PERTH FESTIVAL

15 February – 14 March

WORLD PREMIERE

TIM MINCHIN

WITH WEST AUSTRALIAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

APART / TOGETHER

Image: Damian Bennett

Founder

UWA PERTH·AUSTRALIA

Principal Partner

lotterywest

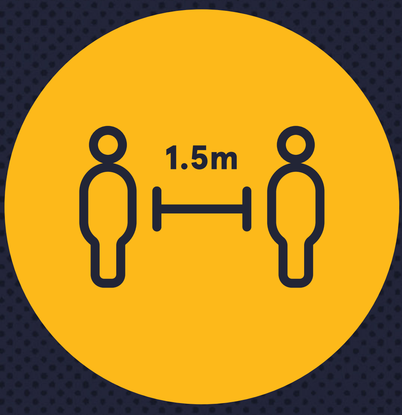
KINGS PARK & Botanic Garden

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

Stay COVID-19 safe



Physical distancing

Wash your hands

Stay home if you are sick

Register your attendance

For latest health advice visit healthywa.wa.gov.au/coronavirus

TIM MINCHIN

WITH WEST AUSTRALIAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

APART / TOGETHER

KAARTA KOOMBA / PERTH CBD

KINGS PARK & BOTANICAL GARDEN

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
FEBRUARY				5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	**20**	**21**
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

Sat & Sun Gates open 5.30pm
Tim Minchin 7pm
Duration 80mins

With thanks to Mellen Events and
Kings Park & Botanic Garden

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Image: Jess Wyld

Perth Festival 2021 is a love song to this place – its people, artists and stories. And so, it is fitting that one of our city's favourite sons (and a dear friend of many of us in the Festival family and beyond) is back in town to perform a special version of his very personal album Apart / Together. Whilst Tim has lived away from Perth for many years now, that absence has seemingly made his heart grow fonder. He captures a yearning and a tranquility that many of us have at one stage or another experienced here in Perth. His musical distillations of complex emotions lift us all. This album is gentler and more introspective than his comedic and satirical works, and for me reveals publicly the kindness and wisdom that those close to him have long experienced. What a treat to welcome him home.

IAIN GRANDAGE

PERTH FESTIVAL ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Image: Jess Wyld

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING TO DO AFTER THE SHOW?

Why not head into Northbridge and enjoy City of Lights at Perth Cultural Centre? Immerse yourself in the projections, catch some tunes at *STC Courtyard Sessions*, drop into a local bar for a post-show drink or treat yourself to a tasty bite at one of the many eateries.

CREDITS

Written & Performed by Tim Minchin

Conductor Jessica Gethin

With

Steve Hensby (Guitar)

Ben VanderWal (Drums)

Karl Florisson (Bass)

Helen Shanahan (BVs)

West Australian Symphony Orchestra

First Violin Semra Lee-Smith, Graeme Norris, Fleur Challen, Stephanie Dean, Alexandra Isted, Cerys Tooby

Second Violin Zak Rowntree, Ellie Lawrence, Lucas O'Brien, Melanie Pearn, Louise Sandercock, Jane Serrangeli

Viola Alex Brogan, Kierstan Arkleysmith, Allan McLean, Helen Tuckey

Cello Eve Silver, Oliver McAslan, Nicholas Metcalfe

Double Bass John Keene, Christine Reitzenstein

Flute Mary-Anne Blades

Clarinet Alexander Millier

French Horn Robert Gladstones, Julia Brooke

Trumpet Brent Grapes, Peter Miller

Trombone Liam O'Malley, Philip Holdsworth

Percussion Brian Maloney, Francois Combemorel

FRONT OF HOUSE

Audio Guy Smith

Monitors Lewis Ryan

Stage Mark McEwen

Lighting Justin Twible

Management Katie Minchin

REPERTOIRE

Summer Romance
Arranged by Alice Humphreys

Leaving LA
Arranged by Joe Twist

The Absence Of You
Arranged by Daniel Denholm

Airport Piano
Arranged by Holly Harrison

Apart Together
Arranged by Lisa Cheney

I Can’t Save You
Arranged by Rebecca Erin Smith

Beautiful Head
Arranged by Nicholas Buc

I’ll Take Lonely Tonight
Arranged by Erkki Veltheim

If This Plane Goes Down
Arranged by Iain The Boss Grandage

Talked Too Much, Stayed Too Long
Arranged by Jamie Messenger

Carry You
Arranged by Sarah Belkner

APART TOGETHER

THE ALBUM

'For the past twenty years, I've always written from a point of view. It could be a pseudo-classical song about putting your baby to bed. Or an Austrian drinking song about the Catholic church. Or from the perspective of a six-year-old child who's a genius. That's great. But this isn't that. This is about what fills the available space when you pause for a moment.'

– TIM MINCHIN

That it's taken Tim Minchin until now to release his first 'proper' album speaks volumes about the twists and turns his career has taken since he made the journey to London from Perth in the hope of finding an audience for a kohl-eyed, shock-headed musical comedian. Since landing the 2005 Perrier Award for Best Comedy Newcomer, the bullet points mark a vertiginous ascent into wider renown: his music and lyrics for *Matilda the Musical*, which helped propel the Royal Shakespeare Company's adaptation of Roald Dahl's book to a record-breaking number of Tony and Olivier Awards; a string of sold-out arena tours; his celebrated portrayal of Judas in the 2012 touring version of *Jesus Christ Superstar*; and a snowballing acting and writing career

which dramatically bore fruit in the acclaimed 2019 series *Upright*.

But, of course, that isn't the whole story. As a devout rationalist, Tim will no doubt be aware of Newton's third law – that for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. And so, with the giddy successes, there must be one or two concomitant setbacks. In 2018, four years after Tim and his family moved to Los Angeles to start work on the animated musical *Larrikins*, the project – three-quarters and $50 million dollars into completion – abruptly fell victim to Comcast's acquisition of DreamWorks. All of which needs to be mentioned, because these are all experiences that, along the way, have become fossilised into the creative fuel that powered *Apart Together* into existence.

And perhaps no more so than the first single released from the record – 'Leaving LA' sees our protagonist take one last tour around his adoptive home, in the process reconciling the dreams that brought him here with the reality of the four years that followed. Tim explains: 'It's a break-up song, essentially. One of those break-up songs where you're trying to convince yourself you hate that person – but actually, there's a fondness in it too'.

For an artist whose musical output has

often been determined by the brief of a wider project, it was tempting to make this album 'about' something. But early on in the process, Tim realised that there's something to be said for holding your nerve and waiting to see what happens. Almost immediately, the songs came. The first was the album's opening track 'Summer Romance', another memorial to a city that changed the course of Tim's life. This time, London. A chorus of almost pyrotechnic grandeur acts as a suitable setting for a lyric which is ultimately about letting go. 'It doesn't have to be London,' he elaborates, 'It's really about a time of your life to which you can never get back. Reluctantly accepting that your future is elsewhere. And yet you might never again be as happy as you are here.'

Following on the heels of that song, came two more standouts: 'I Can't Save You' and 'Talked Too Much, Stayed Too Long'. The former is a tender address to the tormented soul who you would do anything to save, and yet in life, anything isn't always enough. On the latter, Tim turns the camera around to deliver the album's most cathartic performance: a riotous recap of the highs and lows that propelled him to this point.

Clearly, relocating from Los Angeles to Sydney at the beginning of 2018 had left Tim with much to process. Having

written songs in the past in which he elegantly repudiated the cliché of the tortured artist ('Dark Side', 'Rock and Roll Nerd'), Tim found himself wrestling with a new emotion. 'Sometimes it's not enough to remind yourself how privileged you are. And that was weird for me. Because I'm good at reasoning my way into a happier state of mind. When it finally went away, I just woke up and realised, "Oh! That was just *grief*, was it? Phew!" But that emotion – even though this was never going to be a bunch of whiney songs – that emotion is probably the base paint for this record.'

It's a point borne out with every turntable mile accrued in the company of *Apart Together*. Had Tim's earliest plans to record a solo album borne fruit, his debut album would have emerged 20 years ago. Desperate to mark out a similar niche to inspirations such as Ben Folds and Rufus Wainwright, the young Tim moved from his native Perth to Melbourne in the hope of a record deal that never materialised. However, *Apart Together* bears scant resemblance to that record. And while you can hear those aforementioned inspirations in the mix – most immediately on the ivory-thwacking powerpop of 'Beautiful Head' and 'Airport Piano' – this is unashamedly the work of a husband and a father with his own unique story to tell.

From the author of 'If I Didn't Have You' we know not to expect anything that one might term a straightforward love song. And the title track of *Apart Together* is something of a companion piece to that long-time live comedy favourite. Inspired by a news story on Los Angeles radio about an elderly couple in their mobile home who died of hypothermia in each other's arms, 'Apart Together' tenderly teases out the improbable beauty of such an outcome, and frames it in an exquisitely pensive setting. 'From the outset,' he explains, 'if you enter marriage wholly accepting that it's a commitment to watching each other decay, there's something far more beautiful in that than the greeting card depiction of love that it's overturning.'

This cards-on-the-table candour spiders out into several more of the record's most affecting moments. While other songwriters may seek to portray marriage as a force-field that protects you from the temptations of life on the road, Tim's songs square up to a more fascinating reality. Before being blown into the blue by a soaring, show-stopping rock chorus, the delicate baroque pop beginnings of 'The Absence Of You' see our protagonist wandering through romantic settings in Paris and London, attempting to reconcile this idyllic moment to the one thing that it lacks – the companionship of his wife. In a moment of weakness in

a New York apartment, he succumbs to a kiss from a stranger before the enormity of what's being put at risk puts any longing for short-term gratification into perspective. In the epic ballad, 'I'll Take Lonely Tonight', he is even more uncomfortably honest, seemingly only just choosing to be loyal to the girl who has his *'heart in a house on a hill'*. He calls it his 'monogamy-by-the-fingernails' ballad.

Sometimes, in jettisoning almost all extraneous detail and writing down your own truth, you alight on something universal. It's tempting to surmise, upon spending time with *Apart Together*, that it all happened this way – both the highs and the lows – for a reason. But, of course, its creator has no truck with that sort of supernatural talk. 'You'd be mistaking cause and effect for destiny,' he smiles, 'I'm 45 now. I'm married and I'm a dad. But more to the point, I'm acutely aware of all the things I'm not. I've finally figured that it's ok to write the songs that I write – they do tell stories and often they are very theatrical. And that's fine.'

PETE PAPHIDES

[EXTRACT REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION]

BIOGRAPHIES

TIM MINCHIN

Tim Minchin is an Australian musician, comedian, composer, actor, writer and director. He has toured extensively in the US, UK and Australia, performing solo, with bands and with symphony orchestras. He has released five DVDs, the most recent recorded with the Heritage Orchestra at the Royal Albert Hall. He is the composer lyricist of two hit West End / Broadway musicals, *Matilda* and *Groundhog Day*, both of which won the Olivier Award for Best West End Musical and garnered nominations for Best Score and Best Musical in Broadway's Tony Awards.

Tim wrote, produced and starred in the Sky Atlantic / Foxtel TV series, *Upright*, in 2019. Other screen-acting credits include Atticus Fetch in Season Six of *Californication*, a Logie Award-winning Smasher Sullivan in the ABC's *Secret River*, and Friar Tuck in Lionsgate's *Robin Hood* reboot. Stage highlights include Judas in the UK / Australian Arena tour of *Jesus Christ Superstar* in 2012 and Rosencrantz in the Sydney Theatre Company's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* the following year. He has published two books – the graphic novel *Storm* and the illustrated children's book *When I Grow Up*.

In November 2020 Tim released his debut solo album *Apart Together*. He is a member of the Order of Australia, a philanthropist and a mediocre juggler.

JESSICA GETHIN

Conductor

Hailed as ‘exuberant’, ‘superb’ and a ‘force to be reckoned with’, acclaimed Australian conductor Jessica Gethin has been praised by audiences and critics alike for her stellar musicianship, vibrant energy and charismatic stage presence.

Listed by *Limelight Magazine* in the ‘Top Twenty Australian Artists of the Year’ for 2017, Jessica’s musical experience covers a wide range of genres, with an international schedule seeing her perform throughout Asia, New Zealand, the United States, Australia and beyond. She is fast being recognised for her repertoire diversity, as she moves effortlessly between conducting core symphonic works, mainstage opera and ballet to contemporary and film score.

From 2011 – 19, Jessica was the inaugural Chief Conductor of the Perth Symphony Orchestra (Western Australia). Her recent guest conductor engagements include the Dallas Opera, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra, Singapore Symphony Orchestra and West Australian Symphony Orchestra, as well as tour conductor for productions including National Geographic's *Symphony for Our World*, *Zelda Symphony of the Goddesses* and the Michael Bolton Symphony Tour.

WEST AUSTRALIAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

From the centre of Perth to the furthest corners of our state, every year since 1928, West Australian Symphony Orchestra (WASO) sets hearts racing with extraordinary music and exhilarating performances for all West Australians to share.

WASO is a for-purpose not-for-profit company that thrives on the enthusiasm, passion and support of our entire community. They harness this energy to create events and programs across the State to stimulate learning and participation in a vibrant cultural life.

The Orchestra is both a fierce advocate for our great classical musical heritage and a passionate leader in the commissioning and performance of new music by leading Australian and international composers. Every year WASO mobilise and nurture a new generation of young and emerging artists to help secure a bright future for music in Australia. They create the spark that sets off a lifelong love of music believing it has the power to touch the soul and enrich lives.

The resident company of full-time professional musicians are the beating heart of the organisation. The Orchestra plays a central role in the vibrancy of our creative state, and they are also supported by hundreds of visiting artists, alongside the volunteers of the WASO Chorus, to create exceptional performances for hundreds of thousands of people each year.

The Orchestra is led by Principal Conductor and Artistic Adviser Asher Fisch. Israeli-born, Asher is an internationally-renowned conductor in both the operatic and symphonic repertoire, and is a frequent guest at the world's great opera houses including La Scala, the Bayerische Staatsoper and the Metropolitan Opera in New York.

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With thanks to Kings Park & Botanic Garden board, management and staff.

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR DONORS

We couldn't do it without their amazing support.
You can view the full list of our donors online at
perthfestival.com.au/support-us/philanthropy/our-donors/

PATRONS

Our Festival Patrons generously lead the way in supporting the artistic development of the Festival through a three-year commitment to give $50,000 per annum.

CHAIR'S CIRCLE

Our Chair's Circle is a committed network of Donors who, along with our Chair, support the Festival's long-term strategy of growing the WA arts sector for a minimum of three years with a donation of $20,000 per annum.

FESTIVAL CIRCLE

The Festival Circle giving program provides ongoing support to artistic excellence across all we do. Donations to this fund are a direct investment in enabling us to bring excellence to our community and provide local artists with the opportunity to work alongside the world's greatest thinkers, performers and creatives.

MEDICI

Our Medici Donors make an annual donation towards enabling a specific, ambitious Festival performance each year.

COMMISSIONING FUND

Our Commissioning Fund supports the development of new Festival works over the four-year tenure of our Artistic Director. Donations to this fund enable us to develop and present Festival works that give voice to the people, artists and stories of this place.

CREATIVE LEARNING & ENGAGEMENT

Our Creative Learning & Engagement Fund brings meaningful artistic experiences to young people and our local community to assist their wellbeing, whilst ensuring artistic experiences are accessible for everyone.

LEGACY CIRCLE

Our Legacy Circle recognises bequestors who have left a gift in their will to sustain the future of Perth Festival.

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