



UK // MUSIC

## THE THE

**Matt Johnson**

Post-punk royalty, **The The** will return to Melbourne for the first time in almost thirty years to perform in this year's event.

Following sold out performances in London in June, singer and songwriter **Matt Johnson** and his band **The The** are back performing songs that haven't been heard or witnessed live in almost 20 years as well as new music.

A reactionary figure during Thatcher's reign, Matt Johnson and **The The** were among the most critically-acclaimed and politically engaged bands of the 1980s, becoming post-punk icons of their generation alongside **The Smiths** and **New Order**. Ground-breaking albums such as **Soul Mining** (1989) and **Infected** (1986) have been considered among the decade's finest releases. **The The** was Matt Johnson's vehicle with a revolving cast of pop identities and cult figures including **Johnny Marr** of The Smith's, **Jools Holland**, and Melbourne's own **JG Thirwell**.

Johnson will perform a range of material from **The The**'s longstanding repertoire, recently described as 'fragile synthpop essays that sound like teenage diary entries, a masterclass in adolescent angst' (*The Guardian*).

Melbourne Festival Artistic Director Jonathan Holloway said: 'As a massive fan of post-punk music as a teenager in the eighties in England, it's a no-brainer when you hear **The The** are planning to tour after nearly 30 years, it takes a second to say "yes" to bringing this special event to Melbourne.'

Matt Johnson began his career in 1979 writing personal songs of turmoil before he shifted his gaze to global

geopolitics. This must-see event will feature **The The**'s renowned songs with lyrics heavily drenched in death, love, sex and the meaning of it all, such as 1982's halting **Uncertain Smile** capturing teen angst, 1989's **The Beat(en) Generation** which wraps a political message around Johnson's famed gravelly tones, and the textured sounds of **Armageddon Days Are Here (Again)** from 1989's **Mind Bomb**, before taking a deep dive into the adored music and lyrics of **Soul Mining**.

'I wanted to strip down many of the songs and actually reduce the sonic palette. We won't be using any samplers, click-tracks, sequencers or synthesisers. It's just five musicians, performing reinterpretations of my back catalogue. The songs are not intended to be reproduction of the album versions, and many of them don't sound like they do on the old recordings. Some of the songs do, but if people really want to hear the albums, they should just put on headphones and listen to the albums.' – Matt Johnson on **The The** 2018 tour.

★★★★★ 'Part comeback, part requiem, all extraordinary.' – The London Telegraph

'This is weighty art-school friendly post punk... Matt Johnson's voice was as resonant as ever, while the music jumped from clattering jazz to scuzzy punk to jittery funk with conviction.' – The London Times

**Arts Centre Melbourne, State Theatre**  
**Thu 4 Oct & Fri 5 Oct**

**8pm**  
**\$39 - \$119**

[festival.melbourne](http://festival.melbourne)

Arts Centre Melbourne 1300 182 183  
#melbfest