



Windrush Day: Carrying the Flame

22 June, 2026





Welcome to World Heart Beat and tonight's special concert

Windrush Day 2026: Carrying the Flame

**With special guests Baroness Floella Benjamin, OM DBE DL, Marsha De Cordova, MP
Presented by Cleveland Watkiss, MBE**

Carrying the Flame, presented by World Heart Beat, celebrates Windrush Day 2026; a nationwide movement to honour the lasting contributions and cultural legacy of migrants who helped shape post-war Britain, with particular recognition of the African-Caribbean passengers who arrived aboard the HMT Empire Windrush in 1948, now known as the Windrush generation.

The programme is curated by Ava Joseph and Ayo Vincent, developed in collaboration with members of the Windrush community, will include influence from the genres of Reggae, Ska, Calypso, and Jazz. The concert reflects the rich cultural fabric across our nation, celebrating a vibrant mix of voices and perspectives to ensure creativity continues to flourish across communities.





Programme

Narrated by Cleveland Watkiss, MBE

Welcome from Marsha De Cordova, MP

Poem: 'The British' *Benjamin Zephaniah*

Introduction from Cleveland Watkiss

'Sammy Dead' *Byron Lee & The Dragonaires*
Embassy Gardens Vocalists

Baroness Floella Benjamin reads excerpts from

'Coming to England'

'Yellow Bird' The Paragons

*Malik Bayley, Saki Okuyama, Eleonora Nicolosi, Akos Agymang-Yeboah,
Roselyn Agymang-Yeboah, Eula Flores, Lilja Skipper-Ramsey*

Poem: 'Windrush Child' *John Agard*

'Surfin' Ernest Ranglin

'On the scene / Close up' Dizzy Reece

*Malachi Murrell, Nathaniel Murrell, Liam Nash, Dylan Mora, Prince Masara
Sebastian Rodriguez-Florez*

'The Rake' Dizzy Reece

*Nickolas Rodriguez-Florez, Olivia Ryzbarck, Vivian Nash,
Justin Vaitulevicius, Sasha Nazarov, Sebastian Rodriguez-Florez*

'Ghost Town' The Specials

*HeartBeat House Band, Dede Agyemang-Yeboah,
Camilla Dudley-Wint, Shayla Streuli Fidalgo*

'Candles' Aswad

*HeartBeat House Band, Amelia-Rose Simpson, L'Wren St. Clair,
Antonina Budnik*



—
'The Windrush Legacy in British Music and Culture'
read by Ava Joseph and Ayo Vincent

—
Poem: 'Island Man' *Grace Nichols*

—
'Silly Games' *Janet Kay*

HeartBeat House Band, Ava Joseph, Cleveland Watkiss

—
'Keep it like it is' *Lousia Mark*

HeartBeat House Band, Soloist: *Kaya Moreria*

'I've been pushed around' *Blue Rivers & The Maroons*

HeartBeat House Band, Soloist: *Ava Joseph*

—
'A memoir of my grandad, written by my Uncle
Julian' narrated by Ava Joseph

—
'Milk & Honey' *Hollie Cook*

HeartBeat House Band, Soloist: *L'wren St. Clair*

—
Final reflections

—
Poem: 'Human Family' *Maya Angelou*

—
'Don't stop the carnival' *Sonny Rollins*

Malachi Murrell, Nathaniel Murrell, Liam Nash, Dylan Mora, Prince Masara
Sebastian Rodriguez-Florez, Nickolas Rodriguez-Florez, Olivia Ryzbarck, Vivian Nash,
Justin Vaitulevicius, Sasha Nazarov, Sebastian Rodriguez-Florez,

—
Finish

Please join us for a post-show ice cream courtesy of Oddono's Battersea

A huge thank you to Elizabeth Oddono for the ice cream
A huge thank you to Marie Hansen, MBE, for providing the
delicious flavours of the Carribean

A huge thank you to Joshua Joseph for the punch

A huge thank you to the front of house, production and
programming teams at World Heart Beat





Welcome from Sahana Gero, MBE

Welcome to World Heart Beat, and thank you for joining us to celebrate and honour the extraordinary legacy of the Windrush generation.

We hope you enjoy today's programme, Carrying the Flame, which we offer in deep gratitude for the resilience, creativity, and cultural richness that the Windrush generation has gifted to Britain, an enduring legacy that continues to shape and enrich our shared cultural life.

We are delighted to welcome our Ambassador and Patron of World Heart Beat, the Baroness Floella Benjamin, whose warmth, advocacy, and lifelong commitment to children and education continue to inspire us all. We are also honoured to be joined by Marsha de Cordova MP for Battersea, whose steadfast dedication to community, equality, and cultural life reflects the very spirit of public service and inclusion that this occasion celebrates.



A special welcome also to our guest presenter Cleveland Watkiss MBE, co-founder of the Jazz Warriors, whose extraordinary artistry bridges jazz, Caribbean heritage, improvisation, and spoken expression with profound depth, history, and contemporary resonance.

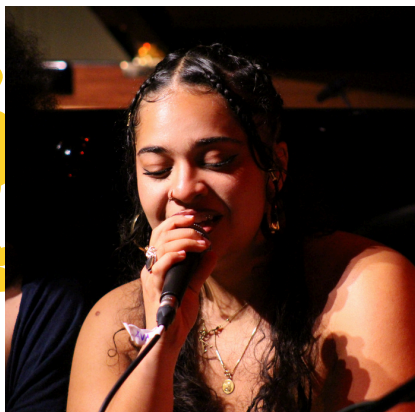
The programme is curated by our outstanding jazz artists, alumni, and musical mentors at World Heart Beat, Ava Joseph and Ayo Vincent. We are also deeply proud of our young World Heart Beat musicians and vocalists, who bring this music to life with energy, talent, and heart.

We extend heartfelt thanks to all who support our work, and to our friends and extended community, Marie Hansen MBE and founder of S.T.O.R.M for your beautiful cooking and generous contribution to today's celebration, and to Elizabeth Oddono of Oddono Ice Creams for kindly treating everyone after the concert.

Carrying the Flame brings together generations through performance, song, and celebration, honouring the past, living in the present, and inspiring the future.



Welcome from the curators



Ava Joseph

Vocalist, basist, alumni, educator



Ayo Vincent

Pianist, alumni, educator

“Join us for a special evening celebrating the legacy of the Windrush generation and the vibrant community they helped build.

Through music, song, and storytelling, we honour the strength, resilience, and spirit of Caribbean people whose contributions have enriched British life for generations. This concert is a celebration of our shared history, our cultural heritage, and the power of music to bring communities together, connect generations, and inspire pride in the journey that continues today.”

Ava Joseph



Our Special Guests



Baroness Floella Benjamin, OM DBE DL

Actress, singer, presenter, author and politician

Baroness Benjamin, OM DBE DL, left Trinidad by ship aged ten and arrived in England on the Marques de Comillas at Southampton docks on the 2nd September 1960. A patron of World Heart Beat, amongst other charitable organisations, Baroness Benjamin has had a diverse and flourishing career in the arts, and has written over 30 books for children and adults, including most notably 'Coming to England' which recounts the tale of her migration to 1960's Britain, and the adversity she, and her family, overcame.

Baroness Benjamin is an advocate for social mobility amongst disadvantaged children, for 20 years she campaigned tirelessly for a Minister for Children to oversee joined up Government policy a position which was successfully put in place in 2003. Baroness Benjamin has also campaigned vigorously for diversity in children's books and in the broadcast media for over fifty years.

Cleveland Watkiss, MBE, is a British virtuoso vocalist, actor and composer. He was the winner of the London Jazz Awards for Best Vocalist in 2010 and was voted Wire/Guardian Jazz Awards best vocalist for three consecutive years. In 2017 at the Parliamentary Jazz Awards he received Jazz Vocalist of the Year award. His amazing vocal experiences have seen him perform with many diverse artists from around the world such as the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Dusseldorf Symphony Orchestra, Wynton Marsalis, Bob Dylan, Jackie Mittoo, Keith Richards, the James Taylor Quartet, and Stevie Wonder.



Cleveland Watkiss, MBE

Vocalist, actor, composer and educator.



Performers

HeartBeat House band

Ayo Vincent
Ava Joseph
Wilf Diamond
Menelik Claffey
Wilf Cameron-Marples
Sebastian Rodriguez-Florez
Keahne Carlita John
Ed Adonis
Hassen Richards-Zoubir

Vocals

Shayla Streuli Fidalgo
Nevaeh McDonald
Dede Agyemang-Yeboah
Camilla Dudley-Wint
Eula Flores
Roselyn Agyemang-Yeboah
Lilja Skipper-Ramsey
Akos Agyemang-Yeboah
Amelia-Rose Simpson
L'wren St. Clair
Antonina Budnik
Eleonora Nicolosi
Malik Bayley
Saki Okuyama
Kaya Moreria

Young Performers

Nickolas Rodriguez-Florez
Prince Masara
Dylan Mora
Malachi Murrell
Nathaniel Murrell
Liam Nash
Sasha Nazarov
Vivian Nash
Justin Vaitulevicius
Sebastian Rodriguez-Florez
Olivia Rybarczyk

Guest musicians

Cleveland Watkiss





ABOUT WORLD HEART BEAT

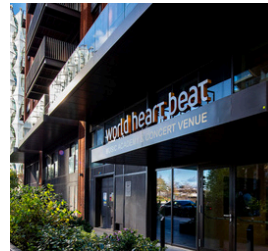
World Heart Beat is a pioneering music charity and cultural organisation based in London, dedicated to transforming lives through the power of music. Founded by Sahana Gero MBE, we provide inclusive, high-quality music education, performance opportunities, and pathways into the creative industries for young people from all backgrounds, regardless of financial circumstance.

What began in 2012 in a derelict warehouse above a plant hire depot in Wandsworth has grown into one of the UK's most innovative music charities. Today, World Heart Beat delivers more than 10,000 music sessions and over 16,000 hours of tuition each year, alongside a year-round programme of more than 100 public concerts, featuring world class musicians as well as supporting hundreds of young people and artists to learn, create, perform, and thrive.

In 2022, we opened World Heart Beat Embassy Gardens in Nine Elms, transforming a former cultural cold spot into a vibrant hub for music, creativity, and community. Our state-of-the-art concert hall, recording studios, café, and music academy sit at the heart of one of London's largest regeneration projects, bringing together people of all ages, cultures, and backgrounds through exceptional artistic experiences.

At World Heart Beat, music is more than an art form, it is a force for connection, belonging, aspiration, and social mobility. We celebrate the rich cultural heritage of our communities, amplify underrepresented voices, and create opportunities for people to come together, share their stories, and shape brighter futures through music.

Talent is everywhere. Opportunity should be too.





SUPPORT US

As a charity, support from trusts, foundations, liveries, individuals and businesses is a vital cornerstone of our work.

World Heart Beat became part of Arts Council England's National Portfolio in 2018, recognising the valuable contribution we make to their Creative Case for Diversity and Equality. We are immensely grateful for their support.

However... this is just 4% of our income each year.

World Heart Beat transforms the lives of children and young people, offering an equality of opportunity to all, providing equality of access through the removal of financial barriers to all, and giving a voice to those who are underrepresented. We need your support to give young people a safe place to go after school, studios to be creative in, music education that is world class, opportunities through meaningful work experience, a stage to perform on and a community that believes in them.



Find out more
worldheartbeat.org





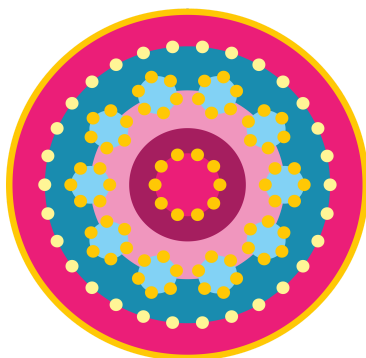
UPCOMING SHOWS





"World Heart Beat is an absolute treasure that hits you in your soul and stays there. It is the embodiment of the communal spirit...They are nourishing the next generation".

Wynton Marsalis



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