



# 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 ñ FREE PERFORMANCES

## Hypnotic outdoor performance

The streets of Victoria will be abuzz with a program of spectacular free outdoor performance as part of Festival Melbourne2006, the Cultural Festival of the Commonwealth Games.

The outdoor program offers some amazing experiences. Highlights include: **The Heliosphere** (suspended under a six metre helium balloon, the helionaut will tumble, spin, and amaze); poetic and moving stories from South Africa, aerialists performing in and around an eight metre inflatable cone, amusing street theatre and the highly acclaimed **Strange Fruit**, all performing free.

### **Afro Jambo Acrobats (Nairobi)**

From the streets of Nairobi the amazing rubberised athleticism of the **Afro Jambo Acrobats**. These six talented acrobats catapult their way at warp speed through limbo dance, hoop jumping, rope skipping, fire eating and spirited African dancing. The Afro Jambo Acrobats have a special talent for forming human pyramids faster than the speed of light.

**At the Outdoor Rig from 16 & 19 March at 7:00pm; 17 March at 5:30pm & 7:00pm; 20 March at 7:00pm & 9:15pm; 22 March at 7:15pm; 23 March at 6:30pm; 25 March at 6:00pm**

**They will also be appearing at Big Top from 23 & 25 March at 3:00pm; Geelong on 18 March at 3:15pm, 4:45pm & 6.00pm and in Moe 24 March at 4:15pm & 6.45pm**

### **The Bells, Five Angry Men (Australia)**

Trapped high within the imaginary spire of their metallic cathedral, five men in black overcoats soar though the air, ringing their bells in a cacophony of sound as though their lives depend on it. **The Bells** is a highly physical, emotionally charged and challenging aerial performance incorporating precisely choreographed acrobatics, dance and music. Much in demand internationally, **5 Angry Men** return to Australia for a rare performance of this complex and visually stunning work.

**Federation Square ñ Amphitheatre 20 March at 6:30pm & 8:30pm; 21 March at 7:00pm & 9:00pm.  
Alexandra Gardens Central Lawn 23 March at 6:00pm & 8:15pm**

### **Clearing, EARTH (Australia)**

From the edges of Melbourneís inner cityscape a procession of living, breathing native trees slowly emerges, transporting us back in time to a land where indigenous prehistoric fauna flourished. A clearing is formed. Within this sacred space a dance ritual is enacted, recalling the landscape in a thrilling and spiritual performance. EARTH, one of the most sought after performance groups in Australia, in collaboration with the National Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Association (NAISDA), comes *Clearing*, a magical melding of physical theatre, stiltwalkers, full body puppetry and dance.

**At the Alexandra Gardens from 17 March at 4:15pm; 18 March at 3:00pm, 5:30pm & 8:15pm;  
19 March at 4:00pm & 8:15pm.**

### **Conedancers, Dream Engine (England)**

Two aerialists bathed in light perform a passionate duet in and around an eight metre high inflatable cone.

**Conedancers** begins with a boy and girl caught in a ritualised folkdance halfway up the side of the cone. As they become carried away by their passion, conventions fall away in a game of chase and longing. Acrobatic, passionate and moving, *Conedancers* is a spectacular performance of suspended choreography, performed by British aerial troupe The Dream Engine.

The Dream Engine specialises in dreaming up the amazing and bringing it to life. Its utterly unique aerial events have enchanted audiences around the world.

**Arts Centre ñ Forecourt from 16 - 19 March at 8:00pm & 9:30pm; Bendigo on 24 March at 9.00pm & 10:00pm; Geelong on 25 March at 8:30pm & 9:45pm**

### **Mr Lucky's Party, Avanti Display (England)**

Mr Lucky usually lives alone under a perpetual downpour, but on this occasion he is joined by a guest.

During the tea party that follows, a celebration begins - party hats, even a cake, appear. Sadly, however, with each course the weather worsens, the downpour increases and their mood darkens. In typical Avanti style, Mr Lucky's party concludes with a bizarre, spectacular and unexpected twist.

Avanti Display is one of Britain's leading street theatre companies. Coupling extreme skills in creative engineering with a trademark of using water in unexpected ways, Avanti Display shows are dramatic, often beautiful and comic.

**At Federation Square ñ Amphitheatre on 18 & 19 March at 1pm & 4pm**

### **Heliosphere, Dream Engine, (England)**

As the day draws to a close, a new light rises over the Commonwealth Games. Is it the moon? A wayward star? Enter the surreal world of the *Heliosphere*, a mysterious place between heaven and earth where a weightless Helionaut hangs, suspended far above the ground under a six metre helium balloon, soaring, spiralling and spinning in graceful and enigmatic tumbles. *Heliosphere*, performed by British aerial troupe, The Dream Engine, is a spectacle to inspire, mystify and enchant.

**Appearing in Geelong on 15 March at 6:00pm, 7:00pm & 8:00pm; Alexandra Gardens from 21 & 22 March at 6:00pm & 8:15pm; Sidney Myer Music Bowl on 23 March at 7:00pm & 9:00pm**

### **The House of the Holy Afro, Third World Bunfight (South Africa)**

The *House of the Holy Afro*, is a club-night collaboration between Third World Bunfight and one of South Africa's top DJs, Dino Moran. Performed by seven singer-dancers, *The House of the Holy Afro* is a journey to the South Africa of today, with all its wounds and hopes. Weaving spiritual melodies together with Moran's driving house-beats and the over-the-top club poetry of Odidi Mfenyana, it's an electrifying mix of the sounds of Soweto with house, soul and shamanic dances. This cabaret abounds in colourful political satire and reflects the preoccupation of the artist: controversies, conflicts and contrasts.

Third World Bunfight was formed out of mainly untrained black performers from local townships and rural areas. This six year-old South African theatre company focuses on forging a truly African theatre from its vast wealth of cultural heritage.

**At the BMW Edge from 16 ñ 19 March at 10:00pm**

### **Memories of the Struggle, Mama Africa Theatre Company, (South Africa)**

The youth of Kliptown have got something to say. 'We want to show people that even though we might be living in shacks, that doesn't mean that our minds are shacks; we are intelligent and we are using our talents.'

Performed by the Mama Africa Theatre Company, *Memories of the Struggle* tells the history of South Africa through the eyes of the people of Kliptown. Along the way audiences are introduced to a series of characters who play out their stories with song, dance and humour, using a wildly creative mix of props, puppets and found objects to tell their tales. This highly inventive, stirring and energetic play is performed in a mixture of languages, but its messages are clear for all to understand.

The Mama Africa Theatre Company was started in 2002. Most of the members are from the Soweto Kliptown Youth Group, an organisation that assists disadvantaged youngsters by offering educational support and an introduction to cultural activities such as dancing and craftwork.

**At the Alexandra Gardens from 21 - 24 March at 1:00pm; The Amphitheatre from 22 - 24 March at 4:30pm; 25 March at 4.30pm; and 26 March at 6:00pm**

### **Miss Judy, Judith Lanigan (Australia)**

**Miss Judy**, circus comedienne, hula-hoopist and clown, presents her new show full of contortion, magic, feats of balance and manipulation and of course hula-hoop stunts. **Miss Judy** knows how to get herself into - and hopefully out of - some very difficult situations. **Miss Judy** has studied hula-hoops in Russia, Magic for Clowns in Spain, and various circus arts in Australia.

**Appearing at the Alexandra Gardens ñ Palm Stage on 19 March at 3.15pm. At Federation Square ñ Amphitheatre from 20 March at 3.15pm & 7:15pm and 23-24 March at 6.30pm. The Outdoor Rig on 19 March, 7.30pm, 22 March, 6.30pm & 9.15pm, 25 March, 7pm. Geelong on 18 March at 3.30pm, 5:00pm & 7:15pm**

### **The Spurting Man, Avanti Display (England)**

Black street comedy that dissects the unequal relationship between a human fountain and his downtrodden assistant. The pompous **Spurting Man** shows off his tricks whilst his assistant, dominated and undervalued, is given no credit at all. The assistant despises his master. The master ignores the assistant. Performed to Ravel's Bolero without a word being spoken, this bizarre and unequal relationship is saturated with comic moments.

**At Federation Square ñ Amphitheatre on 16 ñ 17 March at 1pm & 4pm.**

### **Strange Fruit (Australia)**

Swinging and soaring like hypnotic metronomes high above the street on 4.5 metre poles, **Strange Fruit** has achieved a reputation throughout the world for its spectacular and unique performances combining dance, circus and spectacle.

They will perform three shows including **The Three Belles**, **The Field** and their much anticipated new work, **Absolute Pearl**.

Seductive and charming, **The Three Belles** transport the audience into a dreamy world of period charm and quirky manners. Mannered and graceful; the characters are destined to eternally relive the enchanting night of their first ball. With an unearthly soundscape that uses haunting music of strings, galloping horses, the sitar and the Wedding march.

**The Field** see eight lovers enact an intriguing ritual of courtship and discovery, breaking hearts and bending poles to impossible angles. Themes of love, freedom, loneliness and joy are played out to a unique and eclectic soundtrack ranging from Puccini, Bach and Prokofiev to Maurice Chevalier, Michael Nyman and some specially commissioned contemporary music.

The much-anticipated new work, **Absolute Pearl** is suffused with faded splendour and lingering memories as monumental characters are brought to vivid life by the ritual of dance.

**At the Alexandra Gardens from 16 March at 4:00pm & 8:15pm; 17 March at 1.30pm; 3:30pm & 7:00pm; 20 March at 4:00pm, 6:00pm & 8:15pm; 24 March at 3:45pm & 8.15pm; and 25 March at 4:15pm & 8:15pm**

**At Regional Victoria, including: Ballarat ñ 18 March at 4:00pm & 6:30pm; Bendigo 19 March at 3:00pm, 4:30pm & 6:00pm; Moe, 24 March at 3:45pm & 6.15pm; and Geelong 25 March at 1:00pm, 4:00pm & 7:00pm**

### **Wave, Ellis & Bheki (South Africa)**

Open your ears and your heart to Ellis & Bheki as they weave their magic and slowly conjure up the extraordinary world of *Wave*, a spellbinding piece of physical theatre inspired by the tsunami disaster. A profound insight into a relevant international issue, **Wave** is also irreverent and nonsensical.

Ellis Pearson and Bheki Mkhwane are something of an institution on the lawns in South Africa's Grahamstown, where they bring their unique style of theatre and universal messages to the crowds who gather daily to watch them. Ellis has been described as a post-modern renaissance man, while Bheki's combination of Zulu chic and urban sass endears him to all who meet him. Combining their cultural differences and comedic talents, they have created a style of physical African theatre that is truly their own.

**At the Alexandra Gardens ñ Palm Stage on 19 March at 4.30pm; 22 March at 5.30pm; 23 March at 2.00pm & 5.00pm. At Federation Square ñ Amphitheatre on 20 March at 2.00pm & 4.30pm; 21 March at 1.00pm & 4.00pm; 22 March at 1.00pm.**

**Festival Melbourne2006 ñ 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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