



MEDIA RELEASE

WEDNESDAY 16TH JUNE 2004

DARWIN FESTIVAL TO CREATE SPECTACULAR LIVE ENTERTAINMENT VENUE

The Darwin Festival will truly be a sight and experience to be remembered this year, with the transformation of the George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens into a dedicated Festival venue, and the introduction of an impressive feature stage never before seen in Darwin.

The Botanic Gardens will be transformed into a lively entertainment hub in a tropical, outdoor setting featuring an open-air sound shell, stages, entertainment areas, food and beverage outlets, and information and ticket booths.

The feature stage, an enormous open-air sound shell previously used at the Sydney Olympics, Womadelaide and Adelaide's Symphony Under the Stars, will be located in the Festival venue, and will be a hive of activity with music, theatre, dance, comedy and cabaret performances from 6pm to 9pm every night of the Festival, followed by live music and entertainment at the Festival Club from 9.30pm until late.

With the open-air roof, spectacular lighting effects, natural acoustics and seating for 400-600 people, the sound shell itself will be a stunning feature of the Festival venue.

Artistic Director, Malcolm Blaylock said that one of the unique aspects of Darwin is the tropical, outdoor lifestyle. He said that the Darwin Festival's outdoor venue will capture and embrace that this year.

"We need to focus on what is unique here, and the palm trees, the clear, starry skies and the balmy nights are really Darwin. With the outdoor venue this year, the Darwin Festival will truly be done in Darwin style.

"The Festival venue will be brought alive with the buzz of entertainers, musicians, comedians, actors, locals and visitors enjoying the events and performances over the 18 days and nights of the Festival. It is going to be *the* place to be during the Festival."

George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens Curator, David Griffiths has been working closely with Darwin Festival organisers to help create the ideal setting for the Festival.

"The Botanic Gardens is a perfect venue for the Darwin Festival. Its central location means the Festival will attract visitors as well as locals. It's a great idea and we hope that this becomes an ongoing venture for the Festival in future years."

The Darwin Festival management is also calling on anybody in the community to come forward with suggestions for the name of the sound shell.

Malcolm said "We would like a catchy and symbolic name for the sound shell, so if anybody has any suggestions, please call us on 8981 0083. We look forward to hearing them."

The Darwin Festival venue at the Botanic Gardens will be open over the 18 days and nights of the Festival, from August 12 – 29. Many of the events will be located at the Festival venue, however there will still be events at other venues throughout Darwin.

CONTACT

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The Darwin Festival is from August 12 – 29. See the Darwin Festival website for more information www.darwinfestival.org.au.

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