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barbican

Barbican announces Abel Selaocoe's Mohopolo/Ancestral Memory Weekend: a celebration of South African music, ancestry and connection



Abel Selaocoe photographed by Phil Sharp

South African cellist, vocalist and composer **Abel Selaocoe** returns to his roots for a specially curated Barbican weekend in April 2026. The **Mohopolo/Ancestral Memory Weekend** brings together artists from his homeland of South Africa in a powerful act of remembrance and celebration of shared history through music and will be a highlight of the Barbican's Spring 2026 season.

Running from Thursday 23 April to Sunday 26 April 2026, and joined by **Mbuso Khoza, Nduduzo Makhathini, Gontse Makhene, BCUC, Toya Delazy, Mthuthuzeli November** and **DJ SNO**, Selaocoe traces the journeys of the Bantu people – exploring collective histories of community, resilience and resistance. Through music, movement and storytelling, the weekend reflects on the sonic legacies of the Anglo-Zulu War at Isandlwana, songs of rain, love and rebellion from the apartheid era, and the ancestral rhythms that continue to offer healing and hope today.

Showcasing the depth and diversity of South Africa's musical landscape, the weekend-long event spans traditional Zulu music, Afro-psychedelic future pop, Afrorave, amapiano and contemporary jazz. Across the weekend, audiences are invited to experience exclusive performances, new collaborations and premieres that honour both heritage and innovation in South African music. In addition, rhythm workshops linked to the music that audiences will hear throughout the weekend will be announced at a later date.

Music is the ceremony of remembering.

*To be a musician is to make peace with your own shapeshifting,
to fraternize with your fluidity, and in so doing, trace echoes of the self back through time.*

Improvisation is not merely play, it is pilgrimage. A surrender.

A sacred getting-lost so that something ancient might be found.

– Anonymous

Mohopolo/ Ancestral Memory Weekend events:

- **Tracing the Echoes** ([Thu 23 Apr, Milton Court, 7.30pm](#))
- **BCUC / Toya Delazy / DJ SNO** ([Sat 25 Apr, Barbican Hall, 7.30pm](#))
- **Simunye (We Are One) ClubStage with DJ SNO** ([Sat 25 Apr, Level G, 9.45pm](#))
- **Sithunyiwe / We Have Been Sent** ([Sun 26 Apr, Barbican Hall, 7pm](#))

More details about each of the events in the Mohopolo/Ancstral Memory weekend can be found below:

Tracing the Echoes
Abel Selaocoe & Friends
Thursday 23 April 2026, 7.30pm
Milton Court Concert Hall
Tickets from £25 plus booking fee

In the opening concert of his **Mohopolo/Ancstral Memory Weekend**, South African cellist, composer and vocalist **Abel Selaocoe** brings together a remarkable group of collaborators for an intimate evening exploring ancestral connection through music.

Tracing the Echoes unites Selaocoe with legendary Zulu musician **Mbuso Khoza**, celebrated pianist **Nduduzo Makhathini**, and percussionist **Gontse Makhene** to share songs and stories drawn from their respective tribal traditions. Together, they trace musical lineages that move between the sacred and the spontaneous, where improvisation, ritual and memory intertwine.

Part of Mohopolo/Ancstral Memory Weekend, curated by Abel Selaocoe
 Produced by the Barbican
[Find out more](#)

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BCUC / Toya Delazy / DJ SNO
Saturday 25 April 2026, 7.30pm
Barbican Hall
Tickets from £20 plus booking fee

South African artists **BCUC (Bantu Continua Uhuru Consciousness)** and **Toya Delazy** join forces for a powerful collaboration as part of **Abel Selaocoe's Mohopolo/Ancstral Memory Weekend**. Blending heavy electronic and traditional beats, their performance channels ancestral energy through a fusion of punk-rock, psychedelia, hip-hop and African rhythms.

In this special event, they create a sound that is both contemporary and deeply rooted in history – a reflection on the lives, struggles and spiritual resilience of communities whose stories are often unheard. Drawing inspiration from the spirit world of their ancestors, the performance celebrates Africa not as a continent defined by scarcity, but one rich in tradition, ritual and belief.

Part of Mohopolo/Ancstral Memory weekend, curated by Abel Selaocoe
 Produced by the Barbican
[Find out more](#)

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Simunye (We are one)
Saturday 25 April 2026, 9.45pm
Barbican ClubStage, Level -1
Free

“Jiva kuze kuse / Dance till the sun comes up!”

Following the concert, audiences are invited to continue the celebration with **Simunye (We Are One)** – a late-night ClubStage led by South African **DJ SNO**. Expect an exhilarating journey through South

African jams across time and space, driven by SNO's unshakable spirit of joy and movement. Nothing stands still on her dance floor.

Hailing from the township of Bophelong, SNO (Selina Nongaliphe Oliphant) sees music as a beacon of strength and hope for the marginalised — a vision rooted in her formative years growing up under apartheid. A genuine innovator in musical curation, she brings together the rhythms of jazz, funk, and Amapiano to create a space of togetherness, energy and freedom.

Part of Mohopolo/Ancestral Memory weekend, curated by Abel Selaocoe

Produced by the Barbican

[Find out more](#)

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Sithunyiwe / We Have Been Sent

Abel Selaocoe & Friends

Sunday 26 April 2026, 7pm

Barbican Hall

Tickets from £25 plus booking fee

A brand-new multidisciplinary performance commissioned by the Barbican closes **Abel Selaocoe's Mohopolo/Ancestral Memory Weekend**, bringing together music, dance and storytelling in an expression of ancestral connection and collective spirit.

Sithunyiwe – “*we have been sent*” – means we have been sent by our ancestors to invigorate the spirit of those that are around us. Selaocoe describes this new project as following ‘*a child-like surrender to the instincts of our bodies and how we hear*’. Created by acclaimed choreographer and dancer **Mthuthuzeli November** (Ballet Black, Royal Ballet, Stormzy, The Chemical Brothers), this new dance work channels the deep spirituality of South African traditions through the body.

Music is created and performed by **Mbuso Khoza**, Abel Selaocoe and **Nduduzo Makhathini**, joined by the **Bantu Ensemble**, led by **Rakhi Singh**, and joined by **Gontse Makhene**, **Sidiki Dembélé** and friends.

Together they craft a spontaneous, immersive performance that seeks to heal, educate and unite – a celebration of togetherness and renewal.

Part of Mohopolo/Ancestral Memory weekend, curated by Abel Selaocoe

Commissioned and produced by the Barbican

[Find out more](#)

ENDS

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The Barbican is a catalyst for creativity, sparking possibilities for artists, audiences, and communities. We showcase the most exciting art from around the world, pushing traditional artistic boundaries to entertain and inspire millions of people, create connections, provoke debate, and reflect the world we live in.

We are an international arts and events centre rooted firmly in our own neighbourhood, collaborating with local communities and putting the City of London on the map as a destination for everybody. Central to our purpose is supporting emerging talent and shaping opportunities that will accelerate the next generation of creatives.

As a not-for-profit, we rely on the generosity of individuals and organisations, including our principal funder the City of London Corporation. Every ticket purchased, donation made, and pound earned supports our arts and learning programme and enables the widest possible range of people to experience the joy of the arts.

Opened in 1982, the Barbican is a unique and audacious building, recognised globally as an architectural icon. As well as our theatres, galleries, concert halls and cinemas, we have a large conservatory with over 1,500 species of plants and trees, a library, conference facilities, public and community spaces, restaurants, bars, and a picturesque lakeside oasis.

We're proud to be the home of the [London Symphony Orchestra](#), our Resident Orchestra, and a London base for the [Royal Shakespeare Company](#). We regularly co-commission, produce and showcase the work of our Artistic Associates the [Academy of Ancient Music](#), [BBC Symphony Orchestra](#), [Boy Blue](#), [Darbar Arts, Culture and Heritage Trust](#), and [Serious](#), who produce the [EFG London Jazz Festival](#), alongside other associates and partners including [Doc'n Roll Film Festival](#), [London Palestine Film Festival](#), and [Trafalgar Theatre Productions](#).

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