



MEDIA RELEASE

WEDNESDAY 11 AUGUST 2004

For immediate release

DARWIN FESTIVAL KICKS OFF WITH SANTOS CONCERT ON THE ESPLANADE

The Darwin Festival kicks off its 18 days of entertainment, arts and music this Thursday night with the annual free Santos Concert on the Esplanade.

This popular night of free live music and entertainment at Bicentennial Park on the Esplanade, which typically draws crowds of locals, interstate and international visitors, will be a memorable music feast, with some of the best Indigenous musicians the Territory has on offer.

Yugul, **Saltwater Band** and singer/songwriter **Shellie Morris** will share their unique sounds and musical talents with the audience, creating a concert featuring a powerful blend of modern and traditional Indigenous music.

MC Mac Cocker will have the crowds in high spirits again this year, with his naturally animated personality. First in the music line-up will be **Shellie Morris**, popular Australian Indigenous singer songwriter who has performed professionally in venues all over Australia, and will captivate the crowds with her enigmatic style. Shellie has been nominated for 2 music awards in the inaugural NT Indigenous Music Awards, for Best Female Act and Best Act.

Yugul, the first Aboriginal blues band in the Northern Territory will have the audience grooving to their blues rhythms. With the release of their first album "Across The River" after almost 40 years of playing in local pubs and halls, they have created a landmark album for blues music in Australia, and will be a hard act to follow.

Last on the bill, **Saltwater Band**, one of the hottest bands in Aboriginal Australia, have established a strong reputation for their harmonies and powerful songs and have delivered outstanding performances that leave the audiences wanting more. Saltwater are a new wave in contemporary music representing a uniquely Australian world music style - Indigenous Roots Music. Manuel Dhurrkay, and former Yothu Yindi member and musical genius Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu, are the heart and soul of this talented band and no stage holds any fear for this polished and brilliant band.

Artistic Director Malcolm Blaylock said the Santos Concert on the Esplanade will live up to the audience's high expectations, delivering an electrifying night of exceptional sounds and entertainment.

"The Santos Concert on the Esplanade is a uniquely Territorion event and is a celebration of the Territory's own amazing musical talent.

"The concert is an enjoyable event for people of any age, as they can bring a blanket to sit back and enjoy the music, or they can get up and dance to the lively sounds of these great musicians."

In past years, the Santos Concert on the Esplanade has seen the likes of Yothu Yindi, Drum Drum, Nabarlek Band, The Mills Family, Seaman Dan and Ted Egan.

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The Santos Concert on the Esplanade has traditionally been held on a Saturday night, but this year will be on a Thursday night so as not to coincide with other major events in Darwin.

To continue the entertainment and celebrations, the Darwin Festival is hosting the free Opening Night Party at the Star Shell in the Darwin Botanic Gardens, from 10.30pm after the Santos Concert on the Esplanade. The entertainment at the Opening Night Party includes **Mbackeh Darboe**, **Sophie Koh**, **Em Dee**, **Tetrafile Percussion**, **Wild Water** and a special guest appearance by **Ted Egan**. Richard Margetson, Drive presenter of 105.7 ABC Darwin will host the party.

Festival organisers encourage everyone to party on into the night after the Santos Concert on the Esplanade.

"Everyone is invited to come and celebrate the opening of the Festival, and the opening of the Star Shell. Entry is free, the bar will be open and the music and entertainment will continue into the night, so it is going to be a great party."

DARWIN FESTIVAL 2004 – 18 DAYS OF ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

For 18 days the Darwin Festival will light up the city and the Botanic Gardens in a colourful and powerful celebration of talent that will offer a feast of over 50 performances including music, dance, theatre, opera, ballet, film, interactive workshops and visual arts that incorporate the diverse culture of Darwin.

From the 12th to the 29th of August, locals and visitors will be able to enjoy activities and events from the Australian Central Teddy Bears' Picnic, Kultura, and the Santos Concert on the Esplanade, to Sing Your Own Opera, the Xavier Rudd concert at the Gardens Amphitheatre, and Ross Wilson and the Urban Legends at the Star Shell - there really is something for everyone.

The Festival is a celebration of Darwin and its unique lifestyle and multicultural population, with events chosen to focus on the unique traditions and cultures of the region. The Darwin Festival has something for everyone. It presents Darwin to the world and brings the world to Darwin.

WHAT: Darwin Festival 2004

DATES: Thursday 12 August – Sunday 29 August 2004

VENUES: The Star Shell and Amphitheatre at George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens, Darwin Entertainment Centre, Bicentennial Park and various other venues throughout Darwin.

TICKETS: Tickets are now on sale and can be purchased direct by phoning Darwin Entertainment Centre Booking Office on 08 8980 3333

WEBSITE: www.darwinfestival.org.au

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