

Southbank Centre
Belvedere Road
London
SE1 8XX

Press Office: +44 (0)20 7921 0888
Ticket Office: +44 (0)844 847 9910
press@southbankcentre.co.uk
www.southbankcentre.co.uk

7 March 2014

SOUTHBANK CENTRE CELEBRATES FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF ALCHEMY WITH WORLD PREMIERES, COLLABORATIONS AND RETURN OF ANOUSHKA SHANKAR AND SUSHEELA RAMAN

16 – 26 May 2014

www.southbankcentre.co.uk

Alchemy, Southbank Centre's festival of South Asian culture, returns for the fifth year (16 – 26 May) celebrating and exploring the arts and politics of the countries of the Indian subcontinent and their relationship with the UK. In its fifth year the festival goes further than ever in present exciting collaborations, new works, UK premieres and legendary artists across dance, music, theatre, design, comedy and literature, as well as talks and debates providing a unique insight into the region.

With a range of both ticketed and free events – from concerts by music stars to a food market in Southbank Centre Square, free fashion shows in the foyers to DJs spinning their discs alongside the River Thames – the site will come alive with the with the energy and vividness of work from and inspired by South Asia.

Jude Kelly, Artistic Director of Southbank Centre, said: "For the fifth anniversary of Alchemy we are thrilled to welcome back a host of festival favourites, including Anoushka Shankar and Susheela Raman, as well as new partners and artists, making this year the most ambitious and collaborative yet. We've worked hard to grow the festival in the last five years, welcoming artists and audiences from increasingly diverse backgrounds, and I am delighted to announce Alchemy will tour parts of England in 2015. This will see Southbank Centre collaborate with regional arts centres – Black Country Touring, Cast and Oldham Coliseum, thanks to Arts Council England funding – to present work to their local communities, and extend the reach of the festival beyond London."

Festival highlights include:

- Headline gig from **Anoushka Shankar**, who returns to Alchemy following a sell-out show at last year's festival
- Israeli Qawwali singer **Shye Ben Tzur** makes his UK premiere with guest guitarist **Jonny Greenwood**
- Bollywood singer and playback artist **Sukhwinder Singh** plays the Royal Festival Hall
- UK premiere of **Fearless Nadia** – a musical and cinematic celebration of the silent-era goddess with music from Ben Walsh and the Orkestra of the Underground

- Vikram Seth's *Beastly Tales* brought to life by Indian actor **Naseeruddin Shah** and his family
- ***Pakistan: What Else You Need To Know*** – a day of talks on the country, from cricket to satire, film to the Pak-Sino relationship, curated by author Kamila Shamsie
- Comedy includes internet sensation Humza Arsha's ***Diary of a Badman***, and **Saad Haroon** on growing up wanting to be Pakistan's top comedian
- **Nikesh Shukla** presents his cooking memoir *The Time Machine*, written as he taught himself to cook following the death of his mother, whilst cooking some of his favourite Gujarati food for the audience
- Much-anticipated album launches from **Susheela Raman** and **Soumik Datta**, who plays with special guests including **Nitin Sawhney**
- UK premiere of *Within* by choreographer **Aditi Mangaldas**, with further kathak-inspired dance by **Gauri Sharma Tripathi** in *Flight*, a new work created especially for the festival
- **The Citizens Archive of Pakistan** - a free multimedia exhibition tracing the evolution of Pakistani identity from partition to the present day through a wealth of personal stories, memories and objects, presented in partnership with the British Council
- Alchemy welcomes a group of young musicians from the **Afghan National Institute of Music** in Kabul for a unique musical and cultural exchange, in partnership with the British Council
- A new partnership with Terry Mardi Group brings Asian Music Publishing's Asian Music Seminar to the Alchemy for the first time

As part of Alchemy there will be a range of free events, including fashion shows, gigs and concerts. A number of art installations will be presented, including a specially commissioned textile installation in The Clore Ballroom by Delhi-based designer Siddhartha Das called *Kaal: Unfolding Layers of Time*, and a video installation by Pakistani artist Basir Mahmood titled *I'm on the 'Us' Side and You are on the Other* (2010).

Following the success of last year's pop up, Indian street food restaurant Roti Chai Chaat Shack and Bar returns to Alchemy and takes up residence in Festival Village. They will serve a range of street food and selection of Indian-inspired spiced cocktails. There will also be a food market in Southbank Centre Square throughout the festival offering a range of street food from across the subcontinent. Festival Village will host Design Wallah, in association with Shake the Dust. This pop-up shop will feature jewellery, interiors, artwork and gifts with an emphasis on contemporary design and ethically sourced products that offer something a little different to most pre-conceived notions of South Asian design.

For further press information and images please contact:

Lara Delaney at Southbank Centre:

Lara.Delaney@southbankcentre.co.uk / 020 7921 0917

Mary Rahman at MRPR:

mary@mr-pr.com

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 Gallery as well

as The Saison Poetry Library and the Arts Council Collection. For further information please visit www.southbankcentre.co.uk

Southbank Centre's Alchemy Partners

Alchemy 2014 has been developed with support from many partners and collaborators including an advisory board: British Council, Fanaah Media, Akademi-South Asian Dance UK, Darbar Arts Cultural Heritage Trust, Asia House, Sampad South Asian arts, artist Vaiyu Nadu, SAMA Arts Network, Radio 1 and BBC Asian Network DJ Nihal, Swaraj Music, artist/producer Kuljit Bhamra, artist Sangeeta Datta, Eence Arts, the British Pakistan Foundation, Satrangi Arts, Pan Asian Women's Association, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Asian Music Circuit, Association Sargam, the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and the Nehru Centre.

Alchemy on Tour *(please note a separate press release is available)*

Alchemy on Tour will see the popular festival of South Asian culture tour areas of the UK in 2015, with partners Black Country Touring, Cast and Oldham Coliseum, thanks to support from the Arts Council England. The festival travel to areas in the Midlands and north of England, including Doncaster, Oldham and Wolverhampton, working as part of a jointly-led partnership to develop sustainable new audiences within South Asian communities, where there is currently low engagement within the arts. The tour will continue the Alchemy tradition of offering both free and ticketed events across a range of art forms, including dance, music, comedy and literature as well as fashion and food, working with a range of International and UK artists.