

DARWIN
FESTIVAL
7-24 AUGUST 2025

SCHOOLS PROGRAM

Proudly supported by





Image: Duck Pond by Pia Johnson

HI THERE



Darwin Festival is thrilled to launch our 2025 Schools Engagement Program featuring a great selection of high quality shows and experiences

for students of all ages, encompassing a range of arts subjects and aligning with the learning outcomes and focus of the Australian Curriculum.

As the Northern Territory's leading international arts festival, Darwin Festival presents performances that may not otherwise come to the Territory. We believe all students regardless of circumstances, geographic location or school should have the opportunity to experience world-class and life changing performances.

This year, we have two fantastic physical theatre productions for all-ages: Feathers will fly in Circa's exuberant take on Swan Lake in *Duck Pond* where the world's most romantic ballet is reimagined as an acrobatic spectacular. Continuing our partnership with MAGNT, *How the Birds Got Their Colours* is a stunning and dynamic, Indigenous-led, site-specific contemporary performance piece fusing traditional First Nations dance and storytelling, contemporary circus, and sculpture.

First Nations dance company, Bangarra will present *Illume*. From Mirning Choreographer Frances Rings and Goolarrgon Bard Visual Artist Darrell Sibosado, *Illume* is an iridescent new theatrical experience, drawing together music, visual arts and dance to explore the ways light has captivated and sustained Indigenous cultural existence for millennia.

Two exceptional shows featuring media arts and theatre will be on offer for middle and high-school students including *Night Night* where a theatrical film is created live each night through a blend of puppets, animation and DIY digital magic; and *The Mixed-Race Tape* – a multidisciplinary performance by hip-hop artist Kultar Ahluwalia blending hip-hop with old recordings, family interviews, and spoken word, exploring identity, masculinity, mixed marriage, and fatherhood.

Accessibility and inclusion are important aspects of Darwin Festival. We are thrilled to present *POD* – a magical adventure for all ages that honours the traditional Larrakia seasons; and *Wonderbox* – created by Sensorium Theatre, Australia's leading theatre company making work specifically designed for young audiences with disability and their friends.

This program would not be possible without the support of our partners including the Northern Territory Government through the Department of Education, and The Smith Family. I also want to particularly thank the Schools Advisory Committee who provide us with excellent advice. And lastly, all of the teachers and schools who engage in the Schools Program and support their students to have memorable festival experiences and engagement in the arts.

I look forward to seeing you at a show.

Best wishes

KATE FELL
Darwin Festival Artistic Director

POD

By Luminous Productions

Presented by Luminous Productions and Artback NT

Follow a seed pod on an immersive journey through the Top End seasons.

Together with a nature guide, *POD* battles fire, flood, storms, wind and monsoonal rains on a journey through its lifecycle and out to sea. Cocoons burst into life, grass trees dance, storm clouds morph into horses as they cross the sky and *POD* befriends birds, animals and insects who help it battle all the elements of a year.

Created on Larrakia country and honouring the traditional Larrakia seasons, *POD* is a magical adventure for all ages. The story and our natural world are brought to life through puppets, projection, live improvised music and an interactive set that students are invited to explore.

When	Thu 7 & Fri 8 Aug 9.30am & 11.30am Mon 11 Aug 9.30am
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Where	Darwin Community Arts, 2/1 Travers Street, Coconut Grove
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Duration	50 mins
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Tickets	\$15 per student
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Access: 50% Visual / Non-English Speaking / Sensory Friendly
Teacher resources available



Image by Charlie Bliss

Links to the Curriculum Standards

Subjects: Drama, Music, Visuals Arts

Content descriptor: Join a seed pod on an immersive journey through fire, floods, storms, and monsoonal rains, befriending birds, animals, and insects. This magical adventure honors traditional Larrakia seasons with puppets, projections, live music, and an interactive set.

General capabilities:

Critical and Creative Thinking: Think creatively and critically while engaging with the performance.

Personal and Social Capability: Promote social interaction and personal development through group activities and shared experiences.

Ethical Understanding: Introduces concepts of nature and the environment, fostering connection and responsibility.

Intercultural Understanding: Appreciate different cultural perspectives through reflecting on the Larrakia seasons and nature's cycle in the Top End.

Themes:

- Nature and seasons
- Resilience and adaptation
- Unique Northern Territory environment

How The Birds Got Their Colours

By ARC Circus, Luther Cora and the Yugambeh Dancers

Presented by Darwin Festival and the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory as part of National Science Week

A stunning, Indigenous-led, performance piece fusing traditional First Nations dance, storytelling and contemporary circus, *How The Birds Got Their Colours* will touch your heart, and open your eyes.

This exciting collaboration between the award-winning Arc Circus, internationally renowned First Nations Yugambeh Elder, Luther Cora, and the incredible Yugambeh Dancers is a living, breathing work of art that tells a powerful dreamtime story.

The message is clear: while we may appear different, communicate differently, and have unique perspectives, at the core, we share more in common than we have differences.

How The Birds Got Their Colours is the perfect opportunity for students to engage with the 2025 National Science Week theme, 'Decoding the Universe – Exploring the unknown with nature's hidden language'.

When	Wed 13 – Fri 15 Aug 10am
Where	Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Amphitheatre
Duration	45 mins
Tickets	\$15 per student

Access: 50% Visual / Sensory Friendly

Teacher resources available

Links to the Curriculum Standards

Subjects: Dance, Drama, Visual Arts

Cross curriculum priority: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

Content descriptor: This vibrant performance combines circus arts and storytelling to bring an Indigenous Australian legend to life. Students will be captivated by the acrobatics, aerials, and colorful costumes as they learn about the rich cultural heritage and the importance of storytelling in Indigenous cultures.

General capabilities:

Literacy: Enhance language and comprehension skills through engagement with storytelling and traditional narratives.

Critical and Creative Thinking: Think critically about cultural stories and creatively interpret the performance's visual and physical elements.

Personal and Social Capability: Promote empathy and understanding of First Nations cultures and the importance of cultural heritage.

Intercultural Understanding: Foster respect and appreciation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories and traditions, and understand the significance of cultural diversity.

Ethical Understanding: Reflect on ethical issues related to cultural preservation and the importance of storytelling in maintaining cultural identity.

Themes

- Cultural heritage
- Unity and diversity
- Connection to nature

Image by Sydney Festival



Wonderbox

By Sensorium Theatre

Presented by Darwin Festival and Darwin Entertainment Centre

Sensorium Theatre, Australia's leading theatre company making work specifically for young audiences with disability and their friends, invites children to roll the dice and set out along a safe, exhilarating pathway into the unknown. Step inside the *Wonderbox*, a giant puzzle-box of illusions where a cast of kooky carnival friends lead participants through an immersive multi-sensory wonderland of fantastical large-scale projections, tiny strange delights and infectious live music. Every child's curiosity is celebrated and rewarded with wondrous surprises.

All performances of *Wonderbox* are relaxed performances, with audiences invited to sit or move around freely within the performance space and adjacent chill-out zone. The performers use multi-modal communication including key signs, natural gesture, visual symbols and minimal verbal language. The show is highly visual with a rich aural environment and many opportunities for individual engagement and interaction through the senses.

Wonderbox is an inclusive show and each performance will be adapted based on the access requirements of individual audience members. Schools will be contacted closer to the performance to confirm the attendees specific access requirements.

When	Wed 6 – Thu 7 Aug 9.30am & 12.30pm Fri 8 Aug 9.30am
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Where	Studio Theatre, Darwin Entertainment Centre
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Duration	60 mins
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Tickets	\$450 per session (capacity 30 people including teachers/carers)
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Access: 50% Visual / Non-English Speaking / Sensory Friendly

Online preparatory materials available. These resources familiarise students with the story, characters, songs and storytelling methods, resulting in a more enjoyable show experience.



Image by Jessica Wyld

Links to the Curriculum Standards

Subjects: Drama, Music

Content descriptor: This immersive performance engages all the senses, encouraging students to touch, see, hear, and even smell the wonders within the box. Designed to be inclusive and accessible, Wonderbox is perfect for students of all abilities, offering a unique opportunity to engage with storytelling and creativity in a multi-sensory way.

General capabilities:

Literacy: Engage with storytelling and interactive experiences that enhance language and communication skills.

Critical and Creative Thinking: Think creatively and critically while exploring a sensory-rich environment and solving puzzles.

Personal and Social Capability: Promote social interaction, empathy, and understanding through collaborative activities and shared experiences.

Intercultural Understanding: Foster respect and appreciation for diverse perspectives and inclusive practices.

Ethical Understanding: Reflect on ethical issues related to inclusivity and accessibility, and understand the importance of creating inclusive environments for all.

Themes:

- Curiosity and discovery
- Inclusivity
- Magic and imagination

Duck Pond

By Circa

Feathers will fly in Circa's exuberant take on *Swan Lake*.

The world's most romantic ballet is re-imagined as a circus spectacular, full of Circa's signature physicality and shot through with cheeky humour and a thoroughly contemporary energy.

Be swept away by this tale of swans and hapless princes sparkling with quirky touches like the sequined flipper-wearing duck army and a burlesque black swan. There are sumptuous aerials, jaw-dropping acrobatics and of course feathers! Touching, funny and utterly entertaining, *Duck Pond* is a tale of identity and finding your true self.

When	Fri 22 Aug 11am
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Where	The Playhouse, Darwin Entertainment Centre
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Duration	55 mins
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Tickets	\$15 per student
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Access: 50% Visual / Non-English Speaking
Teacher resources available



Image by Pia Johnson

Links to the Curriculum Standards

Subjects: Drama, Music, Dance

Content descriptor: Experience Circa's playful and energetic re-imagining of *Swan Lake* in *Duck Pond*. This circus spectacular combines stunning aerials, jaw-dropping acrobatics, and cheeky humor to tell a story of swans, princes, and finding your true self. Students will be captivated by the physicality and contemporary energy of this unique take on a classic tale.

General capabilities:

Literacy: Engage with diverse forms of language and expression through exposure to physical and theatrical storytelling.

Critical and Creative Thinking: Think critically about the themes of identity and transformation while appreciating the creative re-imagining of a classic tale.

Personal and Social Capability: Develop empathy and understanding of personal and social dynamics.

Intercultural Understanding: Foster respect and appreciation for different cultural interpretations and artistic expressions.

Ethical Understanding: Reflect on ethical issues related to identity and self-expression.

Themes:

- Identity and self-discovery
- Transformation
- Physical performance

Illume

By Bangarra Dance Theatre

**Presented by Darwin Entertainment Centre and Bangarra Dance Theatre
in association with Darwin Festival**

Step out of the shadows and into the phenomena of light – the central life force of our planet.

From the extraordinary Bangarra Dance Theatre comes an iridescent new theatrical experience, drawing together music, visual arts and dance to explore the ways light has captivated and sustained Indigenous cultural existence for millennia.

Today, artificial light pollution disrupts ecosystems and obscures the dark night sky, devastating First Nations people's connections to sky country and limiting their ability to share celestial knowledge and skylore. First Nations people stand on the precipice of the world under threat.

Mining Artistic Director Frances Rings and Bard Visual Artist Darrell Sibosado's collaboration explores the awe of light, a bridge between the physical and spiritual worlds. It charts the impacts of light pollution in a climate emergency. *Illume* asks the urgent question: is the deep wisdom passed down from elders enough to illuminate a path forward from the shadows of a dark future?

Journey with us through a kaleidoscope of images, patterns and synergies into the otherworldly language of light.

When **Fri 15 & Sat 16 Aug 7.30pm**

Where **The Playhouse, Darwin Entertainment Centre**

Duration **1hr 10mins**

Tickets **\$20 per student**

Warning: Contains elevated sound levels, flashing lights, haze, smoke effects and voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have passed.

Access: 50% Visual



Image by Daniel Boud

Links to the Curriculum Standards

Subjects: Dance, Music, Visual Arts, Drama, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander History & Culture, Social Sciences

Cross curriculum priorities: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures, Sustainability

Content descriptor: A mesmerising performance that blends music, visual arts, and dance to explore the significance of light in Indigenous cultures. Illume highlights the impact of artificial light pollution on ecosystems and First Nations people's connection to the night sky.

General capabilities:

Literacy: Engage with diverse forms of language and expression through storytelling, dance, and visual arts.

Critical and Creative Thinking: Think critically about environmental issues and cultural heritage while appreciating creative forms of expression.

Personal and Social Capability: Develop empathy and understanding of Indigenous cultural perspectives and the impact of light pollution on First Nations people.

Intercultural Understanding: Foster respect and appreciation for First Nations cultures and their connection to the natural world.

Ethical Understanding: Reflect on ethical issues related to environmental sustainability and cultural preservation.

Themes:

- First Nations cultural knowledge and artistic expression
- Impacts of colonisation
- Climate emergency

The Mixed-Race Tape

By Kultar Ahluwalia

Presented by Darwin Festival and Nexus Arts

An autobiographical hip hop journey in the search for identity.

This multidisciplinary performance blends hip-hop with old recordings, family interviews, and spoken word, exploring identity, masculinity, mixed marriage, and fatherhood. Kultar delves into his Punjabi heritage and upbringing, revealing the miraculous steps that connect us all. Kultar's unique blend of storytelling and hip-hop is a highlight of Adelaide's vibrant scene.

Kultar Ahluwalia is a hip hop artist from South Australia with Punjabi and Irish roots. At a young age coming to terms with his identity, Kultar found wisdom in the empowering words of revolutionary hip hop artists. Kultar has now crafted a unique style of hip hop that encompasses numerous influences, whilst remaining very much his own. Kultar is a multifaceted artist (and human being), a rapper, singer, vocalist, poet, music producer, often handling all production, writing, recording and mixing from his humble home studio.

When Thu 7 Aug 11am

Where Brown's Mart Theatre

Duration 1hr 15 mins (includes a 15 min post-show Q&A with the artist)

Tickets \$15 per student

Teacher resources available



Image by Paul Charles Bartlett

Links to the Curriculum Standards

Subjects: Drama, Music, Media Arts, Visual Arts, English

Cross curriculum priorities: Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia

Content descriptor: Experience Kultar Ahluwalia's unique blend of hip-hop and storytelling as he explores themes of cultural and personal identity. Through personal stories about his mixed heritage, Kultar connects with students on themes of family and self-discovery, offering a fresh perspective on diverse cultural experiences.

General capabilities:

Literacy: Engage with diverse forms of language and expression through storytelling in multiples forms.

Critical and Creative Thinking: Think critically about themes of identity, culture, and personal experiences, while also appreciating creative forms of expression.

Personal and Social Capability: Develop empathy and understanding of different social and cultural contexts by exploring themes of identity, authenticity, and family.

Intercultural Understanding: Foster respect and appreciation for cultural diversity through an exploration of Punjabi culture and heritage.

Ethical Understanding: Reflect on ethical issues related to identity, family, and cultural heritage.

Themes:

- Personal and cultural identity
- Masculinity and fatherhood
- Migrant experience

Night Night

By The Last Great Hunt

A story of life, death and other dimensions.

Take a peek beyond the limits of our reality with a heartwarming theatrical film, created live each performance.

Highly visual and playfully cinematic, the newest creation from WA's The Last Great Hunt tells the tale of Pip, a downtrodden Antarctic scientist on a quest to discover the origin of life. Haunted by visions of an albino penguin, she stumbles upon a hidden plane of existence that challenges everything she thought she knew. As her world unravels, Pip must team up with a mysterious, glowing entity to reveal the threads that bind life, death and the universe.

Night Night takes you on an extraordinary adventure, blending puppets, animation, and DIY digital magic. Witness the onscreen story while experiencing the behind-the-scenes artistry as a theatrical film is created live in front of you. Trust us, you'll never want it to end!

When	Thu 14 Aug 11am
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Where	Brown's Mart Theatre
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Duration	1hr 10 mins (includes a 15 min post-show Q&A with the artists)
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Tickets	\$15 per student
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Warning: There are moments in the show where a loud, relatively high pitch sound plays and the lights flash on and off. It can be triggering for people identifying as having ASD. We are happy to show the effect pre-show if there are concerns from a particular patron. We are unable to adjust it however, as it's an essential part of the story.

Access: 50% Visual / Non-English Speaking

Teacher resources available



Image by Adriane Daff

Links to the Curriculum Standards

Subjects: Drama, Media Arts, Visual Arts, Science

Cross curriculum priorities: Sustainability

Content descriptor: *Night Night* is a captivating theatrical production that combines puppetry, animation, and live film to explore themes of life, death, and the unknown. This imaginative show takes students on a journey through different dimensions, encouraging them to think critically and creatively about the planet we inhabit and the mysteries of existence.

General capabilities:

Literacy: Engage with and interpret different forms of media and narrative technique through a theatrical performance that includes puppetry, animation, and live film.

Critical and Creative Thinking: Understand how artists employ a variety of forms and techniques to communicate their artistic intention and explore new ways of expression.

Personal and Social Capability: Develop empathy and understanding of personal and social dynamics through exploring the protagonist's journey and interactions.

Intercultural Understanding: Foster respect and appreciation for cultural diversity through an exploration of Punjabi culture and heritage.

Ethical Understanding: Reflect on ethical issues related to scientific exploration and the unknown, and consider the moral implications of our actions.

Themes:

- Life and death
- Interconnectedness of living things
- Exploration of the unknown

TICKETING INFORMATION

For every 10 students booked, one teacher or guardian is entitled to a complimentary ticket. Please complete a booking form at darwinfestival.org.au or contact our friendly Box Office team for more information.

P: 08 8943 4222 **E:** boxoffice@darwinfestival.org.au

RISK ASSESSMENT

As part of its work practices, Darwin Festival has extensive WHS processes and procedures in place to enable us to cater for large numbers of patrons across multiple venues. The following information is provided for school Risk Assessments.

Venue: Darwin Community Arts – Theatre

Brief: An air-conditioned theatre venue with entrance from the Darwin Community Arts car park on Travers Street. Care should be taken when moving around the space.

Hazards:

- Even-surfaced venue with highly reduced risk of slip or trips
- Power leads are taped down and do not cross pathways
- Sufficient house lighting at the entry/exit at start
- 'No-go' or 'staff only' zones are clearly signed
- Exit signs are illuminated
- Entry requires access through car park

Disabled Access:

Yes

Toilets:

One accessible toilet, all genders

First Aider:

No. Teachers will be the first responders for their own students

First Aid Kit:

Yes

Fire Extinguishers:

Yes

Venue: Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Amphitheatre

Brief: An outdoor space located at the MAGNT Amphitheatre (access through the Freshwater Pond exhibit to the left of the main entrance). The area is grassed with limited shade and will be separated for ticket holders. Care should be taken when moving around the space.

Hazards:

- Even-surfaced venue with highly reduced risk of slip or trips
- Power leads are taped down and do not cross pathways
- Sufficient house lighting at the entry/exit at start and end of shows
- 'No-go' or 'staff only' zones are clearly signed
- It is an outdoor venue, sun protection and drinking water advised
- Front of house staff will be in attendance

Disabled Access:

Yes

Toilets:

Adequate toilets to service 1,000 people

First Aider:

Yes, however teacher will be the first responder for their own students

First Aid Kit:

Yes

Fire Extinguishers:

Yes

Venue: Brown's Mart Theatre

Brief: A heritage listed air-conditioned theatre venue with a medium-sized undercover veranda for shade prior to entrance to the theatre. Care should be taken when moving around the theatre.

Hazards:

- Even-surfaced venue with highly reduced risk of slip or trips
- Power leads are taped down and do not cross pathways
- Sufficient house lighting at the entry/exit at start and end of shows
- Illuminated steps in the auditorium
- 'No-go' or 'staff only' zones are clearly signed
- Exit signs are illuminated
- Front of house staff will be in attendance
- Courtyard is fenced and can be opened in the event of an emergency

Disabled Access:

Yes

Toilets:

- 2 x female stalls and 2 x hand basins
- 1 x male stall and 1 x urinal, and 2 x hand basins
- 1 x disabled toilet and 1 x hand basin

First Aider:

Yes, however teacher will be the first responder for their own students

First Aid Kit:

Yes

Fire Extinguishers:

Yes

Venue: Darwin Entertainment Centre – Studio Theatre & The Playhouse

Brief: A modern air-conditioned theatre venue with a large veranda area and large foyer at the entrance. Care should be taken when moving around the theatre.

Hazards:

- Even-surfaced venue with highly reduced risk of slip or trips
- Power leads are taped down and do not cross pathways
- Sufficient house lighting at the entry/exit at start and end of shows
- Clearly marked illuminated steps in the auditorium
- 'No-go' or 'staff only' zones are clearly signed
- Exit signs are illuminated
- Front of house staff will be in attendance

Disabled Access:

Yes

Toilets:

Adequate toilets to service 1,000 people during peak performance times

First Aider:

Yes, however teacher will be the first responder for their own students

First Aid Kit:

Yes

Fire Extinguishers:

Yes



Image: *How The Birds Got Their Colours* by Lexi Spooner





Image: Wonderbox by Daniel Grant

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