

## Music is Great – Part 2

From festival fun to the glamour of opera. This is the magnificent Royal Albert Hall in London.

Tonight is press night for their new production of Aida... and for some reason they've let me in... although I'm not entirely sure if I'm dressed for the occasion.

The Royal Albert Hall, named after Queen Victoria's husband, opened in 1871. It's been busy hosting music and performance events ever since.

Tonight it's all about opera. Verdi's Aida is a love story about a princess and a soldier. This production is presented by the Royal Albert Hall and Raymond Gubbay Ltd and features the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

Jasper Hope is the chief operating officer here at the Royal Albert Hall.

**Richard:** Jasper, this is such an incredible building. Tell me about it.

**Jasper:** Thank you. Well, this is the ceremonial entrance of the Royal Albert Hall, and we are 140 years old, and probably the world's most famous stage.

**Richard:** And what's your favourite thing about the Royal Albert Hall?

**Jasper:** Seeing the audience's reaction, I think, to walking in for the first time.

**Richard:** So, in your opinion, what is so great about great British music?

**Jasper:** Well, just think about this building and the stage, and who we've hosted over the years. Edward Elgar, The Beatles, Yehudi Menuhin, the Rolling Stones, Adele, you name it, they've all played here. That is great British music.

Music is at the heart of British culture and is used as a way of reaching out to young people and disadvantaged groups.

This is Southampton on the south coast. Now, a shopping centre is the last place I'd expect to find musical talent. But inside, there's a music project that is making a big difference to kids' lives.

SoCo may be a small team but they are making a big difference. Known as The Hub, it's a space perfect for creating music for all ages. Here musicians take to the stage, record balcony sessions for up-and-coming bands and have workshops in many creative activities.

Matt Salvage runs the project.

**Richard:** Matt, this is a fantastic project. Tell me about it.

**Matt:** Well, it's a space where people can come and get involved in music. We work with lots of different groups of people who can engage with music-making and arts.

**Richard:** So what happens here?

**Matt:** We do all sorts of stuff here, whether it's an opportunity for people to write music, get involved in a project that we've got running, or people can do recording or performance.

**Richard:** So who comes here?

**Matt:** We get a real mixture of people coming here. The project was set up really to help disadvantaged groups, so we work with young people, we work with homeless people, people with drug problems, older people, we run a mental health music group, and it's really just people who wouldn't be able to otherwise access projects like this.

**Richard:** Is it making a difference?

**Matt:** I think it's really making a difference. Just by having this space here and allowing people to come and get involved in something that's creative, something that they can be passionate about, it gives them a really positive focus.

**Richard:** That's great, Matt. Can I have a go?

**Matt:** Yeah, go for it!

What an amazing musical journey I've had. And who knows? Maybe someone out there will notice my talent...