

SOUTHBANK CENTRE

Press Release

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Contact: press@southbankcentre.co.uk

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Southbank Centre announces a new series celebrating East and Southeast Asian culture - ESEA Encounters



L-R: Haruomi Hosono © Itaru Hiram; Tianzhuo Chen © Pierre Zylstra; Alex Ho © Marcel Lennartz

The **Southbank Centre** has announced the lineup for a brand new cultural series showcasing East and Southeast Asia and the diaspora - **ESEA Encounters**.

Taking place from **Thursday 17 - Sunday 20 July**, ESEA Encounters will showcase a selection of some of the most exciting contemporary art and culture of East and Southeast Asia in an incredible lineup of performances, music, poetry, literature and art alongside a pop-up market. ESEA Encounters brings together leading artists from across the region and diaspora artists from the UK, continuing the Southbank Centre's ongoing mission to reflect and support the breadth of creative communities represented in London and across the country.

Commenting on ESEA Encounters, Southbank Centre Artistic Director Mark Ball said, *"This is an insight into the work of artists from East and Southeast Asia and its diaspora communities that illuminates the preoccupations and ideas that are driving new artistic forms through a plethora of events - from the Japanese musical legend Haruomi Hosono, to a breathtaking 12-hour theatrical performance in the Queen Elizabeth Hall Foyer by Tianzhuo Chen, alongside a variety of dance, literature and family events across the weekend. This is an open programme welcoming anyone of any age and background to be inspired by the span of creativity in this major cultural hub of the world."*

On Thursday 17 July, a new adaptation of the Chinese folk story Ye Xian will be performed in the Purcell Room - **Ye Xian - A Story Untold**. Combining contemporary music with Chinese and Western instruments, composer Alex Ho presents an intimate reflection on Ye Xian's journey between and beyond different cultures. Supported by the Arts & Humanities Research Council, this music theatre piece is a homage to the beautiful complexities of diasporic identity, weaving together a tapestry of sounds, memories and dreams.

On Friday 18 July, the visionary Chinese artist **Tianzhuo Chen** with his Asian Dope Boys collective will present **TRANCE** - a 12-hour theatre-meets-rave event intertwining dance, performance, music, visual art and pop culture. In the course of the performance's six chapters, **TRANCE** presents a web of science fiction stories that establish connections between traditional rituals and contemporary culture. Taking place in the Queen Elizabeth Hall Foyer, Chen will transform the space into a symbiotic organism that will allow his ecstatic assemblage of spooky, tentacular, lavish shapes to take place. **TRANCE** is a production of partner in crime and Kampagnel, in co-production with Komische Oper Berlin/Schall&Rausch and Dark Mofo.

On Saturday 19 July, the Japanese music icon **Haroumi Hosono** will perform a headline show in the Royal Festival Hall. A founding member of the influential folk-rock act Happy End and part of the pioneering electronic trio Yellow Magic Orchestra. Haroumi Hosono will perform an eclectic set of compositions across his five-decade career, with support from electronic and Cuban music band CHO CO PA CO CHO CO QUIN QUIN.

ESEA Lit Fest will curate a day of literary discussions in the Purcell Room on Saturday 19 July, in association with ESEA Lit Fest. The writer Elaine Castillo and video game producer John Lau will speak to journalist Rebecca Liu about the future of love in an age of disconnection in **Love in the Time of Tech**. Turner Prize-shortlisted artist Pio Abad and novelist Susan Barker will discuss political histories and the spectral in **Seeing Ghosts**. Additionally, the novelist Tash Aw and poet Will Harris will speak about family, the masculine and fragmentation in **Epic Intimacies**.

Additionally, in the St Paul's Pavilion, the poets Troy Cabida, Nina Mingya Powles and Natalie Linh Bolderston will share their own poems alongside poetry from Southeast Asia that has inspired them in **Language and Lineage: Poetry Sharing**.

Also on Saturday 19 July, in the Clore Ballroom, **Ura Matsuri 2025** will celebrate the diverse heritage of the East and Southeast Asian diaspora in the UK. Now in its ninth year and free to attend, resident hostess Japanny-A-Granny will serve up a wide range of delights from pop music headlined by Franks Chickens, dance, Benshi (live film storytelling), classical music on traditional instruments, Chindon Street performance and more. Ura Matsuri will also present **Daylight Ninjas** on the Riverside Terrace in the afternoon - a family celebration of East and Southeast Asian culture.

Across the weekend from Saturday 19 - Sunday 20 July, a pop-up **Yokimono Japanese Summer Market** will take place in the Royal Festival Hall foyers. Traditional and

contemporary Japanese food, culture, arts and crafts will be displayed across the weekend, from vintage kimono, clothing, ceramics, illustrations, books, as well as a variety of delicious Japanese treats, including onigiri rice balls, wagashi, mochi and matcha.

Finally, on Sunday 20 July, the music collective en Rapport will present two audio-visual projects, under the title *You to We*, that probe the connections between the seen and unseen, heard and unheard. Part 1 - ***Ayatori & Lotus Code*** - will explore the themes of being, identity, environment, aloneness and connectivity with a complex layering of captivating visual imagery and evocative live music and sound, created by photographer Yuriko Takagi and musician Ed Jones. Part 2 - ***No One's an Island*** - will be led by award-winning jazz artists Kit Downes and Thomas Morgan as they explore the uniquely refined sound of Emi Makabe's shamisen and vocals, set in a richly nuanced melding of contemporary jazz and Japanese folk music.

Tickets for ESEA Encounters go on sale to members on **Tuesday 1 April** at 10am and to the general public on **Wednesday 2 April** at 10am via southbankcentre.co.uk.

ENDS

Event Listings

[Ye Xian - A Story Untold](#)

Thursday 17 July, Purcell Room, 7pm

[Tianzhuo Chen: TRANCE](#)

Friday 18 July, Queen Elizabeth Hall Foyer, 1pm

[Haruomi Hosono](#)

Saturday 19 July, Royal Festival Hall, 7pm

[Seeing Ghosts: Pio Abad & Susan Barker](#)

Saturday 19 July, Purcell Room, 12.15pm

[Epic Intimacies: Tash Aw & Will Harris](#)

Saturday 19 July, Purcell Room, 3pm

[Language & Lineage: Poetry from SE Asia and the diaspora](#)

Saturday 19 July, St Paul's Pavilion, 4.30pm

[Love in the Time of Tech: Elaine Castillo & John Lau](#)

Saturday 19 July, Purcell Room, 5.45pm

[Ura Matsuri's Daylight Ninjas](#)

Saturday 19 July, Riverside Terrace, 1pm

[Ura Matsuri 2025](#)

Saturday 19 July, Clore Ballroom, 7:15pm

[Yokimono Japanese Summer Market](#)

Saturday 19 July - Sunday 20 July, Clore Ballroom, 12 - 7pm (Saturday) / 11am - 6pm (Sunday)

[Ayatori & Lotus Code](#)

Sunday 20 July, Purcell Room, 3pm

[No One's An Island](#)

Sunday 20 July, Purcell Room, 6pm

NOTES TO EDITORS

For further information, please contact:

press@southbankcentre.co.uk

PRESS IMAGES: [here](#)

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About the Southbank Centre

The Southbank Centre is the UK's largest multi-arts centre and engages the most diverse audiences of any performing arts organisation in the UK. Our biggest venue, the Royal Festival Hall (2,700 seats) is the lasting legacy of the 1951 Festival of Britain and the ambition and values of that project – that arts, ideas, innovation and culture can heal communities and should be available and accessible to everyone – are still our guiding principles today. The Southbank Centre is uniquely able to offer a wide-ranging, inclusive and world-class artistic programme spanning contemporary visual arts, music, dance, performance, literature, comedy and spoken word across the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room, the Hayward Gallery and our free spaces. We are also home to the National Poetry Library, the National Academy for Social Prescribing (NASP) and six resident orchestras (Aurora Orchestra, Chineke! Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, London Sinfonietta, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Philharmonia Orchestra).

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