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STARS ALIGN FOR A PERFECT WEEKEND OF CONVERSATIONS

Literature & Ideas, 21-23 February

A stellar line-up of award-winning international, national and local writers will gather for **Perth Festival's** annual celebration of brilliant literature and exciting ideas.

Superstar **Neil Gaiman**, acclaimed *Dark Emu* author **Bruce Pascoe**, much-loved children's writer **Julia Donaldson** plus American Indian novelist **Tommy Orange** (*There There*), and acclaimed Brooklyn-based writer **Julia Phillips** (*Disappearing Earth*), join about 100 special guests at the 2020 Literature & Ideas Weekend.

The weekend hub is once again nestled in the beautiful surroundings of The University of Western Australia, where more than 70 free and ticketed sessions will engage writers, readers and lovers of big ideas.

The international guests include Pakistani journalist **Sanam Maher** (*A Woman Like Her: The Short Life of Qandeel Baloch*), Nigerian journalist **Chike Frankie Edozien** (*Lives of Great Men*), **Arif Anwar** from Canada (*The Storm*), New Zealand writer **Chessie Henry** (*We Can Make a Life*) and Norwegian writer and anthropologist **Long Litt Woon** (*The Way Through The Woods: On Mushrooms and Mourning*).



Julia Donaldson: Image: Steve Ullathorne

Among our national guests are acclaimed writers **Charlotte Wood** (*The Weekend*), **Christos Tsiolkas** (*Damascus*), **Heather Rose** (*Bruny*), **Melissa Lucashenko** (*Too Much Lip*), **Claire G. Coleman** (*The Old Lie*), **Tara June Winch** (*The Yield*), **Katherine Johnson** (*Paris Savages*), **Jess Hill** (*See What You Made Me Do*), **Jeff Sparrow** (*Fascists Among Us: Online Hate and the Christchurch Massacre*), **Maxine Beneba Clarke** (*Saturday Portraits*), **Omar Sakr** (*The Lost Arabs*), **Ruby Hamad** (*White Tears Brown Scars*) and **Thomas Mayor** (*Finding the Heart of the Nation*).

The weekend also includes our popular **Family Day** on Sunday 23 February with a huge range of free activities including storytelling and songs with **Julia Donaldson**, plus Cheeky Dogs workshop and the Paper Bird Kombi crew providing fun activities and storytelling sessions.

Perth Festival's Literature & Ideas Curator Sisonke Msimang says her program encompasses local and global stories and topics under the overarching themes of land, money, power and sex.

"In an age of incredible polarisation and often ugly debate, when love as a public value is in jeopardy, the 2020 Literature & Ideas program is grounded in a firm belief that love must play a more overt role in our public discussions," Sisonke says.

“This is no excuse to avoid truth telling,” she says. “We have asked our guests to bring their most loving, direct and clear selves to the table.

“We hope you enjoy all the aspects of the program that remain familiar from previous years – the wonderful venue, the multiple sessions, the excellent books and brilliant writers.

“We hope too that you appreciate the slower and deeper pace. We have scheduled longer sessions and longer breaks between those sessions. We’ve done this in the belief that a feast cooked with love takes time.”



Image Matthew Newton, Rummin Productions

Bruce Pascoe, left, kicks off the weekend in conversation with Noongar academic and musician **Dr Clint Bracknell** at the Octagon Theatre on Friday 21 February, while on Saturday 22 February the gloves are off as **Rick Morton**, **Maria Tumarkin** and **Sanam Maher** tackle the big topics of sex, power and money in *Unmoderated: The Gauntlet Series*.

UWA’s Tropical Grove will be home to special readings on Saturday 22 February by some of our best writers and poets including **Leni Shilton**, **Madelaine Dickie**, **Emily Paull**, **David Whish-Wilson**, **Nandi Chinna**, **Caitlin Maling**, **Catherine Noske**, **Ingrid Laguna** and **Bindy Pritchard**.

In the first Perth edition of **Story Club**, comedian **Ben Jenkins** hosts some of our finest raconteurs including **Jane Caro**, **Matt Okine**, **Holden Sheppard** and **Sukhjit Kaur Khalsa**.

Rounding out the weekend on Sunday 23 February at the Octagon Theatre will be a lively discussion about a year of protest and people power anchored by **Benjamin Law** in conversation with writer and broadcaster **Jeff Sparrow**, First Nations writer and campaigner **Thomas Mayor**, investigative journalist **Jess Hill** and WA teenage climate activist **Bella Burgemeister**.

Adding to these exceptional experiences will be our first **Lit Crawl Perth** showcasing local talents in venues along Beaufort Street, Mount Lawley on Thursday 20 February from 7pm, our inaugural **A Bus, A Book, A Bite** with a fabulous food experience tied to book as well as **Literature & Ideas in Fremantle** with **Dervla McTiernan**, **Alan Carter**, **Barry Jonsberg** and our very own **Sisonke Msimang**.

Full program details [here](#). Media 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 birdiyngara 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.



LITQUAKE

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