

18 June 2009

## PESTIVAL

### CELEBRATING INSECTS IN ART, AND THE ART OF BEING AN INSECT

#### A THREE-DAY FESTIVAL OF INSECT-INSPIRED MUSIC, COMEDY, TALKS, NATURE TRAILS AND INSECT/HUMAN INTERACTION

**Southbank Centre, Friday 4 – Sunday 6 September 2009**

- **The Termite pavilion - a giant walk-in termite mound**
- **Insect-inspired music in the 'Queen Bee Hall' hosted by Robyn Hitchcock**
- **Robin Ince's night of insect comedy with guests including Garth Merenghi**
- **Experimental insect music with Chris Watson featuring *The Bee Symphony* with Southbank Centre's very own bees**
- **Beecab - a London Taxi in the form of a bumblebee with working beehive in front seat**

For three buzzing days in September, swarms of 'insecterested' or the merely curious will be attracted to Southbank Centre like moths to a flame to experience Festival, a celebration of insect life. The festival was founded in 2006 and brings together scientists, thinkers, artists, performers and musicians to explore the insect world.

The packed Festival weekend will take over the venues and spaces of Southbank Centre including the Royal Festival Hall and Queen Elizabeth Hall, which will be renamed the Royal Festival Hall and Queen Bee Hall for the weekend. Events include a nature trail with **insect ID walks; talks; workshops and experiments; Cross Pollination** – an evening of experimental insect music with **Chris Watson; Bob and Roberta Smith's Mobile Brownfield site; a Beecab**, raising awareness of the plight of the bees; insect comedy with **Robin Ince** and guests, including **Garth Merenghi; live insect shows; an urban insect garden; a giant human bee hive;** insect-related songs with added clicks, rubbings and hisses with **Robyn Hitchcock** and – at the centre of Festival 2009 – **The Termite**

**Pavilion**, a large termite inspired architectural structure in form of a six-metre cube which will be situated on Southbank Centre Square. **Full festival details to be announced.**

Pestival Founder and Director, **Bridget Nicholls**, said: "Insects are critical to human life on Earth. With over a million insect species, they are the most diverse group of animals on Earth. And yet insects are frequently misunderstood, reviled or ignored by the majority of the human population. Pestival will challenge stereotypes about insects and give them their rightful place, for good and bad, in our collective cultural consciousness."

The **Beecab** – a London Taxi that has been specially customised by artists and scientists for Pestival in the form of a bumblebee in full flight and with a working beehive in the front seat – was launched today at the Wellcome Trust. The Trust recently launched a funding scheme for scientific research into the disappearance of bees and other pollinating insects, supporting Pestival. The Beecab will be appearing around London until the end of the summer when it arrives at Southbank Centre for Pestival 2009.

Pestival is also generously supported by the Wellcome Trust, Arts Council England, The City Bridges Trust, The Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851, and is a Japan-UK 150 Event.

Ticketed Southbank Centre Pestival events will be on sale to Southbank Centre members on Monday 22 June and on general sale from Tuesday 23 June.

**For further press information and images please contact Sabine Kindel on 020 7921 0917 or [sabine.kindel@southbankcentre.co.uk](mailto:sabine.kindel@southbankcentre.co.uk) or Miles Evans on 020 7921 0676 / [miles.evans@southbankcentre.co.uk](mailto:miles.evans@southbankcentre.co.uk)**

**Southbank Centre Ticket Office: 0871 663 2500 [www.southbankcentre.co.uk](http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk)**

### **Notes to Editors**

**Southbank Centre** is the UK's largest arts centre, occupying a 21-acre site that sits in the midst of London's most vibrant cultural quarter on the South Bank of the Thames. The site has an extraordinary creative and architectural history stretching back to the 1951 *Festival of Britain*. Southbank Centre is home to the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room and The Hayward as well as The Saison Poetry Library and the Arts Council Collection. The Royal Festival Hall reopened in June 2007 following the major refurbishment of the Hall and redevelopment of the surrounding area and facilities.

**Pestival** is a mobile arts festival examining insect-human interactivity in bioscience, through contemporary art, cinema, music and comedy, as well as direct scientific demonstration and educational projects. Pestival aims to initiate a cultural shift in the way people think, moving them towards a more integrated way of looking at the natural world. Pestival's lasting legacy is to forge new working relationships between disciplines, communities and species. Further information at <http://pestival.org>