

MEDIA RELEASE: Friday 11 February 2022

PERTH FESTIVAL 2022 OPENS TODAY

More than 100 free and ticketed events set to inspire and delight

Perth Festival opens today so we invite you to dive into our program filled with world-premieres, new local commissions and major works coming to Perth for the first time.

Some of our dazzling stage shows, outdoor films and exhibitions have already begun, setting the scene for artists and audiences to come together to celebrate our 2022 theme of **Wardan (Ocean)** over the next three weeks.



Lila McGuire as Molly Chubb in Panawathi Girl. Image: Dana Weeks

The world premiere of **David Milroy's** rollicking musical ***Panawathi Girl*** is already wowing packed houses at His Majesty's Theatre, while acting royalty **Kate Walsh** and **Caroline Brazier** are playing their deadly game of thrones in ***Mary Stuart*** at the Heath Ledger Theatre.

Tonight, psych-rockers **Pond** hit the outdoor stage at Fremantle Arts Centre, where the stunning group exhibition ***Undertow*** explores the deep cross-currents of our relationships with the ocean. In other Festival action this weekend, dancers weave magic in world-premieres of ***And The Earth Will Swallow Them Whole*** at the State Theatre Centre and WA Ballet's ***Platinum: Ballet at the Quarry***.

Alter Boy and other artists navigate pathways of expression in ***Our Language*** at DADAA, and senior Walmajarri artist **Sonia Kurarra** opens her landmark solo exhibition ***Portals of Love and Loss*** at Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery alongside ***Ariel's Song***. Nearby, the gripping Italian film ***To Chiara*** is playing in the **Lotterywest Films** season at UWA Somerville.

Throughout the Festival, other highlights include the funny, heart-warming theatre work ***The Smallest Stage***, the wondrous family light and performance event ***Patch's Lighthouse***, soprano

Emma Matthews shaping beauty from air in *Sea Pictures* beneath WA Museum Boorla Bardip's famous blue whale, the sublime *Katie Noonan with Strings* at AGWA and the epic concert *Become Ocean*, featuring the combined forces of the **West Australian Symphony Orchestra** and **Western Australian Youth Orchestra**.

Breathing new life into old spaces, beatmaker **Ta-Ku** takes over the old **Karrakatta Club** with his *Songs to Experience* music and art show, and our converted European Foods warehouse venue in Northbridge features a fantastic contemporary music line-up including **Methyl Ethyl** and *Flewnt's Boorloo Block Party*.

In our Wardan year, there are events all along the coast. **Perth Symphony Orchestra** perform free concerts near the sea at Rockingham and Wanneroo, and **The Farm** and **Co3 Contemporary Dance** kick up the sand at City Beach in *The Ninth Wave*. **Alter Boy**, **Stella Donnelly** and RTRFM's *WA Mixtape* crank up the music at B-Shed, while South Mole juts into the ocean as a witness to *Sounds of Sunset* with **CLAUDIO**.

Our **Literature & Ideas** program also returns, starting with *A Day of Ideas: At Sea*, a day of conversations with Perth at the heart at **Subiaco Arts Centre** on 19 February. Over the following *Writers Weekend* on 26-27 February, **Tim Winton**, **Lisa Taddeo**, **Hannah Kent**, **Helen Garner** and many more writers, plus the fun of **Family Day**, will bring connection through stories to Fremantle Arts Centre.

To close the Festival on the March long weekend, the free and immersive multisensory experience of *Noongar Wonderland* will light up Perry Lakes with dynamic stories of Noongar Boodjar co-created by many of the artists behind recent Festival hits *Hecate* and *Fist of Fury Noongar Daa*.

Artistic Director Iain Grandage says: 'Perth Festival 2022 is a glittering collection of experiences for you, our audience. Over the next three weeks, the finest artists of our generation are bringing stories to life in the most extraordinary ways and in the most extraordinary locations right across our city. We all seek moments of comfort in these turbulent times, and it is a privilege to be able to share these events that are filled with such beauty, joy and wonder.'

While five shows could not proceed during this year's Festival season, we still have more than 100 free and ticketed events for people to enjoy and we look forward to welcoming audiences to our COVID-safe venues. We remind everyone to get double-vaccinated (and a third dose when eligible), and to have their proof of vaccination and ID ready to present upon entry to applicable venues and events. Please see our COVID-safe page here: <https://www.perthfestival.com.au/covidsafe/>

This year, Perth Festival is reaching out from the city and around this vast state with our new **Touring WA** partnership with **Minderoo Foundation**, taking events to Bunbury, Albany and Karratha.

Also look out for **Meyne Wyatt's** extraordinary *City of Gold*, the Black Swan State Theatre Company and Sydney Theatre Company production coming to the Heath Ledger Theatre from 17-27 March.

We thank the Government, Principal Partner Lotterywest, Founding Partner the University of Western Australia and all our supporters. We could not put on the Festival and make such a positive impact on our community without them by our side.

Perth Festival runs 11 February – 6 March. Lotterywest Films continues to 3 April.

BOOKINGS AND FESTIVAL INFO: perthfestival.com.au

Click [here](#) for media kits and images. For further information, interviews or images please contact:

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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.

Festival 2022 theme - Wardan

The ocean. We saw them first. They came along the sea, beyond the horizon. Moving upon the water, closer and closer. Big white sails and strange white men. We saw them, thinking the spirits of our ancestors are returning. Our lives changed forever. Now we are here. Today. Together still. Wardan is where it all began for us. It is dangerous and powerful, a mysterious and spiritual place.

– Assoc Prof Ted Wilkes AO and Ian Moopa Wilkes

ABOUT 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 almost 70 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 Artistic Director 2020-24



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