

Summer 2025

barbican



Summer 2025

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↻ *Temporary Pleasure*, Joyride, 2025. Concept image courtesy of the artist.

← Huma Bhabha, 2022. Photo by Daniel Dorsa. Courtesy David Zwirner.

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AD Audio described

For people with visual impairments. Live commentary is given through a headset that explains what is happening as it unfolds.

BSL BSL-interpreted

This event uses British Sign Language for D/deaf and hard of hearing customers. Events may be BSL-interpreted or BSL-led.

CAP Captioned

Captioning assists D/deaf and hard of hearing customers, and anyone else who finds subtitles useful.

REL Relaxed

Ideal for anyone who would benefit from a more informal setting. You can come and go during the event, make noise and have a less formal experience.

TI Touch tours

A chance to experience the set in advance to help you understand the performance better. For anyone who would benefit due to their disability.

Welcome

Discover how sound moves us – across time, space, and emotion – in a season of immersive experiences and collective resonance at the Barbican.

This summer, we invite you to pause, to attune your body, your memory, your senses – and enter into a new relationship with sound. Our summer 2025 season explores the profound ways sound moves through us, connects us, and helps us make sense of the world. It's a season that stretches across disciplines and across our spaces, resonating in unexpected places – from car parks to concert halls, from whispered echoes to body-shaking bass.

Sound is more than what we hear. It's vibration, presence, protest, community. It can transport us to the past, activate our senses in the present, and push us toward new futures. It shapes identity, sparks joy, and can be an instrument for resistance and social change.

At the heart of the season is *Feel the Sound* – a new multi-sensory exhibition that invites us to explore how we experience sound beyond hearing alone, and is co-produced with Tokyo's MoN Takanawa: The Museum of Narratives, one of Japan's newest cultural complexes set to open in Spring 2026. This immersive experience perfectly reflects the way we at the Barbican are always asking how art can connect us more deeply – to each other, to place, and to ourselves. Entitled *Frequencies*, our seasonal theme responds to this question through an invitation to feel sound in all its complexity: the personal and the political, the physical and the emotional, the remembered and the imagined.

As part of that, our programme Rebel Radio delves into pirate radio with talks, screenings and live broadcast from our foyers in partnership with Brixton-based Rezzent Radio.

Frequencies forms part of a much wider celebration of creativity across the summer – a vibrant collection of events spanning Theatre, Music, Cinema, and Visual Arts. Highlights include *Encounters: Giacometti x Huma Bhabha*, the first of three groundbreaking exhibitions positioning historic sculptures by Alberto Giacometti with new works by contemporary artists, in an intimate new space. In this moment of extreme global conflict, Giacometti's post-war sculptures, their exploration of the effects of trauma on the body, and Bhabha's response, take on new and significant meaning.

Fiddler on the Roof and *Good Night, Oscar* come alive in our Theatre, plus there are classical concerts with Khatia Buniatishvili & Friends, CBSO Orchestral Qawwali with Abi Sampa, Herbie Hancock's 85th birthday celebration, a special Pride programme in June, and our beloved Outdoor Cinema series returns to the Sculpture Court.

This summer, we hope to open up new ways of sensing, feeling and thinking – across disciplines and perspectives – and offer space for quiet reflection, collective energy, and possibility.

Whether you're here for a moment or for the day, we hope these sonic experiences stay with you, echoing long after you leave.

Devyani Saltzman

Director of Arts & Participation

→ *In Pursuit of Repetitive Beats*
Photographer: Adil Boukind,
Exhibition at the Phi Centre,
Montreal



The world is sound

Use your body as a listening device as we explore new ways of experiencing sound in an innovative immersive experience.

This summer, step into a world where sound is felt as much as it is heard, as a new exhibition explores the profound ways in which sound shapes our emotions, memories, and physical experiences. Through cutting-edge installations, interactive technology, and newly commissioned artworks, *Feel the Sound* challenges us to reconsider how we listen – not just with our ears, but with our entire bodies.

'If there's anywhere that should be putting on an exhibition about how we experience music and sound, it's the Barbican,' says Head of Creative Programming at Barbican Immersive, Luke Kemp. 'We wanted to push the limits of what a spatial sound experience can be and open up new ways for people to engage with something that feels so familiar, yet can be completely transformed.'

Unlike traditional music exhibitions, *Feel the Sound* isn't about genres, history, or famous artists. Instead, it focuses on the personal, physical, and even subconscious ways that sound affects us. 'Most people think about listening with their ears, but what happens when you start to listen with your whole body?' Kemp asks. 'We wanted to explore sound beyond just hearing – how we feel it, how it resonates through us, and how it shapes our experience of the world.'

One of the central ideas behind the exhibition is the concept of personal rhythm. Visitors will have the chance to explore their own 'Inner Symphony' through an interactive experience developed with neuroscience specialists from Kinda Studios in collaboration with Nexus Studios. 'Your body has its own unique rhythms, from your heartbeat to your breathing patterns,' Kemp explains. 'By scanning your hand at different points in the exhibition, you'll receive a personalised response that reflects your state at that moment. At the end, all these frequencies come together in a collective installation – a kind of Spotify Wrapped for your body's sonic experience.'

To fully immerse visitors in this new perspective on experiencing sound, *Feel the Sound* transforms the Barbican's spaces into a series of sound 'portals'. Each installation offers a different perspective on how sound moves through space, memory, and culture.

One of the most striking installations is by Japanese artist Miyu Hosoi, who has created *Observatory Station*, a sound sculpture located at the Silk Street entrance. 'When we think of an observatory, we imagine something visual,' says Kemp. 'But Hosoi's work challenges us to observe the world through sound instead. Twelve different speakers will transmit recordings from locations around the world, allowing visitors to "listen in" on global environments.'

Elsewhere in the exhibition, the physicality of sound is explored through *Resonant Frequencies*, an installation by Evan Ifekoya. Visitors will sit on a vibrating haptic well while watching sound waves create mesmerising patterns in water, making the invisible power of sound waves tangible.

'We create exhibitions that spill out into different spaces across the Barbican,' says Kemp. 'This time, we're using the car parks as an unexpected but perfect location. Car culture and music have an

incredible relationship, from teenagers blasting music in their first cars to underground raves. We wanted to embrace that connection and play with the idea of subverting expectations – taking a space people rarely think about and turning it into an immersive soundscape. So this installation will feature real cars with incredible sound systems.'

As the exhibition developed, a strong theme of memory and nostalgia emerged. Many of the creatives involved explore the idea of sound as a form of living history – something that connects us to the past, not in a static way, but as an experience that remains alive in the present.

The ability of sound to evoke memory is explored in *Forever Frequencies*, a series of monoliths created by Domestic Data Streamers, who use generative AI and music boxes to create future music memories that haven't yet happened. And *Your Inner Symphony*, a collaboration between Kinda Studios and Nexus Studios fuses neuroscience and design to capture visitors' emotional responses, revealing the invisible ways music shapes our internal rhythms. 'It's about taking something deeply personal – your own voice, your own memory – and turning it into something universal,' says Kemp.

And while people often associate the idea of sound with music, this isn't just for music fans. Kemp says: 'It's for anyone who's ever been moved by sound – which is pretty much everyone. The minute you step outside, you're surrounded by sound. The exhibition is designed to make people more aware of that and to experience sound in a new, more connected way.'

A significant part of this accessibility comes from the exhibition's structure. Some of the installations will be free to access, allowing visitors to encounter the work as they move through the Centre. 'We want people to be able to engage with the themes of the exhibition, even if they're just passing through on their way to another event,' says Kemp.

The exhibition has been designed with Deaf and hard-of-hearing visitors in mind, ensuring that the experiences of those who engage with sound in different ways are fully represented. Award-winning poet, artist and Deaf charities advocate Raymond Antrobus was part of the early development process. 'His insights were invaluable,' says Kemp. 'It made us think beyond the conventional ways of experiencing sound. This isn't just about hearing – it's about feeling, sensing, and engaging with sound on multiple levels.'

From the deep vibrations of bass frequencies to the delicate whispers of distant landscapes, *Feel the Sound* invites visitors to tune in to the world in a completely new way. 'We want people to leave the exhibition thinking differently about the role sound plays in their lives,' says Kemp. 'It's about slowing down, being present, and recognising that we exist in a vibrational world – not just a visual one.'

Temporary Pleasure, Joyride,
2025, concept image courtesy
of the artist



Feel the Sound

22 May–31 Aug Across the Centre

Produced by the Barbican, co-produced by Mon Takanawa: The Museum of Narratives, Tokyo, Japan. The exhibition is sponsored by Destination Partner: Culture Mile BID and Audio Partner: d&b audiotechnik with additional support from the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation and the Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation.

Destination Partner Audio Partner





Join us on a trip to a rave in 1989

A groundbreaking VR experience will transport you back in time to explore a cultural movement that redefined Britain.

Step into the euphoric heart of 1989's acid house scene with *In Pursuit of Repetitive Beats*, a groundbreaking VR experience by Darren Emerson and East City Films. The immersive documentary-adventure transports audiences to a defining moment in British culture – one of underground raves, pulsing music, and togetherness.

'It really is more an experience of a seminal time of youth culture,' says Emerson. 'It's that moment where you take a risk, not knowing where you'll end up, only to find

yourself somewhere extraordinary.' Set at the height of acid house's rise, *In Pursuit of Repetitive Beats* captures the euphoria and the social context of a movement that reshaped British nightlife and music.

Unlike traditional music documentaries, which rely on talking-head interviews and studio backdrops, this VR journey drops participants directly into the heart of the action. 'I love music documentaries, but I find them frustrating,' Emerson explains. 'I want to be there. I want to go on the journey.' So

he set out to enable people to experience the time and be immersed in what was happening. From the cramped backseat of a mate's car, scouring the streets for clues to a secret location, to the exhilaration of finally stepping inside a warehouse rave, every moment brings the past to life.

The response to *In Pursuit of Repetitive Beats* has been overwhelmingly emotional. For those who lived through the scene, the experience is nostalgic. Some have even been moved to reconnect with old friends from their rave days, struck by the intensity of reliving those formative moments. 'You know how life is – you're in each other's company every weekend for a few years, and then responsibilities pull you in different directions. People have told me they left the experience thinking, "I need to call that person."'

Younger audiences, meanwhile, approach the experience with curiosity, drawn by the music and the mythology surrounding this era. Many leave with a newfound appreciation of the movement's cultural impact. 'People don't always realise they're stepping into a cinematic, interactive documentary,' says Emerson.

And it is a story worth knowing. Acid house and the rave culture it spawned were seismic forces in British society. At a time of political and economic upheaval, with high unemployment and a shifting industrial landscape, raving was an act of defiance and liberation. With its DIY ethos, the scene took over abandoned warehouses, disused airfields, and hidden countryside spots, creating spaces where barriers of class and race dissolved under the pulse of repetitive beats.

The media, and particularly the tabloid press, responded with hysteria. Fearing mass gatherings of young people, police squads were formed to clamp down on raves, and draconian laws followed. 'Some of the police I spoke to for this project were in the acid house squads at the time,' Emerson recalls. 'Even now, they still think it was about LSD, when really, it was about a new sound and a

new way of coming together.'

Looking back now, it's clear that acid house didn't just change music – it changed culture. The dance music explosion that followed laid the foundations for Britain's clubbing scene and electronic music's global dominance. DJs who once performed at raves are now household – even establishment – names. Festivals that grew from the scene are major economic forces. 'Moral panics come and go,' Emerson reflects. 'But if something is culturally important, it endures. This experience is about celebrating that moment, its energy, and its impact.'

Now, thanks to new technology, that energy can be felt once again. The latest version of *In Pursuit of Repetitive Beats* allows up to 24 participants to take part in the experience, heightening the communal aspect that made raving so powerful in the first place. It is also designed to be as accessible as possible, with subtitles, wheelchair-friendly adaptations, and haptic vests that let audiences feel the bass vibrate through their bodies. 'There's a real sense of collectivity,' says Emerson. 'Some of the euphoric moments feel even bigger when shared.'

Prepare to be transported – this isn't just a history lesson; it's an invitation to feel the beat, chase the night, and relive the revolution.

In Pursuit of Repetitive Beats **22 May–3 Aug** The Pit

In Pursuit of Repetitive Beats was created by Darren Emerson and produced by East City Films

✎ *In Pursuit of Repetitive Beats*,
Photographer Adil Boukind,
Exhibition at the Phi Centre,
Montreal

Around the Centre

Celebrating pirate radio's enduring legacy

Explore the radical influence of radio's original rebels, and discover how their impact continues to make waves today.

Pirate radio wasn't just about music – it was a movement. A rebellious force that gave Black British music and underground sounds a platform when mainstream stations wouldn't. It shaped UK culture then, and its influence continues today.

This season, we present *Rebel Radio* – an exploration of radio as a space for community, creativity, and subversion. Through a live radio residency in the foyers, a talks and screenings programme, a new podcast series, club night and immersive listening

stations, *Rebel Radio* invites you to experience the radical spirit of pirate broadcasting and its lasting impact across culture.

Curated by Karena Johnson, Head of Creative Collaboration and Reena Kalsi, Lead Producer – Public Programme at the Barbican, *Rebel Radio* brings together a wide mix of experiences that celebrate radio's power to connect and inspire.

We're collaborating with Brixton-based Represent Radio to broadcast live from the Barbican foyers across the month. Represent

Radio prides itself on its forward-thinking underground music and has a DIY spirit.

We're also presenting a new podcast series on the history of pirate radio called *Gaps in the Dial*, by DJ and radio producer Tayo Popoola. He will also share his skills in workshops that explore how emerging creators can reinvent radio for the digital age. 'Podcasts are a modern equivalent of pirate stations,' says Johnson. 'They build communities, they challenge the status quo – it's all part of the same legacy.'

There are also opportunities to revel in nostalgia with *Sunday Selecta* sessions and a listening hub foyer installation, inspired by the participatory energy of pirate radio. 'We're really leaning into that request-show spirit where people in the audience get to say what they want to hear,' Johnson says. 'Sunday Selecta will see a live DJ on the Barbican freestage, with the chance for people to introduce the tracks they've chosen and talk about what they mean to them.'

Plus, a Rebel Radio party will see DJs from the pirate radio era playing back to back with younger DJs until the early hours. *Them Ones Presents* is a talks programme curated by Tobi Kyeremateng offering opportunities to hear from pioneers of pirate radio and contemporary thinkers on the legacy of the rebel community.

An accompanying film programme offers a deep dive through television archives, to uncover the stories behind pirate radio stations as it was told at the time.

Pirate radio transformed British music culture and its influence continues to shape the way we listen today. *Rebel Radio* is both a tribute to its past and a celebration of where sound is heading next.

Whether you were there in the early days or are discovering its impact for the first time, join us to listen, learn, and be part of the next wave of radio rebellion.

Rebel Radio

6 Jun–31 Aug various venues

Rebel Radio highlights

Represent Radio Live from the Barbican: The Origins

7 Jun 12–6pm, Level G Studio

Make Yourself Heard Podcast Masterclass

7–8 Jun 11am–6pm, CC Studio, Level 2

Rebel Archivists Panel Talk

11 Jun 7.30pm, Auditorium 1

Barbican x Rinse FM Party

13 Jun 11pm–2am, ClubStage, Level -1

Represent Radio Live from the Barbican: The Genres It Birthed

14 Jun 12–6pm, Level G Studio

Sunday Selecta

15 Jun 12–3pm (timed slots), FreeStage

Airwaves of Rebellion: Youth, Identity, and the Fight for Community Radio

16 Jun 6.30pm, Cinema 2

Elijah & Geeneus

18 Jun 7.30pm, Frobisher Auditorium 1, Level 4

Airwaves of Rebellion: Pirate Stations, Black Culture, and Community Power

19 Jun 6.30pm, Cinema 2

Represent Radio Live from the Barbican: The Communities It Inspired

20 Jun 12–6pm, Level G Studio

Sunday Selecta

22 Jun 12–3pm (timed slots), FreeStage

Where Are All the House Parties At (Dance Rebellion) Panel Talk

25 Jun 7.30pm, Auditorium 1

For full programme, see our website.

 *Pirate radio station pioneers Kiss FM studios, 13 November 1987* © Jeff Veitch

'Classical music has always been part of queer culture'

New music and iconic favourites are celebrated Classical Pride.

Classical Pride returns to the Barbican for its third edition, bringing together world-class musicians, contemporary composers, and an electrifying celebration of LGBTQ+ identity in classical music. What began as a single concert has rapidly expanded into a multi-venue festival, with this year's events spanning London and even reaching as far as Los Angeles.

'The first year was just one concert at the Barbican,' says conductor and event organiser Oliver Zeffman. 'Last year, we expanded to five events, and this year it's grown again – though we can't announce everything just yet! But the final night will once again be at the Barbican with the London Symphony Orchestra, which has become something of a staple.'

The centrepiece of *Classical Pride* at the Barbican will be an evening with the London Symphony Orchestra featuring a mix of contemporary and classical works. The programme includes *Bacchanale* from *Samson and Delilah* by Saint-Saëns, Jennifer Higdon's *Blue Cathedral*, and George Benjamin's *Dream of the Song*, which Zeffman describes as 'one of the most important works by one of the world's most significant composers – who also happens to be gay.'

Leading mezzo-soprano Jamie Barton will take centre stage, performing a new commission by American composer Jake

Heggie, as well as the famous *Mon cœur s'ouvre à ta voix* from *Samson and Delilah* and an encore of *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*.

'I love that we've got this balance of the familiar and the new,' says Zeffman. 'There's Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake Suite*, which everyone knows and loves, but also new commissions and modern classics. We want to celebrate queer musicians from the past and present, and that mix is really important.'

In addition to the main concert, *Classical Pride* will once again showcase emerging artists. This year's young artist showcase, held in partnership with the City Music Foundation, will take place as a pre-concert performance in the Barbican Hall. 'Last year, we did it at St Giles, but this time we want to make it even more accessible,' Zeffman explains. 'If you've got a ticket to the LSO concert, you can come along. In fact, even if you don't have a ticket, you'll probably still be able to attend – we just want as many people as possible to hear these fantastic young musicians.'

There will also be a collaboration with Platoon, the Apple-owned record label, which will record and promote the young artists involved. 'We're still working out exactly what that will look like, but the idea is to give these musicians a real platform,' Zeffman says.

Beyond the Barbican, *Classical Pride* will bring a diverse array of performances to other London venues. One of the most striking events will be a double bill at Wilton's Music Hall, featuring *Eight Songs for a Mad King* by Peter Maxwell Davies – a visceral, avant-garde exploration of madness – paired with Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Caroline Shaw's *Partita for 8 Voices*, a groundbreaking piece that redefines choral music.

'Both of these works push the boundaries of what vocal music can be,' Zeffman notes. '*Eight Songs* is incredibly intense, and *Partita* uses all kinds of extended vocal techniques. The whole thing will be staged, and we're currently finalising a director who will bring a real vision to it.'

At its heart, *Classical Pride* is about more than just great performances – it's a statement of inclusivity and recognition for the LGBTQ+ community in classical music.

'People often think of queer music as Kylie, Madonna, Elton John – but it's also Tchaikovsky, Handel, and Chopin,' Zeffman says. 'Part of what we're doing is celebrating that history and showing that classical music has always been part of queer culture.'

As the event grows, its mission remains as vital as ever, particularly against a shifting global backdrop. 'With the political climate darkening for LGBTQ+ people in many parts of the world – including places that have historically led the way on gay rights – it's more important than ever to celebrate queer culture,' Zeffman reflects. 'Classical Pride isn't political in itself, but just because others are trying to erase our history doesn't mean we should stop celebrating it.'

Classical Pride
4 Jul Hall

↓ The LSO will perform at a centrepiece concert for Classical Pride
© Matthew Johnson





Travel back to a time of rapid change in queer cinema

Cinema Curator Alex Davidson looks ahead to a season of groundbreaking films from the 1970s.

Nobody does it like Barbara Hammer. A couple of decades ago I took a punt on attending a ramshackle event in a small London venue that included a couple of her films which, then, I had never heard of. I was immediately confronted by her provocatively-titled *Dyketactics* (1974), a four-minute wonder featuring women dancing naked in a rural landscape and lesbians having sex in

a scene of extraordinary intimacy for its time. It's also one of the most 70s films I've ever seen, a hippie-ish tribute to same-sex desire. Even today, its boldness is inspiring.

Hammer took a fearless approach to depicting lesbian sexuality on screen, and we'll be screening a selection of her queer shorts, including *Dyketactics*, for the opening night of a film season I've curated called

Queer 70s. We'll be travelling back to the 1970s, when LGBTQ+ lives were shown on screen with an unapologetic gusto unthinkable a decade before. Following the Stonewall Riots in New York in 1969, a queer battle cry against homophobic oppression, the world saw greater LGBTQ+ visibility and in many countries Gay Liberation movements began to emerge. Of course, the thawing in attitudes was not universal, and some of the films in *Queer 70s* reflect the realities of being out and open in a changing world.

As I write this, I'm still neck-deep in movie rights negotiations. Some films can literally take months to clear, and that's before I can confirm if there are prints or digital copies I can access. But I can promise you that there will be some real curios, including an ultra-rare screening of *The Set* (1970), a campy Australian melodrama about the corruption of a confused young man making his way through Sydney high society. It has to be seen to be believed.

I've tried to showcase films from around the world, as so many familiar titles from the era are from the US or the UK, and I'm including as many rare and underseen movies in the mix as I can. But I had to include a Derek Jarman film in the season – his legacy is too important to ignore, so do come and witness his mighty I-can't-believe-they-managed-to-get-that-made, nudity-packed, Latin language marvel *Sebastiane*, a queer reimagining of the last days of Christian martyr Saint Sebastian. It's going to look gorgeous in Cinema 1. I can't wait.

Queer 70s

11 Jun-16 Jul Cinemas 1, 2 & 3



↗ *Dyketactics* (1974). Courtesy of the Estate of Barbara Hammer, New York and Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI), New York.

→ *Sebastiane* (1976), dir Derek Jarman



The joy of outdoor cinema

There's no better way to enjoy world-class films in summer than under the stars on our Sculpture Court.

There's nothing quite like our annual Outdoor Cinema season. Each summer, we transform the Sculpture Court into a stunning open-air cinema, where audiences take their seats beneath the city skyline and a canopy of stars, surrounded by the striking Brutalist architecture of the Barbican.

Every guest receives a comfy headset that delivers crystal-clear audio while glowing with soft, coloured light – turning all 650 attendees into part of the cinematic spectacle.

Alongside the on-screen magic, our hand-picked food stalls serve up delicious meals and snacks, while a pop-up bar nestled in the greenery of our Conservatory provides the perfect spot to toast the evening.

This unique setup is only here for a limited time, with one carefully selected screening each night. The programme reflects the breadth of what we champion in our cinemas year-round – bold storytelling, visionary filmmaking, and unforgettable experiences.

Join us under the stars for a summer of extraordinary cinema.

Associate Partner



Destination Partner



← ↓ Amina Humphries, 2024



Taste the Beer-bican

We're raising a glass to creativity with the launch of our very own beer, brewed in collaboration with Welsh craft brewery Verdant. This bespoke lager was developed to coincide with the *Feel the Sound* exhibition (see page 6) and will be available across our bars this summer.

'We just thought the bars were missing something truly Barbican,' says Anna Kowalik from the our Commercial Development team. 'It's a bit of fun — something creative that adds a unique touch to people's experience.'



The crisp, refreshing 4% lager is designed with summer in mind, and the packaging is just as exciting as what's inside. Four specially designed cans — each featuring artwork created in-house — double as collector's items. A QR code on each label will link drinkers directly to exhibition content, adding an interactive element to the experience.

If the beer proves popular, the team hopes to continue the concept with new designs linked to future projects — turning Barbican Beer into a rotating canvas of creativity.

With profits supporting the Barbican through its commercial activities, every sip gives a little something back to the arts. Catch it while it's cold — and collectible.

Want free entry?
Barbican Members go free to all exhibitions.

Aged 14–25?
Join Young Barbican for free and get tickets to our exhibitions for just £6.

Visit our website for all the details.

Artistic Encounters

Encounters: Giacometti x Huma Bhabha explores the connections within works by contemporary artist Huma Bhabha and 20th century sculptor Alberto Giacometti.

One of the most significant European sculptors of the 20th century, Alberto Giacometti is known for his distinctive, elongated sculptures which experiment with the human form. Responding to the pain and devastation caused by the Second World War, his works proposed a new perspective on humanity and the collective psyche.

Encounters, a series of three groundbreaking exhibitions taking place over the course of a year, pairs his work with contemporary artists, creating a dialogue across time. The inaugural exhibition brings together the work of Alberto Giacometti and Huma Bhabha, an artist known for her raw, powerful sculptures that explore themes of war, displacement, and the human condition. Born in Karachi, Pakistan, and based in Poughkeepsie, New York, Bhabha's sculptural language fuses ancient and futuristic aesthetics. Working with materials like clay,

cork, Styrofoam, and found objects, her figures evoke both ruin and resilience, much like Giacometti's forms shaped by the trauma of war. In this exhibition, Bhabha presents a selection of works from 2003 to the present, displayed alongside Giacometti's sculptures to highlight the resonances between their practices – both in materiality and in their shared engagement with the fractured, vulnerable human form.

We talked to Bhabha about Giacometti's impact on her work, her artistic process, and what it means to present her sculptures in conversation with his.

Could you tell us about your first encounter with Alberto Giacometti's work? What impact did it have on you?

The first time I encountered Giacometti's work in person was during a trip to the Peggy Guggenheim Museum in Venice where I



← Huma Bhabha, *Feel the Hammer*, 2024. Photo by Kerry McFate. Courtesy of the artist and David Zwirner Gallery



saw *Walking Woman*, 1936 for the first time. I also saw a retrospective at the Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal (MBAM) in 1998 and it really affected me. I was making sculpture, but hadn't started to work with clay yet.

Do you feel Giacometti's work has influenced your own practice? Can you tell us how?

There has definitely been an influence. I see a lot of connections in the physical process of creating my work. I use my hands and have a direct connection to the materials – it's a very old fashioned way of working. There is also

a sensibility and approach that I've learned from him, an obsession with certain details and parts of the body.

What is it about Giacometti's practice that you're particularly responding to with this exhibition?

[Barbican Head of Visual Arts] Shanay Jhaveri invited me to present my work alongside the work of Giacometti, the first in a series of "Encounters" at the museum. His vision has led us to select works that show the potential connections with Giacometti's sculptures. There are a lot of connections

to the subject matter in our work and also the materiality, which is very important to me. I am also responding to the effects of militarism and forever wars, as Giacometti was confronting the human suffering and the trauma of the two world wars.

Encounters: Giacometti x Huma Bhabha 8 May–10 Aug Level 2

Co-organised by the Barbican and the Fondation Giacometti in partnership with the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi *The Encounters: Giacometti* series is generously supported by Blanca and Sunil Hirani, Cockayne Grants for the Arts, a Donor Advised Fund held at The Prism Charitable Trust, and Art Mentor Foundation Lucerne, with additional support from the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation.

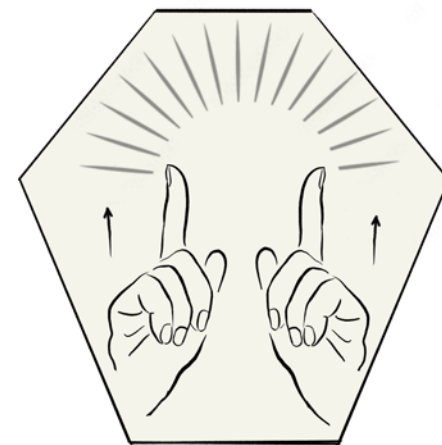
FONDATION-
GIACOMETTI

KN Kiran
Nadar
Museum
of Art

COCKAYNE

ART FOUNDATION
MENTOR LUCERNE

I have left Earth in search of an audible God.



Art for everyone, everywhere

Explore our Centre this summer and discover a treasure trove of artworks free to experience.

Part of *Feel the Sound, Observatory Station* by Miyu Hosoi transforms the Silk Street entrance into a listening space, dispersing global field recordings through a sculptural array of speakers.

By the Lakeside, poet Raymond Antrobus's *Heightened Lyric* features kite sculptures and illustrated signage that reflect on missing sounds and offers insight into D/deaf people's experience of the hearing world.

Inside, on Level 2, four powerful sculptures by Huma Bhabha – *Member*, *Nothing Falls*, *Feel the Hammer*, and *Mr. Stone* – are installed in the foyer outside the Level 2 gallery, part of *Encounters: Giacometti x Huma Bhabha*.

Whether you're arriving for a performance or exploring the building, these works remind us that some of the best experiences are the ones you stumble across for free.

✦ Alberto Giacometti holding
Three Men Walking, 1940s,
Photo: anonymous, Archives
Fondation Giacometti ©
Succession Alberto Giacometti
/ Adagp, Paris 2025

✦ Raymond Antrobus,
Heightened Lyric, 2025,
illustration and design by Polly
Dunbar

Sharing Arab stories through film

A powerful selection of films revisits the past, confronts the present, and imagines the future, offering UK audiences a rare opportunity to engage with the breadth and complexity of Arab storytelling.

The SAFAR Film Festival offers more than just a collection of films—it brings audiences face-to-face with the richness, complexity, and urgency of Arab storytelling. Through a carefully curated selection of classics, contemporary works, and bold new voices, the festival creates a space where histories are revisited, present realities are confronted, and imagined futures take shape on screen.

'For this year's 10th edition, the SAFAR Film Festival's programme encapsulates a reflective journey through the evolution of Arab cinema, mirroring the socio-political and cultural landscapes of the Arab world,' says festival curator Rabih El Khoury. The festival has grown into a vital platform for

→ *Seeking Haven for Mr Rambo* by Egyptian director Khaled Mansour

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



Arab film representation in the UK, and this year's theme is structured around three core threads. 'Revisiting cinematic classics that illuminate the historical and cultural contexts of the Arab world, showcasing contemporary works that address urgent realities and innovative storytelling, and exploring forward-looking narratives that challenge boundaries and envision futures shaped by resilience and creativity.'

The programme does not adhere to a single genre or style. Instead, it brings together an expansive range of cinematic forms, each offering a unique perspective. 'Addressing the intricacies of the Arab world today means opening up to different thematic perspectives and filmmaking approaches: from feature fiction to documentaries, from short films to essays, an evening that deconstructs colonial archival material and plenty of classics from the Arab film heritage, the films couldn't be more different from one another.' The festival's selection is a testament to the breadth of Arab cinema, offering a space where tradition and experimentation coexist.

A key aim of SAFAR is to foster cultural exchange by bridging narratives across different communities. 'The SAFAR Film Festival showcases Arab cinema to diverse audiences. Many of the stories that are presented come from distinct countries, yet they speak a common cinematic language.' This language - expressed through themes of identity, migration, patriarchy and social change - resonates widely, challenging reductive portrayals, such as of the Arab world. 'SAFAR is a platform for Arab filmmakers to share authentic stories, challenging narratives about the Arab world and broadening perspectives.' More than just a film festival, it is a space for dialogue. 'Through screenings, panel discussions, and Q&A sessions, the festival encourages

dialogue between filmmakers and viewers. Our partnerships with cinemas across the UK regions also help integrate Arab stories within the wider British cultural landscape, creating a space for artistic exchange and deeper cultural connections between the Arab world and UK audiences.'

At the heart of SAFAR's mission is a belief in film as a powerful medium for building understanding and solidarity. 'Film is a powerful medium that transcends language, geography, and politics. It offers authentic, diverse narratives that challenge one-dimensional portrayals.' This immersive experience allows audiences to see their own reflections in stories from afar. 'Some of the feedback we get from SAFAR audiences is that they never imagined "their struggles are also our struggles", referring to the characters in the films. This emotional experience is part of the power of cinema. It encourages nuanced understanding, fostering connections that go beyond surface-level appreciation and toward deeper, more engaged cultural exchange, and this is really important to us and to the festival's mission.'

As SAFAR Film Festival marks its 10th edition, it remains an essential bridge between Arab cinema and UK audiences, bringing urgent, poetic and daring storytelling to the forefront.

SAFAR Film Festival

11–28 Jun Cinemas 1, 2 & 3

All information correct at the time of press. For the most up to date information, see barbican.org.uk

→ The Set (1970)
© Frank Brittain

Cinema Summer

Animation at War: When the Wind Blows PG
28 May 6.20pm, Cinema 1 **CAP**

Experiments in Film: God Bless the Child 15* + conversation with Christopher Harris & Kodwo Eshun
27 May 6.30pm, Cinema 2

New East Cinema: Toxic 18* + ScreenTalk
29 May 6.10pm, Cinema 2

Graeme Arnfield: Zero-Gravity Resistance 12A + lecture performance
29 May 6.30pm, Cinema 3

MET Opera Live in HD: Il Barbiere di Siviglia 12A
31 May 6pm, Cinema 1

Good Vibrations: Relaxed Screening: Eden 15 + Intro
2 Jul 6.10pm, Cinema 3 **REL**

Good Vibrations: Relaxed Screening: The Sound of Nerodivergence 18* + ScreenTalk
8 Jul 6.30pm, Cinema 3 **REL**



Senior Community Screening: All We Imagine as Light 15
9 Jun 11am, Cinema 2 **AD**

Senior Community Screening: Anora 18
26 May 11am, Cinema 2 **AD**

Silent Film & Live Music: A Colour Box U*
8 Jun 3pm, Cinema 1

Senior Community Screening: Nickel Boys 12A
23 Jun 11am, Cinema 2 **AD**

Regular Screenings

Learn more about all of our regular screenings by visiting barbican.org.uk/cinema

New Releases

New films on our screens, from around the world, every Friday. Plus, our Mondays are magic: all new release films are £6* as part of our Magic Monday deal.

Family Film Club

11am every Saturday, Cinema 2. Enjoy family films from £2.50, plus show and tell introductions and free workshops. Family Film Club is on pause during July and August, but returns in September.

Parent and Baby Screenings

New releases every Saturday and Monday morning. Sign up to the mailing list at barbican.org.uk/parentandbaby

Relaxed Screenings

One Friday and one Monday per month, we show a film in a tailored environment for people who prefer a more relaxed environment, with lower sound and space to move about.

Pay What You Can Screenings

Each Friday, one of our new release film screenings is PWYC. Simply pick the price you can pay. (£3–15)

Senior Community Screenings

Every other Monday 11am, Cinema 2. New release screenings for 60+ cinema goers and those who matter to you most.

Members' Screenings

11am every Sunday, Cinema 2. New release screenings just for Members, £6

Past wars, present lessons

Writer, event/film producer and curator Gareth Evans looks back at the 30-year history of Ken Loach's important film *Land and Freedom*.



In times such as ours, it can feel like we're a long way from ideas of truth, justice and integrity in economic, political and social relations. At such moments, a disempowered citizen might look – more than usually – to forms of culture to articulate such concerns.

In the British manifestation of this honourable and committed lineage, surely the most prominent filmmaker is Ken Loach. One of only nine directors to have won two Palme d'Or awards at Cannes and the person with the most films – fifteen – in competition there, Loach is renowned and respected globally for his profound and life-long commitment to working-class concerns, expressed in a warm

and deeply empathetic – while also justifiably angry – manner, that never patronises either his characters or his audience. Over six decades, Loach has crafted an unmatched cinema of solidarity that speaks universally to its perennial themes of oppression, inequality and resistance, both personal and collective.

Always developing ideas closely with equally engaged and passionate writers, he has directed dozens of television 'plays', numerous cinema features and non-fiction works, from his path-breaking *Up the Junction* (1965) and *Cathy Come Home* (1966) to 2023's *The Old Oak*. Among these many titles are his two great historical civil war epics, the

Spanish-set *Land and Freedom* (1995) and the 2006 Palme d'Or-winning Irish-focused *The Wind that Shakes the Barley*. It is out of this first work that two of the most important and enduring creative relationships in Loach's life emerged. The then human rights activist Paul Laverty, who has scripted all but one of the director's fiction features since, appeared in the film as an actor while Rebecca O'Brien has produced all his films since *Land and Freedom* (together, they set up the production company Sixteen Films in 2002 to enable this extensive portfolio).

A sweeping panorama of the Spanish Civil War and the experiences of the international volunteers who signed up to fight in support of the fledgling Republic, *Land and Freedom* showcases Loach's great skill in dramatising the tension between the individual and the history of their age (Loach himself was born exactly a month before the Civil War started in 1936). A constantly relevant and moving work about solidarity and commitment in the face of Fascist authoritarianism, it follows the experiences of David Carr (Ian Hart) a Communist worker from Liverpool who joins the militia. With a vivid portrayal of the training, battles, camaraderie and the essential political debates, the film immerses us in the unfolding conflict. Importantly, it does not shy away from the internal tensions and betrayals by the Republican side.

Filmed – as all Loach's works are – in chronological order, and embodying the values it argues for through an entirely democratic crewing and production process, it's among the finest and most moving of his films, one that links British working-class experience to the great sweep of global struggles.

Such a shared vision – and the trust that come with decades of work together – reveal unequivocally the centrality of collaboration to Loach's working methods, his sense of cinema's radical potential, and his political convictions. In this united front, complex and traumatic histories are remembered and

respected; the public realm is celebrated and defended and there is a moving witness to lives normally overlooked at best and deliberately marginalised at worst. Voices are heard, anger is allowed, experiences are acknowledged and, even if only briefly, one feels that another, better world is possible.

Land and Freedom¹⁵ - 30th Anniversary Screening + Screentalk with Ken Loach, Rebecca O'Brien and Ian Hart

15 May 6.30pm, Cinema 1



↖ *Land and Freedom* (1995), dir. Ken Loach

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A fusion of traditions

Experience the power of qawwali reimaged with orchestra.

A thunderous roar from the audience, a wave of euphoria breaking through the hush of an orchestral hall – this is the power of the *Orchestral Qawwali Project*.

Led by composer and orchestrator and conductor Rushil Ranjan and singer Abi Sampa, this groundbreaking fusion of Sufi devotional music and Western orchestration is bringing together audiences from all backgrounds, creating a shared musical experience unlike anything else.

For many, it's an introduction to the electrifying power of qawwali. For others, it's their first time experiencing the emotional depth of an orchestra. 'One of the most exciting things is when we go on social media after a show, we'll find people talking about how it's the first time they've seen an orchestra and how they had no idea that it would feel that way,' Ranjan shares. At the same time, classically trained musicians and audiences are discovering the raw intensity of qawwali's call-and-response vocals and hypnotic rhythms. 'I think there's a perception around maybe orchestral music or classical music that is felt within some of these communities sometimes – that's kind of eroding, which is really cool.'

Despite its growing popularity, Ranjan remains surprised by the sheer number of people drawn to the project. 'I'm always kind of taken aback by just how many people come to these shows,' he admits. 'I remember when we came on stage at Royal Albert Hall, there were 5,500 people. I was like, so who are all these people?! How do they know about this? How has this happened? Because we don't have a giant industry or label machine behind us.'

That organic reach speaks to the universal pull of qawwali, a devotional art form steeped in poetry and improvisation. Even for those who don't understand the lyrics in Urdu, the music resonates on a deep level. 'Qawwali in and of itself is a really emotional art form, and it's kind of engineered to be that way,' Ranjan explains. 'We're finding it really exciting that a lot of people who, quite

like myself, don't have experience with Urdu poetry and so don't necessarily understand what the lyrics mean are still able to experience what is being said musically.'

Bringing these two musical worlds together wasn't without its challenges, particularly in rehearsal. 'It's not a reluctance, it's more of a kind of uncertainty about what this is going to be,' Ranjan notes. 'I think there are a lot of projects that try and bring art forms together, but maybe do it sometimes more in a tick-boxing exercise. So I think there is some hesitation sometimes from musicians.' But as the process unfolds, 'they just kind of open up, which is really wonderful.'

One of the most exhilarating moments in the performance comes early in the set. 'We open normally with a piece called *Alla Hoo*, and there's a point where there's this cadence – it's a false ending – and that's when the audience first reacts. So far, we've been really lucky that they've reacted really euphorically to that moment. Watching orchestral musicians react in turn to that euphoria is wonderful!'

That energy is transformative not just for audiences but for the musicians themselves. 'The way I'm sat, I can always see – I'm sat opposite the first violins – so I can look across and I just look at their faces change as they hear that sort of roar come in from the audience,' Ranjan shares. 'Any feelings of jadedness or cynicism just melts away, which is really inspiring as well.'

For Ranjan, *Orchestral Qawwali Project* isn't just about fusion – it's about building bridges between cultures, genres, and audiences. The result is a performance that feels at once timeless and groundbreaking, inviting everyone, regardless of background, to experience something new.

Orchestral Qawwali Project
20 Jul Hall

← Orchestral Qawwali Project
© Gaëlle Beri



Immerse yourself in the talent of music's rising stars

Don't miss this showcase of Europe's brightest young classical talent featuring seven concerts over two days, set in breathtaking venues.

For three decades, the European Concert Hall Organisation (ECHO) has been spotlighting some of Europe's most exciting emerging artists through its Rising Stars programme. Alumni of the scheme include violinist Renaud Capuçon and pianists Igor Levit and Khatia Buniatishvili.

Now, as it marks its 30th anniversary, there's an opportunity to see the latest cohort of exceptional musicians in some of the most beautiful locations in the City. Revel in wonderful music in the stunning surrounds of medieval church St Giles Cripplegate, or the splendour of The Charterhouse's Great Chamber.

ECHO, a network of 23 leading concert halls across 14 European countries, was founded to foster collaboration and innovation in classical music. This flagship initiative offers a career-defining platform for artists. 'It's about fast-tracking talent to the top stages of Europe,' explains Federico Rinaldi, who coordinates the programme. Artists are nominated by programmers at ECHO venues, and gain exposure at prestigious venues, participate in career development workshops, and create bespoke commissions.

The selection process has a strong focus on diversity and artistic innovation. Rinaldi says: 'We look for excellent emerging artists with strong national careers, and we aim for gender balance, genre variety, and

unconventional approaches.'

Gender balance is an important part of the scheme, and ECHO is committed to Keychange, the movement advocating equity in the music industry. 'This commitment reflects our belief in leading by example,' says Rinaldi. 'We present these artists as the future of classical music, so inclusion is essential.'

Over its 30-year history, Rising Stars has launched the careers of numerous renowned artists, including violinist Janine Jansen and clarinettist Martin Fröst. 'It's incredible to see how many have become major figures in classical music,' Rinaldi says. The scheme also draws significant audiences across the continent. Last year's season saw 102 concerts, with a total attendance of 33,904 people and 55 Education, Learning and Participation activities.

For this Weekender, each artist will present a mix of classical and contemporary repertoire, reflecting the initiative's encouragement of innovation. Some of the musicians will be reflecting on 2025 being the 150th anniversary of Maurice Ravel's birth through their programming, and all will share new music created through grants enabling them to commission work by a composer.

← Lukas Sternath
© Thomas Rabsch

The 2025 cohort includes pianist Lukas Sternath, who achieved sensational success at the 71st International ARD Music Competition, winning not only First Prize but seven special prizes, including the audience prize. His London recital will feature works by Sofia Gubaidulina, Erik Satie, György Ligeti, and a new composition by Patricia Kopatchinskaja, promising a blend of technical precision and emotional expression.

Clarinettist Carlos Ferreira's magnetic playing, deep-rooted understanding of musical style and attention to the finest detail, have won him widespread praise. His London appearance will include a new work by Lanqing Ding, a fresh and inventive voice in contemporary music, alongside works by Debussy and Boulez, showcasing his commitment to bridging classical traditions with modern innovation.

French string quartet Quatuor Agate – Mathilde Milwidsky, Laurent Tavernier, Lucie Mercat, and Noémie Achet – will pair Ligeti's Bartók-inspired *Métamorphoses Nocturnes* with Ravel's masterful String Quartet, plus there's a new composition by Anna Korsun.

Viola player São Soulez Larivière will take audiences on a journey from the Baroque to the present day, through music by Igor Stravinsky, György Ligeti, and Johann Sebastian Bach to a fresh work by Julia Wolfe. Cellist Benjamin Kruithof is a regular collaborator with esteemed orchestras across Europe, and his recital will feature works by Nadia Boulanger, Maurice Ravel and Sergei Rachmaninov. He's worked with Sally Beamish to create *Reverie*, especially for this tour.

'Explosive young talent' (*AllMusic*), British trumpeter Matilda Lloyd invites us to discover two of the most important works written for trumpet and piano: Honegger's *Intrada* and Enescu's impressionistic *Légende*, before sharing the emotional range of the instrument through chansons by Pauline Viardot and Gabriel Fauré, and a new work from Dani Howard. Finally, violinist Rakhi Singh is known for her boundary-pushing collaborations and



genre-defying projects. For this Weekender, she brings a programme of contemporary works, performed with friends, and Ravel's sparkling Duo.

Performing in the City holds special significance for all the artists, says Rinaldi. 'London is key for classical music. It's a global city, and the Barbican series offers unparalleled impact.'

This chamber music series gives London audiences the chance to witness music stars of tomorrow. As Rinaldi sums up, 'This Weekender isn't just a concert series; it's a celebration of what's next.'

ECHO Rising Stars at 30: Chamber Music Weekender 7-8 Jun

↑ Benjamin Kruithof

→ Rakhi Singh. Photo by
Phil Sharp © Manchester
Collective



Drama, depth and a touch of scandal

Sir Antonio Pappano ends his first season at the helm of the LSO with Strauss' *Salome* and *Ein Heldenleben* – a vivid mix of story, psychology and sound.

As Sir Antonio Pappano first season as Chief Conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra's draws to a close, he will lead the ensemble in two major Strauss performances that showcase the expressive breadth of both composer and orchestra.

First, on 25 May, *Ein Heldenleben* is paired with Mozart's Violin Concerto No 3 – featuring the acclaimed Lisa Batiashvili. Then in July, the season reaches its dramatic final act with a concert performance of *Salome* – Strauss at his most provocative and theatrical.

'*Salome* is tumultuous, heroic, scandalous – a kaleidoscope of colour,' says Pappano. 'A virtuoso vehicle for the orchestra.' Based on Oscar Wilde's provocative play, the opera caused a sensation at its premiere and continues to captivate with its heady mix of drama and psychological tension. Though Pappano has conducted it many times, it's been years since his last performance. 'It showed the way forward for theatre,' he reflects. 'I can't wait.'

Ein Heldenleben, performed in May, offers a different kind of storytelling – Strauss turning the lens on himself in a sweeping, autobiographical tone poem. 'It's about conquering the difficulties of life,' Pappano says. 'Life is tough, and in that way, the piece is very modern, psychologically speaking.' Pappano has conducted the work with the LSO in previous seasons and sees it as a key part of their shared repertoire. 'We'll return to *Ein Heldenleben* over and over again in our relationship. For me, it's important to have a

list of pieces that are 'ours.'

As he previously told us, his connection with the LSO stretches back to 1996 and their first collaboration at Abbey Road Studios. 'We've been in the trenches together,' he said, recalling a shared history that includes over 70 concerts and many major recordings. 'This is such an exciting orchestra. The music just jumps off the page.'

Since taking up his post as Chief Conductor, Pappano has spoken about his desire to conduct a broad repertoire – from English symphonic music and lesser-known French and Italian works to projects exploring dance across musical eras. 'I think we need some joy in our concerts,' he said, reflecting on the role of music in a post-pandemic world. 'It should be a little contrast to balance the harshness of the psychology of living in today's world.'

With *Salome* bringing down the curtain in July, this pair of Strauss performances doesn't just end the season – it marks a bold artistic statement from a conductor-orchestra partnership entering a new chapter.

Mozart and Strauss *Ein Heldenleben*
25 May Hall

Strauss' *Salome*
11 & 13 Jul Hall

→ Sir Antonio Pappano © Mark Allan



Classical music

Summer

London Symphony Orchestra:
Szymanowski & Berlioz, with
Lisa Batiashvili
22 May 7pm, Hall

BBC Symphony Orchestra:
Elder conducts Mahler
23 May 7.30pm, Hall

London Symphony Orchestra:
Mozart & Strauss, with Lisa Batiashvili
25 May 7pm, Hall

Cassie Kinoshi x Ensemble
Intercontemporain
27 May 7.30pm, Hall

Carducci Quartet – Shostakovich
Quartets: Intimate Portraits, Part 5
29 May 7.30pm, Milton Court

ECHO Rising Stars at 30

Lukas Sternath
7 Jun 11.30am, St Giles Cripplegate

Carlos Ferreira
7 Jun 1.30pm, St Giles Cripplegate

Quatuor Agate
7 Jun 4pm, St Giles Cripplegate

Sào Soulez Larivière
7 Jun 7.30pm, St Giles Cripplegate

Benjamin Kruithof
8 Jun 11.30am, Charterhouse

Matilda Lloyd
8 Jun 2pm, Charterhouse

Rakhi Singh & Friends
8 Jun 4.30pm, Charterhouse

TWENTY: VOCES8 20th Anniversary

Anam: Music to move the soul
8 Jun 1.30pm, St Giles Cripplegate

VOCES8 20th Anniversary Concert
8 Jun 7pm, Hall

London Arab Orchestra
7 Jun 7.30pm, Hall

Guildhall School of Music & Drama:
Dido and Aeneas
9–16 Jun 7pm, Silk Street Theatre

Khatia Buniatishvili & Friends
12 Jun 7.30pm, Hall

London Symphony Orchestra:
No Friend But the Mountains
19 Jun 7.30pm, Hall



London Symphony Orchestra:
Family Concert – The Planets
21 Jun 2.30pm, Hall

Anna Meredith's Nuc with
Ligeti Quartet and film
21 Jun 8.30pm, Cinema 1

London Symphony Orchestra:
LSO on Film – The French Connection
22 Jun 7pm, Hall

Evgeny Kissin
25 Jun 7.30pm, Hall

LSO Discovery Showcase
26 Jun 7.30pm, Hall

Guildhall School of Music & Drama:
Opera Makers
27 Jun – 2 Jul 7pm, Milton Court Studio Theatre

Academy of Ancient Music:
Beethoven's Symphony No 5
27 Jun 7.30pm, Hall

↑ Matilda Lloyd

Classical Pride: Voices of Tomorrow
4 Jul 6pm, Hall

Classical Pride: Voices of Joy & Sorrow
4 Jul 7.30pm, Hall

London Symphony Orchestra:
Strauss' Salome
11–13 Jul 7pm, Hall

LSO Discovery Storytelling
for under-5s
13 Jul 10.30am, Fountain Room

LSO Discovery Storytelling
for under-5s
13 Jul 12pm, Fountain Room

The Orchestral Qawwali Project:
CBSO/Rushil Ranjan & Abi Sampa
20 Jul 7.30pm, Hall

LSO Resident
Orchestra

All information correct at the
time of press. For the most
up to date information, see
barbican.org.uk

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Bringing West to the East

Dance to the sounds of Carnival as one of the country's foremost soundsystems comes to our Hall with orchestral versions of the biggest tracks.

Following their electrifying debut here in 2023, Rampage Sound System and the Nu Civilisation Orchestra reunite for Carnival Classics 2 – a night celebrating the rich heritage of sound system culture, featuring the power of live orchestration. With a setlist that spans the full spectrum of Carnival music, from soca and reggae to garage and drum 'n' bass, our Hall will be transformed into a space where nostalgia, culture, and musical reinvention collide.

For Rampage's Maurice and Treble T, last year's concert was a defining moment in their decades-long career. 'It's the best thing we've ever done,' Maurice says. 'The feedback has been immense – people still stop us in clubs asking, "When are you doing it again?"' Now, they're back, with another night of Carnival magic reimaged.

Rampage Sound System is a pillar of Notting Hill Carnival, drawing some of the largest crowds with their bass-heavy, high-energy sets. But this project takes their sound to an entirely new dimension. Rather than simply playing records, they have reworked iconic tracks, collaborating with Nu Civilisation Orchestra to create orchestral scores that honour the original anthems while adding a fresh perspective.

'It's incredible hearing these tracks performed with a full orchestra,' says Treble T. 'The string sections bring so much emotion – it makes the music feel more dramatic, more cinematic.'

Last year's show took the audience on a journey through Carnival's musical evolution, weaving together decades of tracks that have defined the UK's Black music scene. 'We picked songs that mean something to us,' Maurice explains. 'We wanted to tell the story of Notting Hill Carnival, from its roots right up to the present day. It went from soca to reggae, to dancehall, garage, funky house, jungle – it was a full spectrum.'

One of the most exciting aspects of Carnival Classics 2 is its ability to reach audiences across generations. 'For people who grew up with us, who don't want to be in a dark club all night but still want to dance, this is perfect,' says Treble T. 'It's a classy rendition of the music they used to rave to, and they're in bed by lam – win-win!'

At the same time, the event introduces a younger audience to the roots of contemporary club culture. 'It's important for people to understand where these sounds come from,' Maurice adds. 'For a long time, sound system culture wasn't given the respect it deserved. But why shouldn't this music be performed in places like the Barbican? We've evolved, and it's only right that Black music is showcased in these kinds of spaces.'

This year's edition promises to be even more dynamic, with new special guests joining the lineup.

As one of the UK's most influential sound systems, Rampage has spent over 30 years shaping the sonic landscape of Carnival. Now, alongside Nu Civilisation Orchestra, they're proving that sound system culture belongs not just on the streets of west London, but on one of the country's most prestigious stages in east London.

Rampage: Carnival Classics 2
20 Jun 8pm Hall

← Carnival Classics returns to our Hall following an electric debut in 2023

Contemporary music Summer

Hawkwind

26 May 7.30pm, Hall

I'm With Her

29 May 8pm, Hall

Actress x Suzanne Ciani

30 May 7.30pm, Hall

Moin

31 May 7.30pm, Hall

Cat Power Sings Dylan '66

1 Jun 8pm, Hall

Sada Echo: Music from Palestine

6 Jun 7.30pm, Hall

Naseer Shamma

15 Jun 7.30pm, Hall

Warp Vision MMXXV

14 Jun from 12pm

Tigran Hamasyan

16 Jun 7.30pm, Hall

Rampage: Carnival Classics 2

20 Jun 8pm, Hall

Anavitoria

23 Jun 8pm, Hall

Brad Mehldau Trio

24 Jun 7.30pm, Hall

Jeff Mills: Blue Potential

London Symphony Orchestra/
Christophe Mangou

28 Jun 8pm, Hall

Take Me to the River

12 Jul 7.30pm, Hall

James Taylor Quartet

18 Jul 7.30pm, Hall

Herbie Hancock

24–26 Jul 8pm, Hall

Quinteto Astor Piazzolla

27 Jul 7.30pm, Hall

Fonseca

31 Jul 7.30pm, Hall

Summer Jazz Series brings the heat

Curated with an ear for innovation and soul, this year's line-up features jazz royalty, global storytellers and genre-defying collaborations – including Herbie Hancock's first ever three-night London takeover.

Your summer soundtrack is about to shift up a gear with the return of the Summer Jazz Series, featuring a handpicked mix of jazz trailblazers, soul legends, and rising stars. Now in its fourth year, the series offers everything from exciting newcomers to late-career brilliance.

'This year's line-up is all about artists who push the boundaries of their craft,' says Pelin Opcin, Director of our Associate Producers Series, who's organising the series with us.

The series opens on 16 June with Tigran Hamasyan, and his new project *The Bird of a Thousand Voices*. 'It's a one-of-a-kind musical experience,' says Opcin. Opening for him is vocalist and violinist Alice Zawadzki, who Opcin describes as 'one of the most exciting voices in the UK scene right now'.

On 24 June the Brad Mehldau Trio performs here for the first time here with bassist Felix Moseholm and drummer Jorge Rossy. 'Brad always brings this intimate, lyrical quality to his sets, but he's also constantly evolving,' says Opcin. 'He can go from interpreting Nick Drake to Gershwin in the same breath.'

On 12 July, the energy shifts again with *Take Me to the River All-Stars*, bringing Memphis soul royalty to the Barbican stage. 'Carla Thomas, the Hi Rhythm Section, Jerome Chism... this is the real deal,' says Opcin.

Then, closing the series in style, is a three-night residency from Herbie Hancock (24–26 July), celebrating his 85th birthday. 'Every show is full of energy. He never stops. And he's still showing us what the future of jazz can sound like.'

Summer Jazz Series

16 Jun–26 Jul Hall



All information correct at the time of press. For the most up to date information, see barbican.org.uk

→ Herbie Hancock

Theatre & dance

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*Subject to availability

A dazzling portrait of brilliance and struggle

Doug Wright's acclaimed play brings the wit, genius, and inner turmoil of Oscar Levant to life – illuminating a groundbreaking conversation on mental health.

In 1958, a man was temporarily released from a psychiatric hospital – not to go home, but to appear on live television.

That man was Oscar Levant, a virtuoso pianist, actor, and raconteur whose razor-sharp wit made him a star – and whose struggles with mental illness made him a trailblazer in an era when such battles were often swept under the carpet. His story takes centre stage in *Good Night, Oscar*, Doug Wright's gripping and darkly humorous play, which comes to our Theatre this summer after a celebrated Broadway run.

At the heart of the production is Sean Hayes, reprising his Tony-winning performance as Levant – a role he was, according to Wright, 'born to play'. Best known for his role as Jack McFarland in TV comedy *Will & Grace*, Hayes transforms into Levant on stage, capturing his rapid-fire humour and his profound personal battles.

Levant was a fixture of mid-century American culture, appearing in MGM musicals, wowing audiences with his piano virtuosity, and trading witticisms with the biggest stars of the day. But beneath the public persona was a man struggling with mental illness. At a time when discussions of mental health were virtually taboo, Levant

destroyed conventions by openly addressing his struggles on national television.

'It was 1950s America – buttoned-up, puritanical,' Wright explains. 'Mental illness was often seen as a personal failing. But Oscar had the audacity to joke about his condition, using humour as both a survival mechanism and a way to educate the public.'

Wright's play distils Levant's life into one electrifying night, dramatising a real-life event: an appearance on *The Tonight Show* with Jack Paar. What makes this particular show remarkable is that Levant had been institutionalised at the time – and was temporarily released from the psychiatric hospital just to go on air. 'That's not my invention,' Wright says. 'It really happened. I took some artistic licence in shifting the talk show, but the fundamental truth remains.'

The road to *Good Night, Oscar* began with a serendipitous moment between Wright and Hayes. Years ago, Wright wrote a screenplay about George Gershwin that included Levant as a character – but the film ended up not getting made. When Hayes approached him about writing a play centred on Levant, the playwright was struck by the coincidence. 'Sean casually mentioned he once auditioned for a Spielberg movie about Oscar Levant,' Wright recalls. 'And I said, "Sean, I wrote that movie!" That quirk of fate set the project in motion, and even though the film never happened, Spielberg later came on board as a Broadway producer.'

← Sean Hayes in *Good Night, Oscar*, photo © Joan Marcus

Developing the play was a meticulous process, with workshops spanning five years. Wright credits Hayes' deep involvement in shaping the role: 'Every time we workshopped it, Sean brought enormous insight, ferocity, and humour. From the very first reading, I knew he was meant to play Oscar.'

Wright says he's looking forward to the show coming to London. 'New York is certainly America's theatrical capital, but we all look to London as the Everest we want to scale,' he says. 'Oscar is such a uniquely American figure, so I'm very curious to see how audiences respond. That said, whatever happens, planting a flag at the Barbican will be a lasting source of pride.'

Beyond Levant's wit and musical brilliance, *Good Night, Oscar* is also a meditation on the intersection of genius and mental illness – a conversation that resonates deeply today. As artists increasingly publicly address their mental health struggles, and mental health discourse is less couched in the shame it once was, Wright sees the play as part of a larger cultural shift. 'I know my father struggled with bipolar disorder, and my mother's life became about managing that reality. In some ways, *Good Night, Oscar* is the closest I'll ever come to writing about my parents' marriage.'

Yet, despite its weighty subject matter, the play is no heavy-handed tragedy. Levant's legendary one-liners – some lifted directly from his own words, others crafted by Wright in his voice – ensure the evening is as entertaining as it is thought-provoking. 'Some nights, I'd stand at the back of the theatre and keep a tally of which jokes were Oscar's and which were mine,' Wright says with a laugh.

And what comes through it all is the fact that mental health issues can affect anyone and many people have experienced them. As Wright puts it, 'I hope audiences don't just see a historical figure on stage – I hope, at some point, they see themselves.'

Good Night, Oscar

31 Jul-21 Sep Theatre **BSL CAP AD**

→ Sean Hayes in *Good Night, Oscar*, photo © Joan Marcus





Fiddler on the Roof, photo
© Marc Brenner

A timely revival with a powerful vision

***Fiddler on the Roof* may be a well-loved stalwart of musical theatre, but its themes resonate as strongly today as they ever have, as a new production directed by Jordan Fein reveals. He tells us all about it.**

When Jordan Fein was approached to direct *Fiddler on the Roof* for Regent's Park Open Air Theatre in 2023, he already had a deep personal connection to the show. 'It's a piece I don't remember not knowing,' he says. 'It was the first show my father ever saw, and my grandmother's parents left Ukraine in 1910 for the same reasons as in the story.' Now, as this acclaimed production transfers to the Barbican, Fein is embracing the challenges of bringing it indoors while ensuring its powerful themes remain as immediate and resonant as ever.

'It's a piece about a community that is ultimately torn apart by political forces beyond their control,' he explains. 'We're seeing that all over the world right now, with really dire consequences. But what *Fiddler* also offers is hope. At its heart, it's about love – active, engaged love, not just in an abstract sense. It's about taking care of others and engaging with people fully, even those who are different from you.'

This sense of deep emotional connection is at the core of Fein's approach. While he has a reputation for bold, innovative storytelling, he was clear that *Fiddler*'s extraordinary music and text should remain at the forefront. 'I wasn't interested in taking it apart in a radical way,' he says. 'But because it's such a well-known show, I want to make sure people hear the music and the ideas in a fresh way.'

A key aspect of this has been the ensemble. 'We have 28 cast members, and you really feel them as a community,' Fein notes. 'The show is often thought of as Tevye's story, but it's truly an ensemble piece. It was essential that each performer brought something of themselves to their role. We kept coming back to the idea of who they are as individuals within this community, and how they contribute to it as a whole.'

Fein's approach to the music also emphasises its role in the fabric of the characters' lives. 'In this world, singing and dancing aren't just performance – they're survival. That's how they cope with their really challenging reality.' At the Barbican, this will

be reinforced by the physical presence of the band on stage, an integral part of the community rather than a separate entity.

The transition from the open air of Regent's Park to the indoor space of our Theatre offers new opportunities. 'There's something about Fiddler that feels like an evocation of ancestry and the past,' Fein reflects. 'So many towns in Europe were just wiped off the map. The story, especially with the way it starts musically, feels like a conjuring of sorts. Indoors, we can lean into that even more – there's a spirituality to it, not necessarily in a religious sense, but in the way we're evoking real, lived histories.'

For audiences familiar with *Fiddler on the Roof*, this production will feel both deeply traditional and strikingly fresh. 'It's a real combination of tradition and innovation,' Fein says. 'The performances, the design, the music – it's all rooted in a profound respect and love for the material. But at the same time, it has to speak to now.'

One particular element that has resonated strongly with audiences is the portrayal of Tevye's daughters. 'The actors playing them are so young, so powerful. You really feel the rebellion and revolution within their choices. I don't know if that's new, but it's something people are really responding to.'



For Fein and his family, this production has been especially meaningful. 'I was sitting next to my dad on press night, and it was just really special,' he recalls. 'When I told my grandmother I was directing it, she immediately started singing *If I Were a Rich Man*. It's something we can all share together.'

Fiddler on the Roof

24 May–19 Jul Theatre **BSL CAP AD**



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