

# National Theatre

Wednesday 10 May 2023

## NATIONAL THEATRE ANNOUNCES RIVER STAGE 2023 PROGRAMME



- Enjoy a summer of entertainment with London's largest free outdoor arts festival, **River Stage**, opening from 9 June until 2 July 2023
- Expect four weekends filled with live music, dance, creative workshops for all ages and more curated by UK's leading arts and culture organisations on the South Bank
- This year's River Stage partners are **The Glory** (9–11 June), **James Cousins Company** (16–18 June), **Shubbak Festival** (23–25 June) and **Hackney Empire's Young Producers** (30 June – 2 July)
- Indulge in the best of London's street food at KERB Presents: The Table, London's longest banqueting table at the National Theatre, where food and theatre meet

Now in its seventh year, the National Theatre's **River Stage** returns with an eclectic summer programme on the South Bank. This year's programme platforms leading arts and culture

organisations from across London, with events including unmissable club nights, performances from legendary drag artists, dance companies, music, comedy and more.

**The Glory** return to River Stage from **9–11 June** to kick-off the festival with a weekend packed with musical sing-a-longs, cabaret, live-drawing and more. **John Sizzle** brings a selection of classic Glory hits, and **Jonny Woo** hosts special guests including **Sooz Kempner**, **Adam Perchard** and **George Bourgeois** for a night of comedy and musical theatre. Dance to a soundtrack of RnB and disco with rising cabaret stars from the Global Majority at *Shade* hosted by **Rhys' Pieces**. Glamorous ghost whisperer **Séayoncé** will summon spirited high jinks from beyond the grave with hilarious stand-up and original songs. Returning this year are **Bolly Illusion** celebrating London's South Asian queer community and **Drag Life Drawing**, a daytime workshop for the whole family.

Making their River Stage debut on **16–18 June**, **James Cousins Company** bring an exciting line-up of dance and music to the South Bank. The company reimagines their hit immersive production **We Are As Gods** turning the South Bank into a club night. **James Cousins** will lead a **Guys and Dolls workshop** teaching the choreography from Adelaide's Hot Box. A conversation with **Arlene Philips** sees her share stories from the highlights of her career. Get your dancing shoes on at the **Line Dancing** and **Salsa Workshops** or dance the night away at the **After Party** with songs remixed by **PÄTO**.

**Shubbak Festival** makes its way to the South Bank from **23–25 June** showcasing groundbreaking contemporary Arab arts through a cutting-edge programme with over 20 incredible acts across the weekend. In collaboration with choir singers, string players and more, **Zahed Sultan** presents a series of live performances that celebrates people on the margins of society. Featured on Boiler Room and a pioneer of the SWANA/UK music scene, **Saliah** will be bringing a high-energy set that remixes SWANA classics with modern club sounds. Artist **Aya Haidar** invites audiences of all ages to join in stitching and sharing fabric to build a rich layered tapestry that transcends borders. Audiences are invited to an array of musical styles performed by **Beirut Groove Collective**, **Amira Kheir**, **Berber Diffusion** and more.

**Hackney Empire's Young Producers** return from **30 June – 2 July** for a weekend curated by the next generation of young creatives, aged 14-21. Expect a weekend of exceptional young talent including performances by award-winning UK hip-hop dance company **Boy Blue**, an interactive movement workshop by **The Pappy Show** and celebrate Pride weekend with the **Young Producers Sing Along**. Singer, songwriter and producer **Kali Claire**, who has previously worked with the likes of *Alicia Keys* and *Mabel*, will be headlining the Saturday

programme. Hosted by **Scully** (No Signal Radio), audiences can expect dance crews, rap battles, big vocals, steel pans, grime, '90s bangers, alongside some of the latest crazes tearing up TikTok.

**KERB** brings their open-air street food market to the National Theatre once again, opening from May to September. London's longest banqueting table will be ready for visitors to tuck into seasonal street food specials such as pork belly and chicken thigh Portuguese bifanas, fluffy Korean bao buns, Venezuelan cachapas, Japanese ramen, Nashville fried chicken, Indian thalis, Sicilian style deep pan pizzas and wildly flavoured ice cream.

River Stage will run from Friday 9 June until Sunday 2 July 2023. Please find the full programme details [here](#).

**ENDS**

### **Notes to Editor**

For images [click here](#).

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### **About the National Theatre**

The National Theatre's mission is to make world-class theatre, for everyone. The National Theatre creates and shares unforgettable stories with audiences across the UK and around the world. On its own stages, on tour, in schools, on cinema screens and streaming at home, it strives to be accessible, inclusive and sustainable.

The National Theatre empowers artists and craftspeople to make world-leading work, investing in talent and developing new productions with a wide range of theatre companies at its New Work Department. Our nation thrives on fresh talent and new ideas, so the National Theatre works with young people and teachers right across the UK through performance, writing and technical programmes to ignite the creativity of the next generation. Together with communities, the National Theatre creates ambitious works of participatory theatre in deep partnerships that unite theatres and local organisations – showing that nothing brings us together like theatre.

The National Theatre needs your support to shape a bright, creative future. For more information, please visit [nationaltheatre.org.uk](http://nationaltheatre.org.uk)

### **About The Glory**

The Glory is East London's legendary queer bar, drag hothouse, LGBTQIA+ performance venue, nightclub and curators of major events and festivals across the country. Opened in 2014 by iconic London drag queens Jonny Woo and John Sizzle, plus infamous party-

starter, and TV director Colin Rothbart, with many of their staff being influential creatives and some of their performers such as Bimini and Crystal, to name but two, end up gracing the UK's television sets! Not just a pub, The Glory can be found at leading festivals like Glastonbury, Latitude and Mighty Hoopla and regularly features on documentaries and features.

[www.theglory.co](http://www.theglory.co)

### **About James Cousins Company**

James Cousins Company create bold, refreshing dance experiences that inspire and entertain audiences by transporting them into unique worlds on stage, screen and beyond.

Founded in 2014 the company, led by choreographer James Cousins, has been on 4 extensive UK tours as well as presented and created work across Europe, South America, and Asia. The film *Within Her Eyes* features on the GCSE Dance syllabus and in 2019 JCC was nominated for Best Independent Company at the National Dance Awards. The company's latest immersive production *We Are As Gods* was a sell-out success transforming the iconic Battersea Arts Centre with an explosive celebration of a new world.

[www.jamescousinscompany.com](http://www.jamescousinscompany.com)

### **About Shubbak Festival**

Shubbak Festival is the UK's premier biennial festival of contemporary Arab arts and cultures, celebrating its seventh edition this year with over 200 artists and 80 events. The Festival is taking place across London, key UK locations, and online throughout 23rd June - 9th July 2023.

Cutting-edge artists feature alongside distinguished names in its ambitious programmes of premieres and new commissions. With a vibrant mix of visual arts, film, music, theatre, dance, literature and debates, Shubbak showcases the diversity and innovation of contemporary Arab arts and cultures, and celebrates what makes it distinctive to itself.

[www.shubbak.co.uk](http://www.shubbak.co.uk)

### **About Hackney Empire**

Hackney Empire's Young Producers return to the National Theatre's River Stage with three free days of youth-fuelled talent, unbelievable energy, and pure vibes. Curated by the next generation of young creatives aged 14-21, the Young Producers are serving the hottest London's talent blowing up right now.

Since 1901, Hackney Empire has been creating unforgettable experiences for audiences and artists, young people and communities, on and off its stage. Situated at the heart of one of the most exciting and diverse communities in London we are uniquely placed to create life-changing, life-affirming cultural experiences and give a voice to the next generation of artists. Each year they welcome audiences of up to 200,000 people into their beautiful Grade II\* listed building and create a safe space for 4,000 young people to build their confidence and transform their aspirations.

[www.hackneyempire.co.uk](http://www.hackneyempire.co.uk)