



Songs for Freedom National Tour Shares Hopes for a Better Future

Marking the 40th Anniversary of the Passing of John Pat in custody, Ngarluma and Yindjibarndi Elders Lead Songs for Freedom, Raising Their Voices to Heal a Nation

Big hART and the community of Ieramugadu (Roebourne) are honoured to invite the community to this very special concert event, Songs for Freedom. Songs for Freedom is an uplifting concert of original songs created by an intercultural group of artists, many in the Pilbara town of Ieramugadu (Roebourne WA). In the final show of their national tour, this event will take place on Saturday 23 September. We warmly welcome all to this family friendly event of cultural sharing through music, song and screen.

With musical direction from Grammy award-winning artist, Lucky Oceans, and powerful narration by Ngarluma man, Patrick Churnside, guest artists joining us in Roebourne are Kutcha Edwards, Emma Donovan, and Nooky. Songs for Freedom offers heartfelt messages of freedom and hope from the people of the Pilbara, in their own words, and is set to fill the night with voices of peace, freedom and country.

Songs for Freedom has its foundations in workshops involving the family of John Pat, whose death in custody in 1983, triggered the Royal Commission into deaths in custody. 28 September 2023 is the 40th Anniversary of John Pat's passing.

Songs for Freedom is the public manifestation of a project that has been running in Roebourne since 2010. Thirteen years ago, the Elders invited Big hART to come into their community to help create good stories and good images about Roebourne with their young people and for people outside of their own community. It was their desire to combat the impacts of the many negative stories being reported about the small Pilbara area by finding positive ways to connect with their own young people, sharing cultural practices, and giving them access to growth opportunities through different mediums. Since that time Big hART, supported by the Elders, has delivered workshops in the community, the school, and the prison, creating digital content, music, theatre, and performance to transform the negative stories told about Roebourne, to rich stories of renewal, self-determination, and the power of culture in Ieramugadu. Many of the songs included in Songs for Freedom have been created through engagement with these workshops.

Artist and Cultural Advisor, Patrick Churnside says: *"Songs for freedom is a body of work and a campaign...Essentially, we are singing for freedom for our country... we are singing for freedom for our children."*

Artist and Cultural Advisor, Allery Sandy says:

"We encourage the Aboriginal people to stand up for who they are. You have talent; Go for it. While we have our Elders still to have stories and to perform."

Songs for Freedom is moving and optimistic – a shining example of what can be accomplished through creativity and diversionary practice from within the heart of a community.

The album *Songs for Freedom* was released February 17, 2023. The album is the work of numerous songwriters, musicians, and other creatives, coming together under the name The Freedom Collective. **Produced by Grammy Award-winning musician Lucky Oceans**, Songs for Freedom features lead vocal contributions from Naomi Pigram, Patrick Churnside, Fred Ryan, Vikki Thorn (The Waifs), Kendall Smith, Kankawa Nagarra (Olive Knight), Jay Jarome and John Bennett. **The album was recently**



Photo credits Brett Boardman, 2023

selected as ABC Country's Album of the Week.

Songs for Freedom has been celebrated in Perth at the Perth Festival, Darwin, and Hobart at MONA FOMA. The Sydney event was on 2 September at Barangaroo, the next stop on the tour was Canberra at ANU's Llewellyn Hall on 9 September, followed by Melbourne on 15 September at Melbourne Recital Centre. The culmination of the tour is a series of workshops, a concert at Roebourne Regional Prison, and the anniversary concert in at Ngurin Cultural Centre, Roebourne WA on 23 September.

National Tour details:

SYDNEY - Saturday September 2, 6:00 pm

Barangaroo Reserve, Barangaroo

FREE ENTRY - No bookings required

CANBERRA - Saturday September 9, 7pm

Llewellyn Hall (ANU), School of Music Building #100, William Herbert Place, Acton

Tickets: \$10

Booking link: <https://premier.ticketek.com.au/shows/show.aspx?sh=SONGFREE23>

MELBOURNE - Friday September 15, 7:30 pm

Melbourne Recital Centre, Cnr Southbank Boulevard & Sturt St, Southbank VIC 3006

Tickets: \$50 (Mobtix available)

Booking link: <https://www.melbournerecital.com.au/events/2023/songs-for-freedom/>

ROEBOURNE - Saturday September 23, 5:00pm

Ngurin Cultural Centre, Roe St, Roebourne

FREE ENTRY - No bookings required

Big hART acknowledges and expresses deep gratitude to the Ngarluma, Gadigal, Ngunnawal, Kulin, Yindjibarndi people as traditional custodians of the countries where we work.

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