

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 19th January 2017

FIRST PEOPLES' PROGRAM ANNOUNCED PLUS 30 MORE ACTS



The National Folk Festival is delighted to announce its First Peoples' Program with a stellar line-up of award-winning and emerging Aboriginal artists, writers and projects. Plus this week, 30 more acts from across Australia are announced.

Sister and brother **Genise and Nicholas Williams** are Aranda people from Hermannsburg, NT and come from Aboriginal country music royalty. Children of Aboriginal country singer Warren H Williams, one of Australia's most highly decorated Aboriginal artists, and their grandfather country singer Gus Williams, their music sings of Hermannsburg in story and song. With a recent tour to Germany with the Central Desert Aboriginal Choir under their belt, this talented duo will also be leading the Festival Choir with Rachel Hore.

Curated by award-winning composer, performer and creative entrepreneur **Jessie Lloyd**, the **Mission Songs Project** is the first project of the Archie Roach Foundation. With exquisite harmonies and an important story to tell, the Mission Songs Project seeks to revive and perform a rare and almost forgotten collection of early Australian Indigenous contemporary songs that were performed on missions and settlements, and around the campfires between 1900–1999. Jessie Lloyd has also been awarded the 2017 National Folk Fellowship. Don't miss hearing this vital part of Australia's history at the National Folk Festival.

At the mere age of 14, emerging Indigenous singer-songwriter **Tilly Thomas** has already performed at some of South Australia's premier events including the Adelaide Fringe Festival Garden of Unearthly Delights, the Desert Fringe prior to Archie Roach's performance, Survival Day and, the increasingly popular Stone Pony folk sessions. With a folk, country and indie pop influences, Tilly is inspired by her Nukunu culture and, in 2017 will record her first EP.

From a long line of storytellers, **David Spry** is an Indigenous singer/songwriter from Northern Australia with a reggae, roots and blues sound. Sharing the stage with the likes of Tex Perkins, Michael Franti, Ash Grunwald, and Jeff Lang, you can expect a warm, upbeat afternoon vibe with David Spry, getting you into the festival spirit this Easter.

As part of our special 2017 Talks Program **Dr Jared Thomas**, an award-winning writer of theatre, children's and young adult fiction will speak on culture and belonging. A Nukunu man of the Southern Flinders Ranges who grew up on country, Jared's first play *Flash Red Ford* toured Uganda and Kenya and his novels include *Sweet Guy*, *Calypso Summer* and *Songs That Sound Like Blood* which references many iconic Aboriginal singer-songwriters.

Also joining the Festival's Celebration of Australia's First Peoples is award-winning iconic soul & blues artist **Kutch Edwards** and the high-powered Brisbane nine-piece dance, dub and reggae outfit **Dubmarine**. Canberra's premiere indigenous dance group **Wiradjuri Echoes** will deliver our Welcome to Country with Auntie Agnes O'Shea and, from Yuin and Eora Country the acclaimed female Indigenous dance group, **The Djaadjawan Dancers** make a welcome return to the National.

Over 40 acts are announced in today's January release. The line-up includes the vaudeville cabaret of the infamous **Mic Conway's National Junk Band**; fresh from Nashville, **The Mae Trio** touting their highly anticipated second album showcasing powerful songwriting and stunning harmonies; and, get down and dirty with **Heath Cullen and Band** performing their latest highly acclaimed album 'Outsiders', which was recorded with Elvis Costello's band The Imposters. With rave reviews and

comparisons to the likes of Yo Yo Ma, don't miss chamber-folk trio **The String Contingent**; the intense energy of **The Barleyshakes**; plus an intimate performance with folk virtuosos **Kate Burke, Luke Plumb & Ruth Hazleton** as they come together for a special one-off performance featuring songs from the album 'Declaration' and premiering new songs from future projects.

With just 3 months to go till the 51st National Folk Festival, now is the time to pick up your tickets and plan your visit to one of Australia's most dynamic and enduring folk music events. Across five fabulous days in the Nation's Capital at Easter, the 2017 Festival is from 13-17 April and features an A-list of over 200 international and national acts. Keep up with all the Festival news, masterclasses and announcements at www.folkfestival.org.au or on our Facebook or Twitter pages. @natfolkfest #ournff #5daysinaperfectworld

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