

MEDIA RELEASE: 31 October, 2019

FIVE STAGE STARS PEN AN ANTHEM FOR OUR TIMES

Anthem

**By Andrew Bovell, Patricia Cornelius, Melissa Reeves,
Christos Tsiolkas & Irine Vela**

A PERTH FESTIVAL COMMISSION



Image: Pia Johnson

***'Tough, funny theatre with an urgency to its purpose and no comfortable answers.'* – The Guardian**

Four of Australian theatre's most exceptional playwrights and a leading composer have reunited after 21 years to take Australia's dramatic pulse in the new Perth Festival commission **Anthem**.

WA's own **Andrew Bovell** (*The Secret River, Lantana*) and a dream-team of writers captured the zeitgeist of Melbourne and Australia through a series of powerful interwoven vignettes in the 1990s landmark play *Who's Afraid of the Working Class?*

Now they collaborate once again to ask a bold question: do Australians share a dream and do we really sing together with one voice?

Playwrights **Andrew Bovell, Patricia Cornelius, Melissa Reeves** and **Christos Tsiolkas** join director **Susie Dee** and composer **Irine Vela** to set *Anthem* in one of the few places where Australians closely mix – a public train carriage. The public transport system is a microcosm of larger political tensions and anxieties played out by the old and young, rich and poor, new migrants and old.

Produced by Performing Lines and Arts Centre Melbourne, *Anthem's* diverse and multi-generational cast includes **Amanda Ma, Maude Davey, Tony Nikolakopoulos, Eva Seymour, Carly Sheppard, Maria Mercedes, Reef Ireland, Thuso Lekwape, Osamah Sami, Eyrn Jean Norvill, Sahil Saluja** and **Ruci Kaisila**.

Anthem is a funny and ferocious portrait of a country unable to reconcile its past and uncertain of its future and political vision. The colliding voices that make up this anthem might not always be in harmony, but they cannot be silenced.

Performing Lines is renowned for producing proactive contemporary performance by Australia's most audacious independent artists. They create work that is propelled by pressing questions and new ways of seeing the world and championing the unconventional, the marginal, the rebellious and the new.

[Click here for images.](#)

WHAT: Anthem

WHERE: Heath Ledger Theatre

WHEN: Wed 12 – Sun 16 Feb

HOW MUCH: \$39 - \$89

BOOKINGS AND FESTIVAL INFO: perthfestival.com.au

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Anthem was initiated by Arts Centre Melbourne and has been produced by Performing Lines in association with Arts Centre Melbourne. Script commissioned by Arts Centre Melbourne. *Anthem* is presented by Melbourne International Arts Festival and Arts Centre Melbourne.

This project has been assisted by the Australian Government's Major Festivals Initiative, managed by the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body, in association with the Confederation of Australian International Arts Festivals Inc., commissioned by Melbourne International Arts Festival, Arts Centre Melbourne, Sydney Festival and Perth Festival.

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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 66 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.

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