



ST JOHN'S SMITH SQUARE

Southbank Sinfonia at St John's Smith Square Building a Sound Future Together

Southbank Sinfonia and **St John's Smith Square** are excited to announce their strategic merger, forming **Southbank Sinfonia at St John's Smith Square**. A wonderful opportunity will arise by these two charities merging into one new organisation thereby providing a dynamic and permanent home for a unique programme of first-class creative musical development.

As one new charity, **Southbank Sinfonia at St John's Smith Square** will create a hub for world-class musical development, placing emerging talent at the heart of the organisation. It will offer a permanent home for a renowned orchestral fellowship programme and act as a beacon for the future of classical music, embracing versatility and innovation in everything from great symphonies to bold new musical adventures.

The pandemic has created an exceptional range of challenges for the arts and culture and its effects have been felt particularly acutely by those on the brink of their careers, where so many opportunities have been lost. Both Southbank Sinfonia and St John's Smith Square have proved their resilience and inventive flexibility during these challenging times, creating new possibilities and experiences and reacting with agility and creativity. Inspired to achieve sustainability by coming together, **Southbank Sinfonia at St John's Smith Square** will be a catalyst for hope and renewal, giving a home to the next generation of orchestral musicians and embedding a creative community at our iconic concert hall in the heart of Westminster.

Southbank Sinfonia at St John's Smith Square will deliver an annual programme of orchestral training and development, incorporating workshops, projects and concerts that engage communities in the joy and benefits of music-making. The well-established and much-loved programme of regular festivals (eg. Christmas Festival, Holy Week Festival & London Festival of Baroque Music) will continue, as will the programme of exciting concerts and events from professional, community and education partners.

Simon Over (Music Director, Southbank Sinfonia) and Richard Heason (Director, St John's Smith Square) will lead **Southbank Sinfonia at St John's Smith Square** as Co-Directors. Southbank Sinfonia will make St John's Smith Square its home from April 2021, with a free live-streamed concert on Thursday 15 April - the first in a new series - and it is anticipated that the merger will be fully effected by the summer of 2021.

For more information and interviews please contact:
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Quotes

Duncan Sutherland, Chair of Southbank Sinfonia said

"I am incredibly excited to see these two wonderful organisations come together which will provide a much needed beacon of light to arts organisations. Our exciting strategy for the future will make Southbank Sinfonia at St John's Smith Square one of the most accessible and creative venues in the country housing a world class orchestral fellowship based on providing a step up for young musicians, steeped in connections with local communities and education. We are looking forward to working with all of our partners and supporters to plan this bright future together. I would like to sincerely thank the trustees and staff of both organisations for their hard work in getting to this point."

Martin Smith, Chair of St John's Smith Square said

"This merger involves a much-loved venue with a world-class acoustic tying the knot with an orchestra built for the newest generation of exceptional talents. The arrangement is future-facing and will be transformational for both parties. It provides a beacon of hope for young musicians in exceptionally difficult times."

Simon Over, Music Director of Southbank Sinfonia and Co-Director designate of Southbank Sinfonia at St John's Smith Square said

"I've always loved performing at St John's Smith Square. Southbank Sinfonia has enjoyed an ongoing relationship with the hall since its inaugural concert there in 2002, and in its 20th anniversary next year, the moment is right for the orchestra to enter the next stage of its development, making this splendid hall its permanent home. Working together, Southbank Sinfonia and St John's Smith Square can realise their full potential."

Richard Heason, Director of St John's Smith Square and Co-Director designate of Southbank Sinfonia at St John's Smith Square said

"We're incredibly excited to be welcoming 33 wonderfully talented young musicians to become the driving force behind the creative programme at St John's Smith Square. St John's Smith Square is a stunning building with a fabulous reputation for music-making which embraces everything from local groups to world-class artists. Placing emerging talent at the heart of the organisation guarantees the future of our musical heritage."

Notes to Editors

Each year, **Southbank Sinfonia** welcomes 33 of the world's most promising graduate musicians to embark on its renowned fellowship. The orchestra was founded in 2002 by Music Director Simon Over to provide graduate musicians with a much-needed springboard into the profession. More than just an orchestra, this is a community where young talents can find their own creative strengths, fulfil personal goals, make lasting contacts, and take their musicianship to new frontiers.

Alongside unparalleled opportunities to gain crucial experience in orchestral repertoire, chamber music, opera, dance and theatre, Southbank Sinfonia celebrates how intrepid young players can have a uniquely important voice in the sector, shaping the future of their artform. Whether in Rush Hour Concerts, the hit production of Amadeus at the National Theatre, or through collaborations with the Royal Opera House, Sadler's Wells or boundary-pushing guest artists, Southbank Sinfonia's musicians bring fresh resonance to the stage.

To date, almost 600 musicians have completed the programme and can be found worldwide in leading orchestras and acclaimed chamber ensembles, as inspiring music educators, and pioneering their own entrepreneurial musical ventures.

A unique music venue in central London and a masterpiece of English Baroque architecture, **St John's Smith Square** was designed and built by Thomas Archer and has survived fire, lightning, bomb plots and the Blitz.

The beauty of the building is matched by an exceptional acoustic and from its restoration as both church and concert hall in the late 1960s, St John's has presented some of the finest classical talent in a programme featuring choirs, chamber orchestras and period instrument groups.

Home to the annual Christmas Festival, Holy Week Festival and the London Festival of Baroque Music, St John's Smith Square welcomes around 100,000 people each year for a programme of approximately 300 concerts, along with further recordings, rehearsals and filming work.

www.southbanksinfonia.co.uk www.sjss.org.uk