

FINALIST CATALOGUE FOR

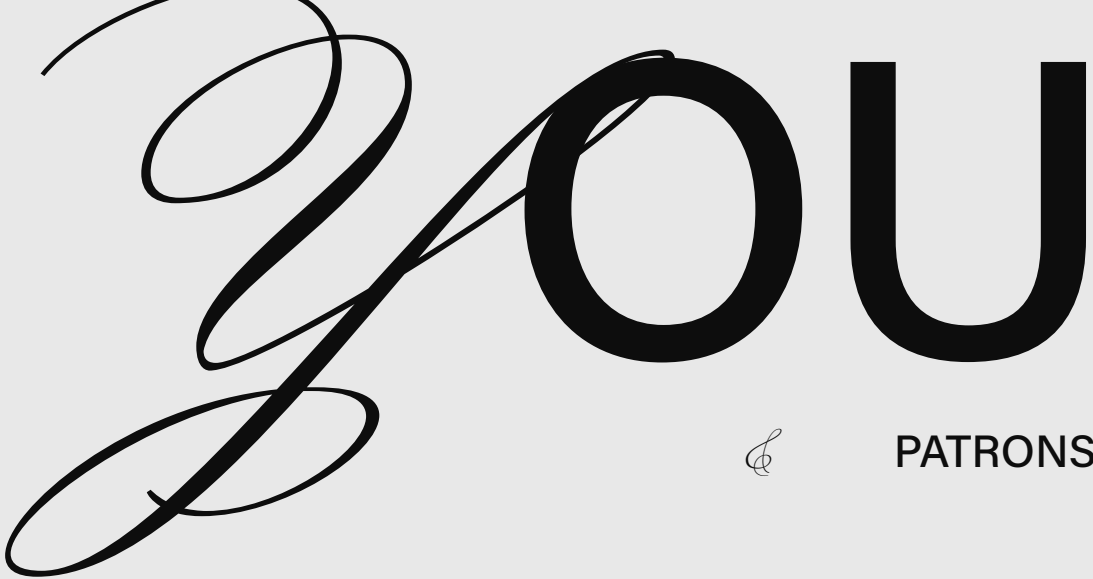
MUSIC

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THANK

TO OUR 2025 PARTNERS



Major PatronGovernment PartnersEvent and Finalist Fee PartnerMelbourne Prize for Music 2025 PartnersThe Beleura John Tallis Award for Emerging Composers 2025Professional Development Award 2025Falls Creek Musicians Residencies 2025 Partner



Dr Alastair Jackson AM



PatronsFounding PartnersProfessional ServicesHotel PartnerMedia CommunicationsTrophiesPrint Partners

Diana Gibson AO



Creative Partner 2025 Identity

Videography & Event Photography

NYORA STUDIO GALLERY

Bill Kirk & Janine Kirk AO



MinterEllison

Civic Choice Awards 2025 Partner

Exhibition Signage & Banners

Catering Partner

Website Partner

Lindy M Shelmerdine & David K H Moffatt



The Mighty Wonton



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE ANNUAL THE FOUNDER OF MELBOURNE PRIZE

WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE TRADITIONAL OWNERS OF THE LAND ON WHICH THE MELBOURNE PRIZE TRUST OPERATES, THE PEOPLE OF THE KULIN NATION, AND PAY OUR RESPECTS TO THE ELDERS, PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE.

Thank you for your interest in this year's Melbourne Prize for Music 2025 & Awards.

Now in its 21st year, the annual Melbourne Prize continues to recognise and reward artistic excellence, offering career development opportunities for Victorian musicians, writers and sculptors.

This year we received a record number of entries across four categories, reflecting the extraordinary talent and diversity of our music community. I would like to thank all entrants and the music industry for their continued support.

The judging panel has selected four finalists for the \$60,000 Melbourne Prize for Music 2025, one of Australia's most prestigious and valuable music awards. They are showcased in this catalogue.

Information on the judges and the other award categories is provided in the catalogue, including the \$20,000 Beleura John Tallis Award for Emerging Composers, the \$10,000 Dr Alastair Jackson AM Professional Development Award, and the Falls Creek Musicians Residencies, consisting of two 14-day residencies at the resort, along with \$1,000 each. There are no finalists in these categories.

The winners in all categories will be announced at melbourneprize.org on 13th November. Cast your vote on our website for a Melbourne Prize for Music

2025 finalist to win the \$2,000 Civic Choice Award 2025. Voters will go into the draw to win a \$100 Readings gift voucher.

Visit Fed Square, our event and finalist fee partner, to see the Finalist Exhibit Info Point located at the main stairs and get interviews with our finalists, partners, and judges. Fed Square generously supports the fees paid to the non-recipient Melbourne Prize for Music finalists.

We are deeply grateful to our Major Patron, The Vera Moore Foundation, and all our prize and operations partners and patrons, whose generous support has made this year's program possible. Without them I could not offer the annual Melbourne Prize.

Please refer to the catalogue to learn more about our partners.

The annual Melbourne Prize, run by the Melbourne Prize Trust, continues to foster creative development and enrich public life through community investment in the arts.

Yours sincerely,
Simon Warren OAM
Founder and Executive Director
[Melbourne Prize Trust](https://melbourneprize.org)

FED SQUARE

FED
SQ.FINALIST
EXHIBIT

30 OCTOBER — 13 NOVEMBER

INFO POINT AT THE MAIN STAIRS AT FED SQUARE


 Melbourne
Prize for
Music
2025

FOUNDING EVENTS PARTNER — THE ANNUAL MELBOURNE PRIZE

For over twenty years, Fed Square has proudly been the home of the annual Melbourne Prize, working alongside Simon and his wonderful team. The Melbourne Prize celebrates the extraordinary creativity of artists in our city, and over two decades has grown in prestige as its impressive list of alumni continues to expand. This year's group of finalists for the Melbourne Prize for Music 2025 is once again remarkable; congratulations to all.

Since opening in 2002, Fed Square has been known as Melbourne's town square and civic heart. Its Civic and Cultural Charter leads its direction, partnerships and programming, and it is the proud home to four remarkable organisations: The Ian Potter NGV Australia, ACMI, Melbourne Electronic Sound Studio and the Koorie Heritage Trust. Now, under the management of the Melbourne Arts Precinct Corporation, Fed Square has become the gateway to the Melbourne Arts Precinct which will only grow as MAP Co and its partners deliver the Melbourne Arts Precinct Transformation.

It is a privilege to once again host the Melbourne Prize for Music 2025 in The Edge, and to celebrate our longstanding connection with this important prize. Congratulations and thanks to Simon and the Melbourne Prize team, and to the generous supporters who make this important annual prize possible.

Katrina Sedgwick OAM
Director & CEO
Melbourne Arts Precinct Corporation



LEARN ABOUT THE FINALISTS

Visit the Info Point, at the main stairs at Fed Square, to learn more about the Melbourne Prize for Music 2025 & Awards and visit melbourneprize.org to see the finalist, judges and partner interviews.



PHOTO: TOBIAS TITZ

KEY DATES

ENTRIES OPEN

12 May 2025

ENTRIES CLOSE

7 July 2025, 5pm

FINALISTS ANNOUNCED / VOTING OPENS IN CIVIC CHOICE AWARD 2025

4 September 2025 at melbourneprize.org

FINALIST EXHIBIT AT THE MAIN STAIRS AT FED SQUARE / CATALOGUE RELEASED

30 October – 13 November 2025

CIVIC CHOICE AWARD 2025 / VOTING CLOSES

12 November 2025, 5pm

WINNERS ANNOUNCED IN ALL CATEGORIES

13 November 2025 at melbourneprize.org

PRIZE & AWARDS

MELBOURNE PRIZE FOR MUSIC 2025

\$60,000

This Prize will be awarded to a Victorian musician or group whose body of work has made an outstanding contribution to Australian music and to cultural life. Open to all music genres.

To be eligible for this category entrants must be a professional Victorian musician or group (performers or composers).

Supported by Major Patron, The Vera Moore Foundation and The Tallis Foundation.

MAJOR PATRON



THE BELEURA JOHN TALLIS AWARD FOR EMERGING COMPOSERS 2025

\$20,000

This Award will be given to a emerging Victorian composer to assist in developing their career. Open to all genres of composition.

To be eligible for this category, entrants must be a professional Victorian composer.

This Award is in memory of John Tallis (1911–1996) — a distinguished composer who studied at the London Royal College of Music and wrote music for ballet. In 1995 he was Composer-of-Honour at Monash University's Department of Music.

His legacy lives on through his bequest of Beleura, his home on the Mornington Peninsula, to The Tallis Foundation, which is open to the public. Beleura has a performance space hosting music programs that celebrate contemporary Australian musicians.

Supported by The Tallis Foundation.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AWARD 2025

\$10,000

This Award will be given to a Victorian musician or group to fund a project/s, travel or other proposals to assist the entrant pursue their music career.

To be eligible for this category entrants must be a professional Victorian musician or group (performers or composers).

Supported by

DR ALASTAIR JACKSON AM

FALLS CREEK MUSICIANS RESIDENCIES 2025

Falls Creek Alpine Resort will make available two separate 14-day residencies, one to each of two recipients.

Each recipient will also receive \$1,000, supported by the Melbourne Prize Trust.

The residencies are provided by Falls Creek Alpine Resort.



CIVIC CHOICE AWARD 2025

\$2,000

This Award will be given to a finalist in the Melbourne Prize for Music 2025 with the highest number of public votes.

Votes can be made using the online Voting Form, which will be available at melbourneprize.org from the announcement of finalists on 4 September — **voting closes on 12 November at 5pm.**

Voters will have a chance to win a \$100 gift voucher from Reading. The winner of this Award will be announced on 13 November at melbourneprize.org.

Supported by the Melbourne Prize Trust.



GOVERNMENT PARTNERS

A MESSAGE FROM CREATIVE VICTORIA

Melbourne is a city that lives and breathes music — from our vibrant live scene to the creativity of the musicians, composers and songwriters who shape the soundtracks and songs that move us.

Music brings us together, tells our stories, and strengthens our cultural identity, and the Melbourne Prize for Music 2025 & Awards shines a spotlight on the incredible talent and diversity of Victorian musicians.

The Victorian Government is proud to support this year's Melbourne Prize for Music 2025 & Awards, honouring Victorian musicians who have made an extraordinary contribution to our music culture.

Congratulations to this year's nominees and thank you to the Melbourne Prize Trust for celebrating Victorian musicians with these awards.



CREATIVE
VICTORIA



The Hon. Colin Brooks MP
Minister for Creative Industries

A MESSAGE FROM THE CITY OF MELBOURNE

The annual Melbourne Prize has held an important role in Australia's creative life for 21 years. This year's prize celebrates excellence in music.

The City of Melbourne is proud to be a long-term supporter of a prize that has helped provide career opportunities for our talented musicians, sculptors and writers in a valuable three-year cycle that strengthens the city's creative foundations.

In rewarding excellence and talent, the annual Melbourne Prize enriches our creative community and our public life. On behalf of the City of Melbourne, this year I thank all our local musicians for helping to shape the sound of Melbourne.



CITY OF
MELBOURNE



Nicholas Reece
Lord Mayor

2025 JUDGES

JUDGE'S STATEMENT

The applications for the Melbourne Prize for Music 2025 form a collection of profound commitment, expression, and contribution to music in Australia.

From those who have given a lifetime to their art form, through to those just beginning their journey in music, one thing is obvious: Victoria is enriched by an absolutely incredible community of musicians and creative artists. It was a deeply moving experience to read all of the applications.

Selecting recipients for prizes was no easy task, as there were many deserving submissions. We would like to congratulate all artists who have expressed interest in the annual Melbourne Prize this year, your work is seen, valued and deeply appreciated.

These awards are testament to the remarkable ecosystem of music in Victoria, thanks to the many personal and public investments in music education, access and participation over decades. To all the musicians who applied, please continue your music, to express your creativity, and change the world through music — let's individually and collectively continue to prioritise, participate in and support music.

MISSY HIGGINS



WEBSITE missyhiggins.com

Missy Higgins is one of Australia's most beloved singer/songwriters. She has struck a deep and enduring chord with her irresistible melodies, the lyrics of *Arrow Through the Heart* and classics like *Scar*, *The Special Two*, *Steer*, *Everyone's Waiting* and *Futon Couch*.

2024 was a huge year for Missy with the release of *The Second Act* — “a kind of sequel” to her hugely influential debut, *The Sound of White*. That million-selling classic was about taking on the world as a 20-year-old, while *The Second Act* is about doing it all over again as a 40-year-old, after the stories you told yourself turned out not to be true. Written, produced, and performed largely on her own, it's a powerful statement that topped the ARIA charts exactly 20 years after *The Sound of White* reached #1.

The Second Act Tour drew unanimous rave reviews and played to over 100,000 Australians, culminating in her induction into the ARIA Hall Of Fame. Since being unearthed by Triple J while still at high school, Missy has blazed a trail for female singer/songwriters in this country, marching to her own drumbeat and earning 26 ARIA Award nominations plus seven ARIA #1s (so far!).

BENJAMIN NORTHEY



WEBSITE benjaminnorthey.com

Australian conductor Benjamin Northey is the Chief Conductor of the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra, Conductor in Residence of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and Principal Conductor in Residence of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. In 2025, he was appointed as Director of the Australian Conducting Academy.

Northey studied conducting at Finland's Sibelius Academy with Professors Leif Segerstam and Atso Almila, and completed his studies at the Royal College of Music, Stockholm, with Jorma Panula in 2006.

Northey appears regularly as a guest conductor with all major Australian symphony orchestras, Opera Australia (*La bohème*, *Turandot*, *L'elisir d'amore*, *Don Giovanni*, *Così fan tutte*, *Carmen*), New Zealand Opera (*Sweeney Todd*), and the State Opera South Australia (*La sonnambula*, *L'elisir d'amore*, *Les contes d'Hoffmann*).

His international appearances include concerts with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra, the Mozarteum Orchestra Salzburg, the Hong Kong Philharmonic, the National Symphony Orchestra of Colombia, the Malaysian Philharmonic, and the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra.

An ARIA Awards, AIR Music Awards, and Art Music Awards winner, he was voted Limelight Magazine's Australian Artist of the Year in 2018. Northey's many recordings can be found on ABC Classics.

In 2025, he conducts the Melbourne, Sydney, Queensland, Tasmanian and Christchurch Symphony Orchestras and the Hong Kong Philharmonic.

GENEVIEVE LACEY



WEBSITE genevivelacey.com

Musician and arts advocate Genevieve Lacey creates, performs and curates. Her work can be experienced in museums, concert halls, parks and gardens, festivals, and the digital realm. She's been touring internationally for decades, has a substantial recording catalogue, and ABC film *Recorder Queen* has been made about her life.

As a recorder virtuoso, Genevieve has performed at the Lindau International Convention of Nobel Laureates, as concerto soloist in the Royal Albert Hall for BBC Proms, at the London Jazz Festival and on Thursday Island with Australian indigenous ensemble The Black Arm Band. Her own creative works include *Breathing Space* (a permanent sound installation at the National Museum of Australia), *Soliloquy* (a communal re-invention of solo recital), and *Pleasure Garden* (a listening garden).

Genevieve curates Utzon Music for Sydney Opera House. She's been artistic director for *Finding Our Voice*, artistic advisor to UKARIA, director of Musica Viva's FutureMakers, and 2018 artist-in-residence at the Melbourne Recital Centre. She's on the board of A New Approach, and is a former Chair of the Australian Music Centre.

She has won ARIAs, Helpmann Awards, Green Room Awards, Churchill Fellowships, Freedman Fellowships, Australia Council Fellowships, Melbourne Prize for Music (Outstanding Musician Award), and the Sidney Myer Individual Performing Arts Award. In 2024, *Breathing Space* won Work of the Year (Electroacoustic/Sound Art) at the ARPA Art Music Awards, and Genevieve was named National Luminary.

THE ANNUAL 2005-2024

MELBOURNE PRIZE ALUMNI

FOR MUSIC

2025

2024

Melbourne Prize for Literature 2024
Alexis Wright

Writer's Prize 2024
Carrie Tiffany

Inaugural Falls Creek Writers Residencies 2024
Claire Thomas & Angus Cerini

Civic Choice Award 2024
Judith Bishop

2023

Melbourne Prize for Urban Sculpture 2023
Maree Clark

Civic Choice Award 2023
Vipoo Srivilasa

2021

Melbourne Prize for Literature 2021
Christos Tsiolkas

Professional Development Award 2021
Evelyn Araluen

Writer's Prize 2021
Eloise Victoria Grills

Civic Choice Award 2021
Maxine Beneba Clarke

2022

Melbourne Prize for Music 2022
Missy Higgins

Professional Development Award 2022
Jess Hitchcock

Beleura Emerging Composers Award 2022
Annie Hui-Hsin Hsieh

Civic Choice Award 2022
Liza Lim

2020

Beth Arnold
Mikala Dwyer
Emily Floyd
Nicholas Mangan
Kathy Temin
Field Theory

Rural & Regional Development Award 2020
Laura Woodward

Professional Development Award 2020
Isadora Vaughan

Civic Choice Award 2020
Field Theory

2018

Melbourne Prize for Literature
Alison Lester

Best Writing Award
Maria Tumarkin

Readings Residency Award
Jamie Marina Lau

Civic Choice Award
Louise Milligan

2019

Melbourne Prize for Music
Deborah Cheetham AO

Distinguished Musicians Fellowship 2019
Erkki Veltheim

Development Award 2019
Mojo Juju

Beleura Emerging Composers Award 2019
Andrea Keller

Civic Choice Award 2019
Kaiit Waup

2017

Melbourne Prize for Sculpture
Daniel von Sturmer

Rural & Regional Development Award
Fayen d'Evie

Public Artwork Design Concept Award
Emma Anna

Professional Development Award
Bridie Lunney

Civic Choice Award
Sarah crowEST

2015

Melbourne Prize for Literature
Professor Christopher Wallace-Crabbe AM

Best Writing Award
Andrea Goldsmith

Writers Prize
Kate Ryan

Civic Choice Award
Robbyn Annear

2016

Melbourne Prize for Music
Kutch Edwards

Outstanding Musicians Award
Scott Tinkler

Beleura Award for Composition
Kate Neal

2014

Melbourne Prize for Urban Sculpture
Geoff Robinson

Professional Development Award
Kay Abude

Civic Choice Award
Kay Abude

Rural & Regional Development Award
Aleks Danko

2013

Melbourne Prize for Music
Brett Dean

Outstanding Musicians Award
Stephen Magnusson

Development Award
Kate Kelsey-Sugg

Civic Choice Award
Mick Harvey

2012

Melbourne Prize for Literature
Alex Miller

Best Writing Award
Craig Sherborne

Civic Choice Award
Tony Birch

2011

Melbourne Prize for Urban Sculpture
Bianca Hester

Professional Development Award
Isaac Greener & Lucas Maddock

Civic Choice Award
Isaac Greener & Lucas Maddock

2010

Melbourne Prize for Music
David Jones

Outstanding Musicians Award
Ben Northey

Development Award
Natalie Bartsch

2009

Melbourne Prize for Literature
Gerald Murnane

Best Writing Award
Nam Le

Civic Choice Award
Amra Pajalic

2008

Melbourne Prize for Urban Sculpture
Alexander Knox

Professional Development Award
Tom Nicholson

Vic Urban Award
Louise Paramor

Civic Choice Award
Elaine Miles

2007

Melbourne Prize for Music
Paul Grabowsky

Outstanding Musicians Award
Genevieve Lacey

Development Award
Julian Langdon



DESIGN



ART DIRECTION

BY

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MELBOURNE PRIZE 2025

FOR

MUSIC
FINALISTS

SHANE HOWARD AM

NICOLETTE FRAILLON AM

DEBORAH CONWAY AM

EMMA DONOVAN

\$60,000

Supported by Major Patron, The Vera Moore Foundation in conjunction with The Tallis Foundation.

MAJOR PATRON



THE WINNER WILL BE ANNOUNCED ON 13 NOVEMBER AT [MELBOURNEPRIZE.ORG](https://melbourneprize.org).

PLEASE VISIT [MELBOURNEPRIZE.ORG](https://melbourneprize.org) FOR INTERVIEWS WITH THE FINALISTS.

VOTE FOR A FINALIST TO WIN THE CIVIC CHOICE AWARD 2025 AT [MELBOURNEPRIZE.ORG](https://melbourneprize.org).

RUNNER UP FINALISTS RECEIVE \$1,000 EACH SUPPORTED BY FED SQUARE.

Finalist fees supported by Fed Square.



Melbourne
Prize for
Music
2025

SHANE HOWARD AM

SINGER & SONGWRITER

WEBSITE shanehoward.com.au
INSTAGRAM [@goannafella](https://www.instagram.com/goannafella)

BIO

Shane Howard AM is a prolific writer and musician, refining his art through 14 solo albums, three *Goanna* albums, two books and a stable of production credits. This cultural treasure chest has established him as a significant contributor to modern Australian folklore. He has penned over 300 songs, recorded by numerous artists. Much of his musical life has been spent working with First Nations musicians, as well as touring Ireland and the world. His work holds both national and international significance — due in equal measure to the consummate quality of his work and the deep understanding of his role as an artist.

CAREER

For over 40 years, Shane Howard AM has created a uniquely Australian voice, establishing himself as one of the country's most influential writers and singers. From the red heart, where he penned his enduring song *Solid Rock*, *Sacred Ground*, to the wilds of Tasmania that inspired *Let the Franklin Flow*, Howard's songs have drawn a new map of Australia. His songs challenge existing social paradigms, explore the human heart and dig deeply into what it means to be a modern Australian. They reach across the globe, championing the cause of common people, the environment and justice in the face of colonisation. Shane is an Australian musical treasure and a trailblazer, creating musical projects that enact genuine social change. He's performed for Prime Ministers, Aboriginal Elders and environmental campaigners — from concert halls to protest sites and remote campfires. Howard refined his art through 14 solo albums, three *Goanna* albums, two books and an extensive list of production credits — a cultural legacy that has established him as a vital contributor to modern Australian folklore. He is a respected senior statesman, continuing work as a poet, musician, writer, singer, producer, and mentor. He is currently writing his autobiography.



PHOTO: FERNE MILLEN



SHANE HOWARD TRIO —
'HYMM TO LOVE' (LIVE)

TOP 10 CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 ***Exile: Songs & Tales of Irish Australia***
Creative Director
- 2 ***Black Arm Band***
Co-Music Director
- 3 **Topping Commercial Music charts with *Solid Rock***
Writer/Performer
- 4 **Performing at the close of the climb at Uluru**
Peformer
- 5 **Touring touring Ireland, US, Holland with Mary Black**
Performer
- 6 **Touring First Nations communities of North West Territories of Canada with Yirmal Marika**
Performer
- 7 **Working with Music Producer Bill Payne on Goanna album *Oceania***
Writer/Performer
- 8 **Collaborating with Jimmy Chi on *Corrugation Road Album***
Producer
- 9 **Engaging with Joan Baez re: performance of *Solid Rock* on her Australian tour**
Writer
- 10 **Honorary Doctorate from Deakin University**
Recipient

DEBORAH CONWAY AM

SINGER, SONGWRITER, PRODUCER, FESTIVAL DIRECTOR, MENTOR, ACTRESS & AUTHOR

WEBSITE

INSTAGRAM

FACEBOOK

deborahconway.com

[@deborahconway](https://www.instagram.com/deborahconway)

[@conwayzygier](https://www.facebook.com/conwayzygier)

BIO

Deborah Conway AM has been a contributor to Australian music for over 40 years. A singer, songwriter, producer, festival director, mentor, actress, and author, her first band Do-Ré-Mi topped the charts, while her first solo album achieved platinum sales.

Over the last 20 years, Conway has released 14 albums as an independent artist. Conway was a pioneer in the home concert space from 2004, produced the national concert series, *Broad*, and was Artistic Director for the Queensland Music Festival 2009–2011. She has performed countless shows in lounge rooms, theatres and stadiums and earned many accolades.

CAREER

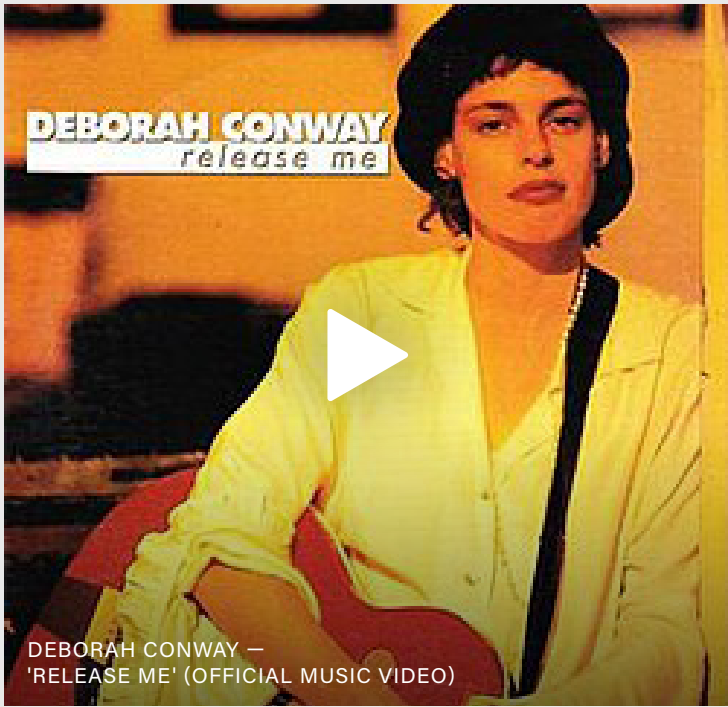
Deborah Conway AM is a singer, songwriter, producer, festival director, actor, author, innovator, role model and entrepreneur. Over Conway’s four-decade career she has been fearless in her risk taking — pushing existing boundaries and always arguing her cause with integrity, pursuing the highest standards of whatever is in her sights.

Conway has recorded 14 studio albums, two of them with her seminal band Do-Ré-Mi, the last 11 with Willy Zygyier, who has been her musical collaborator for the last 35 years. She has played countless shows in every size of venue from lounge rooms and back sheds to theatres and stadiums.

Conway’s memoir, *Book of Life*, inspired an accompanying stage show, *Songs from the Book of Life*, written by Conway and Zygyier.

Gongs include an Aria Award, Gold & Platinum Album Awards, induction into the National Film and Sound Archive, recognition as a Living Legend by the Leaps & Bounds Festival and Rolling Stone Magazine, made a National Living Legend by the National Live Music Awards, made a Member (AM) of the Order of Australia, won the Don Banks Award and was inducted into the Music Victoria’s Hall of Fame. Conway and Zygyier recently released a new album, *Right Wing Propaganda*.

- TOP 10 CAREER HIGHLIGHTS
- 1 Conway was the unsung voice of Tracey Mann’s star turn as the singer of The Takeaways on the ABC’s hit series *Sweet & Sour*.
 - 2 Conway’s Sydney-based, post-punk band Do-Ré-Mi released their debut album *Domestic Harmony* in 1985; the first single *Man Overboard* hit top 5 on the Australian charts.
 - 3 Conway’s debut solo album *String of Pearls* (1991) received 9 ARIA nominations and won the Best Female ARIA award in 1992.
 - 4 In 1991, Conway employed guitarist Willy Zygyier for a national tour, they have been personal and professional collaborators ever since.
 - 5 In 2004, Conway and Zygyier released *Summertown* on their own record label and launched a groundbreaking way to promote it, namely house concerts that were previously unheard of.
 - 6 Producing *Broad* (2005–2008), a concert series that invited female singer/songwriters from different genres of music on stage together to explore their approach to their craft.
 - 7 Conway was Artistic Director for the 2009 and 2011 *Queensland Music Festivals*. She commissioned 20 new works and presented over 300 musical events to more than 350,000 people.
 - 8 In 2013, another album, *Stories of Ghosts*, marked a watershed moment when the identity of being a Jew and a musician became something to be expressed simultaneously.
 - 9 Conway’s autobiography, *Book of Life*, was released in October 2023 and inspired a scripted musical theatre piece, written with Zygyier, called *Songs From The Book of Life*.
 - 10 Receiving an *AM Order of Australia* in 2020.



WORKS

Book of Life (Stories of Ghosts) live on ABC TV Q&A
Release Me (String of Pearls)
G-D live on Rockwiz
Nothing Tastes The Same



NICOLETTE FRAILLON AM

CONDUCTOR, LEADER, MUSIC DIRECTOR & EDUCATOR

WEBSITE nicolettefraillon.com

BIO

Nicolette Fraillon AM is a trailblazing and award-winning conductor, leader, music director, and educator. Her international career is one of courage, dedication, and ‘firsts’ — the first female conductor to be Music Director and Chief Conductor of The Australian Ballet, the National Ballet of the Netherlands, and several other institutions, and the first Australian woman to conduct an Australian symphony orchestra.

Her 20-year tenure with The Australian Ballet makes her one of the longest-serving Music Directors and Chief Conductors of any arts company in Australia. Known internationally as a champion of equality, Australian music, and education, Nicolette’s work shines a light on the power and importance of the arts in shaping and sustaining an enlightened, progressive society, and has impacted artists and audiences across five decades.

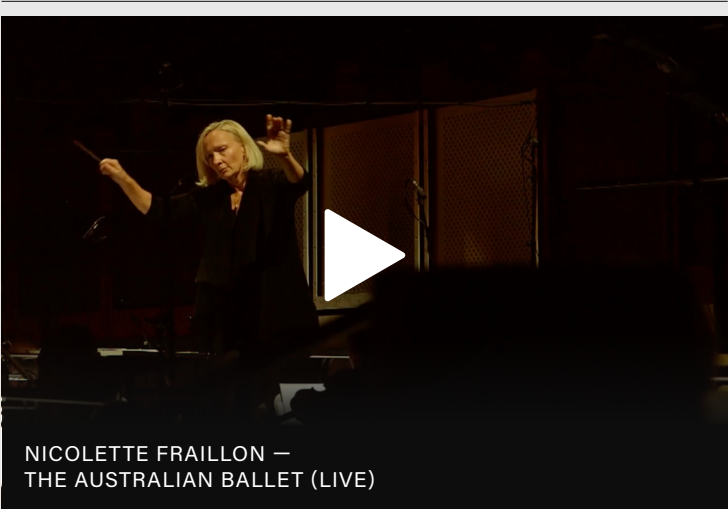
CAREER

Nicolette Fraillon AM was born and raised in Melbourne, she began her tertiary studies at University of Melbourne, completing them in Vienna and Hannover. In 1994, following her success in the Netherlands Broadcasting Association’s *International Kirill Kondrashin Conducting Competition*, she was appointed Music Director and Chief Conductor of *Het Nationale Ballet, Netherlands* (1994–1996).

In 1995, Fraillon became the first Australian woman to conduct an Australian Symphony Orchestra. By 1998, she had returned to Australia as *Director of the School of Music* with the Australian National University. From 2003–2022, she served as Music Director and Chief Conductor of The Australian Ballet (TAB), a unique and influential tenure lasting 20 years.

Over five decades, Fraillon has conducted thousands of performances across Australia, Europe, Japan, China and North America, often as the first female conductor to lead many of these companies. International guest engagements include critically acclaimed productions with Birmingham Royal Ballet, the New York City Ballet, the San Francisco Ballet, the Finnish National Ballet, and the Norwegian National Ballet. Nicolette has performed with all of Australia’s symphony orchestras, becoming Artistic Director of Orchestra Victoria in 2014.

In 2017, Fraillon was appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia “for significant service to the performing arts and musical performance as a conductor, to arts education, and to women.” Fraillon is also a recipient of the Sir Bernard Heinze Memorial Award as “a testament to her unparalleled dedication, artistry, and unwavering pursuit of excellence.”



- CAREER HIGHLIGHTS
- 1 Conducting her first concert at aged 16 with the Victorian Junior Symphony Orchestra in Melbourne.
 - 2 1992, successfully being admitted to, and then becoming a winner in the *International Kirill Kondrashin Conducting Competition*, in the Netherlands.
 - 3 1993 and 1997, the birth of her two sons, Sascha and Joshua.
 - 4 1994, becoming Music Director and Chief Conductor of the National Ballet of the Netherlands, learning about classical ballet and conducting *Swan Lake* for the first time.
 - 5 2002, conducting *Spartacus* with The Australian Ballet at the Sydney Opera House, and then being offered the position of Music Director and Chief Conductor by David McAllister AO. Becoming his artistic ‘partner in crime’ for almost 20 years.
 - 6 The honour of conducting Graeme Murphy’s beautiful and powerful *Swan Lake* for The Australian Ballet, touring with it across Australia and the world (Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Perth, Brisbane, Cardiff, Paris, London, Manchester, New York, Beijing, Shanghai, Tokyo).
 - 7 Working with orchestras and audiences across Australia, presenting music talks, inviting hundreds of thousands of people into the brilliant and diverse world of classical and contemporary ballet.
 - 8 Conceptualising and then delivering the ‘Ballets Russes Project’, receiving the, at the time, largest ever ARC grant awarded to a performing arts project — a four year collaboration between The Australian Ballet, The National Library of Australia, the University of Adelaide, exploring the lasting legacy of the tours to Australia, in the 1930s, by the legendary Ballets Russes companies and their explosive impact on dance, classical music, theatres and the visual arts in this country. Leading the team which delivered performances, films, a book, conferences, exhibitions, and the discovery and digitisation of documents, photos, designs and other ephemera in Australian public and private collections, as lasting contribution to the history of the arts in Australia.
 - 9 Standing on the conductor’s podium in the Concertgebouw — Amsterdam, the Chatelet — Paris, the Coliseum — London, the Lincoln Centre — New York, the Joan Sutherland Theatre — Sydney and feeling the extraordinary honour it was/is to follow in the footsteps of so many giants of classical music in those places, to feel the weight of history.
 - 10 Fighting to save Orchestra Victoria for the good of the nation. Bringing it under TAB’s protective wing.
 - 11 Meeting the extraordinary Deborah Cheetham, (marrying her) and then working together on a range of projects, particularly the ballet *The Hum*, for The Australian Ballet’s 60th Anniversary.

EMMA DONOVAN

SINGER & SONGWRITER

WEBSITE emmadonovan.com
INSTAGRAM [@emmadonovan_music](https://www.instagram.com/emmadonovan_music)
TIKTOK [@emmadonovanmusic](https://www.tiktok.com/@emmadonovanmusic)
FACEBOOK [@emmadonovansmusic](https://www.facebook.com/emmadonovansmusic)

BIO

Emma Donovan is a celebrated Gumbaynggirr and Yamatji singer and songwriter, renowned for her powerful voice and fearless storytelling. She first emerged as a teenager with Stiff Gins before joining The Black Arm Band and fronting acclaimed soul outfit The Putbacks.

With albums *Dawn* and *Crossover*, Donovan cemented herself as one of Australia’s most vital artists, blending gospel, country, and soul with her cultural roots. She has graced major stages including WOMADelaide, Bluesfest, and the Sydney Opera House, and was inducted into the National Indigenous Music Awards (NIMA) Hall of Fame with her family band The Donovans. Her latest work, *Take Me to the River*, premiered in 2025.

CAREER

Emma Donovan is one of Australia’s most celebrated voices, a proud Gumbaynggirr and Yamatji artist whose career has spanned more than two decades. Emerging as a teenager with Stiff Gins before fronting soul outfit The Putbacks, she has forged a unique path that blends gospel, country, and deep soul with the storytelling traditions of her culture. Her albums *Dawn* and *Crossover* with The Putbacks earned her critical acclaim and national recognition, cementing her as a vital force in Australian music.

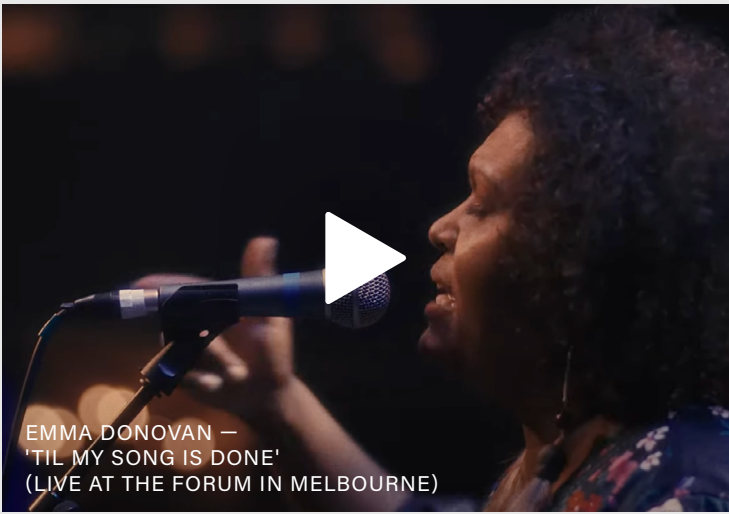
Donovan has performed on many of the country’s great stages, from WOMADelaide and Bluesfest to the Sydney Opera House, and is now recognised as a cultural leader and mentor for the next generation of First Nations voices. In 2021, she was inducted into the National Indigenous Music Awards (NIMA) Hall of Fame with The Donovans, her family band. A milestone that honoured her lifelong dedication to music and signalled her growing place among the respected elders of Australian song.

Her newest work, *Take Me to the River*, is a bold, multidisciplinary show that reimagines her catalogue with powerful new arrangements, visuals, and storytelling. Premiering at Darwin Festival and heading to Sydney Festival in 2026, it is the latest chapter in a career defined by truth, power, and an unwavering commitment to song.



PHOTO: MARCUS WEBER

- TOP 10 CAREER HIGHLIGHTS
- 1 Stiff Gins (late 1990s–2000s) — began her career with pioneering Indigenous vocal trio Stiff Gins.
 - 2 The Black Arm Band (2000s–2010s) — core member of the groundbreaking First Nations collective.
 - 3 Archie Roach's *Into the Bloodstream* Tour (2012–2013) — featured vocalist touring nationally with Archie Roach.
 - 4 Emma Donovan & The Putbacks (2014) — formed acclaimed soul/gospel group blending Indigenous storytelling.
 - 5 *Dawn* (2014) — debut album with The Putbacks, praised for its raw honesty and power.
 - 6 *Crossover* (2020) — second album with The Putbacks, ARIA-recognised and critically acclaimed.
 - 7 Major Festivals — performed at WOMADelaide, Bluesfest, Port Fairy Folk Festival, and Sydney Festival.
 - 8 NIMA Hall of Fame (2021), inducted with The Donovans for lifelong contribution to music and culture.
 - 9 Mentorship & Advocacy — leader and mentor for emerging First Nations artists nationwide.
 - 10 *Take Me to the River* (2025–2026) — new multidisciplinary show premiering at Darwin Festival and Sydney Festival 2026.



EMMA DONOVAN —
'TIL MY SONG IS DONE'
(LIVE AT THE FORUM IN MELBOURNE)

BELEURA AWARD FOR EMERGING COMPOSERS 2025

THE WINNER WILL BE ANNOUNCED ON 13 NOVEMBER
AT [MELBOURNEPRIZE.ORG](https://melbourneprize.org).

\$20,000

Supported by The Tallis Foundation.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AWARD 2025

THE WINNER WILL BE ANNOUNCED ON 13 NOVEMBER
AT [MELBOURNEPRIZE.ORG](https://melbourneprize.org).

\$10,000

Supported by

DR ALASTAIR JACKSON AM



Melbourne
Prize for
Music
2025

FALLS CREEK MUSICIAN RESIDENCIES 2025

THE TWO RECIPIENTS WILL BE ANNOUNCED ON 13 NOVEMBER
AT [MELBOURNEPRIZE.ORG](https://melbourneprize.org).

THE RESIDENCIES ARE PROVIDED BY FALLS CREEK ALPINE RESORT.

[Click here](#) to visit Falls Creek Alpine Resort's Arts & Culture strategy.



The award will provide two published Victorian authors
with two 14-day residencies at the Resort.

Each recipient will receive \$1,000 cash generously
supported by The Melbourne Prize Trust.

MELBOURNE
PRIZE TRUST



CIVIC AWARD

CHOICE 2025

THE WINNER WILL BE ANNOUNCED ON 13 NOVEMBER
AT [MELBOURNEPRIZE.ORG](https://melbourneprize.org).

\$2,000

Supported by

MELBOURNE
PRIZE TRUST™

This Award will be given to the finalist in the
Melbourne Prize for Music 2025 with the highest
number of public votes.

Visit melbourneprize.org to cast a vote and have
a chance to win a \$100 gift voucher from Readings.
Voting closes on 12 November at 5pm.



Melbourne
Prize for
Music
2025

THANK

YOU

WE ARE CELEBRATING 21 YEARS OF THE ANNUAL MELBOURNE PRIZE AND WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE MANY PARTNER ORGANISATIONS WHO HAVE MADE THIS YEAR'S MELBOURNE PRIZE FOR MUSIC 2025 AND AWARDS POSSIBLE.

MANY OF THE PARTNERS HAVE BEEN WITH THE PRIZE FROM THE START IN 2005.

THANK YOU TO ALL THE MUSIC ENTRANTS AND FINALISTS THIS YEAR.

The Melbourne Prize for Music 2025 & Awards would not be possible without the generous patronage of our Major Patron and Melbourne Prize for Music parnter, **The Vera Moore Foundation** — thank you to Trustees **Ian R M Morrison** and **Roger Blythman**, and **Secretary, David Richardson AO OBE**.

The Beleura John Tallis Award for Emerging Composers has been generously supported by **The Tallis Foundation**. Thank you to **Dr Alastair Jackson AM** for providing the Professional Development Award and to **Falls Creek Alpine Resort** for providing the music residencies. The Civic Choice Award is supported by the **Melbourne Prize Trust**.

The Melbourne Prize Trust would like to thank the Victorian Government, through **Creative Victoria**, and the **City of Melbourne**, as our Government Partners, for their ongoing partnership and generous support.

Thank you to our founding Events Partner, **Fed Square**, who have generously supported the Finalist Exhibit at the main stairs in the Plaza and awards evening at The Edge, plus the finalist and judges fees.

The dedication of the three 2025 judges, **Missy Higgins**, **Genevieve Lacey** and **Ben Northey** is greatly appreciated. Thank you also to our Cultural Advisor, **Kutcha Edwards**.

Founding Partners **PLAYGROUND**, **Ernst & Young**, **Minter Ellison** and **Committee for Melbourne** helped establish the Prize and continue to be involved in the annual activities. **PLAYGROUND** generously provides the office for the Trust — thank you. The design for each annual Prize is created by our Creative Partner

PLAYGROUND Studio in South Melbourne, who have been partners since inception. Thank you to CEO **Sally Dobell**, studio manager **Kim Hankin**, this year's designer **Angelina Bassovitch**, in conjunction with **Macario Manis** and **Holly Chen**, and the studio team one and all. The visual identity is inspired by Chladni patterns — the hidden geometries when sound meets matter.

We are fortunate to have a number of patrons who have supported this year's program. These including founding patron **Diana Gibson AO**, **The Yulgilbar Foundation**, **The Scanlon Foundation**, **The Sidney Myer Fund**, **Bill Kirk** and **Janine Kirk AO**, **Lindy M Shelmerdine** and **David K H Moffatt**.

Thank you **Kine Graffiti** and **Rui**, **Josie**, **Robbie De Sousa-Reay** and **Andrew Warenow** for this year's finalist, judges and partner videography. The Trust greatly appreciates the generous support of Corporate Partner, **Sofitel Melbourne On Collins**, Melbourne's Hotel for the Arts, for hosting our finalist welcome event.

There are a number of organisations who have been with the annual Melbourne Prize for many years and we would like to thank for their ongoing partnership. **Royce** provides strategic media and communications advice, along with **Grant Thornton** who undertakes the annual audit of the Trust, and to **Jamison Alliot** for accounting services. **Rothfield**, **Ellikon** and **Spicers Paper** are our print partners. Thank you to **Evan Evans** for supporting digital printing and exhibition signage and to **Lee Wong**, **Aitor Mauleon** and **Celine David** of **The Mighty Wonton** for our website and IT management.

Thank you to **Aldo Bilotta** of **Nyora Studios** for hand crafting the unique presentation trophies for the awards. Thank you for **Barry Iddles** of **360Q** for catering the awards at Fed Square.

Thank you to the Board of the Melbourne Prize Trust, including **Clive Scott AM (Chairman)**, **The Hon. Mrs Pamela Warrender OAM**, **Professor Andrea Hull AO**, **Anthony Poynton**, **Simon Warrender OAM** and **Gerald Dalbosco**.

The Trust would like to thank the many organisations supporting the music sector in Victoria whose support this year has been invaluable. The many sector peak bodies, commercial organisations and websites that made it possible to promote the music Prize during the entry period.

The Trust is fortunate to have the support of a number of people whose contribution this year is greatly appreciated. These include Melbourne Prize Social Media Manager **Sarah Kempson**, guitarist **Dr Tim Willis** and volunteers **John McFarlane**, **Michaelangelo Casabianca**, **Leah Bunney** and **Tobias Kierdorf**.

Thank you one and all for supporting this year's activities, which provide opportunities to the Victorian music sector.

ABOUT MELBOURNE MELBOURNE

THE PRIZE PRIZE ANNUAL TRUST

HISTORY

The Melbourne Prize Trust was established as an Income Tax Exempt Charity and Deductible Gift Recipient in 2005 and commenced the annual Melbourne Prize in 2005.

The founder of the Trust, Simon Warrender OAM, announced the annual Melbourne Prize, following the unveiling of his project being the commissioning of *The Magic Pudding* sculpture, as a centerpiece of a new children's garden precinct in Melbourne's CBD, located at the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne.

The annual Melbourne Prize was established to provide opportunities for artists and recognise and reward excellence and talent, inspire creative development and enrich public life.

The first three-year cycle of the annual Melbourne Prize commenced with the Melbourne Prize for Urban Sculpture 2005. The Trust funds the annual Melbourne Prize through cross-sector partnerships from the government and private sector, and private patrons.

The annual Melbourne Prize is open to Australian citizens or Australian permanent residents who are residents of the State of Victoria.

The home of the annual Melbourne Prize is Fed Square, where an exhibit of finalists, according to each cycle, is held each November. All prize and award recipients are announced on this website.

The annual Melbourne Prize was founded with the support of the Committee for Melbourne.

SUPPORT

MAKE A TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATION TO SUPPORT THE ANNUAL MELBOURNE PRIZE.

The annual Melbourne Prize, run by the Melbourne Prize Trust, is in its 21st year and provides opportunities for Victorian writers, sculptors, and musicians.

Operating with the support of private and public sector community investment, the annual Melbourne Prize helps develop our creative sector and positions Melbourne and Victoria as a place of opportunity for artists.

[Click here](#) to support the annual Melbourne Prize.

Donations of \$2 or more are fully tax-deductible. Visit [melbourneprizetrust.org](#).

Launched in 2004, the annual Melbourne Prize recognises and rewards excellence and talent, inspires creative development and enriches public life by providing career development opportunities to Victorian sculptors, writers and musicians.

Run by the Melbourne Prize Trust, the annual Melbourne Prize is one of the most valuable arts prizes in Australia.

Now in its 21st year, the Prize is funded by support from the private and public sectors.

To date, approximately \$3 million has been made available to Victorian artists via the annual Melbourne Prize, plus exhibitions, residencies and travel. The Trust is listed on the Register of Cultural Organisations and has Deductible Gift Recipient status.

The annual Melbourne Prize is one of the most valuable creative development initiatives of its kind in Australia and runs in a three-year cycle.

The current cycle is:

- Melbourne Prize for Music 2025
- Melbourne Prize for Urban Sculpture 2026
- Melbourne Prize for Literature 2027

The annual Melbourne Prize is unique, celebrating artistic excellence under the banner of Melbourne — Australia's cultural capital.

The annual Melbourne Prize announcements are made through this website, along with an event held at Federation Square each November.

A digital catalogue is produced for the November awards and the public has the ability to vote for a finalist to win the Civic Choice Award.

The annual Melbourne Prize increases the public's exposure and access to the creativity of our community and enhances Melbourne's reputation as a cultural capital and center of opportunity for artists.

The origins of the Trust date back to the idea by Simon Warrender OAM, for a CBD children's garden precinct, subsequently located at the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne and the commissioning of *The Magic Pudding* centerpiece sculpture in 2000 with copyright permission from Helen Glad, Norman Lindsay's granddaughter. Proceeds from the sale of limited-edition miniatures of this landmark sculpture contributed to the Trust — they are now sold out.

Please visit [melbourneprizetrust.org](#).

The 2025 design and identity are by Founding Partner PLAYGROUND.





Melbourne Prize for Music 2025