

MEDIA RELEASE

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SYDNEY FESTIVAL 2010 THIS IS OUR CITY IN SUMMER JANUARY 9–30

sydney festival 2010

Festival Director Lindy Hume today announced details of **Sydney Festival 2010**, a program of exceptional theatre, dance, music and film with artists from all over the world that is set to light up the city from January 9–30. The 2010 Festival, Hume's first of three as Festival Director, is the most expansive to date. The Festival includes the highly anticipated return of some friends, a continued commitment to free events and the introduction of a wide range of artists making their Sydney debuts.

The program for the 2010 Festival reflects a sense of communal and individual catharsis, but also ideas of happiness and optimism after the upheavals of the last year. Sharp observations on humanity are implicit in many of the works, whose creators once again remind us that great art from any period should tell us something about our lives today.

Festival Director Lindy Hume said "As Festivals should be, Sydney Festival 2010 is expansive and generous – the theatre program is a wonderfully wild ride, and the music is an eclectic and often joyous celebration of life.

"Sydney Festival aims to develop a deeper connection with artists from the Asia Pacific region over the next three years, so I'm thrilled to celebrate – within a culturally diverse program – the work of major artists from the Pacific and India in 2010.

"In many ways the free program is at the heart of Sydney Festival, and I'm delighted to say the 2010 free program is bigger than ever. In 2010 Sydney Festival will perform to around 700,000 people in a free program that features an astonishing line-up of world artists – Australian Indigenous supergroup **The Black Arm Band**, soul legend **Al Green**, West African stars **Toumani Diabaté** and **Vieux Farka Touré** and Indian megastar **AR Rahman**. Our weekend Domain series features **Sydney Symphony** and our new **Summer Sounds**, and on the last weekend we welcome back **Mazda Opera in The Domain** to the Festival portfolio, with **Leonard Bernstein's Candide**.

"I'm proud and delighted to welcome you to celebrate with us at Sydney Festival 2010."

OVERVIEW

The Festival's opening night party, **Festival First Night** has made a huge impact in its short history, with up to 240,000 people filling the city's streets, lanes and parks in 2009. In 2010, **Festival First Night** builds on this success, making for the ultimate opening night celebration and serving up a spectacular tasting plate of Festival performances.

For the three weeks following, the Festival offers a dizzying array of creative talent, including German director **Thomas Ostermeier** with his radical retake on **Hamlet**; Ireland's **Fabulous Beast's** macabre and beautiful **Giselle**; the hottest director on London's West End, **Rupert Goold**, with his **Six Characters in Search of an Author** starring **Ian McDiarmid** and **Catherine McCormack**; and American director extraordinaire Peter Sellars with his magnificent Stravinsky double bill, **Oedipus Rex & Symphony of Psalms** with **Sydney Symphony**, **Sydney Philharmonia Choirs** and a stellar line-up of soloists. On the same night as the Oedipus story unfolds in the Concert Hall, the Sydney Opera House Forecourt will play host to Producer **Hal Willner's** veritable rabble of rock and folk icons with **Rogue's Gallery** featuring, amongst others, **Marianne Faithfull**, **Tim Robbins**, **David Johansen**, **Norma Waterson** and **Sarah Blasko**. Meanwhile, in the Drama Theatre, Sydney Theatre Company's **Optimism** presents a wonderful

bunch of clowns led by the irrepressible **Frank Woodley**. Across at Sydney Theatre, choreography's it-girl **Crystal Pite** and her company **Kidd Pivot Frankfurt RM** perform their new work **Dark Matters**.

In his first visit to Australia, Sydney Festival is incredibly proud to present the much-revered **Al Green**, who will bring his gospel and soul to **Festival First Night**, as well as two nights at the State Theatre. Also making their Australian debut is luscious alternate-pop band, **Grizzly Bear**; while making a welcome return to Sydney are Mali maestro of the kora, **Toumani Diabaté**, and country-noir chanteuse **Neko Case**. At Parramatta, Indian superstar **AR Rahman** brings the colour and vibrancy of Indian music and dance to the stage for a massive free one-night-only concert with more than 40 dancers, singers and musicians. Also from India come 43 Rajasthani musicians in a custom-built 'magic box' staging with **The Manganiyar Seduction**. At Seymour Centre, it's back to electronic music of the early 1980s, with **Circa 1979: Signal to Noise**, incorporating an exhibition, talks, and Keynote and concert by **John Cale** at the Enmore Theatre.

There are plenty of Festival treats for families, including **Circus Oz** and their new show, **Barely Contained**, pitching their Big Top tent at Tumbalong Park in Darling Harbour; a trip to the moon (armed with cardboard boxes and a thermos flask) with **One Small Step**; a gorgeous stage adaptation of Shaun Tan's illustrated novel, **The Arrival**; and a chance to get up close with a proms-style show, with **MusicAlive: Zeeko**.

Making a welcome return in 2010 is **About An Hour**, which will be the basis of the **Inner West Hub**. **About An Hour** is a bunch of playful, irreverent and witty shows that are easy on the clock and even easier on the wallet, and will have the Seymour Centre buzzing. The 2010 program also turns a solid focus on the visual arts including Australian **Lynette Wallworth's** video works, **Olafur Eliasson's** large-scale exhibition at MCA; and **Edge of Elsewhere** at **Campbelltown Arts Centre and Gallery 4A**.

Other dance and theatre highlights include Samoan choreographer **Lemi Ponifasio's Tempest: without a body**; and Belgium's **Muziektheater Transparant's** story of Dutch Nazi-sympathisers in **Ruhe**. The music program includes rising Polish jazz group, **Marcin Wasilewski Trio**; the best of the New York jazz scene with **Medeski Martin & Wood**; and Sydney's own **Ensemble Offspring** with a new work, **Fractured Again**.

The 2010 Festival also welcomes back that gorgeous old dame, **The Famous Spiegelent**, with a brand new house show of delicious lavishness and illusion, **Smoke & Mirrors**, starring **iOTA**. And to get the flipside on all the Festival artists, check out a new sector of the program, **The Scope**, a series of talks, seminars, discussions and more.

All this, and so much more, makes Sydney Festival 2010 a celebration not to be missed.

FESTIVAL FIRST NIGHT

Now in its glorious third year, **Festival First Night** is the best way to kick off the three weeks of Sydney Festival. **Festival First Night** is made possible through a partnership of State Government through Arts NSW, the City of Sydney and government agencies, corporate partners and Festival artists. It is a celebration of our city and our festival, a re-imagining of the urban spaces in the CBD and a chance to welcome visitors to our city. City streets, parks and laneways will be transformed with outdoor stages and literally hundreds of artists giving everyone the chance to see the work of the Festival's major artists. The 2010 **Festival First Night** features free performances by the legendary **Al Green**; Australia's own super-collective of Indigenous singers and musicians, **The Black Arm Band**, with **Hidden Republic**; New York's favourite little big band with **Big Bad Voodoo Daddy**; those very cool funksters of Tokyo, **Mountain Mocha Kilimanjaro**; and soul and blues with **Black Joe Lewis & The Honeybears**.

Returning in 2010, DJ collective **Uber Lingua** spread their wings and relocate to Chifley Square, where the palm trees have inspired them to play neo-tropical beats on an international scale. With DJs, musicians, MCs and stunning visuals, Uber Lingua continue the annual ritual of helping launch Sydney Festival in global style.

Meanwhile, Hyde Park will be transformed into the sounds and aromas of India, with what will surely be one of the gems of the night, the exuberant **The Manganiyar Seduction**, where 43 Rajasthani musicians

present their dazzling combination of Indian music and theatre into a lush spectacle of melody, rhythm and song. Sydney-based **Bobby Singh and Friends** will be exploring Indian traditional music, percussion and dance, and its connections, influences and echoes through music. And as dusk falls, take a stroll down **Central Avenue of Hyde Park** for a spectacular laser and light show on the canopy.

Festival First Night gets started in the afternoon with **Kasey Chambers, Poppa Bill and the Little Hillbillies** and their irresistible country music for kids; **Ruby Hunter** with her songs and storytelling in **Out & About**; circus workshops with Sydney's **Aerialize** where kids can learn hula hooping, juggling, acrobatics and more; and Sydney-based **King Tide** with their live blend of dub, reggae, ska and roots.

Festival First Night will announce more of the line-up closer to the event www.sydneyfestival.org.au/firstnight

THEATRE

Sydney Festival has an astounding array of theatre in 2010 program, ranging from the truly epic to stories of the everyday and everything in between. Kicking off the theatre program is a re-telling of Shakespeare's **Hamlet** from **Schaubühne Berlin**. Directed by **Thomas Ostermeier**, and performed in German, this audacious production uses a cast of just six actors, taking on the mammoth task with passion, anguish and macabre humour.

At the Seymour Centre, UK's Headlong theatre revisit a classic of the early 20th century, Pirandello's **Six Characters in Search of an Author**. Directed by **Rupert Goold**, and following its critically acclaimed season in London's West End, this radical re-imagining of this celebrated satire is a sinister parable for a media-obsessed age and an exhilarating exploration of how we define ourselves and our 'reality'.

For a truly majestic experience, internationally acclaimed director **Peter Sellars** brings a rarely performed Stravinsky double bill to a transformed Concert Hall at Sydney Opera House. **Oedipus Rex & Symphony of Psalms** is a performance of epic proportions, featuring the **Sydney Symphony, Sydney Philharmonia Choirs**, soloists including **Yvonne Kenny**, and **Paula Arundel** as Antigone/Narrator. Sellars' pairing of the two works positions the **Symphony of Psalms** as a balm for the bleak despair of Oedipus' fate, giving the myth an ending of transfiguration and peace.

Things become a little more upbeat with comedian **Frank Woodley** leading a cast of unruly characters in Sydney Theatre Company's **Optimism** at the Sydney Opera House. *Candide*, Voltaire's classic 18th century novel of enlightened insanity, has transformed into a cutting commentary on the no worries bravura of the contemporary swagger. Directed by **Michael Kantor**, **Optimism** opened the theatre program at Edinburgh International Festival 2009, winning a prestigious Herald Angel Award for Woodley.

The reinterpretation of the classics keeps coming with Pan Pan Theatre's **Oedipus Loves You**. With dark humour and a live punk music score, this eccentric and original production is inspired by the classic Oedipus plays of Sophocles and Seneca and the Freudian theory they spawned, but sets the myth in a dysfunctional suburban household.

From one of Australia's leading theatre companies, **Urban Theatre Projects** (*Back Home* in 2006 and *The Last Highway* in 2008), comes their newest creation, **The Fence**. Set in a typical family home in Sydney's western suburbs, the play investigates the resilience and wisdom of five middle-aged Australians, four of whom grew up in care as part of the Stolen Generations and Forgotten Australians, in an explosive tale of love, belonging and dispossession.

From Belgium's Muziektheater Transparant comes **Ruhe**, where a spellbinding recital of Schubert *lieder* is abruptly interrupted by two people who wish to admit to their voluntary service in the SS in 1940. Part-recital, part-monologue, **Ruhe** is a powerful and challenging piece of theatre set in the magnificent surrounds of The Great Hall at The University of Sydney.

DANCE

In 2010, Sydney Festival welcomes Canadian choreographer **Crystal Pite** and her company **Kidd Pivot Frankfurt RM** on their premiere visit to Australia with **Dark Matters**, a haunting

exploration of the great unknown. Pite's work fuses classical elements with the complexity and freedom of structured improvisation and a strong theatrical sensibility.

CarriageWorks will host two dance works – **Giselle** and **Tempest: without a body**. Part-theatre part-dance, **Giselle** is choreographer **Michael Keegan Dolan**'s radical re-telling of the famous romantic ballet, moving it to a damp and dour Irish village. With its themes of madness and ghostly revenge, **Fabulous Beast's Giselle** celebrates the triumph of the human spirit, albeit through a weekly line-dancing class.

In **Tempest: without a body**, Samoan choreographer **Lemi Ponifasio** and his **MAU** company present a visually ravishing and apocalyptic response to the sinister escalation of post-9/11 state powers. Part-dance, part-theatre, part-oratory, Ponifasio's powerful work speaks of conflicts, terrorism and colonialism, as well as the hope for a life of dignity and respect. With Ponifasio's distinctive dance style of ceremonial ecstasy, **Tempest** also features an extraordinary appearance by prominent Māori activist **Tame Iti**. And for a high-energy full-throttle experience, try Brazil's **Balé de Rua** at Sydney Opera House, a pulsating mix of African dance, hip-hop, samba and capoeira.

MUSIC

Get ready to feel the L-O-V-E when the much-revered **Al Green** comes to Sydney with his celebration of gospel and soul. In his Australian premiere, Green will present his highly-acclaimed show at both **Festival First Night** and the State Theatre. Green is one of the all-time great soul singers, releasing a string of hits including "Let's Stay Together", "Take Me to the River" and "I'm Still in Love with You".

Watch out for pirates on the Forecourt of Sydney Opera House when impresario extraordinaire **Hal Willner** (*Came So Far for Beauty*, Sydney Festival 2005), presents his **Rogue's Gallery**, featuring an exemplary line-up of local and international pop, rock and folk artists in an epic concert tribute to songs of the sea. The all-star cast, including **Marianne Faithfull**, **David Johansen** (New York Dolls), actor/musician **Tim Robbins**, **Gavin Friday**, **Norma Waterson** (The Watersons), **David Thomas** (Pere Ubu), **Baby Gramps**, **Sarah Blasko**, **Katy Steele** (Little Birdy), **Glenn Richards** (Augie March) and more, will perform contemporary re-workings of traditional pirate ballads, sea-songs and chanteys.

Across town at City Recital Hall are **Grizzly Bear** and **Neko Case**. One of the most illustrious bands of 2009, Brooklyn's **Grizzly Bear** craft glorious orchestrated pop music in the tradition of some of the most revered experimental American music. **Neko Case** makes a welcome return to Sydney with her combination of classic country songwriting, sophisticated pop sensibilities and soaring vocals.

Also at City Recital Hall is France's **Diotima String Quartet** with a trio of concerts featuring music from Beethoven to Ravel as well as contemporary composers, resulting in an exhilarating journey through a variety of sound worlds and periods. American bass/baritone **Ryan McKinny** (also performing in **Oedipus Rex**) will perform that most heartbreaking of song cycles, **Winterreise**, that sublime combination of **Franz Schubert**'s music and **Wilhelm Müller**'s poems .

Presenting two very different concerts is Mali's celebrated musician, **Toumani Diabaté**. At the State Theatre, Diabaté will play a concert of his recent album, *The Mandé Variations*, featuring visionary interpretations of traditional music of the kora (a traditional West African 21-string harp) alongside ground-breaking improvised pieces. At Riverside Theatre (and at **Summer Sounds in The Domain**) Diabaté will let loose with **The Symmetric Orchestra** in a joyous super-charged celebration of the music of Senegal, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast and Mali.

Also in a particularly joyous mode is **The Manganiyar Seduction**, where 43 Rajasthani musicians perform a dazzling combination of Indian music and theatre. Seated in 36 individual curtained compartments, the musicians are framed by carnival lights, revealing each solo musician. What follows is a build-up of instruments and voices in a lush spectacle of melody, rhythm and song.

Enmore Theatre plays host to two not-to-be-missed gigs of the Festival. First up is the legendary **John Cale** and his band playing music from his vast catalogue. Founding member of the seminal The Velvet Underground, Cale is a musician, singer, songwriter, producer, poet and visual artist, and will also present a Keynote Address at the Seymour Centre, as part of **Circa 1979: Signal to Noise**. And for the ultimate

Australia Day experience, try **Dirty Three & Laughing Clowns** in a special Don't Look Back presentation.

In a world premiere, Sydney-based **Ensemble Offspring** will present **Fractured Again**, a multi-faceted performance combining original compositions and experimental sounds with aspects of installation art, lighting design and choreography. Featuring the rare and angelic-sounding glass harmonica, **Fractured Again** is inspired by a scene from Donizetti's opera *Lucia di Lammermoor*.

Back at City Recital Hall, two jazz trios strut their stuff with Polish outfit **Marcin Wasilewski Trio** making their Australian debut. Balanced, complex and delicate, theirs is a bewitching sound. Next is Brooklyn-based jazz and groove band **Medeski Martin & Wood**, whose profound musical rapport allows them to make music in the moment. (**Medeski Martin & Wood** also perform at The Famous Spiegel tent.)

Sydney's favourite summer pop-up concert venue, **Beck's Festival Bar** gets a facelift when it returns to Hyde Park Barracks for Sydney Festival 2010. With a spanking new marquee, an additional free late night gig series and a diverse line up of hot local and international bands and DJs, **Beck's Festival Bar** will be the ultimate outdoor summer party destination for music fans and Festival revellers. The line-up includes **Grizzly Bear**, **Big Bad Voodoo Daddy**, **Black Joe Lewis & the Honeybears**, **Severed Heads**, **Vieux Farka Touré**, **Camera Obscura**, **DJ Yoda's National Video Vacation**, **The Very Best**, **Breakestra** and many more.

THE FESTIVAL GARDEN

The Festival Garden is back for its fourth year, but more importantly, it's the 90th birthday celebration for that most glorious of venues, **The Famous Spiegel tent**. This year she plays host to a brand new house-show, **Smoke & Mirrors**. Part-vaudeville, part-fantasy, **Smoke & Mirrors** will be a lavish and lyrical journey across an illusory landscape, accompanied by some dangerously charismatic strangers and the extraordinary talents of **iOTA** (*Hedwig and the Angry Inch*).

In the early evening music time slot, the Festival presents a selection of folk, electronica, jazz and more with UK singer-songwriter **Fink** and his understated music combining folk, blues, electronica and dub influences; London-based singer-songwriter and rising star **Laura Marling** with her acoustic guitar and bittersweet folk songs; Canada's baroque-pop quartet **Patrick Watson** with their precise, delicate arrangements carrying Watson's stunning, world-weary voice; and the diverse combination of musicians in **Seckou Keita Quintet** with their unique blend of traditional West African music and contemporary jazz, classical, Flamenco and reggae, driven by Keita's spectacular kora (21-string harp) playing. Hailing from Ireland, the Spiegel tent also presents **Sharon Shannon Band**, who bring a contemporary edge to traditional Irish music with blues, reggae and soul; the ultimate electronic/live collage with **The Books** and their cut-and-paste musical aesthetic, blending vocal samples and found sounds with their own original folk and acoustic music of live vocals, guitar and cello; and alt-country husband and wife duo, **The Handsome Family**, who draw on Gothic fiction and American folk music, combined with the traditional country, Tin Pan Alley, bluegrass and murder ballads.

At the other end of the evening it's **Late at the Garden**, where a mix of live music and DJs make for the perfect chill-out atmosphere to reflect on the day's Festival activities.

ABOUT AN HOUR

About An Hour is a series of dance, theatre, music and comedy that is all about encouraging people to take a punt and come see a show, all for an investment of just \$30 for the ticket, and just one hour (or thereabouts) of their time. This selection of playful, irreverent and witty shows range from world premieres to award-winning hits including: the world premiere of Sydneysider **Shaun Parker's** newest dance/theatre work, **Happy As Larry**; soul-searching storytelling with everyone's favourite Welshman in **Hugh Hughes in...360**; comedy songs and characters with the darling of the UK comedy circuit, **Isy Suttie: Love Lost in the British Retail Industry**; Dublin-style punk rock pandemonium in a new telling of an old epic with **Oedipus Loves You**; a comedy of politics when a team of suburbanites try to take on the world's issues with **Party**; and poetry of all kinds with **Tim Key: The Slutcracker**.

FAMILY EVENTS

In 2010 mayhem and madness come to town in the guise of the latest **Circus Oz** show, **Barely Contained**, setting up camp in Tumbalong Park at Darling Harbour. At the Seymour Centre, there's the perfect opportunity to take a trip to the moon, all with the aid of some trusty cardboard boxes, buckets and a thermos flask, when two incredibly versatile actors in **One Small Step** tell the tale of the space race and beyond; and also for the littlies, **MusicAlive: Zeeko** will be playing music Proms-style, so everyone can get up close to the instruments and join in with the songs. At CarriageWorks is the very beautiful **The Arrival**, adapted from the award-winning graphic novel of the same name by **Shaun Tan**. A universal migrant tale set in a fantastical time and place, **The Arrival** is a wondrous, wordless play by New Zealand's **Red Leap Theatre**.

LARGE-SCALE FREE EVENTS

In 2010, Sydney Festival claims all four Saturday nights in The Domain. **Festival First Night** kicks things off on Saturday 9, and the second Saturday will resonate with the music of **Toumani Diabaté & The Symmetric Orchestra with Vieux Farka Touré** in **Summer Sounds in The Domain**. Saturday number three will be one of the most well-attended Festival events, **Symphony in The Domain** with the **Sydney Symphony** this year celebrating the music of Leonard Bernstein and more with **Wonderful Town**. And to wrap up the month on Saturday January 30, coming back into the Festival fold is **Mazda Opera in The Domain** with **Leonard Bernstein's Candide** and a magnificent cast including **David Hobson, Emma Matthews, Judi Connelli** and the irrepressible **Paul McDermott**.

One of the defining moments of Sydney Festival 2010 is sure to be **AR Rahman's** free concert at Parramatta Park. Two-time Academy Award winner Rahman is the undisputed king of contemporary Indian music, and with an entourage of more than 40 singers, musicians and dancers on stage, this will be a gathering of Bollywood-esque proportions.

And of course, where would the Festival be without the annual **AAMI Ferrython** – when our four beloved little ferries race it out on Sydney Harbour with thousands cheering them on.

THE SCOPE

In 2010, Sydney Festival introduces a new inclusion in its program – **The Scope**. A series of artist talks, seminars and Keynote Address, **The Scope** will zone in on the flipside of the Festival, finding out what makes artists tick, as well as delving into some of the broader themes of the Festival.

The Scope features the **Keynote 2010 – Crisis, Catharsis, Renewal**, where speakers will share their thoughts on the year ahead. In a **World Café**, **Dr Geoff Gallop** will lead an evening of integrated performance, music and discussion along the theme **Are We Happy Yet?**. In **The 5th Pacific Thought Symposium – Bringing Forth the Ancestors**, choreographer **Lemi Ponifasio** presents a rare opportunity to share different views and cultural philosophies, and to propose new ways to grapple with Pacific thought.

At **Circa 1979: Signal to Noise**, the legendary **John Cale** presents a **Keynote** exploring the New York avant garde, proto-punk and his work with Andy Warhol. **Circa 1979** also has the **Signal to Noise Sessions**, a day of free talks about experimentation in music, film and video in Sydney in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

EXHIBITIONS

Exhibitions range from the immense, with the MCA presenting one of their largest-scale exhibitions with Danish Icelandic artist **Olafur Eliasson** in **Take Your Time**; to the other end of the scale with Canadian artist **Bear Witness** and his investigation of how indigenous cultures are portrayed in the media. At CarriageWorks is a trilogy of video works by Australian **Lynette Wallworth** – **Invisible by Night**, **Evolution of Fearlessness** and **Duality of Light** – all intense, immersive experiences for the individual viewer; and from **Campbelltown Art Gallery** comes **Edge of Elsewhere**, the beginning of a major three-year project bringing together some of the most exciting contemporary arts from Australia, Asia and the Pacific.

Sydney Festival is part of Vivacity, our world famous New Year Sydney where everyone is invited to experience January's best events.

Kicking off with the spectacular 2009 Sydney New Year's Eve fireworks, the celebrations continue with Sydney Festival, including Festival First Night and the not to be missed AR Rahman concert at Parramatta Park, the Eliasson exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art, the prestigious Medibank International Sydney tennis and Australia Day. To make the most of your New Year in Sydney visit www.vivacitysydney.com

Although the program for **Sydney Festival 2010** is launched on November 4, there are still aspects of the Festival program to be announced in the lead-up to the event. Keep checking www.sydneyfestival.org.au

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