

## Press Release

Date: Monday 20 May 2019

Event Listings [HERE](#) Image Gallery [HERE](#)

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## Southbank Centre's *Africa Utopia* festival returns in a new collaboration with Indaba X for a weekend of events celebrating art and culture from Africa and its diaspora: 13-15 September 2019

Featuring Akala, Clara Amfo, Dallas Austin, Big Narstie, Ozwald Boateng, Chineke! Orchestra, Noel Clarke, Davido, Nathalie Emmanuel, Simon Frederick, Dr Abosede George, Lee Gray, Bethann Hardison, Femi Kuti, Denise Lewis, Mata, Nina Reece, Jay Jay Revlon, Osi Umenyiora, Jay Williams with more names to be announced



Images L-R: Bethann Hardison, The New Afrika Shrine in Lagos, Femi Kuti, Clara Amfo

Southbank Centre today announces the first names and events for *Africa Utopia 2019*, as well as a new partnership for this year's festival with co-curators **Indaba X**. Showcasing an exciting lineup of leading artists and voices from the African continent and its diaspora, *Africa Utopia 2019* will encompass three days of music, comedy, performance, literature, fashion, talks, debates, workshops and free activity across Southbank Centre's 17-acre site (13-15 September 2019).

This Southbank Centre festival, now in its seventh year, celebrates and explores Africa and its diaspora's influence in shaping the way we think about art, culture, gender, race, sexuality, fashion, activism and society. New for this year's festival, Southbank Centre is pleased to be working with co-curators Indaba X who, with The Kofi Annan Foundation and Event Horizon, powered by Live Nation, are a new initiative designed to celebrate, inspire and bring together the African diaspora through a range of art forms and cultural disciplines.

Names and events for *Africa Utopia* 2019 include:

## MUSIC

- Opening the festival, **The Kuti family presents “Afrika Shrine Alive”** bringing the atmosphere and energy of the iconic New Afrika Shrine in Ikeja, Lagos to Southbank Centre’s Royal Festival Hall for an evening of live music and dance. Celebrating the legacy of pioneer of the Afrobeat music genre, Fela Kuti, performers include four-time Grammy-nominated Nigerian musician **Femi Kuti** with further names to be announced.
- A chamber ensemble from **Chineke! Orchestra**, Southbank Centre Associate Orchestra and Europe’s only professional majority-BME orchestra, return to *Africa Utopia* performing Errollyn Wallen’s *NENNA*, and an arrangement of the highlife song *Sweet Mother* by Prince Nico Mbarga, sometimes referred to as ‘Africa’s National Anthem’. In a free event, **Chineke! Junior Orchestra** invites audiences to sit amongst the players and hear music performed up close.

## TALKS AND PANELS

- Olympic gold medallist **Denise Lewis**, English sports pundit, former NFL player and 2 time Super-Bowl champion **Osi Umenyiora** and American former basketball player **Jay Williams** discuss the power and price of protest in sport
- American fashion model **Bethann Hardison** and British fashion designer **Ozwald Boateng** explore how the fashion industry can better represent diverse identities, both on and off the catwalk
- Poet and rapper **Akala**, Assistant Professor of History and Africana Studies at Barnard College in New York, **Dr. Abosede George** and historian **Ed Keazor** discuss how and where black cultural memory is preserved
- Photographer and filmmaker **Simon Frederick**, *Game of Thrones* actress **Nathalie Emmanuel** and *Kidulthood* writer and actor **Noel Clarke** explore the power of black perspectives, both in front of and behind the lens, discussing how the film industry has both celebrated and denied diversity
- A panel featuring Nigerian singer-songwriter **DaVido** and Grammy Award-winning American record producer **Dallas Austin** discuss if and how the music made by black artists, from Afrobeat to drill, hip-hop to grime, explores the breadth of blackness
- In a time of an expanding palette of makeup shades and black-owned beauty brands, Radio 1 presenter **Clara Amfo** leads a panel discussion on beauty, from self-expression and the performance of identity, to purely the skin deep

- *Gay Times*' first black editor **Lee Gray** hosts a conversation with one of London's finest DJs and dancers - **Jay Jay Revlon** - to explore the art of voguing: its genesis, the highs, lows and future

## PERFORMANCE

- A special *Africa Utopia* themed **Letters Live** event featuring world-class performers reading remarkable letters from black history in this celebration of black contribution to society and culture.
- **Africa Utopia Fashion Show** showcasing designers from all over the African continent who are taking a playful look at gender and identity, while both honouring and subverting traditions of the African aesthetic, in this free event combining music, arts and dance
- A special *Africa Utopia* themed comedy showcase - '**The Laughing Leopard**' - hosted by rapper and MC **Big Narstie** and featuring a stellar lineup of comedians to be announced

## PARTICIPATION AND WORKSHOPS

- The return of the **Africa Utopia Marketplace** featuring more than 30 stalls offering the latest in African-inspired fashion, accessories, books, art and homeware, filling the foyer spaces of the Royal Festival Hall
- A live makeup tutorial, 'Black is Beautiful', with **Mata** - makeup artist to Skepta, Stormzy and IAMDDDB - who offers her tips, tricks and shares her journey of putting the colour back in to mainstream beauty
- A creative writing workshop led by writer **Nina Reece** who will unlock the power of black creativity

**Madani Younis, Creative Director, Southbank Centre** said, "*We're excited to present our seventh Africa Utopia festival and to be collaborating with co-curators Indaba X for the first time. Through music and performance, talks and debate, this vitally important festival has become a beacon of fresh ideas and discovery, pushing culture forward. We look forward to inspiring audiences with a packed weekend of events, showcasing an incredible array of artists and a wholehearted celebration of the immense influence of the African continent and its diaspora.*"

Tickets for *Africa Utopia* go on sale to Southbank Centre Members on Tuesday 21 May and to the general public on Wednesday 22 May with the exception of The Kuti Family Presents

Afrika Shrine Alive, Black is Beautiful with Mata, The Art of Voguing with Jay Jay Revlon, The Laughing Leopard, and Creative Writing Workshop with Nina Reece which go on sale at a later date. Link to event listings below.

-ENDS-

**For further information or to buy tickets please visit the following website:**

[www.southbankcentre.co.uk](http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk)

### **Event Listings**

Please find a link to event listings in date order [HERE](#)

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

### **Join the Conversation:**

@southbankcentre

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#AfricaUtopia

### **For further press information please contact:**

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## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

### **About Southbank Centre**

Southbank Centre is the UK's largest arts centre and one of the UK's top five visitor attractions, occupying a 17 acre site 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. 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).