PERTH FESTIVAL

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PERTH FESTIVAL 2026: Truth Telling and Mischief Making

Wednesday 22 October





The Perth Festival 2026 program – the second from Artistic Director Anna Reece – presents audiences with the works and artists of this time and place, repurposing Perth icons as works of art and inviting a journey into completely unexpected locations. From office towers, town halls, a power station and a cathedral, to riversides, hillsides and the vast night sky – it unlocks spaces and transforms them into sites of surprise and delight.

With **13** Perth Festival commissions, an incredible **20** world premieres and a further **nine** Australian premieres over **23** days, it will showcase art in all its forms from West Australian and international artists. Showcasing **108** events, **33** of which are free to experience, plus **24** exciting feature films, there is something to inspire everyone.

Perth Festival Artistic Director Anna Reece says: "Perth Festival is our city at its best. Curious, connected, creative and completely alive. For four weeks in summer we open as many doors as we can and invite everyone in. We don't just put on shows, we take over the city with brilliant artists and their truth telling and mischief making. This is not just art you want, it's art you need. Every year, Perth Festival becomes a moment in time that changes the city. Streets hum, ideas spark, people meet, and we see Perth through new eyes. This is a festival open to everyone, a celebration that makes this extraordinary place feel more like home."

Western Australian Premier, the Hon Roger Cook says: "The WA Government is committed to fostering a vibrant and creative State. Perth Festival plays a vital role in this vision - which is why we are proud to again support the Festival through Lotterywest. As a highlight of WA's event calendar, it brings together global artists, local talent, and the spirit of our city - making it a unique event found only in Perth. I'm thrilled to see the return of the Perth Festival to the East Perth Power Station this year - a special hub to meet friends, listen to music, enjoy good food, and be inspired by Indigenous art."

The Festival opens online with one of the most moving digital projects of our time from British artist Joe Bloom. ***A View From A Bridge*** is about connection in a distracted age and just how extraordinary ordinary people can be, when given the space to speak. Released across February, audiences can follow on Instagram, YouTube and TikTok as the voices and bridges of Perth become part of a viral network about connection, courage and the quiet power of listening in this Australian premiere.

An explosive performance program filled with drama, thrills and decadence lights up the city's stages this season, including the transformative solo dance work ***Songs of the Bulbul*** from award-winning UK choreographer and dancer Aakash Odedra in a Festival exclusive; local theatre icons The Last Great Hunt return with their stunning faux foreign film adventure ***Lé Nør [the rain]***; ***LACRIMA,*** a French theatre epic set in the cut-throat world of haute couture; the heart-warming ***Haribo Kimchi*** - a feast for the senses in a personal performance from South Korean theatre-maker Jaha Koo touching on migration, home and the healing power of food; the futuristic dance epic

U>N>I>T>E>D from the wildy talented team at Chunky Move; internationally acclaimed WAAPA alumna ***Meow Meow*** returning to the stories of Hans Christian Andersen with a bold and provocative retelling of ***The Red Shoes***;

The thrills and surprises continue with Lost and Found Opera as they present an operatic fever dream in the Australian premiere of Philip Glass' ***The Trial*** performed in a CBD corporate office tower, the West Australian Opera return with a new ***Secret Opera*** atmospheric experience cloaked in mystery at an undisclosed venue; and ***POV*** crackles with wit and energy as a live docu-drama unfolds with two unrehearsed actors and one camera-wielding kid.

Exciting Western Australian commissioned performances for Perth Festival in 2026 include Hugo Flavelle's performance art ***Let Me In, Let Me Out***, as well as world premieres of ***Dragon I*** from Adam Kelly and the playful street-based adventure ***the booster protocol*** from pvi collective.

Following the hugely successful revival of the iconic **East Perth Power Station** last year, Perth's wildly celebrated music venue returns in 2026 with another incredible line-up of local and international artists and events. With a mix of music, late night energy and insta-worthy visuals, this Lotterywest community experience will become the ultimate cultural venue for hot summer nights. The East Perth Power Station won Best Cultural, Arts or Music Event for WA at the recent 2025 Australian Event Awards.

Highlights across the Main Stage include UK electronic visionary **Max Cooper** kicking off the music program; Australian rock loyalty Mick Turner, Mick Harvey, Adalita and Marty Brown joining forces as **Bleak Squad**; the unmistakable chilled grooves of Britain's **Morcheeba**; genre defying English rock band **Black Country, New Road**; multi award-winning superstar **Baker Boy** alongside Haisla Nation rappers **Snotty Nose Rez Kids**; the electrifying indie pop of one of Britain's most exciting singer songwriters **Nilüfer Yanya**; Perth's underground club music icons **SYBER: 013**; and **Sudan Archives**, who fuses R&B, hip hop, electronica and strings into a sound that defies labels, closing the Main Stage with her acclaimed boundary breaking album. **Perth Symphony Orchestra** will also welcome special guest vocalists to bring David Bowie's greatest songs back to life in a one night only spectacular, ***Rebel Rebel***.

All are welcome to the sounds and dancefloor of **Casa Musica**, as families, friends and festival goers settle by the river for free live music every Wednesday to Sunday. Inspired by the vibrant piazzas and parks of southern Europe, this open-air celebration of community and summer will feature the sounds of world-class musicians from across the Indian Ocean rim and beyond, in a program reflecting the diversity of the city and our place in the world.

Returning for a second year, **Boorloo Contemporary** will bring the Power Station to life with entirely new awe-inspiring and thought-provoking commissions alongside solo exhibitions from First Nations artists.

The industrial façade will become a vast canvas, transforming with the breathtaking work of Bibbulmun Noongar/Budimia Yamatji artist **Lance Chadd Tjyllyungoo,** as his depictions of landscapes skilfully weave Noongar spiritual beliefs and stories into images of physical landforms. A series of colour pennant flags created by Wadawurrung artist **Kait James** will also adorn the venue. Her embroidery critiques and subverts the stereotypes that have shaped Australia's image, using bold colours, pop-culture iconography and humour to heal.

Lighting up the skies once again in 2026 is the powerful ***Karla Bidi***, inspired by the Noongar tradition of lighting fires to greet and guide visitors. This captivating experience, featuring a new soundscape of song and story, 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.

The program proudly features powerful First Nations storytelling and performances. ***The BhuMeJha Project*** invites audiences to escape into nature for an immersive evening of ceremony and culture, song and dance, storytelling,

ritual and reflection on the edge of the Perth Hills. On the riverfront for ***Nitja***, Point Walter will be transformed in this free community event through live music, storytelling, dance and projected animation.

Perth Festival are also thrilled to launch a new fine music series for 2026 within the luminous surrounds of St Mary's Cathedral, hosting intimate and electrifying concerts in the ***Sanctum Series***.

Grammy-award winners **Roomful of Teeth** will bring their cutting-edge compositions and unique octet vocal stylings to the cathedral halls of East Perth, as virtuosic fiddler **Martin Hayes** will enchant audiences with the spirit of traditional Irish music with his unmistakable tone. Riley Skevington will lead WASO musicians through the evocative and iconic chamber music program ***Echoes Through Time***, and clarinettist **Tommaso Lonquich**, cellist **Umberto Clerici** and pianist **Claudio Martínez Mehner** will bring their internationally acclaimed collaboration to the West Coast. Closing out the *Sanctum Series* will be award-winning Swedish vocal quartet Åkervinda, as they reimagine centuries-old Nordic melodies through luminous and modern harmonies.

The Embassy makes its return in 2026 for three weeks of music, glamour and sass at the beautiful Perth Town Hall. Across the season the venue will overflow with jazz, blues, soul, cabaret, contemporary crooners – expect big band swing, smoky blues, soulful voices and bold new sounds, served with a side of cocktails and sophistication.

Perth's celebrated chanteuse **Ali Bodycoat** will return with The Embassy Big Band for two unforgettable nights; **Somi** blends the soul of East African folk with the improvisational spirit of New York jazz; **Promises & Wild Beasts** (aka Mama Kin Spender) takes on a theatrical debut; bluesman **C.W. Stoneking** bring his distinctive blend of ragtime and gothic storytelling to the stage; Grammy-nominated Japanese pianist **Makoto Ozone** performs for lovers of jazz at its sharpest edge; **Annahastasia** brings the vibes with a compelling set of contemporary folk and blues; whilst alt-country star **Emily Lubitz** delivers her velvet smooth vocals like an old Hollywood star.

The Embassy will also come alive this summer with cabaret performances full of charm and cheek, guaranteed to spark laughter and nostalgia in equal measure. Drag diva **Le Gateau Chocolat** will present a unique performance of this latest delicious treat *Raw Cacao*; musical theatre sensation **Marney McQueen** will serve up a night of Broadway classics, pop hits and a touch of yacht rock; an intimate evening of sublime music with **Meow Meow** also features her creative collaborator (and previous Perth Festival Artistic Director) Iain Grandage on keys; whilst **What's Tina Got To Do With It!** brings the music of Tina Turner back to life in this variety style evening of guest performers.

Kicking off the summer in style, Perth's much-loved home of international cinema **Lotterywest Films** makes its return to UWA Somerville on Monday 24 November with season opener ***Nouvelle Vague,*** from Oscar-nominated **Richard Linklater**. The iconic director brings 1960s Paris to life in his meticulous and affectionate portrait of the making of Jean-Luc Godard's legendary feature debut *Breathless* – a film no cinephile should miss.

Professor Amit Chakma, Vice-Chancellor of The University of Western Australia, says: "The University is delighted to continue its partnership with Perth Festival to deliver a diverse and inclusive cultural event. We are proud of our ongoing support of the Festival which brings joy to so many in our community. I'm especially excited about the return of Lotterywest Films where cinema lovers can enjoy the very best of international films among the pines and under the stars on our beautiful grounds."

Other highlights include award winners and crowd pleasing darlings from the European festival circuit; Kelly Reichardt's ***The Mastermind***, Harry Lighton's ***Pillion***, Eva Libertad's ***Deaf***, Joachim Trier's Cannes Grand Prix winner ***Sentimental Value***, Cannes Festival Palme d'Or-winning director Jafar Panahi's ***It Was Just An Accident***, Kleber Mendonça Filho's ***The Secret Agent***, Hasan Hadi's ***The President's Cake***, Maura Delpero's ***The Mountain Bride Vermiglio***, and Andrew Patterson's ***The Rivals of Amziah King***.

Locally, Perth's favourite summer ***Ballet at The Quarry*** returns with Incandescence - blending the timeless elegance of classical ballet with the daring innovation of contemporary choreography in four dazzling world premiere works. ***Scenes From the Climate Era*** unfolds across 66 short scenes, blending the comic, tragic and surreal, brought to life by the Western Australian Youth Theatre Company. ***Perth Moves*** by STRUT Dance will be eight nights of dance classes, a one-night-only dance battle party, the world premiere of Concrete Echoes, a powerful work by award-winning Aotearoa duo Ta'alili (Aloali'i and Tori Manley-Tapu) and acclaimed French choreographer Boris Charmatz bring his en masse participatory dance work Cercles to the heart of the city with 200 dancers.

For Perth Festival 2026, First Nations voices and the artists of Western Australia, whose courage and vision shape culture, connect with masterful European theatre and new perspectives from across the Indian Ocean rim and Southeast Asia to offer audiences an incredible opportunity to embrace and discover.

Perth Festival runs from Friday 6 February to Sunday 1 March
Lotterywest Films runs from Monday 24 November 2025 to Sunday 29 March 2026
General public tickets on sale at midday AWST on Monday 27 October
Bookings and information at perthfestival.com.au

Images can be found here

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