

BLACKHEATH HALLS

PART OF TRINITY LABAN CONSERVATOIRE OF MUSIC & DANCE

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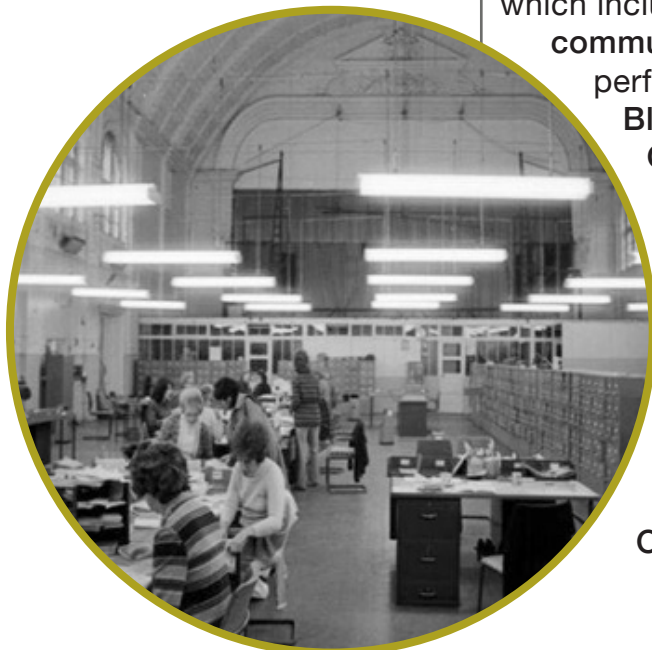
A BRIEF HISTORY OF BLACKHEATH HALLS



Blackheath Halls opened its doors in 1895: funded by local people to satisfy the need for a space that could accommodate large-scale concerts and meetings.

Designed by **William Webster**, it is thought to be the earliest surviving purpose-built concert hall in London. In early years, the Halls hosted lectures by **Sir Ernest Shackleton**, **Suffragette rallies** and **George Bernard Shaw** pleaded from the stage for the establishment of a National Theatre. The Halls played host to many renowned early 20th century composers and artists such as **Sir Edward Elgar**, **Percy Grainger**, **Dame Clara Butt**, **Fritz Kreisler** and **Myra Hess**.

During **World War I** it was commandeered by the **Royal Army Pay Corps** and reopened for public concerts in 1921. It was commandeered again in 1940 by the **Ministry of Works** during **World War II**, and from the 1950s it was used as **DHSS** offices.



Following extensive restoration in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Halls reopened as a concert venue in 1985, operating as a charitable trust to pursue the ethos of its Victorian founders.

In 2003 Blackheath Halls was bought by **Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance** so it would become the main concert and rehearsal venue for the students including performances and collaborations with many international artists and conductors including **Melvyn Tan** and **Johnny Dankworth**. In addition to this, Blackheath Halls showcases a varied programme of high profile music and comedy events alongside its own **Community Engagement** programme which includes the annual **community operas** and performances by the **Blackheath Halls Orchestra**.

The Halls are also in demand as a rehearsal and recording venue regularly hosting the **English National Opera**, **Philharmonia** and **Royal Philharmonia Orchestra**.

Since reopening in 1985, the Halls has welcomed a range of artists from almost every musical genre – **Jamie Cullum**, **The Breeders**, **Sir Simon Rattle**, **Nitin Sawhney**, **Paco Peña**, **The Tiger Lillies**, **Nikolai Demidenko**, **Kate Rusby** and **The Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain** – to name but a few.



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