

Brighton
Festival

NEW DAWN

3-26
May
2025

Guest Director
Anoushka Shankar

Anoushka Shankar Proudly Presents

Brown Girl in the Ring: Words in Motion

Curated and produced by Brown Girl In The Ring founder Sweetie Kapoor

Supported by

Brighton Dome Corn Exchange | Sat 3 May

DISCERN
Permit Room

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Thank you to those who wish to remain anonymous

Thank you to all our Members and our Big Give donors

BRIGHTON FESTIVAL 2025

A very warm welcome to Brighton Festival 2025, guest directed by the wonderful Anoushka Shankar.

The journey this Festival takes you on is a testament to Anoushka's vision, ambition, and artistic inspirations, and it is a privilege to be sharing this programme of work with you all. I welcome the warmth and generosity of her invitation to us all towards a New Dawn.

A festival of this ambition and scale would not be possible without the longstanding support from Brighton & Hove City Council and Arts Council England, and we are also extremely grateful to our Principal Supporter The Pebble Trust, Major Supporter the Bagri Foundation, Major Sponsor Mayo Wynne Baxter and to our partners at the University of Sussex.

There are so many dedicated people who make Brighton Festival happen: our patrons, members, supporters, partner companies and venues, audiences, staff, volunteers, and - most importantly - the artists, emerging and stellar, who bring us the rapture, surprise, provocation and joy that a great Festival line-up should.

I look forward to seeing you across the city through May, and wish everyone a wonderful Festival from the parades to the parties, from the talks to the walks, from symphonies to table tennis, and from dusk to new dawns.



**Lucy Davies, Chief Executive
Brighton Dome & Brighton Festival**



PERFORMANCE

Anoushka Shankar presents

Brown Girl In The Ring

Words in Motion

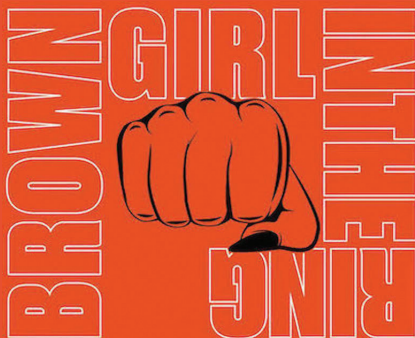
Brighton Festival
Exclusive

Sat 3 May, 8.30pm

£30, C £25 | Age 16+

Brighton Dome Corn Exchange

The multidisciplinary platform has over the years garnered a reputation for innovative events celebrating some of our best pioneering creative talent and inspirational women for newer audiences—all set in a boxing ring! The specially curated programme *Words In Motion* echo's this year's festival theme New Dawn, with special commissions and exclusives; showcasing an exceptional cohort of award-winning poets, actors, dancers, musicians and activists: Mona Arshi, Bishi, Nikita Gill, Areeba Hamid, Ms. Mohammed, Anita Rani, Meera Syal (CBE), Sarah Kundi, Tara Lily, Preti Taneja, Amrit Kaur, Indira Varma and a special performance by Anoushka Shankar.



Supported by

PRESENTED BY
Pennit Room

**Anoushka Shankar, Guest Director of Brighton Festival 2025,
proudly presents:
Brown Girl In The Ring, curated & produced by Sweetie Kapoor**

**Sat 3 May, 8.30pm
Corn Exchange, Brighton Dome**

The multidisciplinary platform has over the years garnered a reputation for innovative events celebrating some of our best pioneering creative talent and inspirational women for newer audiences—all set in a boxing ring! The specially curated programme Words In Motion will echo this year's festival theme New Dawn, showcasing an exceptional cohort of award-winning poets, actors, dancers, musicians and activists:

Anoushka Shankar

With nine Grammy nominations under her belt, Anoushka Shankar's many accomplishments include several firsts: she was the first Indian musician to perform live and present at the Grammys and the first Indian woman to be nominated. She was also the youngest and first female recipient of a British House of Commons Shield, recognising her as a leading musician of the Asian arts, and one of the first female composers to become part of the UK's A-level music syllabus. With over 25 years of performing behind her, Anoushka is a truly genre-defying artist spanning the worlds of classical, contemporary, acoustic and electronic music. Anoushka will be Brighton Festival's 16th Guest Director.

Amrit Kaur

Described as "Where Aretha (Franklin) soul meets Punjabi Folk," Amrit Kaur is a compelling singer-songwriter, Sarangi Player and powerhouse vocalist whose music bridges soul, R&B, and Punjabi Folk. Praised by legendary producer Rick Rubin for her live performances, her sound and artistry is as timeless as it is trailblazing and is one of the finest voices of our times.

Anita Rani

Award-winning Presenter and Sunday Times bestselling author Anita Rani, one of the nation's most recognisable faces on British television returns to Brown Girl in the Ring for Brighton Festival. A host of Woman's Hour, she is a lead presenter on Countryfile, a regular on Radio 2, and well-known for her work on Channel 4, Channel 5, the BBC and most recently with Netflix. Anita is also a Refugees Goodwill Ambassador for the UNHCR.

Areeba Hamid: Greenpeace UK

An incomparable force for change, Areeba Hamid is the joint executive director of Greenpeace UK, making her the first woman, first person of colour and migrant to lead the organisation. Areeba worked in Greenpeace globally, campaigning on issues like marine conservation, coal expansion in India, rainforest destruction in Indonesia, and tar sands in Canada and North America and joins us to deliver light, hope and new ways of being.

BISHI: Yoko Ono's 'Voice Piece for Soprano'

Multi instrumentalist, musician, vocalist, composer and producer Bishi performs her sensational adaptation of Yoko Ono's powerful Voice Piece for Soprano. Bishi's version, originally commissioned by Tate Modern and performed at Glastonbury 2024, will feature new BGITR produced-elements. The powerful and instructive work urges audiences to vocalise on cue and 'Scream; against the wind, against the wall, against the sky.' This

participative act takes on an urgent symbolic meaning against the many challenges of our times. It calls for a New Dawn.

Meera Syal: Exclusive

The nation's much loved and celebrated comedian, actor and writer Meera Syal (CBE), was the recipient of BAFTA's highest accolade in 2023 and the WFIV Lifetime Achievement award, amongst many others. The trailblazing artist will debut parts of her highly-anticipated forthcoming memoir. Still in the works, it is scheduled for publication in the summer of 2025.

Mona Arshi & Indira Varma: Mouth

A BGITR exclusive, the Forward Prize winning poet and novelist Mona Arshi's 3rd collection *Mouth* makes a stage debut ahead of its July 2025 publication. Mona gives voice to the silenced women of Greek tragedy as they navigate war and its aftermath, offering a new reflection on power, migration, and loss in current times. Olivier award-winning powerhouse TV, film and theatre actor Indira Varma returns to the boxing ring to bring Mona's words to life on stage. Indira has been working with the IRC since 2016, supporting and spreading awareness of refugee stories within the UK and beyond.

Ms. Mohammed

Unapologetically bold and unique, Ms. Mohammed is a genre bending force; fusing Island Punk Rock 'n' Dhol. Powered by fierce guitars, Trinidadian Soca riddims, Indian percussion, and soul — the singer, song writer and formidable guitarist carries forward the legacy of the Riot Grrrl Movement. To quote Iggy Pop "Whoa! A Middle Eastern beat into a rockin' groove!"

Nikita Gill: New Commissioned Work

International poetry sensation Nikita Gill is a playwright, writer and illustrator. Her words have captivated hearts and minds all over the world, with a vast on-line following. With six poetry collections, and a YA novel in verse under her belt, her debut adult sc-fi novel *Hekate* is set to release in 2025. The novella in verse *Angel Of Redemption* was commissioned by the BBC to mark 60 years of the cult TV show Doctor Who. Nikita is also an ambassador for National Poetry Day and the editor of the poetry anthology SLAM!

Preti Taneja: New Commissioned Work

A Gordon Burn and Desmond Elliott Prize winner, Preti Taneja is regarded as one of the most fearless and finest writers of our times. She was awarded the Philip Leverhulme Prize for Languages and Literatures in recognition of her experimental creative practice, and is currently working on her third novel and a work of creative nonfiction.

Sarah Kundi

Award-winning dancer Sarah Kundi, former principal dancer with the English National Ballet, joins BGITR for this bold experimental solo, especially choreographed for the event, is set to *Speaking In Tongue* by music pioneer Sheila Chandra. The piece sets out to explore the journey of silenced voices, like an unspoken prayer rising into light - where truth finally prevails.

Tara Lily

With a uniquely liquid vocals that pull from jazz, soul and some of the melismatic stylings of north Indian classical, the Peckham-born British-Bengali artist Tara Lily had forged a special space for herself, catching the attention of Virgil Abloh, Gilles Peterson, Iggy Pop, Jamie

Cullum and notably was the first British artist to be signed by Motown Records UK. A bright rising star, the singer, songwriter and multi-instrumentalist is a musical anomaly, celebrating strength and power in her music.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, unfortunately Asha Puthli and Saloni Saraf can no longer perform at this event. Amrit Kaur, Tara Lily, Sarah Kundi and Ms Mohammed have been added to the line-up.



Welcome to a New Dawn

What an honour it is to find myself at the helm of an institution that seeks, year on year, to celebrate boldness, diversity, and connection. Brighton has long held a special place in my heart—it's a city where difference holds value, where art forms collide and cross-pollinate freely, where the promise of transformation is made reality. To be curating the programme feels like an extraordinary opportunity to take part in the uplifting creative energy of this city.

For 2025, we look towards a New Dawn. Together with the Brighton Festival team, I've shaped a programme that envisions a hopeful future - an emergence from the dark of night into the glow of early morning.

For years now there have been so many reasons to despair, to worry, to lose hope. But we have the power and insight within us to craft an alternate future, and that only comes about through what we create in the present. We'll not only celebrate art's power to challenge and uplift, but also to explore what lies ahead.

We need this, I think—to come together, to lift each other up into the light, to be beacons for one another as we take stock, take aim, and take action. This isn't just a festival for audiences to experience passively—it's for everyone to participate in, to connect with, to feel part of.

By bringing together artists and modalities from all over the world, with their rich and varied heritages, we reimagine what's possible—through music, through dance, through storytelling.

I'm delighted that so many artists answered the call and will be bringing their unique perspectives and beauty to the Festival.

I can't wait for us all to share in this journey.

A handwritten signature in white ink, reading 'Anoushka' with a stylized flourish and a small 'x' mark below it.

Anoushka Shankar

Brighton Festival 2025 Guest Director



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