



Media release



The Festival of the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games

Embargo on release of schedule of events in its entirety before 23 February 2006.

January 2006

Festival Melbourne2006 – FREE PERFORMANCES

United by music and dance

Jamaican reggae superstar Jimmy Cliff, 'Mama Africa' Miriam Makeba, renowned Scottish percussion soloist Evelyn Glennie and the U.K's pumping Dhol Foundation will join forces with Australia's own Paul Kelly, Kutcha Edwards, Not Drowning Waving and many more, in what is one of the largest free musical programs ever to be arranged in Australia.

Part of Festival Melbourne2006, the cultural festival of the 2006 Commonwealth Games, two outdoor stages at the Alexandra Gardens will offer non-stop free music from all corners of the Commonwealth, in an eclectic program which covers the gamut of musical genres and tastes from roots, reggae, tribal, folk, indigenous, rock, pop, classical and more. And, following the conclusion of the days' sporting events, there will be live music and dancing from around the Commonwealth at Federation Square.

"Music is one of the world's most uniting forces – we have in common a love and understanding of it that helps bring us together," said Sue Natrass, Chair of the Festival Melbourne2006 Cultural Working Group. "In selecting this program, we've scoured the smallest villages in Africa, the far corners of Asia and the Pacific and the hotspots of the U.K to bring the best music the Commonwealth has to offer to Melbourne. It is a truly eclectic program – one that shows an extraordinary diversity and range, and expresses the many ways in which people use music to celebrate life and living."

Highlights include a performance from Tanzania's Golden Pride Children's Choir, forty-two children with angelic voices from a small African village, who wowed the 2004 London Womad audience with their divine homegrown songs.

Ghana's drum-pounding, foot-stomping African ShowBoyz, who featured in the musical documentary *1 Giant Leap* alongside Michael Stipe and Kurt Vonnegut, will perform their contagious tribal reggae together with magic tricks and comic routines. There will also be performances from The Fiji Island's Black Rose, Indian Sarod player Amjad Ali Khan, Northern Ireland's Andy White and Canada's La Bottine Souriante.

At Alexandra Gardens and Federation Square

African ShowBoyz, from Ghana, perform an adrenaline rush of reggae, roots and rhythm, on March 20 at 4:30pm and March 23 at 6:30pm, at Big Top on March 23 at 3:00pm and in the City Square on March 16 at 2:00pm & 3:30pm, March 17 at 2:00pm & 3:30pm and March 22 at 2:00pm & 4:30pm. They also perform at Moe on March 18 at 5:00pm, Bendigo on March 19 at 6:30pm, Ballarat on March 24 at 5:00pm and Geelong on March 25 at 3:00pm & 5:00pm.

Amjad Ali Khan from India, one of the world's foremost sarod players, performs in Ballarat on March 18 at 5:30pm.

Andy White from Northern Ireland, who has worked with Van Morrison, Peter Gabriel, Sinead O'Connor and Neil and Tim Finn, has the political edge of the young Bob Dylan and the Celtic influences of the Waterboys, performs at the Palm Stage on March 17 at 8:15pm and the Garden Stage on March 25 at 3:00pm.

Black Rose, one of Fiji's most popular groups, perform euro-dance meets pacific reggae at Federation Square on March 20 at 5:30pm and March 21 at 10:30pm, Alexandra Gardens Soundshell on March 22 at 2:00pm and Alexandra Gardens Garden Stage on March 23 at 3:00pm, Moe on March 24 at 9:00pm and Ballarat on March 25 at 5:00pm.

Bomba, Australia's funkiest dance reggae band led by Nicky Bomba, performs at Alexandra Gardens Soundshell on March 24 at 9:15pm and Federation Square on March 25 at 11pm.

The Charcoal Club, featuring Richard Frankland, Andy Baylor, Monica Weightman, Aurora Kurth, Andrew O'Grady, Roseanne Hunt and Harry Lye, perform at Ballarat on March 15 at 7:00pm, Federation Square on March 19 at 10:45pm and Alexandra Gardens Soundshell on March 23 at 4:00pm.

Combo la Revelacion, from Australia, perform hot chilli rhythms and killer beats at Federation Square on March 23 at 10:30pm and the Alexandra Gardens Soundshell on March 25 at 2:00pm.

Cosmo Cosmolino, from Australia, a Melbourne based quintet that mix tango with dynamic chamber music at Alexandra Gardens on March 23 at 10:15pm.

India's **Dhol Foundation**, a powerhouse of percussion from the Punjab, perform for the first time in Australia at Alexandra Gardens – Garden Stage on March 18 at 10:15pm, Alexandra Gardens – Soundshell on March 21 at 10:15pm, Ballarat on March 17 at 5:30pm and the Sidney Myer Music Bowl as part of the Percussion Gala on March 19 at 7:30pm.

Doch, from Australia, perform gypsy grooves at Alexandra Gardens Soundshell on March 24 at 4:30pm and the Garden Stage on March 25 at 9:15pm.

Dr Subramaniam, from India, known as the 'Emperor among violinists' performs superb jazz fusion at the Alexandra Gardens on March 17 at 2:30pm.

Drum Drum, based in far north Australia and featuring classically trained musicians from Papua New Guinea, Fiji and Australia, perform at the Arts Centre Beachy on March 20 at 6:00pm, Alexandra Gardens Palm Stage on March 21 at 8:15pm and March 24 at 4:00pm, the Alexandra Gardens Soundshell on March 22 at 4:00pm and March 23 at 7:00pm and at Moe on March 25 at 12:30pm.

Dya Singh, a unique blend of mystical North Indian music with Western folk, perform at the Alexandra Gardens – Garden Stage on March 23 at 5:00pm, Alexandra Gardens Soundshell on March 24 at 2:00pm and Moe on March 25 at 2:00pm.

Frank Yamma and Piranpa, one of Australia's most talented contemporary performers, and a traditional Pitjantjatjara man from Australia's central desert, performs at Alexandra Gardens Palm Stage on March 21 at 4:00pm, Soundshell on March 24 at 7:00pm, Garden Stage on March 22 at 5:00pm and Moe on March 25 at 6:00pm.

Tanzania's **Golden Pride Children's Choir**, forty-two children with untrained angelic voices who have won the hearts of many, including Peter Gabriel, perform at Alexandra Gardens Soundshell on March 19 at 7:00pm, March 20 at 9:15pm and March 21 at 6:30pm and the Alexandra Gardens Garden Stage on March 22 at 3:00pm

Grand Union Orchestra perform the haunting sounds of the Andes and Southern India with dance rhythms from the Caribbean and South African townships at the Alexandra Garden Garden Stage on March 19 at 3:00pm, Alexandra Garden – Soundshell on March 21 at 4:00pm and Bendigo on March 26 at 6:30pm.

Jaipur Kawa Brass Band from India, bring a riotous brand of Indian rejoicing, traditional Rajasthan and Hindustani classical music and a dash of gypsy dance to Alexandra Gardens Soundshell on March 22 at 6:30pm, Alexandra Gardens Palm Stage on March 24 at 9:15pm, the Big Top on March 24 at 3:00pm, City Square on March 23 at 6:30pm, Sidney Myer Music Bowl on March 25 at 7:30pm and Ballarat on March 26 at 7:00pm

Jarrah perform original acoustic Koori music at Federation Square Stage on March 19 at 9:30pm.

The Kusun Ensemble, Ghana's most innovative and powerful music and dance ensemble, perform at the Sidney Myer Music Bowl on March 17 at 7:30pm and March 19 at 7:30pm, Alexandra Gardens Garden Stage on March 20 at 6:30pm and March 21 at 3:00pm, Alexandra Gardens Palm Stage on March 22 at 7:00pm, Federation Square on March 23 at 5:30pm, Moe on March 18 at 9:00pm and Ballarat on March 24 at 6:15pm.

Kutcha Edwards, former National Indigenous Person of the Year and lead singer of Blackfire, will perform at Federation Square on March 25 at 10:00pm and Bendigo on March 19 at 2:00pm.

La Bottine Souriante, from Canada, and living legends of French North American roots music, play saucy jazz, salsa and folk at the Alexandra Gardens Soundshell on March 16 at 7:00pm and March 19 at 9:15pm and Geelong on March 17 at 10:00pm.

Liam Teague & the Renegades Steel Orchestra from Trinidad and Tobago, hailed as the 'Paganini of the Steelpan', play calypso and meringue rhythms at the Sidney Myer Music Bowl on March 16 at 7:30pm and March 19 at 7:30pm, and Alexandra Gardens Garden Stage on March 20 at 3:00pm.

Limestone, featuring Joe Camilleri and Nicky Bomba, two of Australia's most highly respected musicians, perform at Alexandra Gardens Soundshell on March 23 at 9:15pm and Moe on March 26 at 6:00pm.

Michael McGoldrick, from Northern Ireland, plays politically charged instrumentals, drawing on traditional, world jazz and experimental hip-hop influences, at Federation Square on March 17 at 10:30pm, Alexandra Gardens Garden Stage on March 18 at 6:00pm and March 20 at 5:00pm and Bendigo on March 19 at 5:00pm.

Miz, a power duo from Brisbane, Australia, perform hip hop and rhythm and blues at the Alexandra Gardens Palm Stage on March 16 at 6:00pm and March 19 at 2:00pm and the Big Top on March 16, 17, 18 and 19 at 9:15pm and the Alexandra Gardens Garden Stage on March 21 at 5:00pm.

The Mornington Island Dancers bring to life the Dreamtime stories of the Lardil people of the Gulf of Carpentaria at Alexandra Gardens Soundshell on March 18 at 1:30pm, March 21 at 2:00pm and the Palm Stage on March 20 at 2:00pm.

The Musafir Gypsies, from Rajasthan, are a travelling band of Indian performing artists who spin music, dance and acrobatics into a highly entertaining musical spectacle. They perform at Alexandra Gardens Garden Stage on March 16 at 6:00pm, March 17 at 8:15pm and March 19 at 10:15pm, and Palm Stage on March 18 at 3:00pm.

Nexus, high priests of the percussion world, perform a spectacle of sound, rhythm and movement at the Alexandra Gardens soundshell on March 16 at 9:15pm, March 17 at 5:00pm and March 18 at 4:30pm, and as part of the Percussion Gala at the Sidney Myer Music Bowl on March 19 at 7:30pm.

Australia's much-loved **Not Drowning Waving**, featuring David Bridie, perform their own brand of folk and ambient rock pop at the Alexandra Gardens Soundshell on March 25 at 7:00pm.

Paul Kelly, Australia's favourite singer, songwriter and poet, and the **Boon Companions** will bring Festival Melbourne 2006 to a close on March 26 at 6:00pm at the Alexandra Gardens Soundshell.

Sally Ford and the Pachuco Playboys, bring the spirit of Buena Vista into the 21st century. They perform at Federation Square on March 24 at 10:30pm.

Ravi Bandhu Vidyapathy, renowned dancer, percussionist and choreographer from Sri Lanka, and one of the greatest living exponents of Sri Lanka's Kandyan dance form, performs at Alexandra Gardens Soundshell on March 19 at 2:00pm and March 23 at 2:00pm, the Garden Stage on March 20 at 10:15pm, the Palm Stage on March 21 at 6:00pm and March 22 at 4:00pm and Moe on March 24 at 5:30pm.

Australia's **Raw Metal Dance Company** perform tap mixed with funk, hip hop and acrobatics at the Alexandra Garden Soundshell on March 16 at 5:00pm and the Palm Stage on March 17 at 4:30pm.

The Renegades Steel Orchestra, the greatest and most successful steel band in the world, perform at the Sidney Myer Music Bowl on March 16 at 7:30pm, the Alexandra Gardens Soundshell on March 18 at 7:00pm, Garden Stage on March 20 at 3:00pm and the Sidney Myer Music Bowl as part of the Percussion Gala on March 19 at 7:30pm.

From the remote Elcho Island in North East Arnhem Land, **Saltwater** perform ska-influenced songs blended with ancient Aboriginal and contemporary sounds, reflecting their ties to the land and sea, at the Alexandra Gardens Garden Stage on March 21 at 9:15pm, Palm Stage on March 19 at 6:00pm, Soundshell on March 16 at 2:00pm and March 20 at 2:00pm and at Bendigo on March 22 at 5:30pm.

Scrap Arts Music, Canada's funkiest drummers, take scrap, old bike parts, sewerage pipes and aluminium bowls to make big noise. They perform at the Alexandra Gardens Garden Stage on March 16 at 6:00pm, Palm Stage on March 17 at 6:30pm and the Sidney Myer Music Bowl's Percussion Gala on March 19 at 7:30pm.

Scotland's **Shooglenifty**, a six piece 'hypno-folkadelic' outfit who play ambient trance, perform at Alexandra Gardens Soundshell on March 25 at 10:15pm.

Sing for Water, harnessing the power of the collective voice, features community and school choirs from around Melbourne to perform a massive concert while at the same time raising funds for clean water in East Timor. The children's choir, *Children Sing For Water*, led by the unique South African singer, songwriter and musician, Valanga Khoza, with support from artists Kutcha Edwards, Vicky King and Angela Costi, will perform a concert featuring exciting new compositions by the children in addition to songs linked to water as the source of life. The adult choir, led by the extraordinarily talented singer/songwriter, Kavisha Mazzella, and joined by a number of professional guest artists including Helen Chadwick, Paulo Almeida of The Dili Allstars, and Australia's favourite singer, songwriter and poet Paul Kelly, will perform a selection of hauntingly beautiful and inspiring songs from around the world. It takes place at Alexandra Gardens on March 18 at 2:00pm and 3:30pm.

Skazz, Australia's unique ska/Jamaican jazz act, perform at Federation Square on March 22 at 10:30pm.

Strike, a high energy drumming group from New Zealand, perform at Federation Square on March 21 at 5:30pm and Alexandra Gardens Garden Stage on March 22 at 9:15pm.

Talvin Singh & Tabtek, direct from the clubs of London, this gifted young tabla player and one of the pioneers of the British Asian electronic music scene will DJ at Federation Square on March 18 at 10:30pm and Sidney Myer Music Bowl as part of the Percussion Gala on March 19 at 7:30pm.

Te Matarae/Orehu, a 26-strong troupe of Maori kapa haka dancers, storm the stage at Alexandra Gardens Soundshell on March 20 at 7:30pm and March 25 at 5:00pm, the Palm Stage on March 24 at 7:00pm, Federation Square on March 22 at 5:30pm and the Sidney Myer Music Bowl on March 23 at 7:30pm.

Joseph and James Tawadros, Egyptian-Australian brothers who perform Arabic lute and ancient Egyptian percussion at the Alexandra Gardens Palm Stage on March 22 at 9:15pm and March 23 at 9:15pm, and the Garden Stage on March 24 at 3:00pm.

New Zealand's **Te Vaka** play Polynesian rhythms and feisty dance at the Alexandra Gardens Soundshell on March 22 at 10:15pm, the Sidney Myer Music Bowl on March 23 at 9:30pm, Bendigo on March 24 at 10:30pm and Moe at March 25 at 7:30pm.

The Solomon Island's **Tolegeu** perform panpipe rhythms and high-energy dance at the Alexandra Gardens Palm Stage on March 16 at 8:15pm and March 20 at 8:15pm, the Soundshell on March 17 at 2:00pm and March 19 at 5:45pm, at Moe on March 18 at 4:30pm and the Sidney Myer Music Bowl on March 23 at 8:30pm.

The **Tongan Royal Corps of Musicians**, a military band like no other, appear at the City Square on March 16 at 1:00pm, March 20 at 1:00pm and 4:00pm and March 22 at 1:00pm and 3:00pm, at Ballarat on March 18 at 2:00pm, Geelong on March 19 at 2:00pm and 4:00pm, Alexandra Gardens on March 16 at 3:00pm and 7:30pm, Moe at March 25 at 11:30pm and 3:00pm, Bendigo on March 26 at 5:30pm and the Sidney Myer Music Bowl on March 24 at 7:30pm.

True Live bring together some of Melbourne's finest groove jazz, classical and hip-hop performers to appear at the Big Top, as part of the Big Top Hop on March 16, 17, 18 and 19 at 9:15pm and at Alexandra Gardens on March 25 at 6:00pm and Federation Square on March 26 at 10:30pm.

Singapore's **Wicked Aura Batucada**, who have put Singapore on the world music map with its infectious rhythms and positive energy, perform at Alexandra Gardens Garden Stage on March 16 at 3:00pm, Palm Stage on March 17 at 2:00pm and March 18 at 8:15pm, Federation Square on March 16 at 10:30pm and at Bendigo on March 19 at 3:30pm.

Zebra Crossing, hailing from South Africa, Sri Lanka and Australia, bring together groovy rhythms from diverse musical traditions, at Alexandra Gardens Palm Stage on March 18 at 6:00pm and Geelong on March 24 at 8:30pm.

Adiemus: Songs of Sanctuary, a choir for the new age, brings together choirs from Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide for one night only to perform the uplifting music of acclaimed Welsh composer Karl Jenkins. *Adiemus – Songs of Sanctuary* has become a worldwide phenomenon, capturing hearts and imaginations all over the globe. Frequently compared to the music of Enya, Enigma and Deep Forest, this stunningly beautiful work defies any simple categorisation. *Songs of Sanctuary* will be performed by a 180-strong national youth choir assembled especially for the Commonwealth Games, conducted by Mark O'Leary and lead by the Young Voices of Melbourne with Brisbane Birralees Voices, Young Adelaide Voices and Brisbane's Ferny Grove Percussion Ensemble, backed by a 20-piece orchestral ensemble. Hear them at Federation Square on March 20 at 10:00pm.

Festival Melbourne2006 – Wednesday 15 to Sunday 26 March, 2006.

Festival Melbourne2006 celebrates the breadth of culture and art from across the nations of the Commonwealth. The Festival is an integral part of the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games, and it is proudly funded and supported by the Victorian and Australian Governments.

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