

MEDIA RELEASE

Level 5, 10 Hickson Road The Rocks
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sydneyfestival.org.au



Magic Mirrors Spiegelent - Music

Lake Street Dive / Moses Sumney / Regurgitator Perform The Velvet Underground & Nico / Cash Savage and the Last Drinks / Weyes Blood / Jessy Lanza / Mdou Moctar / Halfway / Klub Koori with Gawurra / The Comet is Coming / The Bats



Photo: The Comet Is Coming by Fabrice Bourgelle

Lake Street Dive, USA

13 January
\$40 + booking fee

At first listen it's familiar, like a well broken-in pair of vintage boots – but *Lake Street Dive*'s perfectly balanced blend of rollicking soul, Motown pop, and knockabout R&B, anchored by flawless harmonies and **Rachael Price**'s smoky, astonishing voice, has a freshness to it that's hard to pin down. The Brooklyn-based, classically-trained foursome have been together for over a decade, but after a sultry *Jackson 5* cover that went viral, a show-stealing appearance alongside **Jack White** and **Patti Smith** at a 2014 *Inside Llewyn Davies* tribute show in NYC, and a new album of originals recorded while listening to a lot of **Bowie** and **The Zombies**, they've well and truly picked up the tempo.

Moses Sumney, USA

15 January at 5.00pm
\$40 + booking fee

Celestial, soulful, and subtly subversive, Moses Sumney makes dreamlike folk-soul that slow-dances with death and makes heartbreak sound holy. Raised in California and Ghana, counting Sufjan and Solange as fans before he'd even released his acclaimed debut EP, and with strands of Anohni and Billie Holiday in his musical DNA, Sumney writes songs that sound like they grew out of cracks in an LA sidewalk: natural, surprising, elegant, perfectly formed.

Armed with just a guitar, a loop pedal and an otherworldly voice, his performances come together one luminous layer at a time. He'll tell you, tongue in cheek, that his songs are older than time, and you'll believe him. You'll want to laugh, you'll want to dance, and you might forget to breathe.

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Regurgitator Perform *The Velvet Underground & Nico*, Australia

17 January at 7:30pm
\$40 + booking fee

Brisbane art-rock veterans **Regurgitator** may not be the first act to come to mind when picking teams for a *The Velvet Underground & Nico* tribute. But the 'Gurge have never met a musical genre they couldn't lovingly poke a few holes in, or a tongue-in-cheek performance-art stunt they didn't like the flavour of.

Originally conceived to close the **Andy Warhol | Ai Weiwei** exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria, the show returns for a Sydney encore, with **Quan, Ben** and **Peter** joined by **Seja** on keys (and some key vocal duties) and **Mindy Meng Wang** on the Chinese guzheng. Their faithful but fresh reinvention of one of the greatest albums of all time is a love letter from one set of enduring eccentrics to another.

Cash Savage and the Last Drinks, Australia

18 January at 7:30pm
\$30 + booking fee

With a voice as weather beaten and worn-in as an old leather jacket, and a knack for country-blues song writing that's both bruised and bruising, **Cash Savage** leads her six-piece band **The Last Drinks** for the riveting performances that made them one of Melbourne's most talked-about live acts for years.

Savage's gruff growl and eloquent guitar licks, **Kat Mears'** melancholy fiddle, a rhythm section that knows instinctively when to stomp and when to let a moment breathe: these are the tools they use to work out demons, shake off hangovers, wallow in grief, and rejoice in the tender terror of new love. Dirty, deep, and unmistakably Australian, Cash Savage's wild honesty and raw charisma make for a hypnotic live experience.

Weyes Blood, USA / Australia

19 January at 7.30pm
\$40 + booking fee

Natalie Mering's songs have a gauzy sheen of casual, sun soaked romance, like a faded photo from the 70s; old pianos and moody horns create a halo around a rich, lissom voice. Mering's work as Weyes Blood has been compared to **Judee Sill** and **Nick Drake**, and her latest album *Front Row Seat To Earth* – which feels as intimate and as expansive as the title suggests – sees her luxuriating in Laurel Canyon hippie textures. As her history of collaboration with experimental artists like **Ariel Pink** and **Jackie O Motherfucker** suggests, there's a modern weirdness in her love of lived-in sounds.

From the eerie, complex folk-rock elegies of her earlier records to the "uneasy listening" AM radio nostalgia of *Front Row Seat To Earth*, Mering is bringing a wealth of moody beauty to Sydney, with a backing band featuring Sydney's Jack Ladder (Sydney Festival 2016) on bass and Daniel Stricker (Midnight Juggernauts) on drums.

Jessy Lanza, Canada

20 January at 9:30pm
\$40 + booking fee

A future-pop party thrown by your coolest ex-girlfriend, **Jessy Lanza's** high soulful vocals and house-inflected 90s R&B promise woozy, late-night atmosphere. With the addition of a drummer for her first-

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ever Australian shows, Lanza will be out from behind the gear desk and free to weave her bright, steamy magic on one of the festival's most intimate stages.

Lanza's silky R&B productions have been setting her apart since well before her 2013 debut *Pull My Hair Back* scored her a Polaris Prize nomination. Her incredible follow-up, *Oh No*, has been hailed as one of the best albums of 2016, seen her compared to **Prince**, and built a warm, self-assured identity on the icy, hazier foundations of her debut. Never one to fade into the shadows, even as her music plays with the contrasts of light and dark, Lanza is a bold voice – as unafraid to challenge misperceptions about female artists in a male-dominated genre as she is to push the boundaries of pop and electronica in unexpected directions.

Mdou Moctar, Niger

21 January at 9.30pm
\$40 + booking fee

Born in the Azawagh desert of Niger, **Mdou Moctar** taught himself to play a homemade guitar, and found his first fans in the West African mobile phone music trading network. After one of those tracks proved a standout on the cult compilation *Music From Saharan Cellphones Vol. 1*, he was signed to Sahel Sounds (whose founder, Christopher Kirkley, bought him his first left-handed Fender guitar), where his electrified, psych-influenced takes on traditional Tuareg guitar reached even wider acclaim.

But Moctar became even more of a cult figure as the star and soundtrack composer for Kirkley's 2015 film *Akounak Tedalat Taha Tazoughai* – a hit at film festivals around the world, and not only the first Tuareg-language feature film, but also a Prince homage unlike any other. (The title translates to "Rain the Colour of Red with a Little Blue In It", as there is no Tuareg word for "purple".)

Making his Australian debut as part of trio, Moctar calls to mind Jimi Hendrix at his most mystical, as well as the West African desert-rock giants whose traditions he's twisted into something that feels entirely new.

Halfway, Australia

22 January at 5.30pm
\$40 + booking fee

Somewhere between Wilco's alt-country moments and the low-key pop power of The Go-Betweens, you'll find Halfway. The eight-piece ensemble have been crafting some of Australia's most critically acclaimed and underrated records for over sixteen years, including the 2014 AIR Awards' Best Country Album, *Any Old Love*.

Soaked in Queensland's rich tradition of indie-pop songwriting, their under-the-radar fifth album *The Golden Halfway Record* is one of the sleeper standouts of 2016, scoring glowing five-star reviews.

Halfway have a decade and a half under their belts of writing simply flawless songs, burnished with steel guitars and a laconic twang that tempers the sharpness of bittersweet lyrics about love, loss and leather jackets.

Klub Koori with Gawurra, Australia

27 January at 5.30pm
\$30 + booking fee

In 2015, singer-songwriter **Stanley "Gawurra" Gaykamangu** got on a bus and travelled 1500km from his home in Milingimbi Island, in North East Arnhem land, to a studio in Alice Springs. The Yolngu man recorded his album *Ratja Yaliyali* there, the understated beauty of his Gupapuyngu-

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language songs and soft, soaring vocals blended with NT producer **Broadwing's** expansive orchestral arrangements.

Less than a year later, Gawurra was picking up a four-and-a-half star review from Rolling Stone and supporting **Peter Garrett** at the Darwin Festival, and will kick off 2017 by making his Sydney Festival debut.

Like all the songs on the album, the stunning title track is a traditional songline from Gawurra's home. "Ratja yaliyali" means "vine of love"; these songlines, and Gawurra's performance, speak of connection to country, to family, to life, to the wind and the past. It's a link that both lives in the language, and transcends it.

The Comet is Coming, UK

28 January at 7.30pm
\$40 + booking fee

To the curious ear, 2016 Mercury Prize nominees, **The Comet Is Coming** are a creative jazz trio. But these mavericks think of their sound as "apocalyptic space funk" - a comet that *"travels through distant galaxies exploring musical concepts."*

The London-based group are at the forefront of a nascent movement creating new music steeped in history by incorporating dub, post-punk, 70s sci-fi, afrobeat and psychedelic electronica. Think erupting synth basslines, organ swells, ecstatic sax and tribal rhythms.

The Guardian calls them the "true heirs" of Sun Ra - and saxophonist **Shabaka** is a member of **Ra's enduring Arkestra** (Sydney Festival 2014). You may find yourself questioning more than just the borders of genre in the face of cosmic annihilation. Of course, you'll also find yourself dancing much too hard to the music to care what they call it.

The Bats, New Zealand

29 January at 5.00pm
\$40+booking fee

As a world first, The Bats will perform their brilliant new album *The Deep Set* in full, accompanied by a string section. *The Deep Set* is a potent distillation of The Bats as we've known and loved them for 35 years. Still in their original lineup, which has stood firm since 1982, New Zealand's own "Fab Four" have applied their everlasting pop smarts to deepen the sound they created - layering Robert Scott's ever catchy and dreamy songwriting with distinctive guitar jangles, shimmering harmonies and heightened emotion courtesy of cello, viola and violins.

The Bats will delve into the canon of glorious indie-pop songs for which they have become so loved, and which continue to wield a mighty influence across the pond with a new generation of Australian daydreamers.

Where Magic Mirrors Spiegel tent, Meriton Festival Village, Hyde Park North

When 13-28 January

Bookings sydneyfestival.org.au

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