

## NEWS RELEASE

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SHELL CLASSIC INTERNATIONAL  
2008/09

## GUSTAVO DUDAMEL AND THE SIMÓN BOLÍVAR YOUTH ORCHESTRA OF VENEZUELA COME TO SOUTHBANK CENTRE FOR THEIR FIRST UK RESIDENCY

Southbank Centre today announced that the sensational **Simón Bolívar Youth Orchestra of Venezuela** with conductor **Gustavo Dudamel** will return to London on 14 – 18 April 2009 for a special residency at Southbank Centre as part of the 2008/09 *Shell Classic International* season. The 27-year-old Venezuelan conductor was first seen at the Royal Festival Hall in 2005 when he conducted the Philharmonia Orchestra as part of the *Allianz Cultural Foundation Conductors' Academy* (and has been a regular conductor with the Philharmonia since). He returned to the Hall last June to conduct the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra in a memorable preview concert just before the Hall reopened. This was soon followed by a concert at the *Proms*, where he and the Simón Bolívar Youth Orchestra of Venezuela produced an electrifying performance, which brought wide-spread critical acclaim. The *Daily Telegraph* wrote, 'Music-making this joyous is in a class of its own. If you hear of the orchestra coming within 500 miles of you, book straight away; they will probably sell out within minutes' and *The Independent* called it 'a joyous and edifying spectacle'.

The residency at Southbank Centre is focussed around two concerts in the Royal Festival Hall by the Orchestra on 14 and 18 April – the first programme will include Bartók's *Concerto for Orchestra* and the second Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*. Additional events throughout the residency will include Orchestra members performing chamber music concerts in other Southbank Centre venues and work with the Resident Orchestras and Artists.

Conductor Gustavo Dudamel said: 'London has a very special place in my heart because when I first met my wife, this magnificent lady was living in your magnificent city. I was lucky enough to play with the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra in the newly refurbished Royal Festival Hall just before it reopened and returned to the city for the *Prom* concert with the

Simón Bolívar Youth Orchestra of Venezuela. Now I get to bring this youth orchestra to the Southbank in a project quite unlike any which we've done before. Come join us for what we hope is an unforgettable experience.'

Marshall Marcus, Head of Music at Southbank Centre said: 'I'm so pleased to welcome Gustavo Dudamel back to the Royal Festival Hall. He has been a regular visitor here over the past few years and this special residency offers an exceptional opportunity for London audiences to see and hear one of the world's most dynamic groups of musicians. I'm sure it will be an utterly memorable week for all concerned.'

The Simón Bolívar Youth Orchestra was founded in 1975 and has continuously aimed to create new opportunities for musical excellence in Venezuela, working with conductors such as Claudio Abbado and Sir Simon Rattle and touring with its Music Director Gustavo Dudamel. Heading a national system, the State Foundation for the Venezuelan System of Youth and Child Orchestras (FESNOJIV, known colloquially as *El Sistema*), this orchestra is comprised of over 200 young musicians between the ages of 16 and 20, all products of a system that is of equal social, musical and educational importance in Venezuela. *El Sistema* involves some 250,000 musicians from across Venezuela in a system of pre-school orchestras, over 90 children's orchestras, over 130 youth orchestras and over 30 professional adult symphony orchestras.

The *Shell Classic International* series brings great orchestras from around the world to the Royal Festival Hall, to complement the four Resident Orchestras' programme. Other highlights of the season include concerts by the **Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Mariss Jansons**, the **Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra** with its Honorary Conductor **Zubin Mehta**, and two performances by **Ensemble Intercontemporain** conducted by founder **Pierre Boulez** with soloist **Pierre-Laurent Aimard**.

This is the second year that Shell has supported the *Shell Classic International* season as part of its major sponsorship of Southbank Centre's Transformation project, which included the reopening of the refurbished Royal Festival Hall in June 2007.

**For further PRESS information please contact Jenny Wegg in the Southbank Centre Press Office on 020 7921 0824 or email [jenny.wegg@southbankcentre.co.uk](mailto:jenny.wegg@southbankcentre.co.uk)**

**Tickets will be on general sale from 7 February.**

**Ticket Office: 0871 663 2500**

**Online booking: [www.southbankcentre.co.uk](http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk)**

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

### **Southbank Centre**

Southbank Centre manages the Royal Festival Hall, The Hayward, Queen Elizabeth Hall and Purcell Room, as well as the Saison Poetry Library, the Arts Council Collection and Hayward Touring Exhibitions on behalf of Arts Council England. It attracts more than 3 million visits annually. The Royal Festival Hall reopened in June 2007 following the major refurbishment of the Hall and redevelopment of the surrounding area and facilities.

### **Shell**

Shell and the Royal Festival Hall have been neighbours on the South Bank for over 40 years, and Shell is committed to supporting the local communities in which we operate. We share a strong interest in the development of the South Bank area and are proud to have supported last year's renovation of the Royal Festival Hall.

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