



Wesfarmers Arts

SYNOPSIS & CASTLIST

WEST AUSTRALIAN OPERA
& BREAKSEA PRESENT

The Song Catchers

23 - 24 October 2026
Albany Entertainment Centre

Director & Librettist Matt Reuben James Ward
Composer Jarred Wall

Conductor & Music Arranger Pia Harris
Set & Costume Designer Fiona Bruce
Animation Design Sohan Ariel Hayes
Lighting Design Lucy Birkinshaw
Associate Director Rachael Colmer

Cultural Consultants Aunty Eliza Woods,
Aunty Glenda Williams, Uncle Larry Blight
and Jarrad Inman

Contributors Breaksea Youth Writers' Group
and Jon Doust

Featuring Breaksea Youth Ensemble and
UWA Conservatorium Music Theatre Students

Nan Gina Williams-Ghouse AM
Arum (Tipu's mum) Rachelle Durkin
Marri Jarrad Inman ^
Tipu Lachlan Higgins
Mr Ant Jarred Wall ^

^ Supported by the Roberts Emerging Artist Program

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West Australian Opera is proudly supported by
the WA Government and Lotterywest, and the
Australian Government through Creative Australia,
its arts funding and advisory body.

The Song Catchers is a lyrical fable of two unlikely friends, set between the ordered fox city of Hillside and the ancient bushland beyond its fence.

The City of Hillside thrives by harvesting the songs of animals from the bush and converting them into energy. Young fox Tipu is expected to follow in the footsteps of his mum, Arum, a proud Song Catcher.

But Tipu has a secret: as a cub, he slipped beyond the fence and befriended Marri, a young echidna. Over the years, they meet in secret, exploring the bush together. Watching their story unfold is Mr Ant, a travelling bard who sings of their friendship and the uncertain road ahead.

When Arum trains Tipu in the family profession, Tipu reluctantly becomes a Song Catcher. Years later, he comes face-to-face with Marri and, believing he has no choice, harvests his friend's song.

Wracked with guilt, Tipu breaks into Hillside's underground vault to retrieve it, accidentally releasing hundreds of captured songs.

The foxes blame the animals beyond the fence and set fire to the bushland in retribution. Tipu flees Hillside to find Marri and return his song, but when Marri tries to sing again, the song cannot be restored.

Marri's wise Nan tells them of the ancient Listening Tree, which cannot return what has been lost but may offer a new song to those willing to listen with an open heart. Guided by Nan's story and Mr Ant's songs, the friends journey through the bush to find it.

At the Listening Tree, Marri discovers a new song, before helping Tipu discover that he too has a song within him. When Arum finally finds them, she arrives not as a Song Catcher, but as Tipu's mum, ready to acknowledge her mistakes and listen.

As Tipu and Marri raise their new songs together, the Listening Tree begins to grow again. Nan is joined by Mr Ant, who asks what will happen when Tipu returns to The City of Hillside. Her answer is simple: it depends if people listen.