

# SOUTHBANK CENTRE

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## Press Release

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**Images:** [HERE](#)

**Listings:** [HERE](#)

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## Southbank Centre announces its Spring Literature Season featuring Margaret Atwood, Akala, Hanya Yanagihara and more



Akala © Paul Husband, Margaret Atwood © Luis Mora, Hanya Yanagihara © Jenny Westerhoff

Spring highlights include:

- A UK exclusive with literary phenomenon **Margaret Atwood**: *Burning Questions*
- **Akala** discusses his book *The Dark Lady* at an in-conversation event with special readings and performances from **The Hip Hop Shakespeare Company**
- A book launch of **Hanya Yanagihara**'s *To Paradise*
- **Marlon James** discusses *Moon Witch*, *Spider King*, the highly-anticipated second book from his Dark Star Trilogy
- The return of the Southbank Centre's resident poetry and music night, **Out-Spoken**
- An evening with one of America's most compelling and visionary poets, **Alice Notley**
- Immersive performance **Seder**, combining jazz drumming, otherworldly sound, contemporary dance, and poetry
- Marking **World Earth Day**, **Hot Poets** partner spoken word artists with scientists, NGOs and change-makers, for hopeful climate-change stories, soundtracked by **Tongue Fu**
- The return of the live **T.S. Eliot Prize Readings**

The Southbank Centre announces its Spring 2022 Literature Season, featuring a UK exclusive in-person live event with double Booker Prize-winning author **Margaret Atwood** as she discusses her new book *Burning Questions* (24 Mar, RFH the event will also be live streamed by Fane). This fascinating season is packed with events featuring renowned thinkers, diverse writers, poets and artists who explore mystery, fantasy and tackle myriad subjects including feminism and freedom, class

and identity, the environment and technology.

**Ted Hodgkinson, Head of Literature & Spoken Word, the Southbank Centre**, said: “After a hugely successful hybrid Autumn season and London Literature Festival in 2021, we’re bringing in the new year with a selection of events to lift the spirits and replenish the imagination, with exclusive appearances from world renowned authors including Margaret Atwood, Marlon James and Hanya Yanagihara alongside innovative new spoken word performances.”

The 2022 Spring Season follows a successful year of literature at the Southbank Centre in 2021 featuring popular events and authors including Sally Rooney, Wole Soyinka, Paul McCartney, Armistead Maupin, Helen Oyeyemi and many more.

Taking place from January to April 2022, the Spring Season features a range of literature events and celebrates storytelling at the 20th **Imagine Children’s Festival** in February at the Southbank Centre. Spanning across its three auditoriums (Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall and Purcell Room) as well as in its National Poetry Library and foyer spaces.

Tickets go on sale to the Southbank Centre Members on Thursday 9 December and to the General Public on Friday 10 December. Tickets for Imagine Children’s Festival and Purcell Sessions events already on sale.

## **FURTHER PROGRAMME DETAIL**

### **TALKS AND IN CONVERSATION EVENTS**

In a UK exclusive, double Booker Prize-winning author **Margaret Atwood** discusses her new book, *Burning Questions*. Appearing live on stage, Atwood will tackle myriad subjects including feminism and freedom, the environment and technology, and when to dispense advice to the young (answer: only when asked) (24 Mar, RFH). The event is also available to live stream for audiences across the world.

With the release of his book *The Dark Lady*, this in conversation event with **Akala** is for adult and young adult readers alike, and features a wide-range of topics alongside special readings and performances from **The Hip-Hop Shakespeare Company**. BAFTA and MOBO award-winning hip-hop artist, writer and social entrepreneur Akala has led youth arts, education and music projects globally and co-founded The Hip-Hop Shakespeare Company in 2009. *The Dark Lady* plunges the reader into the violent, visceral streets of Elizabethan London, weaving history and magic with contemporary ideas around class and identity (6 Feb, RFH).

**Hanya Yanagihara** introduces her new novel *To Paradise*, a bold, brilliant novel spanning three centuries and three different versions of the American experiment, at an in conversation event with Booker-shortlisted author **Neel Mukherjee**. Yanagihara is the author of the million-copy bestseller *A Little Life* shortlisted for the Booker Prize 2015, shortlisted for the Baileys Prize for Women’s Fiction 2016, winner of Fiction of the Year at the British Book Awards 2016 and a finalist for the National Book Awards 2015 (20 Feb, QEH).

Acclaimed Man Booker prize-winning author **Marlon James** returns to the Southbank Centre to discuss the second book in his revolutionary Dark Star Trilogy: *Moon Witch, Spider King*. The book allows us to imagine a mythic world with a lost child, a 177- year-old witch, a deadly regal chancellor, and a peculiar mystery with many answers. During this event, James discusses the rich tradition of African mythology, fantasy and history (2 Mar, QEH).

## **NATIONAL POETRY LIBRARY**

One of America's most compelling and visionary poets, **Alice Notley** who is known for challenging the boundaries of genres, reads from her latest book *For the Ride*, which recounts the journey of survivors of a global disaster who board a ship to another dimension, saving words as they travel. Notley also reads a selection of previous work and is in discussion with National Poetry Librarian, Chris McCabe, before taking questions from the audience (6 Apr, L5 Function Room). Further National Poetry Library events are to follow in the new year.

## **PURCELL SESSIONS**

As part of London's major new performance series Purcell Sessions, the Southbank Centre's resident music and poetry night **Out-Spoken** returns, showcasing emerging artists alongside established names. Sessions are led by **Anthony Anaxagorou** - founder of Out-Spoken and T.S. Eliot Prize-nominated poet, **Anthony Joseph** - novelist and Jerwood-Compton poetry fellow and other leading UK and US poets. The line-ups include poets **Holly Pester, Fiona Benson, lisa luxx, Rishi Dastidar, Emily Berry** and many more. (22 Jan, 26 Feb, 19 Mar, 9 Apr in the Purcell Room).

To mark Earth Day, **Hot Poets** partner spoken word artists with scientists, NGOs and change-makers to share hopeful stories about climate change, soundtracked by **Tongue Fu**. Featuring, **Joelle Taylor, Yomi Şode, Zena Edwards, Elvis McGonagall, Toni Stuart, Matt Harvey, The Repeat Beat Poet, Jonny Fluffypunk and Francesca Beard**, plus prizewinners from a nationwide participation project (22 Apr, Purcell Room).

The multidisciplinary performance piece **Seder** will also be coming to the Purcell Room. Combining jazz drumming, other-worldly sound, contemporary dance, and poetry, Seder is based on Adam Kammerling's poetry collection of the same name. It focuses on kinder transport evacuee Walter Kammerling, exploring the themes of ritual, re-telling and survival (20 Apr, Purcell Room). See [HERE](#) for more information on Purcell Sessions.

## **IMAGINE CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL**

The Southbank Centre's annual Imagine Children's Festival returns in February 2022. Coinciding with half-term week, it includes twelve days of the best children's theatre, storytelling, comedy, family parties, music and dance for ages 0 - 11 featuring some of the UK's leading children's authors. This year, Imagine celebrates its 20th birthday with a fun-packed programme featuring **Adam Kay, Dame Jacqueline Wilson, Joseph Coelho, Julia Donaldson, Michael Rosen** and more. See [HERE](#) for more information on Imagine.

## **PRIZES AND READINGS**

Hosted by poet and broadcaster Ian McMillan, the **T.S. Eliot Prize Readings** celebrates the best poetry of the past year. This year the prize is judged by Glyn Maxwell (chair), Caroline Bird and Zaffar Kunial. This year's shortlisted poets are: **Raymond Antrobus, Kayo Chingonyi, Selima Hill, Victoria Kennefick, Hannah Lowe, Michael Symmons Roberts, Daniel Sluman, Joelle Taylor, Jack Underwood and Kevin Young**. This will be a hybrid event, available to live stream. Presented in partnership with the T.S. Eliot Foundation (9, RFH and on demand until 16 Jan).

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## **Keeping audiences safe on site**

As we welcome visitors back, our number one priority is the safety, health and wellbeing of visitors and staff. We continue to review and manage any risks and respond to any changes in government

guidance. Full details of our Covid-secure measures can be found on the Southbank Centre website [here](#).

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# ENDS #

Please find all Listings information [HERE](#)

For further press information please contact:  
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### About the Southbank Centre

The Southbank Centre is the UK's largest arts centre occupying a prominent riverside location that sits in the midst of London's most vibrant cultural quarter on the South Bank of the Thames. We exist to present great cultural experiences that bring people together and we achieve this by providing the space for artists to create and present their best work and by creating a place where as many people as possible can come together to experience bold, unusual and eye-opening work. We want to take people out of the everyday, every day.

The site has an extraordinary creative and architectural history stretching back to the 1951 Festival of Britain. The Southbank Centre is made up of the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room and Hayward Gallery as well as being home to the National Poetry Library and the Arts Council Collection. It is also home to four Resident Orchestras (London Philharmonic Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, London Sinfonietta and Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment) and four Associate Orchestras (Aurora Orchestra, BBC Concert Orchestra, Chineke! Orchestra and National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain).

### About the Southbank Centre's National Poetry Library

The Southbank Centre's National Poetry Library is the largest public collection of modern poetry in the world and is housed at the Southbank Centre in London. Founded by the Arts Council in 1953 and opened by poets T.S. Eliot and Herbert Read, the library contains over 200,000 items spanning from 1912 to the present day, extensive resources for poets, academics, schools and families. Hosting exhibitions and events, as well as offering an extensive catalogue and ebook service accessible online, the library is free to use [www.nationalpoetrylibrary.org.uk](http://www.nationalpoetrylibrary.org.uk)

Opening times for venues can be found on the [Southbank Centre website](#).



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