

Australian Festival of Chamber Music

13 April 2026

Australian Festival of Chamber Music fans put their money where the music is

The Australian Festival of Chamber Music has proven itself to be one of Queensland's most powerful cultural tourism drivers, injecting more than **\$3 million** in direct and incremental expenditure for Queensland, generating more than **66,000 direct visitor nights**, and attracting high-value travellers who don't just attend, but stay longer, spend more, and return year after year.

In 2025 alone, the Festival delivered **66,675 direct** visitor nights across Queensland, with more than **55,000** in its host city Townsville

AFCM Executive Director, Ricardo Peach, said, "Audiences aren't just turning up for a concert, they're building entire holidays around the experience, with hundreds extending their stays beyond their original plans."

"With more than 10,600 unique attendees in Townsville last year, AFCM is not a niche arts or music event, it's a significant tourism engine with real, measurable impact and we are thrilled to be hosting the event in Cairns this year."

"It's also attracting exactly the audience regional destinations are seeking. More than 80 per cent are over 50, travelling as couples or with friends, with high discretionary income and a strong appetite for premium, experience-led travel. Crucially, 89 per cent would recommend the Festival, and 91 per cent rate it as a great experience, driving powerful word-of-mouth and repeat visitation," he said.

So, what keeps them coming back?

"Artistic Director and acclaimed British violinist **Jack Liebeck** delivers a program that balances global excellence with powerful storytelling, fresh commissions and deeply personal artistic connections, creating a Festival experience that is as emotionally resonant as it is world-class. The musicians come for the music, the audiences come for the experience, and both return," said Peach.

In 2026, the Festival enters an exciting new chapter, relocating to Cairns, Queensland, Australia, where from 24 July to 1 August it will transform the tropical city into a global chamber music capital. Here, extraordinary performances will unfold against the natural wonders of the Great Barrier Reef and Daintree Rainforest, creating a rare fusion of cultural and destination appeal.

Queensland Minister for Tourism and the Environment, Andrew Powell, said the Australian Festival of Chamber Music was a standout on Queensland's cultural calendar and another reason visitors were choosing regional Queensland.

"Events like the Australian Festival of Chamber Music shine a spotlight on places like Cairns and give people another great reason to visit this incredible part of our state," Minister Powell said.

“They bring visitors into our regions, fill local hotels and restaurants, and support jobs for local Queenslanders. That’s exactly what the Crisafulli Government’s Destination 2045 plan is about - attracting visitors, encouraging them to stay longer, spend locally, and experience the very best of Queensland, from the reef to the rainforest and right through our vibrant regional cities.”

Tourism Tropical North Queensland Chief Executive Officer Mark Olsen said hosting the Australian Festival of Chamber Music in Cairns was an opportunity to bring new visitors to Tropical North Queensland.

“Loyal music lovers coming to Cairns for the first time will discover just how diverse our region is and will want to plan an extended trip in future years to better explore the Great Barrier Reef and the Wet Tropics rainforest,” he said.

“With more than 2000 tours departing from Cairns, there is a reef and rainforest adventure to suit everyone as well as many restaurants, cafes and bars to relax in and soak up our tropical lifestyle.”

This year’s AFCM program is bold, cinematic and unafraid to take risks, from composers who met wildly dramatic ends in *Horrible Histories*, *Composer Edition*, to Schubert’s *Winterreise* reimagined for the tropics, a lost Holocaust-era work completed 80 years on, and a sweeping multimedia tribute to the natural world. It’s chamber music with edge, story and serious emotional punch.

International artists this year include **Berlin Philharmonic Principal Horn Stefan Dohr**, French cellist **Christian-Pierre La Marca**, Irish tenor **Robin Tritschler** and world-renowned ensembles including the **Sitkovetsky Piano Trio**. They are joined by leading Australian musicians including **Piers Lane**, **Karin Schaupp**, **Lloyd Van’t Hoff**, and many more, alongside emerging artists and new works from the AFCM Pathways Emerging Composer in Residence **Sam Wu**.

Melbourne-born cellist **Charlotte Miles**, now based in Germany, is one of Australia’s most exciting young classical exports, recognised internationally for her expressive power and technical command. She returns to the AFCM after making a standout impression at the 2025 Festival. She was also among the 66 cellists just selected to compete in the first round of the Queen Elisabeth International Cello Competition, widely regarded as the world’s preeminent cello competition for cellists aged between 18 and 30.

Importantly, audiences will hear new commissions that connect past and present, including British composer Alex Turley’s new work for flute and string quartet.

Imagery of 2026 artists [HERE](#)

Imagery of Artistic Director Jack Liebeck in Cairns [HERE](#)

Australian Festival of Chamber Music: 24 July – 1 August, 2026

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AFCM is supported by the Queensland Government through Tourism and Events Queensland and Arts Queensland; Cairns Regional Council; the Ian Potter Foundation; and the Australian Government through Music Australia and Creative Australia, its principal arts investment and advisory body.

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