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# barbican

## Barbican announces Hayden Thorpe's *Song of Ness* with Robert Macfarlane and Propellor Ensemble



Credit: Eeva Rinne

**Hayden Thorpe: *Song of Ness*  
with Robert Macfarlane & Propellor Ensemble**  
**Thursday 16 October 2025, 7.30pm**  
**Milton Court Concert Hall**  
**From £25, plus booking fee**

Singer-songwriter and former Wild Beasts frontman **Hayden Thorpe** makes his Barbican headline debut bringing the poignant words and melodies from his latest album *Ness* to Milton Court Concert Hall on 16 October 2025. Inspired by the eerie fable of best-selling place author **Robert Macfarlane** and artist **Stanley Donwood's** book of the same title, the album reimagines the atmospheric landscapes of Suffolk nature reserve *Orford Ness* and will be brought to life by Thorpe, performing alongside Macfarlane, **Propellor Ensemble** and musicians from **Guildhall School of Music & Drama**.

*Ness speaks. Ness speaks gull, speaks wave, speaks  
bracken & lapwing, speaks bullet, ruin, gale, deception.*

Through bold orchestration and ethereal choral arrangements, Hayden Thorpe's *Ness* takes audiences to the other-worldly nature reserve of *Orford Ness* on the Suffolk coast – once a cold war military base and now, paradoxically, a rewilded place. In collaboration with 12-piece Propellor Ensemble and composer Kerry Andrew, Thorpe crafted this album by extracting words from Robert Macfarlane's book to unearth hidden songs, haunting melodies and innovative soundscapes. Akin to the record, audiences can expect to be taken on a journey through folk, experimental orchestral music and elegant pop in this special Barbican performance at Milton Court.

A deeply personal project, *Ness* serves as both a meditation on human impact and a celebration of the natural world's resilience, brought to life in this one-of-a-kind performance that will also feature large ensemble, choir and projection mapping created from artwork by Stanley Donwood.

The performance will also include a world premiere of specially commissioned *Ness* work with new songs from Thorpe and Macfarlane alongside arrangements for orchestra and choir by Jack McNeill (Propellor Ensemble) and Kerry Andrew, the creators behind the acclaimed album.

Produced by the Barbican  
[Find out more](#)

## LISTINGS – BARBICAN CONTEMPORARY MUSIC PROMOTIONS COMING UP IN 2025

- **Spiritualized: Pure Phase** ([Wed 26 & Thu 27 Mar 2025, Barbican Hall, 7.30pm](#))
- **Hania Rani & Ensemble present: Ghosts** ([Sat 5 Apr 2025, Barbican Hall, 7.30pm](#))
- **Yann Tiersen** ([Sat 19 Apr 2025, Barbican Hall, 7.30pm](#))
- **Liminal Chords: A Dreamscape in Verse & Sound: MA.MOYO (Belinda Zhawi) + Friends** ([Wed 23 Apr 2025, Barbican Art Gallery](#))
- **Daniel Brandt and Tristan Perich** ([Fri 25 Apr 2025, Barbican Hall, 7.30pm](#))
- **Charlie Cunningham** ([Sat 26 Apr 2025, Barbican Hall, 8pm](#))
- **Mustafa** ([Fri 9 May 2025, Barbican Hall, 7.30pm](#))
- **Jason Moran** ([Fri 9 May 2025, Milton Court Concert Hall, 7.30pm](#))
- **Terry Riley 90th Birthday Tribute with Pete Townshend, Bang on a Can All-Stars, SHABAKA and special guests** ([Thu 15 May 2025, Barbican Hall, 7.30pm](#))
- **Fatoumata Diawara** ([Sat 17 May 2025, Barbican Hall, 7.30pm](#))
- **Actress x Suzanne Ciani present Concrète Waves** ([Fri 30 May 2025, Barbican Hall, 7.30pm](#))
- **Moin** ([Sat 31 May 2025, Barbican Hall, 7.30pm](#))
- **Cat Power Sings Dylan '66** ([Sun 1 Jun 2025, Barbican Hall, 8pm](#))
- **Sada (Echo): Music from Palestine** ([Friday 6 June 2025, Barbican Hall, 7.30pm](#))
- **Naseer Shamma** ([Sunday 15 June 2025, Barbican Hall, 7.30pm](#))
- **Tigran Hamasyan (Summer Jazz Series)** ([Mon 16 Jun 2025, Barbican Hall, 7.30pm](#))
- **RAMPAGE: Carnival Classics 2** ([Fri 20 Jun 2025, Barbican Hall, 8pm](#))
- **Brad Mehldau Trio (Summer Jazz Series)** ([Tue 24 Jun 2025, Barbican Hall, 7.30pm](#))
- **Take Me To The River All-Stars: Memphis Soul Revue (Summer Jazz Series)** ([Sat 12 Jul 2025, Barbican Hall, 7.30pm](#))
- **Herbie Hancock (Summer Jazz Series)** ([Thu 24 – Sat 26 Jul 2025, Barbican Hall, 8pm](#))
- **Carlos Alomar presents: The D.A.M. Trilogy** ([Fri 28 Nov 2025, Barbican Hall, 8pm](#))
- **NEW - Hayden Thorpe: Song of Ness with Robert Macfarlane and Propellor Ensemble** ([Thu 16 Oct 2025, Milton Court Concert Hall, 7.30pm](#))

**ENDS**

### Notes to Editors

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### Barbican press room

All Barbican Centre press releases, news announcements and the Communications team's contact details are listed on our website at [www.barbican.org.uk/our-story/press-room](http://www.barbican.org.uk/our-story/press-room)

### About the Barbican

The Barbican is a catalyst for creativity, sparking possibilities for artists, audiences, and communities. We showcase the most exciting art from around the world, pushing traditional artistic boundaries to entertain and inspire millions of people, create connections, provoke debate, and reflect the world we live in.

We are an international arts and events centre rooted firmly in our own neighbourhood, collaborating with local communities and putting the City of London on the map as a destination for everybody. Central to our purpose is supporting emerging talent and shaping opportunities that will accelerate the next generation of creatives.

As a not-for-profit, we rely on the generosity of individuals and organisations, including our principal funder the City of London Corporation. Every ticket purchased, donation made, and pound earned supports our arts and learning programme and enables the widest possible range of people to experience the joy of the arts.

Opened in 1982, the Barbican is a unique and audacious building, recognised globally as an architectural icon. As well as our theatres, galleries, concert halls and cinemas, we have a large conservatory with over 1,500 species of plants and trees, a library, conference facilities, public and community spaces, restaurants, bars, and a picturesque lakeside oasis.

We're proud to be the home of the [London Symphony Orchestra](#), and a London base of the [Royal Shakespeare Company](#). We regularly co-commission, produce and showcase the work of our other associates and partners including the [Academy of Ancient Music](#), [BBC Symphony Orchestra](#), [Boy Blue](#), [Darbar Festival](#), [Doc'n Roll Film Festival](#), [Drum Works](#), [EFG London Jazz Festival](#), [London Palestine Film Festival](#), [Serious](#), and [Trafalgar Theatre Productions](#).

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