

## MEDIA RELEASE

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sydneyfestival.org.au



# Sydney Festival releases first wave of shows for 2018



Nanna Bech, *Aquasonic*, Photo: Charlotta de Miranda

Sydney's pre-eminent summer event, **Sydney Festival**, today announces the first three performances of its 2018 program; **Aquasonic**, an underwater concert, installation, and visual performance; **RIOT**, a variety show with an all-star Irish cast; and **The Town Hall Affair**, by the world-renowned New York-based theatre company **The Wooster Group** playing their first ever Sydney show. All three performances are Australian premieres and exclusives to Sydney Festival.

Now in its 42<sup>nd</sup> year, Sydney Festival takes place from the **6–28 January 2018**, to once again turn the entire city into a cultural hub.

**The Town Hall Affair** is an artful theatrical reimagining of the classic 1971 documentary **Town Bloody Hall** by Chris Hegedus and D.A. Pennebaker, which captured a raucous debate between author Norman Mailer and leading feminists including Jill Johnston and Germaine Greer - played by internationally renowned film and TV actor **Maura Tierney**. The debate may have taken place more than 45 years ago, but its themes remain relevant. Directed by **Elizabeth LeCompte**, co-founder of acclaimed experimental theatre troupe The Wooster Group, the play combines live performance of real-life dialogue from the debate with video footage from the documentary, both inhabiting the original film and derailing it.

**RIOT** is an acclaimed Irish variety show that melds high art and trash culture in a disorderly cocktail of partying and politics. It contains an all-star cast including famed drag queen and activist **Panti Bliss**, comedic acrobat dance sensations **Lords of Strut**, and former *Riverdance* leads **Up & Over It** amongst others.

**Aquasonic** is an ethereal underwater concert performed by five musicians submerged in aquariums. Playing custom-made instruments and singing in an invented style reminiscent of Cocteau Twins' Elizabeth Fraser, the result is a musical performance that both looks and sounds haunting and otherworldly. Avant-garde ensemble **Between Music** spent years researching the possibilities of performing music underwater, conducting experiments with scientists, deep sea divers and master craftspeople to develop entirely new instruments that can be played in water.

**Sydney Festival Director, Wesley Enoch** says "Sydney Festival is Sydney's cultural New Year's resolution. We set the cultural agenda for the year ahead and bring you some of the wildest cultural adventures you're ever likely to see. Sydneysiders embrace seeing the wonderful and the weird, the

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*adventurous and the thoughtful. From exciting underwater music, to the true Irish sense of a 'political party' and one of the most renowned experimental theatre companies in the world.*

*These three international hit shows are just a taste of what we have in store for you. Come enjoy the beauty of Sydney in summer!"*

### Listings information:

#### **Aquasonic**

Genre: Music

Where: Carriageworks

When: 6-9 January, see website for timings

Price: \$59-\$69

Link: <http://www.sydneyfestival.org.au/info/aquasonic>

#### **The Town Hall Affair – The Wooster Group**

Genre: Theatre

Where: Sydney Opera House, Drama Theatre

When: 7-13 January, 8pm, no performance Monday

Price: \$86-\$96

Link: <http://www.sydneyfestival.org.au/info/the-town-hall-affair>

#### **RIOT**

Genre: Theatre/Cabaret

Where: Meriton Festival Village

When: 5-28 January, see website for timings

Price: \$70-\$80

Link: <http://www.sydneyfestival.org.au/info/riot>

### NOTES FOR EDITORS:

#### **For interviews and further information contact:**

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Images for the shows announced above can be found here: <http://sydfe.st/earlyrelease2018>

General images for Sydney Festival can be found here: <http://sydfe.st/genpics2018>

For customer tickets telephone 1300 856 876 or visit [www.sydneyfestival.org.au](http://www.sydneyfestival.org.au)

### About Sydney Festival

Every January, Sydney Festival enlivens and transforms Sydney with a city-wide multi-art form cultural celebration. 2017 saw the entry of Festival Director, Wesley Enoch, and a program of over 450 performances and 150 events performed by over 1,000 artists at more than 46 venues across theatre, dance, music, circus and art. Inclusive programming, a broad range of free events and accessible pricing policies for the ticketed shows means that Sydney Festival is open to all, welcoming both Sydneysiders and visitors from wherever they live.

Since its launch in 1977, Sydney Festival has presented international artists such as Björk, Brian Wilson, Grace Jones, Manu Chao, Elvis Costello, AR Rahman, Cate Blanchett, Ralph Fiennes, Robert Lepage, The Flaming Lips, Peter Sellars, Sir Ian McKellen and David Byrne & St. Vincent alongside some of the world's great companies - Wayne McGregor's Random Dance, Cheek by Jowl, Gate Theatre and the Schaubühne Berlin to name only a few. Sydney Festival creates a meeting point for the best in national and international art, building a world class Festival in one of the world's greatest cities.