

# Boiler Room x Total Refreshment Centre

## Dreaming The City

**Start time:** 8pm

**Set times:** 2 hr 30 minutes

All times are approximate and subject to change.

**Francis Gooding explores the history behind Total Refreshment Centre and speaks to Boiler Room ahead of their collaborative show.**

Jazz needs venues that support it. From the birth of bebop at Minton's Playhouse in Harlem, to the fire music that was ignited at Slug's Saloon in New York's East Village, or the refashioning of British jazz at Ronnie Scott's Old Place on London's Gerard Street, the history of the music is intimately tied to the clubs and bars that gave jazz musicians the freedom to develop their art. But the music also needs spaces that allow community to form – the communal and neighbourhood spaces in which people can come together to exchange ideas, inspire each other and create.

Since its inception in 2012, Total Refreshment Centre has offered a new generation of musicians all these essentials and more, and tonight's event will bring the energy and vibe that defines it directly to the Barbican. Curated by TRC founder Alexis Blondin, and featuring an all-star cast of TRC stalwarts, the show will recreate the flavour of a night at the club, and showcase the sounds and players that make TRC what it is today – a mixtape of Total Refreshment classics, past and present.

As London's jazz scene shifted gears and started to move at speed, TRC rapidly became a key gathering point for the capital's dispersed and diverse contemporary musical energies – a crucial communication node and energy point for the city's burgeoning new movement. With a radically forward-looking programme of events, TRC welcomed musicians from across the globe to the stage, and its studio spaces saw key documents from a new era in jazz put to tape. Before it was even half a decade old, TRC was already an institution.

Squashed between residential Foulden Road and the petrol garage on Stoke Newington High St, the TRC property started out as a confectionary factory in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and went through periods as a shoe factory and supplier of car parts. By the 1980s it was a Caribbean social club called Mellow Mix and Blend, which provided rehearsal spaces for theatre, dance and music, and hosted the annual Miss Caribbean beauty pageant.

Mellow Mix and Blend eventually moved on, leaving the buildings abandoned. And when Alexis Blondin saw the space advertised on Gumtree in 2012 with the description 'Would Suit Music School', he saw potential in the labyrinth of empty, shabby rooms and spaces. After a communal effort of salvage and restoration that never looked anything more than half-finished, Total Refreshment Centre was born.

Holding 9 studios and a large space for events and performances, TRC became the focal point for a music in development. A stirring jazz scene, which had been quietly building in south and east London, expanded rapidly into the space. And not only musicians filled the studios: the presence of photographers, DJs, producers and artists made TRC a creative hub where a highly networked and instinctively collaborative artistic scene could naturally grow across boundaries and practices.

Musically, TRC gives developing players a critical testing ground for their work, and the sound of today's new jazz was toughened and refined through testing to destruction in front of supportive audiences. Crowds and venues don't only support music, they help create it, and the jazz sound of today has been

barbican

shaped by the creative, positive and radical dream of tomorrow's London that was incubated, and continues to be nurtured, by TRC.

Divided into five 'chapters', tonight's programme will tell the story of TRC in sound. The tale will begin with a scene-setting revival of some of its finest live moments, featuring vocalist Dylema Amedie and Jazz Warrior's vibist Orphy Robinson, before moving on to remember the Mellow Mix and Blend era with some reggae classics, and celebrate the Caribbean backbone of the current jazz scene with a set from tubist Theon Cross. With Cassie Kinoshi's SEED Ensemble, trio Wildflower and poet Josh Idehen taking us into the present and toward the future, the show will close with the out-genre musicking of Alabaster DePlume. The show will open and close with the songs taken from the book of the great Sun Ra.

In order to bring an authentic TRC touch, there will be no backstage mystification, and no separation of crowd and artist – plus there will of course be the essential DJ set after the live music has finished, hosted by TRC's regular DJs.

The event is jointly presented with independent music platform Boiler Room, who will be live-streaming the event. Debora Ipek, the Music Programmer at Boiler Room comments, 'The show tells the story behind one of the most influential music hubs in London's recent music history through exploring the diverse sounds that shaped TRC. It's really exciting for us to document a key celebration within London's booming jazz scene'. Boiler Room's involvement in the project is fitting given the exciting and explorative nature of the show. Boiler Room have been streaming live music worldwide since 2010; from their base in London they have streamed over 4000 shows from 150 cities, enabling access to underground music from any point on the globe.

Changes in circumstance during 2018 mean that Total Refreshment Centre's performance and club spaces are no longer in regular use. But the studio spaces are open and busy, and most importantly the new musical spirits that were kindled in one of London's most significant modern musical spaces remain as vital, urgent and creative as ever. And you can't shut that down.

## Performers

**Alabaster DePlume** sax  
**Cassie Kinoshi** alto sax, composer  
**Chelsea Carmichael** tenor sax, flute  
**Cherise Adams-Burnett** vocals  
**Crispin Spry Robinson** percussion  
**Deschanel Gordon** piano  
**Donna Thompson** percussion, vocals  
**Dylema Amadie** vocals  
**Emma-Jean Thackray** trumpet  
**Idris Rahman** flute, sax  
**James Howard** guitar, vocals  
**Joe Bristow** trombone  
**Joshua Idehen** vocals  
**Kwake Bass** drums  
**Leon Brichard** bass  
**Maria Osuchowska** harp, vocals  
**Miguel Gorodi** trumpet  
**Mutale Chashi** bass  
**Noriko Okaku** visual artist  
**Orphy Robinson** vibraphone  
**Oscar Jerome** guitar  
**Patrick Boyle** drums, piano  
**Rai Wong** tape loops  
**Rio Kai** bass  
**Rozi Plain** bass, vocals  
**Sheila Maurice-Grey** trumpet  
**Shirley Tetteh** guitar  
**Theon Cross** tuba  
**Tom Drissler** bass  
**Tom Skinner** drums  
**Tyrone Isaac-Stuart** dance and choreography  
**Yahael Camara Onono** percussion  
**Yohan Kebede** keys



The City of London Corporation is the founder and principal funder of the Barbican Centre