

## **The Spirit Of Melbourne - Synopsis**

Welcome to our original theatrical presentation, *The Spirit of Melbourne*.

It is present day Melbourne and we find ourselves in an average suburban high school classroom. Harry and his punk mates are causing mischief as the studious nerds try their best to bury their heads in books. **(Long Way To The Top)** Soon, even the music nerds get carried away with the exuberance and blast the forbidden music into the poor teacher's underpaid face. She tries to regain control but to no avail **(Prisoner Of Society)** but an out of control Harry falls from on high, knocking his head and descending into unconsciousness.

In some transient world, Harry meets The Spirit of Melbourne, who has taken on the form of a young woman. After trying unsuccessfully to hit on her, Harry agrees to follow The Spirit on a journey through the past to discover the heritage that he has been actively and insolently denying. **(Leaps And Bounds)**

The Spirit leads Harry back to Melbourne in the late 1700s and he observes the successful civilization of the Wurundjeri, who have yet to encounter European settlers. **(Djapana – Sunset Dreaming)** However, a blast from the trumpets heralds the arrival of the colonial powers and the First Australians are suddenly under threat. **(Solid Rock)** Ultimately, the colonialists overpower the Wurundjeri and Harry struggles to come to terms with the injustice he has witnessed. **(Beds Are Burning)** Has a spark of compassion been ignited in the selfish young man?

Still under the guiding hand of The Spirit, Harry is transported forward to 1851. Gold is discovered by a lone wanderer and, almost immediately, the site is transformed into a busy and prosperous mine. **(Catch My Disease)** Gold fever is everywhere and the ornate buildings of Melbourne begin to take shape, forming the architectural foundations of the Melbourne we know today.

Fast forward once more to 1901 and the proclamation of the new Federation – the Commonwealth of Australia – at Parliament House in Melbourne. The toffs exist in their own privileged world, barely aware of the working men and women around them. **(God Save The Queen)** Eventually, Bruce has had enough and challenges the authority figures, launching into the famous activism that won workers their rights to an eight hour day. **(Working Class Man)** Not to be left behind, Sheila and the women protest that they should be given rights to vote and join in the powerful demonstration. **(I Am Woman)** Eventually, the power of the masses prevails and the toffs are left whimpering pathetically as the class system is dismantled – the birth of a fair go for all.

The next stop on Harry's journey of discovery is 1915 and we witness young men being sent to fight at Gallipoli in World War 1. **(And The Band Played Waltzing Matilda)** What starts as a game ends in tears and, following the last post and the famous words from President Atatürk, a grieving mother weeps over the grave of her fallen son. **(Reckless)** A refugee ponders a new life in Melbourne **(When The War Is Over)** and we travel forward to Station Pier in the 1950s to meet Giuseppe, one of the first post WWII migrants to settle in what is soon to become one of the world's great multicultural cities. **(Shaddup You Face)**

Mysteriously, Harry now finds himself in an unknown and ethereal location. The Spirit explains that she has not brought them here, but that Harry's thoughts have caused this detour. She asks him what he is thinking and he confesses that he is falling in love with her, and therefore the very

city that she embodies. **(Under The Milky Way)** Confused, The Spirit regains control and resets the journey, bringing us to various scenes in modern Melbourne.

We wind our way down the Yarra river to the Melbourne Cricket Ground, a holy sporting mecca where fans are passionately following their heroes as they pursue sporting glory. **(Holy Grail)** Following the AFL match, a couple of fans decide to meet up with some mates at the pub, where Harry enjoys being part of the social scene. **(Duncan)** The young men and women then decide to hit the beach and check out all the hot surfer chicks and dudes, hoping to score a date. **(In The Summertime)**

Harry confesses to The Spirit that he now finds Melbourne pretty cool – in fact he thinks that life here is just like one big party. The Spirit tells him that his journey is soon to be ending but that there is one terrible final thing for him to witness. We see footage of the devastating Black Saturday bushfires, but take heart in the selfless deeds of the Melburnians and Victorians who opened their hearts to those who suffered so badly. **(Throw Your Arms Around Me)** Harry is moved by what he witnesses and The Spirit forces him into a moment of epiphany, struggling with inner wraiths and demons as he tries to reconcile who he is and who he wants to be. **(Don't Hold Back)** As he moves in to kiss The Spirit, Harry is returned to consciousness and the present day reality of the classroom, mere moments after his fall. After all that he has experienced with his mysterious guide, will he return to his errant ways, or will he honour and embrace the life and the city of which he is a part? **(I Still Call Australia Home)**