



Sydney Festival

For over four decades, Sydney Festival has been an enduring symbol of the summer season, captivating audiences with an artistic extravaganza that began its journey in 1977.

This remarkable festival transcends the confines of conventional celebrations, evolving into a city-wide ode to culture, creativity, and intellectual exploration. With each passing year, it continues to evolve and adapt, weaving a rich tapestry of artistic expressions across the sprawling canvas of Greater Sydney.

The Festival's transformative influence is palpable, resonating through Sydney's streets, along its iconic beaches, within the grandeur of stately theatres, and reimagining everyday spaces. Sydney Festival breathes life into these diverse locales, offering a program that spans the spectrum from thought-provoking ticketed performances to groundbreaking, boundary-pushing free showcases. Prioritising First Nations artists and their narratives, the Festival embraces a captivating spectrum of creative domains. From theatrical endeavours and musical journeys to enchanting dance performances, visionary visual art exhibitions, and the intriguing intersections between these forms, the Festival showcases a diverse and mesmerising array of disciplines.

As a steadfast patron of new Australian works, Sydney Festival serves as a vibrant platform, introducing the world to the myriad voices and narratives that define the nation's cultural identity. Simultaneously, it draws the world's preeminent artists to Sydney's vibrant stage. It is a nexus of creative energies where the world converges to explore and celebrate the human experience through the language of art.

The Festival's legacy is marked by a trail of unforgettable productions, many of which were born from its commissions and premieres. These include iconic performances such as "Cloudstreet" (1998), "Black Chicks Talking" (2003), "The Adventures of Snugglepot & Cuddlepie" (2007), "I am Eora" (2012), "The Secret River" (2013), "Black Diggers" (2014) and "Counting and Cracking" (2019). Notable recent additions to this illustrious catalog include "Black Ties" (2020), "Sunshine Super Girl" (2021) "The Pulse" by Gravity & Other Myths (2022), "Wudjang: Not the Past" (2022) and Stephanie Lake's critically acclaimed "Manifesto" (2023).

The buzz of Sydney in January wouldn't be the same without Festival appearances from major Australian musicians, performers and comedians including Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds, Archie Roach, Ruby Hunter, Paul Kelly, Gotye, Regurgitator, Emma Donovan, Tex Perkins, Megan Washington, Meow Meow, Christa Hughes, Yana Alana and Celia Pacquola.

World-leading artists and companies that have shared work with Sydney Festival audiences in recent years include Lithuanian opera-performance "Sun & Sea", Spain's formidable queen of flamenco, Sara Baras, with "Alma" (2023). Lars Jan and Early Morning Opera's Joan Didion's *The White Album*, performance artist Bryrony Kimmings' "I'm A Phoenix, Bitch", and choral choir Tenebrae (2020); Schaubühne Berlin and Complicité's "Beware of Pity", Ethiopian legend Mulatu Astatke, Neneh Cherry, and American artist Nick Cave's epic exhibition UNTIL (2019); Wayne McGregor, Olafur Eliasson and Jamie xx's ballet collaboration "Tree of Codes", National Theatre's "Barber Shop Chronicles", The Wooster Group's "The Town Hall Affair", Pussy Riot Theatre's "RIOT DAYS", and DryWrite and Soho Theatre's hit "Fleabag" (2018); Complicité's "The Encounter", Cheek By Jowl with Pushkin Theatre's "Measure For Measure" (2017); James Thiérée's "Tabac Rouge" (2015); Sasha Waltz's underwater dance opera "Dido and Aeneas" (2014); and Ludger Engels and Vivienne Westwood's Baroque-punk "Semele Walk" (2013), to name but a few.

These masterpieces find their place among a lineage of extraordinary works and artists that have graced Sydney Festival's illustrious history. Ariane Mnouchkine and Théâtre du Soleil, Robert Wilson, Robert Lepage, Nederlands Dans Theater, Philip Glass, Ian McKellen, Batsheva Dance Company, National Theatre of Scotland, Al Green, Brian Wilson, Grace Jones, Andrew Weatherall, AR Rahman, Angélique Kidjo, Kneehigh Theatre, and Fabulous Beast are just a few of the luminaries whose talents have illuminated the Festival's stages over the years.

Sydney Festival operates as a non-profit organisation and benefits from robust support from government, as well as enthusiastic backing from the corporate and community sectors. Over the course of its remarkable 47-year history, the Festival has cultivated profound and enduring partnerships with all its stakeholders, solidifying its status as a treasured institution within the rich tapestry of Sydney's extensive cultural landscape.

These enduring alliances have been instrumental in shaping the Festival's identity as a cornerstone of cultural expression in the city. With unwavering government support, active engagement from the business community, and the enthusiastic participation of the wider community, the Festival has become an integral part of Sydney's cultural fabric.

This longstanding commitment to collaboration and shared cultural vision has positioned the Festival not just as an event, but as a cherished institution deeply ingrained in the very soul of the city. It stands as a testament to the power of partnerships and collective dedication to enriching Sydney's cultural life, leaving an indelible mark on the city's artistic heritage.

FESTIVAL DIRECTOR ROLE

Sydney Festival is recruiting for its next Festival Director, with the successful candidate slated to assume the role in the final quarter of 2024. This appointment will be on a fixed-term contract, encompassing the responsibility to curate and oversee four consecutive annual January festivals, spanning from 2026 to 2029.

Reporting directly to the organisation's CEO, the Festival Director will hold a pivotal role in crafting and executing the yearly Festival program. As the creative and artistic lead of the Festival, they will actively cultivate relationships with touring companies, artists, and industry stakeholders, serving as the ambassador for the Festival and its diverse program to audiences, government bodies, sponsors, and donors.

Working in close collaboration with the Creative Artist in Residence, the Festival Director will jointly shape the artistic and creative direction of Sydney Festival. This role also places the Festival Director as the primary public spokesperson, especially concerning matters pertaining to the artistic program and the annual event.

The core responsibility of the Festival Director is to meticulously curate the Festival program in a timely manner, seeking approval from the CEO and the Board of Directors. The aim is to align the program with the company's objectives, adhere to the guidelines and directives set by the Board, and ultimately achieve both public and critical acclaim.



CURATORIAL POLICY



The curatorial policy is a set of guidelines that underpins the artistic vision of the Festival.

Sydney Festival is dedicated to showcasing works of excellence across a range of artistic disciplines while prioritising diversity, inclusion and equal access. Through carefully curated programming that aligns to the artistic vision and strategy of the Festival, we aim to create a platform that celebrates the richness of human experiences and perspectives, fostering a sense of community and understanding among artists, audiences and the wider community.

Curatorial Guidelines

Artistic Diversity: Our programming encompasses a wide spectrum of artistic disciplines, including but not limited to theatre, opera, dance, music, visual arts, spoken word and interdisciplinary performances. We strive for a balanced representation of genres and styles.

Representation: We actively seek out underrepresented artists and voices, giving priority to works that amplify narratives and perspectives often marginalised in mainstream spaces.

Curation Process: The curatorial team employs an open and transparent selection process that considers artistic merit, relevance to the Festival's artistic vision, and alignment with our mission. The team includes individuals from diverse backgrounds to ensure a variety of perspectives.

Accessibility: All Festival venues and precincts are selected with accessibility in mind, including considerations for physical accessibility, sensory accommodations and affordability. We provide captioning, sign language interpretation and other aids to ensure inclusivity.

Community Engagement: We actively involve the broader community in the Festival through partnerships with local organisations and community groups. Outreach programs, workshops and free events extend the Festival's impact beyond the performances.

Feedback and Improvement: We are committed to continuous improvement. We gather feedback from artists, audiences and stakeholders to assess our programming's impact and identify future enhancements.

Conclusion: Our curatorial policy reflects our dedication to excellence, diversity and equal access in the performing arts. By adhering to these principles and guidelines, we aim to create a Festival that showcases outstanding artistic achievements while nurturing a culture of inclusivity and understanding that celebrates the human experience.

Core Principles

Artistic Excellence: Our primary focus is presenting high-quality artistic works that challenge, inspire and captivate our audiences. We uphold rigorous standards of artistic excellence in all our programming.

Diversity and Inclusion: We believe in the power of diverse voices and perspectives to enrich the arts and society. With First Nations people first our programming actively seeks out artists and works representing a wide range of backgrounds, cultures, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, abilities and viewpoints.

Equal Access: We are committed to removing barriers that prevent equitable access to the arts. Our Festival strives to be physically accessible, financially attainable and culturally sensitive, ensuring that all members of our community can participate and engage with the programming.

Public Funding: We uphold the entitlement of all artists and entities to avail themselves of public funding, facilitating the inception and presentation of their creations. We also honour their choice to use public funds devoid of any political endorsement, intervention or sway.

Collaboration: We recognise the value of collaboration in fostering innovation and creativity. We will actively seek partnerships with local, national and international organisations, artists, and communities to create a dynamic and interconnected Festival experience.

Education and Engagement: In addition to presenting performances, we are dedicated to offering educational opportunities and engagement initiatives. Workshops, panels and discussions provide audiences with deeper insights into the creative process and the broader cultural context of the works presented.



ARTISTIC AND CREATIVE LEADERSHIP

The role of the Festival Director in shaping the artistic and creative direction of Sydney Festival encompasses a multifaceted approach:

1. Visionary Program Development:

The Festival Director will be responsible for conceiving, developing, and meticulously executing the annual program. This task involves not only curating a diverse and compelling lineup of artistic events but also aligning these offerings with the overarching strategic vision set by the Board. The aim is to create a program that not only entertains but also resonates with audiences, contributing to the Festival's cultural legacy.

2. Long-Term Artistic Strategy:

In addition to the annual program, the Festival Director will craft a comprehensive artistic vision, strategy, and plan that extends across a four-year tenure. This forward-thinking approach ensures a coherent and evolving artistic identity for the Festival, paving the way for exciting developments and sustained growth.

3. Artistic Identity and Branding:

Beyond live performances, the Festival Director plays a pivotal role in defining and conveying the artistic and creative identity of Sydney Festival. This identity is reflected not only in the events themselves but also in the Festival's broader communication and marketing materials, creating a cohesive and resonant brand that captures the essence of the Festival.

4. Innovation and New Creations:

Encouraging innovation and the development of new artistic works and creative initiatives is a critical facet of the role. This involves supporting emerging artists, fostering experimental projects, and ensuring that the Festival remains a hotbed of artistic exploration, where fresh ideas and boundary-pushing works flourish.

5. Global and Local Connections:

With First Nations people first, the Festival Director will actively establish and nurture extensive networks, spanning from the local to the global stage. These connections go beyond singular events and are designed to be sustainable, benefiting not only the current Festival but also future iterations under successive Festival Directors. Such networks are instrumental in securing high-calibre talent, forging international partnerships, and expanding the Festival's reach.

6. Creative Collaborations:

Cultivating and maintaining strategic creative partnerships is essential. These partnerships can involve artists, cultural institutions, sponsors, and stakeholders. By fostering collaborations, the Festival Director ensures that artistic synergies are harnessed to their fullest potential, resulting in unique and groundbreaking artistic endeavours.

7. Community Engagement:

Recognising the Festival's role as a cultural cornerstone, the Festival Director is tasked with managing strategic community relationships relevant to the Festival program. This includes working closely with local communities, Indigenous groups, and cultural organisations to ensure that the Festival remains deeply rooted in and connected to the diverse communities it serves.

In summary, the Festival Director's responsibilities encompass a wide spectrum of artistic and creative leadership, ranging from the strategic development of the Festival's vision to the practical implementation of its program. This multifaceted approach ensures that Sydney Festival continues to thrive as a dynamic and culturally significant event, not only for the present but for the future as well.

SYDNEY

A city with a 65,000-year history, where Indigenous wisdom blends seamlessly with modern marvels.

- Australia's largest city, is home to more than 5 million residents.
- English is the predominate language but more than 300 languages are spoken amongst its multicultural community
- A temperate climate with mild winters and warm summers.
- Consistently ranked as one of the world's most liveable cities

NATURE'S BEAUTY

Iconic harbour, pristine beaches, lush green spaces.



INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

Open-minded and welcoming to people from all corners of the globe.



DIVERSE CULTURE

A global city that celebrates its Indigenous culture and multicultural communities.



VIBRANT ARTS

Sydney's artistic sector flourishes with a strong commitment to First Nations culture.



ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

A thriving job market, robust financial sector and thriving industries.



EDUCATION EXCELLENCE

Sydney boasts premier universities and top-tier primary and high schools.



CULINARY PARADISE

From fine dining to street food, a gastronomic destination.



SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

World-class sporting events, water sports and vibrant nightlife.



Applications are currently being accepted and will close on 31 May 2024. To express your interest in the position and receive a copy of the Festival Director Candidate pack, kindly email your details to the Festival Director Selection Panel at peopleandculture@sydneyfestival.org.au

