

For immediate release



Dance Can't Nice – new exhibition explores London's Black music spaces

Where does Black British music belong, and who gets to decide? Celebrating south London's music scene, artists Naeem Davis and SignKid highlight the relationship between Black British music and physical space in **Dance Can't Nice**, a new exhibition curated by Adem Holness opening at the Horniman Museum and Gardens on 30 July 2021.

When the 2006-2017 Metropolitan Police risk assessment form 696 made it harder for London venues to put on Black music events, many genres continued to flourish in private spaces.

Dance Can't Nice explores the language and spaces that have influenced the production and advancement of British Bashment, Garage, Lovers Rock, Grime, Gospel, Jazz and Soul.

Naeem Davis reimagines the bedrooms, barbers, churches and living rooms that are home to Black music genres and the people who contribute to them. And Lewisham-based D/deaf rapper SignKid showcases the British Sign Language versions of key slang words and phrases from Black British music culture through an interactive video.

The exhibition is a Black-led interrogation of the power and responsibility public spaces and organisations have in supporting local music scenes. Taking its name from the Frankie Paul & Sugar Minott song, **Dance Can't Nice** is an invitation to consider the things Black live music needs to be great.

Naeem Davis says: 'I want to evoke a sense of nostalgia and create value for the forgotten. I want to honour our spaces. As the ownership of Black music venues fades and we emerge from the global pandemic, our community and its origins have never been more important. Our culture thrives in the underground. Our music is a blessing and privilege to those outside our community who have been granted access.'

Adem Holness, Music Curator at the Horniman says: 'I want this exhibition to really interrogate the relationship between Black live music and public space. I'm hoping it prompts conversation and discussion about where Black British music belongs. In some ways it's about acknowledging the way in which Black music has been pushed out of public space, but it's also about honouring where

it has managed to thrive. By working with Naeem to reimagine sacred Black music and cultural spaces, I want to pull back the curtain on music genres we all love.'

Dance Can't Nice opens in the Horniman's contemporary arts space The Studio on 30 July and runs until 24 October 2021. The exhibition is free to enter, but visitors must pre book a free time slot to visit the Museum at horniman.ac.uk

The exhibition is part of the Horniman's wider **696** programme of live gigs, collaborations, specially commissioned works and residencies which celebrate Black British music genres – and the people working in them – that have been disproportionately affected by bias in legislation. Visit horniman.ac.uk/696 for more information on **696** and how to get tickets.

696 was made possible thanks to The Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund – delivered by the Museums Association, Arts Council England, Youth Music, The London Community Foundation, Cockayne - Grants for the Arts and PRS Foundation's The Open Fund.

Ends

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Notes to Editors:

- The Horniman's 696 programme takes its name from Form 696, a risk assessment form from 2006-2017 which the London Metropolitan Police requested promoters and licensees of events to complete and submit 14 days in advance of an event in 21 London boroughs.
- The Horniman Museum and Gardens opened in 1901 as a gift to the people in perpetuity from tea trader and philanthropist Frederick John Horniman, to 'bring the world to Forest Hill'. Today the Horniman has a collection of 350,000 objects, specimens and artefacts from around the world. Its galleries include natural history, music and an acclaimed aquarium. A new World Gallery of anthropology opened in June 2018 and a new arts space, The Studio, opened in October 2018. Indoor exhibits link to the award-winning display gardens – from medicinal and dye gardens to an interactive sound garden, Butterfly House and an animal walk – set among 16 acres of beautiful, green space offering spectacular views across London. horniman.ac.uk
- Coronavirus impact: Every month the Horniman was closed cost around £150,000 in lost income from ticket sales, memberships, the shop and café. In recent years, the Horniman has increasingly relied on this vital income to help care for the Gardens, animals and Aquarium residents, to run events and to look after the collections. The support of returning visitors, our supporters and their generous donations are more needed than ever. horniman.ac.uk/support-us/
- The Horniman Museum and Gardens is core-funded by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and since 1990 has been governed by an independent charitable trust, registered charity no. 802725. The Horniman Museum and Gardens also receives funding from Arts Council England as one of its National Portfolio Organisations.
- On 29 July 2019 the Horniman Museum and Gardens declared an ecological and climate emergency, pledging to place carbon reduction and environmental issues at the heart of its work. The declaration – and the subsequent Climate and Ecological Manifesto, published in January 2020 – is a consolidation of existing work and a commitment to renewed ambitions to reduce the Horniman's environmental and pollution footprint, increase biodiversity, and inspire others to do so. Find out more about the Horniman's manifesto commitments and progress so far at horniman.ac.uk/climate.