



# Spitalfields music festival

26 JUNE – 8 JULY 2026

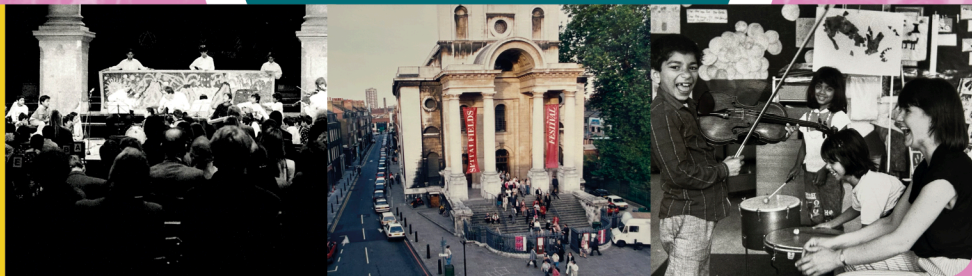
50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

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# 50 YEARS OF SPITALFIELDS MUSIC



In 1976, the musical polymath Richard Hickox organised a fundraising concert to help save Christ Church Spitalfields. It would be the spark which founded Spitalfields Music, and now half a century of music-making in East London.

Spitalfields Music Festival has become a vital incubator of talent, bringing together some of the most exciting artists of our time to share new music, or bring fresh verve to classics. We've now commissioned over 120 new works and counting, and proudly invite audiences to be at the forefront of classical music's ever-evolving story.



**Kicking off our 50<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations, this year we have curated a globe-trotting selection of musical styles and performers, from French and Italian baroque masterworks to contemporary classics with influences from Estonia, China, Pakistan, Japan and – of course – our own dynamic corner of London.**

Every performance tells a different story, highlighting universal truths and human hopes for the next half century, while also reflecting on what has changed since our foundation.

As ever, we delight in the new, offering music for curious ears and minds, across the historic East End. 20 new commissions and premieres await, platforming music from both world-class artists and exciting new voices.

Our home patch is vibrant, inclusive and welcoming. We look forward to sharing it and some wonderful music with you this summer.

# FESTIVAL EVENTS: 26 - 28 JUNE

WORLD PREMIERE

Fri 26 June | 7.30pm | Shoreditch Town Hall

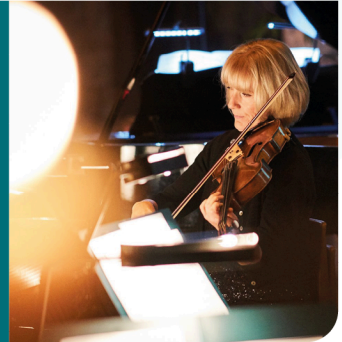
£29

## The Missing Piece...is Peace

£15

In a world ever more shaped by uncertainty and unrest, the need for space to reflect on peace feels urgent.

The **City of London Sinfonia** join us in a programme of string music and spoken word, including new commissions by composer **Philip Herbert** and poems by four diverse voices. Further music by **Sibelius** and **Arvo Pärt** guides a journey inspired by UN Secretary António Guterres and his quote, "Peace is the missing piece".



LONDON PREMIERE

Sat 27 June | 4.30pm & 7.30pm  
Metronome London, Aldgate

£35

## In the Belly of the Beast

£15

**Carolyn Sampson** stars in thrilling new adaptations of **Elisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre's** baroque cantatas. Following on from 2023's five-star revelation *Out of Her Mouth*, **Mahogany Opera** and **Dunedin Consort** return with three stories of biblical men – Adam, Jonah and Jephthah – told from the perspective of women in their orbits. They offer a gripping examination of the human condition, uncovering the true cruelty and arbitrariness of the powers that be.

"A revelation ... a pulsing, vibrant slice of music drama."

★★★★ *The Times*, on *Out of Her Mouth*



Sun 28 June | 11.00am | Starts at Ragged School Museum, E3

## Walking Tour: Dr Barnardo's East End

£15

When Thomas Barnardo left his native Dublin for London's East End in 1866, he was so moved by the poverty in his new neighbourhood, and how that impacted children, that he resolved to help. Join Alastair Owens of Queen Mary University of London to learn about Barnardo's life and work in East London, beginning at the Ragged School he founded.

# 28 JUNE - 3 JULY

Sun 28 June | 2.00pm | State 51 Factory, Shoreditch

£25

## 1976 and All That with Gillian Moore

£15

The Great Heatwave. An economic crisis. The death of Benjamin Britten. The Sex Pistols' *Anarchy in the UK*. And the founding year of Spitalfields Music Festival! Broadcaster and writer Gillian Moore delves into all things 1976. We'll hear about the birth of punk, seismic shifts in the classical music world, and the global events that made 1976 such a defining year.



WORLD PREMIERES

Wed 1 July | 7.00pm | Rich Mix, Shoreditch

£20

## No Man Is an Island

£15

Ten years on from one of the defining political events of the 21<sup>st</sup> century – the referendum that sparked the UK's decision to leave the EU – three new commissions explore what it means to be European today. Soprano Mimi Doulton performs new works by Elaine Mitchener, Linda Buckley and Krööt-Kärt Kaev which probe identity, connectedness and isolation, interspersed with reflections from across the continent on the political landscape we now inhabit.



UK PREMIERES

Thu 2 July | 7.00pm | The Dutch Church, City of London

£29

## Seasonal Quartet:

£15

## New European Ensemble ft. Ali Smith

Ali Smith's *Seasonal Quartet* novels explore the interconnectedness of the past and present, weaving threads across generations, and capturing the unique context of our modern world. With the New European Ensemble, she adds a musical dimension - including premieres of pieces based on *Autumn*, *Winter*, *Spring* and *Summer*, interspersed with readings from her books.



LONDON PREMIERES

Fri 3 July | 7.30pm | St Giles Cripplegate, Barbican

£25

## The Carice Singers: The Song Sung True

£15

Hear the human voice in all its versatile beauty: Judith Weir's *The Song Sung True* stars alongside rarely heard 20<sup>th</sup>-century masterpieces by Jean-Yves Daniel-Lesur and Luigi Dallapiccola – each taking ancient ideas and reimagining them in their own technicolour musical languages. The spirit of innovation continues with four new works by a wave of fresh talent: Cloe Hotham, Hannah Siddiqui, Sam Buttler and George W. Parris.



## 4 - 5 JULY



Sat 4 July | 4.00pm | Starts at Altab Ali Park, Aldgate East

### Walking Tour: Charles Booth's Victorian Whitechapel

£15

Follow the route taken by Charles Booth in 1898 to research his famous poverty maps. Guided by Sean Patterson, you'll experience one of London's most historic and vibrant quarters, shaped by 400 years of Irish, Jewish, Bangladeshi and Huguenot immigration. The voices of writers such as Jack London, Israel Zangwill and Samuel Pepys vie with contemporary accounts to paint a picture of a constantly changing environment and population.

WORLD PREMIERE

Sat 4 July | 7.00pm | Rich Mix, Shoreditch

£20

### Standard Issue

£15

Standard Issue are causing a stir with their bold programming. In their Spitalfields Music Festival debut, the ensemble brings us a vibrant mix of contemporary music from female-identifying music creators, including a world premiere from composer and ecologist **Kate Milligan** exploring the hidden wildlife in London's crumbling Islington Water Tunnel.

Alongside this, experience music about black box flight recorders, viking runes, and imagined memories by a host of exciting contemporary composers.



Sun 5 July | 2.00pm | Starts at Whitechapel Station

### Walking Tour: Monica Ali's Brick Lane

£15

Migrants from Bengal have been arriving in London for centuries. Take a guided walk along Brick Lane with Dr Laura Agustin and hear Bengali/Bangladeshi history, alongside short readings from Monica Ali's classic feminist novel.

"An epic yet intimate novel set in the Asian community in London's East End, full of warm humour and strikingly imagined by Monica Ali"

*The Booker Prize on Brick Lane, shortlisted in 2003*

WORLD PREMIERES

Sun 5 July | 6.00pm | Whitechapel Town Hall

£20

### Slide Action

£15

Multi-award-winning trombone quartet Slide Action are redefining the possibilities of the instrument.

Working with visionary composers including world premieres from **Ben Nobuto**, **Rockey Sun Keting** and **Omri Kochavi**, they bring trombone repertoire into new frontiers.

"This exhilarating blast is the future of brass" *BBC Music Magazine*



6 - 8 JULY

Book at [spitalfieldsmusic.org.uk](http://spitalfieldsmusic.org.uk)



Mon 6 July | 1.00pm

### Walking Tour: Young People's Takeover

£15

Year 9 students from Whitechapel, working with geographer, teacher, and East End tour guide Kate Amis, have designed and planned a walking tour around Spitalfields Market and Brick Lane. Drawing on music, art, geography, food and social history, students will guide you through the fascinating heritage of their neighbourhoods.

Mon 6 July | 7.00pm | Wilton's Music Hall, Shadwell

£29

### Tom Hickox ft. New Young Voice Collective

£14.50

Singer, songwriter and composer, Tom Hickox is a musical storyteller par excellence. His rumbling baritone voice imparts heartbreaking tales of disasters at sea, unconsummated love affairs, and the quirks of British road trips.

"Tom Hickox is a troubadour of our times. His art is timeless, weaving magical tales and composing mesmerising tunes ... His sheer talent is plain to see." *Louder Than War, 2025*



WORLD PREMIERE



Tue 7 July | 7.00pm | Wilton's Music Hall, Shadwell

### Mercury Songs

£29

£14.50

Emily Levy & Matthew Bourne's *Mercury Songs* is a powerful reimagining of British folk, rooted in our country's radical history and inspired by Julia Varley, who devoted her life to improving the working conditions of women and was jailed twice for her protests.

A 5-piece ensemble draws from traditional British folk songs and a rich archive to tell stories of empowered women, their agency and their defiance.

Wed 8 July | 7.00pm

Chapel of St Peter ad Vincula, Tower of London

£50

### Missa Papae Marcelli at the Tower of London

£15

Masterpieces of polyphony are paired with shimmering organ works, performed in the Tower of London's historic chapel.

Palestrina was the pre-eminent composer of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, but his pupil **Francesco Soriano** had an equally astonishing understanding of polyphony. Hear Soriano's arrangement of the *Missa Papae Marcelli* alongside timeless music by Palestrina.



# IN THE COMMUNITY

Alongside our festival, Spitalfields Music works throughout the year on award-winning community projects. We also run Skills Lab, a professional training course for music facilitators working in community settings.

This summer we'll be taking music into local schools, bringing hundreds of school children together for The Primary Big Sing, and working with teenagers to help share their walking tours of their local area with festival attendees. We'd love you to join us and experience the brilliant talents of Tower Hamlets' young people in action.



Mon 6 July | 1.00pm

£15

## Walking Tour: Young People's Takeover

Teenagers from Whitechapel, working with geographer, teacher, and East End tour guide Kate Amis, have designed and planned a walking tour around Spitalfields Market and Brick Lane. Drawing on music, art, geography, food and social history, students will guide you through the fascinating heritage of their neighbourhoods.

WORLD PREMIERE

Mon 7 July | 12.15pm | Whitechapel Town Hall

## The Primary Big Sing

*Free, book online*

Over 200 children from our Neighbourhood Schools come together to connect and celebrate through song! Featuring high-energy songs, including a new commission by composer Anna Pool for the young people of East London, this performance is sure to leave you feeling uplifted by the sheer joy of singing.



*Visiting schools throughout the summer term*

## Schools Tour: Royal Academy of Music

Our long-standing collaboration with the Royal Academy of Music brings musicians into East London KS1 classrooms.

Performed by Open Academy Fellows with workshop leader Jessie Maryon Davies, this unique ensemble of harp, cello, flute, and French horn leads an captivating session combining music, movement, and participation.

# TICKETS

Find out more about each festival event  
and book tickets online at

[spitalfieldsmusic.org.uk](https://spitalfieldsmusic.org.uk)

or call the Box Office on 07311 622393

Under 30? Enjoy £15 tickets to any festival event



## HELP FUEL THE NEXT 50 YEARS OF MUSIC

Whether via a one-off donation, becoming a member, or supporting us through a company or charitable trust, your support truly helps to improve lives through music.

Find out more at [spitalfieldsmusic.org.uk/donate](https://spitalfieldsmusic.org.uk/donate), or email Michelle Hromin, our Fundraising Manager, at [michelle.hromin@spitalfieldsmusic.org.uk](mailto:michelle.hromin@spitalfieldsmusic.org.uk)

## WITH THANKS

The festival – and all our community and education work – is only possible thanks to the amazing generosity of people like you, our Members, Trusts & Foundations and other funding bodies.

### CORE FUNDERS

Arts Council England  
The Mary Kinross Charitable Foundation  
The SHM Foundation  
Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation

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