

Sydney Festival 2026

Preview Guide

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

Sydney Festival acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands on which the Festival takes place. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and recognise the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities.

WELCOME TO OUR 50TH SUMMER

Welcome, friend. Welcome, stranger. It's your Festival here. We're 50 summers deep and feeling jubilant.

Every January we meet here in Sydney, artist and audience, to create something unique, unrepeatable and hopefully unforgettable.

Thank you for showing up for it – for turning this city into a living work of art, year after year. You are the point of it all.

We've grown with you, and grown with Sydney, but we're also here to make sure part of you never grows up. We're here to delight your inner-child, ignite your imagination, keep our city evolving and be in awe together.

So here's to the next 50 summers. There are countless paths forward and we're taking them all.

\$49 EARLY BIRD TICKETS

Sydney Festival's 2026 program is launching with an exclusive offer – snap up A Reserve and General Admission tickets for just \$49.

Enjoy exceptional seats at low prices – but don't wait too long. Early Bird Tickets are strictly limited and only available until 21 November or until allocations are sold out.

Look for the Early Bird sticker at sydneyfestival.org.au to grab yours.

Terms and conditions apply.

“Some of us get shy around big birthdays, but don't expect that from the Sydney Festival as it marks 50 years of lighting up our city in summer. I'm looking forward to seeing new Festival Director Kris Nelson inject his sparkle into this great Sydney tradition of soaking up the world's best arts and culture on hot summer nights. Enjoy the festival!”

The Hon. John Graham, NSW Minister for the Arts, Music and the Night-time Economy, Jobs and Tourism.

“The City of Sydney is a proud partner of Sydney Festival. In 2026 as we celebrate the 50th anniversary, we look forward to this bold cultural celebration transforming and enlivening our city. We welcome

Sydneysiders and visitors to enjoy Festival shows all across our beautiful city.”

Clover Moore AO, Lord Mayor of Sydney

“This year’s program marks an incredible half century of Sydney Festival excellence. That’s 50 years of culture making, 50 years of festival drama, 50 years of memories made across the city by artists and audiences. From the 1970s to the 2020s, festivalgoers have cherished different iterations and moments of this remarkable, uniquely Australian event. Over the decades, Sydney Festival has welcomed the world’s best and most daring artists, while celebrating and launching countless local creators – it’s been held by generations and shaped generations in turn. Ideas and themes of generations are at the heart of our 2026 Festival. We’re creating collective moments and experiences that will resonate no matter your birth year, whether you’re an old hand or shiny newcomer. We’re embracing an ‘alphaboomer’ vibe – we’ve got intergenerational line-ups, stories across the ages and performances fit to excite your aunty or the teen in your life. This is a festival that’s ideas-rich, deeply local and invested in the world we live in. Sydney’s a global city and in my first year, I want to introduce leading international voices to match the heartbeat of our city. Over these next four years, my vision is to create festivals that can transform us – an ambition that encompasses not just the kind of shows we present, but how you as Sydneysiders experience art and that

inspires us to imagine together the future of this great city.”

Kris Nelson, Festival Director

PROGRAM THEMES

Each year, Sydney Festival brings artists and audiences together to share stories that move, question and connect us. This program unfolds across the city like a conversation – between old friends and new voices, the intimate and the spectacular.

These themes trace the many ways we gather: on common ground, in play and power, through global exchange, across generations, and in the city itself. Together they reflect what it means to celebrate culture in motion – alive, evolving, and uniquely Sydney.

Our Common Ground

Festivals give us common ground on which to meet. This is how culture is made: over time, through song and story, talking and listening, dance, ceremony and play. Everyone’s invited to this show – not just as audience, but as participant. Dance in Joel Bray’s reimagined *Garabari*, experience oceanic renewal in Latai Taumoepeau’s *WansolMoana*, and sing in a community chorus led by Nardi Simpson, among sculptures made by sister Lucy Simpson, and fire tended by Uncle Matthew Doyle in a powerful multi art-form collective performance.

With three funerals and a wedding dress, we're leaning into what brings us together: love and loss, how we celebrate and grieve. Whoop with *WAKE*, an Irish tradition turned into cabaret spectacular; find transcendence in roving Chinese cyber-dream *Opera for the Dead* 祭歌; and laugh along with Sydney's slideshow stylists at *Death by PowerPoint*.

The World in Our City

Look around you – the world is here. Encounter the Egyptian revolution in Khalid Abdalla's anti memoir *Nowhere* and face the stark class lines of luxury fashion in Caroline Guiela Nguyen's *LACRIMA*.

In music, singular sounds from around the globe fill the city – from First Nations icon Kankawa Nagarra, to Mongolian jazz visionary Enji and South London's Punjabi sensation Raf-Saperra. Persian pop star CHAI and cult favourite Noorayah with DJ Habibeats promise to get you moving.

In dance, Indonesian artists Murtala and Alfira O'Sullivan map survival in *Sisa-Sisa*, while Sudanese choreographer Azzam Mohamed and composer Jack Prest trace the silence between electronic beats in their breathtaking duet *Echo Mapping*.

Power in Play

In a time of transformation and complexity, we're asking big questions about who holds power and how stories are told – and we're doing it with a sense of play.

In Eun-Me Ahn's *Post-Orientalist Express*, critique collides with exuberant possibility in a kaleidoscope of contemporary Asian dance. In Julia Phillips' exposing installation *Observer, Observed*, the sightseer becomes the spectacle. Provocateur Travis Alabanza flips a transphobic attack into triumph in *BURGERZ*, while Dan Daw assembles a dynamite cast of dancers with disability to explore the cost of success in *EXXY*.

From Ben Graetz's fabulous rock-and-roll drag in *A Night of Rock and Roll with Bogan Vilela* to the epic seven hour *asses.masses* – a custom video game played by the entire audience – these artists prove that power and play are not opposites, but allies in transformation.

The Alphaboom Experience

Here, generations gather – in the audience and on stage. Legendary American musician Lonnie Holley collaborates live with peers and young up-and-comers to create music on the fly. Mare Advertencia joins 13-year-old Noongar sensation INKABEE in a night of power-shifting rap, while Tibetan virtuoso Tenzin Choegyal fuses his soaring melodies with Western Sydney producer Wytchings at Bankstown Arts Centre.

Get swept up in the fast-rolling action of Clare Watson and Virginia Gay's epic mother-daughter comedy *Mama Does Derby*, open the envelope at Belvoir St Theatre for the heartfelt exchange between fathers and sons in *Dear Son* and revel in the Pasifika led ode to the suburban garage in *Blacktown Garage Party*.

Bring your kids, bring your granddads – this is culture that connects us all.

Sydney: A Stage

This is our city, seen anew. Sydney transforms before our eyes as streets, beaches and gathering places become playgrounds for imagination, celebration and connection.

Art spills out of the theatres and into the open air: Alessandro Sciarroni's *Save the Last Dance for Me* reawakens a century-old tradition; Legs On The Wall roll into Bondi Pavilion on a giant inflatable wave in *WAVERIDER*; and the pulse quickens on Hickson Road as *Efectos Especiales* unfolds in real time – film crews in hot pursuit of its dying protagonist.

As the sun sets on the Festival, *Vigil: Belong* lights up Barangaroo Reserve in a powerful ceremony of fire, song and art – a collective moment of belonging beneath the Sydney sky.

LACRIMA

CAROLINE GUIELA NGUYEN | FRANCE |
AUSTRALIAN PREMIER

One dress. Four countries. An audience of billions.

The Princess of England is getting married: across the globe, designers and artisans race to create a wedding gown fit for history. Watch transfixed as acclaimed playwright and director Caroline Guiela Nguyen unpicks the glamour of fashion in this absorbing drama that centres the people behind the prestige.

THEATRE

22 – 25 January

Roslyn Packer Theatre

AUDIO DESCRIPTION | SURTITLES | TACTLE TOUR

NOWHERE

KHALID ABDALLA | FUEL | UNITED KINGDOM |
AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE

A story of revolution, counter-revolution, friendship, and loss.

Inspired by his involvement in the Egyptian revolution of 2011, actor and activist Khalid Abdalla (*United 93*, *The Kite Runner*, *The Crown*) brings together the personal

and the political in an act of anti-biography that asks how we got here and how we find agency amidst the mazes of history.

THEATRE

13 – 17 January

Roslyn Packer Theatre

AUSLAN INTERPRETED PERFORMANCE

BLAK OUT

As Sydney Festival turns 50, the Blak Out program reminds us that we gather because we must — it's who we are.

The act itself makes us strong: together we endure, together we celebrate, together we carry on. For three weeks, the city moves to stories of resilience and brilliance led by the most powerful Blak artists in the country. At the centre burns The Vigil – our compass through uncertainty, the fire beckons our return. From that heart rises Blak joy, a weekend alive with music, dance and stories that celebrate the fullness of our Blakness. This is both a reckoning and a rising: unflinching, transformative and full of light. When we gather, we remember our strength.

Jacob Nash, Creative Artist in Residence

HELD

LUCY SIMPSON | WORLD PREMIERE

A new series of major sculptural works honouring earth and fire, sky and sea Country stretch across Stargazer's Lawn for the duration of the Festival, welcoming all who gather. Designed by Yuwaalaraay Wirringgaa woman Lucy Simpson, these unique vessels hold space for a powerful message carried by winds and waterways.

BLAK OUT, VISUAL ART

8 – 25 January

Barangaroo Reserve

FREE

VIGIL: BELONG

NARDI SIMPSON, LUCY SIMPSON & UNCLE
MATTHEW DOYLE | WORLD PREMIERE

Rising smoke, song, and ceremony at sunset.

We gather because we must. Join us amongst the sculptures of Lucy Simpson, as Uncle Matthew Doyle kindles fire and smoke, and Nardi Simpson leads a joyous community chorus with songs spanning generations. Gather for a night of Blak song and ceremony, and help close the Festival in a collective act of honouring.

BLAK OUT, CEREMONY, MUSIC

25 January

Barangaroo Reserve

FREE

GARRIGARRANG BADU

PETA STRACHAN & JANNAWI DANCE CLAN |
WORLD PREMIERE

Through Dharug women, Country comes alive

Both preservation and celebration, the multi-generational dance clan honours Dharug mothers, grandmothers, and daughters who have carried culture forward across time. From the freshwater of the mountain to the saltwater of the sea, this full-length work brings millennia of knowledge to life through movement that reflects both ancient practice and contemporary voice.

BLAK OUT, DANCE

9 – 10 January

Sydney Opera House, Drama Theatre

GARABARI

JOEL BRAY

Dance, gather and connect in this joyous, high-energy corroboree

Join acclaimed choreographer Joel Bray for a heart-pounding dance ritual on Sydney Harbour. Created with Wiradjuri Elders and community, *Garabari* is a dazzling reimagining of corroboree, where music, light, and movement unite audiences in one powerful, joyful rhythm.

BLAK OUT, DANCE

9 – 11 January

Sydney Opera House, Northern Broadwalk

REDFERN RENAISSANCE

ANGELINE PENRITH

The celebration of National Black Theatre returns.

Honouring the revolutionary art and activism of the 1970s National Black Theatre in Redfern, Wiradjuri Yuin actor Angeline Penrith offers an expanded series of performance readings and discussions that will galvanise and inspire in equal measure.

BLAK OUT, THEATRE

15 – 24 January

Belvoir St Theatre

DEAR SON

THOMAS MAYO, ISAAC DRANDIC & JOHN HARVEY

Blak dads, Blak sons, Blak grandfathers, Blak love.

The theatrical production of Thomas Mayo's groundbreaking anthology honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men comes to Sydney Festival. Renowned theatre-makers Isaac Drandic and John Harvey offer you an intimate show centred on letters between fathers and sons, with the original cast starring Jimi Bani, Waangenga Blanco, Trevor Jamieson, Kirk Page and Aaron Pedersen.

BLAK OUT, THEATRE

8 – 25 January

Belvoir St Theatre

KANKAWA NAGARRA

A Blak blues legend with global reach.

Walmatjarri, Gooniyandi and Bunuba Elder, Kankawa Nagarra is an international award-winning blues and gospel singer-songwriter. Her 2024 album, Wirlmarni, won the prestigious Australian Music Prize. From the desert of Fitzroy Crossing to Broadway and beyond, 'The Queen of The Bandaral Ngadu Delta' is a true phenomenon.

BLAK OUT, MUSIC

8 January

ACO on the Pier

EMMA DONOVAN - TAKE ME TO THE RIVER

One of Australia's finest talents reimagines soul classics.

Over a celebrated career, ARIA-nominated singer and songwriter Emma Donovan has enchanted audiences with her mesmerising voice and commanding stage presence. *Take Me to the River* is her tribute to the timeless soul classics that have shaped her, and all of us.

BLAK OUT, MUSIC

16 January

City Recital Hall

THE BOGONG'S SONG: A CALL TO COUNTRY

Yolande Brown & Chenoa Deemal

Even the smallest creatures have a vital role to play.

When a brother and sister turn out the lights for the night, they enter the Dreaming, where the past speaks

through stars, trees, and grass. A rich blend of storytelling, shadow puppetry, dance and song created for children, this new work from Yolande Brown and Chenoa Deemal is steeped in wonder and joy.

BLAK OUT, FAMILY

15 – 20 January

Various locations

AUSLAN INTERPRETED PERFORMANCE | AUDIO
DESCRIPTION | TACTILE TOUR

A NIGHT OF ROCK AND ROLL WITH BOGAN VILLEA

BEN GRAETZ

Blak, bogan, and queer as Queen.

From the creator of sellout sensation *Tina: A Tropical Love Story* comes a night of queer Blak brilliance, bogan-style. The greatest rock anthems of all time as you've never heard them before, this is the best blend of headbanging and drag since Freddie Mercury.

BLAK OUT, CABARET

16 – 18 January

Sydney Theatre Company, Wharf 1 Theatre

MAMA DOES DERBY

CLARE WATSON & VIRGINIA GAY | WORLD
PREMIERE SEASON

A high-octane ode to family and finding your people.

The grand Victorian interior of Sydney Town Hall transforms into a roller derby track in this raucous show about a single mum and her teenage daughter relocating to a new town. Putting their unbreakable bond on skates, this warm, funny and exhilarating production is a story for all ages about stacking it and getting back up.

THEATRE

15 – 22 January

Sydney Town Hall

AUDIO DESCRIPTION | CAPTIONED PERFORMANCE
| RELAXED PERFORMANCE | TACTILE TOUR

POST ORIENTALIST EXPRESS

EUN-ME AHN | KOREA | AUSTRALIAN EXCLUSIVE

Joyfully subversive dance from the *enfant terrible* of Seoul.

Rebellious Korean choreographer Eun-Me Ahn dismantles your expectations in a high-energy visual spectacular that mesmerises and dazzles. Showcasing

90 of Ahn's original costume designs, these exuberant dances and extravagant outfits are rooted in local traditions but not constrained by them.

DANCE

8 – 10 January

Roslyn Packer Theatre

SAVE THE LAST DANCE FOR ME

ALESSANDRO SCIARRONI | ITALY | AUSTRALIAN
EXCLUSIVE

An Italian spin on love and desire.

The Polka Chinata is here to steal your heart. Nearly lost to time, this early 1900s Italian courtship dance has been saved from extinction by Alessandro Sciarroni and reinvented for the 21st century with astonishing physical, musical and emotional intensity.

DANCE

14 – 23 January

Various locations

ECHO MAPPING

AZZAM MOHAMED & JACK PREST

A cathartic live duet of sound and movement.

Composer Jack Prest and dancer Azzam Mohamed combine in this pulsing and poignant performance that pushes the boundaries of song and dance. Jack's transcendent electronic textures meet Azzam's Sudanese melodies and fluid choreography in exhilarating loops that trace the shape of silence.

DANCE

17 – 19 January

Sydney Town Hall

SISA-SISA

MURTALA & ALFIRA O'SULLIVAN | INDONESIA |
WORLD PREMIERE

An intimate double bill of Indonesian dance solos.

In Jejak & Bisik Alfira O'Sullivan weaves body percussion, song, and spoken word exploring ageing as a woman and a dancer. In Gelumbang Raya, Murtala retraces his time in the aftermath of the 2004 Aceh tsunami, moving through dark memories in a choreography that maps survival with grace

DANCE

23 & 24 January

Bankstown Arts Centre

EXXY

DAN DAW | UNITED KINGDOM & AUSTRALIA |
AUSTRALIAN EXCLUSIVE

The cost of being true to yourself is always high.

The celebrated queer and crippled dance artist Dan Daw takes us back to his working-class origins to reflect on where he started and examine the pressure to stay “on top” after his breakout success. Joined by three performers who walk and talk like him, Dan may finally be able to blend in after a lifetime of standing out.

DANCE

15 – 18 January

Sydney Opera House, Drama Theatre

AUDIO DESCRIPTION | CAPTIONED PERFORMANCE
| RELAXED PERFORMANCE | TACTILE TOUR

TURANDOT

OPERA AUSTRALIA & THE OPERA CONFERENCE

Puccini’s beloved final opera, *Turandot*, famous for the iconic aria “Nessun Dorma”, is given a bold and refreshing interpretation by critically acclaimed director and choreographer Ann Yee. This monumental new

staging blasts a complex classic into the modern era with daring and verve.

OPERA

15 January – 27 March

Sydney Opera House, Joan Sutherland Theatre

SURTITLES

DISCO NEVER DIES

SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA | WORLD
PREMIERE

Grab your flares and your go-go boots – this is the reimagining you didn't know you needed. The Sydney Symphony Orchestra teams up with incredible vocalists for this night dedicated to all things mirror balls, sequins and platform shoes. Boogie to hits from ABBA, the Bee Gees and more.

MUSIC

22 January

The Hordern Pavilion

OPERA FOR THE DEAD 祭歌

MINDY MENG WANG & MONICA LIM

Come alive in this grand sonic ritual of remembrance.

Enter a realm in which the past intertwines with the present, ritual meets technology, and music forms a bridge between the living and the departed. *Opera for the Dead* 祭歌 is an immersive contemporary Chinese cyber-opera made to transform the way you look at life, death, and memory.

IMMERSIVE OPERA

15 – 18 January

Bell Shakespeare, The Neilson Nutshell

AUDIO DESCRIPTION & TACTILE TOUR

BURGERZ

TRAVIS ALABANZA | UNITED KINGDOM |
AUSTRALIAN EXCLUSIVE

Burgers and bile with a side of blistering bite.

The breakout show from one of the UK's leading trans artists, *BURGERZ* remains painfully timely, unsettling, and powerful. Winner of the Total Theatre Award at Edinburgh Festival Fringe, this hilarious and heartbreaking show explores how trans people survive, and reclaims an act of violence with serious sauce.

THEATRE

7 – 18 January

Track 8, Carriageworks

ENGORGED

REUBEN KAYE

A fearless voice soars bigger than ever before.

Giving new meaning to “bigger than ever before”, the fiery, filthy and fabulous comedian and cultural icon blends witty punchlines with full-throated torch songs. Backed by an 18-piece orchestra, Kaye fires off deeply personal (and hilarious) stories between belting out diva-worthy anthems.

CABARET, MUSIC

16 January

Sydney Opera House, Concert Hall

BAD HAND

NATALIE ABBOTT

You can't choose the hand you're dealt.

A raw and darkly funny cabaret debut, *Bad Hand* is Natalie Abbotts deeply personal celebration of love, loss and life. Dedicated to her late partner, this no-holds-barred show sees the Muriel's Wedding musical star turn heartbreak into humour in her quest to find hope for the future. Luck favours the bold, will you place your bets or fold?

CABARET

15 – 17 January

Sydney Theatre Company, Warf 1 Theatre

AUSLAN INTERPRETED PERFORMANCE

BIGMOUTH STRIKES AGAIN (THE SMITHS SHOW)

SALTY BRINE | UNITED STATES OF AMERICA |
AUSTRALIAN EXCLUSIVE

A bewitching literary mixtape from cabaret's mad genius.

Musical renegade Salty Brine has crafted a fever-dream fusion of The Smiths album *The Queen Is Dead*, Shelley's *Frankenstein* and his own life story. The latest instalment in his sprawling Living Record Collection project, this is a genre-smashing spectacle of indie rock and gothic theatrics, with electric vocals and great lashes of camp.

CABARET

14 – 18 January

Sydney Theatre Company, Warf 1 Theatre

AUSLAN INTERPRETED PERFORMANCE

WAKE

THISISPOPBABY | IRELAND | AUSTRALIAN
EXCLUSIVE

Death has never felt more alive.

The theatrical masterminds behind *RIOT* (Sydney Festival 2018) are back with *WAKE*, a high-octane, heart-thumping remix of the renowned Irish grieving ritual. Customs collide with club anthems, pole-dancing, poetry, tap, and more in this glittering, raucous and deeply moving reminder to live fully.

CABARET

14 – 25 January

Carriageworks, Bay 17

AUDIO DESCRIPTION & TACTILE TOUR

ASSES.MASSES

PATRICK BLENKARN & MILTON LIM | CANADA |
AUSTRALIAN EXCLUSIVE

A collective video game experience putting the asses in charge.

The donkeys are rebelling. They no longer have it all in a post-Industrial society, and they want their jobs back. You, the audience, must collaborate to guide the herd

through an epic seven-hour adventure laced with bawdy humour and social commentary. Video gaming meets theatre in this anti-capitalist ass blast.

INTERACTIVE GAMING

24 & 25 January

Sydney Opera House, Drama Theatre

RELAXED PERFORMANCE

LIVE ON HICKSON ROAD (EFECTOS ESPECIALES AND THE KICK ON)

LUCIANA ACUÑ & ALEJO MOGUILLANSKY |
ARGENTINA | AUSTRALIAN EXCLUSIVE

Beats and cinematic heat.

Dive into the scene as live action unfolds on Hickson Road. Part street performance, part live movie shoot, immerse yourself in *Efectos Especiales*, where the real world becomes a film set and the audience the extras. Kick on after the final show as DJs and dancefloor take over for a streetside sesh to remember.

IMMERSIVE THEATRE, MUSIC

10 January

Hickson Road, Walsh Bay

FREE

SYDNEY SYMPHONY UNDER THE STARS 50 YEARS OF MUSIC AND PICTURES

SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

A special birthday edition of our beloved musical tradition.

The Sydney Symphony concert you know and love is back in the heart of the city. Gather under the stars to celebrate Sydney's artistic spirit with a moving First Nations orchestral work, followed by a journey through 50 years of Festival moments – featuring archival footage, stunning artwork and exquisite live music from the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. Park your rug, unpack your snacks and enjoy this special anniversary concert beneath the summer sky.

MUSIC

17 January

Tumbalong Park, Darling Harbour

FREE

LONNIE HOLLEY

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA | AUSTRALIAN
EXCLUSIVE

The visionary artist in the eye of a musical storm.

A survivor of Jim Crow-era Alabama, Lonnie Holley's vast artistic power has manifested across forms: in drawing, painting, sculpture, photography, performance, music and filmmaking. At Sydney Festival, the one-of-a-kind artist will star in musical collaborations conjured entirely in the moment.

MUSIC

9 & 10 January

ACO on the Pier

NOORIYAH & DJ HABIBEATS

UNITED KINGDOM | PALESTINE & UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA | AUSTRALIAN EXCLUSIVE

Dress to sweat for this club-ready double-bill.

From Glastonbury to Coachella to BBC4, UK-based Nooriyah has the world moving to her tune. In an unforgettable night for Third Culture Kids and music lovers, she's joined by Palestinian American DJ Habibeats, known for fusing Arabic sound with global electronic influences and championing a new wave of culturally rooted dance music.

MUSIC

17 January

City Recital Hall

PARIS PALOMA

UNITED KINGDOM

A fearless feminist voice on the rise.

Paris Paloma has gone from promising newcomer to powerhouse with her debut album *Cacophony* already surpassing one billion streams. Tipped as the “natural successor to Florence and the Machine”, this is your chance to be part of a cultural phenomenon.

MUSIC

9 & 10 January

City Recital Hall

AUSLAN INTERPRETED PERFORMANCE

ENJI

MONGOLIA & GERMANY | AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE

Discovering jazz in her adopted home of Munich, Germany, Mongolian singer and songwriter ENJI has wowed international audiences with a sound that combines the urtiin duu (“long song”) tradition with acoustic jazz improvisation. Let this one-of-a-kind performer transport you as she makes her Australian debut.

MUSIC

16 January

ACO on the Pier

TENZIN CHOEGYAL

TIBET & AUSTRALIA

Grammy-nominated Tibetan artist Tenzin Choegyal has performed around the world at venues like New York's Carnegie Hall and now takes up at residence at Bankstown Arts Centre. Two nights of ethereal beauty will include soaring melodies from his *Whispering Sky* album, a new collaboration with rising star Wytchings and a musician's workshop led by Tenzin Choegyal with Tenzin Kunsang.

MUSIC

16 & 17 January

Bankstown Arts Centre

CHAI

AOTEAROA & IRAN

Effortlessly switching guises as rapper, producer, sound engineer and director, CHAI's acclaimed 2024 debut album, *Safar*, firmly established her as a musical force. Fusing hip-hop, pop, R&B, electronica and Persian instrumentation, the multi-hyphenate star has a sound all her own.

MUSIC

17 January

ACO on the Pier

RAF-SAPERRA

UNITED KINGDOM & PAKISTAN

Mixing traditional Punjabi folk vocals with UK garage, drill and Afrobeats, South London's Raf-Saperra has become one of Britain's most talked-about new exports since his debut "*Glassy Riddim*". Led by the garage anthem "N.L.S. (Nach Le Soniye)" and his breakout mixtape *Ruff Around the Edges*, Saperra's bhangra-laced bangers have stormed dancefloors from Berghain to Glastonbury.

MUSIC

23 January

City Recital Hall

MARE ADVERTENCIA & INKABEE

MEXICO & AUSTRALIA | AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE

Zapotec rapper Mare Advertencia returns hip-hop to its roots: speaking truth to power. An established force on the world stage, here she's joined by Noongar sensation, INKABEE, who at 13 has already been dubbed "the future of Australian hip-hop" by Chance the Rapper. Expect a night of powerhouse First Nations lyricism.

MUSIC

23 January

ACO on the Pier

MILAN RING – THE SOUND OF RAIN ON DUST

AUSTRALIA | WORLD PREMIERE

Milan Ring returns with her most intimate performance yet. Lie down and immerse yourself in this deep-listening, sound bath experience that blends guitar, electronics and field recordings. Developed between Berlin and Sydney, this performance lingers in the moments before release, where grief begins to shift and transformation takes form.

MUSIC

24 January

ACO on the Pier

UNDERCURRENT

The future of music burns in the heart of Western Sydney.

Three nights of sonic takeover that amplify the future-facing sound of Western Sydney.

From underground electronica to Pasifika Soul, from queer anthems to genre defying experiments. This live

music series celebrates the trailblazers and the next wave of artists shaping the cultural heart of the west.

MUSIC

22 – 24 January

Riverside Live at PHIVE

THE CENSOR

CASSANDRA FUMI & VIDYA RAJAN

Their stage, their rules, your turn to listen.

What happens when kids are in charge? In the age of helicopter parenting and moral panic about screen time, with kids more restricted than ever in what they can read, see, listen to, and say, *THE CENSOR* reverses the narrative. In this theatre, kids shape the story and tell it their way. You are in their hands now.

FAMILY

22 – 25 January

ATYP, THE REBEL THEATRE

RELAXED PERFORMANCE

ROTHAR

MIQUEL BARCELÓ & MOISÉS MAS GARCÍA |
IRELAND

AUSTRALIAN EXCLUSIVE

A bicycle repair shop becomes a wondrous dreamscape.

In a quirky bicycle repair shop at the end of a small Irish town, Miquel and Moisés exercise their imagination. Follow two boys as they create scenarios from everyday objects to fuel fantastic adventures. Through gorgeous design, brilliant physical comedy and the power of play, discover just how far creativity can take you.

FAMILY

14 – 18 January

Sydney Opera House, Playhouse

GARDEN OF SOUND

VOXSTEP | WORLD PREMIERE

Play your part in this innovative symphony.

Follow two gardeners, Dag and Dug, as they compose their 'garden' into a wondrous symphony. First, watch as they craft their sound-filled world before your eyes using motion capture and a game engine to create a sonic environment activated by gestures. Then, the stage becomes yours to explore and play, where every movement makes music.

FAMILY

7 – 17 January

Various location

WAVERIDER

LEGS ON THE WALL | AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE

Get swept up in an inflatable ocean adventure.

Performed on a giant inflatable wave at the iconic Bondi Pavilion, physical theatre superstars Legs On The Wall bring surf culture and jaw-dropping acrobatics together into an epic show. Stay after the show, as the inflatable wave transforms into a play zone for everyone to enjoy.

FAMILY

8 – 18 January

Bondi Pavilion

FREE

OBSERVER, OBSERVED

JULIA PHILLIPS | GERMANY & UNITED STATES OF AMERICA | AUSTRALIAN EXCLUSIVE

Where you can be the spectator and the spectacle.

Anyone can step up to these bronze binoculars but be warned – while getting a closer look at Darling Harbour, Darling Harbour will get a closer look at you. A camera within will broadcast your peeping eyes onto a large screen. *Observer, Observed* comes to Sydney fresh

from New York City's High Line, and explores ideas of public surveillance and spectatorship.

VISUAL ART

8 – 25 January

Prymont Bridge, Darling Harbour

BLACKTOWN GARAGE PARTY

EDITH AMITUANAI, SALOTE TAWALE & SIONE
MONU | AUSTRALIA & AOTEAROA | AUSTRALIAN
EXCLUSIVE

Pull up a milk crate and open your heart, cuz.

Artists Sione Monu and Salote Tawale turn the Blacktown Arts Centre into a suburban garage party full of Pasifika art. Featuring music and karaoke from some of Western Sydney's greatest acts, Edith Amituanai's performance piece Siren Boyz, workshops and a special family photo booth, this is a cultural offering of community open to everyone.

VISUAL ART, FAMILY, MUSIC

15 & 16 January

The Leo Kelly Blacktown Arts Centre

“As Sydney Festival turns 50, we’re throwing open the doors to Summer School.

This is where the Festival turns up the volume on learning, participation and disruptive joy. Get up close and personal with artists in talks that crack open process and inspiration, then roll up your sleeves in workshops that turn sparks into things you can make, do, feel or share. If you’re an adventurous learner, restore the spirit in contemporary rituals – honour lore and kin through the tide, spin low in the revival of the polka chinata, or have an epiphany through Lonnie Holley’s ecstatic improvisations.

This year we’re also elated to be launching Festival Commons, a new initiative that invests in the next generation of curators and cultural conveners from across Sydney and the Asia Pacific.

Who said school was out for summer?”

Nithya Nagarajan, Artistic Associate – Summer School

WANSOLMOANA: LUNAR ASSEMBLY

LATAI TAUMOEPEAU | TONGA & AUSTRALIA |
WORLD PREMIERE

Ocean, moon, water, womb. Let the tide wash over you.

As the moon renews, over 100 women and children will convene at one of the last remaining women-only ocean pools in the world. Tongan-Australian artist Latai Taumoepeau and collaborators will guide you in a restorative evening of sonic meditation, communal bathing, and ancestral ceremony.

IMMERSIVE

18 January

McIver's Ladies Baths

DEATH BY POWERPOINT

HARRIET GILLIES, XANTHE DOBBIE, VICTORIA SPENCE & THOM SMYTH | WORLD PREMIERE

Two things in life are unavoidable: death, and Microsoft PowerPoint.

Two fiercely independent queer organisations unite to throw open the doors to Hurstville's Life Rites funeral home. Through starwipes and slide transitions, queer artists from across Sydney explore life, death and everything in-between in this deeply human, refreshingly irreverent take on life's last great unknown.

IMMERSIVE

16 – 17 January

Life Rites Funerals, Hurstville

AUSLAN INTERPRETED PERFORMANCE

CONFLICTORIUM

INDIA | AUSTRALIAN EXCLUSIVE

Step inside Sydney's new salon of dissent.

An Indian collective of artists, mediators, historians and peacebuilders are bringing their interactive museum of conflict to Sydney. Throughout the festival, leave your mark on this community archive through hot takes and creative prompts: from pressing debates to your neighbourhood drama, everything is on the table.

14 – 25 January

Carriageworks

SUMMERSCHOOL WORKSHOPS

The show might end, but the spark doesn't have to. Summer School invites you to step inside the creative process with hands-on workshops led by world-class artists. Follow your impulses and add new tools to your kit.

Dance into absurdity with choreographer Eun-Me Ahn, craft cabaret with icon Salty Brine, jam with Tenzin Choegyal, immortalise the polka chinata with Alessandro Sciarroni and collaborators and find new ways to navigate the art of disagreement with *Conflictorium*.

Each workshop is a chance to come curious and learn by doing in spaces brimming with creativity, mischief and possibility.

SERIOUS DANCERS FOR RIDICULOUS PROBLEMS

Ein-Me Aun

7 January

Sydney Dance Company

CABARET IS CRAFTING

Salty Brine

10 January

Richard Werrett Studio, Roslyn Packer Theatre

SAVE THE LAST DANCE FOR ME

Gianmaria Borzillo & Giovanfrancesco Giannini

14 – 23 January

Dancer's Alley Darling Harbour, Sydney Town Hall,
Leichhardt Town Hall

DID YOU MEAN IT?

CONFLICTORIUM

17 January

Carriageworks, Bay 19

COOPERATIVE PLAY FOR THE GAMEFUL REVOLUTION

Milton Lim & Laurel Green

22 January

Carriageworks, Bay 19

CONFLICTS INSIDE-OUT

CONFLICTORIUM

24 January

Carriageworks, Bay 19

PLAN YOUR FESTIVAL

It's a big program and you've got big plans for it. We salute you, art lover, and we're here to help. Head to sydneyfestival.org.au/plan-your-festival for everything you need to know and do to get the absolute best from your Festival.

TICKETS

For all pricing details, info and to book, visit sydneyfestival.org.au

Tickets available from 9am, Thursday 6 November 2025 AEDT.

EARLY BIRD TICKETS

\$49 Early Bird Tickets are available from 9am, Thursday 6 November until midnight, Friday 21 November 2025 AEDT. Quantity is limited and may sell out prior to the offer end date. Valid to most shows and select performance times on A Reserve and General Admission Tickets. Only available on bookings made via Sydney Festival and a transaction fee applies.

Some exclusions apply, see sydneyfestival.org.au/earlybird

GETTING THERE

Public Transport

We encourage you to use public transport when getting to and from Sydney Festival events. Walsh Bay Arts Precinct is a short walk from the Metro station at Barangaroo.

For transport information visit transportnsw.info or call 131 500.

Wilson Parking

Receive 10% off night and weekend parking when you prepay online using the promo code SYDFEST26. Only available at selected car parks in the Sydney CBD.

Terms and conditions apply.

ACCESS & INCLUSION

We welcome all visitors to Sydney Festival events, and make every effort to ensure the program is accessible to our whole audience. All our events are held at wheelchair accessible venues.

For further details on the Festival's access program, precincts, venues and built environments, and for up-to-date information on shows including duration time, visit sydneyfestival.org.au/access

Contact Us

For disability access information and assistance, email access@sydneyfestival.org.au, or call us on 02 8248 6500. Sydney Festival is happy to receive calls via the National Relay Service.

FESTIVAL FEASTS

The only thing more nourishing than a great show is some perfectly cooked pizza dough. It's summer – you deserve both. We've partnered with some of Sydney's best restaurants to bring you exclusive \$30 and \$50 set menus, as well as a la carte (ALC) menus near Festival venues – just ask for Festival Feasts when you book and dine.

Head to sydneyfestival.org.au/ff to see what's on offer

Sydney Festival's brand celebrates creative voices of our city. This year's brand has been developed in collaboration with artist Nadia Odlum.

NADIA ODLUM

Nadia Odlum is a Sydney-based artist whose work explores how we move through and make sense of urban space. Through painting, sculpture and public installations, they transform the patterns and materials of the city into playful, abstract forms that invite curiosity and connection. Odlum's practice celebrates the vibrancy of shared environments, revealing the city as a living network shaped by interaction, imagination and the everyday choreography of human experience.