

Media Release



The
Wheeler
Centre
Books
Writing
Ideas

Embargoed until 3 February 2012

A new year is the time for celebration and the Wheeler Centre is bursting out of the starting blocks in 2012 with a packed first programme of events.

With three new series and as many as eight events a week, there's something for all tastes and persuasions in Programme One. From atheism to Islam, cabaret divas to philosophers, eroticism to the classics, join us as we unveil our explosive new calendar featuring the most extraordinary local and international voices.

The Wheeler Centre Gala (11 February) kicks off the whole shebang at Melbourne Town Hall. Hear from storytellers including the renowned **Gillian Mears**, playwright **Lally Katz** and the comedic brilliance of **Casey Bennetto** as they share their *Stories to Believe In*.

Available on **3 February**, the new programme includes:

- **Ideas for Melbourne (13 – 17 February)** will raise the big questions for our city's future over five big nights. From Arts to Urban Planning, hear the experts and the policy makers discuss what will decide this year's looming city elections.
- The brilliant **Alain de Botton (21 February)** makes his only Melbourne appearance at the Melbourne Town Hall to tell us why atheists should stop mocking religion and steal from it instead.
- Be blown away as the extraordinary talent of cabaret diva **Meow Meow** meets burlesque sensation **Amanda Palmer (24 February)** for a revealing conversation about life, love and creativity.
- Foreign correspondent **Kim Barker (22 February)** abandons journalistic neutrality for her arresting account of life in a conflict zone. **Eliza Griswold (8 March)** takes us on a journey to explore the Tenth Parallel, the line where Islam and Christianity meet.
- Literary great **Alan Hollinghurst (2 March)** joins us to tackle the most compelling questions of sex, identity and politics, while the bold and challenging work of **Etgar Keret (15 March)** has seen him hailed as a worthy successor to the Amos Oz generation of great Israeli storytellers.
- Two of the most inventive writers working in Spanish today, **Javier Cercas** and **Juan Gabriel Vasquez (7 March)** come together to explore the connection between truth, fiction and history.
- From history to legacy, **Alex Miller** and **Jim Davidson** honour the late **Hazel Rowley (14 March)** and the imprint she left on Australian writing.
- Celebrated Australian author **Janette Turner Hospital (1 March)** speaks on a lifetime of work, while **Anita Heiss (18 April)** sparks questions of politics and identity in *Am I Black Enough for You?*

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The Wheeler Centre

A Victorian Government initiative and the centrepiece of Melbourne's designation as a UNESCO City of Literature.

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With a new year, we welcome **three** new series to our Wheeler Centre calendar:

- Proving not all news is black and white, journalist and editor **Sally Warhaft** launches **Fortnightly Forum (6 March)** a chance to hear the stories behind the news and find some hard-hitting truths.
- Get the university literature education you may have missed out on, as **Ramona Koval** leads us through **Australian Literature 101 (8 March)**. From the *Man Who Loved Children* to *Monkey Grip*, our ten-week series explores and gives context to great Australian writing.
- Cats, op-shops, the 1987 Australian cricket team...**Sam Pang** has persuaded some familiar faces to reveal their **Unexpected Passions**. First up, comedian **Kate Langbroek** and *Wilfred's* **Adam Zwar (2 March)** make their bizarre confessions.

Following on from the success of 2011, we bring back some audience **favourites**:

- In partnership with the St. James Ethics Centre, we present five new **Intelligence Squared** debates. Whet your appetite for fierce discussion with **Animals Should be Off the Menu (20 March)**
- **On the Road** – The Wheeler Centre jumps in the Tarago to visit Victoria's regional towns. **Leslie Cannold** will be in Mildura (**29 February**) and **Steven Amsterdam** will swing by Sale (**17 April**)
- Not all storytelling can be charming fables and whimsical yarns. **Erotic Fan Fiction (26 April)** returns for another delightfully filthy installment. **Noni Hazlehurst** will leave *Playschool* behind in this hilarious night of adults-only entertainment. She will be in good company with Triple J's **Tom Ballard** and the *Hungry Beast's* **Elmo Keep**.
- **Lunchbox/Soapbox** returns for bite-sized pieces of polemic. The lunchtime series is back every Thursday with new topics, new faces and reignited passion.
- **Texts and the City** – There comes a point when study can take the joy out of any text. Every Tuesday afternoon in terms one and two, we're set to rediscover a sense of love and wonder about the texts of the VCE English list. For students, teachers and life-long learners.
- **Debut Mondays** gives us four first-time authors reading from their work. Now in **The Moat**, have dinner or a glass of wine and discover the best new writers around – the perfect food for thought.

All tickets and bookings through wheelercentre.com | Full media kit available upon request

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