

Brighton
Festival

Guest Director
NABIHAH IQBAL
6-28 MAY 2023

BISHI featuring Trans Voices
Celestial Voices {Swargiya Awaz}
The Old Market | Fri 26 May, 8pm



Freesheet

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In Memory: Joan Griffiths | Andrew Polmear

Thank you to those who wish to remain anonymous

Thank you to all our members

BRIGHTON FESTIVAL 2023



We are thrilled to present this diverse and engaging programme, inspired by our Guest Director, musician, producer, DJ and broadcaster Nabihah Iqbal.

This year's theme, 'Gather round' celebrates the spirit of community and collaboration that lies at the heart of Brighton Festival. I hope over the next three weeks that you will join us in exploring new artistic horizons, challenging boundaries, and discovering the joy of shared experiences.

Whilst we uncover the world premieres, innovative productions, and genre-defying events that pack the programme this year, we're also

delighted to be reopening Brighton Dome's historic Corn Exchange and Studio Theatre during the festival.

I would like to thank our funders Brighton & Hove City Council and Arts Council England for their continued support, and extend this thanks to our patrons, supporters, audiences, staff, volunteers, and everyone else involved in for helping to make this festival possible.

So, Gather Round, as together we make Brighton Festival 2023 a truly unforgettable celebration.

**Andrew Comben, Chief Executive
Brighton Dome & Brighton Festival**

andrew.comben@brightonfestival.org

Brighton Festival Exclusive

Brighton
Festival

vocals, sitars
and synths...
create a
cathedral of
sound.'

★★★★★
The New
Internationalist

BISHI feat. Trans Voices

Celestial Voices

{Swargiya Awaz}

plus DJ set from I Am Fya

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Fri 26 May
The Old Market

scan me



BISHI featuring Trans Voices

Celestial Voices

{Swargiya Awaz}

Performers:

BISHI

Trans Voices

I Am Fya

Created by BISHI

Collaborators: Trans Voices

Composer, sound designer: BISHI

Running time: 1 hour 50 minutes

British Bengali Vocalist and Composer, BISHI's writing style was built around experimentation and improvisation of her own 4 octave vocal range, inspired by plaintive chant, pastoral folk, Meredith Monk, Bulgarian music and Indian Classical music.

Celestial Voices {Swargiya Awaz}, is an evening comprising BISHI's solo material for voice and electric sitar from her most recent album 'Let My Country Awake,' focused on dual identities, anti-racism, and a call to find empathy in a divided world [★★★★★ - The New Internationalist] Including choral pieces arranged especially for the UK's first professional trans+ choir, Trans Voices, who will join BISHI on stage.

The evening culminates in the world premiere of 'Of Herculine,' a new choral piece inspired by the life of Herculine Barbin, whose birth date globally marks Intersex Day of Remembrance highlighting the violence inherent in the binary sex and gender system. This piece was composed by BISHI exclusively for Trans Voices' uniquely non-traditional singers.

Expect a joyful but revenant celebration of the exquisitely diverse qualities of human voice, challenging all limitations.

Biographies

BISHI Bio:

BISHI is an artist, composer and producer born in London of Bengali heritage. She has independently released three albums and several EPs to critical acclaim. Featuring revolutionary use of her trademark electric sitar and four-octave vocal range, latest album 'Let My Country Awake' focuses on dual identities, anti-racism, and a call to find empathy in a divided world ★★★★★ - The New Internationalist "Bishi is Art" - Miranda Sawyer

BISHI is celebrated for the use of ground breaking technology in her live performances, from interactive bodysuits to live coded and mixed reality environments. Collaborations and commissions include: Tony Visconti, Sean Ono Lennon, Jarvis Cocker, The London Symphony Orchestra, Yoko Ono's Meltdown and fashion designer Manish Arora. Alongside her compositions placed in both film and TV, BISHI's first full score for film (VR) premieres in 2023. Recent partners include LANDR, Real World Studios, Spitfire Audio, Spitalfields Music, Ableton and Delic. Her first AV installation 'Reflektions,' has been shown nationally and internationally, selling out at Coventry City of Culture and in 2022 became the first artist's work to be project-mapped across UNESCO World Heritage sites, The Queen's House & Royal Naval College, London.

A passionate advocate for inclusivity & the gender equality, BISHI founded WITCiH (Women in Tech Creative Industries Hub), a non-profit organisation supporting women, trans and non-binary creative practitioners in tech. Platforming music creators since its inception in 2016, with salons and live events featuring diverse guests including: Imogen Heap, Ana Matronic and Mira Calix. During lockdown BISHI curated 'WITCiH Digital Festival' 2021 starring Laurie Anderson, Hannah Peel alongside the Creative Women In Tech podcast. BISHI has been a broadcaster on BBC Radio 4 and is an ambassador for the Featured Artists Coalition and The Creative Passport. She is also on the board of directors for The F-List for Music and a Keychange Innovator (2022).

Trans Voices Bio:

The vocal collective launched in 2022 with 'Reclaim' - a Guardian Films documentary with Arts Council support, which is centred around trans joy in the context of the choir's formation and debut project at Union Chapel, London. The film saw its premiere screening at a sold out Rio Cinema, London show featuring author Shon Faye.

Affiliated with world-leading alternative choir London Contemporary Voices, Trans Voices is a diverse group of over 20 trans+ vocalists co-founded by ILĀ (fka Anil Sebastian) and Coda Nicolaeff. More than a choir, the sound of this bold new community is utterly distinctive - from hypnotic meditative pieces like 'Allow' to the raw call to action of 'Reclaim'.

Trans Voices made its first recording appearance on acclaimed violinist and broadcaster Anna Phoebe's live album Sea Souls. Championed by Mary Ann Hobbs at BBC 6 Music, the choir was asked to create a bespoke jingle for the stations Loud and Proud campaign.

The vocal collective followed this up with performances at the Roundhouse, London as part of the venue's Beyond+Between summer programme running alongside Jean Paul Gaultier's Fashion Freak Show.

Over the course of 2022, the vocal collective has appeared as part of Camden Roundhouse's Beyond & Between programme alongside Jean Paul Gaultier's Fashion Freak Show as well at Whitechapel Gallery, Pink News Awards 2022 and more.

"As the first professional trans+ choir in the UK, we are here to reclaim the spaces transgender voices are seldom heard in. We are telling our own stories, in our own ways - and it's liberating.

After all, there are as many ways to be a singer as there are people who sing."

ILĀ, Co-founder

"We're developing new ways of singing outside the traditional gender binary, while celebrating the unique qualities of trans voices along the way."

Coda Nicolaeff, Co-founder



Introduction from

Nabihah Iqbal

Come closer. A little nearer.
Gather 'round.

To be able to stop what you're doing, just for a moment, and let yourself be transported into another world is a little luxury we can all enjoy: a five-minute daydream at a bus stop, a ritualistic morning walk, getting lost in a good book, listening to your favourite song... and the patchwork of all these moments, strung together, makes something bigger, especially when you start connecting up all these instances that occur between all of us.

When these moments are collective experiences, that we all feel, all together, all at once – like being at a gig or in a nightclub, at a theatre, a workshop, a discussion – it makes the moment even more special, almost magical. This feeling of togetherness, of sharing, of community, of exchange, is something we often take for granted. But it's a feeling that many of us have learnt to appreciate with a fresh vigour in this post-pandemic world, and it's a feeling that has inspired my whole approach to being Guest Director of Brighton Festival 2023.

I think of the word 'festival' and it transports me right back to being 16 years old, standing in a field at my first proper 'weekend festival' experience, running on hardly any sleep, excited to see as many of the bands on the line-up as possible, being with all my friends, enjoying

the halcyon feeling of freedom as a teenager. That formative experience will always stay with me, but thinking more broadly about what 'festival' means to me, it's about shared experiences, being inspired and amazed, learning, exchange, happiness, meeting new people, appreciating art and creativity, escapism, discovery... I want festival-goers to be able to take all of these things away from Brighton Festival 2023, and I'm sure they will, considering all the brilliant acts on the line-up.























It has been an honour to curate this year's festival and I'm looking forward to seeing it add another layer of vibrancy to Brighton, a city so full of energy already. It's a cliché to say that the festival offers 'something for everyone' – but maybe to get the most out of it, the key is to try going to the things that you think aren't for you... and hopefully you'll come away pleasantly surprised.

I owe the deepest gratitude to all of the Brighton Festival team for all their hard work and commitment to bringing this festival to life, for asking me to be a part of it, and of course, a huge thank you to all the artists, dancers, thinkers, music-makers, and dreamers that together make up the 2023 line-up.

Nabihah Iqbal

Thank you to our supporters for making Brighton Festival possible

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