

MEDIA RELEASE: Thursday, 31 October 2019

**SOARING SONGS AND SOUNDSCAPES**

**Thirteen Ways to Look at Birds (February 15)**

**Featuring Paul Kelly, James Ledger, Alice Keath, and Seraphim Trio**

**A PERTH FESTIVAL COMMISSION**



Image: Shane Reid

***“Paul Kelly melds literature and music like no other Australian musician.” – The Guardian***

Australian music legend **Paul Kelly** and Western Australia's leading composer **James Ledger** will bring to life their 2019 ARIA Award-winning 'Best Classical' album on stage at **Perth Festival**, for an evocative song cycle inspired by birds.

Birds have fascinated poets for centuries, not just for their song and flight but as symbols of hope, freedom, love, communication, peace, luck and migration. What better way to honour them than by sending songs out into the air?

Joined by singer-songwriter **Alice Keath** and chamber ensemble **Seraphim Trio** featuring **Anna Goldsworthy** on piano, **Helen Ayres** on violin and **Tim Nankervis** on cello, *Thirteen Ways To Look At Birds* is a tribute in words and music to our feathered friends – from the barn owl to the nightingale, the thornbill to the falcon, and the magpie to the swan.

Using the words of poets John Keats, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Emily Dickinson, Judith Wright, Thomas Hardy and others, each of these 13 new songs and soundscapes is its own world – delicate and intimate at times, colossal and soaring at others.

Banjo with pizzicato strings, synthesizer drones with piano, processed guitar with glockenspiel are just a few of the combinations to be heard in a unique marriage of electronics, acoustic instruments and the human voice.

"Working with Paul [Kelly] always seems to uncover fascinating new musical worlds that neither of us would have found on our own. *Thirteen Ways to Look at Birds* lies somewhere in between our own usual languages," says James Ledger.

"Alice, Tim, Helen, Anna and producer Bob have brought so much to this. I'm thrilled to be a part of something so unique."

Paul Kelly adds: "This is the second time I've worked with James setting a group of poems to music. Writing with him, I've learned to expect the unexpected. He surprises and challenges me in the best possible way. And it's been an honour working with such a talented gang on stage and in the studio. I'm excited to be sending our fledglings out into the air!"

**WHAT: Thirteen Ways To Look At Birds**

**WHEN: 15 February, 7:30pm (followed by a Post Show Q&A)**

**WHERE: Perth Concert Hall, Perth CBD (Dyeedyallup)**

**HOW MUCH: \$39 - \$79**

**BOOKINGS AND FESTIVAL INFO: [perthfestival.com.au](http://perthfestival.com.au)**

*Presented in arrangement with GWB Entertainment. Commissioned by Adelaide Festival and Perth Festival.*

[Download 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.*