

BRITTEN'S CENTENARY

Royal Festival Hall and Queen Elizabeth Hall
Saturday 28 – Sunday 29 September

The Rest Is Noise is a year-long festival that digs deep into 20th-century history to reveal the influences on art in general and classical music in particular, inspired by Alex Ross' book *The Rest Is Noise*. We have brought together some of the world's finest orchestras and soloists to perform many of the most significant works of the 20th century. We reveal why these pieces were written and how they transformed the musical language of the modern world. If you're new to 20th-century music, then this is your time to start exploring. There has never been a festival like this.

Jude Kelly, Artistic Director, Southbank Centre

BRITTEN'S CENTENARY 1945 – 1975

'I believe in roots, in associations, in backgrounds, in personal relationships', Benjamin Britten once said, and there is perhaps no composer whose work has so powerfully grappled with ideas of place, identity and community. The windswept fishing town of Aldeburgh was the place Britten called home. His works channel the rhythm of the waves, the vast expanse of the ocean, and the sense of isolation and marginalisation, feelings as English in their way as the imperial certainties of earlier times. Britten was a steely individual – in the fraught Cold War atmosphere after the war, Britten's pacifism, his socialist leanings and his homosexuality contributed to his own sense of being an outsider. While Britten was fully

engaged with the avant-garde music of his time, his constant belief in the duty of the musician to communicate to the modern audience led to his music being viewed with suspicion by some. Britten's dark and brooding operatic masterpiece *Peter Grimes* tells the story of a fisherman driven to a watery grave by a claustrophobic and oppressive village community. First staged a month after VE day, it secured Britten's status as one of the greatest composers of the 20th century. As Britten changed the face of British opera, we look at the other changes that were occurring in post-war Britain from the Windrush Generation to the National Health Service.

All sessions are of a limited capacity and seating is allocated on a first come first served basis.

Britten's Centenary Study Evening, Thursday 3 October, 6.30pm

An informal follow-up evening of facilitated discussion groups offers you an opportunity to reflect and delve deeper into the topics covered this weekend. The main focus for the study evening will be **New communities and a new Britain:** As Britain emerged from the Second World War, it was a nation seeking stability in roots and community as well as embracing new political systems and communities. Benjamin Britten's music grappled with ideas of place and identity, while painters explored landscape with new vigour and intensity. Free but ticketed – booking is essential. Please book online or at the Ticket Office.

Foyles Bookshop: *Continue the Journey*

Throughout *The Rest Is Noise* festival, Foyles book stall is stocking books by many of the writers featured in the programme, as well as books which provide a historical and cultural overview of the period.

Sign up to the journey email at southbankcentre.co.uk/therestisnoise for further content, to catch up on any talks you missed, and to delve deeper into the festival.

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The Rest Is Noise
is inspired by
Alex Ross's book

THE
REST
IS
NOISE

SOUTHBANK
CENTRE

SATURDAY 28 SEPTEMBER

10am – 11am The Front Room at Queen Elizabeth Hall	Breakfast with Britten Grab a coffee and delve inside the workings of some of the music behind <i>The Rest Is Noise</i> festival. Led by amateur John Browne and repetiteur Helen Collyer, today's focus is Britten's <i>Peter Grimes</i> , an epic and powerful operatic masterpiece.
10am – 6pm Sunley Pavilion at Royal Festival Hall, Level 3 Green Side	Grayson Perry: Nostalgia for the Bad Times A selection of films chosen by Grayson Perry from the BFI National Archive highlighting different facets of Britishness in the immediate post-war period.
11.15am – 12.15pm Queen Elizabeth Hall	Shirley Williams on Britten's Britain Baroness Shirley Williams on the social landscape post 1945, an era of recovery for a battered nation. She explores ideas of nationhood, community and the national mood.
12.30pm – 1.30pm The Front Room at Queen Elizabeth Hall	Listen to This Composer and broadcaster Michael Berkeley, who is also Benjamin Britten's godson, introduces and plays recorded extracts of the music featured in <i>Britten's Centenary</i> .
Purcell Room at Queen Elizabeth Hall	Paul Kildea – Benjamin Britten: A Life in the Twentieth Century Controversial, insular and often misunderstood. Paul Kildea discusses Britten's musical genius and his work with BBC correspondent Nick Higham. Includes Q&A.
Level 5 Function Room at Royal Festival Hall	Noise Bites A whistle-stop tour of the key topics of the era. Subjects in this session include Britten's War Requiem , Owen to Jarman , John Piper and set design , BS Johnson and Britten and Mahler .
The Weston Roof Pavilion at Royal Festival Hall, Level 6 Green Side	Britten's Landscape The coast around Aldeburgh was perhaps the most enduring inspiration for Britten's work, which explored the meaning of place and identity. In this event, others share their own inspirations, through readings and discussion of the Suffolk landscape.
12.30pm – 2pm Blue Room, Spirit Level at Royal Festival Hall	Britten's Children John Bridcut's award-winning 2004 documentary travels through Britten's world of childhood and the music it inspired. Some of the boys who were close to Britten talk for the first time about their relationships with him.
2pm – 2.45pm The Clore Ballroom at Royal Festival Hall	Noye's Fludde by Benjamin Britten Come and join Noye, his family, a cast of animals and musicians from the London Philharmonic Orchestra as they escape from the great flood in this colourful opera.
2.30pm – 3.30pm	Listen to This Please see 12.30pm.
Purcell Room at Queen Elizabeth Hall	Georgina Ferry: Early Computing Georgina Ferry, author of <i>A Computer Called Leo</i> , recalls how computers went from code-breaking to cake-making.
Level 5 Function Room at Royal Festival Hall	Noise Bites A whistle-stop tour of the key topics of the era. Subjects in this session include Myfanwy Piper , Coventry Cathedral , British avant-garde poetry and Britten and Henry Moore .
The Weston Pavilion Roof Pavilion at Royal Festival Hall, Level 6 Green Side	Bradley Bulletins Professor Paul Banks and actor Michael Gould reflect on the engaging diaries of Lionel Bradley. A passionate music enthusiast, he chronicled 500,000 words on the concerts he attended, including every performance of the premiere season of <i>Peter Grimes</i> in London.
Blue Room, Spirit Level at Royal Festival Hall	The Burning Fiery Furnace A film of the 1967 performance of Britten's church parable, featuring Peter Pears, John Shirley-Quirk, and Britten as musical director: the longest existing film of Britten at work.
4pm – 4.45pm	Noye's Fludde Please see 2pm.
4pm – 5pm Queen Elizabeth Hall	Britten & Children: Susie Orbach, John Bridcut, Nicholas Riddle and Brett Kahr Chaired by leading writer and psychologist Susie Orbach, this event discusses Britten's relations with boys. It combines testimony from those who knew him, a wider debate about society's view of children and the documentary evidence from Bridcut's <i>Britten's Children</i> .

4pm – 5pm	Bradley Bulletins Please see 2.30pm.
4pm – 5.15pm Blue Room, Spirit Level at Royal Festival Hall	A Time There Was Tony Palmer's 1979 documentary made for the South Bank Show is: 'the most absorbing film ever made about a composer, how he worked, what he thought and what made him what he was.' Featuring Britten, Leonard Bernstein and Janet Baker.
5.30pm – c. 6.15pm Royal Festival Hall	Pre-concert performance Musicians from the Royal College of Music perform Britten's String Quartet no.3 and <i>Phantasy</i> .
6.15pm – 7.45pm	Britten's Children Please see 12.30pm.
7pm – c.10pm Royal Festival Hall	London Philharmonic Orchestra with Vladimir Jurowski: Britten's Peter Grimes* Hear this landmark opera – a chilling tale of marginalisation and persecution. *Not included in the Day or Weekend Pass; tickets from £9 available at the Ticket Offices.
7.45pm – c.9pm Purcell Room at Queen Elizabeth Hall	Auden, Britten, Mitchell & Ravenhill: Cabaret Songs * Jamie McDermott from The Irrepressibles performs cabaret songs by Benjamin Britten, Auden, Conor Mitchell and Mark Ravenhill. *Not included in the Day or Weekend Pass; £15 tickets available at the Ticket Offices.
8pm – 9.45pm Blue Room, Spirit Level at Royal Festival Hall	Benjamin Britten – Peace & Conflict Tony Britten's 2013 drama-documentary covers Britten's time at Gresham's School in Norfolk, which encouraged pupils to address social and political issues and where Britten's hatred of militarism was formed.

SUNDAY 29 SEPTEMBER

10am – 11am Queen Elizabeth Hall	Alex Ross: A New Cultural Universe Alex Ross returns with his most ambitious lecture yet; a whirlwind survey of music from 1945 to 1980, opening with Benjamin Britten's non-conformist conservatism before exploring the sonic eruptions of the post-war avant-garde and minimalism.
10am – 6pm	Grayson Perry: Nostalgia for the Bad Times Please see Saturday 28 September, 10am.
11.30am – 12.30pm The Front Room at Queen Elizabeth Hall	Mark Ravenhill: Britten & Theatre Mark Ravenhill, one of the UK's most versatile playwrights, discusses the theatricality of Britten's music and opera: the timeless themes of love, death and childhood that they evoke and their intrinsic sense of drama. Chaired by Neil Bartlett.
Purcell Room at Queen Elizabeth Hall	Paul Gilroy, Lawrence Scott & Susheila Nasta: The Windrush Generation In 1948 HMS Windrush arrived in London and changed British society for ever. Paul Gilroy, author of <i>The Black Atlantic</i> , joins novelist Lawrence Scott, and Susheila Nasta, editor of <i>Wasafiri</i> , to discuss the rapid changes in Britain after the war.
St Paul's Roof Pavilion at Royal Festival Hall, Level 6 Blue Side	1951: The Festival of Britain Panelists including Wayne Hemingway, Shân Maclennan and historian Barry Turner discuss the political, personal and aesthetic aspects of the festival, whose greatest legacy is the Royal Festival Hall, with chair Juliet Gardiner.
Blue Room, Spirit Level at Royal Festival Hall	Benjamin Britten & His Festival This behind-the-scenes look at the Aldeburgh Festival and the opening of Snape Concert Hall by The Queen was not seen for 40 years after it was made.
1pm – 2pm Purcell Room at Queen Elizabeth Hall	Britten's Poets Poet and novelist Lavinia Greenlaw discusses and examines the poetry Britten set to music during his life, with sung examples by singer James Gilchrist and readings.
The Front Room at Queen Elizabeth Hall	Noise Bites A whistle-stop tour of the key topics of the era. Subjects in this session include Baby Boomers, the teenage revolution, Lyons Tea Shop lithographs, and Angry Young Men and Women.

St Paul's Roof Pavilion at
Royal Festival Hall,
Level 6 Blue Side

Stephen Johnson: The War Requiem, Coventry Cathedral & Reconciliation.
Britten wrote his *War Requiem* for the consecration of Coventry Cathedral, built after the original was destroyed in the war. Broadcaster and writer Stephen Johnson discusses his personal connections with the work and the impact of its premiere.

1pm – 2.30pm

Britten's Children
Please see Saturday 28 September, 12.30pm

3pm – 4pm
White Room, Spirit Level
at Royal Festival Hall

Noise Bites
A whistle-stop tour of the key topics of the era. Subjects in this session include **Imogen Holst, the NHS, Britten and pacifism** and **British New Wave Cinema**.

St Paul's Roof Pavilion at
Royal Festival Hall,
Level 6 Blue Side

Visual Arts Talk: Post-War Pastoral
Alexandra Harris and George Shaw discuss the work of artists John Piper and Graham Sutherland. Chaired by author and critic Patrick Wright.

3pm – 4.45pm
Purcell Room at
Queen Elizabeth Hall

The Spirit of '45: Film Screening
Ken Loach's landmark film is a passionate story of national unity, and a documentary about the Labour government's vision of a fairer society.

A Time There Was
Please see Saturday 28 September at 4pm.

3.15pm – 5.15pm
Queen Elizabeth Hall

Zeitgeist: Britten Films*
Britten's scores for the Post Office film unit were pivotal in honing his style. Hear them with narration from BAFTA and Olivier award-nominated actor Samuel West.
*Not included in the Day or Weekend Pass; £10 tickets available at the Ticket Offices.

5.30pm – 6.30pm
Purcell Room at
Queen Elizabeth Hall

Andrew Zolinsky, Adrian Bradley & Cameron Pyke: Britten & Russia
A piano and cello recital featuring Britten's *Notturmo*, Shostakovich's Prelude & Fugue No.6 and Britten's Sonata No.3. Plus Cameron Pyke talks about the composer's relationship with Shostakovich, Rostropovich and Russia.

The Front Room at
Queen Elizabeth Hall

1945: A New Britain?
Following our screening of *The Spirit of '45*, a panel including historian Juliet Gardiner, Penelope Lively and chair Peter Parker discuss the social and emotional landscape of post-war Britain: one of excitement and visionary thinking, mourning and rationing and physical destruction.

5.30pm – 7.15pm

Benjamin Britten: Peace & Conflict
See Saturday 28 September at 8pm

7pm – 8pm
The Clore Ballroom at
Royal Festival Hall

Sunday Gathering
Jude Kelly, Artistic Director of Southbank Centre, leads a round-up session looking at the themes of the weekend, and invites your feedback on the festival.

8pm – 9.35pm
The Clore Ballroom at
Royal Festival Hall

Feature Film: Moonrise Kingdom
Wes Anderson's critically acclaimed 2012 comedy, starring Bruce Willis, Edward Norton and Bill Murray, is a story of young love. Featuring Britten's music, it is inspired by the director's experience of performing in *Noye's Fludde*.

The next stop in *The Rest Is Noise* is *Post-War World*, next weekend Saturday 5 – Sunday 6 October. See the festival brochure for full listings, or visit southbankcentre.co.uk/therestisnoise