



**STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL
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Queensland Music Festival on the hunt for new Artistic Director as Jazz maestro James Morrison heads off for new adventures

Queensland Music Festival (QMF) has announced that jazz maestro James Morrison will finish up in his role as Artistic Director at the end of August after leading two incredibly successful Festivals in 2013 and 2015.

Mr Morrison will now focus on running the new James Morrison Academy of Music in Mount Gambier and performing more in Australia and overseas, as well as continuing to support QMF's Indigenous programs.

The announcement comes hot on the heels of a landmark 2015 Festival, which included 10 international premieres and 13 Australian premieres. More than 130,000 people attended 1,100 performances and workshops from 17 July – 2 August across 26 regions of Queensland, including communities as remote as Birdsville in the west, and Aurukun in the north.

Highlights included *Keys to the City*, which saw pods of digital pianos popping up all over Brisbane inviting people to come and play; QMF's biggest community production to date, *Under This Sky*, where 700 Logan locals performed; securing the world's greatest double bassist, Edgar Meyer, for three exclusive concerts; bringing together three jazz geniuses - indie darling Megan Washington, Romanian pianist Marian Petrescu, and James Morrison himself - for a very special concert; and the inauguration of one of the world's most remote symphony orchestras for *Mount Isa Celebrates*.

James Morrison said: "From the moment I first joined QMF it has been a joy and an inspiration to work with this incredible team to transform the lives of Queenslanders through music. Whilst I knew from the beginning I would only be Artistic Director for two Festivals, I will always treasure this time as one of the most rewarding of my career."

QMF Chair Athol Young said James Morrison should be proud of his legacy of increasing musical participation throughout Queensland.

"Both the 2013 and 2015 Festivals placed music-making and active participation at the heart of their programs," Mr Young said.

"Attention-grabbing projects such as the *World's Biggest Orchestra* in 2013, and *Keys to the City* this year inspired tens of thousands of Queenslanders of all ages to take part in the Festival, and has established a fantastic future platform for QMF.

"James embraced the quintessential nature of Queensland - its diversity, unique landscape and the enormous geographical scale of the state. His generosity as a person, as a performer and as an Artistic Director is incredible. At the same time as bringing international artists of the highest quality to Queensland, he was working to galvanize instrumental programs in Indigenous communities with the Cape York Indigenous Program and *Yarrabah Band Festival*. These are legacies that will remain."

Mr Morrison will remain involved in QMF via the Cape York Instrumental Program (CYIP) and *Yarrabah Band Festival*. James will mentor students at the CYIP Band Camp and perform at *Jazz on the Green* on 13 September, and at the *Yarrabah Band Festival* on 14 November.

Mr Morrison said QMF's long-term programs in Indigenous communities transcended the tenure of any single Artistic Director.

"I could not lose contact with these major initiatives that have been such a big part of my time at QMF," Mr Morrison said.

"The work being done in these communities is extremely important and very close to my heart, so I'm delighted to still be involved in a very hands-on way.

QMF is now searching for the new Artistic Director, with the contract expected to begin in early 2016.

"QMF is a much-loved highlight of the Queensland arts calendar, having worked with 82 communities across the State since 1999," said Mr Young.

"The Festival's commitment to excellence and access in equal measure has produced extraordinary legacies and remains the core element of all our programming and future plans.

"As we start the search for a new Artistic Director for the 2017 Festival and 20th Anniversary in 2019, the QMF team is eagerly looking ahead to initiating new projects and building on the amazing success of James Morrison's tenure as Artistic Director."

For more information visit qmf.org.au

Queensland Music Festival is an initiative of the Queensland Government and a state-wide celebration of music with a vision to transform lives through unforgettable musical experiences.

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