

**Swimming
a long way
together**



Swimming a long way together
Community Endurance Swim
and Performance

13-15 October 2023, Sea Lanes

Swimming a long way together: Sea Lanes, Brighton

In 1933 Mercedes Gleitze performed an 'Endurance Swim' in Worthing at the Heene Road Baths, which has since closed, where she swam for 47 hours continuously. It was a record-breaking achievement. There were large crowds of spectators at the event as well as poolside music and entertainment. The festive atmosphere created spurred Mercedes on and kept her spirits up.

'Mercedes did not find endurance swimming unduly monotonous because she was passionately fond of music, and its provision was critical to the success of all her swims. She used rhythm, voices and lyrics of songs and hymns to inspire and stimulate her movement in the water, and this helped her to remain conscious and aware of her surroundings when swimming for periods of up to 47 hours'

-Doloranda Pember, *In the Wake of Mercedes Gleitze*, 2019, The History Press, p.156

This was Mercedes' final Endurance Swim, so it is fitting that **Swimming a Long Way Together** will conclude this phase of the project in Mercedes' home town. For this final event, artist Vanessa Daws is reimagining Mercedes' endurance swim in Worthing as a collective, continuous, and multi-disciplinary performance, taking place across 47 hours at Sea Lanes, the new national centre for open water swimming on Brighton beach.

Starting at 5.30pm on Friday, the first swimmers will take to the water. Rather than a re-enactment of Mercedes solo effort, the event will be a continuous swimming relay; there will always be at least one person swimming in the pool until 4.30pm on Sunday.

The swimmers are accompanied by a continuous, 47 hour programme of poolside entertainment.

Responding to an open call or invitation by the curatorial team, the entertainment includes a broad range of formats and disciplines: talks, poetry, movement, live art, film and a broad range of musical performance across different genres – including contemporary, folk and popular music. Many of the performers are directly or indirectly paying tribute to Mercedes Gleitze through the themes, ideas and forms that they are presenting.

The performances are viewable from the pool, Sea Lanes surrounds – the beach and cafes – and via livestream.

Performance schedule

Friday 13 October

17:30

Bell Lungs

Soaring electroacoustic layers of folk, minimalism, psychedelia, free improvisation and avant-garde pop, channelling the shifting emotions of altered states in the pursuit of endurance.



Bell Lungs

18:30

Joy Jefford and Sylvia Bluck

Accompanying herself on the guitar, Joy will sing a collection of her own songs on the themes of nature, creativity and freedom and a cover called 'Sea Swimming' specially arranged for the occasion. Her songs will alternate with extracts from 'Waterlog' by Roger Deakin read by Sylvia.



Sylvia Bluck

19:30

Norman Yamada with Frances Bartlett

Live-streamed from across the Channel, Frances and Norman will perform an extract from Norman Yamada's piece 'Révélation' (2014). 'Révélation' is a three hour composition divided into 12 sections, each centered by a drone tone varying in volume and harmonic color played by computer. Although highly structured, 'Révélation' gives its interpreters freedom to change articulation, dynamics, and tempi, as they wander through an unpredictable sonic space.



Joy Jefford



Norman Yamada
with Frances
Bartlett



Anna Maria Mullally

20:30

Anna Maria Mullally

'Pluck and Endurance:' Anna Maria Mullally gives a talk on Brighton women swimmers of the 20s and Mercedes Gleitze



Alice McCabe and Amy Cutler

21:30

Alice McCabe and Amy Cutler

A live performance and ambient projection of an under/overwater dance of strokes and bubbles in ongoing spirals using flowers, light and sound.



Vanessa Daws and Landless

22:30

Vanessa Daws and Landless

A screening of 'At Home in the Water', a film by Vanessa Daws that follows the inner and outer journey of the long distance sea swimmer, plus recordings of music by traditional singing group Landless.



Bela Emerson

23:30

Bela Emerson

A fully improvised and setting-responsive cello performance by Bela, an innovative musician who uses cello to connect with others, support people's wellbeing, and create responsive sounds and textures.

00:30

Warren 'Kaninen' Rasmussen

A performance artist, writer and rabbit, exploring themes of participation, pedagogy, work and nonsense.



Warren
'Kaninen'
Rasmussen

01:30

Claire Kent

A reading of the Worthing papers from 1933, contemporary to Mercedes' record-breaking swim.



Claire Kent

02:30

Daniel Alexander Hignall-Tully

Daniel Alexander Hignell-Tully is a sound-artist and composer, whose work engages with both avant-garde and experimental compositional approaches and the socio-political nature of creative practice within the everyday.



Daniel
Alexander
Hignall-Tully

04:30

Fresh Perspectives

'Beside the Sea' is a showreel on the theme of our relationship to the sea: community, positivity, health and wellbeing. It includes clips filmed in Brighton & Hove, the South East coast and St Leonards Lido in the '30s, '40s and '50s. Production of the film was supported by Screen Archive South East at the University of Brighton. Fresh Perspectives is a group of film enthusiasts aged 18 - 25 who co-curate and present film screenings in Fabrica's unique arts space.



Fresh
Perspectives



Vanessa Daws and Landless

05:30

Vanessa Daws and Landless

A screening of 'At Home in the Water', a film by Vanessa Daws that follows the inner and outer journey of the long distance sea swimmer, plus recordings of music by traditional singing group Landless.

Steve Mentz



06:30

Steve Mentz

Recordings of watery poems by blue humanities writer Steve Mentz.



Hannah Denton

07:30

Hannah Denton

OUTSIDE: An update about a recent feasibility study investigating the impact of outdoor swimming on depression.

Caleb Howard-Almond



08:30

Caleb Howard-Almond

Acoustic good vibes, some you'll know and some you'll leave humming



Luna Wave

09:30

Luna Wave

Luna Wave will be leading a free-to-attend 45 minute session of 50 sun salutations in conjunction with Swimming a Long Way Together. We will move and breathe together and take on this challenge from the side of the pool at Sea Lanes.

Dan Green



10:30

Dan Green

Songs from Sussex and the sea

11:30

Philip Hoare

Philip will deliver 'Sea-Ecstasy,' an oral essay specially written for the occasion, celebrating the sea and swimming in space and time, in your bones and in your head.

Philip Hoare



12:30

Katie Byrnes

Beat based vinyl DJ set exploring funk, soul, breaks, hip hop, loops, and edits.

Katie Byrnes



13:30

SwimOut Podcast

SwimOut Podcast brings you a cornucopia of tales about Mercedes Gleitze, through a prerecorded short drama and discussion with Mercedes' grandson Andrew Pember followed by live guests Vanessa Daws and Anna Maria Mullally.

[Listen to the podcast here.](#)

SwimOut Podcast



14:30

Emma Lindsay and Alice Gale Feeney

'You Can Call it Confirmation Bias' is a performance grounded in friendship and a desire for objects to predict the future. Two performers construct worlds using voice and movement alongside paper props, miracle fish and trees that look like women's legs.

Emma Lindsay and Alice Gale Feeney



15:30

Sophia Trewick and Libby Waters

A reading of writing by Sophia and Libby which will explore the relationship between women and wild swimming today.

Sophia Trewick and Libby Waters



KarenKaren



16:30

KarenKaren

Lo-fi piano and guitar performance - original songs of life and love

17:30

Dolly Dollycore

Dolly Dollycore has loved sharing music as a DJ all of their 'grown-up' life; this set is a deep dive into the lapping, splashing flow of songs about swimming and water.



Dolly Dollycore

18:30

Ingrid Plum

Ethereal vocals, synth and recordings of nature woven together to form fluid fragmentary narratives of hydrofeminism.

Ingrid Plum



19:30

Swim Trek

Telle's SwimTrek Journey: An insight into how Telle went from an enthusiastic swimmer (like many people), to a cold water fanatic and endurance event lover, whilst working with her dream company, SwimTrek.



Swim Trek

20:30

VÄLVE

Folk lullabies re-imagined by the BBC Radiophonic Workshop by a gleaming lo-fi/avant-guard sound art group.

VÄLVE



21:30

Anna Maria Mullally

A VJ set featuring clips from contemporary and vintage film and newsreel with swimming as the theme.



Anna Maria Mullally

22:30

Mae Hill

A young artist singing a variety of genres from country to dance, bringing good vibes and lots of fun!



Mae Hill

23:30

Issac Frank

With a background in the UK underground clubbing scene and drawing inspiration from popular music, Issac Frank has crafted a sound that blends elements of pop, UK underground dance, and experimental genres.



Issac Frank

Sunday 15 October

00:30

Pettaluck

'Carnival of the Seas' combines woodwinds and electronics to tell the tale of sea creatures both mythical and real.



Pettaluck

02:30

Hardworking Families

Slow sounds and abstract textures for the middle of the night.



Hardworking Families

04:30

Fresh Perspectives

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Fresh Perspectives

05:30

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Vanessa Daws and Landless

06:30

Steve Mentz

Recordings of watery poems by blue humanities writer Steve Mentz.



Steve Mentz



Serena
Constance

07:30

Serena Constance

A sunrise telling of the InnuIt story of Sedna: Seawitch and Queen of the Oceans

Richard, from
The Shadow
Triggers



08:30

Richard, from The Shadow Triggers

A mix of original songs and covers – country, pop and rock.



Adam
Symbiosis

09:30

Adam Symbiosis

Eclectic, exciting, Adam Symbiosis brings the house party to the poolside!

Rosalie
Nickerson



10:30

Rosalie Nickerson

Path to the Moon
Queen of the Tides
She leads you down
To the water's edge.
Dip into the waves
Of a heroine's past.



Redvox

11:30

Redvox

Redvox sings swampy songs on the guitar "about things that touch me".

POG



12:30

POG

Playing 'The Lido,' which is all about a love of outdoor swimming pools, plus some songs about the seaside.

13:30

August Radio Project

A musician/busker playing acoustic songs ranging from 90's punk rock to American country



August Radio Project

14:30

Anna Maria Mullally

DJ Set: This set will feature a selection of popular tunes of the 20s and 30s, including some of Mercedes' favourites.



Anna Maria Mullally

15:30

Bell Lungs

Soaring electroacoustic layers of folk, minimalism, psychedelia, free improvisation and avant-garde pop, channelling the shifting emotions of altered states in the pursuit of endurance. The set will conclude with 'as easy stop the sea', the song written for the project by artist and musician Ruth Clinton.



Bell Lungs

About Swimming a Long Way Together

Swimming a Long Way Together is a multi-disciplinary art and swimming project by Vanessa Daws, curated by Rosie Hermon. It celebrates sea-swimming communities and follows in the footsteps of Mercedes Gleitze.

Vanessa Daws is an artist based in Dublin. As well as being a long distance swimmer, Vanessa has incorporated swimming into her artistic practice. Swimming, journey, encounter, conversation and Vanessa's first hand swimming experiences are the starting points for her projects. Vanessa has been developing a multi-layered way of working with different communities in different disciplines, all connected through particular bodies of water:

'When passing a body of water, be it pond, fountain, lake, river or sea, it's hard for me to resist the urge to take a swim. My work investigates where this drive to swim, to immerse oneself in water comes from. Is it the sheer thrill of the unknown; to feel the water on our skin, the cold on our head, adapt our breathing and to feel we exist.'

It was during Vanessa's preparations to attempt to swim the English Channel that she first came across the fascinating history of the celebrated long distance swimmer Mercedes Gleitze.

Mercedes was the first British woman to have swum the English Channel in 1927, the first person to swim the Strait of Gibraltar, and she also completed record-breaking endurance swims of up to 47 hours in public swimming pools. From humble origins, Mercedes became celebrated for her swimming achievements, with huge audiences coming to cheer her on or to greet her whenever she emerged from the water.

Through the project, Vanessa has created swimming-based art events in the locations where Mercedes made significant achievements in her extraordinary swimming career, Dublin, Cork and Galway in Ireland, Donaghadee in Northern Ireland, Brighton and Dover in England.

Mercedes' story has been documented by her daughter Doloranda Pember in her biography "In the Wake of Mercedes Gleitze", which has been an inspirational text for this project.

Swimming a Long Way Together is funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund as part of a project by Fabrica, Brighton, Sea Lanes, Future Foundry and Dover Museum. It has also been funded through the Irish Arts Council Open Call Award 2021 and Arts Council England. The event at Sea Lanes has been produced by Fabrica.

www.swimmingalongwaytogether.com

www.vanessadaws.com

www.fabrica.org.uk

Swimming a Long Way Together has been brought together by an incredible team of people.

Swimming a Long Way Together event team:

Liz Whitehead, Valerie Furnham, Barry Lynch, Petra Giffard, Anna Maria Mullally, Hannah Denton, Petra Matthews Crow, Giles Thacker, Dan Green, Eddie Hayden-Smith, James Tranmer, Paul Dungworth, Rhys Evans, Iris Madariaga, Emma Norris, Kezia Keeler

Many thanks to everyone at Sea Lanes including Mark Byerley, Spencer Hodge, Spike Glazebrook Higgs and Katie McFarlane

Thanks also to Screen Archive South East, Concorde 2, the performers and more than 200 swimmers who have signed up to take part.

And finally we continue to be incredibly thankful to Doloranda Pember, Mercedes Gleitze's daughter, for her ongoing support and advice.



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