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LOCAL STARS TO SHINE BRIGHT AT PERTH FESTIVAL 2021

Program celebrates a world of talent in our own backyard

Perth Festival will overflow with Western Australian creativity as we celebrate the 2021 theme of **Bilya** (river) this summer.

Just as the river is a source of revival, play and reflection, Festival 2021 is both celebratory and contemplative as we focus attention on the local brilliance that would thrill audiences anywhere in the world.

The Festival opens in dazzling style as **City of Lights** starts a 21-night spectacular takeover of the **Perth Cultural Centre** – and **Tim Minchin** performs the world-premiere of his new album ***Apart Together*** orchestrated live in concert with **West Australian Symphony Orchestra** in **Kings Park**.

City of Lights promises an exciting night out for the entire family.



Tim Minchin. Cr. Damian Bennett

Its centrepiece will be the epic imaginary world of ***Bilya Beneath***, an hourly immersive 360-degree spectacle of music, projections and animations washing the Perth Cultural Centre's buildings in vivid colour in tribute to Northbridge's submerged waterways.

As Perth Festival's new home for 2021, City of Lights brings live music and other tasty treats to tempt the senses from the **State Theatre Centre of WA Courtyard** to the street fare of **Lantern Lane** behind **The Rechabite** and all venues in between. The full Contemporary Music program will drop on 21 January.

WA Museum Boola Bardip hosts several special events, including the exquisite ***One and Many*** chamber music series staged under the famous Blue Whale, and the landmark exhibition ***Songlines: Tracking the Seven Sisters*** from the **National Museum of Australia**.

Festival 2021 pays tribute to WA's unique circumstances, with audiences set to enjoy exceptional Festival experiences from our extraordinary artists. The world may not be making its way to Perth at Festival time – but in so many ways it is already here as we celebrate the rich diversity of our community.

'Perth Festival 2021 is a love song to this place – to its people, its artists, its stories, its river,' says **Artistic Director Iain Grandage**.

Bilya also honours the **Derbarl Yerrigan** (Swan River). It is deeply entwined with the creation story of this place through the presence of the Wargl, the embodiment of all fresh water sources for **Whadjuk Noongar** people. 'This is the first and pre-eminent story of our river,' Grandage says. 'But a river runs through us all – our histories and bloodlines entwined – leaving memories everywhere.'

Productions along the river speak to the many histories of this unique place we call home, including ***Witness Stand*** at significant sites from Mandoon (Guildford) to Wadjemup (Rottne), ***BESIDE*** at Peninsula Farm in Maylands and ***The Cherry Orchard*** at Sunset Heritage Precinct in Dalkeith.



BESIDE. Cr. David Cox

South of the river, we bring the Festival to a joyous conclusion on 28 February with ***Wild Things***, our takeover of **Perth Zoo** where families can share a different habitat with WA's top authors, musicians, performers and other creative creatures. Other fantastic family fare includes **Barking Gecko Theatre's** beautiful new show ***HOUSE*** and **Freeze Frame Opera's** delightful ***The Little Mermaid***.

Indigenous-led art continues to be at the heart of the Festival, with such highlights as the Noongar-led walking performance ***Galup*** at Lake Monger, the Noongar dub of Bruce Lee's iconic kung-fu film ***Fist of Fury Noongar Daa*** and ***Koort (Heart)***, **Gina Williams'** and **Guy Ghouse's** song cycle in Government House Gardens. **Yirra Yaakin** also brings an Indigenous voice to the queer love story ***The Sum of Us***, the play that inspired the 1990s Jack Thompson-Russell Crowe film.

The extensive 2021 program includes 18 world premieres and 44 Festival commissions, more than twice as many as in 2020. 'It's a joy to celebrate the work of local independent artists,' Grandage says. 'The program is filled with exciting new commissions which reflect the breadth and reach of our shared community.'

These include ***Black Brass***, a feast of music, theatre and storytelling by African-born writer and performer **Mararo Wangai**, the choose-your-own theatre adventure of ***The Last Great Hunt's Whistleblower***, **Ian Sinclair's** poetic family drama ***Whale Fall*** and **Jay Emmanuel's** new play ***Children of the Sea***, whose young migrant cast take the audience on a gripping voyage of survival. New dance works abound, including world premieres of **Co3 Contemporary Dance's** moving ***Archives of Humanity***, **Emma Fishwick's** mesmerising ***Slow Burn, Together*** and the multi-venue promenade of ***MoveMoveMove*** presented by the **Blue Room**. They share the 2021 program with acclaimed, established Festival favourites **Black Swan State Theatre Company**, **West Australian Ballet**, **West Australian Opera** and **WASO**.



Whistleblower. Cr. Daniel Grant

Our magnificent State orchestra will delight audiences in many ways across the 2021 program. The combined musical might of WASO and the **WA Youth Orchestra** join Noongar singers including **Della Rae Morrison** for ***Dreams of Place***, two special opening-weekend concerts at **Perth Concert Hall**. In an epic concert event later in the Festival, WASO and **Voyces** choir supplement **Rachel Dease's** soaring soundscapes from her brand-new album ***Hymns for End Times*** at **His Majesty's Theatre**.

Warm summer evenings and glorious music make an intoxicating mix for the Valentine's Day treat of **The Jazz Line**, a journey through jazz's greatest moments in the gardens of Government House, and WA Opera's two-night 30th anniversary special presentation of **City of Perth Opera in The Park** in Supreme Court Gardens on the final weekend of the Festival.



Beneath **UWA Somerville's** famous pines, the 17-week **Lotterywest Films** makes an opening night splash on 30 November with the Australian premiere of the powerful WA-made Venice Film Festival hit **The Furnace**. The ever-popular film season promises many idyllic nights under the stars all summer with some of the biggest names in international cinema including **Olivia Colman, Anthony Hopkins, Stanley Tucci, Gael García Bernal** and **Mads Mikkelsen** – plus surfing champ **Jodie Cooper**.

Anoïtette in the Cévennes. Cr. Julien Panié Chapka Films – La Filmerie – France 3

We celebrate our burgeoning local literary scene by spreading the **Literature & Ideas Program** across three weekends and extending events from Fremantle to Perth to Joondalup. Hot spots will be the **Day of Ideas: Just Beneath the Surface** with a multitude of Noongar voices leading vital discussions about our river and our city at Perth Concert Hall and the **Literature Weekend** at His Majesty's Theatre. Local luminaries like **Craig Silvey, Elizabeth Tan, Rebecca Giggs** and **Rebecca Higgie** will shine alongside live-streamed guest stars such as **Julia Gillard, Trent Dalton, Maaza Mengiste, Brit Bennett** and **Kate Grenville**. The full Literature & Ideas program will be announced on 21 January.

The Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery's survey of celebrated WA artist **Olga Cironis, Dislocation**, will be a highlight of the **Visual Arts Program**, as will an extensive **Abdul-Rahman Abdullah** retrospective at John Curtin Gallery and **The Gathering**, a seminal **PICA** exhibition by First Nations artists from Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand reflecting on gatherings of people, ideas and objects in large numbers in challenging times.

Our comprehensive **Connect** programs offer engagement and development opportunities for our community by stretching and celebrating lifelong learning and the connection between our artists and our audiences.

'There are so many fantastic stories in Festival 2021 which reveal new and unexpected insights into who we think about when we say, "We are Western Australians",' Grandage says. 'We hope this Festival will be a beacon for us to gather around in all our wonderful diversity here on Noongar Boodjar. We can't wait to share it with you.'

Perth Festival runs 5 – 28 February 2021. **Lotterywest Films** runs from 30 November 2020 – 28 March 2020.

Tickets go on sale to Friends of the Festival at 12pm noon WST on Wednesday 18 November and to the general public at 9am WST on Wednesday 25 November.

BOOKINGS AND FESTIVAL INFO: perthfestival.com.au

Click here for [media kits](#) and [images](#).

For further information, interviews or images please contact:

Stephen Bevis

+61 8 6488 8618 / 0448 927 281

sbevis@perthfestival.com.au

Belinda Sherry

+61 8 6488 8582 / 0415 346 803

bsherry@perthfestival.com.au

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 2021 theme

Bilya. River. Nestled into boodjar, mother earth. Bilya is a network of cords going from one place to another, bringing life, giving water, feeding the land. In Noongar language and life, the word bilya begins at bily, meaning navel or belly button, becoming bilya the cord of life. Without rivers what would we have? As we rest beside it and ponder upon its continual nourishing we connect deeper to our existence and the true meaning of bilya.

– Roma Yibiyung Winmar and Kylie Bracknell [Kaarljilba Kaardn]

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 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.

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