

PRESS RELEASE



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

Friday 27 September 2013

SOUTHBANK CENTRE PRESENTS A BUMPER SEASON OF POETRY TO MARK THE SAISON POETRY LIBRARY'S 60TH ANNIVERSARY

Highlights include:

- World class poets read at one-off event to mark the **Poetry Library's 60th birthday**
- **Seamus Heaney's** sold out lecture reprogrammed as **memorial tribute** in his honour
- **Six new Birthday Poems commissioned** to commemorate the **60th anniversary**
- Former librarians reunite to share their stories about the **Poetry Library**
- Series of intimate **shared readings** where the audience join together to read an iconic poem aloud
- **Forward Prizes for Poetry** presented at **Southbank Centre** for first time with all-star line-up
- **National Poetry Day Live** returns for a fifth year
- **T. S. Eliot Prize Readings** return to **Southbank Centre**
- One-night only performance of **Kate Tempest's** *Brand New Ancients* with live quartet
- Exhibition of new work by **Cerith Wyn Evans** in response to the **Poetry Library's** collection

Poetry is enjoying something of a blossoming at **Southbank Centre** and more widely – the annual **T. S. Eliot Prize Readings** in **Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall** have been a sell out for the past few years (2,500 capacity) and the **Poetry Parnassus Festival**, as part of the **London 2012 Festival**, was the hugely successful, largest ever gathering of global poets. This autumn, **Southbank Centre** will mark the 60th anniversary year of the **Poetry Library** in **Royal Festival Hall**, which is described as '*one of the great libraries of the world (BBC Radio 4)*', with a bumper season of poetry readings, performances, exhibitions, events and activities to coincide with **National Poetry Day** on 3 October.

Jude Kelly, Artistic Director of Southbank Centre said:

'We are very proud of The Poetry Library – the biggest collection of contemporary poetry in the UK – and delighted to be celebrating its 60th anniversary with many of the people that use it – from established and

Patron: Her Majesty The Queen. Chairman: Rick Haythornthwaite.
Chief Executive: Alan Bishop. Artistic Director: Jude Kelly OBE
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emerging poets, to children, young people and poetry enthusiasts. Poetry has an immense power to fire the imagination and is at the heart of our Literature programme as well as our vision for the site.

'As part of Southbank Centre's Festival Wing plans, we will move the Poetry Library from its hidden location in the Royal Festival Hall to become the centrepiece of a new area – The Word Space – dedicated to showcasing poets and writers from across the world, creating powerful new literacy programmes and ensuring that poetry and storytelling continues to flourish here for future generations.'

The Poetry Library was the brainchild of **Eric Walter White** who went on to be the first Literature Director of the Arts Council, and was officially opened on 12 May 1953 by poets **T. S. Eliot** and **Herbert Read**. The collection began as an initiative of the Arts Council, moving between various buildings for several years before finding a permanent home in **Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall** 25 years ago where it was reopened by **Seamus Heaney** in 1988.

Ted Hughes worked on ***The Rattle Bag*** anthology at the library during the 1970s and some of the **Poetry Library's** current regular visitors include **Alan Hollinghurst, Simon Armitage, Kate Tempest, Daljit Nagra** and **John Hegley**. Recent celebrities who have been spotted popping into the **Poetry Library** include **Benedict Cumberbatch, P J Harvey, Emily Watson, Lauren Laverne**, and **Richard Ayoade** of *IT Crowd/Submarine* fame.

The Poetry Library currently welcomes around 2,000 visitors a month, with over 5,000 members. The library is free to join and is open Tuesday to Sunday, from 11am – 8pm, **the longest opening hours of any public library in the UK**. Due to the efforts of successive librarians over six decades, the library now holds **the largest collection of poetry in Britain**, with **over 200,000 items** (the library aims to collect two copies of all UK poetry publications since 1912) including poems, journals, audio recordings, lyric books and rare magazines.

Chris McCabe, Southbank Centre's Poetry Librarian said:

'The Poetry Library is such a treasured resource and loved by so many people, that we wanted to mark our 60th Birthday in style. From commissioning six new poems about the library; to hosting shared readings where people can join in and read a poem aloud; to a fantastic gala evening showcasing the poets who use the library and the amazing poetry in our 200,000 piece collection; and a series of Friday morning Rug Rhymes for very young children, we set out to celebrate the wide variety of poetry championed by Southbank Centre and showcase the development of poetry across the decades – from performance poetry to poetry in translation and from popular poetry to the linguistically experimental.'

The highlight of the season will undoubtedly be the **Poetry Library's 60th Birthday Party** (29 October), where some of the world's best poets, relaxed in the birthday mood, will offer a rollicking night of performances to celebrate the anniversary. This very special birthday party is hosted by **Simon Armitage**, and features readings from **Fleur Adcock, John Agard, Jen Hadfield, Kei Miller, Daljit Nagra, Tom Raworth, Brenda Shaughnessy, Amjad Nasser** and **Warsan Shire**. The poets have plundered the **Poetry Library** shelves for some of their favourite poems and taken requests for readings from their own work. Some of the poetry films held in the library's collection will be showcased with free screenings ahead of the live readings.

Delving further into the **Poetry Library's** history with anecdotes and remembrances, former librarians **Jonathan Barker, Mary Enright, Simon Smith** and **Miriam Valencia** will reunite to share their stories and discuss the library at a special event on Wednesday 2 October. There will also be a series of intimate **shared readings**, presented across three evenings, where the audience join together to read an iconic poem aloud. The selected poems are **W. H. Auden** and **Christopher Isherwood's *The Dog Beneath the Skin*** (22 October), **Ken Smith's *Fox Running*** (23 October) and **Alice Oswald's *A Sleepwalk on the Severn*** (24 October).

Offering after-hours access to explore the library, the **Poetry Library Lock-Ins** are a series of study courses in collaboration with **The Poetry School** (fortnightly starting Monday 30 September). The events will offer access to the library's collection of books, audio, video and ephemera, in order to inspire new poems and deepen readers understanding of current trends in contemporary poetry. There will also be a chance for children to explore the **Poetry Library's** collection, as every other Friday from 11 October, under-fives and their parents are invited to gather at the **Poetry Library** for **Rug Rhymes** – short sessions of nursery rhymes, poems and rhyming

stories. This is also an opportunity to look at and borrow books from the **Poetry Library's** ever growing children's collection.

Putting poetry centre stage, the **Poetry Library** has commissioned six new **Birthday Poems** to celebrate the **60th anniversary** by **Annie Freud, John Hegley, Kate Kilalea, Daljit Nagra, Mario Petrucci** and **Indigo Williams**. These poems will be projected onto the side of **Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall**, accompanied by audio recordings of the poets reading the work, and will also be distributed on postcards. Throughout the 60th Birthday season, the **Poetry Library** also presents new work by visual artist **Cerith Wyn Evans** in an exhibition inspired by his love of poetry (Tuesday 1st October – Tuesday 31st December). Evans' work often makes use of found or remembered texts and includes quotes from a diverse range of poets, from **William Blake** to **James Merrill**.

Elsewhere as part of Southbank Centre's poetry programme for 2013-2014, the annual **Forward Prizes** come to **Southbank Centre's Purcell Room** for the first time. (1 October). **The Forward Prizes** are regarded by poets internationally as one of the highest accolades, and past winners include **Thom Gunn, Seamus Heaney, Ted Hughes** and **Carol Ann Duffy**. For the first time in the prizes' 22-year history, they will be given away on stage. During the event the shortlisted poetry will be read by Forward judges **Jeanette Winterson** and **Samuel West**, plus leading actors including **Juliet Stevenson, Helen McCrory** and **Natascha McElhone**.

National Poetry Day Live (3 October) returns for a fifth year with a packed day of free performances and activities around this year's theme of water, programmed in partnership with **The Poetry Society**. Children and adults can contribute to **Amy Sharocks's Museum of Water** – a collection of bottled water and accompanying stories, hear shanty songs sung by **The Morris Choir** and poetry readings from **Simon Armitage, Patience Agbabi, Hannah Lowe, David Morley** and **John Wedgwood Clarke**. Several new **Poetry Society film-poem commissions** will also premiere at **National Poetry Day Live** including *Evaporations*, a collaboration between **Alice Oswald** and artist **Chana Dubinski** filmed by **Andrew Brown** and **Richard Couzins**. The film was shot on location in Devon, and in order to record the poet's breath leaving the body as water vapour, one extended sequence was filmed in low temperatures in a cold storage unit. Four new film-poems premiere by poets **Liz Berry, Canal Laureate Jo Bell, Ian Duhig** and **Ian McMillan**, who have travelled the nation's canal network with film-maker **Alastair Cook**. The day will end with a special reading of sea poems by **Simon Armitage** and friends, relayed to **The Clore Ballroom** from **A Room for London**, the boat-shaped hotel room on top of **Southbank Centre's Queen Elizabeth Hall**.

Following the sad death of **Seamus Heaney**, **Southbank Centre** has reprogrammed his sold-out lecture as an evening of poetry and song in his memory (20 November). Now in **Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall**, the evening will be a celebration of his life and work with poetry, music, film, anecdote and appreciation. The event will be hosted by **Andrew O'Hagan** with music from the master uilleann piper **Liam O'Flynn** and cellist **Neil Martin; Ian Bostridge** with **Julius Drake**; and **The Chieftains**. **Seamus Heaney's** poetry will be read by **Simon Armitage, Carol Ann Duffy, Charlotte Higgins, Michael Longley, Paula Meehan, Paul Muldoon, Ruth Negga, Edna O'Brien, Bernard O'Donoghue** and **Christopher Reid**. **The Poetry Library** is also currently holding **A Book For Seamus**, and inviting members of the public to contribute their thoughts and condolences. The desk that **Seamus Heaney** signed when he took part in **Southbank Centre's Poetry Parnassus** in 2012 is also currently on display in the **Poetry Library**.

Looking ahead, **Southbank Centre** further seals its reputation as the leading venue for live literature, spoken word and poetry with the **T. S. Eliot Prize Readings** once again returning to Royal Festival Hall (12 January), as well as a one-night only performance of **Kate Tempest's Brand New Ancients** with a live quartet (28 January).

For further press information please contact:

Katie Toms on 020 7921 0926 / katie.toms@southbankcentre.co.uk

Ticket line: 0844 847 9910

Website: www.southbankcentre.co.uk

SEPTEMBER LISTINGS

POETRY LONDON AUTUMN LAUNCH

Friday 27 September 6.30pm, Level 5 Function Room at Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, FREE

An event to launch the autumn issue of Poetry London, one of the UK's leading poetry magazines, with readings from featured poets, the judge of the magazine's annual competition, Pascale Petit, and this year's competition winners. Please note, this free event requires a ticket. Tickets can be booked online, by phone or in person (no fees apply). Tickets include a glass of wine.

THE POETRY LIBRARY LOCK-IN

Monday 30 September, Monday 14 October, Monday 28 October, Monday 11 November, Monday 25 November, 6.30-8.30pm, Southbank Centre's Poetry Library, £82 for all five sessions, £74 (over 60s), £66 (concessions)

To celebrate its 60th anniversary, the Poetry Library, in collaboration with the Poetry School, is offering a new course for poetry writers and readers. Poets and regular library users Claire Crowther, Karen McCarthy Woolf, Daljit Nagra and James Wilkes, in discussion with resident librarians and course students, will talk about their discoveries in the library and the new work it has led to. The events will offer after-hours access to the library's collection of books, audio, video and ephemera, in order to inspire new poems and deepen understanding of current trends in contemporary poetry. This course is suitable for people looking for independent inspiration for new work and also those wanting informal but in-depth poetry discussion. Booking and further details: www.poetryschool.com

OCTOBER LISTINGS

CERITH WYN EVANS

Tuesday 1st October – Tuesday 31st December, open Tuesday-Sunday, 11-8pm The Poetry Library, FREE

As part of the Poetry Library's 60th birthday celebrations artist Cerith Wyn Evans has created a new text-piece for the library called *With the Advent of Radio Astronomy...* which will be shown alongside some of his celebrated typographical works, inspired by his fascination with language and poetry. Evans' work often makes use of found or remembered texts and includes quotes from a diverse range of poets, from William Blake to James Merrill. This new work arises from what *Interview Magazine* has described in Evans as 'a poetic sensibility that isn't so much spiritual as grounded in a private place'.

FORWARD PRIZES FOR POETRY

Tuesday 1 October, 7.30pm, Southbank Centre's Purcell Room, £12, Concessions 50% off (limited availability), RETURNS ONLY

The annual Forward Prizes are regarded by poets internationally as one of the highest accolades. Past winners include Thom Gunn, Seamus Heaney, Ted Hughes and Carol Ann Duffy. As a prelude to National Poetry Day and for the first time in the prizes' 22-year history, the prizes will be given away on stage at Southbank Centre. During the event the shortlisted poetry will be read by Forward judges Jeanette Winterson and Samuel West, plus leading actors including Juliet Stevenson, Helen McCrory and Natascha McElhone. The evening will be chaired by journalist and broadcaster Tom Sutcliffe. The event also marks the publication launch of this year's *Forward Book of Poetry*, featuring the cream of the poetry crop.

Shortlisted poets for the 2013 Forward Prizes:

THE FORWARD PRIZE FOR BEST COLLECTION

Her Birth by Rebecca Goss

Pluto by Glyn Maxwell

Parallax by Sinéad Morrissey

The Havocs by Jacob Polley

Drysalter by Michael Symmons Roberts

THE FELIX DENNIS PRIZE FOR BEST FIRST COLLECTION

Dear Boy by Emily Berry

She Inserts the Key by Marianne Burton

Oswald's Book of Hours by Steve Ely

Chick by Hannah Lowe

War Reporter by Dan O'Brien

Accurate Measurements by Adam White

THE FORWARD PRIZE FOR BEST SINGLE POEM

The Doll's House by Patience Agbabi

The Metric System by Nick MacKinnon

A seedy narrative or moments of lyrical stillness? by Rosie Shepperd

From the Dialysis Ward by Hugo Williams

SECRET HISTORY OF THE POETRY LIBRARY

Wednesday 2 October, 8pm, Southbank Centre's Poetry Library, FREE

A special event to celebrate the Poetry Library's 60th birthday. Four poetry librarians – Jonathan Barker, Mary Enright, Simon Smith and Miriam Valencia come together to discuss the library. This is a chance to hear about the poets whose collections have been found amongst the books over the years and discover what the librarians really feel are the best poets they've collected. Free but booking essential via

specialedition@poetrylibrary.org.uk

NATIONAL POETRY DAY LIVE: WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE

Thursday 3 October, 1pm-8pm, The Clore Ballroom at Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, FREE

Southbank Centre and The Poetry Society present the fifth National Poetry Day Live – a packed day of free performances and activities around this year's theme of water.

National Poetry Day Live schedule:

1pm - 2.15pm

A performance for young audiences. Wyvil Primary School perform on the theme of water alongside poet Aoife Mannix, and compère John Hegley and spoken word artist Francesca Beard whip up whirlpool of words. They are joined by the sonic wavelengths of beatboxer Tiana Oldroyd, aka BadaboomTee.

2.30pm - 4.30pm

This year's Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award judges Hannah Lowe and David Morley read, accompanied by previous Foyle winner Dom Hale. SLAMBassadors UK Artistic Director Joelle Taylor performs alongside former champ Anthony Anaxagorou and winner of the 2012 New Generation Slam, Indigo Williams. Four new film-poems premiere by poets Liz Berry, Canal Laureate Jo Bell, Ian Duhig and Ian McMillan, who have travelled the nation's canal network with film-maker Alastair Cook.

4.45pm - 6pm

The premiere of *Evaporations*, a new Poetry Society film-poem collaboration between poet Alice Oswald and artist Chana Dubinski filmed by Andrew Brown and Richard Couzins which explores the mortality of water. *Evaporations* was filmed on location in Devon. To record the poet's breath leaving the body as water vapour, one extended sequence was filmed in low temperatures in a cold storage unit. Following the flow of the river of words, there are performances from the award-winning poet Simon Armitage, Poetry Review's Forward Prize nominee Patience Agbabi and poet John Wedgwood Clarke, reading from his recent collection *Sea Swim*. National Poetry Day Live will be sung out by shanty songs from the Morris choir.

7pm

The watery wanderings end with a special reading of sea poems by Simon Armitage and friends, relayed to The Clore Ballroom at Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall from A Room for London, the boat on top of Southbank Centre's Queen Elizabeth Hall.

Activities available throughout the day:

Museum of Water

Amy Sharrocks's collection of publicly donated water and its accompanying stories. Members of the public are asked to choose some water that is precious to them, find a bottle to put it in and then describe why they chose this water – this can be as a poem; some of them will be read out on the day.

Aqueous Quiz

A chance for members of the public to pit their wits against the Poetry Society's quizmaster.

Poetry Butcher

Members of the public can bring along a poem that needs work and let the poetry butchers cut straight to the heart of the verses with their razor-sharp critical expertise. Places are limited on the day.

RUG RHYMES – FOR THE UNDER FIVES

Every other Friday starting Friday 11 October – Friday 20 December, 10.30am, Southbank Centre's Poetry Library, FREE

Under-fives and their parents are invited to gather on the Poetry Library poem rug for a short session of nursery rhymes, poems and rhyming stories. There is also an opportunity to look at and borrow books from the Poetry Library's ever growing children's collection. Free but booking essential (Tickets must be booked for each adult and baby/toddler).

THE DOG BENEATH THE SKIN – A SHARED READING

Tuesday 22 October, 8pm, Southbank Centre's Poetry Library, £5, Concessions 50% off (limited availability)

The first of three shared readings in which the audience are invited to join in. At this intimate event all audience members share in the reading aloud of part of W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood's *The Dog Beneath the Skin*, the first collaboration between the two literary giants and an important contribution to English poetic drama in the 1930s. The shared readings are a chance to celebrate the range of poetry in the Poetry Library's collection as part of the library's 60th Birthday celebrations.

FOX RUNNING – A SHARED READING

Wednesday 23 October, 8pm, Southbank Centre's Poetry Library, £5, Concessions 50% off (limited availability)

All audience members share in the reading aloud of Ken Smith's *Fox Running*. This is the second of three intimate shared readings which celebrate the range of poetry in the Poetry Library's collection as part of the library's 60th Birthday celebrations.

A SLEEPWALK ON THE SEVERN – A SHARED READING

Thursday 24 October 8pm, Southbank Centre's Poetry Library, £5, Concessions 50% off (limited availability)

All audience members share in the reading aloud of Alice Oswald's *A Sleepwalk on the Severn*. Commissioned for the 2009 Festival of the Severn, this breathtakingly original work records what happens when the moon moves over the sublunary world: its effect on water and on language. This is the third of three intimate shared readings which celebrate the range of poetry in the Poetry Library's collection as part of the library's 60th Birthday celebrations.

POETRY FILMS AT THE POETRY LIBRARY'S 60TH BIRTHDAY PARTY

Tuesday 29 October, 6.15pm, The Front Room at Southbank Centre's Queen Elizabeth Hall, FREE

A showcase of some of the poetry films held in the collection at Southbank Centre's Poetry Library ahead of the live readings at the Poetry Library's 60th birthday party.

POETRY LIBRARY 60TH BIRTHDAY PARTY

Tuesday 29 October, 7.30pm, Southbank Centre's Queen Elizabeth Hall, £15, £12

With over 20,000 visitors a year and over 200,000 items across its various collections Southbank Centre's Poetry Library presents an outrageously varied and unlikely-to-be-repeated event to celebrate its 60th birthday. Some of the world's best poets, relaxed in the birthday mood, offer a rollicking night of performances to celebrate what BBC Radio 4 has called '*one of the great libraries of the world*'. This very special birthday party is hosted by Simon Armitage, and features readings from Fleur Adcock, John Agard, Jen Hadfield, Kei Miller, Daljit Nagra, Tom Raworth, Brenda Shaughnessy, Amjad Nasser and Warsan Shire. The poets have plundered the Poetry Library shelves for some of their favourite poems and taken requests for readings from their own work.

POETRY LIBRARY BOOK CLUB – GEOFFREY HILL: COLLECTED POEMS, 1952-2012

28 October, 6.30pm, Southbank Centre's Poetry Library, FREE

With his *Collected Poems, 1952-2012* eagerly anticipated, the Poetry Library is delighted to celebrate its 60th birthday with a Book Club celebrating 60 years of a single poet's work. At the event there will be an opportunity to discuss poems from all the different stages of Geoffrey Hill's career, a man who has been described by the *New Statesman* as '*our greatest living poet*'. Please note, this free event requires a ticket. Tickets can be booked online, by phone or in person (no fees apply).

NOVEMBER LISTINGS

SLAMBASSADORS UK NATIONAL FINAL

Friday 1 November, 4pm, The Clore Ballroom at Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, FREE

The UK's loudest and longest running solo youth slam is back. Presented by the Poetry Society, SLAMBassadors UK national final showcases the strongest spoken word talent in the country and includes guest performances by spoken word stars Hollie McNish and Joelle Taylor.

STORYSLAM: LIVE

Friday 1 November, 7.45pm, Level 5 Function Room at Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, £8

StorySLAM: Live presents the winning stories from Southbank Centre's project in HMP Holloway – Slamming Gates. The project aims to find the literary stars of the future, and this unique event will showcase the winning stories on the theme of freedom of expression. Members of the public can enter the StorySLAM on the night by bringing along a five-minute story on the same theme. Hosted by Malika Booker with music from Rizomorph, this event is part of the annual Koestler Art By Offenders Season at Southbank Centre.

ETRUSCAN BOOKS, BY DEEP WATER, IN DEEP WATER

Wednesday 6 November, 8pm, Southbank Centre's Poetry Library, FREE

Etruscan Books presents an evening of short readings. The readers include Carlyle Reedy, Stuart Montgomery, John Hall, Helen Macdonald and Nicholas Johnson. There will also be a film by Tom Pickard and a contribution by Roy Fisher in absentia. Etruscan Books grew out of the Six Towns Poetry Festival (1992-97) in Stoke-on-Trent, and its first book work was by Ed Dorn. Its work represents a continuum of the way of bookmaking by presses like Fulcrum, Goliard and Grosseteste. The books are still sewn on good papers, and give attention to spatiality, experiment and the lyric.

Free but booking essential via specialedition@poetrylibrary.org.uk

POETRY LIBRARY OPEN DAY

Sunday 17 November, 11am, Southbank Centre's Poetry Library, FREE

The fifth annual Poetry Library Open day focuses on poetry in and as performance. Along with displays of printed and audiovisual material from the collection the day also includes a programme of live readings.

A TRIBUTE TO SEAMUS HEANEY

Wednesday 20 November, 7.30pm, Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, £12, £10

Following the sad death of Seamus Heaney, Southbank Centre has reprogrammed his sold-out lecture as an evening of poetry and song in his memory. Now in Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, the evening will be a celebration of the life and work of Seamus Heaney with poetry, music, film, anecdote and appreciation. Hosted by Andrew O'Hagan with music from the master uilleann piper Liam O'Flynn and cellist Neil Martin; Ian Bostridge with Julius Drake; and The Chieftains. Seamus Heaney's poetry will be read by Simon Armitage, Carol Ann Duffy, Charlotte Higgins, Michael Longley, Paula Meehan, Paul Muldoon, Ruth Negga, Edna O'Brien, Bernard O'Donoghue and Christopher Reid. In association with Faber and Faber.

DECEMBER LISTINGS

POETRY LIBRARY BOOK CLUB T. S. ELIOT PRIZE

Monday 2 December & Monday 9 December, 6.30pm, Southbank Centre's Poetry Library, FREE

Two book club sessions devoted to discussing the shortlist for this year's T. S. Eliot prize. Discussion of the ten books shortlisted for the 'world's top poetry award' will take place over two consecutive weeks. The full shortlist will be announced in October but the four Poetry Book Society Choices for 2013 automatically have a place on the shortlist and so far this year they are *Bad Machine* by George Szirtes (Bloodaxe), *Drysalter* by Michael Symmons Roberts (Jonathan Cape) and *Red Doc* by Anne Carson (Cape). Please note, this free event requires a ticket. Tickets can be booked online, by phone or in person (no fees apply).

DENTALFLUX

Wednesday 4 December, 8pm, Southbank Centre's Poetry Library, FREE

An evening exploring the crossover possibilities of performed words, asking how the expectations of poetry and art audiences differ. Hosted by Candida Powell-Williams, performers include Patrick Coyle, Rebecca Lennon and Daniel Oliver. Free but booking essential via specialedition@poetrylibrary.org.uk

JANUARY LISTINGS

T. S. ELIOT PRIZE READINGS

Sunday 12 January, 7pm, Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, £15, £12, 10% off when you book before 31 October and quote EARLYBIRD

The T. S. Eliot Prize readings return to Southbank Centre, as, on the eve of the judges' decision, the poets shortlisted for the 2013 T. S. Eliot Prize read from their works in what has become one of the most loved events of the literary calendar. Expect an electric atmosphere at this performance, which is a unique opportunity to hear the best contemporary poets reading their own work. The ten book shortlist will be announced on 24 October. The Poetry Book Society Choices for 2013 will automatically have a place on the shortlist and so far this year they are *Bad Machine* by George Szirtes (Bloodaxe), *Drysalter* by Michael Symmons Roberts (Jonathan Cape), *Red Doc* by Anne Carson (Cape) and *At the Time of Partition* by Moniza Alvi (Bloodaxe). The winner of the 2013 Prize will be announced at the award ceremony on Monday 13 January, where the winner will be presented with a cheque for £15,000, donated by the T. S. Eliot Trustees, following on in the tradition of Valerie Eliot, who generously gave the prize money from the inception of the prize. The shortlisted poets will each receive £1,000. In association with the Poetry Book Society.

KATE TEMPEST & BATTERSEA ARTS CENTRE ON TOUR – BRAND NEW ANCIENTS

Tuesday 28 January, 7.30pm, Southbank Centre's Purcell Room, £12, Concessions 50% off (limited availability)

Unfolding on the edges of the city, *Brand New Ancients* discovers the myths of modern times in the lives of two South London families as they collide, connect and come apart – all racing towards a violent conclusion. Poet and rapper Kate Tempest tells an hour-long everyday epic over an exhilarating live orchestral score played by tuba, cello, violin, drums and electronics, that finds the gods of today all around us and reveals that our true heroes are much closer than we think.

Kate Tempest was awarded the Ted Hughes Award for innovation in Poetry for *Brand New Ancients*, and it comes to Southbank Centre for a one-night only performance as part of a unique London collaboration touring to ten venues.

The score is composed by Nell Catchpole in collaboration with and performed by Kwake Bass, Raven Bush, Natasha Zielazinski and Jo Gibson.

A Kate Tempest and Battersea Arts Centre co-production. Co-commissioned by the Albany. Supported by Arts Council England.

Notes to Editors

About Southbank Centre

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. www.southbankcentre.co.uk

About Southbank Centre's Saison Poetry Library

Southbank Centre's Saison Poetry Library was the brainchild of Eric Walter White, and was officially opened on 12 May 1953 by poets T. S. Eliot and Herbert Read. The collection began as an initiative of the Arts Council, moving between various buildings for several years before finding a permanent home in Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall in 1988 where it was reopened by Seamus Heaney. The Poetry Library currently welcomes around 2,000 visitors a month, with over 5,000 members. The library is free to join and is open Tuesday to Sunday, from 11am – 8pm, the longest opening hours of any public library in the UK. Due to the efforts of successive librarians over six decades, the library now holds the largest collection of poetry in Britain, with over 200,000 items. The Poetry Library is about to enter a new era. As part of the redevelopment of Southbank Centre's Festival Wing the library will move to a new glass building overlooking the river, with increased access to visitors. The plans also include rehousing the Poetry Library's dedicated children's poetry collection. www.poetrylibrary.org.uk