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Benedict Cumberbatch, Jude Law, Jarvis Cocker, Fiona Shaw, Gustavo Dudamel, Steve Reich, Zandra Rhodes, Laurie Anderson, Cerys Matthews, Ballet Black, Joyce DiDonato, the Lord Mayor, the Mayor of London and more celebrate iconic Barbican's 35th Birthday

Benedict Cumberbatch, Jude Law, Jarvis Cocker, Fiona Shaw, Gustavo Dudamel, Steve Reich, Zandra Rhodes, Laurie Anderson, Ballet Black and Joyce DiDonato join fellow world-class artists along with the Lord Mayor, **Andrew Parmley**, and the Mayor of London, **Sadiq Khan**, in celebrating the Barbican's 35th Anniversary today (**3 March 2017**). To mark the occasion, the leading international arts centre is launching a digital collection of 35 of its cultural 'Firsts' from the last three and a half decades, accompanied by a short essay from **Cerys Matthews** on the power of art.

Consisting of pioneering events selected from the Barbican's boundary-pushing heritage, the 'Firsts' demonstrate the impact of the Centre on the UK's cultural landscape and represent all of the Barbican's art forms – music, theatre, dance, visual arts and film – as well as its creative learning programme. They include the world premiere of **Les Misérables (1985)** – now the world's longest running musical; **Grayson Perry's** first show in a UK public gallery (2002), programmed a year before he won the Turner Prize in 2003; the UK premiere of **Robert Wilson and Philip Glass' Einstein on the Beach (2012)** – widely credited as one of the greatest artistic achievements of the 20th century; and Britain's first comprehensive retrospective of **Woody Allen** films (1984).

London's first silent disco was programmed by the Barbican in 2001 – in its conservatory with **Aphex Twin** – and the arts centre has also given 40 zebra finches their first experience of playing electric guitars in public (**Céleste Boursier-Mougenot, 2010**), and the UK public its first (and only) opportunity to control the rain (**Random International: Rain Room, 2012-13**).

Declared a 'modern wonder of the world' by The Queen when she opened the Centre on 3 March 1982, the iconic Brutalist building plays host to almost 4,000 arts and learning events every year for an annual audience of 1.1 million. The City of London Corporation is the founder and principal funder of the Barbican and the Centre's international focus attracts audiences from around the globe. In 2015/16, people from 91 different countries booked tickets at the Barbican.

More than 30 years ago, in 1985, the Barbican staged Britain's largest-ever festival of Japanese culture **Toki: Tradition in Japan Today**. It went on to introduce the capital and the country to the rich and – at the time – often little-known artistic bounty of Scandinavia, Iceland and Finland with the UK's first major celebration of Nordic culture **Tender is the North (1992)**.

In 1998, it launched the world's most comprehensive celebration of American culture, **Inventing America**, which, over the course of the year, featured more than 50 contemporary and 40 classical music concerts (including eight premieres), 19 art exhibitions, nine specialist film seasons, over 150 film screenings, 12 productions of theatre, opera, drama and dance (including 11 UK premieres) with 140 performances, 19 talks, five themed weekends, and an opening event starring an Elvis Presley impersonator, 30 customised Harley-Davidsons and an array of cheerleaders.

In addition to bringing the best of international arts to the UK, the Barbican produces touring exhibitions to travel the globe. These include **Game On**, the first major international exhibition to explore the vibrant history and culture of computer games. First developed in 2001, it has now been seen by 3,640,105 people worldwide.

The Barbican continues to present a diverse range of cultural 'Firsts'. Forthcoming highlights from the 2017 programme include *Basquiat: Boom for Real* the UK's first large-scale exhibition of art prodigy **Jean-Michel Basquiat** (21 Sep 2017 - 28 Jan 2018); the world premiere of *Obsession* starring **Jude Law** and directed by **Ivo van Hove** (19 Apr - 20 May 2017); *What London Watches: Ten Films That Shook Our World* (6-13 April 2017) – the first time that Londoners have been asked not only which films have changed their world, but will also have the opportunity to see a selection of London's choices on the big screen; the UK premiere of *Room 29* by **Jarvis Cocker** and **Chilly Gonzales** (23-25 March 2017); and the first symphonic silent 'disco'. The *Silent Symphony* will take place on the Barbican's sculpture court and relay **Sir Simon Rattle's** inaugural concert as the **London Symphony Orchestra's** Music Director (14 Sep 2017).

The full set of 35 Barbican Firsts is available here:
<http://www.barbican.org.uk/barbicanat35/>

Sir Nicholas Kenyon, Managing Director of the Barbican, said: "Thanks to the generosity of the City of London Corporation and the vision of our leadership, the Barbican has had a remarkable sustained history of continuing innovation. These 35 'firsts', chosen from so many over the 35 years of our programme, show how the Barbican has always been pushing the art-forms forwards – and continues to do so today. From Richard Mosse's *Incoming* to Jean-Michel Basquiat, Simon Rattle and the LSO, Toneelgroep and Jude Law, we celebrate the very best adventurous, distinctive work in the arts. Here's to the next 35 years!"

Louise Jeffreys, Director of the Arts, Barbican, said: "As the UK reimagines its place in the world, the arts – which open up different ways of seeing the world and provide us with new and vital perspectives – will become more important than ever in shaping our national and cultural identity. We are immensely grateful to the thousands of artists who have made the past 35 years at the Barbican so rich and varied, and to our team whose hard work and dedication knows no bounds."

Andrew Parmley, Lord Mayor of the City of London, said: "The Barbican Centre is an internationally renowned multi-arts and conference venue, a major player in the Square Mile's vibrant cultural hub, and a prime example of radical post-war architecture. I am thrilled to be celebrating its 35th anniversary and I send my warmest congratulations. Over the years, the Barbican has gained an outstanding reputation for its outreach work and ability to attract world-class performers, and with Sir Nicholas Kenyon and his superb team at the helm, its diverse and loyal audiences are in the hands of people who take pride in commissioning and delivering excellent work."

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, said: "The Barbican encompasses so much of what is great about London – it's bold, international, innovative and outward looking. Whether bringing the best of the world's arts to our doorstep or taking its programme to communities in its neighbouring boroughs, for the past 35 years the Barbican has played a huge role in ensuring London is a world leader in arts and culture."

Jude Law said: "I first performed at the Barbican as a young actor twenty-two years ago and I am delighted to be returning in April for Barbican and Toneelgroep's *Obsession*. In the intervening years the Barbican has carved out a truly special place in our theatre landscape, offering audiences something they can't get anywhere else."

Benedict Cumberbatch said: "The Barbican has been conjuring fantastic theatre experiences for 35 years, and my time on their stage was hugely enjoyable. Long may it continue."

Jarvis Cocker said: "I am really looking forward to playing at the Barbican in the month of its 35th birthday. The show, *Room 29*, could only really happen at a place like the Barbican. To quote Laurie McMenemy: Barbican: it's great, man!"

Fiona Shaw said: "The Barbican has raised the game for all who work in British theatre, welcoming and supporting British artists and inviting the best of the best from the international world. Its ambition and passion make it the most important institution for international theatre in the country. Happy 35th Birthday Barbican...and many more great years ahead!"

Gustavo Dudamel said: "Over the past six years, working with the Barbican as part of the Los Angeles Philharmonic residencies has been a wonderful experience. Many congratulations on the Barbican's 35th anniversary, and we look forward to many more collaborations!"

Steve Reich said: "The Barbican has been a major presenter of my music in London for many years. Recently they mounted a series of first rate concerts in honor of my 80th birthday, and so it gives me great pleasure to congratulate them on becoming 35. It is a venue where audiences get to experience an extraordinary variety of performances and I wish them continued and well deserved success far into the future."

Zandra Rhodes said: "Happy Birthday Barbican! You have proved yourself to be a wonderful and vitally needed center on the east side of London. You have proved your worth with spectacular exhibitions that have pushed artistic boundaries that are fresh and relevant, starting with ADITI (the 1st festival of India), Jean Paul Gaultier and more recently *The Vulgar*."

Laurie Anderson said: "I have had a lot of fun with the Barbican over the years, and was thrilled when they mounted an exhibition of my work in 2011 along with Trisha Brown and Gordon Matta-Clark. It gives me great pleasure to wish them a very happy birthday."

Cassa Pancho said: "Our performance in 2016 was a transformative event in Ballet Black's history and exposed us to a much wider audience. From my first meeting with the Barbican to opening night and our sell-out run, we felt incredibly well supported by the whole team. On behalf of everyone here at Ballet Black: Happy 35th Birthday to the Barbican!"

Joyce DiDonato said: "I've always had a very special relationship with Barbican audiences who have an appetite for such a rich breadth of music. In this world, the one uniting factor we have is a beautiful shared musical and cultural landscape, so from across the Atlantic I wish the Barbican the very happiest of birthdays!"

Ivo van Hove said: "The Barbican and Toneelgroep Amsterdam have proven to be a perfect match. Our relationship started in 2009 with the presentation of *Roman Tragedies*, a 6 hour Shakespeare-marathon in....Dutch. We are proud to be part of their great international family of theatre companies from all over the world. It challenges us in the best way thinkable."

Ragnar Kjartansson said: "I am extremely pleased to have had the first UK survey of my work at the legendary Barbican. The interdisciplinary buffet that the Barbican fits my unfocused practice. Seriously I love the building the utopian feel and the programme that has kept me coming and coming as a tourist since my parents took me there in the 80s. I wish them a brilliant and very happy birthday!"

Random International said: "The Barbican actively embraces the unknown in its search for meaningful experiences for its audiences. The bold acts of faith this entails are what

makes it possible to first publicly present works like *Rain Room*, which have a huge impact on the development of artistic practices. We look forward to continuing to expect the unexpected over the next 35 years."

Julie Cunningham said: "Happy birthday to the Barbican, whose work has always inspired me as an artist because of its originality and creativity. I am excited to be a part of its past, present, and future."

ENDS

Notes to Editors

Press Information

For further information, images or to arrange interviews, please contact:
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35 FIRSTS (<http://www.barbican.org.uk/barbicanat35/>)

1) 3 March 1982

Barbican Centre opens

The first arts centre in the world to have music, theatre, visual arts, film and a tropical conservatory all under one roof opens.

2) 9 June 1982

RSC: *Henry IV Parts I and II*

World premiere of Trevor Nunn's production of Henry IV (and the first ever production in the Barbican Theatre).

3) 9 – 30 November 1984

Woody Allen Retrospective

Britain's first ever comprehensive retrospective of Woody Allen films.

4) 14 February – 8 April 1985

Munch and the Workers

First time 114 Edvard Munch works are shown in the UK.

5) 8 October 1985

RSC/Cameron Mackintosh: *Les Misérables*

World premiere of *Les Misérables*, which goes on to become the world's longest running musical.

6) 7, 14, 21, 28 November 1985 at 1pm

***TSB Bank Lunchbox Concerts* with the London Symphony Orchestra**

First venue to combine Kit Kats, scotch eggs and classical music.

7) 27 November 1985 – 26 January 1986

Toki: Tradition in Japan Today

Britain's largest-ever festival of Japanese culture (at that time).

8) 2 January 1986

RSC: *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*

London premiere of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* by Christopher Hampton starring Alan Rickman, which goes on to win both the Olivier and Evening Standard Awards for Best Play.

9) 12 December 1989

Candide

The first time Leonard Bernstein ever conducts his operetta *Candide* is with the LSO at the Barbican, in the world premiere of its "Final Revised Version".

10) 10 November – 13 December 1992

Tender is the North

First comprehensive celebration of Nordic culture in the UK.

11) 12 September – 15 December 1996

Jam: Style + Music + Media

First gallery showing of Alexander McQueen.

12) 22 January – 26 November 1998

Inventing America

World's largest celebration of US culture.

13) 6 – 15 July 2001

Complicite: *The Noise of Time*

UK premiere of *The Noise of Time*, directed by Simon McBurney.

14) Sunday 14 October 2001

DJ PRICHARD.G.JAMS PKA APHEX TWIN

London's first silent disco.

15) 19 October – 11 November 2001

Studio Ghibli season

First major UK retrospective of the work of Japanese animation house Studio Ghibli.

16) 27 March 2002

Mali Music

World premiere of *Mali Music* live features Damon Albarn, Ko Kan Ko Sata Doumbia and Diourou Diallo.

17) 16 May – 15 September 2002

Game On

First major international exhibition to explore the vibrant history and culture of computer games.

18) 21 September – 3 November 2002

Grayson Perry: Guerilla Tactics

Grayson Perry's first show in a UK public gallery, which leads to him winning the Turner Prize in 2003.

19) 14 April – 14 May 2005

BITE: *Julius Caesar* (Directed by Deborah Warner. Produced by BITE)

World premiere of Deborah Warner's production of *Julius Caesar*.

20) 13 February – 22 May 2006

Tropicália: A Revolution in Brazilian Culture

Legendary psychedelic rock band *Os Mutantes* play together for the first time since 1973 as part of Tropicália, the Barbican's three-month festival of Brazilian art, music, theatre, dance and film.

21) 17 January 2008

BBC Symphony Orchestra: *Total Immersion - Stockhausen*

The BBC Symphony Orchestra launch their first Total Immersion series with a celebration of the music of Stockhausen. The acclaimed series continues today with three in-depth composer explorations each season.

22) 20 – 22 November 2009

Toneelgroep Amsterdam: *Roman Tragedies*

London debut of Toneelgroep Amsterdam with Ivo van Hove as Director.

23) 27 February - 23 May 2010

Céleste Boursier-Mougenot

First time that zebra finches play electric guitars (in public).

24) 3 March - 22 May 2011

Laurie Anderson, Trisha Brown, Gordon Matta-Clark: Pioneers of the Downtown Scene, New York 1970s

UK premiere of Trisha Brown's dance piece *Walking on the Walls*.

25) 22 July 2011

A Night in Tahrir Square

Featuring El Tanbura, Azza Balba, Mustafa Said and Ramy Essam

First time the musicians perform in the UK since their roles in Tahrir Square.

26) 6 October 2011 – 19 February 2012

OMA/Progress

First major exhibition of OMA and 'starchitect' Rem Koolhaas in the UK.

27) 4 – 13 May 2012

Einstein on the Beach

An opera in Four Acts by Robert Wilson and Philip Glass

UK premiere of Einstein on the Beach, widely credited as one of the greatest artistic achievements of the 20th century.

28) 25 – 26 July 2012

Wynton Marsalis' Swing Symphony

Feat. Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis & London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Sir Simon Rattle

UK premiere of Wynton Marsalis' symphonic meditation on the evolution of swing, *Swing Symphony (Symphony No 3)*.

29) 4 October 2012 – 3 March 2013

Random International: Rain Room

First (and only) time people are able to control the rain.

30) 4 July 2013

Beck: Song Reader Live

A stellar cast of artists performs Beck's unique album Song Reader

First time Beck's unique sheet music album *Song Reader* was performed live in its entirety.

31) 27 – 28 July 2013

Open East Festival

First arts and learning event in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park following the 2012 Olympics.

32) 12 – 13 September 2013

John Cale & Liam Young

LOOP>>60Hz: Transmissions from The Drone Orchestra

World's first drone orchestra featuring flying drones.

33) 12 February 2015 (with 8 weeks of rehearsals leading up to it)

Young Orchestra for London

First time an orchestra made up of young people from every London borough is conducted by Sir Simon Rattle.

34) 27 June 2015

Boredoms

First time Boredoms perform one of their epic *Boardrum* concerts in the UK and the first such concert featuring 88 cymbal players.

35) 5 August – 31 October 2015

Sonia Friedman Productions: Hamlet

Biggest single NT Live broadcast to date – seen by over 550,000 people worldwide.

FIVE FUTURE FIRSTS

1) 23 - 25 March 2017

Room 29

UK premiere of *Room 29* by Jarvis Cocker and Chilly Gonzales.

2) 6 – 13 April 2017

What London Watches: Ten Films That Shook Our World

The first time that Londoners have been asked not only which films have changed their world, but will also have the opportunity to see a selection of London's choices on the big screen.

3) 19 April – 20 May 2017

Barbican/Toneelgroep Amsterdam – Obsession

The world premiere of *Obsession* starring Jude Law and directed by Ivo van Hove.

4) 14 September 2017

LSO - Silent Symphony

The first symphonic silent 'disco' takes place on the Barbican's sculpture court. The Silent Symphony will relay Sir Simon Rattle's inaugural concert as the London Symphony Orchestra's Music Director.

5) 21 September 2017 – 28 January 2018

Basquiat: Boom for Real

UK's first large-scale exhibition of Jean-Michel Basquiat (1960-1988).

About the Barbican

A world-class arts and learning organisation, the [Barbican](#) pushes the boundaries of all major art forms including dance, film, music, theatre and visual arts. Its creative learning programme further underpins everything it does. Over 1.1 million people attend events annually, hundreds of artists and performers are featured, and more than 300 [staff](#) work onsite. The architecturally renowned centre opened in 1982 and comprises the Barbican Hall, the Barbican Theatre, The Pit, Cinemas One, Two and Three, Barbican Art Gallery, a second gallery The Curve, foyers and public spaces, a library, Lakeside Terrace, [a glasshouse conservatory](#), conference facilities and three restaurants. The City of London Corporation is the founder and principal funder of the Barbican Centre.

The Barbican is home to Resident Orchestra, [London Symphony Orchestra](#); Associate Orchestra, [BBC Symphony Orchestra](#); Associate Ensembles the [Academy of Ancient Music](#) and [Britten Sinfonia](#), Associate Producer [Serious](#), and Artistic Partner [Create](#). Our

Artistic Associates include [Boy Blue Entertainment](#), [Cheek by Jowl](#), Deborah Warner, [Drum Works](#) and [Michael Clark Company](#). International Associates are [Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam](#), [New York Philharmonic](#), [Los Angeles Philharmonic](#), [Gewandhaus Orchestra Leipzig](#) and [Jazz at Lincoln Center](#).

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