

## MEDIA RELEASE

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sydneyfestival.org.au



# Sydney Festival to expand its free program offerings in new spaces and places in 2017-2019



Photo: Meriton Festival Village, photo credit Jamie Williams

Sydney Festival prides itself on the accessibility of its events. Inclusive programming, affordable ticketing options and a broad range of free events have ensured that Sydney Festival is open to all. For over forty years, Sydney Festival's audacious programming has appealed to both new and loyal attendees and provided audiences with the opportunity to see the very best local and international performing arts.

Sydney Festival today announces the line-up of the free Village Stage presented by China Southern Airlines in Meriton Festival Village, new to the Festival in 2017. For 21 nights, the free outdoor stage will be the centre of the action with a diverse program of free events featuring cabaret, breath-taking acrobatics and aerialists, dance and music.

Headlining the free Village stage is the resident house show, *The Hair Salon* produced by **Art Engineers**: a show-stopping, eclectic mix of live performance and art running from Wednesday through to Sunday for the duration of the Festival. Starring **Bob Downe**, **Lisa Fa'alafi** and **Leah Shelton**, *The Hair Salon* features *The Big Hair Show* – a nonstop variety show, *The Perm Set* – a curated live music program, and Spanish hair sculptors **Osadia**.

With a line-up of disco, soul, funk and Latin bands, *The Perm Set* bands will provide Festival goers with the party atmosphere to dance the summer evenings away in Sydney's Hyde Park. Featured on the line-up are denizens of dark romance **Spectres Of Love**, the pop rock sounds of **PIRRA**, the scuzzy pop of **Body Type**, the multicultural sounds of **Eastern Empire**, **Los Tones** bringing the garage rock, the bluesy talents of **Alice Terry** and the 15 piece orchestra and authentic Colombian singers of **Cumbiamuffin**. Out of Melbourne will be the colourful and eclectic trio **Broadway Sounds** and the calypso rhythms of **Mighty Duke & The Lords**.

Featuring more wigs than you can poke a curling wand at *The Big Hair Show* is a cross-between *Charlie's Angels* and *Edward Scissorhands* with a heady mix of cabaret, colour-enhanced acrobatics, dance and music – a nonstop variety show. Hosted by cabaret queens Lisa Fa'alafi (*Hot Brown Honey*, *Polytoxic*) and Leah Shelton (*The Good Room*, *The Brides of Frank & Polytoxic*) the

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*The Big Hair Show* will see receptionist **DJ Sveta** spinning up tunes while salon owner and ever-ebullient Bob Downe shows off his skills as the comb king to the stars. Also featured on the line-up will be special guests and the crème de la crème of cabaret, including **Brendan Maclean, Paul Capsis, Costa Georgiadis, Catherine Alcorn, Alice Terry, Sheridan Harbridge** and more.

Each Saturday in Meriton Festival Village an array of musical talent will take to the Village Stage to deliver a day-to-night program of live music. Featured on the line-up will be local legends **The Spooky Men's Chorale, Mighty Duke & The Lords, Old School Funk Band** and **Electric Fields**.

In another first in 2017, Sydney Festival in partnership with **Parramatta Park** and **Sydney Symphony Orchestra** will present the free concert *Symphony Under the Stars* at Sydney's newest major outdoor events venue, The Crescent in Parramatta Park. Situated in the world heritage listed Parramatta Park, The Crescent is a spectacular natural amphitheatre that holds up to 18,000 people. The ambience of the park through to the natural acoustics of the surrounds make for the perfect venue to enjoy everything from classical through to contemporary music performances. *Symphony Under the Stars* at The Crescent in Parramatta Park will be the closing concert of Sydney Festival's Western Sydney program on 28 January.

In an ongoing commitment to refreshing its program of free events, Sydney Festival is looking to expand its concerts series at The Crescent in 2018 and 2019 to include *Opera Under the Stars* with **Opera Australia**, as well as a range of contemporary music concerts.

Opening up the opportunity to explore new spaces for events in 2018 and 2019, Sydney Festival today announces *Symphony Under the Stars* and *Opera in the Domain* will return for their final performances in The Domain in 2017. Sydneysiders and visitors are invited to join Sydney Festival in celebrating more than 30 years of concerts in The Domain with *Symphony Under the Stars* on January 14 and *Opera in the Domain* on January 21.

**Festival Director Wesley Enoch** said "*Sydney Festival has a history of exploring the exciting and the new. For over 40 years, through a range of free and accessible events, we have invited Sydneysiders to explore their city and encouraged visitors to come off the beaten track.*

*With the help of our partners, Sydney Festival continues to support free programming to expand our presence throughout the greater Sydney area and offer broader audiences new opportunities to engage. From the city centre to Western Sydney, from the Meriton Festival Village and Barangaroo to The Crescent at Parramatta Park and Campbelltown Arts Centre - there is lots to see and do."*

When: January 7 – 29

More information: [sydneyfestival.org.au](http://sydneyfestival.org.au)

Performance dates and details of the Village Stage schedule can be viewed [here](#).

### ABOUT SYDNEY FESTIVAL:

Sydney Festival was originally conceived by the Sydney Committee, the NSW State Government and the City of Sydney with a view to attracting people into the city centre during the holiday month of January.

The first Festival took place in 1977 and it has since grown to become one of Australia's largest annual cultural celebrations with an international reputation for modern, popular and intelligent programming. In many ways it is still best understood as a celebration of Sydney and its style and energy reflect the confidence, diversity and vigour of one of the world's most beautiful cities.



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With the support of the NSW Government and Parramatta City Council, Sydney Festival took a new approach to the city's west in 2012. Over the last 6 years, Sydney Festival has offered a range of paid and free events positioning centrepiece productions in its dedicated Parramatta and Western Sydney program.

Sydney Festival's audacious contemporary programming positions it at the forefront of arts practice in Australia. The Festival attracts an audience of over 500,000 in venues across Sydney and Parramatta.

**For interviews and further information contact:**

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