

barbican



May – Jun 24



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↻ Ebony Thomas, Senior Artist, Cassa Pancho's Ballet Black. © Photography by ASH

← Ibrahim Mahama's *Purple Hibiscus* during installation at the Barbican, 2024. Courtesy Ibrahim Mahama, Red Clay Tamale, Barbican Centre, London and White Cube. © Pete Cadman, Barbican Centre

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Accessible events

Look out for the access symbols in the key on the right to find accessible events and exhibitions. Head to the event or exhibition webpage for precise times of accessible events.

Accessible tickets

Join our Access Membership scheme to book accessible tickets and tell us about any access requirements, plus receive our dedicated access newsletter.

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AD Audio described

Some audio described events are provided for people with visual impairment. Commentary is provided through a headset describing visual action that is essential to understanding the story as it unfolds.

BSL BSL-interpreted

These events use British Sign Language interpretation for D/deaf and hard of hearing customers

CAP Captioned

These events assist D/deaf and hard of hearing customers, as well as anyone who may benefit from subtitling.

REL Relaxed

A Relaxed event is ideal for anyone who would benefit from a more informal approach to noise and movement in the space, or would feel more at ease knowing they could enter and exit freely.

My picks

Beth Watson

Beth Watson works as a host, invigilator and tour guide, and is a member of the Barbican Staff Pride Network. This Pride Month, she's selected her recommendations for what's coming up.



Soufiane Ababri: Their mouths were full of bumblebees but it was me who was pollinated

Like all the best installations in The Curve, this show is both intimate and expansive. One side of the gallery is hung with affectionate and arresting drawings of queer life in Morocco. On the other side, the length of the floor is splashed with a huge painted letter representing a slur aimed at gay men. Its vivid red recalls the raw scar of colonially-imported homophobia, still violently impacting LGBTQIA+ Moroccans. Chain-link curtained spaces within the gallery combine with a soundscape to hint at another world of underground clubs; creating a palpable sense of the vital protection and connection found in private and social queer spaces which so often become sanctuaries.

Until 30 Jun The Curve



ANOHNI & the Johnsons: It's Time To Feel What's Really Happening

I first heard ANOHNI's otherworldly voice when working front-of-house in another venue about fifteen years ago. I'd had no idea what to expect, peeking in at the back of the hall, but was instantly mesmerised. I'm looking forward to hearing her unite with the Johnsons for a mix of old and new material. I'm also keenly anticipating a concert that responds directly to the here and now, with the resonant challenge implied in the show's title: *It's Time To Feel What's Really Happening*.

1-2 Jul 7.30pm, Hall

↖ Soufiane Ababri, *Bedwork* 2023. © Soufiane Ababri, Photo: Rebecca Fanuele

↑ ANOHNI and the Johnsons ©Willy Vanderperre

➤ *Perfect Show for Rachel* ©Holly Revell

→ *Freak Orlando*



Perfect Show for Rachel

I'm beyond hyped for the return of this show to The Pit. At every performance Rachel creates a completely unique theatrical experience, with a top-class team of creative collaborators (from ZooCo and Improbable) throwing their multitude of talents at the wall to realise her vision. Don't miss the chance to immerse yourself in Rachel's world – or return to it – it's worth catching this show multiple times if you can: because it's live, and everything is up to Rachel, each night is completely different.

24 May – 9 Jun The Pit **AD BSL CAP REL**



Queer 80s

I'm excited for this smorgasbord of less-often-seen LGBTQIA+ films from around the world, and particularly intrigued to check out *Tongues Untied*, *Quest for Love*, and *Beautiful Mystery*.

5-26 Jun Cinema 1 **AD**



For your diary

What does it mean to 'make it' as an artist in the 21st century? As traditions evolve and power shifts, performance and production artists with the skills to create their own work become the trailblazers of our culture. *Making It* is a three-week festival of new work created by Guildhall School students.

The festival features *Kaleidoscope*, a series of performances by 26 artists on the cusp of their professional careers; celebrations of the harp and piccolo; premieres of three new operas by composers and librettists on Guildhall's MA in Opera Making & Writing; and many more showcases of outstanding work by students from across the School.

Making It is part of a summer of events at one of the world's top ten performing arts institutions.

Making It

11–28 Jun Guildhall School of Music & Drama

The magic of film scores

↑ Director George Lucas with the LSO during the recording of *Star Wars Episode III* at Abbey Road Studios.
© Mike Humphrey

Discover the London Symphony Orchestra's almost century-long relationship with film music.

Perhaps your favourite film music is the bursting opening of *Star Wars*, the stirring brass of *Superman*, or the eerie swirl of *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, but whichever you love, the London Symphony Orchestra likely recorded it.

Renowned as one of the world's most famous film ensembles, the LSO's history with movie scores stretches back to 1935, when they performed Sir Arthur Bliss's score for Alexander Korda's film *Things to Come*.

From then on, the orchestra was in hot demand. 'During the 1940s, they worked

on more soundtracks than commercial recordings,' says LSO Discographer, Philip Stuart.

Having been involved with 106 films in the 1940s, work shifted away from soundtrack recordings in the next few decades. But then came a seismic shift. André Previn, who had made his name in Hollywood and already had four Oscars under his belt before coming to the LSO, became Principal Conductor in 1968.

In the 1970s he made a chance call to a contact from his old Hollywood days, an

enquiry to see what he might be working on that the LSO could be brought into. The contact was John Williams, who was preparing a new film called *Star Wars*. The rest is history.

Since that 1977 hit, the LSO has been synonymous with blockbusters. As we'll discover at a concert on 16 June, the orchestra worked on the *Star Wars* franchise, *Return to Oz*, *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, and many, many more.

But the LSO hasn't just appeared on soundtracks but also on screen. They've

featured in 22 films, including the Warsaw Concerto in *Dangerous Moonlight* (1941), Hitchcock's *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1955) and most recently *Maestro* (2023).

And now there's the opportunity to see them perform these famous works live, as we go to the movies with the world's most renowned film orchestra.

Lights, Camera Action: The LSO on Film

16 Jun 7pm, Hall

Inclusion = innovation



Discover the limitless creative opportunities that open up when Deaf and disabled people are involved in the artistic process through two ground-breaking productions this summer.

ZooCo's *Perfect Show for Rachel* returns following a sold-out, five-star (*The Guardian*) run in 2022, while the Los Angeles Philharmonic brings a landmark performance of Beethoven's opera *Fidelio* with Deaf West Theatre, in which the drama is played out between Deaf actors, with signed recitatives and arias.

The critical acclaim for these performances showcases the valuable contribution that Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people make in the creative world. However, the fact these shows are so rare reveals the significant barriers these communities face when it comes to accessing the arts.

'Despite Beethoven's legacy as a Deaf artist, there remains a significant gap in representation and opportunities for Deaf individuals in the arts,' says Deaf West Theatre artistic director DJ Kurs.

The company's production of *Fidelio* with the LA Phil, described by the *LA Times* as 'an outright breakthrough for opera', sees a cast signing the opera arias as singers perform the notes. Opening up the visual spectacle of sign language shares 'the sublime possibilities of human expression,' as conductor Gustavo Dudamel explained in his director's note for the world premiere at the orchestra's home, the Walt Disney Concert Hall in LA.

Until the approach from Dudamel, Kurs says his Tony Award-winning company had turned down all proposals to collaborate on operas. He says the 'genuine gesture of collaboration' helped persuade him, as well as the fact that Dudamel had worked with the Coro de Manos Blancos, a Deaf choir, as a young child in Venezuela. '[Our decision] also came out of the desire to open up a new art form to the Deaf community.'

→ The *Perfect Show for Rachel* ensemble perform (from left to right: Folarin Akinmade, Nick Gilbert, Mark Aspinall, Flo O'Mahony, Ethan Pascal, Sara Dawood, Rachel O'Mahony, Fleur Rooth). © Danny Khan

→ Deaf West Theatre and the LA Phil perform *Fidelio* in Los Angeles. © Dustin Downing & Los Angeles Philharmonic

↓ DJ Kurs is Artistic Director of Deaf West Theatre



'This project offered a unique platform to innovate and extend our mission at Deaf West – bringing a new, accessible experience to Deaf audiences by melding sign language with the power of opera. It was a ground-breaking opportunity to showcase how Deaf and hearing artists can create a shared space for artistic expression.'

Theatre company ZooCo has been making work led by and made in collaboration with deaf, disabled and neurodivergent artists for years. Even so, its extraordinary *Perfect Show for Rachel* is like nothing else seen on a stage before, says director Flo O'Mahony.

The production sees Rachel, who is Flo's sister and a learning disabled care-home resident, sit on stage with a custom-built tech desk, through which she takes charge as the director of every unique performance in real time. A touch of a button can trigger music, lighting, theatrical scenes or choreography, brought to life instantly by a company of performers.

The aim of the production was to create Rachel's perfect hour on stage, asking people to step into Rachel's world for once, instead of her having to assimilate with ours. Although specific to Rachel's cultural interests and life story, the show invites the audience to consider what the perfect hour for their autistic nephew might be, or a mum who has dementia, and how different this might be from their lived reality.



“We wanted people to understand the quality of storytelling that can happen if you let someone new sit in the director’s seat at a major institution.



Deaf West Theatre’s work spans three decades, and has consistently been an artistic bridge between the Deaf and hearing worlds, demonstrating the expressive power of sign language and showcasing the cooperation between communities that sparks such incredible and unforgettable productions.

‘This collaboration enriched our artists with a deeper appreciation for each other’s modes of expression,’ says Kurs. ‘Our actors gained invaluable insights into the opera’s rhythm and timing, while hearing performers discovered the importance of visual storytelling. Together, we cultivated a mutual respect and realised the immense potential of creating art that is truly inclusive.’

When it premiered in LA, audiences were captivated by the experience. ‘The response was incredibly positive, with many people experiencing the fusion of opera and sign language for the first time,’ says Kurs. ‘This innovative approach expanded the audience’s understanding of opera’s possibilities, demonstrating that it can be a deeply moving experience for everyone.’

The first run of *Perfect Show for Rachel* here in 2022 also got a rave response, including a 5-star review from *The Guardian* and winning an OFFIE Award. ‘It was such a huge thing to have sold-out audiences,’ says O’Mahony. Responses from the audience included phrases such as ‘I’ve never seen something like this.’ ‘This is the best thing I’ve ever seen.’ ‘This is the most warm and welcome I’ve felt in an audience.’ And for O’Mahony, the show’s effect on people’s perspectives was equally important. ‘In their feedback, many people wrote that it made them think about how this could be applied in their lives.’

Fidelio shows that the collaboration between Deaf and hearing performers unveils limitless creative possibilities. ‘It allows us to explore new expressions, narratives, and ways to engage audiences,’ says Kurs. ‘By challenging traditional storytelling methods, we foster innovation and creativity, proving that diversity in expression enriches the arts and opens doors to uncharted artistic territories.’

And for O’Mahony, ‘it was important to know the show spoke to people on a personal level, but also on a creative quality level. I don’t want people to leave thinking: “Aww, wasn’t Rachel having a nice time?”. I want them to go away and grapple with bigger ideas. The risk of a show like this is that it could play into the ableism of how non-disabled people see learning-disabled people. The type of culture Rachel likes is sometimes very colourful, playful and silly. But underneath that playfulness, there is a very clear political statement being made. Rachel is here, front and centre, and she’s authentically in charge. It’s joyful, yes, but that joy is radical in its realisation.’

‘While we didn’t change Rachel’s cultural offer, people could also see the quality behind the work. And that’s to do with it being on stage at the Barbican. We wanted people to understand the quality of storytelling that can happen if you let someone new sit in the director’s seat at a major institution.’

✎ Rachel O’Mahony, Director of *Perfect Show for Rachel*, with her sister Flo O’Mahony, Artistic Director of ZooCo. © Holly Revell

My Barbican



Joana Vieira Flores (@barbican_photos) took part in our most recent Members-only Photo Walk, and captured this rainy shot of our Sculpture Court, which won the best image of the day. She says: 'I'm really drawn to patterns. I loved the repetitive motifs in the window shutters and the lights you can spot at the bottom of the picture. I also really like the different vertical, horizontal and circular lines you can spot in the picture.'

'On the day of the photo walk it was raining. I aimed to capture how you see the rain seep through each layer of concrete in between the rows of windows. Funnily enough, this photo would not have been possible without my husband getting soaked in rain: half way from our house to the Barbican I realised I had forgotten my camera and my husband cycled home and back under the pouring rain to get it for me!'

Members get exclusive access to a broad range of events, as well as discounts, priority booking, a dedicated lounge and much more. Find out more on our website.

Holding Deaf artists to the same critical standards as hearing people is equally important to Kurs. 'Doing so recognises their talent, professionalism, and dedication. It ensures they are valued equally and encourages all artists to pursue excellence and innovation. This approach reinforces the belief that art transcends linguistic and sensory boundaries, acknowledging that the experiences of Deaf audience members are as significant as those of hearing attendees.'

These two incredible productions show the expansive opportunities that open up when organisations welcome more perspectives. It's something ZooCo discovered during a show that required a Deaf actor for narrative purposes. 'Because Deaf culture was integral to the art, rather than being performative, our work got so much better,' says O'Mahony. 'When you work with a Deaf artist, suddenly all of the lazy things that hearing people do around staging a scene become artistically more boring. The result is a huge visual, storytelling language. And I don't just mean sign language – we started working with projection and captioning, and the captions became a character in the piece. The scenes were sparkier, more physical, and more visual – our work got better.'

'Why that often doesn't happen more widely is there's a lot of non-disabled culture in organisations. The willingness to change how people think theatre should be made isn't always met by action. What tends to happen is that organisations try to drop disabled people into a practice that's already established. We don't get to see thriving disabled artists in the same light; we see someone who's been dragged and dropped into a traditional, not disabled-informed process. No one can do their best work in that light.'

'The world is missing out hugely on the cultural leadership of Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people, who bring radically different ways of seeing a story. When people come to see *Perfect Show for Rachel*, they're experiencing a whole new idea of what "perfect" is, a new idea of what "good art" is, or even how you gauge whether it's good or not.'

Kurs says there needs to be more initiatives and platforms to support and promote Deaf artists. 'Addressing these barriers requires a collective effort to dismantle stereotypes, improve accessibility, and celebrate the unique contributions of Deaf individuals to the artistic world. This performance is one step towards that goal.'

Perfect Show for Rachel

24 May – 9 Jun The Pit **AD BSL CAP REL**

Fidelio

3 Jun 7.30pm, Hall **BSL CAP**

Pick your own prints

In 1982, photographer Peter Bloomfield was commissioned by the first Managing Director of the Barbican Centre to photograph the completion of the building. The archive of his images, which he gifted to us, demonstrates the ambition and scale of the construction of this Brutalism icon.

Now, you can choose one of Bloomfield's incredible photos to display on your home walls. Our new Custom Print service means you can browse a selection of images and order them in different sizes, with or without a frame, for delivery directly to your door.

Pick from beautiful views of the Theatre as it looked when it was first completed, the Sculpture Court, the view across the Lake, and many more.



To discover the collection scan the QR code or see barbican.org.uk/shop

Art & design

Want free entry?

Barbican Members go free to all exhibitions.

Aged 14–25?

Join Young Barbican for free and get tickets to the Art Gallery for just £5.

Visit our website for all the details.

The serious business of play

The first solo exhibition in the UK by Francis Alÿs in over a decade opens in our Art Gallery this summer. Assistant Curator Inês Geraldês Cardoso reveals the powerful message behind his major series, *Children's Games*.

✓ *Children's Game #12: Musical Chairs*. Oaxaca, Mexico, 2012. 5'05". In collaboration with Elena Pardo and Félix Blume.

→ *Children's Game #29: La roue*. Lubumbashi, DR Congo, 2021. 8'43". In collaboration with Rafael Ortega, Julien Devaux, and Félix Blume.



Francis Alÿs has a career spanning over three decades, working across painting, drawing, performance, photography, and film. His practice is characterised by the interplay between art and geopolitical power dynamics; iconic works include *Paradox of Praxis 1 (Something making something leads to nothing)*, 1997, which saw him push a giant block of ice through the streets of Mexico City until it melted, and *When Faith Moves Mountains*, 2002, where he shifted a mountain in Peru by a few centimetres alongside hundreds of volunteers. Working in collaboration with local communities worldwide, his engagement with cross-cultural contexts from Latin America to

North Africa and the Middle East operates beyond dominant, Western-centric narratives.

Our new exhibition – his first and largest institutional solo exhibition in this country in over a decade – will feature the UK premiere of his series *Children's Games*. Since the 1990s, Alÿs has filmed children at play for this critically-acclaimed work. He is interested in play as spontaneous moments where children gather, usually on the streets and without toys, playgrounds, or adult supervision. The props used in these games are simple and incidental, including a piece of rope, the stripes in a zebra crossing, oranges, bottlecaps, old tyres and even snails or grasshoppers. The films are short,



More highlights

Ibrahim Mahama: Purple Hibiscus

See our building's concrete walls enveloped in 2000sqm of woven cloth for Ghanaian artist Ibrahim Mahama's incredible public artwork.

Until 18 Aug Lakeside

Free

Made possible by Tia Collection with associate sponsor Culture Mile Bid. Additional generous support from The Ampersand Foundation and The African Arts Trust.

Ranjani Shettar: Cloud songs over the horizon

A spectacular display of large-scale sculptures by Shettar suspended across our Conservatory. Shettar's creations are each handcrafted by the artist and draw inspiration from the complexity of nature – using a range of materials including wood, stainless steel, muslin, lacquer and techniques that have been adapted from traditional Indian crafts.

Until July Conservatory

Free

Commissioned in partnership with the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (KNMA).

Unravel: The Power and Politics of Textiles in Art

Using textiles, fibre and thread, 50 international artists challenge power structures and reimagine the world in this major group exhibition.

Until 26 May Art Gallery



For our full programme scan the QR code or see barbican.org.uk

↗ Children's Game #7 Stick and Wheels. Bamiyan, Afghanistan, 2010. In collaboration with Natalia Almada. Photo © Francis Alÿs.

↗ Soufiane Ababri, *Bedwork, La réparation*, 2023. © Soufiane Ababri. Photo Rebecca Fanuele.

running between three and six minutes, and are displayed in a multi-screen installation format, which is an extraordinary immersive and cacophonous experience – akin to being in the eye of a hurricane or an augmented playground.

As a former architect, an interest in urban planning and how cities are developed is central to Alÿs's practice. Part of his interest in children's games comes from a desire to document games at risk of extinction as cities grow larger and there are more cars on the streets, resulting in the loss of public spaces where kids can gather, and communities are formed. Increasingly these games are also under threat due to the encroachment of the digital world and children's preference for screens, video and online games and social media.

Alÿs's work highlights how the specificity of local contexts shapes games, while also underscoring the universality of play, from a rural village in the Congo, to a high-rise in Hong Kong or a door-step in Morocco. We'll present this series alongside Alÿs's new body of animations focusing on hand games, as well as the outcomes of a major art and learning collaboration with three schools who are Barbican neighbours.

Francis Alÿs

27 Jun – 1 Sep Art Gallery

Generously supported by the John S Cohen Foundation, the Delegation of Flanders (Embassy of Belgium) and the Company of Arts Scholars Charitable Trust.

Subverting prejudice

From creating work lying in bed to choosing drawing as a medium, artist Soufiane Ababri's practice is all-encompassing.



For his first solo exhibition at a major UK institution, Moroccan artist Soufiane Ababri transforms The Curve into a new site-specific work. Encompassing drawing, performance, and installation, his work challenges the dominance of Western narratives in queer history.

How does *Their mouths were full of bumblebees but it was me who was pollinated* respond to the gallery?

The Curve's architectural plans reminded me of the Arabic letter Zayin (ز), which is the first letter of the word 'zamel', an insult for gay men. I remembered the sound of this letter was repeated in the high school corridor – 'zzzzz' – hence the reference to the buzz of the bumblebees in the title. I wanted to point out that humiliation can generate forms of resistance and self-construction.

Tell us about the work we can see

For a long time, the codes of masculinity and virility, and the way they affect male bodies had a lack of social – or artistic – scrutiny. Recently, softening representations of masculinity is something I've been trying to implement in my work. I create scenes that play with the ambiguity of what's happening,

it's a moment to question preconceptions we can have about the intimacy between two male bodies in the same space.

Talk us through your working process – how do you create your images?

For several years now I have devoted myself to drawing. I used to think that it was a medium that was marginalised in the art world because it does not have the prestige of painting or sculpture and the art market does not consider it to be of high value. Because I work on issues of marginalisation, racial minority and deconstruction of domination, I decided to put drawing at the centre of my practice. Then I added the protocol of working while lying in bed. This is firstly to refuse the authority which emerges from the place of the 'artist in his studio' but also to take up the position of Arabic people, enslaved people and women represented by Western white male painters of the past. I feel like I'm putting myself in their shoes and giving them a voice.

Soufiane Ababri

Until 30 Jun The Curve

Free

Supported by Fluxus Art Projects



Get money off tickets
Barbican Members enjoy 20% off cinema tickets*.

Aged 14–25?
Join Young Barbican for free and get cinema tickets from just £5.

Visit our website for all the details.

*There's always an asterisk. In this case, there are a few exceptions – check the website for details.

Delve into James Baldwin's impact on cinema

James Baldwin was one of the most influential writers and activists of the 20th century. While he's best known for social commentary, his film theory is equally incisive, as a new season will show.

Despite being published nearly 50 years ago, James Baldwin's incisive 1976 book *The Devil Finds Work* remains a valuable, if still underexplored, account of the exploration of Black cinematic representation and looking practices.

Throughout May we're exploring the ideas in this landmark text through a season of films which engage with the two central concerns in Baldwin's text: the ways in which the critique of the nation's cinema also forms as a critique of Black identity within the nation; and Baldwin's personal experiences of film culture and the social, cultural and political questions that accompany Black people's consuming of moving images within cinematic spaces.

The season is curated by UCL Associate Professor in Film, Culture and Society, Dr Clive Chijioke Nwonka. He says 'I found *The Devil Finds Work* through exploration of Black cinema as a student, but became enchanted by Baldwin's language, and it's stuck with me ever since. This text was a very different way of approaching film theory than I had been accustomed to through my education. Most people who study film within higher education are familiar with very dense, academic texts, but this was very accessible yet still highly intellectual.'

In the seminal work, Baldwin talks about watching particular films and the effect they had on him. It's approachable, yet deeply thought-through, and beautifully written. 'I found it applicable to me when thinking about myself as a Black Londoner in cultural spaces such as cinemas, watching *12 Years a Slave* or other films where the Black body is depicted in particular ways to particular audiences, which often isn't new,' says Nwonka. '*The Devil Makes Work* became a useful toolkit to me personally, which later seeped into my academic work when I began teaching Baldwin and Black film.'

While past explorations of Baldwin and cinema have focussed on the man himself through documentaries such as *I Am Not Your Negro*, Nwonka is taking a new approach –

focussing on Baldwin's thinking about cinema by exploring the ideas in *The Devil Finds Work* and how they relate to cinema today. Like the book itself, the season is accessible, yet deeply considered.

He's chosen films such as Barry Jenkins' 2018 adaptation of Baldwin's 1974 novel *If Beale Street Could Talk*, short films by contemporary directors which reflect the ideas in *The Devil Finds Work*, and *Hunger*. Although on the surface, Steve McQueen's examination of the 1981 hunger strike by IRA prisoner Bobby Sands isn't about Black identity, it fits this theme, says Nwonka, because Baldwin's book also looks at films that weren't about Black life to ask what is experienced by the audience when confronted with images of human suffering.

'I'm hoping this season will firmly establish Baldwin as a film theorist,' says Nwonka. 'Yes, he's a journalist, a political commentator, but he's also someone who cared about cinema, representation, textual imagery and what they mean. It's time we looked again at the ways in which his ideas and his theories map on to contemporary cinema.'

**The Devil Finds Work:
James Baldwin Through Film**
2–22 May Cinemas 1 & 2

This project is part of the 'James Baldwin and Britain' project (2024–2027), led by Douglas Field, Kennetta Hammond Perry and Rob Waters, with thanks for the generous support by the Arts and Humanities Research Council.



↖ 35 Shots of Rum

↑ *If Beale Street Could Talk*, showing as part of *The Devil Finds Work*.



Pioneering queer films at a time of global upheaval

Cinema Curator Alex Davidson tells us his passion project *Queer 80s*, which showcases films at a pivotal moment in history.

Coming Out, a powerful East German film from 1989, finishes with a gay character now finally comfortable with his sexuality, cycling away from the camera towards the horizon and an uncertain, hopeful future. He – and the filmmakers – didn't know the half of it. The evening *Coming Out* was first shown, the Berlin Wall fell and Europe changed forever.

We're showing *Coming Out* as the final film in *Queer 80s*, a passion project I've been working on for over a year, showcasing queer

representation and creativity throughout the 1980s. Whereas last year's *Queer 90s* film programme featured films that marked the major movements happening around the world, *Queer 80s* considers films that were made on the brink of massive political and social change.

You might be familiar with some of the films. We're showing Pedro Almodovar's wonderful *Law of Desire* (1987), which pulsates with the queer liberation that

came with the Movida movement. Marlon Riggs' *Tongues Untied* (1989), a landmark masterpiece, contributed to a wave of films celebrating black, gay sexuality at a time of intense racism and homophobia, intensified by the Aids crisis. *Ashik Kerib* (1988) by Armenian filmmaker Sergei Parajanov, previously jailed for his sexuality, is a defiant celebration of Azerbaijani culture, on the eve of the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

I also wanted to shine a light on some lesser-seen films. I've been trawling through archives and dusty film festival programmes with questionable 80s-tastic branding, on the hunt for some rarer titles. Ingmar Bergman fans should check out *The Farewell* (1982), a beautiful, poignant Swedish-language drama by Finnish director Tuija-Maija Niskanen, about a gay woman struggling to cope in the repressive home of her haute bourgeois father.

We're showing Helena Nogueira's extremely rarely screened South African lesbian romance *Quest for Love* (1988), a fiercely political drama released two years before the end of Apartheid. And for those of you who love the sound of an outrageous, offensive gay erotic comedy from Japan, then Genji Nakamura's how-the-hell-did-this-get-made pink movie *Beautiful Mystery* (1983) may be the film for you.

Bring a date or a mate to our screening celebrating 80s shorts and featurettes from New Zealand, including the delightfully off-beat romantic comedy *Beyond Gravity* (1988). I'm especially excited about our opening night film – a screening of West German curio *Freak Orlando* (1981), an unforgettably bizarre take on Virginia Woolf's gender-changing hero that has to be seen to be believed. The screening will be followed by a Q&A with its director – queer cinema legend Ulrike Ottinger – the perfect way to launch the season.

Queer 80s

5–26 Jun Cinema 1

Also don't miss

SAFAR Film Festival

The UK's largest festival of Arab cinema returns with films from the Middle East and North Africa.

28–30 Jun Cinemas

We Dare to Dream

Barbican Cinema marks Refugee Week with a screening of the uplifting documentary from Waad al-Kateab (*For Sama*) accompanied by a ScreenTalk with the director.

19 Jun 6.30pm, Cinema 1

Silent Film & Live Music: Bed and Sofa

This wry sex comedy offers fascinating insights into male-female relations in the supposedly post-bourgeois communal society of Soviet Russia.

9 Jun 3pm, Cinema 1

John Deakin: Pariah Genius + The Falconer

The premiere of a new artist film about the life of John Deakin, launched to mark the launch of a new book by Iain Sinclair.

30 May 6pm, Cinema 1



For our full programme scan the QR code or see barbican.org.uk

↳ *Era Vermelho*, showing as part of *Queer 80s*

No pain, no gain in the pursuit of love

Our New Releases Curator Sonia Zadurian looks ahead to a film you must see on our big screen in May.

→ Silent Soviet film *Bed and Sofa* (1927) is showing in June

British writer/director Rose Glass burst onto the film scene with her critically acclaimed debut feature, *Saint Maud*. This psychological horror starred Morfydd Clark (*The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power*) as a caregiver living in Scarborough, with what could arguably be described as a somewhat distorted sense of reality. Glass's second directorial outing, *Love Lies Bleeding*, relocates to sunny, rural New Mexico, but shares some common DNA with her first.

It's 1989 in a small US town. Lou (Kristen Stewart) manages a gym by day and keeps to herself by night, with few connections outside of her beloved sister Beth (Jena Malone) and sleazy brother-in-law JJ (Dave Franco). That is until bodybuilder Jackie (Katy O'Brian) hitchhikes into town and the two strike up a relationship. As their fondness for one another grows, so too does Jackie's abuse of anabolic steroids. When a serious crime is committed, things become complicated, and the old adage soon begins to ring true: you always hurt the ones you love.

From the outset, Glass sets about making one thing crystal clear; this is a gritty, resoundingly unglamorous film about pain. From loneliness, addiction and heartache to physical violence and domestic abuse, characters in this crime drama go through

it all in the pursuit of love and happiness; a tragic irony encapsulated by that simple gym mantra 'no pain, no gain'.

Composer Clint Mansell (*Black Swan*, *High-Rise*) creates a deeply absorbing, powerful and grimy score, dramatically contributing to a downright visceral viewing experience. You can practically smell the dirt and taste the sweat, as certain sounds are amplified and exaggerated to emphasise touch and the physical world.

It's a wild ride of a film; a crime thriller that packs a serious punch. As our lovers fight to stay together and live happily ever after, it's Glass's characteristic flirtation with body horror that keeps things unpredictable. With Jackie's increasing dependence on steroids warping her vision, we're privy to a frightening and grotesque version of reality. Glass's distinct directorial style is carried through by a stellar cast; Ed Harris is chilling as Lou Sr, Lou's criminal father, and Malone is unrecognisable as Lou's homely sister Beth. However, it's Stewart and O'Brian's film, with the latter in particular totally transformed and a captivating figure throughout.

Love Lies Bleeding
From 3 May Cinema 1

Silents please!

Curious about early cinema? Curator Tamara Anderson explains why the Barbican's silent film screenings are a great place to start.



A fable about the perils of genetic engineering; a documentary exploration of the hidden history of witchcraft; a twisted, circus-set melodrama of *amour fou*; a vampire tale. I could be describing the line-up of new films released on any given Friday in 2024, but in fact, all the above were made nigh-on 100 years ago, and are recent highlights from the Barbican's *Silent Film & Live Music* series. They are: *Alraune* (1928), *Haxan* (1922), *The Unknown* (1927) and *Nosferatu* (1922).

As the dust settles on a century of cinema history, many films from the silent era are now generally agreed to be among the very best. Number nine on *Sight & Sound's* 2023 poll of the greatest films of all time, the experimental documentary *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) is a high-water mark of cinematic invention and leads a pack of eight further silent titles in the poll's top 100. Serious film lovers owe it to themselves to check them out.

There are also plenty of other films from the period – comedies, and cult films especially – that may fall short of 'great' but are superbly entertaining. Working quietly behind-the-scenes at the Barbican, it's been my job this last little while to make a selection for you, choosing from the dozens I watch, the ones I love – and hope you will too. I approach this task always as a film fan, not as a film historian.

By chance, the two films I've picked for you so far this year are Soviet productions. *Bed and Sofa* (1927) – playing in June – is a wry sex comedy; meanwhile, for November I've chosen *By the Law* (1926), a nearly unclassifiable psychological horror/melodrama/western about a couple of prospectors who must wait out a grim Canadian winter in a primitive cabin, while keeping guard over a murderer.

Of course, nearly every classic film these days is only a few clicks away from you on the computer. But the joy of watching silent films with us – aside from the careful curation and big screen presentation – is the live music that accompanies them. We are lucky to be able to draw on our connections to the nearby Guildhall School of Music & Drama, as well as a pool of some of the best international performers.

Whether the soundtrack comes courtesy of a musician and their Mellotron or a stage full of wind, brass and string instruments, silent film is so much more enjoyable watched with live music... and with a crowd. I can promise you some memorable afternoons.

Silent Film & Live Music: Bed and Sofa
9 Jun 3pm, Cinema 1

Classical music



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We're hanging a huge chandelier for piano duo

The Labèque sisters' interpretation of Philip Glass's opera trilogy will be an illuminating experience.

When legendary pianist sisters Katia and Marielle Labèque created instrumental suites for two pianos taken from Philip Glass's opera *Les Enfants Terribles*, its success was so striking that they approached the composer to complete the set. Naturally, he said yes, and in a UK premiere, we'll hear the beguiling results in June.

While the sisters' interpretation of Glass's minimalist works takes centre stage, suspended above them, a chandelier will transport you into the enchanting realms of the narratives, casting a soft glow that dances in harmony with the spellbinding music below.

However, hanging a 3m wide, 300kg light in our Hall isn't straightforward, as stage designer Nina Chalot and artistic director Cyril Teste tell us.

'When I listened to the work of Katia and Marielle, I instinctively knew it would be more appropriate to use an object on stage rather than a screen or picture,' Teste explains. 'Because one of the movements is *La Belle et La Bête* (Beauty and the Beast), I was inspired to choose a chandelier. We wanted to create a light object that didn't take focus away from the music, something minimalist. It's an honour to work with the Labèque sisters, so we wanted people to listen and not have their attention taken away by the set.'

However, he admits sticking to his vision was a struggle at times: 'It was so hard to be minimalist because the music tells such an incredible story and creates so much emotion that I had to stay away from the temptation to create a *son et lumière*.'

Chalot explains there were a number of technical challenges to creating the enormous chandelier, but says she is delighted with the result. 'It's a really rough material, but it creates a very intimate feeling. It's 3m diameter and can be as high as the venue ceiling allows, and is made up of 20 tubes linked by necklace chains.'

As Katia and Marielle perform, the lighting in the chandelier changes, adding a further dimension to this landmark collaboration between one of the most influential composers of the 20th century and two extraordinary pianists.

**Katia and Marielle Labèque:
Cocteau Trilogy**

17 Jun 7.30pm, Hall



← Katia and Marielle Labèque. © Umberto Nicoletti

↑ Katia and Marielle Labèque. © Pauline Delassus & Philharmonie de Paris

The altar for strings

Famous Mexican composer Gabriela Ortiz wrote the latest in her series of *Altar* works for brilliant young Spanish violinist María Dueñas. And while this series may be called *Altars*, they are nothing to do with religious architecture – she sees them more as symbolic, spiritual, or magic structures.

The UK premiere of the seventh of these works, *Altar de Cuerda* (String Altar), will be performed by our international associate orchestra, the LA Philharmonic as part of their residency. And, as the astute listener will hear, a theme of architecture runs through all three movements.

The work embraces the traditional fast-slow-fast structure, but that's where convention ends. Opening with *Morisco Chilango* (Moorish *chilango* – a slang word for a Mexico City resident), Ortiz considers ideas of the intricate dynamics of cultural appropriation and re-appropriation, a theme that resonates throughout her work. Yet it also introduces subtle melodic motifs reminiscent of Mediterranean flavours, in homage to Dueñas's Andalusian roots. As a proud *chilanga* herself, Ortiz infuses her compositions with personal and cultural significance.

Canto Abierto transports listeners to the open chapels of 16th-century Mexican churches, where Indigenous communities were initially hesitant to enter enclosed spaces. Here, Ortiz constructs harmonies akin to architectural structures, with chords that ebb and flow like the undulating waves of the sea. The solo violin gracefully dances atop these harmonic swells, while tuned crystal glasses, played by wind players, add layers of ethereal resonance.

In *Maya Déco*, Ortiz showcases her virtuosity with a fast-paced, rhythmically



charged movement that sparks a dynamic dialogue between the solo violin and the orchestra. As the piece reaches its climax, a meticulously crafted cadenza showcases the soloist's prowess, drawing parallels to the intricate details of architectural design.

It feels particularly fitting that these nods to architecture and space should be performed in such a landmark building as ours. It will be framed by John Williams's rousing *Olympic Fanfare* and Dvořák's *New World Symphony*, which will be especially rousing under the baton of conductor Gustavo Dudamel.

Los Angeles Philharmonic: Dvořák 9

2 Jun 7.30pm, Hall

Highlights

LA Phil residency

Superstar conductor Gustavo Dudamel and the Los Angeles Philharmonic return to the Barbican for two concerts, including Dvořák's Ninth Symphony alongside the UK premiere of Gabriela Ortiz's Violin Concerto *Altar de cuerda* performed by violinist María Dueñas, and a performance of Beethoven's *Fidelio*, with Deaf West Theatre and the White Hands Choir of El Sistema Venezuela.

2 & 3 Jun Hall **BSL**

BBC SO Total Immersion Day: Italian Radicals

After World War Two, Italian composers confronted hard choices and discovered boundless opportunities. A new generation found its own voice, and as the era of *La dolce vita* gave way to the radical 1960s and 1970s. For this Total Immersion Day, the BBC Symphony Orchestra dives into the worlds of Bruno Maderna, Luciano Berio, Luigi Nono and Luigi Dallapiccola, through concerts, talks and more.

5 May Multiple venues

Kavakos Plays Bach

Across two concerts, star violinist Leonidas Kavakos will delve into JS Bach's Six Solo Violin Sonatas and Partitas, each of which is a masterpiece. Kavakos is celebrated for his recordings of these works and is renowned as an interpreter of Bach's music.

2 & 3 May 7.30pm, Hall

Academy of Ancient Music – Handel's Orlando

Singer Iestyn Davies stars alongside Handel expert Laurence Cummings and Academy of Ancient Music in a concert performance of Handel's epic fantasy opera.

30 Jun 4pm, Hall

Guildhall School Gold Medal

See some of the stars of the future compete for the renowned music school's most prestigious prize. Previous winners include Jacqueline du Pré, Tasmin Little, and Sir Bryn Terfel.

1 May 7pm, Hall

Gabriela Ortiz.
© Mara Arteaga

LSO Resident Orchestra



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Buried treasure

Find out what happened when Erland Cooper took the only copy of his latest album and planted it under a rock in Scotland.

In May 2021, Scottish composer Erland Cooper took the only existing copy of the master tape of his first classical album, planted it in the ground in Orkney, and deleted all digital files. Now, he will play back the retrieved tape, exactly as it sounds from the earth.

Carve The Runes Then Be Content With Silence is an homage to permanence, memory, and the deeply rooted connections between land, art, and community. It not only celebrates the centenary of revered Scottish poet George Mackay Brown (a childhood neighbour of Cooper's) but also explores ideas of patience, deep time and the role of nature in composition.

By planting (which he prefers to 'burying', because of the connotations of both words) the only recording of the work, Cooper invites the earth in as a co-composer – the pops, clicks and scratches, even empty spaces where the recording has been erased due to it being buried will be transcribed for performance, making mother nature a significant element in the final work.

'The composition is not what was written on the paper and given to the musicians. That's just part one,' he says. 'Part two is what comes out from the ground.'

'I remember the cellist on the performance came up to me at the end of the session and said, "Are you really going to delete every digital file and put this on a tape and then bury it?" When I said yes, she said, "but it sounded so beautiful. It was so memorable to me. I don't think I'll ever forget it." And I thought, "well, that's what this is about too – there are multiple layers to it. It's about process as much as the final performance.'"

When he buried the tin containing the works, he left a treasure hunt of clues for fans – and 18 months later, it was found by a couple, from Kirkwall. One has to wonder: was Cooper ever worried whoever found it wouldn't return the recording? 'No,' he smiles, 'because if it didn't get returned, that would be part of what I'd planned. Even if we never saw it for 20 years, that's the journey the piece went on.'

And he says the experience has taught him about patience, and seeded many other creative projects and ideas among people who've encountered the project. That's why he chooses to say 'planted' over 'buried'.

What emerges from the earth we'll find out at this special concert. And if the earth has wiped the whole recording – then, as Mackay's poem after which it's named says, we will be 'content with silence'.

Erland Cooper: Carve the Runes Then Be Content With Silence

8 Jun 7.30pm, Hall

For your diary

Sona Jobarteh

From one of five principal kora-playing families in West Africa, Sona Jobarteh seamlessly blends traditional music with blues and Afropop. Her recent album *Badinyaa Kumoo* (Words of Unity) explores the familial bond, extending the invitation to the audience through her performance, reflecting the wider unity of humanity.

11 May 7.30pm, Hall

Beth Gibbons

Emerging from a decade of reflection and change, Beth Gibbons (of Portishead) will perform her most personal album yet, *Lives Outgrown*. With lyrics inspired by mid-life, motherhood, anxiety and the menopause, this album is full of textural wonder.

9 Jun 7.30pm, Hall

Aoife O'Donovan with Guildhall Session Orchestra

Inspired by the letters and speeches of suffragist Carrie Chapman Catt, GRAMMY award-winning Aoife O'Donovan returns to our Hall for a concert 100 years in the making. *All My Friends* questions how much has really changed for American women a century after gaining the right to vote.

18 Jun 7.30pm, Hall

SHABAKA

Pioneering voice of British jazz, Shabaka Hutchings' performance in our Hall will showcase his vast pallet of cultural influences. His past work incorporates classical concertos with world-leading orchestras; leading hugely influential bands and acclaimed solo album, *Afrikan Culture*, which is focused around the eastern Asian instrument, the *Shakuhachi*.

9 May 7.30pm, Hall



For our full programme scan the QR code or see barbican.org.uk

Erland Cooper

3 Arthur Russell tracks you need to hear

Discover the amazing disco-influenced work of the Iowa cellist who remained in obscurity during his career until a reissue after his death saw him become a cult figure.

Now regarded as one of the 20th century's musical visionaries, cellist Arthur Russell was relatively unknown during his career, which was tragically cut short in 1992 when he died from an Aids-related illness aged just 40. His genre-defying compositions span disco, country, experimental composition and more. While he only released three albums under his own name during his lifetime, he collaborated with many more people, so there's a treasure trove of work out there.

Ahead of a concert by Speakers Corner Quartet with special guests including Hot Chip's Alexis Taylor, Christine and the Queens, Loraine James, Cate Le Bon, Sarah Tandy (piano), Sheila Maurice-Grey (trumpet), Oren Marshall (tuba), Oscar Jerome (guitar), Lucinda Chua (cello + vocals), delve into Russell's eclectic back catalogue and revel in some of the most beguiling and beautiful music to come out of the USA.

Travels Over Feeling: The Music of Arthur Russell

25 May 7.30pm, Hall

Generously supported by Trevor Fenwick and Jane Hindley



1 #5 (Go Bang) Dinosaur L

The heady disco sounds of this killer floor-filler encapsulate the sheer exuberance and vibe of Russell's free-wheeling sound. Often found in the record bag of DJ Frankie Knuckles in the New York club scene of the 80s, it throbs with the feel of early house music, through which you can hear why Russell is frequently cited as an influence by the likes of LCD Soundsystem and Hot Chip (who covered it on Red Hot Org's *Master Mix: Red Hot + Arthur Russell* compilation). If this doesn't get you up and dancing, you have no soul.

2 "Instrumentals" Volume 1 – Part 3 Arthur Russell

The album of *Instrumentals* was inspired by the photography of Russell's Buddhist teacher, Yuko Nonomura. It charmingly captures the composer's magpie aesthetic and broad influences. Technically extremely challenging due to its asymmetrical time sequences and highly syncopated lines, it remains extremely listenable, with poppy harmonies, as the honky-tonk sounds of this track demonstrate.

3 I Never Get Lonesome Arthur Russell

On the surface, this is a charming country song but on closer inspection you find it's threaded through with Russell's wry humour. 'I never get lonesome/Especially in the night when you are gone,' he sings at one point.

Get high this summer

Four rooftops you can enjoy in the City as the weather improves.



↓ Sky Garden

While the Garden at 120 might be the largest public rooftop space, the Sky Garden is the capital's highest public garden, with 360-degree views of the City and beyond. This indoor garden features stunning views, and an outdoor balcony. Free to enter, you just have to reserve your ticket by scanning the QR code.



↑ Horizon 22

Opened in summer 2023, this extraordinary indoor space is Europe's highest free viewing platform. Located on level 58, it offers 300-degree views of the city, showcasing its most iconic landmarks.



↑ The Lookout

Also opened summer 2023, the Lookout is 8 Bishopsgate's 50th-floor viewing gallery. Drink in the uninterrupted views of the City's iconic landmarks, impressive skyscrapers, and historic architecture for free.



→ The Garden at 120

Visit the City of London's largest outdoor public rooftop space for free. At 15 storeys up, The Garden at 120 offers exceptional 360-degree views of the City and greater London. Home to 85 Italian wisteria trees, over 30 fruit trees, a 200ft flowing water feature, and relaxed seating, there's also a kiosk selling teas, coffees and snacks on the level below. No need to book.

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Why I love Cole Porter's songs

Kiss Me, Kate Music Supervisor Stephen Ridley shares his unique perspective on the extraordinary talent of composer and lyricist Cole Porter.

Unlike many of his Broadway composer contemporaries, Cole Porter wrote both music and lyrics to create some of the most loved and enduring songs in Musical Theatre. It's the combination of his individual melodic writing and witty, sophisticated lyrics that place him, for me, as one of the greatest of all time. Instead of writing songs to fit the drama, Porter's melodies and lyrics are the drama and drive the story forward.

Amazingly his songs also stand alone in their own right, which is a real testament to his skills. His songs stand the test of time – their wit and elegance are a delight and they remain funny and edgy even to a modern audience.

As a musician, playing and conducting Porter's work is such a joy. The melodies swing themselves; sometimes you need the orchestration to really make songs swing, but if you sing the melody of 'Too Darn Hot' or 'Always True To You In My Fashion', the writing does it for you.

Porter was always looking for ways to adapt musical structures. For example, in 'So In Love', he uses the traditional A-A-B-A

structure, but makes it his own by raising the pitch of the highest note in each section, increasing the intensity and dramatic tension of the song.

Musically, there is so much variety in *Kiss Me, Kate* and it is clear to see why it is Porter's most successful show. It has huge breadth of musical styles; the dazzling opening ensemble number, 'Another Openin', Another Show'; the Renaissance style writing of the play-within-the-play; one of his most beautiful ballads, 'So In Love'; 'Too Darn Hot', one of his strongest dance numbers; the comedy of 'Brush Up Your Shakespeare' and the character songs like 'I Hate Men' and 'Where is the life that late I led?'. That variety keeps the audience on their toes and engaged with the show.

I was lucky enough to be the Music Supervisor on *Anything Goes* at the Barbican two years ago and it's a real privilege and joy to be returning with another Cole Porter masterpiece.

Kiss Me, Kate

4 Jun – 14 Sep Theatre **AD BSL CAP**

Don't miss

Kiss Me, Kate

One of Cole Porter's most famous works sees his razor-sharp witted lyrics meet Broadway musical comedy meeting Shakespeare. Starring the multi-award-winning Adrian Dunbar (*Ridley, Line of Duty*) and Tony Award winner Stephanie J Block (*Into The Woods, 9 to 5*), it features a company of over 50 including a full-scale orchestra for the musical treat of the summer.

4 Jun – 14 Sep Theatre **AD BSL CAP**

Ballet Black: Heroes

Now in their 22nd year, Cassa Pancho's Ballet Black return to our stage with a double bill featuring new and innovative work. See page 36 for more details.

15–19 May Theatre

Perfect Show for Rachel

Discover how a learning disabled artist has the power to lead the creation of her 'perfect show'. Theatre-loving, enigmatic 33-year-old Rachel sits on-stage on a throne with a custom-built tech desk to take charge as the director of every unique performance in real-time.

24 May – 9 Jun The Pit **AD BSL CAP REL**



For our full programme scan the QR code or see barbican.org.uk



'My family are my heroes'



Ballet Black dancer Ebony Thomas reflects on the company's latest show, called *Heroes*.

Who's your hero? For its latest production, Cassa Pancho's Ballet Black delves into this theme through two innovative works. The show opens with the premiere of *If At First*, by Franco-British artist and Choreographer in Residence at Scottish Ballet, Sophie Laplane. 'It addresses the theme of the everyday hero, whether that be your friend, a parent or someone in the public eye that you aspire to be or you admire,' says Senior Artist Ebony Thomas. 'It's quite a contrast from the next piece, which is very intense.'

So who are Thomas's heroes? 'It's my family,' he says. 'Without them, I wouldn't be

where I am today. This is my seventh season with Ballet Black and the longer I've been here the more I've understood the privilege and the responsibility of my role.'

The programme also includes award-winning choreographer, Mthuzuzeli November's exciting and energetic work about the meaning of life, *The Waiting Game*, which – unusually for a ballet performance – features dancers using their voices.

'We usually just use our body to express a story,' says Thomas. 'But as Ballet Black we've got used to it now, especially with Tutu's pieces. *The Waiting Game* is about the day-to-day and how that can sometimes feel overwhelming. Sometimes you wake up, you have your coffee, get on the tube, go to work, come back, have your dinner, go to sleep, and that can become a lot for people. But how do we overcome the barriers we put

in place to find peace, and start again the following day?'

Thomas says Ballet Black is 'more than just a ballet company, or a job. Ballet Black represents change, inclusion, and hope, especially for the younger generation who may not have seen ballet as a career option. Ballet Black not only grows its own audience, but it grows ballet's audience as a whole. When you come to one of our performances and look around at the audience, the demographic is so vast. That brings new eyes, new brains, and new ideas to the ballet world. That benefits everyone. There's only so many times you can watch *Sleeping Beauty*, as beautiful as it is. There are so many Black stories that need to and should be told in the public domain, through the expression of dance. For me, it's a privilege to tell those stories.'

Ballet Black: *Heroes* 15–19 May Theatre



↻ Pictured clockwise from top: Isabela Coracy, Ebony Thomas, Helga Paris-Morales, Acaaã de Castro, Megan Chiu, Love Kotiya, Mikayla Isaacs, Taraja Hudson and Bhungane Mehlomakulu. © Photography by ASH

↑ Ballet Black's Isabela Coracy. © Photography by ASH



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The Barbican may be Europe's largest arts centre, but it's also a wonderful spot to enjoy the outdoors and make the most of the summer.

This year, we're excited to open one of our most ambitious public art projects: a huge installation on the exterior of the building by Ghanaian artist Ibrahim Mahama, called *Purple Hibiscus*. Head to the Lakeside to take in this brightly coloured fabric work.

There are also stunning views across the estate and calming waters, plus our pop-up cabin serving soft service ice creams and sundaes, ice cream milkshakes and freakshakes, plus a range of drinks inspired by Mahama's work.

Summer Picnic Garden Until 31 Aug Lakeside



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To donate, scan the QR code or visit barbican.org.uk

↑ © Rachel Shnapp.

→ Multi-instrumentalist Shabaka Hutchings performs on 9 May. See page 31 for more details.

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