



Imogen Cooper (20 Jun)

Sat 20 classical
**Aurora Orchestra
 with Imogen Cooper**

Nature Unwrapped
Mozart's Piano

Hall One 7pm
 £24.50–£64.50 | Savers £9.50

Copland *Appalachian Spring*
Mozart Piano Concerto No. 25 in C,
 K503
 Symphony No. 38 in D, K504 *Prague*

Imogen Cooper piano
Aurora Orchestra
Nicholas Collon conductor

Aurora plunges into the vast American heartland of Copland's *Appalachian Spring*, a work sprinkled with infectious, light-footed melodies and life-affirming spirit. Pianist Imogen Cooper brings her dazzling playing to Mozart's majestic Piano Concerto No. 25 in C major – a piece seen by some as the most ambitious and symphonic of all of his piano concertos. Concluding the programme, the grand *Prague* Symphony sees Mozart at his most inventive, taking the symphonic form to new heights with the richness of his contrapuntal and harmonic exploration.

Sat 20 classical
**The Lock-In:
 Songs of Travel**

Nature Unwrapped
Mozart's Piano

Hall Two 9.15pm
 £9.50

Aurora trombonist Matt Gee journeys through the bleak, wintry landscape of Schubert's *Winterreise* in a unique arrangement for trombone and ensemble.



Madison Violet (24 Jun)

Mon 22 comedy
The Guilty Feminist

Hall One 7.30pm
 £16.50 | Savers £9.50

Ever felt like you should be better at feminism? Join comedian Deborah Frances-White for her comedy podcast, recorded in front of a live audience. Each episode Deborah and her guests discuss their noble goals as 21st-century feminists and the paradoxes and insecurities which undermine them. The podcast has become a phenomenon, with over 60 million downloads since 2016.

Wed 24 folk
Madison Violet

Hall Two 8pm
 £14.50 | Under 30s £8.50

With heart-wrenching songwriting and luscious harmonies combined with the natural storytelling of folk, the rhythms of Americana and catchy pop hooks, Madison Violet have been captivating audiences and critics alike for two decades.

Thu 25 folk
Steve Tilston

Hall Two 8pm
 £14.50 | Under 30s £8.50

Folk legend Steve Tilston returns to Kings Place to celebrate his 70th



Sumida River (27 Jun)

birthday as well as his half-century career milestone. Steve marks his semicentennial as a professional musician on top form with no signs of slowing down. One of our most celebrated songsmiths, Steve is widely recognised within the worlds of folk and contemporary music: the words, arrangements and subtle, quite superb guitar playing could belong to no one else. Come and celebrate the milestone birthday and landmark anniversary of this iconic and greatly admired artist.

Fri 26 words
**Minoru IV Gensho
 Umewaka**
In conversation

Noh Reimagined

Hall One 6pm
 Free (but call box office on 020 7520 1490 to reserve your seat)

Umewaka Minoru Gensho *shite* actor with **Dr David Hughes**, SOAS, University of London

Minoru IV Gensho Umewaka, Living National Treasure and 56th head of the renowned Umewaka family, is one of the greatest and most daring representatives of Noh theatre alive today. As well as mastering the classical repertoire, he has revived ancient Noh plays and created new works, introducing innovations that have revitalised this classical art

form. In his very first appearance in the UK, Minoru Umewaka reflects on his extraordinary journey as a Noh *shite* (lead) actor, discussing his experience of the art form and its powerful relationship with nature in conversation with Dr David Hughes of SOAS.

Fri 26 classical
Saigyo-Zakura
(Saigyo's Cherry Tree)

Noh Reimagined
Nature Unwrapped

Hall One 7.30pm
 £34.50 – £16.50 | Savers £9.50

Our classical programme includes highlights from Noh playwright Zeami's masterpiece *Saigyo-Zakura* (Saigyo's Cherry Tree) as performed by Minoru IV Gensho Umewaka. In the story, we overhear a conversation between Saigyo, a famed poet-monk, and the spirit of an old cherry tree in a spring garden at midnight. Selections of dance and music from the popular Noh repertoire will also be performed as part of the programme.

Fri 26 contemporary
Song of the Birds

Noh Reimagined
Nature Unwrapped

Hall Two 9.45pm
 £12.50 | Savers £9.50

Piers Adams recorders
Yukihiro Isso flute

Hear the songs of birds reimagined afresh in a cross-cultural collaboration between British recorder virtuoso Piers Adams, leader of the celebrated Baroque quartet Red Priest, and Japanese Nohkan flute maestro Yukihiro Isso. Together they explore the sounds of birds in the Baroque and Noh repertoires, including *Sagi-Midare* (The Heron's Dance), and via new compositions specially written for *Noh Reimagined*.

Sat 27 learning
**Noh Movement
 Workshop**

Noh Reimagined
Nature Unwrapped

Hall Two 11am
 £12.50 | Savers £9.50

Two shite actors

Hisao Kanze (1925–1978), one of the greatest *shite* actors (the masked lead in a Noh play) of all time, was often asked how he wanted to act on stage. He replied, 'I long to stand like a flower in nature.' In this workshop, two *shite* actors offer a hands-on chance to learn the basic movement patterns of Noh, including use of physical space and breath control. Attendees should bring a pair of tabi or white socks to wear during the workshop.



Yukihiro Isso (26 Jun)



Noh and the natural world

As *Noh Reimagined* returns to Kings Place, curator **Akiko Yanagisawa** reflects on the centrality of nature to Japanese culture

Since ancient times, Japanese people have lived with natural phenomena, such as earthquakes and tsunamis, that could destroy them at any time. Despite, or perhaps because of this, the Japanese have long worshipped the natural world, believing that *kami* (deity spirits) reside in every aspect of nature. The natural world is something to celebrate and admire, a part of everyday life. Nature is central to culture in Japan, including folk festivals, food, music, poetry, design and gardening.

In Japanese Noh theatre, there are many stories in which humans live in harmony with nature. In *Takasago*, an old couple confess that they are an incarnation of two pine trees. In *Saigyō-Zakura* (highlights of which will be performed at this year's *Noh Reimagined*), the renowned 12th-century monk and poet Saigyō converses with the spirit of an old cherry tree. In a famous poem, he even dreams of

The Japanese have long worshipped the natural world, believing that *kami* (deity spirits) reside in every aspect of nature

dying surrounded by blossoms: 'Let me die in spring under the blossoming trees; let it be around that full moon of Kisaragi month.'

Older people are respected figures in Noh, probably because ageing is regarded as a sublime work of nature. The transience of nature, knowing that life leads to death and we are part of this natural process, lies deep in the hearts and minds of Japanese people, as reflected in the concept of *mujo*, meaning impermanence, transience or mutability.

For me, Noh is the art of *mujo*. Noh often features ghosts telling stories of their past lives. These stories do not have conventional happy endings; instead, the characters succumb to and accept their fates, reminding us that we human beings are part of a natural cycle of life and death.

This afternoon, I felt a sense of *mujo* as I walked under a row of cherry trees, hearing a chorus of cicadas. Looking down at the pavement, I saw several cicadas whose short lives were over. Noh – the oldest performing art in the world – quietly tells us how to perceive our relationship to nature by drawing our attention to this same idea: that we are part of the natural world, subject to the same cycles, the same powers of nature, as every living thing.

Noh Reimagined

Fri 26 & Sat 27 Jun
See listings for details

Sat 27 **Sumida River in Sign Language** classical

Noh Reimagined
Nature Unwrapped

Hall Two 2pm
£12.50 | Savers £9.50

With **Chisato Minamimura** as the Mother

Sumida River in Sign Language brings the natural and human worlds together in a drama of physical gesture and facial expression. Performed by deaf, unmasked actors, the play is suffused with the life of the river: pines bending in the wind, flocks of Miyako birds and mist swirling in from the bay. This poignant tale was reimagined by Benjamin Britten in his chamber opera *Curlew River*. It is spring, a time of growth; a ferryman waits for customers when a mother arrives in search of her lost son.

Sat 27 **Understanding Noh Seminar** words

Noh Reimagined

St Pancras Room 3pm
£6.50

Professor Andrew Gerstle SOAS, University of London

This seminar by Professor Andrew Gerstle of SOAS, an eminent scholar specialising in Japanese traditional theatre, offers tips on how to appreciate Noh, as well as answering any questions you might have about its history, aesthetic concepts, stories, and performance traditions.

Sat 27 **Cerith Wyn Evans Noh (A-Drift)** contemporary|art

Noh Reimagined

Hall Two 5pm
£14.50 | Savers £9.50

Film screening: approx. 1 hour duration

Cerith Wyn Evans is one of the most significant figures on the contemporary art scene, and was awarded the Hepworth Prize for Sculpture in 2018. For *Noh Reimagined*, Evans draws on his deep knowledge and love of Noh theatre to create a new film piece, as well as collaborating with Noh musicians to produce a live performance. Evans explains: 'My contribution to this recognition of Noh performativity is born from the joys this art brings to me. I have



Thick & Tight (27 Jun)

been lucky enough to familiarise myself with around 200 Noh performances over the last 25 years... Noh in the "expanded field" is apt to misinterpretation... the "spirit" of Noh is my heart doctor.'

Sat 27 **Pre-concert talk Eleanor Perry & Daniel Hay-Gordon** words

Noh Reimagined

St Pancras Room 6pm
Free (but call Box Office on 020 7520 1490 to reserve your seat)

Dancer-actors Eleanor Perry and Daniel Hay-Gordon of Thick & Tight discuss the creative process behind their new piece, which is inspired by the *Kyogen* tradition (humorous sketches used as interludes during a longer Noh performance) and will premiere in the Hall One evening concert.

Sat 27 **Hengenka The Holistic Energies of Nature** contemporary|classical

Noh Reimagined
Nature Unwrapped

Hall One 7.30pm
£34.50 – £16.50 | Savers £9.50

Noh theatre merges with Western queer performance in a new work by the award-winning dance duo Thick & Tight, who explore new visions arising from ancient traditions. Opening with a classical dance piece, the evening culminates in the UK premiere of *Hengenka*, composed by Yukihiro and for which the duo are joined by all Noh performers. The work celebrates the awe-inspiring power of nature, with the title invoking the constant energy, transformation and interconnectedness of the natural world. The *Tengu* monster role, originally played by a *Kyogen* actor when the piece was premiered in 2017, is here choreographed and performed by Thick & Tight in a new interpretation.