

BRISBANE FESTIVAL APPOINTS EBONY BOTT AS NEW ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

BRISBANE
FESTIVAL

Brisbane Festival 2025
5-27 September

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Media Centre

Images of Ebony Bott
available [here](#)

Brisbane Festival 2025 Media
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Incoming Brisbane Festival Artistic Director Ebony Bott

Brisbane Festival has announced the appointment of Ebony Bott as its next Artistic Director, ushering in a new chapter for one of Australia's most ambitious and culturally resonant festivals.

A nationally respected creative leader, Bott brings to the role a rare combination of artistic audacity and strategic precision. With a career spanning two decades across the country's major cultural institutions—including the Sydney Opera House, Adelaide Festival Centre, and Arts Centre Melbourne—she has earned a reputation for programming that is both emotionally intelligent and commercially astute. Her work consistently bridges the civic and the spectacular, the local and the globally significant.

In her current role as Head of Contemporary Performance at the Sydney Opera House, Bott has led a portfolio defined by bold reimaginings, genre-fluid storytelling and wide public appeal. Her programming spans theatre, cabaret, circus, comedy and large-scale spectacle, with highlights including *Amadeus* starring Michael Sheen and costumed by cult fashion label Romance Was Born; the hip hop dance phenomenon *Message in a Bottle*, set to the music of Sting; and the Netflix-filmed world premiere of Hannah Gadsby's *Body of Work*. Under her leadership, the Sydney Opera House's contemporary program has drawn over 120,000 paid attendees annually. Prior to that, she reinvigorated the Adelaide Cabaret Festival, pairing household names with boundary-pushing new voices to expand the definition of cabaret in the national imagination.

Curatorially, **Bott** describes her philosophy as deeply attuned to people and place: "Festivals aren't just programs, they're civic rituals. They reflect us back to ourselves and open us up to the world. That's what drew me to Brisbane Festival. It has a pulse that's distinctly local and a platform that resonates far beyond. For me, the most powerful festivals grow from the identity of their city, not simply land upon it. They listen, connect, and leave a lasting imprint."

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On Bott's appointment, **Brisbane Festival Chair Anna Reynolds** said: "Ebony has a rare ability to think expansively while listening deeply. Her work is grounded, generous and unafraid to ask big questions. She understands the moment Brisbane is in—a city on the cusp of positioning itself on the global stage—and brings both the boldness and the rigour to shape a festival that speaks to this."

Brisbane Festival CEO Charlie Cush added: "Ebony has the track record, the networks and the creative leadership to drive Brisbane Festival's next evolution. Her combination of artistic integrity and commercial acumen is second to none, and her work is consistently audience-driven without compromising ambition."

Throughout her career, Bott has championed underrepresented voices and fostered pathways for artists to tour nationally and internationally. Her approach to leadership is collaborative and clear-eyed: one that foregrounds First Nations perspectives, supports emerging practitioners, and understands the power of participation.

As Brisbane prepares for the global visibility that comes with hosting the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, Bott's appointment signals a timely alignment between artistic confidence and civic opportunity. She is set to commence in mid-September 2025, and will work alongside the festival's current leadership to deliver a seamless transition into the 2026 program and beyond.

"Brisbane Festival has always felt alive to possibility," **Bott** said. "It's a festival that listens to its city while looking outwards. I'm honoured to be part of its next chapter and to help shape a future that is imaginative, inclusive and unmistakably Brisbane."

Minister for the Arts John-Paul Langbroek welcomed the news of Ebony Bott's appointment and thanked outgoing Artistic Director Louise Bezzina for her extraordinary contributions: "Brisbane Festival is a true highlight on our calendar of events which creates new and exciting experiences for Queenslanders of all ages and interests to enjoy."

"I'm confident Ebony's reputation for innovation and artistic collaborations will take Brisbane Festival to the next level allowing it to reach new and global audiences."

"The Crisafulli Government is proud to support Brisbane Festival and showcase our state's talented artists, creatives, and arts companies in the lead up to the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games and beyond."

Brisbane Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner also shared his congratulations: "Brisbane Festival lights up our suburbs each year with vibrant colour, creativity and community spirit. It's one of the biggest events on our calendar supporting hundreds of local artists and businesses. Ebony Bott's appointment opens an exciting new chapter, and we look forward to seeing her vision elevate the Festival and Brisbane's global reputation as Australia's lifestyle capital."

Brisbane Festival runs 5-27 September.

This recruitment search was led by REA arts + culture, specialists in executive search for cultural leaders across Australia and NZ.
