

# PERTH INTERNATIONAL Jazz FESTIVAL

21 June 2023

+61 (0) 402 723 742  
mace@perthjazzfest.com

To the Australia Council and its Industry Advisors:

I write in support of SIMA, and their critical place Australia's arts landscape as a presenter of great improvised music.

SIMA matters. It promotes what is creative in our artform. It means a focus on improvisation and the creation of new work. Without it, Australian jazz would be more reliant on commercial opportunity and less creative.

I have been lucky enough to work with SIMA for almost 20 years in many ways, which illustrates the way SIMA works nationally to make a difference. SIMA:

- supported me as an artist, presenting my 14-piece touring jazz orchestra multiple times, including a significant presentation that we released as one of our 10 albums;
- developed a partnership with the Western Australian Youth Jazz Orchestra (WAYJO) to make a West Australian branch of their Young Women in Jazz Workshops, now called Progressions;
- collaborated to share artists between the Sydney Women's International Jazz Festival and the Perth International Jazz Festival (PIJF).

This year, SIMA's Regional Touring program supported a local-legend music teacher, Andrew Mackay-Sim, who has set up a specialist jazz program in Australind. We were able to take Dr Jo Lawry – Sydney Conservatorium's Jazz Equity leader, better known as a bandmate of Sting and Paul Simon – to this regional high school with the support of SIMA Regional Touring.

We also hosted saxophonist Tessie Overmyer, SIMA's Sonic Futures young artist, for a week in residency with WAYJO. She blew minds – a young person inspiring young people. We sat back and let it happen, and it was probably the best workshop we have ever had: big smiles and jaws dropping, kids looking at each other in disbelief while trying to be cool about it. That's when you know you've broken through.

It's our tenth year of delivering Young Women in Jazz Workshops, now Progressions, and the difference in our scene is marked. More girls and non-binary kids are playing, auditioning and succeeding at WAAPA. It's not as much of a challenge to produce balanced programs of the highest quality anymore. The best thing is that the young people embrace the change. They show us the way.

As part of a buying-block we are collaborating to bring one of the world's great contemporary jazz artists, Cecile McLorin Salvant, to Australia this October. This is huge for us - it's that perfect mix of high art that speaks to a wide audience, and it speaks to our mission of trying to present the best work to the most people.

We support SIMA as an effective investment in Australia because it is strong, collaborative, and lifts our capacity in Perth. A stronger SIMA means stronger jazz in Australia.

Yours Truly



Dr Mace Francis

Artistic Director

[www.perthjazzfest.com](http://www.perthjazzfest.com)