

EMBARGOED UNTIL 10AM ON TUESDAY 4 AUGUST

## MELBOURNE FESTIVAL TURNS 30 IN 2015

2015 Melbourne Festival celebrates 30 years of presenting the world's best arts experiences to local audiences. Josephine Ridge's third and final program for Melbourne Festival reveals a strong focus on writing, literary adaptations, collaborations, opportunities for debate and discussion, and a feast of world class performances from local and international artists.



Highlights include West-End smash hit adaptation of George Orwell's dystopian masterpiece **1984**, Nobel Laureate **Toni Morrison** gives further voice to Shakespeare's most fiery angel with **Desdemona**, we celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Patti Smith's seminal **Horses** album with the help of musical genius **Courtney Barnett** and friends, and shine a spotlight on New York's and Melbourne's trailblazing creative independent theatre artists.

With eight world premieres, 17 Australian premieres, 15 events exclusive to Melbourne Festival – including **Flight Facilities with the MSO**, **Batsheva Dance Company's Last Work**, **NYC's PS122** and Belgium dance theatre mavericks **Peeping Tom** – plus five specially commissioned works, and the largest program yet of free ancillary events to encourage debate in the Festival's history, 2015 is also a truly international program. Over 18 days in October, the Festival will present 74 events by artists and companies from countries including Iceland, Faroe Islands, Israel, UK, Mali, USA, China, Sweden, France, Canada and Germany.

Josephine Ridge said: "It is a special honour to be the Artistic Director of Melbourne Festival in its 30th year. Milestones such as this present the opportunity to reflect on the traditions that make this Festival great. They also give us pause to think about the present and our role as a contributor to contemporary Melbourne life.

"One of our most sustained traditions, the **Quartets at Sunset** at the Collins Street Baptist Church, returns for the conclusion of the three year project, **Haydn for Everyone**. And one of our newest but vitally important traditions, **Tanderrum**, will open this 30<sup>th</sup> program.

"The sophistication, irreverence, audacity and creative intelligence of Melbourne's independent theatre scene is one of the most rewarding aspects of living here, and the Festival continues to mine the depths of creativity with the many partnerships with other artists and organisations that make the cultural life of this city so extraordinarily rich. We also place an examining lense on some burning issues of today."

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Over 250,000 people have already seen Headlong's radically staged production of **1984**, one of theatre's most powerful events of recent times. It received a nomination for Best New Play at the Olivier Awards, and forms a timely reminder of the dangers posed by the digital age and society's subconscious cooperation in our own surveillance. This West-End smash hit adaptation will have an exclusive Australian season as part of the 2015 Melbourne Festival, alongside a series of special events responding to this production including **Language, Performance and Power: Reflecting on 1984 in 2015**, **Aural Contract: The Voice Before the Law** with artist Lawrence Abu Hamdan, curated by Liquid Architecture, **George Orwell's 1984: A Live Reading** at the Legislative Assembly Chamber in Victoria's Parliament House, read by notable politicians, actors, media commentators; and **Eyes Without a Face: Surveillance in Cinema** program at ACMI.

Dance highlights include Israel's **Batsheva Dance Company** presenting two exhilarating works by **Ohad Naharin** – one of the world's pre-eminent dance makers – with the ever-evolving showcase **Decadence** and the Australian premiere of **Last Work**; and cinematic set design and jaw-dropping physicality combine to create an unforgettable piece of dance theatre from Belgium's **32 Rue Vandenbranden** in **Peeping Tom**.

**New York Narratives** is a multi-faceted exchange program that explores the history of two cultural capitals – Melbourne and New York – and the influence of each city's independent theatre practitioners (**PS122** in New York and **Arts House** in Melbourne) on local, national and international artists and audiences. In addition to staging works from two of **PS122** distinguished alumni **Okwui Okpokwasili's Bronx Gothic** and **Andrew Schneider's You are nowhere**, the program features a hands-on interactive performance with Melburnians and Andrew Schneider, **Acting Stranger**, video installations and films that chronicle artists and productions presented at **PS122** over the past three decades; a multi-faceted exhibition of **Arts House's** first decade; and pre/post show talks with the creative artists behind the shows.

Enigmatic director **Peter Sellars** and Nobel Prize Laureate **Toni Morrison** give voice to Othello's lover in **Desdemona**. Through music from award winning Malawi singer-songwriter **Rokia Traoré**, this unique and compelling creation tells the untold stories of the doomed heroine from Shakespeare's original tale.

Children and adults alike can enjoy this year's program of family friendly entertainment featuring **The Rabbits** - based on John Marsden and Shaun Tan's haunting picture book, Opera Australia and Barking Gecko Theatre Company have assembled some of Australia's foremost creative talents to collaborate on a new piece of musical theatre with music by Australian opera and pop-sensation singer-songwriter Kate Miller-Heidke, and a visually stunning design, riddles, puzzles and magic combine in **Masquerade** – as playwright and actress Kate Mulvany and author of *The Moon Falling in Love with the Sun* Kit Williams join forces with this touching love story between a parent and child in an epic musical adventure; and remembered by generations of Australians from the 70's cult TV show *Monkey Magic*, **Monkey...Journey to the West** combines comedy, music and spectacular martial arts to produce entertainment for the whole family.

2015 also sees some fascinating world premiere productions and events from local Melbourne dance, theatre and visual arts companies and artists including Fraught Outfit's **The Bacchae**, Antony Hamilton's **NYX**, Speak Percussion's **A Wave and Waves** and Outer Urban Projects' **Grand DiVisions**.

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In classical music, the conclusion of the three year *Haydn for Everyone* program is more than simply a retrospective of the works of Haydn—it's a comprehensive exploration and celebration of the enduring influence of the string quartet throughout history. Spanning gala concerts, exclusive events and pop-up public performances, the works visited in this program encompass not only Haydn's own prodigious output, but also classic and contemporary works by many of those he influenced.

Music lovers are spoiled for choice with an exclusive concert from electronic music duo **Flight Facilities**. Coming off the back of one of the best selling Australian albums of 2014, they will combine their pulsating dance tunes with the **Melbourne Symphony Orchestra** for a special one night only in the Sidney Myer Music Bowl; with five critically acclaimed albums under her belt, award winning UK folk singer-songwriter **Laura Marling** will perform in the acoustic sublime of Hamer Hall for one night only; often regarded as one of the greatest albums of the 20th Century, Patti Smith's *Horses* now gets an exhilarating rejuvenation from **Courtney Barnett, Jen Cloher, Adalita** and **Gareth Liddiard** in this tribute to the 40th anniversary of the album's release.

A name uttered alongside the likes of Hendrix, Richards, Santana and Clapton, America's pioneer of electric jazz **John McLaughlin** performs a live with a show that is widely regarded as a thing of legend. One of the most acclaimed film composers of his generation **Clint Mansell** performs exclusively for Melbourne Festival over two nights. Best known for his expansive scores layering dozens of movies including all of Darren Aronofsky's projects, from *Pi* and *Requiem for a Dream* to *Black Swan* and *Noah*, Mansell is backed by the might of a nine-piece band, complete with string section to present a sweeping retrospective of his works.

A rivertop lounge; an al fresco café; a beer and cider bar; and a live music venue - the Foxtel Festival Hub will light up the banks of the Yarra for 18 days and nights in October. This year's year jam-packed music program includes Icelandic minimal techno duo **Kiasmos (Ólafur Arnalds & Janus Rasmussen)**; French 10-piece **Babylon Circus**; Germany's **Brandt Brauer Frick**; Ireland's **Colm Mac Con Iomaire**; **The Field**; seminal English post-punk band **The Fall**; LA R&B duo **Rhyye**; **The Basics**; **Katie Noonan**; **George Maple**; **Bombay Royale**; **Cut Copy** DJs and more.

The record-breaking, award-winning Spiegel tent sensation **LIMBO** finally makes its Melbourne debut. This intoxicating mix of cabaret, circus and acrobatics has revealed in sell-out international seasons and takes sexy bravado to dizzying new heights. **LIMBO** seduces audiences with a show so hot that Madonna came twice.

The 30<sup>th</sup> Melbourne Festival takes place from **8-25 October 2015**. The full program will go on sale at **9am on Friday 7 August** with ticket packages available from **noon on Tuesday 4 August**.

[melbournefestival.com.au](http://melbournefestival.com.au) / #melbfest

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