



London 2012 Festival

The UK-wide cultural festival has a wealth of events taking place right here in the capital. Here's our handpicked selection of highlights from all the fun that's on offer. By Jo Caird and David G. Taylor

Whether you're into dance, music, theatre, fashion, art, food or film, the **London 2012 Festival** is bound to have something to entice you. Running **until 9 Sep**, this mammoth, nationwide festival of creativity is a bit of a cultural Olympics with more than 1,000 events, many of them free to attend. For listings of all the exciting things taking place, visit festival.london2012.com

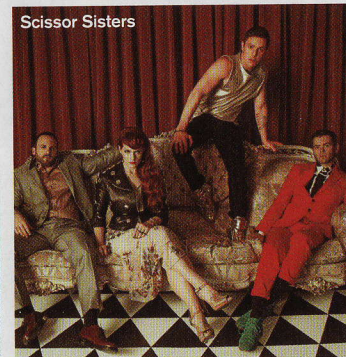
1 Turner Prize-winning artist and musician **Martin Creed** will be making sure that you don't sleep in on the first day of the London 2012 Olympic Games (**27 Jul**). His noisy new art piece *Work No. 1197* is an interactive sound installation where a multitude of bells across London and the UK will be rung as quickly and as loudly as possible for three minutes. It takes

place at 08.00 and the whole of the UK is invited to join in. The organisers are aiming for at least one million participants. You'll hear church bells (pictured below left), bicycle bells, cow bells and more. Get hold of any bell you can find and join in the fun by signing-up, at allthebells.com

2 **BT River Of Music** is a weekend of free concerts taking place on stages near the River Thames (**21-22 Jul**). Musicians from all the Olympic and Paralympic nations will be represented on a series of stages named after the world's major continents: Asia (Battersea Park) Africa (London Pleasure Gardens. londonpleasuregardens.com); Europe (Trafalgar Square, pictured above, and Somerset House, p. 68); Americas (Tower of London, p. 68); and Oceania (Greenwich Old Royal Naval College). A wide range of sounds and styles will be featured, so there's sure to be something for everyone. Among the artists confirmed so far, you could hear US pop band the Scissor Sisters, legendary South African trumpeter Hugh Masekela, German singer-songwriter Angélique Kidjo and



Hugh Masekela



Scissor Sisters



Battersea Park

5 It's not for nothing that Simon Russell Beale has been described as "the greatest stage actor of his generation". Don't miss him playing the title role in William Shakespeare's **Timon Of Athens** (p. 110). This rarely-performed story of friendship, betrayal and revenge is playing at the National Theatre **until 9 Sep**.



Lyte Jewel at the British Museum



Penguin Café Orchestra

Britain's Penguin Café Orchestra (pictured). All the events are free, but some require tickets. For more information, go to serious.org.uk/bt-river-of-music

3 Explore Stratford, the area around the Olympic site, with **En Route**, an MP3 walking tour of its streets and back alleys from the Theatre Royal Stratford East. You'll hear snippets of narrative, music, philosophy and more in this specially-commissioned theatre piece (**until 21 Jul**). Make sure you're wearing comfortable shoes, press play on your MP3 player (provided by the theatre company) and get lost in a world of theatre, just minutes from the heart of the Games. The start location will be texted to ticket

holders 24 hours before their tour commences.

Theatre Royal Stratford East, Gerry Raffles Square, E15. ☎ 020 8534 0310. stratfordeast.com Stratford. Map C4.

4 Pop into the Whitechapel Gallery (p. 85), one of the East End's leading art spaces, for **Government Art Collection - Commissions: Now And Then**. Running **until 2 Sep**, this exhibition offers a rare glimpse into the art collection of the UK government, which usually hangs on the walls of embassies and government buildings the world over. It's a collection that consists of over 13,500 works, dating from the 16th century to the present day.

6 **Shakespeare: Staging The World** is a large-scale exhibition taking place at the British Museum (**from 19 Jul**; p. 85). It's part of the *World Shakespeare Festival* (p. 112), which sees dozens of international theatre companies come together to celebrate the world's greatest



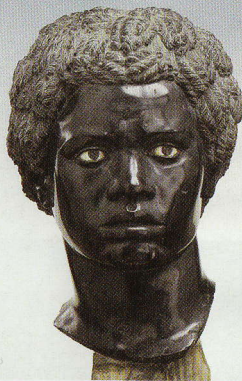
Olympic medals at the British Museum



Martin Creed: Bells

TRAFALGAR SQUARE IMAGE © VISITLONDON/IMAGES/BRITANNIA/VIEW/ROYALNAVY/PABLANIC; HUGH MASEKELA IMAGE © BRETT RUBIN; PENGUIN, CARE ORCHESTRA, MADE © STEVE COOPER; EN ROUTE © PETER WOOD

Roman-era bust of an African man at the British Museum



playwright. The exhibition examines the emerging role of London as a world city in the lifetime of William Shakespeare. Learn about the Bard's life and works through precious historical objects (pictured above and previous page), digital media and performance.

7 Celebrate the start of the Games with a real British tradition, one of the concerts from the **BBC Proms** (p. 112) series at the Royal Albert Hall. *Prom 18 (27 Jul)* sees legendary conductor Daniel Barenboim taking on Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9 In D Minor*, one of the composer's best-known works. And don't worry, if you can't make it along to this particular concert, the Proms boasts a varied programme that runs **until 8 Sep**.

8 **Damien Hirst** has been making waves in the art world for over two decades now, and this exhibition at Tate Modern (p. 84), his first major UK retrospective, is a fitting tribute (**until 9 Sep**). It features over 70 works, including *The Physical Impossibility Of Death In The Mind Of Someone Living* (pictured below),



Titian's oil painting *Diana And Actaeon*

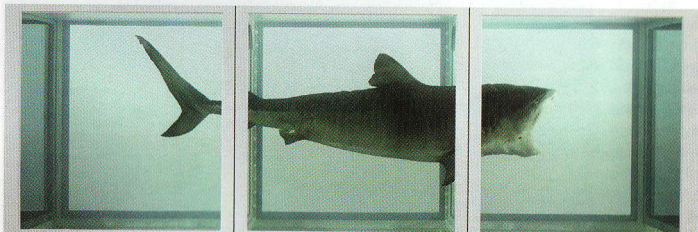
9 *Metamorphoses* is an epic work by Roman poet Ovid (43 BC-17 AD), which inspired the artist Titian to create some of his greatest paintings, and the multimedia event **Metamorphosis: Titian 2012** brings together a range of artists, choreographers and composers to celebrate these works by the Venetian renaissance master. The Royal Opera House (p. 113) will host performances of new dance pieces created in response to three of Titian's masterpieces, *Diana And Actaeon*, *The Death Of Actaeon* and *Diana And Callisto* (**until 21 Sep**). Meanwhile over at the National Gallery (p. 83), the paintings themselves will be shown in a free *Metamorphosis: Titian 2012* exhibition (**until 23 Sep**), alongside new Royal Opera House set designs by contemporary British artists including Chris Ofili, Conrad Shawcross and Mark Wallinger. If you head for Trafalgar Square on **16 Jul** (map C5), you can catch a free live screening of one of the Royal Opera House performances.

Hirst's famous 1991 work showing a tiger shark suspended in a tank of formaldehyde.

mineral mining to design. It's the perfect exhibition to put you in the Olympic mood.

10 For the ultimate Games fix, don't miss the display **London 2012 Olympic And Paralympic Games Medals** at the British Museum (**until 9 Sep**, p. 85). The medals will be displayed alongside a range of objects that tell the story of Britain's involvement with the Olympics and Paralympics over the years, and visitors will learn how the medals for the 2012 Games were produced, from

11 Leading British names from the worlds of art and fashion pair up to produce collaborative works in the free exhibition **Britain Creates 2012: Fashion + Art Collusion** (**until 29 Jul**) at the Victoria And Albert Museum (p. 89). Designed to champion London 2012, as well as celebrate the close link between fashion design and the visual arts, this unique show will illustrate



what great things can happen when two minds collide. Among the collaborations see work by Hussein Chalayan and Gavin Turk; Paul Smith and Charming Baker; Stephen Jones and Cerith Wyn Evans; plus Matthew Williamson and Mat Collishaw.