

27-29 MARCH 2026

# playmakers

FAIRBRIDGE VILLAGE, PINJARRA



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Is 'Playmakers' WA's best kept musical secret?

Playmakers Festival returns to the historic Fairbridge Village from 27–29 March 2026, bringing with it a vibrant gathering of musicians, makers and music-lovers from across the world. Set among heritage cottages and tall trees, the festival is quickly becoming a cherished event where artistry, craftsmanship and community intertwine. Artistic Director Rod Vervest describes the 2026 edition as “packed with remarkable talent – whether you’re into folk, world music, instrument making, or dance, there’s something in the programme that will grab you.”

This year's programme welcomes an exciting line-up of international guests. Riccardo Tesi, one of the world's most respected accordion players and custodians of Italian traditional music, returns to WA after his much-loved visit with Banditaliana in 2019. He arrives in duo form with the luminous vocalist and guitarist Giua. “Riccardo is a living master,” Vervest says. “To hear him in the intimacy of Playmakers, alongside talent such as Giua, is something truly special.”

Also returning to WA is Canadian singer-songwriter Lowry Olafson, whose roots in the Perth folk scene stretch back to the early 1980s. Having performed at festivals such as Nannup and Fairbridge Festival, Olafson returns to launch his 10th album, *Born for This*. His concerts, warm and deeply connective, feel more like gatherings of old friends than performances. “Lowry’s return is a beautiful full-circle moment,” Vervest notes.

Toronto folk duo, Basset, bring timeless harmonies and poetic songwriting to the Playmakers line-up. Yasmine Shelton's unmistakable voice and Sam Clark's sensitive instrumental work evoke the spirit of the early folk revival. “Basset have that rare ability to hush a room,” Vervest says. “The beautifully blended harmonies, and a certain sensitivity in their playing really draws audiences in.”

From the Celtic world comes Scotland-born, Canada-based guitarist, Tony McManus, hailed by John Renbourn as “*the best Celtic guitarist in the world.*” His playing, dazzling in its dexterity and sophistication, draws from Scotland, Ireland, Brittany, and beyond. “Tony is a world-class guitarist,” Vervest says. “His command of the instrument is extraordinary, audiences are blown away by the precision and artistry in his playing.”

Closer to home, Perth’s own Gallus Ceilidh Band will ignite the dance floor with a full-throttle Scottish ceilidh - complete with driving fiddle tunes, rhythmic backing and friendly callers to guide every step. “A ceilidh is pure joy,” Vervest says. “Expect flying feet, flushed cheeks and unstoppable grins.”

Beyond performances, Playmakers offers a rich programme of conversations and collaborations. Former producer of Radio Nationals ‘The Weekend Plant’, Doug Spencer, will host a series of in-depth artist conversations, exploring the stories, traditions and inspirations behind the music. Meanwhile, Vervest himself premieres a new project: The Country Blues, Ragtime and Vintage Jazz Roadshow, featuring The Ragtones and Dave’s Dobro Dream Hour. This journey through the interwar American styles of the 1920s–40s, performed on vintage instruments and microphones, promises an immersive trip through the muddy Delta, Piedmont hill country and back streets of New Orleans. “We want audiences to feel like they’ve stepped into a speakeasy or a jook joint,” Vervest says.

The Playmakers Festival also shines a spotlight on the craft behind the music. This year the programme welcomes British-born, NSW-based luthier Daisy Tempest, founder of Tempest Guitars. Known for her one-of-a-kind acoustic instruments and dedication to traditional craftsmanship, Daisy has built an international following through her work and online presence. “Daisy represents a new generation of makers,” Vervest says. “She honours tradition while inviting the world into her workshop through her YouTube channel.”

The 2026 programme shines a spotlight on the breadth of Western Australian talent, featuring emerging songwriters, world-music ensembles, classical performers and innovative cross-genre collaborations. “WA’s musical landscape is rich and ever-growing,” Vervest says. “Playmakers is a place where local artists stand shoulder-to-shoulder with global masters.”

What sets Playmakers apart most is the immersive nature of the festival. Festival-goers can stay on-site in the Village’s charming historic cottages where music spills onto verandas and jam sessions happen around kitchen tables, or camp under the stars and relish the magical bushland environment. Friends reunite over shared meals, new collaborations spark around picnic tables, and the Village pool becomes a welcome retreat between concerts. “Playmakers dissolves the barrier between artist and audience,” Vervest says. “You might hear a world-class musician on stage, then find yourself sharing breakfast with them the next morning.”

With its blend of world-class artistry, intimate experiences and the warm, communal spirit that defines Fairbridge Village, Playmakers Festival 2026 promises a weekend of music, craft and connection unlike any other. Book in quick as capacity is limited.

Tickets are on sale via [playmakerswa.com.au](http://playmakerswa.com.au), and start at \$150 for the full weekend. Cottage accommodation, camping, and meals, are additional.

Playmakers is proudly supported by the Government of WA

