

MEDIA RELEASE: 7 FEBRUARY 2025

## PERTH FESTIVAL OPENS TODAY

**Illuminating Perth nights with incredible music, theatre and art all month long**



*Karla Bidi image credit: Cole Baxter*

**Perth Festival 2025** kicks off today with an incredible weekend of immersive events to entice and delight Perth audiences. Whether it's a first look at the reinvigorated **East Perth Power Station** and its global musical offerings, venturing to His Majesty's Theatre to immerse in the opulent storytelling of **Mahabharata**, or discovering your new favourite artists through the **Boorloo Contemporary** exhibitions - the opening weekend is a diverse mix of music, theatre and visual art, promising something for everyone.

Across the next 24 days audiences can discover 104 different events - 64 of which are free - in a Festival that always aims to surprise and delight. Featuring over 380 artists, including 143 international artists and 173 local West Australian artists, Artistic Director Anna Reece is thrilled to be opening the first of her four Festival seasons.

Perth Festival Artistic Director **Anna Reece** said: "It's been over 18 months of dreaming, planning, and pulling it all together, and now—here we are. A game changing Festival for my hometown that I know our city is ready for.

"A Festival that is so proudly Western Australian—in the stories we tell and the places we take over. Backyards, beaches, parks, rivers, iconic buildings, old haunts as well as our beautiful theatres. All places that hold memories and meaning, transformed by artists and audiences coming together."

Launching tonight, and illuminating the skies every night during the Festival, is the powerful **Karla Bidi**. Meaning Fire Trail and inspired by the Noongar tradition of lighting fires to greet and guide visitors, this Festival commissioned and produced installation transforms the **Derbarl Yerrigan** (Swan River) into a stunning trail of campfires. From Walyalup to Mandoon, from Fremantle to Guildford – this Lotterywest community experience welcomes audiences into the heart of the Festival's offerings.

Created by the next generation of First Nations artists, and guided by Elders, each beacon is a glowing symbol of welcome, warmth, safety and inclusivity. With 11 locations scattered along the river's edge, these illuminations are a unique blend of light sculptures and soundscapes designed specifically for this place. Each activation starts from 7:45pm on 15 minute loops with a short interval and runs until late. No tickets, no theatre seats – just the sky, the sounds and the beautiful riverbank.

*Karla Bidi* is created through close collaboration between multi-disciplinary artists **Ilona McGuire, Jacob Nash, Chloe Ogilvie** and **Ian Wilkes**, and guided by **Vivienne Hansen**, Perth Festival **Noongar Advisory Circle, Nigel Wilkes** and **Alta Winmar**. Join one of the *Karla Bidi Live* events to get an intimate insight from the artistic team and their guests, as they discuss the themes and storytelling that sparked their creation. See the website for specific dates and locations.

Across the first weekend at the **East Perth Power Station**, expect a powerful all First Nations opening night line-up, starting tonight with the Main Stage headlined by the multi-award-winning electronic duo **Electric Fields**, who captured everyone's hearts with their 2024 Eurovision performance.



*East Perth Power Station image credit: Sophie Minissale*

Then, a kaleidoscopic mash-up of African and electronic elements by **Ibibio Sound Machine**, fronted by Nigerian singer **Eno Williams**, will unite the dancefloor on Sun 9 Feb. This electrifying group of musicians bring their sexy, synth-driven soundscapes for a '90s retro-futurist atmosphere on the dancefloor.

Over the next month the Power Station welcomes German pianist, composer, producer and celebrated performer **Nils Frahm** for two enticingly hypnotic nights; Midnight Oil's legendary frontman **Peter Garrett & The Alter Egos** in a rare solo performance fuelled by power and passion; **Alter Boy** performing their entire catalogue of self-described 'queerlectro pop noir'; Norwegian duo **Røyksopp** for a very special DJ set from beyond the Arctic Circle; UK electric duo **Maribou State**; Egyptian-Australian DJ **Moktar**, renowned for mixing house and techno music with traditional Arabic

instrumentation; and **C.FRIM** who will throw down blends of rap, afrobeat, dancehall and grime with esoteric house, techno and everything in between.

Alongside these incredible Main Stage performances, this Lotterywest community experience will continue to spark joy with **Casa Musica** - a vibrant celebration of music, food and culture inspired by the lively piazzas and parks of southern Europe. This free event promises world-class performances from across the Indian Ocean rim and beyond, featuring acts from Réunion Island, South Africa, India and Italy.

When the sun sets, the façade of the Power Station will also serve as a spectacular backdrop for an ambitious art commission featuring projected works from three Noongar artists: **Allan Yarran, Ilona McGuire** and **Daniel Hansen**. Each night, the walls come alive as they become a canvas for **Boorloo Contemporary**, an electrifying new celebration of Indigenous artists.



*Power Station Commission projection artwork from Allan Yarran. Image credit: Rob Gibbon*

Audiences can enjoy a variety of unique free events that celebrate the power of community across the city. Bring the family and settle in with a picnic at Riverside Gardens for a euphoric evening of **Orchestra-oke**, or venture further west to Scarborough Beach for **Indian Ocean Sounds**, where South African group **The Joy** and Réunion Island's **Lindigo** delight with harmonies, soul and traditional dance.

In an Australian first, renowned Moroccan-Belgian choreographer **Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui** debuts **Manifest** at the always popular and free **Perth Moves** from **STRUT Dance**. This powerful new work features 12 local dancers, two grand pianos and is supported by a 'silent choir' of 50 community volunteers. Alongside this premiere, join **All The Queens Men** as they bring their joyous social dance project to Forrest Place for the first time in **Perth Moves: LGBTIQ+ Elders Dance Club**.

Throughout this year's Festival, theatre dwellers are spoilt for choice as the Heath Ledger Theatre, Studio Underground, His Majesty's Theatre and Regal Theatre all host eclectic stage stories from around the world and closer to home. **Larsen C** and **C A R C A R C A** are breathtaking works of international dance; the wildly funny world premiere of **LEGENDS (of the Golden Arches)** brings to

life an unexpected journey to the underworld; the thrilling Broadway sensation **Is This A Room** brings a real-life FBI investigation into the spotlight; and *The Last Great Hunt*'s world premiere of the playfully cinematic **Night Night** rounds out the Festival season.

**The Embassy** hub, taking over the Perth Town Hall from Fri 14 Feb, will host an exquisite array of musical delights, from classical ensembles to rockabilly blues. Highlights at The Embassy include celebrated songbird and jazz musician extraordinaire **Ali Bodycoat**; New Zealand's country-soul star **Tami Neilson**; the spellbinding songbird **Camille O'Sullivan**; the enigmatic **Joseph Keckler**; Australia's most celebrated violinist **Véronique Serret**, a new work by **Sunny Kim's Ensemble Ochaye**; and from Ethiopia, the legendary 78-year-old musical maestro **Hailu Mergia**

Meanwhile, **Summit** presents thought-provoking storytelling and critical discussions featuring some of the Festival's most compelling minds.

With many Festival shows close to selling out, tickets are still available for **Peter Garrett & The Alter Egos**, **Mahabharata**, **12 Last Songs** and **Big Name No Blankets**. Discover the full Perth Festival 2025 program at [perthfestival.com.au](http://perthfestival.com.au). Thanks to the WA Community who play Lotterywest Games, a Lotterywest grant of \$9.5 Million has supported the 2025 Perth Festival.



*Salama image credit: Sophie Minissale*

**WHAT:** Karla Bidi

**WHEN:** Fri 7 Feb – Sun 2 Mar, from after sunset until late

**WHERE:** Various sites along the Derbarl Yerrigan / Swan River

South Mole | Walyalup, Fremantle; 1 Fleet St,  
John Tonkin Reserve | East Fremantle; Riverside Rd  
Point Walter Reserve | Dyoondalup, Bicton; Honour Ave  
Sir James Mitchell Park | South Perth; Mill Point Rd  
J.H. Abrahams Reserve | Goodroo, Crawley; Hackett Dr / The Avenue  
Point Fraser, Boorloo Bridge | Boorloo, East Perth; Riverside Dr  
Mardalup Park | East Perth; Brown St / Jewell Ln

# PERTH FESTIVAL

7 Feb – 2 Mar

Founding Partner

Principal Partner



Riverside Gardens | Bayswater; King William St  
Garvey Park | Ascot; Fauntleroy Ave  
Kings Meadow Reserve | Mandoon, Guildford; Hill St  
Lilac Hill Park | Mandoon, Caversham; W Swan Rd

The full Perth Festival 2025 program is now live at [perthfestival.com.au](http://perthfestival.com.au)  
Images are available at [perthfestival.com.au/for-media](http://perthfestival.com.au/for-media)

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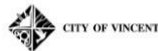
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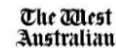
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