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NEW PERTH FESTIVAL DIRECTOR ANNA REECE UNVEILS HER INAUGURAL PROGRAM FOR 2025



Perth Festival today announced its full 2025 program, with new Artistic Director **Anna Reece** inviting Perth audiences and visitors to taste the salty air, feel the sand dunes beneath their feet, be challenged by truth-tellers, and play with mischief-makers.

Running for 24 days from Friday 7 February 2025, with 104 different events 64 of which are free, art in all its forms from Western Australia and across the globe can be experienced in a Festival that aims to surprise and delight.

Featuring over 380 artists, including 143 international artists and 173 local West Australian artists, highlights range from legendary queen of cool **PJ Harvey** and Irish sensations **Fontaines D.C.** kicking off their national tours in Perth, to first Australian performances from world class European choreographers in **Marco da Silva Ferreira** and **Christos Papadopoulos**, from Australian rock icon **Peter Garrett** and electronic music duo **Electric Fields**, to epic international centrepiece **Mahabharata** and Tina Satter's extraordinary **Is This A Room**.

The program includes seven Perth Festival commissions, five world premieres and a further six Australian premieres or Australian exclusives, as well as the transformation of two of the city's most iconic venues, **The East Perth Power Station** and the **Perth Town Hall** into exciting new Festival sites.

Perth Festival Artistic Director Anna Reece says: "To deliver a festival for my home and the city I love is beyond my greatest dreams. This bold and spirited international capital city of endless opportunity and kaleidoscopic possibility, with a pulse is as vibrant as it is eclectic.

"The 2025 Perth Festival looks to the future of art and the world we inhabit together, through a program that is simultaneously contemporary and nostalgic. We will create a fever, a hunger, a boldness - stories of truth telling and a sense of mischief. We will deliver experiences of surprise, delight, discovery, feast and provocation - dancing in the dunes just as much as we will be debating in town halls.

"We hope to entice our audiences into all kinds of spaces across our city with spectacular events that are accessible and immersive, that span our cultural foundations as a state and a city, from our First Nations to our European and Asian migration stories. Everyone is welcome at Perth Festival."

The Festival opens with the world premiere of **Karla Bidi**, inspired by the Noongar tradition of lighting fires to greet and guide visitors. This captivating experience will transform the Derbarl Yerrigan/Swan River into a stunning illuminated pathway, with beacons of light stretching along the river from the hills to the Indian Ocean, each serving as a symbolic campfire of welcome, warmth, and inclusivity.

Exclusive to Perth, highlights from the theatre program include **Mahabharata**, a stunning interpretation of an ancient Sanskrit poem by Toronto's **Why Not Theatre** (seen as two separate shows or, for the ultimate marathon experience, one complete event with an optional traditional Indian feast and storytelling session); running from midday to midnight, **12 Last Songs** is a one-off part live exhibition and part epic performance, inviting audiences

to meet people they never get the chance to meet in everyday life; ***Is This A Room***, the unnerving true story and interrogation of whistleblower Reality Winner; and by Western Australia's **The Last Great Hunt**, the world premiere of ***Night Night***, the tale of Pip, an Antarctic artist on a quest to discover the origin of life.

The world premiere of ***LEGENDS (of the Golden Arches)*** by **Jo Lui** and **Merlynn Tong** will take audiences on an explosive wild ride into the depths of the Chinese afterlife, unravelling the bonds of friendship, culture, and redemption; and ***August: Osage County*** by **Black Swan Theatre Company** & **Belvoir St Theatre** presents **Tracy Letts'** Broadway smash—a caustic and darkly funny exploration of a family in meltdown.

Film, traditional Balinese music and EDM collide in ***Samsara: A Cine-Concert***. Featuring traditional dance, masks and wayang kulit (Indonesian shadow puppetry), this stunning experience with a soaring live score, created by acclaimed Indonesian director **Garin Nugroho** asks what price you would pay to fulfill your heart's desire.

In a historic move, the **East Perth Power Station** will open its doors as Perth Festival's newest precinct, transforming the long-dormant site into the ultimate destination for hot summer nights. Set along the river's edge, the iconic venue will welcome the public for the first time in years, bringing fresh energy to one of Perth's most significant landmarks as it becomes the beating heart of this year's festival celebrations.

When the sun sets, the façade of the Power Station will serve as a spectacular backdrop for an ambitious art commission featuring projected works from three First Nations artists.

Every Wednesday to Sunday afternoon, the Power Station comes alive 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 Reunion Island, South Africa, India, and Italy as well as our very own local artists

After dark, a hidden corner will transform into a main stage for experimental, electronic, and live music, promising an unforgettable experience in this monumental industrial setting featuring acts such as celebrated performer **Nils Frahm** for two enticingly hypnotic nights; Midnight Oil's legendary frontman **Peter Garrett & The Alter Egos** in a rare solo performance, **Alter Boy** performing their entire catalogue of self-described 'queerlectro pop noir,' Norwegian duo **Røyksopp** for a very special DJ set, multi-award-winning Australian electronic music duo **Electric Fields**, a kaleidoscopic mash-up of African and electronic elements by **Ibibio Sound Machine**, Egyptian-Australian DJ, **Moktar** along with **C.FRIM**. Full program to drop in December.

Meanwhile, **The Embassy**, Perth's cherished ballroom – once home to 80s raves, New Year's Eve blowouts, department store staff balls and old-school dance lessons – will be reimaged in the **Perth Town Hall**, transforming it into a vibrant space of nostalgic charm, contemporary flair, and provocative experiences.

The Embassy will present an exquisite array of musical delights, from classical ensembles to rockabilly blues, alongside **Summit**, thought-provoking storytelling featuring some of the Festival's most compelling minds. Every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, Embassy Up Late will serve as the free Festival late-night hotspot - an artist club, infused with a little bit of surprise and delight.

Musical highlights at **The Embassy** include celebrated songbird and jazz musician extraordinaire **Ali Bodycoat** leading an all-star posse of music maestros on a trip down memory lane – with a contemporary twist; 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**.

To close **The Embassy**, a grand celebration invites all to join in an unforgettable night for **A Night Out West**, honouring the legacy of the Coolbaroo Club, whose legendary gatherings welcomed everyone from local mob to stars like Nat King Cole. **A Night Out West** is a nod to the infamous ball of the same name, held in the Perth Town

Hall in 1955, and will feature an all-First Nations lineup, including award-winning R&B and neo-soul artist **Bumpy**, and the **Wilarra Band** from **Lucky Oceans** and **David Milroy**.

Ushering in summer ahead of the main Festival, Perth's beloved home of international cinema, **Lotterywest Films** returns to UWA Somerville on Monday, 25 November. The season opens with **Didi**, which will transport audiences back to 2008, a time when YouTube was just emerging and MySpace offered a first taste of social media. We are also partnering with our friends at Luna Palace to bring the spirit of Lotterywest Films to the young and young at heart in **Cine Wonders**.

International highlights of the dance program include **Larsen C**, a breathtaking work of art on the move by Greek choreographer **Christos Papadopoulos** inspired by the slowness and decay of a huge 10,000-year-old ice shelf in Antarctica; and **C A R C A Ç A** by Portuguese choreographer **Marco da Silva Ferreira**, where 10 performers electrify the stage, with their complex and percussive footwork (in sneakers).

Locally, Perth's iconic summer **Ballet at The Quarry** returns with three new Australian ballets performed in the distinctive wild surrounds of the Quarry amphitheatre – from dance drawing on our rich Indigenous history to neo-classical pieces en-poinette; and **Perth Moves** by **STRUT Dance** will be six nights of dance classes culminating in the world premiere of **Manifest**, a powerful work by Belgian choreographer **Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui**, featuring 12 local dancers and a 'silent choir' of 150 community volunteers.

Adding to the dynamic music offerings, UK's legendary **PJ Harvey** will kick off her Australian tour at Kings Park for a special one-night performance; Polish pianist and composer **Hania Rani** makes her Perth Festival debut with a magical night of classical elegance and modern sensibilities; **Fontaines D.C.** will perform their latest album *Romance*, delivering their most ambitious work to date; Portugal's renowned **Mariza** promises to captivate with her extraordinary voice and magnetic blend of traditional and contemporary styles; and **Big Name, No Blankets** celebrate the incredible legacy of Sammy Tjapanangka Butcher and his brothers, founders of the iconic Warumpi band.

West Australian Opera tempts audiences to take a chance on **Secret Opera**, inviting them to gather at a mysterious meeting place revealed only to the adventurous. Attendees will be led to an unexpected intimate venue, where fine music awaits. In a delightful twist, the Festival will also feature **Orchestra-oke**, where participants can fulfill their dreams of performing their favourite pop hits backed by the **Perth Symphony Orchestra**. **Musica Viva** celebrates **Jess Hitchcock** as she performs special compositions of her songs for voice and strings with **Penny Quartet**.

Centre for Stories presents a special Perth Festival edition of **Backstories**, where extraordinary individuals from the local neighbourhood share tales that have not been widely told, and Scarborough Beach will see South African group The Joy and Réunion Island's Lindingo complement the sunset with harmonies, soul and tradition dance.

Two thrilling virtual reality experiences are on offer for audiences: **Ultimate Safari**, which immerses participants in the captivating world of wildlife conservation on the safari plains of Tanzania, and **The Great Kimberley Wilderness**, a breathtaking 35-minute documentary that explores one of Australia's most untamed and awe-inspiring regions.

Perth Festival runs from Friday 7 February to Sunday 2 March
Lotterywest Films runs from Monday 25 November to Sunday 1 December
General public tickets on sale at midday AWST on Monday 11 November
Bookings and information at perthfestival.com.au

Images are available at [here](#)

PERTH FESTIVAL

7 Feb – 2 Mar

Founding Partner



Principal Partner



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