

# Proms plans

Get ready for a series of promenade concerts, writes  
**LORETTA HALL**

**M**ELBOURNE is a mecca for a diverse range of musical styles, says one of the many dynamic young singers to be heard regularly about town, Nina Ferro.

Ferro has an adaptable voice, switching between swing, soul, jazz and the blues depending on the gig and her mood.

For her next engagement, the Melbourne Proms Festival, Ferro says she's seeking inspiration from crooners Ella Fitzgerald, Frank Sinatra and Nat King Cole for some big band numbers.

Joined by guest artist and close friend Julie O'Hara, Ferro will be backed by a 16-piece band on June 7 in one of nine Prom concerts to be held over nine nights.

The musical styles of local artists gathered for the second annual festival are as diverse as the venues: Melbourne Town Hall, Melba Hall at the University of Melbourne, the Assembly Hall in Collins St and St Marks Anglican Church, Fitzroy.

With an aim on variety, producer Rod Scanlon of Independent Classics has gathered Irish singers, jazz musicians and a brass band to take on a pipe band.

He has organised a gala concert of children's choirs with 350 voices accompanied by a symphony orchestra.

There's a concert by the winners of the 2000 international best world folk album, female a cappella group Akasa.

Pianist Timothy Young stars in chamber music concert *Mirrors and Reflections* and soprano Louisa Hunter-Bradley, alto Christina Jonas and harpsichordist David MacFarlane will perform Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*.

The festival culminates in *Last Night of the Proms* at Melbourne Town Hall on June 8.

It is only in the past two years that this event has been preceded by a concert series to truly be



**Versatile:** Nina Ferro has an adaptable voice, switching between swing, soul, jazz and the blues. Picture: IAN CURRIE

Melbourne's answer to London's long-running tradition.

London's *Last Night of the Proms* has been held for the past 109 years at Royal Albert Hall at the end of a series of promenade concerts.

This is the first promenade concert for 29-year-old Ferro, and she has selected songs from some of her favourite artists.

"I love to work with a big band, it's very exciting. With 16 people in the band, it's like singing on a very big plush couch with an armchair ride the whole way."

Ferro sings soul and jazz regularly at L'Otel in St Kilda and Dizzy's Jazz Club in Richmond, and she is booked for Melbourne's first Italian jazz festival in September.

"Melbourne is a mecca of music. I have never known a city with such a vast array of places to play and so many talented musicians," says Ferro, who has performed in the US, Europe and the Middle East.

She released an album, *Tender is the Night*, last year with Melbourne pianist Joe Chindamo, with whom she sang as a backing singer in her first professional gig when she was 15.

Later this year she says the pair are planning to record a double album.

**Melbourne Proms Festival, May 31-June 8. Nine concerts at four venues in Inner Melbourne. Ph: 132 849. Adult \$38.20, conc \$31.20, child \$15.70. Subscribe to four concerts for \$99. [www.independent-classics.com.au](http://www.independent-classics.com.au)**