

24 May 2007

## **18,000 PERFORMERS:**

### **4 ORCHESTRAS, 27 GAMELAN ENSEMBLES, 3,000 DANCERS, 12,000 SINGERS AND 2,500 SCHOOLCHILDREN WELCOME THE RE-OPENING OF THE ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL**

The re-opening of the Royal Festival Hall, after two years of restoration and redevelopment, will be heralded by **The Overture: 48 hours of free music, dance, spoken word, film and visual arts** presented by 18,000 performers. There will be something for everyone, with participants being those who have either pre-prepared work to perform or just want to come along during the weekend and join in. One of the highlights will be the opportunity to attend a 'Lucky Dip' concert inside the spectacularly restored Royal Festival Hall auditorium, with at least 10,000 **free tickets** available. An additional 14,000 **free tickets** can be booked for named concerts\*\* inside the Hall. People from all over Britain are invited to join the celebrations starting at **dusk on Friday 8 June and running until dusk on Sunday 10 June.**

**The Overture** will be one of the most ambitious musical and participation events ever staged in Britain, including performances around the Southbank Centre site: indoors in the foyers, The Ballroom and auditorium, on the terraces, Southbank Centre Square, along the river front and on the river itself. Among the invited artists are **Billy Bragg**, who has written a new translation of Schiller's text for Beethoven's 9th Symphony to be performed by the **Philharmonia Orchestra\***, conducted by **Paul Daniel** with a choir of 2,000 singers from all over Britain; The **London Sinfonietta\*** in a mass performance of Terry Riley's iconic 1960's work, *In C*; **The London Philharmonic Orchestra\*** and **Scott Stroman** will recreate a big band sound in The Ballroom; choreographer **Lea Anderson** will recreate her 1998 work, *Flag*, on a grand scale, for 230 performers from 13 national dance agencies around the country; an 800-strong choir will present *Singing River*, a new choral work specially composed by **Orlando Gough**; **Saint Etienne\*** will present a special *Turntable Café* over the weekend; students from Central Saint

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Martins College of Art are designing an open-air *Pendopo* (Gamelan Pavilion) for the Riverside Terrace in which 27 Gamelan Ensembles from across the country will perform; **Shlomo\***, world-renowned human beatboxer, will lead a Beatbox Choir in The Ballroom; **The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment\*** and gospel conductor **Ken Burton**, with **The Sixteen\***, will present a Baroque and Gospel concert; top jazz musicians **Harry Beckett** and his band join 2,500 six and seven year olds from **Lambeth primary schools** to sing four specially-commissioned concerts in the Royal Festival Hall auditorium; the UK's top ballroom dancers, including *Strictly Come Dancing* stars **Matthew and Nicole Cutler**, will perform across the The Ballroom and the riverside terraces; **Billy Bragg** will teach guitar chords and invite the audience to join him in performing some of his favourite London songs; **Antony Gormley's** exhibition, *Blind Light*, will be open in The Hayward for a free dawn view; **Overture Radio**, run by young people, will broadcast on air and online throughout the weekend and including the small hours of the mornings between 2 am and 6 am allowing audiences across the country to participate in The Overture.

Jude Kelly, Artistic Director, Southbank Centre, said: "The Overture reflects the huge commitment of our Resident Artists to the vision of a renewed Southbank Centre, still alive to the original creative spirit of the 1951 *Festival of Britain*, the genesis of the Royal Festival Hall itself. So before the Gala Opening Night and all the spectacular concerts which follow, The Overture will provide an historic moment that belongs to every single person in the country."

\*Resident or Associate Southbank Centre Artist

\*\*See Listings below

Saint Etienne's Turntable Café is presented in association with *Agnés b*

## **The Overture**

**48 hours of free celebrations for the re-opening of the Royal Festival Hall**

**Southbank Centre, London SE1**

**Friday 8 June – Sunday 10 June**

Dusk on Friday until dusk on Sunday.

For full details of The Overture programme, to apply for free tickets, and for information about how to take part in the events, log on to the website [www.southbankcentre.co.uk/overture](http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/overture) or call the Ticket Office on 0871 663 2533. Tickets are available by phone or in person from 30 May.

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## THE OVERTURE EVENTS

### THROUGHOUT THE WEEKEND

**Lucky Dips** – At least 10,000 tickets are being offered across the weekend giving FREE entry into the Royal Festival Hall auditorium performances with stars from the worlds of pop, world and classical music. They can be booked on a first come first served basis from May 30. Some tickets will be available on the day.

**Gamelanathon** – students from Central Saint Martins College of Art have been commissioned by Southbank Centre to design a *Pendopo* (traditional Gamelan performance pavilion) for the Riverside Terrace. **27 Gamelan Ensembles** from across the country bring Indonesian rhythms to the banks of the Thames.

**Lift Off** - All 134 spaces in the Royal Festival Hall (front and back-stage) will be symbolically launched by a performance and a memory from The *Festival of Britain* in *Lift Off*.

**Anomalous Creatures Crossing** - Southbank Centre Resident Artist **Maresa von Stockert** creates intimate performance moments around the site.

**Skylon Spirits** - Honouring the name of the 300 feet high suspended steel structure created as the abiding symbol of the *Festival of Britain* in 1951, Resident Dance Company, **Stan Won't Dance** create a series of aerial duets on the Royal Festival Hall's riverside masts, encapsulating the soaring, optimistic spirit of a post-war nation.

**Overture Radio** – a 48-hour on-site radio station broadcasting throughout the weekend. Run by young people from Lambeth, Southwark, Lewisham and Greenwich. This provides an original soundtrack to the festivities. You can listen to Overture Radio at [www.southbankcentre.co.uk/overture](http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/overture), or on 87.7FM within a three mile radius of the Royal Festival Hall.

**Top national choirs** perform across the site.

**Saint Etienne 24-hour @Turntable Café** – Saint Etienne hosts a version of their hugely successful DJ event throughout the weekend.

**Sheds, Beds and Breads** – Clare Patey, formerly from 'The Museum of', leads an installation of unusual garden sheds to be explored throughout the weekend.

**Strolling Minstrels** - Bellow Head, Billy Bragg, Ku Da Mix, Indigo Moss and Southbank Centre Artists in Residence will be on-site musical hosts.

**Eating and drinking** and informal "hang out" experiences will be available throughout the site; a family picnic zone; a flower market; an extended-hour book fair, as well as late opening hours across Southbank Centre's quality food and retail outlets.

Stroll down a **1950s street** past cars from five decades ago.

**Building Tours** will lead people through the newly refurbished Royal Festival Hall with its trademark open spaces and iconic design.

**Interactive fountain** - Jeppe Heine's *Appearing Rooms* will be present throughout the weekend on the Riverside Terrace.

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## FRIDAY 8 JUNE

**19.00 – 22.00**

Compere **Nicky Miles** invites you to take to the floor and join **Ross Mitchell** with his 8-piece band and singers for a 50's musical welcome to The Overture on the front terraces of the Royal Festival Hall. A **dance cabaret** featuring same sex couples from the United Kingdom and Europe (a first for this country) will perform Ballroom and Latin style. Come along and join in.

**20.30**

**Lucky Dip 1** – A mystery concert by a star from the world of pop, world or classical music. Tickets available from May 30.

**20.00 – 01.30**

The Royal Festival Hall's famous **gamelan** brings alive the foyers with internationally renowned artist and Southbank Centre Artist in Residence, **Dr Rahayu Supanggah**.  
**(continues Saturday 8.00 – 1.30 and Sunday 8.00 – 17.00)**

**22.00**

**Singing River** - A **300-strong candlelit choir** travels by pontoon from Tower Bridge down the Thames culminating in a grand choral piece by Orlando Gough with another 500 Southbank Centre Voicelab singers on arrival at Festival Pier.  
**(repeated Saturday at 22.00)**

**23.00 – 01.30**

**Silent Disco** - A massive spontaneous dance on the Riverside Terrace of the Royal Festival Hall against the backdrop of lighting and projections. Dancers are given their own headphones with a changing play list. Come along and join in.  
**(repeated Saturday at 22.00)**

**22.30 – 23.00**

Masters of light and projection **Light Surgeons** will ignite the external walls of the Royal Festival Hall in a montage of archival footage dating back to the *Festival of Britain* followed by further visual animation by **Gaia Nova**.  
**(repeated Saturday at 22.30)**

**23.30**

**Lucky Dip 2** - A mystery concert from a star from the world of pop, world or classical music. Tickets available from May 30.

## SATURDAY 9 JUNE

**08.00 – 10.00**

Early morning **Tai Chi**, **Kalaripayattu** and **Yoga** and the terraces and Ballroom of the Royal Festival Hall. Come along and join in.  
**(repeated Sunday at 08.00)**

**08.00 – 10.00**

**Hayward Breakfast\*\*** - Free entry to **Anthony Gormley's** new exhibition, *Blind Light* giving an early morning glimpse of the spectacular installation.

**10.30 and 12.30**

Southbank Centre Resident Orchestra, the **London Philharmonic Orchestra** and **Scott Stroman** create a big band sound with a difference on The Ballroom with a team of professional, semi-professional and non professional musicians.

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**10.20 and 13.50**

**Beautiful Beginnings \*\*** – Top jazz musicians **Harry Beckett** and his band join 2,500 six and seven year olds from **Lambeth's primary schools**, to sing four specially-commissioned concerts in the Royal Festival Hall auditorium.  
**(repeated Sunday 11.20 and 15.50)**

**14.30**

**Classical Stars** - Guitarist **Xuefei Yang** and cellist **Natalie Clein** perform on The Ballroom.

**15.30 and 18.00**

**A dance about the world: FLAG \*\*** - 180 performers from across the country from **13 national dance agencies** take over the Royal Festival Hall building in *Flag*, a performance event directed by **Lea Anderson**, Artistic Director of the Cholmondeleys & Featherstonehaughs.

**16.30 and 20.00**

Top wordsmiths compete to become **Overture Poetry Slam** champion. The afternoon heat will feature young people's work, the winner going on to compete in the professional evening slot. Come along and join in.

**17.00**

A World Class **Latin American ballroom dance show** featuring top TV stars **Matthew and Nicole Cutler** from the hit BBC show *Strictly Come Dancing*.

**17.30 and 21.00**

**Akademi** presents *Sapnay* - a mass performance of contemporary Kathak and Bharatanatyam inspired by the Royal Festival Hall Riverside Terrace.

**18.00 and 21.00**

'**In C**' – Southbank Centre Resident Orchestra, the **London Sinfonietta** lead a mass performance of Terry Riley's iconic 1960's minimalist piece on the Ballroom Floor.

**19.30 and 23.00**

Southbank Centre Resident Artist **Rafael Bonachela**'s virtuosic dancers take to the Ballroom Floor in the sizzling duet *Soledad*.

**20.30**

**Big Busk** – **Billy Bragg** leads a mass sing-along with guitar accompaniment of his favourite London songs at Southbank Centre Square. Participants will be able to learn 3, 5 or 7 simple chords via the web and rehearse with Billy at **19.15**

**20.30**

**Lucky Dip 3** - A mystery concert from a star from the world of pop, world or classical music. Tickets available from May 30.

**22.00**

**Singing River** – *See Friday for details*

**22.30**

**Light Surgeons and Gaia Nova** – *See Friday for details*

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**23.30**

**Lucky Dip 4** - A mystery concert from a star from the world of pop, world or classical music. Tickets available from May 30.

**23.30 – 1.30**

**Silent Disco** – *See Friday for details*

## **SUNDAY**

**08.00 – 10.00**

Early morning **Tai Chi**, **Kalaripayattu** and **Yoga**. Come along and join in.

**8.00 – 10.00**

**Hayward Breakfast\*\*** – *See Saturday for details.*

**11.20 and 15.50**

**Beautiful Beginnings\*\*** – *See Saturday for details.*

**13.45**

**An Unexpected Harmony\*\*** - A unique collaboration of baroque and gospel song led by one of Southbank Centre's Resident Orchestras, **Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment** and **Ken Burton**, Britain's leading Gospel conductor, with Southbank Centre Associate Artists, **The Sixteen** and a massed choir.

**15.00 and 16.30**

Renowned **kathak** dancer **Gauri Sharma Tripathi** performs with top international dance artists and musicians.

**16.00 and 19.00**

**Beatbox** - Southbank Centre Resident Artist, **Shlomo** leads a unique **Beatbox choir**.

**18.00**

**The Last Movement\*\*** - The **Philharmonia Orchestra**, conducted by **Paul Daniel** leads a grand performance of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with the Voicelab massed choir - **Surge** - and a choir of 2000 singers from all over the British Isles in a new English translation by Billy Bragg.

**18.30**

Top **Ballroom dancers**, introduced by **Nicky Miles**, perform across Southbank Centre site with an invitation once more for dancers of all ages to join in - led by **Ross Mitchell** and his band. Come along and join in.

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