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**PERTH FESTIVAL LAUNCHES 2020 PROGRAM
7 FEBRUARY – 1 MARCH 2020**



Bennelong, image cr Daniel Boud

On a bedrock of Indigenous culture, **Perth Festival 2020** welcomes everyone to a glorious summer celebration of people and place.

More than 250 events across theatre, music, dance, opera, film, visual arts and literature and ideas – many of them free – will dazzle audiences from near and far from **7 February to 1 March**.

Mavis Staples, Neil Gaiman, Meow Meow, Rufus Wainwright, Kate Tempest, Bryony Kimmings, Paul Kelly, Garrick Ohlsson, Michael Keegan-Dolan – our 2020 Festival artists are as wondrous as our 14 brand-new Festival commissions that celebrate such diverse figures as **Gurrumul, Philip Glass, Beethoven** and **Bon Scott**.

New **Artistic Director Iain Grandage's** four annual programs here on Noongar Boodjar will capture an ever-expanding orbit of stories from the local to the global.

“Perth Festival 2020 will be a huge, euphoric celebration of Perth, Western Australia – it’s my home town and I love it,” Grandage says. “We introduce a sparkling new Festival hub, **City of Lights** including our new contemporary music venue **Chevron Lighthouse**, welcome the return of the

much-loved **Chamber Music Weekend** and premiere exciting new theatre, dance and music works made especially for you by talented local artists working with artists from across the country and around the world.”

In 2020, we begin with the Festival theme of **Karla** – a Noongar term meaning fire and by extension country and home. In Festivals to follow, we sweep beyond Karla’s warm glow across the **Bilya** (River) and **Wardan** (Sea) and finally out into the vast expanse of **Djinda** (the cosmos, the stars).

“Our Festival is a campfire for sharing stories and inviting belonging,” Grandage says. “In celebrating place, and the depth and range of Australian indigenous culture, our entire first week is dedicated to First Nations performances.

“This is a first for any major Australian international arts festival and a celebration of Australia’s unique voice in the world.”

In a landmark event, Perth’s **Yirra Yaakin Theatre** presents the all-Noongar language **Hecate**, an adaptation of *Macbeth* by writer-director and Perth Festival Associate Artist **Kylie Bracknell (Kaarlijilba Kaardn)**. She has also created **Hecate Kambarnap** outside the theatre – a place of gathering, smoking and healing.

The Festival’s first week also brings us the ravishingly beautiful **Bennelong**, one of **Bangarra Dance Theatre’s** most acclaimed shows, and **BLACK TIES**, a hilarious comedy about a Māori and Aboriginal couple’s wedding party from **ILBIJERRI Theatre Company** and **Te Rēhia Theatre**.

A highlight of the opening weekend will be the world-premiere season of **Bungul**, which invites us into the culture that inspired Gurrumul’s final album, **Djarrimirri (Child of the Rainbow)**, in an extraordinary live audio-visual spectacular by Yolŋu dancers, songmen and the **West Australian Symphony Orchestra**.

NEW FESTIVAL HUB LIGHTS UP

From the first moments at our new **City of Lights** Festival hub, Karla bursts into life as a glittering multicultural precinct in and around **Perth Concert Hall**. The City of Lights, powered by human energy, is inspired by the night of February 22, 1962, when the people of Perth lit up our city to guide the orbit of the first American into space, John Glenn.



The City of Lights will pulsate with the best contemporary music under the stars at the **Chevron Lighthouse** outdoor venue. Inside, the iconic Perth Concert Hall transforms from an Indigenous ceremonial ground into a classical and fine music space and a rollicking **Kabarett Haus** curated by the marvellous **Meow Meow**, pictured above right.

What better way to celebrate the richness of Western Australia's stories than to present two of the finest WA theatre works to have emerged from the Festival – the first Indigenous musical ***Bran Nue Dae*** and the stage adaptation of ***Cloudstreet***? They are back in thrilling new productions for a new generation presented in partnership with **WA Opera** and **Black Swan State Theatre Company of WA**. And WA's own **Andrew Bovell** (*The Secret River*, *Lantana*) and a dream-team of the writers behind the 1990s landmark play *Who's Afraid of the Working Class?* reunite to take the dramatic pulse of present-day Australia in the new Festival commission ***Anthem***.

Answering the ancient stories of this land is an ancient story from Ireland, **MÁM**. After the huge success of *Swan Lake/Loch na hEala* at the 2019 Festival, **Michael Keegan-Dolan** and **Teač Daínsa** return to the **Heath Ledger Theatre** with this dance-theatre masterpiece of ritualised ecstasy.

Lovers of dance, physical theatre and circus have much to savour in 2020 as national and international companies perform side-by-side with local artists. Outdoors at the **State Theatre Centre**, audiences will get up close and personal with the master of rock 'n' roll performance, **Hofesh Shechter**, as **STRUT Dance** transforms the Courtyard into a mosh pit of super charged dance. In the **Studio Underground**, 50 dancers flood the stage in **Stephanie Lake's** monumental dance work ***Colossus***. Under director **Yaron Lifschitz**, **Circa's** renowned ensemble join 18 local performers from **Co:3 Australia**, **Circus Maxima** and **CircusWA** to push the limits of human



possibility in the world-premiere Festival commission ***Leviathan*** at the **Regal Theatre**.

International brilliance shines in ***Tao of Glass***, left. Performer-director **Phelim McDermott**, of the UK theatre group **Improbable**, teams up with composer **Philip Glass** and an ensemble of musicians and puppeteers for a gorgeous theatrical odyssey

through Glass's music. It was the hit of the 2019 Manchester International Festival. And **Bryony Kimmings**, last in Perth in 2015 with her sell-out seasons of *Fake It 'Til You Make It* and *Sex Idiot*, returns to us with her Edinburgh Fringe stand-out hit ***I'm a Phoenix, Bitch***. This is just one of many Festival works (alongside ***Fidelio*** and ***Hecate***) that explore women and power.

Karla's closing flames flicker into the sunset south of the river with our massive free Festival finale ***Highway to Hell***. We are reclaiming a 10km stretch of Canning Highway to create the world's longest stage and Perth's largest picnic ground for a day of music and fun on 1 March. This community celebration will honour local legend **Bon Scott** and his relationship with our city on the 40th anniversary of his being laid to rest at Fremantle Cemetery.

A FESTIVAL UNDER THE STARS

We embrace our city's enviable summer nights with the return of **Lotterywest Films** under the stars at **UWA Somerville**, the ever-popular **Ballet at the Quarry** and the transformation of Supreme Court Gardens into a fairytale forest for **Hansel and Gretel**, the City of Perth's **Opera in the Park**. These idyllic outdoor summer experiences are just some of the reasons why Perth Festival is the longest-running annual multi-arts celebration in the Southern Hemisphere.

In 2020 we celebrate Beethoven's 250th birthday at Perth Concert Hall with his only opera **Fidelio**, presented by **WASO**, while other highlights from his vast catalogue feature in the return of the **Chamber Music Weekend** to the University of Western Australia from 14-16 February.

Winthrop Hall and its beautiful surrounds will be the hub for a series of free and ticketed performances reframing Western fine music with Indigenous songlines of our ancient land, lovingly curated by Festival Director Iain Grandage. Among the weekend's highlight are **Quartet & Country**, with the **Australian String Quartet** alongside some of Australia's finest Indigenous musicians. UK vocal consort **The Gesualdo Six**, local choirs **The Giovanni**



Consort and **Voyces**, and didgeridoo master **William Barton**, above, unite for **Ancient Voices**, which includes a new commission based on Beethoven's **Ode to Joy** from local composer **Cara Fesjian**.

The extraordinary music program continues as Australian music legend **Paul Kelly**, composer **James Ledger**, **Alice Keath** and **Seraphim Trio** set our spirits soaring with the song cycle **Thirteen Ways to Look at Birds**. In association with Musica Viva, revered American pianist **Garrick Ohlsson** brings us great works by Beethoven, Prokofiev and Chopin, while guitar brilliance and incandescent vocals shine when **Gina Williams** and **Guy Ghose** perform their Noongar children's songs and lullabies in **Koorlangka**.

In the City of Lights, **Meow Meow** invites us into **Kabarett Haus**, her decadent place of cabaret dreams. The siren extraordinaire kicks off the Kabarett Haus season with her uproarious night of musical mayhem, **Pandemonium**, accompanied by **Pink Martini's Thomas M. Lauderdale** and the WASO conducted by our own Iain Grandage. On following nights, she welcomes music greats **Rufus Wainwright**, with his intimate new show especially created for Perth Festival, and the triumphant return of punk cabaret queen **Amanda Palmer**.

The 2020 contemporary international music program at **Chevron Lighthouse** is an electrifying mix of hot nights and sonic delights. The action kicks off on 7 February with the powerhouse hip-hop heroics of **Briggs** as he brings together a host of special guest Indigenous artists for a **Bad Apples House Party**. It's a tasty entrée to a smorgasbord of unrelenting music treats that include multiple Grammy winners **Blind Boys of Alabama**, disco diva **Evelyn 'Champagne' King + Mondo Freaks**, performance poet **Kate Tempest**, New Orleans marching outfit **Treme Brass Band**, indie charmer

Weyes Blood, the blisteringly beautiful **Aldous Harding**, the ever-evolving nu-soul star **Ngaiire** and Brooklyn synth-pop superstar trio **Yeasayer**. The Lighthouse comes to an epic finale on 1 March with the fiery, fearless and funky tunes of gospel legend **Mavis Staples**, right.



We introduce another new Festival venue in 2020 with the rejuvenated Rechabites Hall. A skip and a jump from the State Theatre Centre in Northbridge, **The Rechabite** will play host to great Australian jazz improvisers **The Necks** and the audio-visual experimentation of **Robin Fox**.

WORDS TO THE WISE

Land. Money. Power. Sex. These four big themes drive our 2020 **Literature & Ideas** program curated for the first time by **Sisonke Msimang**. Novelists, songwriters, filmmakers, politicians, artists, DJs and comedians come together to wrestle with the most pressing issues of our time in a program packed with all the things that matter. The weekend hub is once again the University of Western Australia from 21-23 February but activities popping up all over town from 17 February include the first **Lit Crawl Perth** showcasing local talents in venues along Beaufort Street, Mount Lawley, the mobile book club **A Bus, a Book & A Bite**, and events at **The Literature Centre** in Fremantle.

Bruce Pascoe, acclaimed author of *Dark Emu* and *Salt*, kicks off the 2020 **Literature & Ideas Weekend** in conversation with Noongar academic and musician **Dr Clint Bracknell**. Superstar writer



Neil Gaiman, left, the award-winning author of *Sandman*, *American Gods*, *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* and *Norse Mythology*, shares his stories in a captivating afternoon event at Perth Concert Hall.

The weekend would not complete without our **Family Day**, with a huge range of free activities including the interactive words-and-music adventure of **Dumazi and the Big Yellow Lion** led by **Matt Ottley**, **Valanga Khoza** and members of WASO in *The Sound of Picture Books*.

Other Literature & Ideas highlights include **Melissa**

Lucashenko, **Josephine Wilson** and **Charlotte Wood** discussing writing, money and the politics of prizes in *Prize & Prejudice*. In the first Perth edition of *Story Club*, comedian **Ben Jenkins** hosts some of Australia's finest raconteurs including **Jane Caro**, **Matt Okine**, **Benjamin Law**, **Holden Sheppard** and **Sukhjit Kaur Khalsa**. And our most clear-eyed thinkers will be riffing on the big topics

of Sex, Power and Money in ***Unmoderated: The Gauntlet Series*** at the Octagon Theatre with **Rick Morton, Maria Tumarkin and Sanam Maher**.

A GARDEN OF CINEMA DREAMS

Starting on 25 November to usher in another stunning Perth summer, the best in cinema from around the world is coming to a **UWA Somerville** for **Lotterywest Films** under the stars. To make this special experience even better at in Perth's favourite picture garden, we have new food vendors and a fresh selection of award-winning international films to entertain, enthrall, excite and inspire. Share your nights with **Antonio Banderas, Bill Murray, Fanny Ardant, Willem Dafoe, Robert Pattinson** and other big names in cinema in a season of romance, adventure, thrillers, inspiring docs, politically charged drama, feel-good family tales and even a zombie comedy.

Life meets art for the season opener ***Pain and Glory***, as Spanish legendary director **Pedro Almodovar** and his stars **Antonio Banderas** (Best Actor, 2019 Cannes) and **Penelope Cruz** align for Almodovar's sensuous semi-autobiographical drama. It's followed by **Jim Jarmusch's** sardonic comedy ***The Dead Don't Die***, starring **Adam Driver, Bill Murray, Tom Waits, Chloë Sevigny** and **Iggy Pop** among the greatest zombie cast ever disassembled. Other acclaimed films on the way include the sumptuous French 18th century period drama ***Portrait of a Lady on Fire*** (2019 Cannes Best Screenplay), Cinefest Oz Film Prize winner ***His for Happiness***, visionary filmmaker **Robert Eggers's** gothic thriller ***The Lighthouse***, starring **Willem Dafoe** and **Robert Pattinson**, and the must-see Australian documentary ***In My Blood it Runs***.



The bold 2020 **Visual Arts** program, in the hands of celebrated local curator **Gemma Weston**, examines place and identity with a powerful urgency that balances the spectacular with the intricate and tender. A series of exhibitions around Perth's galleries include stunning new immersive VR works from trailblazing filmmaker **Lynette Wallworth, *Awavena***, left, at the **Art Gallery of WA**, and legendary New York artist **Laurie Anderson's** and

Taiwanese artist **Hsin-Chien Huang's *Chalkroom*** at PICA. **Tina Havelock Stevens'** audio-video work ***Thunderhead*** channelling a storm cell's extreme energy is also at PICA, where **Jacky Connolly's** game-art video work tracks the lives of two *Sims 3* characters in the suburban wasteland of ***Hudson Valley Ruins***.

WA-born artist **Ian Strange** reveals the anxieties of suburban life through his transformations of desolate and empty homes in a series of eerie photography and film works for ***Suburban Interventions 2008-2020*** at **John Curtin Gallery**. In the adjoining gallery, acclaimed Noongar artist

Sandra Hill's *Mirra Kurrum Maun (Far From Home)* examines the impact of government policies and racial discrimination on generations of Aboriginal women.

Continuing the Festival's commitment to arts and disability, **DAADA** in Fremantle will present original works from the ***Cheeky Dogs*** series by Northern Territory artist and illustrator **Dion Beasley**, an artist in the 22nd Sydney Biennale in 2020.

For ***The Long Kiss Goodbye*** at Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery, a group of artists transform familiar materials and symbols into complex meditations on attraction, repulsion, loss and hope. And art meets science in ***Bricolage***, an ambitious new installation of microscopic robots from at **Fremantle Arts Centre**, where we're also celebrating the kaleidoscopic vision of Walmajarri artist **John Prince Siddon** alongside 1990s works by **Butcher Cherele Janangoo** in the joint Mangkaja Arts show ***All Mixed Up***.

Perth Festival is proud to offer this wonderfully vast program, which has something for everyone in 2020. Visit Perth Festival for more details.

BOOKINGS AND FESTIVAL INFO: perthfestival.com.au

Selected images [here](#).

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Perth Festival acknowledges the Noongar people who continue to practise their values, language, beliefs and knowledge on their kwobidak boodjar.

They remain the spiritual and cultural birdiyangara of this place and we honour and respect their caretakers and custodians and the vital role Noongar people play for our community and our Festival to flourish.

Perth Festival

Founded in 1953 by The University of Western Australia, Perth Festival is the longest running international arts festival in Australia and Western Australia's premier cultural event. The Festival has developed a worldwide reputation for excellence in its international program, the presentation of new works and the highest quality artistic experiences for its audience. For 67 years, the Festival has welcomed to Perth some of the world's greatest living artists and now connects with hundreds of thousands of people each year.

Iain Grandage is the Artistic Director 2020–23.

PERTH FESTIVAL

7 February - 1 March

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Leviathan commissioned by Perth Festival, Brisbane Festival, La Strada Graz Festival and Stanford Live.

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