

SOUTHBANK CENTRE

Press Release

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Press images [HERE](#)

The Southbank Centre announces new digital initiatives as it extends closure to 30 June 2020

- The Southbank Centre and its partners announce additional digital initiatives to serve its audiences and the wider artistic community, including *Shankar 100*, *Beethoven 250*, a digital tour of *Among The Trees* exhibition at Hayward Gallery, and daily curated content celebrating past artistic highlights crossing decades and genres.
- [Grace Jones' Meltdown](#) will now take place in June 2021, with Grace Jones and every act confirmed to play the new dates, 11-20 June.

Elaine Bedell, Chief Executive of the Southbank Centre, says:

"It's with great sadness that we're having to close our venues for a longer period of time. To play our part in stopping the spread of the virus, we've cancelled or postponed all our events up to Tuesday 30 June. Beyond this date, we will continue to follow government advice and our plan is to re-open the Southbank Centre when it is safe to do so.

We're in regular contact with the DCMS, Arts Council England and Public Health England as they monitor the rapidly changing situation. As a charity, being closed presents a massive financial challenge for us and for those we work with. We intend to do everything we can to safeguard our future and will take advantage of the Government furloughing scheme as well as submitting a bid to access additional Arts Council England funds from the £90m made available to national portfolio organisations.

Our hearts go out to those key workers on the frontline and also to the freelance artists and crew who contribute to our artistic programme and of course to our audiences who support us. We're also ensuring that all our staff are properly supported during this period of closure.

For those customers who've booked tickets to events until the end of June we're making credit vouchers available that are valid for two years, which can be used when we reopen. If you can afford to, please consider making a donation amount however large or small to the Southbank Centre.

While the Southbank Centre is closed we're making our archive artistic collection available to everyone through our website, social media and weekly 'Your Culture Fix' email.

Take care of yourselves, and we'll see you again when this is over."

Cross-artform digital content highlights

Shankar 100

On **Tuesday 7 April**, the Southbank Centre celebrates the legacy of the seminal Indian musician, composer, educator and sitar maestro **Ravi Shankar** across its digital channels on the centenary of his birthday as part of **Shankar 100**. Audiences are invited to tune into the Southbank Centre's socials to get involved, with content including exclusive video and curated playlists and original articles. The **Ravi Shankar Centenary** concert which was set to take place on 7 April as part of the season will now take place a year later on **Thursday 8 April 2021** with guest artists to be confirmed, alongside a celebratory programme of free public events, workshops and an archive exhibition, also rescheduled to take place in April 2021.

Sukanya Shankar says:

"My husband's music continues to bring magic to people around the globe. As the whole world faces these challenging times, it's more important than ever to celebrate our common humanity with art that transcends boundaries. I'm thrilled that the Southbank Centre will be celebrating his legacy online and throughout the year as part of Shankar 100. While I'm saddened the Ravi Shankar Centenary concert has been postponed, I look forward to next spring, when we can all come together for this very special event."

YouTube Premieres Presents Ein Heldenleben with Vasily Petrenko

On **Wednesday 8 April** (4pm), the Southbank Centre and the **Royal Philharmonic Orchestra** (RPO) team up with **Google Arts & Culture** and **YouTube** to bring audiences the online premiere of *Ein Heldenleben* conducted by Music Director Designate, **Vasily Petrenko**. Depicting the story of a hero grappling with life's adversities, this epic orchestral work - one of Strauss' signature masterpieces - acts as a fitting metaphor for the challenges faced by today's global community. The first in a two-part series from the RPO, the performance of *Ein Heldenleben* was recorded live at the Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall in June 2019 and will be available to stream [here](#).

Beyond Beethoven Nine

On **Saturday 18 April**, the Southbank Centre hosts a one-day digital event to mark Beethoven 250 celebrations. Fronted by conductor **Marin Alsop**, this activity comes in place of *Beyond Beethoven Nine*, a mass participation project which was due to take place at the Royal Festival Hall between 16-18 April. Alongside a 'socially-distanced orchestra' led by **National Youth Orchestra**, readings, blogs, lectures, videos, playlists from leading cultural figures will open up the world of Beethoven to audiences online. The day centres his totemic Ninth symphony and explores how its message of unification through art can be viewed afresh, bringing a sense of hope and optimism to today's current crisis.

TS Eliot prize-nominated British-born Cypriot poet, **Anthony Anaxagorou** offers a digital reading of his poem 'O Human', originally commissioned as the new libretto for *Beyond Beethoven Nine* in place of Schiller's famous *An die Freude* 'Ode to Joy' poem (sung as the climax to Beethoven's symphony). Reflecting on what joy means to young people, the poem is a mosaic of words from almost 100 poems written by pupils from London secondary schools and young refugees who spent time workshopping with Anaxagorou.

Elsewhere: **Marin Alsop** shares 'insight videos' delving beneath the score to offer a step-by-step tour through Beethoven's Symphony No. 9; **Bengi Unsal**, Head of Contemporary Music at the Southbank Centre, curates a bespoke playlist featuring tracks that are both inspired by and sample this great masterpiece; and broadcaster **Tom Service** and lecturer **Laura Tunbridge** offer their perspectives on the composer and his most cherished works.

From the 16-18 April, the Southbank Centre will amplify content from the **National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain**, a key partner in *Beyond Beethoven Nine*. Announced today, the orchestra will be running its first-ever 'Digital Residency' to give their young musicians a virtual community and a chance to share uplifting music with those who need it most. On 16 April, BBC Radio 3 will be repeating their performance of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 at the 2013 BBC Proms. On 17th April at 5pm, NYO invites every musician in the UK to join in a national, live performance from their doorsteps. Playing as a '**socially distanced orchestra**', they will share their own versions of 'Ode to Joy' inspired by the theme of community, bringing the gift of music to those nearby, from frontline NHS staff and key workers to isolated family members or friends struggling with loneliness.

Marin Alsop, conductor, says:

Beethoven's message of unity, tolerance and joy is as relevant today as it was in 1824. Beethoven celebrated the essence of what it is to be human and what it is to be connected. It is truly fitting then that Beethoven, an artist who himself suffered and overcame extraordinary personal hardship, would become so inexplicably connected to this year of unprecedented human challenge. In light of our current world situation, I am so disappointed that I can't join our friends at the Southbank Centre, a key stop on my year-long project, 'The Global Ode to Joy'. To you, the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain and all the other 450 participants who were due to be joining us, I want you to embrace Beethoven's philosophy at this time more than ever before and hold on tight to his central thesis - that together we are stronger and that art can truly unify us all."

David Wallace-Wells event to go online

In a newly re-formatted event which will be available online later in April, David Wallace-Wells will discuss links between the coronavirus pandemic and the climate chaos he outlines in his Sunday Times and New York Times bestselling book, *The Uninhabitable Earth* - in an online event on Penguin's digital channels. The event will be chaired by journalist Samira Ahmed and will include opportunities for the audience to ask questions. David was due to appear at the Southbank Centre's Queen Elizabeth Hall on 8 April. Full details including the date of the new event will be published online in due course. The event is a partnership between Penguin, the Southbank Centre and Cambridge Literary Festival.

Newly commissioned poems on trees

Several newly commissioned poems inspired by the Hayward Gallery's *Among the Trees* exhibition will be read and shared digitally on World Earth Day, 22 April.

Rescheduled programme

Meltdown and Contemporary Music

Grace Jones' *Meltdown* festival is to move to June 2021, with the iconic curator in place and every one of the announced acts confirmed for next year. Acts include Grace Jones, Solange, Peaches, Jimmy Cliff, The Love Unlimited Synth Orchestra, Skunk Anansie, Baaba Maal, Lee Scratch Perry with Adrian Sherwood, Oumou Sangaré, Meshell Ndegeocello, Lee Fields and the Expressions, Ladysmith Black Mambazo and more to be announced, including many on the free Riverside Stage. More information can be found [here](#).

Many contemporary music concerts in the Southbank Centre programme have been rescheduled, with dates for more concerts to be announced soon including Warm Digits (17 Sep 2020), *Concrete Lates: Weval* (2 Oct 2020), Mew (2 Oct 2020), Daedelus (17 Oct 2020), Belle Chen (19 Oct 2020), *Purcell Sessions: Keaton Henson* (5-6 Nov 2020), Gigi Masin (28 Nov 2020), Ben Watt (28 Nov 2020), Ulrich Schnauss (29 Nov 2020), Collocuter (8 Dec 2020), David Rodigan & The Outlook Orchestra (9 Dec 2020), Tindersticks (19 Feb 2021), Goldfrapp (2 and 3 Apr 2021) and the Ravi Shankar Centenary concert (8 Apr 2021).

Comedy

The Southbank Centre continues to be a hub for fresh new comedy talent and legendary household names. David Baddiel is rescheduled to perform his brand new one-man show *Trolls: Not the Dolls* on 3 September in the Queen Elizabeth Hall, Ahir Shah's *Dots* will now play 4 September in the Purcell Room, Simon Munnery reprises his notorious alter ego *Alan Parker Urban Warrior* on 9 October in the Purcell Room. Finally, in a London exclusive, Stewart Lee brings his new show *Snowflake/Tornado* to the Royal Festival Hall from 18 - 23 May 2021.

Literature and Spoken Word

A world leading venue for literature and spoken word, several events from the Southbank Centre's Spring and Summer Literature Seasons have been rescheduled for the Autumn. These include the author of *Three Women*, Lisa Taddeo whose event will now take place on 17 September in the Queen Elizabeth Hall and *Fortunately* with Jane Garvey and Fi Glover which will now take place on 20 September in the Royal Festival Hall. Further announcements regarding the Autumn Literature Season to follow.

Performance and Dance

English National Ballet returns to the Southbank Centre with its prestigious *Emerging Dancer* competition. Now in its 11th year, this annual event recognises the excellence of its artists and celebrates the talent of tomorrow as they perform in front of an eminent panel of expert judges with one set to receive the 2020 Emerging Dancer Award. The event, which was due to take place on the 29 May, will now take place on 22 September in the Queen Elizabeth Hall.

Curated content

The Southbank Centre's 'Culture Fix'

The Southbank Centre's new weekly 'Culture Fix' email pulls together signature weekly digital content, including [book podcasts](#) from Louis Theroux, Phoebe Waller-Bridge, Hilary Mantel and Hillary & Chelsea Clinton, plus contemporary and classical [playlists](#) and a chance to revisit iconic Hayward Gallery shows from the inaugural exhibition of [Henri Matisse in 1968](#) to more recent shows by [Tracey Emin](#) and [Jeremy Deller](#) via Google Arts & Culture.

Among the Trees, Hayward Gallery

Take a [virtual video tour](#) of Hayward Gallery's latest exhibition *Among the Trees* with Director Ralph Rugoff. Further curator-led videos exploring key themes and artist-led videos providing insight into their works will be going live soon. The first is with artist [Hugh Hayden](#), with future videos to come from Eva Jospin and Eija-Liisa Ahtila.

Blogs accompanying the exhibition include [Five things to know](#) and [City and tree: the story of London planes](#) (by Paul Wood, author of *London is a Forest* and *London's Street Trees*) plus a [Spotify playlist](#) provides a musical accompaniment with tracks referencing, or inspired by, interactions with trees, forests or woodland.

Hayward Gallery video content showcasing world class artists and shows

- Curator and artist-led exhibition tours including [George Condo](#), [Andreas Gursky](#) and [DRAG](#)
- Director Ralph Rugoff in conversation with artists including [Jeremy Deller](#) and [Bridget Riley](#)
- Behind-the-scenes access to the likes of [Martin Creed](#) and [Tracey Emin](#)
- View works from [Olafur Eliasson](#) and [David Shrigley](#)
- Insight from artists including [Nicholas Hlobo](#), [Richard Wilson](#), [Ernesto Neto](#), [Ryan Gander](#), [Yinka Shonibare](#) and [Rebecca Warren](#)

Resident & Associate Orchestras

The Southbank Centre continues to work with its Resident & Associate Orchestras to monitor the ongoing impact of Covid-19 on the orchestral sector. Working in close partnership, essential future-proofing is ensuring the continued creative health of our eight world-leading orchestras.

As the Southbank Centre's Resident & Associate Orchestras prepare for the premature ending of their 19/20 seasons, they open up their digital archive and online resources to bring art and culture to audiences in these testing times. This includes: the **Philharmonia Orchestra's** ['Digital Experiences'](#), **London Philharmonic Orchestra's** ['LPOnline'](#), the

Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment's [‘The Show Must Go On\(line\)’](#) and **London Sinfonietta's** [‘London Sinfonietta Channel’](#).

The **National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain** remains a cornerstone of Beyond Beethoven Nine via their new [‘Digital Residency’](#), the **Aurora Orchestra** share compelling content via their [YouTube channel](#), the **BBC Concert Orchestra** will record ensemble and solo works for BBC Radio 3's 'Afternoon Concert' as part of BBC Arts' [‘Culture In Quarantine’](#) scheme, and **Chineke!** get set to release a never-before seen film of their last public concert on 23 February at QEH, conducted by Fawzi Haimor and featuring Tai Murray.

The National Poetry Library

The Southbank Centre's the National Poetry Library, has a large collection of brilliant, moving, funny and groundbreaking poems that can be read online, as well as video poems. Enjoy the Poem of the Day, every day, [here](#) or become an eLoan member and download poetry books and audio to a device of your choice [here](#).

Outspoken

Each month, London's premier evening of poetry and live music *Out-Spoken* platforms the best in UK poetry alongside a line-up of world-class musicians. Following the cancellation of Outspoken in March, readings from the event will be performed digitally through Southbank Centre's Instagram, featuring Scotland's national poet Jackie Kay, Jerwood-Compton winner Yomi Şode and Complete Works fellow Rishi Dastidar.

Ends

NOTES TO EDITORS

The Southbank Centre is now closed to 30 June 2020. Should you need to reach the press team, please contact: press@southbankcentre.co.uk.

The Southbank Centre has an array of leading cultural figures who are available for media interviews/spokesperson comment:

Elaine Bedell, CEO of the Southbank Centre. Elaine became the first female Chief Executive of Europe's largest arts centre in its 66 year history in May 2017 after a 25 year career in the media, working in senior roles at the BBC and at ITV. Elaine is well-placed to comment on the business implications of the coronavirus on the Southbank Centre and wider arts industry, the challenges of temporarily closing the arts venue and its future strategy.

Ralph Rugoff OBE, Director of the Hayward Gallery. Ralph is well-placed to comment on how the coronavirus is affecting museums and art galleries across the country, the impact it is having on artists and the whole visual arts landscape and to speak about how crucial digital engagement has become in these strange circumstances.

Gillian Moore CBE, Director of Music. Gillian Moore is one of the UK's leading figures in music and a sought after writer with over 30 years in the industry. Overseeing a large

programme of classical, jazz and contemporary music in one of the world's largest cultural institutions, Gillian is well-placed to talk about the impact of coronavirus on the wider industry, the power of music to bring solace and community at these times, how we can support artists, and also the new role of digital.

Ted Hodgkinson, Head of Literature and Spoken Word. Ted programmes the ever popular literature programme and the London Literature Festival, he is also chair of the International Booker Prize 2020, and a leader and expert in his field. Ted is available to comment about the publishing industry in general (while book sales are on the rise), and about how the Southbank Centre is adapting its literature programme during closure.

Bengi Ünsal: Head of Contemporary Music. Bengi is responsible for contemporary music across the Southbank Centre, including Meltdown, the longest-running artist curated festival in the world and is on the boards of Music Venues Trust and Sound UK. She has launched cultural institutions in Turkey, and worked with Universal Music and BMG. Bengi is well placed to comment on the impact on the contemporary music scene in the UK and globally, the role of a programmer in a digital world, what the public and industry can do to support artists from grass roots to international touring acts. She can also curate playlists and make musical and cultural recommendations.

Ben Larpent: Head of Classical Music, Southbank Centre. Ben is responsible for the classical music programme across that Southbank Centre. With annual season underpinned by eight Resident & Associate Orchestras, world-leading international orchestras, innovative productions and cutting-edge contemporary classical music projects, Ben is well-placed to discuss the impact of Covid-19 on the orchestral sector and the wider new music scene for the classical genre. Ben has been at the Southbank Centre for over 10 years.

Chris McCabe: Poet and Librarian, National Poetry Library.

For more information, visit the Southbank Centre [here](#).

Join the Conversation:

@southbankcentre

@hayward.gallery.

About the Southbank Centre

The Southbank Centre is the UK's largest arts centre and one of the UK's top five visitor attractions, 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).

