



# Music Box is on song

By **MICHAEL WASHBOURNE**

THE Beck's Music Box is the strange-looking construction taking shape on Perth's Esplanade.

Custom-built for the Perth International Arts Festival — which began yesterday — the Music Box will host musical acts from around the world, as well as cabaret and comedy.

The Music Box will be a key feature of the festival for at least the next four years.

Described as an "open-air playground", the venue will hold 1200 people and is expected to attract more than 25,000 patrons during this year's festival.

The growth of the festival has forced organisers to move from the Perth Concert Hall to the big and unique venue in the heart of the city.

"The Music Box has now got a relationship with the river and it's also got a really good location on the doorstep of the city," PIAF artistic director Shelagh Magadza told *The Sunday Times*.

Ms Magadza said the festival would again provide economic benefits for the city.

She said the festival had developed a reputation for having one of the best contemporary music programs in the country.

## FREE EVENTS

- \* Lotterywest Festival Celebration **Water Fools** — **Iltopie**: The Swan River is set ablaze tonight by a French spectacular for the whole family. From 9pm, Perth Foreshore, end of William St.
  - \* Lotterywest Floating Films — **My Neighbour Totoro**: Applecross, Friday Feb 29, 7.30pm, at Jeff Joseph Reserve). Bayswater, Saturday March 1, 7.30pm, at Riverside Gardens, Milne St. Hillarys, Sunday March 2, 7.30pm, at Hillary's Boat Harbour, South Beach.
  - \* **Madama Butterfly**: Friday Feb 22, 8.30pm, at Supreme Court Gardens.
  - \* **Dirk The Mechanical Tramp** Murray Street Mall, UWA.
  - \* **Le Kiosque** Forrest Place, Lotterywest Floating Films.
  - \* **Visual Arts** — all free.
  - \* **Festival Forums**. Today from 1-3pm at the Playhouse Theatre. Feb 22 from 1-3pm at King Street Arts Centre.
  - \* **Perth Writers Festival**.
  - \* **Beck's Music Box After Parties**.
- [www.perthfestival.com.au](http://www.perthfestival.com.au)

"Over the course of the past 50 years, (the festival) has been significant in bringing some of the best acts from around the world to Australia," she said.

Ms Magadza said the festival was also an excellent place to showcase local talent: "The local arts sector also benefits, as we employ more performers, technical people and other behind-the-scenes staff, such as set constructors, than we normally would."

Beck's Music Box will cater for a variety of genres including disco, rock and jazz, as well as some cabaret and comedy shows.

The festival's popularity was demonstrated again by the quick sales of tickets — many selling out. Tickets for American rock band Sonic Youth sold out within three days.

Other international acts that have sold out include Feist, Sharon Jones and the Dap-Kings, Meow Meow and Gretchen Parlato.

The Music Box will open its doors to the public for free every night from 10.30pm after the main acts have finished.

Local talent such as Kill Devil Hills, Sugar Army, Rocket to Memphis and international DJs Dan Deacon and \$olal are among the acts.

"We've always tried to make it a place where people can come after the main show and have a drink and be entertained," Ms Magadza said.

The Music Box will remain for the duration of the festival, which ends on March 9.



**STRANGE STRUCTURE: Beck's Music Box on The Esplanade.**