

MELBOURNE RECITAL CENTRE

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MEDIA RELEASE

WHERE MELBOURNE'S SKYLINE MEETS THE STAGE: THE BEACON COMES TO LIFE AT MELBOURNE RECITAL CENTRE

Melbourne Recital Centre has realised the original vision for its landmark Southbank home with the official opening of The Peter and Ruth McMullin Beacon – Melbourne's newest cultural destination overlooking the city and the transforming Arts Precinct.

Crowning the uppermost level of the building, The Beacon transforms a formerly disused storage space into an intimate venue, bringing together live music, dining and sweeping views of the Melbourne skyline. Once a hidden room, known only to those in the know, it now comes alive as a place for performance, great food and wine, conversation and celebration, welcoming audiences and guests for both public and private events.

The Beacon's inaugural program will commence on 17 September, establishing a regular rhythm of performances across the week. Musical theatre, Bach, jazz and First Nations-led programming will bring established and emerging artists to the space, with each series offering a different way to experience the venue.

International cabaret superstar Meow Meow opens with a three-night run of specially-crafted intimate performances titled *Meow Meow and Friend*. The following months will reflect the breadth of Melbourne's musical life, from emerging singer-songwriter and producer Holly Hebe and Kuku Yalanji, Jirrbal and Torres Strait Islander artist Kee'ahn to leading jazz musicians including Michelle Nicolle, Paul Grabowsky & Ross Wilson, Tamara Murphy, Stephen Magnusson and Andrea Keller.

Melbourne Recital Centre CEO Sandra Willis said "The idea for the Beacon began with a simple question: how could we use this space to bring people even closer to music? The answer was to build on everything we are known for, exceptional music, extraordinary artists and creating memorable experiences, and reimagine it in an entirely new setting" Willis said.

"Here you can gather around tables, share a meal, and experience Melbourne's finest artists or world-class performers just metres away as the city lights up beyond you. It's intimate, atmospheric and distinctly Melbourne."

ARM Architecture, the building's original architects, returned to transform the uppermost level into a performance and events venue. The design retains a strong visual connection to the city and accommodates musical experiences ranging from solo piano and acoustic performance to amplified contemporary music.

A reflective ceiling installation captures movement and light within the room, while a large-scale spectrogram artwork translates an original composition 'Look Above' by First Nations artists Aunty Joy Murphy-Wandin AO and Dr Lou Bennett AM into a visual work that wraps the interior, continuing Melbourne Recital Centre's integration of music, art and architecture.

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melbournerecital.com.au



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Melbourne Recital Centre Director of Programming Iain Grandage AM “The Beacon invites audiences to look out and listen in – to be up close to the performers while the life of the city unfolds beyond.” Grandage said.

“Melbourne has long drawn its cultural lifeblood from intimate spaces where music is shared socially. The Beacon is our contribution to this tradition – a room in service of music, belonging and conviviality.”

The \$2 million project was made possible through a \$1 million investment from the Victorian Government, matched by a \$1 million philanthropic gift from Ruth and Peter McMullin AM.

Peter McMullin said the gift reflected his and Ruth’s commitment to the role music and cultural institutions play in community life.

“Live music has been a source of connection and inspiration throughout our lives. We wanted to help Melbourne Recital Centre create more opportunities for artists and reach audiences in new ways and continue the vital role it plays within Melbourne’s musical ecology,” Mr McMullin said.

“We are delighted to see this once-hidden space realised as a place that artists, audiences and the wider community can now share.”

Inaugural program

The inaugural program will unfold from September to November, bringing together cabaret, contemporary music, jazz, musical theatre and First Nations artists.

The opening program includes:

- Meow Meow & Friend – 17-19 September
- Neylon & Peele – 21 September
- tragic. a song cycle by Indy Angel – 28 September
- Michelle Nicolle & Hugh Stuckey – 2 October
- Tamara Murphy & Stephen Magnusson – 9 October
- Katie Yap – 12 October
- Sean Riley x Royal Drue (Unplugged) – 19 October
- A Night with... Paul Grabowsky & Ross Wilson – 24 October
- A Night with Dr Trevor Jones – 2 November

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- Jess Hitchcock – 5 November
- Fem Belling & Monique DiMattina – 6 November
- Kee'ahn - 12 November
- Andrea Keller & Stephen Magnusson – 13 November
- Holly Hebe – 19 November
- Michelle Nicolle & David McEvoy – 27 November
- Zoë Black, Caroline Henbest and Molly Kadarauch – 30 November

Further programs and performances will be announced as part of Melbourne Recital Centre's 2027 season launch in late October.

The Peter and Ruth McMullin Beacon will open to the public on 17 September 2026. Tickets go on sale at 11am on 28 August at melbournerecital.com.au/beacon

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About Melbourne Recital Centre

Melbourne Recital Centre is an award-winning live music destination championing the best local and international artists and ensembles across its acoustically renowned performance spaces, the Elisabeth Murdoch Hall, Primrose Potter Salon and the Peter and Ruth McMullin Beacon. As a preeminent venue for experiencing live music in Australia, Melbourne Recital Centre celebrates music in all its extraordinary forms and creates authentic and intimate live experiences for all ages.