



MEDIA RELEASE
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BRISBANE FESTIVAL – WRAPS UP FOR 2009!

The biggest, longest Brisbane Festival ever held has finally drawn to a close after a million people enjoyed 600 performances and events over 22 days in theatres, parks, backyards, streets across the city and suburbs.

2009 was the first year the festival became annual, following the merger with Riverfestival, and has been a great success - marked by sell-out performances, standing ovations, record box office takings and the best international and local talent for Brisbane audiences.

New circus masterpiece L'Oratorio D'Aurélia sold out within days of going on sale, Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan's Moon Water played to full houses of enthralled audiences, selling almost 3,000 tickets, and two of world music's greatest performers, Chucho Valdes and Mariza, received standing ovations, delivering multiple 'encores' to rapt crowds.

Artists and performers came from a total of 15 countries including the LA-based Actors' Gang, Netherlands-based British film director Peter Greenaway and former Irish President and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, who all delivered thought-provoking work to Brisbane audiences.

The final day of the festival was marked by a particularly historic moment when the participants of the Cherbourg Walk arrived in West End's Boundary Street to the sounds of 'From Little Things Big Things Grow' performed by Kev Carmody and school children from Cherbourg and West End.

The 275km journey remembered the strength, unity and survival of many Murri communities who were forcibly moved to the former Barambah Aboriginal Reserve at Cherbourg more than a century ago. Delegates of the International Academy of Environmental Sciences World Forum in Venice, including heads of state and Nobel Laureates, also tuned in live via the internet to witness this historic moment.

The walkers then joined the huge West End Live celebration featuring Indigenous hip hop, jazz combos and visiting artists Way Out West and Archie Roach. The street festival was also the last chance to view the mobile art gallery showing the international internet art exhibition Total Nowhere Emotion Expansion which showcase outstanding, cutting edge work from across the world.

Saturday's closing extravaganza also saw multiple ARIA-winning The Audreys play to a sold-out QUT Spiegeltent, before the final night closed with roof-raising sets from nine-piece Melbourne groove outfit LABJACD and global dance music sensation Wild Marmalade.

It was a fitting closing night for the beautiful venue, which packed in capacity crowds for every genre of music, not forgetting its unforgettable 9pm cabaret show A Company of Strangers that featured Paul Capsis, Le Gateau Chocolat and Martin Martini.

Over the other side of the river, Carnival's Edge at South Bank's Cultural Forecourt bemused, shocked and thrilled audiences with its comedy, sideshow, circus and various tricks and treats.

Another highlight was the world premiere of Miracle in Brisbane, the first ever indigenous opera also sold out thanks to its outstanding cast including Deborah Mailman, its world class Director Rhoda Roberts and wonderful music by acclaimed Italian composer Giorgio Battistelli.

And Brisbane Festival's fringe spectacular BF09 UNDER THE RADAR brought the riotous, sublime and wonderful work of 30 emerging artists to Metro Arts and, for the first time, out into the city's streets and spaces with the new Street Feats.

Brisbane Festival's Artistic Director Lyndon Terracini, who leaves at the end of the festival to take up a new role with Opera Australia, said it had been the perfect farewell.

"It has been incredibly gratifying to see sometimes challenging international works sell out, while the calibre of the locally produced pieces has been breathtaking," Mr Terracini said.

"A festival should engage all the people of a city and from the suburban programme to the ambitious theatre and visual arts, the record audience numbers and ticket sales are testimony to 2009 being the most inclusive Brisbane Festival to date."

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Brisbane Festival is an initiative of the Queensland Government and Brisbane City Council.



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