

SYDNEY
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

Shostakovich Symphony No.4

JAMES EHNES
PLAYS KHACHATURIAN

28 – 31 AUGUST

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE



 Abercrombie
& Kent

 sydney symphony
orchestra
David Robertson
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SEPTEMBER



Geoffrey Lancaster in Recital

MOZART ON THE FORTEPIANO

MOZART Piano Sonata in B flat, K570

MOZART Piano Sonata in E flat, K282

MOZART Rondo in A minor, K511

MOZART Piano Sonata in B flat, K333

Geoffrey Lancaster fortepiano

Mon 2 Sep, 7pm

City Recital Hall

THEME VARIATIONS & PIANO SERVICES



Music from Swan Lake

BEAUTY AND MAGIC

ROSSINI The Thieving Magpie: Overture

RAVEL Mother Goose: Suite

TCHAIKOVSKY Swan Lake: Suite

Umberto Clerici conductor

Wed 4 Sep, 7pm

Thu 5 Sep, 7pm

Concourse Concert Hall, Chatswood



Star Wars: The Force Awakens in Concert

Set 30 years after the defeat of the Empire, this instalment of the Star Wars saga sees original cast members Carrie Fisher, Mark Hamill and Harrison Ford reunited on the big-screen, with the Orchestra playing live to film. *Classified M.*

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Sydney Symphony Presents

Thu 12 Sep, 8pm

Fri 13 Sep, 8pm

Sat 14 Sep, 2pm

Sat 14 Sep, 8pm

Sydney Opera House

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Andreas Brantelid performs Elgar's Cello Concerto

VLADIMIR ASHKENAZY'S MASTERWORKS

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis

*ELGAR Cello Concerto

*ELGAR Enigma Variations

Vladimir Ashkenazy conductor

Andreas Brantelid cello

Meet the Music

Wed 18 Sep, 6.30pm

Thursday Afternoon Symphony

Thu 19 Sep, 1.30pm

Tea & Symphony*

Fri 20 Sep, 11am

Great Classics

Sat 21 Sep, 2pm

Sydney Opera House



Holst's Planets

VLADIMIR ASHKENAZY'S MASTERWORKS

MEDTNER Piano Concerto No.1

HOLST The Planets

Vladimir Ashkenazy conductor

Alexei Volodin piano

Sydney Philharmonia Choirs

Abercrombie & Kent Masters Series

Wed 25 Sep, 8pm

Fri 27 Sep, 8pm

Sat 28 Sep, 8pm

Sydney Opera House

Abercrombie & Kent

OCTOBER



The Four Seasons

VIVALDI AND PIAZZOLLA

PIAZZOLLA arr. Desyatnikov

The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires

VIVALDI The Four Seasons

Andrew Haveron violin-director

Meet the Music

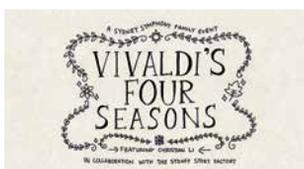
Thu 10 Oct, 6.30pm

Kaleidoscope

Fri 11 Oct, 7pm

Sat 12 Oct, 7pm

Sydney Opera House



Vivaldi's Four Seasons

A SYDNEY SYMPHONY FAMILY EVENT

VIVALDI The Four Seasons

Andrew Haveron violin-director

Christian Li violin

Sun 13 Oct, 1pm

Sun 13 Oct, 2.45pm

Sydney Opera House

WELCOME



Welcome to the Abercrombie & Kent Masters Series.

I always find myself inspired by a Sydney Symphony Orchestra concert, both by the incredible musical talent of the performers and, armed with a little [musicology and biographical] knowledge of the works and the composers gleaned from these program books, with the need to hear and see more of the worlds from which they've emerged.

I expect the Eastern European influences in tonight's program – Armenia's national treasure Aram Khachaturian and the great Soviet polystylist Shostakovich – will leave me with a longing for the landscapes and hospitality of the Caucasus, where I was lucky enough to lead a small group journey last year, and for the mesmerising history, culture and architecture of Moscow, St Petersburg, and beyond. I can already feel my mind wandering east across the Russian steppes to the Kamchatka Peninsula, another extraordinary emerging travel destination, upon the wings of the virtuoso talent from across the Bering Strait, James Ehnes.

Subscribe Now and Win a Luxury European Journey

With Masters Series subscribers treated to an entire season of spectacular classical music, I can understand why you'd need no incentive to sign up as soon as possible. But I'd be remiss if I didn't remind you of the prize for one lucky early subscriber to the 2020 Season: an extraordinary, all-luxury Abercrombie & Kent journey exploring London and Reykjavik, Bergen, Berlin and St Petersburg, with Emirates flights, worth more than \$50,000. Subscribe before 6 September for your chance to win an unforgettable journey in cities and lands steeped in music history.

Of course, if exploring the homelands of these great composers is on your bucket list, check out our Luxury Small Group Journey to Russia, our Limited Edition 'Journey to the Caucasus: Georgia & Armenia' and any number of bespoke and private travel options that straddle east and west. Talk to your travel agent who can work in concert with our Luxury Travel Specialists and offices around the world to orchestrate your Eurasian adventure.

Enjoy exploring!



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sujata Raman', with a horizontal line underneath.

Sujata Raman
Regional Managing Director
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**sydney symphony
orchestra**

David Robertson
The Lowy Chair of Chief Conductor
and Artistic Director

ABERCROMBIE & KENT MASTERS SERIES
WEDNESDAY 28 AUGUST, 8PM
FRIDAY 30 AUGUST, 8PM
SATURDAY 31 AUGUST, 8PM
.....
SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE CONCERT HALL



Shostakovich Symphony No.4

James Ehnes plays Khachaturian

Mark Wigglesworth *conductor*
James Ehnes *violin*

ARAM KHACHATURIAN (1903–1978)
Violin Concerto in D minor

Allegro con fermezza
Andante sostenuto
Allegro vivace

INTERVAL

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH (1906–1975)
Symphony No.4 in C minor

Allegro poco moderato – Presto – [Tempo I]
Moderato con moto
Largo – Allegro



Saturday's concert will be broadcast
live on ABC Classic, and repeated on
14 December at 8pm.

.....
Pre-concert talk by Scott Davie in the
Northern Foyer at 7.15pm.

.....
Estimated durations 35 minutes;
20 minute interval; 60 minutes.

.....
The concert will conclude at
approximately 10pm.



Cover image: James Ehnes
(Photo by Benjamin Ealovega)



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Mark Wigglesworth *conductor*

Mark Wigglesworth is Principal Guest Conductor of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. Other titled positions have included Associate Conductor of the BBC Symphony, Principal Guest Conductor of the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Principal Conductor of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, and Music Director of English National Opera (ENO).

Mark Wigglesworth has conducted many of the world's leading orchestras, such as the Berlin Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra Amsterdam, London Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic, Boston Symphony, New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Chicago Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, and Tokyo Symphony. He most recently conducted the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in 2017.

He has conducted at major opera houses such as the Metropolitan Opera, New York, Bavarian State Opera, Semperoper Dresden, Netherlands Opera, La Monnaie (Brussels), Welsh National Opera, Glyndebourne, and Opera Australia. At ENO he has conducted *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, *Così fan tutte*, *Falstaff*, *Kátya Kabanová*, *Parsifal*, *The Force of*

Destiny, *Magic Flute*, and *Jenůfa*. In 2017 he received the Oliver Award for Outstanding Achievement in Opera for performances of *Don Giovanni* and *Lulu* with ENO at the London Coliseum. Mark Wigglesworth's most recent engagements have included concerts with the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain, the Malaysian Philharmonic, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Detroit Symphony, New World Symphony Miami, and the Norwegian Opera in *Billy Budd*.

Mark Wigglesworth's recordings include the Khachaturian Violin Concerto with James Ehnes, and Shostakovich symphonies with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, Mahler's Sixth and Tenth symphonies with the Melbourne Symphony, a disc of English music with Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Britten's *Peter Grimes* with Glyndebourne, and Brahms piano concertos with Stephen Hough and the Salzburg Mozarteum. He has also written for *The Guardian* and *The Independent* and made a six-part TV series, entitled *Everything to Play For*.



© BENJAMINE ALDIVEGA

James Ehnes *violin*

James Ehnes has appeared with leading orchestras such as the Boston Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, London Symphony, Czech Philharmonic, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin and the NHK Symphony Orchestra, Tokyo. Conductors with whom he has appeared include Vladimir Ashkenazy, Marin Alsop, Sir Andrew Davis, Paavo Järvi, Gianandrea Noseda, David Robertson and Donald Runnicles. Recent performances have included Britten's Violin Concerto with Edward Gardner and a combined orchestra of the Royal Academy of Music and the Juilliard School at the BBC Proms, Sibelius Violin Concerto with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Edward Gardner at the Lincoln Center, New York, and Walton's Violin Concerto and sonatas by Bach and Ysayë in a concert with the BBC Philharmonic and John Wilson. He is Artist in Residence at the Dallas Symphony Orchestra in the 2019-20 season.

James Ehnes is also Artistic Director of the Seattle Chamber Music Society. As a recitalist, he has performed at Wigmore Hall, Carnegie Hall, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, and at the Ravinia, Montreux, and St. Petersburg's White Nights Festival, among others. In 2009 he made a sensational debut at the Salzburg Festival playing Paganini's Caprices. In 2016, he undertook a cross-Canada recital tour, performing in each of his homeland's provinces and territories, to celebrate his 40th birthday. Recent appearances have included a cycle of Beethoven Violin Sonatas with pianist Andrew Armstrong at the Montreal Chamber Festival.

On disc James Ehnes' repertoire ranges from Adams to Bach. His recording of Aaron Jay Kernis Violin Concerto won Best Classical Instrumental Solo in the 2019 Grammy Awards. Having premiered the work in Toronto, he is the concerto's exclusive soloist until 2021. His recording of Beethoven's Violin Concerto with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and Andrew Manze was recently listed by *Gramophone* magazine among the greatest 50 Beethoven recordings.

James Ehnes began violin studies at the age of four, and at nine became a protégé of Francis Chaplin. At the Juilliard School (1993-97), he won the Peter Mennin Prize for Outstanding Achievement and Leadership. He made his orchestral solo debut with the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal at 13. He plays the 'Marsick' Stradivarius of 1715.

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Aram Khachaturian (1903–1978)

Violin Concerto in D minor

Allegro con fermezza

Andante sostenuto

Allegro vivace

Briefly independent after World War I, the Caucasian nations of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia were 'sovietised' in the early 1920s. Bolshevik governments were formed, with the Red Army suppressing any resistance, and the three countries were for a time ruled from the Georgian capital, Tbilisi. Promising young people were given higher education in Moscow, but Lenin's policy of 'putting down roots' also saw the encouragement of local party membership, and the support for local languages for education and official use. This was implemented by a young Georgian ex-seminarian, Ioseb Jughashvili who, as Joseph Stalin, completely reversed the policy when he took power soon afterwards.

Born in Tbilisi to Armenian parents in 1903, Aram Khachaturian was in his late teens when this 'sovietisation' happened, and went to Moscow to study in 1922 – his first subject was biology, but he soon switched to music, studying cello at the Gnesin Institute and composition at Moscow Conservatory, and writing music for an Armenian-language theatre directed by his brother. By 1932 Khachaturian was a member of the Composers' Union, in which he rose to become an office-holder. Like almost every Soviet composer he was obliged to produce noisy patriotic works and film scores, and was subject to the inevitable official denunciation, alongside Shostakovich and Prokofiev, in 1948.

The 1930s and early 1940s saw much of his most significant music, with pieces such as the Trio for clarinet, violin and piano of 1932 attracting international notice for its blend of 'Caucasian' folk music and Western form. The Violin Concerto, which received its premiere at Moscow's Tchaikovsky Hall in 1940 in front of a who's who of Soviet music, was composed for, and with much advice from, the legendary David Oistrakh, who later described the piece as 'sincere, original, witty, full of melodic beauty and national colouring'. As such, it, like the Trio, reflects a kind of artistic 'sovietisation': as Socialist Realist music it adheres to classical design and its musical language is grounded in diatonic harmony in order to appeal to that vast new audience for 'classical' music in Soviet Russia, but is proudly suffused with the idioms of Khachaturian's Armenian and Georgian musical heritage. (Even his *Poem to Stalin*, an 'official' work, uses a text from Azerbaijan.) The composer once said, 'I recall Tbilisi as a town of songs. Everybody sang: the artisan as he worked in his little yard or in the street in front of his house, the street vendors selling Georgian sour milk, fruit and fish. Each vendor had an individual melody of his own, an expressive motif that I shall never forget.'



Aram Khachaturian

IN BRIEF

As one of the first generation of non-Russian composers educated in the Soviet system, Khachaturian brought together the officially-approved classicism of Socialist Realism and the musical heritage of his native Georgia and Armenia. A conventional three-movement work, the Concerto is full of Caucasian melody and dance-rhythm. Composed for David Oistrakh, it dates from 1940, and soon became a popular and comforting work – especially its simple but haunting slow movement – during World War II.

Not surprisingly, Khachaturian's music is dominated by melody that features strongly-defined rhythms as is evident from the opening of the concerto, where the violin quickly takes, and maintains, the lead. The writing is supremely idiomatic (thanks, no doubt, to Oistrakh's advice) reflecting both the figurations of Baroque string writing and those of energetic folk-fiddling; the orchestration, often forceful and highly coloured, is reserved for structural emphasis and never obscures the soloist. And despite the headlong motion of the music, it is notable how soon it slips, however briefly, into the Romantic introspection that we find in works such as the ballet *Gayane* of the same period. Brilliance wins out, however, helped along by the cadenza largely written by Oistrakh himself.

Introspection is, of course, the focus of the slow movement, which begins with a simple triple-metre rhythm and songlike theme, and as it develops explores moments of deep sorrow. Daniel Jaffé has noted that one of the movement's themes is derived from a funeral scene in a score Khachaturian wrote for the 1938 film *Zangezur*, which describes the civil war in the southern Armenian province during the sovietisation of the 1920s. The grief, however, is banished by the explosive energy of the finale, whose brash orchestra tutti sets up the tension between two rhythmic motifs (briefly interrupted by a folksy clarinet) that powers the music. The piece was popular from the start, and became more so as the Soviet Union entered World War II. As Oistrakh put it, it helped people to 'endure distress with its vivid character, vital energy [...] strengthening belief in the future and the final victory.'

GORDON KERRY © 2019

Khachaturian's Violin Concerto calls for solo violin and an orchestra of 2 flutes and piccolo, 2 oboes and cor anglais, pairs of clarinets and bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, 3 percussion, harp and strings.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra first performed Khachaturian's Violin Concerto in May 1958 under Edouard van Remoortel with Ida Haendel, soloist. Its most recent performance was in 7 July 1982 under Piero Gamba with Erich Gruenberg, soloist.

'I recall Tbilisi as a town of songs. Everybody sang: the artisan as he worked in his little yard or in the street in front of his house'.



Khachaturian with violinist David Oistrakh

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906–1975)

Symphony No.4 in C minor, Op.43

Allegro poco moderato – Presto – [Tempo I]

Moderato con moto

Largo – Allegro

Shostakovich's First Symphony was an astonishing enough achievement; the synthesis of modernist techniques and Mahlerian scope embodied in the Fourth Symphony could well have given Shostakovich pride of place among pioneers of the 20th-century symphony. Of course, it was not to be. Towards the end of his work on the symphony in 1936, Shostakovich was the target of a now infamous editorial denunciation in *Pravda*. The symphony was withdrawn from rehearsal (perhaps by Shostakovich himself, perhaps by the Leningrad Philharmonic's director), and would not receive its first performance until 1961, a quarter of a century later. By this time, things had moved on; a new wave of post-Second World War modernists was in the ascendancy, and the possibility of making an avant-garde statement with a symphony (slim enough in 1936) was effectively non-existent.

Shostakovich's own work had also moved on. The Fifth Symphony, written in a far more accessible style, had seen him rehabilitated with the Soviet hierarchy – it was acclaimed as 'a Soviet artist's creative reply to just criticism', and quickly found a place in the repertoire which it has not relinquished since. Would Shostakovich have found such a place in the symphonic repertoire had he not been effectively ordered to tone down his style? Certainly the Fourth Symphony has achieved no great popularity in the four decades since its premiere – but what would have happened had Shostakovich had the chance to decide his creative path for himself? Such entirely reasonable speculation leads to a more uncomfortable question. Did Stalin, thought to have written the *Pravda* editorial, have after all a better idea than the composer of what an audience (Soviet or Western; between the wars, or Cold War, or even post-Soviet) might want? Given the popularity of the Fifth Symphony as opposed to the Fourth, our only possible answer, however uncomfortable, is yes.

The Fourth is Shostakovich's second purely orchestral symphony. (The Second and Third both have choral finales.) In the distinguished history of symphonic beginnings, there is nothing quite as arresting as the opening of this work: an ambitious transposition of Mahlerian 'grandiosomania' (as Shostakovich would later disparage it) from bourgeois fin-de-siècle Vienna to revolutionary Leningrad. The music frequently seems to cross-cut from music for the revolution's hopes to music for its ultimate betrayal. Frequent changes of mood and orchestration – from the *fff* of the large orchestra to a solo instrument within a few bars – mask the fact that the symphony is at a thematic level quite closely argued. Often when a theme returns it is in a completely different orchestral guise – a quiet bassoon solo returns in



Dmitri Shostakovich

IN BRIEF

Stalin's purges of the mid-1930s eliminated thousands of the best minds in Soviet politics, science and the arts, and the close personal interest he took in music, in particular, meant the end of anything vaguely experimental. Shostakovich's brash and violent opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* ran for two years – until Stalin saw it and an 'anonymous' review in *Pravda* effectively threatened the composer. The Fourth Symphony, composed in 1936, was judiciously shelved, its sometimes grotesque parodies of the grand style, and sudden bleakness sure to have brought down denunciation, or worse, on the composer.

the lowest register of the tubas to stabbing interjections from the rest of the orchestra; the opening march theme returns on a barrel-organ combination of clarinets and flutes.

The second movement achieves more overt coherence: the opening three-note upbeat (derived from a short throwaway figure in the first movement) holds things together through some audacious experiments in polytonal and atonal counterpoint. The movement ends with one of Shostakovich's most bizarre inspirations – a disembodied ticking in the percussion, which was to recur, at the other end of his career, in his own Second Cello Concerto and Fifteenth Symphony.

The third movement again begins in typically Mahlerian fashion – a bassoon solo supported by timpani, in a reminiscence of the mock funeral march from Mahler's First Symphony. Again there is a bare minimum of recurring thematic material, as if to compensate for the symphony's chaotic procession of musical types and textures – in particular, an early oboe solo (particularly its first three notes) will resonate through to the symphony's end. About halfway through the movement, there is a most disconcerting change of tone, from exaggerated solemnity to utter bathos – a collection of outright clichés (including some singularly pointless fanfares) is set off by a jaunty bassoon solo. These clichés are dismissed by one last Mahlerian climax; the work ends in numbed near-silence.

CARL ROSMAN © 2002

Shostakovich's Fourth Symphony calls for a large orchestra of 6 flutes (2 doubling piccolo), 4 oboes (1 doubling cor anglais), 6 clarinets (1 doubling bass clarinet, 1 doubling E-flat clarinet), 4 bassoons (1 doubling contrabassoon), 8 horns, 4 trumpets, 3 trombones, 2 tubas, 2 timpani, 7 percussion, celesta and strings.

The first Australian performance of this work was given by the Sydney Symphony on 12 February 1972, conducted by John Hopkins. The Orchestra performed it most recently in April 2002 under Alexander Lazarev.



Prokofiev, Shostakovich and Khachaturian, 1945

There is nothing quite as arresting as the opening of this work: an ambitious transposition of Mahlerian ‘grandiosomania’ from bourgeois fin-de-siècle Vienna to revolutionary Leningrad.

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Vladimir Ashkenazy conductor
Alexei Volodin piano

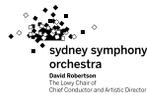
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SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

PHOTO: KEITH SAUNDERS



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THE LOW CHAIR OF CHIEF CONDUCTOR AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

PATRON Professor The Hon. Dame Marie Bashir AD CVO

Founded in 1932 by the Australian Broadcasting Commission, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra has evolved into one of the world's finest orchestras as Sydney has become one of the world's great cities. Resident at the iconic Sydney Opera House, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra also performs in venues throughout Sydney and regional New South Wales, and international tours to Europe, Asia and the USA have earned the Orchestra worldwide recognition for artistic excellence.

Well on its way to becoming the premier orchestra of the Asia Pacific region, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra has toured China on five occasions, and in 2014 won the arts category in the Australian Government's inaugural Australia-China Achievement Awards, recognising ground-breaking work in nurturing the cultural and artistic relationship between the two nations.

The Orchestra's first chief conductor was Sir Eugene Goossens, appointed in 1947; he was followed by Nicolai Malko, Dean Dixon, Moshe Atzmon, Willem van Otterloo, Louis Frémaux, Sir Charles Mackerras, Zdeněk Mácal, Stuart

Challender, Edo de Waart and Gianluigi Gelmetti. Vladimir Ashkenazy was Principal Conductor from 2009 to 2013. The Orchestra's history also boasts collaborations with legendary figures such as George Szell, Sir Thomas Beecham, Otto Klemperer and Igor Stravinsky.

The Sydney Symphony's award-winning Learning and Engagement program is central to its commitment to the future of live symphonic music, developing audiences and engaging the participation of young people. The Orchestra promotes the work of Australian composers through performances, recordings and commissions. Recent premieres have included major works by Ross Edwards, Lee Bracegirdle, Gordon Kerry, Mary Finsterer, Nigel Westlake, Paul Stanhope and Georges Lentz, and recordings of music by Brett Dean have been released on both the BIS and SSO Live labels.

Other releases on the SSO Live label, established in 2006, include performances conducted by Alexander Lazarev, Sir Charles Mackerras and David Robertson, as well as the complete Mahler symphonies conducted by Vladimir Ashkenazy.

2019 is David Robertson's sixth season as Chief Conductor and Artistic Director.

THE ORCHESTRA



David Robertson

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CONDUCTOR AND ARTISTIC
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 Anthony Cowie
 Peter Creeden
 Paul Deschamps
 Paul & Rachelle Edwards
 Roslyn Farrar
 Matthew Garrett & Courtney Thomason
 Rob Gaunt
 Sam Giddings
 Kathryn Higgs
 Katie Hryce
 Amelia Johnson
 Virginia Judge
 Aernout Kerbert
 Robert Larosa
 Kate Lavender
 Carl McLaughlin
 Sabrina Meier
 Adrian Miller
 Jemma Morris
 Alex Nicholas
 Timothy Nicholl & James Camilleri
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