

REPORT

IMPACT

2020

SHAKESPEARE
773B

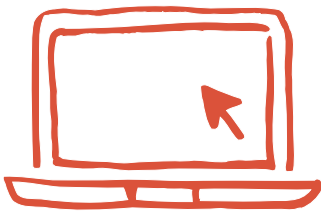
With everything cancelled due to COVID, having an opportunity to connect with Bell Shakespeare was incredible. It gave our students something to look forward to, reignited their passion for performing and gave them new insights into text.

Angela, Teacher, Cairns QLD

THEATRE FOR ALL AUSTRALIANS

Our dream is that all Australians, no matter where they live or what their circumstance, should have the opportunity to experience Shakespeare’s works.

IN 2020



149,166

TOTAL AUDIENCE REACHED THROUGH OUR DIGITAL STREAMING INITIATIVES

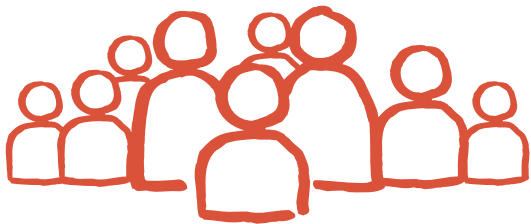
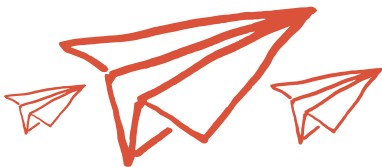


97%

OF FEDERAL ELECTORATES REACHED THROUGH OUR LEARNING AND OUTREACH PROGRAMS

138,086

STUDENTS AND TEACHERS ENGAGED IN REGIONAL, REMOTE, AND URBAN AUSTRALIA THROUGH DIGITAL AND FACE TO FACE PROGRAMS



165,285

PEOPLE ENGAGED WITH A BELL SHAKESPEARE PROGRAM OR PERFORMANCE IN TOTAL, EITHER ONLINE OR IN PERSON

EMPLOYED 91 ARTISTS 29 CREATIVES 22 TEACHING ARTISTS 39 TECHNICIANS

Via mainstage, education, digital and archival production broadcast activities

MENTORED 15 REGIONAL TEACHERS VIA YEAR-LONG MENTORSHIPS

WELCOME TO OUR 2020 IMPACT REPORT



For Bell Shakespeare, 2020 marked 30 years of sharing Shakespeare with Australians everywhere. It turned out to be a year to remember, but not for the reasons we had originally planned.

When theatres, schools and state borders began to close in early March, we were forced to cancel nearly all our live performance activity as the country went into an effective lockdown. This included our acclaimed production of *Hamlet* less than two weeks after opening, the national tour of *The Comedy of Errors*, and a considerable portion of our extensive education and outreach programs.

In a year of such crippling uncertainty, we focused on remaining true to our vision and mission of providing access to the works of Shakespeare. This crystallised as a focus on supporting students and teachers, staying connected to our national audience and stakeholders, and providing as much employment as possible for our predominantly freelance workforce.

We are delighted that in a time of considerable isolation, we were able to connect with so many people and in myriad ways including, eventually, some face-to-face performances in schools.

We were pleased to be able to reach 138,086 students and teachers in 97% of federal electorates mostly via online and digital initiatives.

We are deeply grateful to our many donors, partners and the NSW state and commonwealth governments, as well as our teachers, students, audiences and the entire Bell Shakespeare family.

Gill Perkins
Executive Director

Peter Evans
Artistic Director



JANUARY

Artist in Residence program delivered in Shanghai, China

Hamlet rehearsals commence



John Bell Scholarship recipients week in Sydney

Hecate by Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company in association with Bell Shakespeare premieres at the Perth Festival

FEBRUARY

Creative Development of new work *Mad or Bad*, in partnership with Accessible Arts, exploring neurodiversity.

Regional Teacher Mentorship in Sydney with 15 teachers from across Australia in attendance



Artist in Residence programs in Sydney
Hamlet rehearsals conclude

MARCH

Hamlet opens to critical acclaim at Sydney Opera House



Less than two weeks after opening, *Hamlet* closes due to COVID-19 impact

Bell Shakespeare office closes & staff commence working from home

All in-theatre and education activity cancelled or postponed indefinitely

Bell Shakespeare Shorts Film Festival launches

APRIL

Bell Shakespeare Shorts Festival teacher Q&A delivered on Zoom



Rehearsal room turned into a temporary digital studio

MAY

Online training commences for Regional Teacher Mentorship

Free Schools Broadcasts commence



Teacher Master Series online 26 – 28 May
HSC Seminars with the University of Sydney

JUNE

Kings of Baxter Broadcast & live Q&A



Shakespeare Storytime online workshops launched

First online Artist in Residence program delivered via Zoom

Schools Broadcasts continue

OUR 2020 STORY...

JULY

Speak The Speech podcast launched – Episode 1 with Kate Mulvany

Shakespeare Storytime continues

74 student films received for Film Festival – shortlist announced & judging period

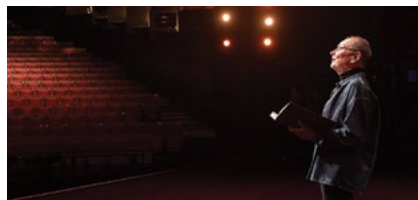


Online John Bell Scholarship auditions commence

School Broadcasts continue

AUGUST

An excerpt of *One Man In His Time: John Bell and Shakespeare* captured and broadcast in partnership with Sydney Opera House as part of their digital season, *From Our House to Yours*.



Bell Shakespeare Shorts Festival online awards ceremony, screening and winners announced

Speak The Speech episodes 2-3 released

The Players commence rehearsals in-person

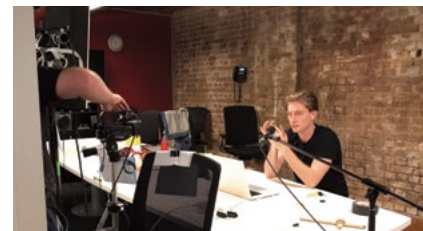
To Thine Own Self Be True online communication workshops

Online John Bell Scholarship auditions continue

Schools Broadcasts continue

SEPTEMBER

Macbeth: The (Socially Distanced) Rehearsal recorded as new schools' online resource



Bell Debate #1 delivered in Sydney and live-streamed

The Players return

Speak The Speech episodes 4-5 released
The Players return to perform in schools in NSW and ACT

Regional Access Workshops delivered online to regional centres across Australia

Online John Bell Scholarship auditions continue

Schools Broadcasts conclude

OCTOBER

Speak The Speech episodes 6-7

Regional Access Workshops continue across Australia



Online John Bell Scholarship auditions continue

NOVEMBER

Bell Debate #2 delivered in Canberra and live-streamed



Speak The Speech episodes 8-9 released
Creative Development – *In The Round*

Regional Access Workshops continue online

Online John Bell Scholarship auditions conclude

DECEMBER

Speak The Speech episodes 10-12 released



Four John Bell Scholarship recipients announced

BELL SHAKESPEARE SHORTS FESTIVAL

Launched not long after COVID-19 took its grip on the world, the festival became a welcome creative task for schools undertaking remote learning.

Our inaugural student film festival, launched in 2020, was originally designed exclusively for schools. When schools were closed and students moved to home learning, eligibility was modified so households and siblings could take part. To assist students and teachers, eight video resources were created and Huw McKinnon and Joanna Erskine hosted a Festival Q&A over Zoom.

We received 74 films from primary and secondary students across Australia. The quality of work was impressive, ranging from traditional retellings to radical, topical, humorous, heartfelt and intelligent reimaginings. The judging panel included Artistic Director Peter Evans, Lisa McCune, Kate Mulvany and Will McDonald.

Following a longlist of 17 films, seven overall awards were announced by Peter Evans and Joanna Erskine at an online awards ceremony on 12 August. The overall winner was Chris Tan from Cabramatta NSW with his film *All The School's A Stage*, reimagining the Seven Ages of Man speech from *As You Like It* as a journey through his high school years.



Cronulla Cooking School by Lilia Buhagiar, Piper Buhagiar, Georgia McLean and Daisy McLean

HIGHLIGHTS

Our inaugural 2020 Bell Shakespeare Shorts Festival winners:

TOP PRIMARY FILM

Reimagining Romeo and Juliet by Caitlin Chung and Solomiia Koreniuk from Waitara Public School, NSW.

TOP SECONDARY FILM

All The School's A Stage by Chris Tan of Cabramatta NSW.

EXCELLENCE IN PERFORMANCE

Cronulla Cooking School by Lilia Buhagiar, Piper Buhagiar, Georgia McLean and Daisy McLean of Caringbah South NSW.

EXCELLENCE IN DIRECTION

Lady Macbeth's Revenge by Inner West Youth Theatre, Annandale NSW.

EXCELLENCE IN STORYTELLING

Her-Story by Grace Bowman from Toowoomba QLD; and *Reimagining Romeo and Juliet* by Caitlin Chung & Solomiia Koreniuk of Waitara Public School NSW.

CREATIVE VISION

Witches by Luis Arnet from Stafford Heights QLD
Runner Up: *The End* by Katerina Reynolds of Blue Mountains Grammar School NSW.

COMMUNITY SPIRIT

All the School's A Stage by Chris Tan of Cabramatta NSW.

We were delighted to learn that Top Secondary Film and Community Spirit award winner Chris Tan was subsequently accepted into a bachelor course at the Australian Film, Television and Radio School (AFTRS) using his Bell Shakespeare Shorts Festival film.

“I feel really lucky and grateful for this festival!”

Chris Tan, Award Winner

“This gave me tingles! Such a fantastic reworking! Fabulous use of location and great to see such a fabulous community of students each playing a part. Well done!”

Kate Mulvany, Festival Judge, regarding Chris Tan's winning film *All The School's A Stage*

REACH

74

Films submitted from across Australia

315

Students

19

Schools



All The School's A Stage by Chris Tan



Lady Macbeth's Revenge by Inner West Youth Theatre

BROADCASTS

Due to the sudden closure of theatres, in 2020 Australian students and audiences missed out on the opportunity to see staged productions of Shakespeare’s plays.

FREE BROADCASTS FOR SCHOOLS

“Thank you so much for making these recordings available. It is so appreciated for a small school with limited access - financially and geographically.”

Teacher, Canowindra High School NSW



The Tempest, 2015 © Prudence Upton

“Thank you for making these available at this time. Your broadcasts have enriched my teaching of these plays and made my students aware of the high quality of Australian theatre when they have not been able to access live performances.”

Teacher, Meriden School NSW

FREE BROADCASTS FOR SCHOOLS

To support students and their teachers during this time of online learning, Bell Shakespeare made available six archival recordings of past productions free of charge to schools nationally.

Plays were selected according to their popularity for study and relevance to Year 12 exams, and included *Macbeth* (2012), *Henry 4* (2013), *The Tempest* (2015), *Romeo and Juliet* (2016), *Othello* (2016) and *The Merchant of Venice* (2017).

An astounding **126,251** students from all states and territories were registered to view the recordings free of charge, and included a large number of schools who had not previously engaged with Bell Shakespeare or our education programs.

Feedback from schools was incredibly positive, with an outpouring of gratitude for providing these resources during such difficult times.

KINGS OF BAXTER LIVE BROADCAST

On 11 June, we screened the award-winning documentary, *Kings of Baxter*, on YouTube, followed by a live Q&A hosted by actor Mandy Bishop and featuring James Evans, Huw McKinnon and *Kings of Baxter* Director Jack Yabsley. The film follows Bell Shakespeare’s Huw McKinnon and James Evans as they work with a group of young men in the Frank Baxter Juvenile Justice Centre on the ambitious task of putting on a live performance of *Macbeth*.

ONE MAN IN HIS TIME IN PARTNERSHIP WITH SOH DIGITAL

When the 2020 season of John Bell’s special celebratory solo show, *One Man In His Time*, was cancelled due to ongoing restrictions, we were delighted to be able to work with Sydney Opera House as part of its digital season From Our House to Yours to bring an abridged version of the performance to audiences.

The performance was viewed by more than **2,600** people around the world, via YouTube. In late 2020 it was announced that *One Man In His Time* would be included as part of the Company’s 2021 season with performances in Sydney and Canberra.

“Being able to access these broadcasts really adds to the students’ understanding of the text as a drama performance and not just a script in a way that film adaptations do not achieve.”

Teacher feedback

REACH

126,251

Students registered for the Free Schools Broadcasts

462

People watched *Kings of Baxter* live online

2,600

People watched the excerpt of *One Man in His Time*



Production still from *Kings of Baxter* produced by Grumpy Sailor



John Bell records an excerpt from *One Man In His Time* for Sydney Opera House © Daniel Boud

IMPACT

94%

Of teachers said they found the free broadcasts valuable.

98%

Of teachers said they would like to access the free broadcasts again.

81%

Of teachers were teaching the play being broadcast.

KINGS OF BAXTER

“Thank you for allowing me access to this incredible experience for these young men. Bell Shakespeare is to be commended for this initiative.”

Bell Shakespeare Patron

ONE MAN IN HIS TIME

“The most magical piece of pure theatre I think I have ever seen. Not just the artistry of Bell’s acting, but the way he showed me the relevance and modernity of Shakespeare’s thinking.”

Bell Shakespeare Patron

We would like to give special thanks to our Sharing Shakespeare donors for making it possible to share free broadcasts with schools.

THE PLAYERS

Each year, Bell Shakespeare’s touring ensemble of actors, The Players, deliver hundreds of performances in primary and secondary schools across Australia. For many students in regional and remote areas, it is their first experience of live theatre.

IN-SCHOOL PERFORMANCES

“The best of the best. I know no other way to bring the texts to life and engage young people other than this method. A living experience of language.”

Teacher, Aurora Southern Highlands Steiner School, Bowral NSW

The Players © Clare Hawley



IN-SCHOOL PERFORMANCES

With 400+ performances scheduled and rehearsals due to commence, the outbreak of COVID-19 put The Players program on an indefinite hold.

Shows were either rescheduled, paused or cancelled, and we remained in contact with schools nationally regarding touring viability. By August we were able to commence rehearsals and began a limited tour in September.

While we were only able to deliver performances to schools in Sydney, regional NSW and ACT, the reception from teachers and students was rapturous after having no live performance experiences all year. Although it was not the extensive tour we had planned, we were thrilled to deliver this small season to such appreciative audiences.

MACBETH: THE (SOCIALY DISTANCED) REHEARSAL

To support the many schools who had booked Players performances around the country who we could no longer reach in person, we adapted our show *Macbeth: The Rehearsal* for an online format. Written and filmed entirely in-house, the film imagined a director and two actors rehearsing *Macbeth* over Zoom, and featured James Evans, Jane Mahady and Jack Crumlin.

With support from the Robert Salzer Foundation, we were able to deliver the recording to many schools free of charge.

The Players © Clare Hawley



REACH

78

Total performances

50

Total schools

8,386

Total students

1,750

Regional students

6,636

Metropolitan students

2,358

Primary students

MACBETH: THE (SOCIALY DISTANCED) REHEARSAL

“One of the benefits that has come out of the COVID-19 experience has been the development of online learning opportunities. For a small, rural school, opportunities such as these were so appreciated and hopefully signalled the opportunity for more of this to follow. Travelling to Sydney to see a full production is worthwhile, but the cost places it out of our reach. Thank you for this valuable experience. For the first time, many of our students didn’t feel disadvantaged by living in the country.”

Teacher, St Joseph’s High School, Aberdeen NSW

Recording Macbeth: The (Socially Distanced) Rehearsal



IMPACT

95%

Of teachers said The Players in-school performances make Shakespeare more accessible for their students.

100%

Of teachers said The Players provide an important live experience that students wouldn’t otherwise have access to.

90%

Of teachers said The Players’ performances provide stimulating ideas and discussion points to take back into the classroom.

100%

Of teachers said they would recommend The Players in-school performances to other schools and teachers.

Recording Macbeth: The (Socially Distanced) Rehearsal



We would like to give special thanks to the following partners for their support:



ONLINE LEARNING

2020 was a year of great learning, resilience and ingenuity. Our face-to-face teaching with students, teachers and the general public needed to be adapted for online delivery, and a wealth of new content was created. We were amazed by the many positives that came from such a testing time, and the national engagement we were able to maintain and expand through these initiatives.

TEACHER MASTER SERIES

“Thank you for offering them. As a remote teacher, access to creative workshops that incorporate participation is a challenge. This series was brilliant!”

Teacher, Christmas Island District High School WA



Teacher Master Series

TEACHER MASTER SERIES

With a range of new teacher masterclasses planned to take place at Bell Shakespeare HQ, we transferred the classes to Zoom and delivered them live, online for 62 teachers. In doing so, a wider range of teachers were able to access these training sessions from Rockhampton QLD to Philip Island VIC to Christmas Island WA.

Sessions were Directing Shakespeare with James Evans, Verse & Prose Masterclass with Huw McKinnon, and a Vocal Wellbeing for Teachers masterclass with Jess Chambers.

HSC SEMINARS WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

In partnership with academics from the University of Sydney, we delivered live, interactive online curriculum-aligned performance seminars for NSW HSC students. Seminars featured live performances from Bell Shakespeare artists of key scenes and soliloquies. Resident Artist in Education Huw McKinnon was joined by Dr Huw Griffiths, Professor Emerita Penny Gay and Professor Liam Semler to explore *Richard III*, *The Tempest* and *The Merchant of Venice*. 84 students participated in the seminars via Zoom, from seven metropolitan and regional schools including Casino High School in regional NSW.

SHAKESPEARE STORYTIME

To support online learning for primary-aged children, their teachers and families, we designed a six-week at home program called Shakespeare Storytime. Each week a live workshop was delivered via Zoom by teaching artists Felix Jozeps and Teresa Jakovich, focusing on one of Shakespeare’s plays or the history of Shakespeare’s England. Each weekly workshop was accompanied by at-home worksheets and activities. Designed to introduce students to Shakespeare’s plays in a light-hearted, fun and active format, this program was endorsed as part of the Creative Kids NSW program with parents able to access the program at no cost.

ESSAY HELP WITH JAMES & HUW

To assist senior secondary students with their studies, for the first time we offered to answer student essay questions via video. With a national callout for essay questions, James Evans and Huw McKinnon answered a range of student questions on plays including *Macbeth*, *Othello* and *Henry IV Part 1*, in five minutes or less. These were made available to access on Bell Shakespeare’s website.

REGIONAL ACCESS WORKSHOPS

As our national tour *The Comedy of Errors* was sadly cancelled, our complimentary workshops for regional students needed to be reimagined. Instead, we delivered live Shakespeare performance workshops in-person and via Zoom to venues and communities across Australia, free of charge. Teaching artists worked with young people in a range of areas including Karratha WA, Mudgee NSW, Toowoomba QLD, Cowell SA, Darwin NT and Warrnambool VIC.

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE, STUDENT WORKSHOPS & SEMINARS

We were able to deliver a large number of workshops and Artist in Residence programs online. We set up a temporary digital studio in the rehearsal room at Bell Shakespeare HQ with the help of our amazing production team, and our teaching artists developed new skills in delivering active workshops online.



Shakespeare Storytime



Digital workshp © Jennifer McGrath

REACH

62

Teachers for Teacher Master Series

84

Students for HSC Shakespeare Seminars

71

Students for online Regional Access Workshops

187

Students for online workshops and seminars

290

Students for online Artist in Residence programs

REGIONAL ACCESS WORKSHOPS

“The experience was fantastic and the students had such a great time. The Teaching Artist was clearly very passionate about teaching Shakespeare and also supporting the students with building their knowledge and understanding.”

Teacher, Mackay State High School QLD

STUDENT WORKSHOPS

“Thank you for this opportunity. In troubled times it has been great to immerse ourselves in ‘theatre’.”

Homeschool participant, NSW

We would like to give special thanks to the following partners for their support:



Shakespeare Seminar Partner



Shakespeare Storytime

FACE-TO-FACE TEACHING

Our residencies and workshops are immersive experiences for students and teachers, ensuring deep learning and engagement with Shakespeare’s text.

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE & STUDENT WORKSHOPS

Happily, we were able to deliver a limited yet powerful range of workshops and Artist in Residence programs face-to-face in 2020. This included a return to Wellington College International Shanghai in early January, before the pandemic outbreak occurred, with Huw McKinnon teaching in-person, followed by online workshop for a total of **650** students. Student workshops chartered everything from senior Shakespeare masterclasses in preparation for exams, through to introductory Shakespeare experiences for primary students in our Shakespeare Adventures programs – Magic & Mayhem and Lovers & Tyrants.

One workshop tour involved South Australian teaching artist Paul Reichstein travelling to schools in and around the Eyre Peninsula delivering workshops and auditioning students for the John Bell Scholarship. Paul kept a diary of his experiences on this tour, which we share on the following page.

REACH

962

Students for in-person Student Workshops

681

Students for in-person Artist in Residence programs

138

Students for in-person Regional Access Workshops

We would like to give special thanks to the following partners for their support:



NEILSON
FOUNDATION

SCULLY FUND



Moorefield Girls High School seminar © Marnya Rothe



Waitara Public School Workshop © Marnya Rothe

SHAKESPEARE ON THE EYRE PENINSULA

By PAUL REICHSTEIN, TEACHING ARTIST

Here’s three things I love: Shakespeare, teaching Shakespeare and working with young people. I love seeing their eyes light up, their confidence rise, their insecurities fall away. It warms my heart more than anything I’ve ever experienced.

I have had the pleasure of working for Bell Shakespeare for 14 years as an actor, a director, a researcher and a teaching artist. I have no favourite, I just love Shakespeare and any opportunity to delve into his worlds and characters. It often feels like I have worked with every school across the width and breadth of this country. I’ve been right across the country from Thursday Island to Cape York to Leigh Creek and many more.

In October, I was finally headed to the Eyre Peninsula on the west coast of South Australia – my home turf. I spent a week driving almost 2,000km to deliver workshops in four towns I know like the back of my hand.



MONDAY

After a John Bell Scholarship audition, I taught a workshop for D’Face of Youth Arts in Wyalla. Working with community arts organisations is incredible. They provide a space for artists who need a path, the actors and creatively minded that need a community and a place to be heard.

Participants in the workshop ranged from a seven-year-old student to adults in their early 50s. We covered a lot, from Shakespearean insults to character journeys and portions of *Romeo and Juliet*. We had a seven-year-old reading Romeo to a 45-year-old Juliet. There are so many passionate and hungry people – children and adults alike – who are keen to perform, be involved and learn different things.



TUESDAY

This was one of my favourite workshops of all time. Cowell is a place close to my heart and 30 minutes west of my hometown. I’m not biased; they were just that damn good. I had about 12 students, none of whom had experienced Shakespeare on any academic or performance level before. They jumped in head-first. Cheeky, intelligent, impassioned speakers, artists and deeply curious. I had too much fun. Truly, too much.

We started with warm up games. Then I led them into Shakespearean insults and they insisted on keeping the hand-outs so they could to use them on fellow students and teachers alike. The insults are as much a lesson in articulation, vocabulary and wordplay as they are just about being bawdy or insulting. One teacher said she was going to use it at the staff meeting on Tuesday evening. Brilliant!

WEDNESDAY

Back to Whyalla for two Lovers and Tyrants workshops with the Year 7s. Year 7 is when things start to get interesting; they respond to any romantic content specifically in a much more interesting way. Things are starting to get real and make sense to them on a personal level.

A boy and girl (who were an actual couple) got up and performed their rehearsed piece from *Romeo and Juliet*. It was going along swimmingly. Their grasp of the text was excellent, they understood the textual stage directions where the characters touch and when they don’t. They spoke beautifully. Then at the end, right on the line, “then move not, while my prayer’s effect I take...” they kissed! It came out of nowhere! The class erupted. I looked at the teacher – his head was in his hand, barely containing his laughter and I nearly fell over. These teenagers actually kissed in front of everyone!

THURSDAY

I’m obsessed with hearing the words of this great playwright in the mouths of people who perhaps won’t even study his plays for another few years. They throw me curve balls, because they are cheeky; I throw them Shakespeare because I’m a hard taskmaster.

My highlight today was the Year 5s at Long Street Primary in Whyalla. I asked them to show me what *Hamlet* might look like in the Middle Back Theatre (the local Whyalla theatre, where I used to see pantomimes as a kid). One student got down on bended knee, gave me the best ‘holding Yorick’s skull acting’ while his mate rested his grimacing face on his palm, playing Yorick. It was beautiful. It was genius.

One of the students randomly came out with the line “To be or not to be, that is the question.” I brought the rest of the group to immediate attention. I asked him where he’d heard that line, how did he know it, what’s going on?” “I saw it in *Billy Madison* and *The Simpsons*”. I asked him, “Do you know where the line came from?” He had no idea. I then led a discussion about the pervasiveness of Shakespeare in contemporary culture. They loved it.

FRIDAY

I travelled from Whyalla to Port Lincoln; one of my favourite drives since childhood traversing beautiful fields, thriving agriculture and livestock and old homesteads that stand the test of time.

I took the students through warmups and asked: What do you know about Shakespeare and what do you know about *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*? Nil to nothing. PERFECT! We started with a moved synopsis, which is a condensed, physical synopsis of the play. We looked at the three worlds within the play: Athenians, Fairies and Mechanicals.

It was wonderful to deliver, reading the narrative aloud and watching these students grapple with moments of serious first-time discovery! “Hang on!” they said, “this is not a love triangle, it’s a square!”



SATURDAY

Travel day, end of tour: I woke up, and felt fantastic. These weeks reinvent me. I love, more than anything, bringing Shakespeare to young people, taking his works off the high shelf of privilege and aristocracy and making them accessible to the youngest of our theatre appreciators, to our future boffins. Right now, there’s nothing I’d rather do in my life.



Paul Reichstein, Teaching Artist

SCHOLARSHIPS

As part of Bell Shakespeare’s commitment to sharing Shakespeare with everyone, regardless of geographical or economic barriers, we provide ongoing opportunities for regional students and teachers to work intensively with our actors, teaching artists and creatives.



Regional Teacher Mentorship © Clare Hawley

REACH

30

Teachers

120

Students auditioned in person or online

4

Students were awarded the 2020 John Bell Scholarship

6

States and territories

REGIONAL TEACHER MENTORSHIP

With 30 teachers due to undertake a year-long mentorship with the Company through the Regional Teacher Mentorship in 2020, sadly only half of the cohort was able to take up the experience.

Group 1, consisting of 15 teachers from regional and remote schools across Australia, travelled to Bell Shakespeare HQ in late February 2020, and participated in four intensive days of training and personal development. Teachers represented the communities of Wee Waa, Nyngan, Kandos, Forbes, Moree, Wellington, Cobar and Narrandera NSW; Moora WA; Emerald, Mirani, and Innisfail QLD; Philip Island, Bendigo and Hamilton VIC. This group was a majority of first and second year teachers who faced significant challenges such as being the sole English teacher in the school, or the head of department with a transient, inexperienced staff.

Group 2 was scheduled for March 2020 in Sydney and so had to be postponed. Instead, we delivered training sessions via Zoom, meeting fortnightly to establish connections and provide support. This group’s program was eventually transferred to 2021.

JOHN BELL SCHOLARSHIP

We commenced the year with the four John Bell Scholarship recipients from 2019 joining us during *Hamlet* rehearsals. The recipients, from the communities of Hobart TAS, Rockhampton QLD, Bathurst NSW and Darwin NT, participated in Shakespeare workshops, movement and vocal training, observed rehearsals, worked with John Bell, and saw a range of in-theatre productions and tours.

Our national scholarship for budding young performers from regional and remote communities, was scheduled for a national audition tour. Instead, we moved in-person auditions to live, online auditions totalling an incredible 120 auditions, allowing us to reach students we wouldn’t normally with in-person activity.

Each student who auditioned received a dedicated 15 minute masterclass with a Bell Shakespeare artist, where they workshop their chosen text and performance. From a shortlist of 14 students, four winners were selected – an additional scholarship place made possible with support from Coca-Cola Australia Foundation. The audition panel included Founding Artistic Director John Bell and Artistic Director Peter Evans.

2020 JOHN BELL SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Kody Austin, Girton Grammar School, Bendigo VIC
Taine De Manser, Mortlake P-12 College VIC
Xia Lian Wilson, The Illawarra Grammar School, Wollongong NSW
Tess Withnell, Karratha Senior High School WA

Two Highly Commended places were awarded to:
Sophie Harvey, Burnie High School TAS
Aidan Murphy, St John Paul College, Coffs Harbour NSW

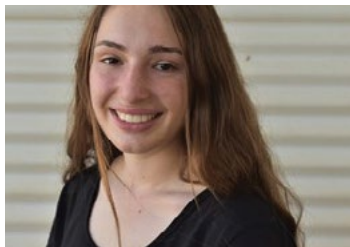
Kody, Taine, Xia Lian and **Tess** are scheduled to travel to Bell Shakespeare HQ in Sydney in 2021 for a week of training and mentorship with the Company.



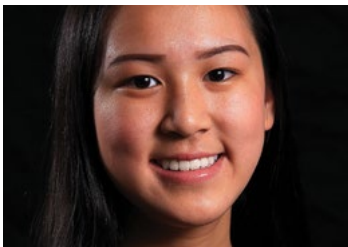
Kody Austin



Taine de Manser



Tess Withnell



Xia Lian Wilson

REGIONAL TEACHER MENTORSHIP

“I feel more motivated and enthused than I have felt in a long time. Not only to implement the amazing things I have learnt during the RTM at my school, but also to continue my own personal exploration of Shakespeare.”

Participant, Regional Teacher Mentorship

VIRTUAL AUDITIONS FOR THE JOHN BELL SCHOLARSHIP

By **HUW MCKINNON** and **JAMES EVANS**

2020 was dark, but there was a silver lining – it gave us an opportunity to rethink how we do everything. It was scary at first, but also very exciting because we could make the most of technology to reach students. A number of glorious innovations sprung up unexpectedly.

What we managed to do has forever changed what we are able to do and the communities we can reach. For example, auditioning young people via Zoom for the John Bell Scholarship! Suddenly, we could connect with students in Queensland, the Northern Territory and Western Australia all on the same day.

Initially, we were concerned about transitioning the John Bell Scholarship auditions to a virtual environment because it is more challenging to build rapport with students but we found it affirming because for the first time, students were doing auditions in the presence of their parents rather than while at school so their parents could hear the audition. We could chat to their family members and get to know a bit more about their communities. On a number of occasions, parents expressed their thanks and how valuable the experience was for their young person.

The virtual format also meant we could spend more time digging into Shakespeare’s language with students who were passionate about learning, and who had more flexibility in their timetables. It was a really fulfilling experience and we hope to continue to reach more students online, even as we increase our face-to-face engagement.

We would like to give special thanks to the following partners for their support:



NEW DIGITAL PROGRAMS

With theatres closed for an extended period in 2020, we took the opportunity to discover new ways of exploring and engaging with Shakespeare’s work.

SPEAK THE SPEECH PODCAST

“*Speak The Speech* is my new favourite podcast - and I have been an avid podcast listener for 12 years.”

Bell Shakespeare Facebook follower



Speak The Speech podcast recording



Sydney Bell Debate © Prudence Upton

SPEAK THE SPEECH PODCAST

We launched a podcast hosted by Associate Director James Evans, celebrating some of Shakespeare’s greatest speeches with some of Australia’s best-known actors, directors, and thinkers. In each episode James is joined by a guest who performs their favourite speech written by Shakespeare. Together they investigate how the words and ideas are brought to life on stage, and what makes each speech special.

Speak The Speech Season One guests included: Kate Mulvany, Leon Ford, Kylie Bracknell, Mandy Bishop, Hazem Shammass, Abbie-lee Lewis, Toby Schmitz, Ray Chong Nee, John Bell, Harriet Gordon-Anderson, Darren Gilshenan, and Zahra Newman.

BELL DEBATES

To celebrate our 30th anniversary year we brought back an iconic program: the Bell Debates, which first ran back in the 1990s. In front of an audience, two teams debated a quote from Shakespeare, demonstrating his ability to provoke thought and discussion about our world today.

Capacity restrictions meant our live audience was limited, but we streamed each debate live on YouTube, giving viewers the opportunity to vote for the winning teams.

The first debate was held at Carriageworks in Sydney on 24 September, with teams debating the topic from *As You Like It* that ‘We have seen better days’. The debaters included Benjamin Law, Miriam Corowa, Jess Scully, Jane Caro, Jan Fran and Jonathan Biggins; and the moderator was Dr Rebecca Huntley.

The second debate was held in Canberra at the National Portrait Gallery on 12 November, with the teams debating the topic from *Julius Caesar* that ‘The fault is not in our stars, but in ourselves’. The debaters included Amy Remeikis, Phyllida Behm, Mark Kenny, Bruce Meagher, Virginia Haussegger and the Honourable Paul Fletcher MP, with Lachlan Edwards moderating.

The streamed debates were viewed by more than 7,253 people on YouTube.

TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE ONLINE COMMUNICATION WORKSHOPS & TRAINING

While Bell Shakespeare has offered leadership, communication and presentation skills workshops for many years, the pandemic presented us with an opportunity to deliver these workshops online. We offered a series of public online workshops on communication and presentation skills, drawing inspiration from Shakespeare’s portrayal of great leaders. The 30 available places were quickly sold out.

REACH

7,253

People watched the Bell Debates

10,600

Downloads of *Speak The Speech* podcast

30

Participants for To Thine Own Self Be True workshops



Canberra Bell Debate courtesy of National Portrait Gallery

TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE WORKSHOPS

“I really enjoyed the presentation, your energy and the chance to hear a little bit of the Bell Shakespeare I am very much missing this year.”

Workshop participant

BELL DEBATES

“I just wanted to say how much I enjoyed this evening’s Debate ‘We have seen better days’. Erudite and intelligent debaters who spoke with conviction and passion. I had a great night in, here in Lockdown Melbourne! Thanks so much.”

Bell Shakespeare patron



Sydney Bell Debate © Prudence Upton

IN THEATRES

Our first production for 2020, *Hamlet*, had been open for less than two weeks when we had to cancel the remainder of our season. Although it was devastating, we were grateful to have been able to open to rave reviews and were determined to bring it back in 2021.

HECATE

“A very moving experience and a fabulous adaptation of an incredible play. Shakespeare’s words spoken in Noongar resonated beautifully.”

Bell Shakespeare patron and Yirra Yaakin Hecate patron



Hecate © Dana Weeks

HAMLET

Shakespeare’s iconic tragedy was programmed as our first production for our 30th anniversary season, with Peter Evans directing. *Hamlet*, starring Harriet Gordon-Anderson, is set inside the glamorous court of Denmark in the 1960s. This was a haunting portrait of a young man struggling with the death of his father, his mother’s hasty remarriage to his uncle, and the vision of his father’s ghost looming in his mind’s eye.

Fortunately, before Sydney Opera House closed we were able to deliver a high-quality broadcast for schools, giving more than 500 students from 29 schools the opportunity to access this important production.

HECATE

Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company premiered *Hecate* at the 2020 Perth Festival in association with Bell Shakespeare. Adapted and directed by Kylie Bracknell (Kaarljilba Kaardn) this was Australia’s first large-scale Shakespeare production entirely in Noongar language as conceived by Kyle J Morrison.

Hecate, queen of the witches, is usually omitted from productions of *Macbeth*. Here, she is put at the heart of everything, watching as *Macbeth* strives toward power at any cost and all the while knowing that order must be restored. Yirra Yaakin’s ensemble used this *Macbeth* adaptation as a springboard to showcase the expressive qualities of their endangered Noongar language.



Hamlet © Brett Boardman

REACH

HAMLET

16

Total performances

5,333

Total audience

586

Students from 29 schools watched the schools broadcast

HAMLET

“It was not only the best Shakespeare production I’ve ever seen, but one of the most moving theatrical experiences I’ve had in the past 20 years.”

Bell Shakespeare Hamlet patron



Hamlet © Brett Boardman

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

2020 allowed us time to develop and explore new and existing works and create new educational resources.



Mad or Bad creative development

“I am a profoundly different person having experienced the *Mad or Bad* development week. I spent months researching neurodiversity in the lead up to this workshop, yet I learnt much more in just a few days with this group of incredible people.”

Head of Education, Joanna Erskine, on the Mad or Bad creative development

REACH

9

Artists employed

60

Artists participated in our national survey

MAD OR BAD WITH DAN GRAHAM & ACCESSIBLE ARTS

In February 2020, in partnership with Director Dan Graham and Accessible Arts, we delivered a one-week creative development on the new work, *Mad or Bad*. This new Australian work explores the experience of neurodiverse people and artists through the lens of Shakespeare’s characters, performed and directed by Australian neurodiverse artists. While we cannot definitively say that any of Shakespeare’s characters are neurodivergent, we know that neurodivergent people can see neurodiverse traits in Shakespeare’s characters.

Neurodivergent artists working in the performing arts industry encounter significant disadvantages and challenges daily. As opposed to physical challenges or disabilities, neurodiversity is ‘invisible’, making it complex to navigate for all.

Joanna Erskine worked as dramaturg and co-facilitator on this project. Six neurodiverse artists took part in the development, with Director Dan Graham facilitating and Accessible Arts representatives assisting. As part of the development, a national survey was deployed and completed by 60 neurodiverse artists working in the Australian performing arts industry. *Mad or Bad* continues as a development project for the Company.

IN THE ROUND

In response to the growing need and demand for filmed video content of Shakespeare’s plays, we embarked on a creative development of a new video resource concept, *In The Round* (working title). Intended to give high school students a concise yet insightful overview of a range of Shakespeare’s popular plays for study, *In The Round* focuses on a series of Shakespeare’s plays, told in 4 x 20 min video sections with narrative commentary and analysis throughout.

Starting with *Macbeth*, over one week we workshopped early concepts with Bell Shakespeare artists and actors Jess Tovey and Danny Ball. Peter Evans oversaw the development in consultation with Joanna Erskine, using video cameras to test camera angles, script requirements and storytelling devices. Additional workshopping was completed with The Players during school holiday breaks. Creative development for *In The Round* continues.



The Players © Clare Hawley

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Thank you to each and every supporter whose vital contribution, whether large or small, monetary or in-kind, played a critical role in ensuring our ongoing sustainability.

In 2020, Bell Shakespeare’s family of donors, partners and audiences rose to the occasion in providing unprecedented support – both emotionally and financially – as we navigated threats caused by the global pandemic.

We were deeply moved by such a strong show of generosity, welcoming a remarkable 568 new donors to the Bell Shakespeare family. Of these, many either donated the value of their theatre tickets or gave a gift in appreciation of our online content.

We would particularly like to extend our thanks to the many donors who chose to increase their giving in 2020, to make sure Bell Shakespeare would be well-positioned to weather the storm. Your generosity has been enormously heartening.

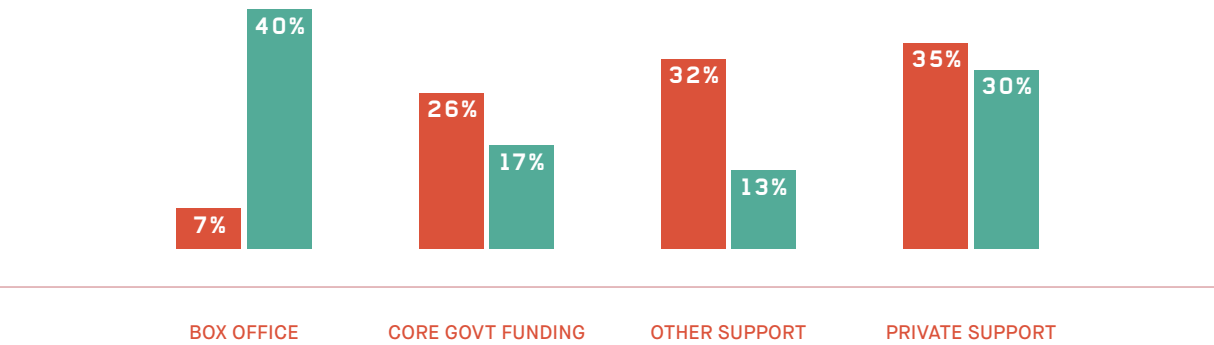
Additionally, we warmly thank major funding partners Neilson Foundation, Crown Resorts and Packer Family Foundations and Scully Fund, all of whom provided unwavering support despite changes made to the delivery of our education and outreach programs.

Finally, we express gratitude to all of our 2020 corporate partners, including major partners Foxtel, La Trobe Financial, Wesfarmers Arts and Teachers Mutual Bank. On so many occasions you embodied the true spirit of partnership, becoming co-collaborators and co-creators of new initiatives in the digital realm. We are proud to have stood together during a challenging time for all.

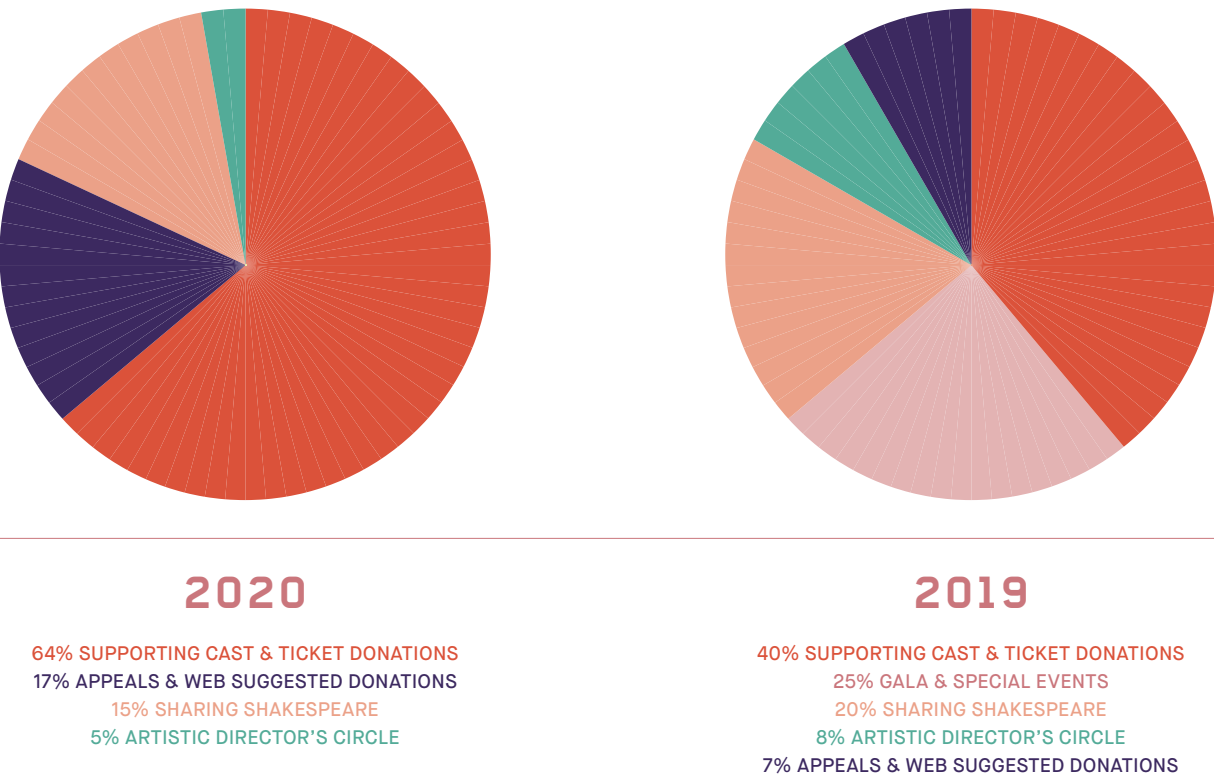


Debra Reinecke
Head of Marketing and Development

SOURCES OF INCOME 2020 VS. 2019



PHILANTHROPIC GIFTS 2020 VS. 2019



THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

We are grateful for our partners who help us deliver our education and outreach programs across the country.

TRUSTS AND FOUNDATIONS



SCULLY FUND



CORPORATE PARTNERS



Premium Company and
Hamlet Season Partner



National Schools Partner



Perth Season Partner



Regional Teacher Mentorship Partner



Shakespeare Seminar Partner

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT



The Company is assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body, and by the NSW Government through Create NSW.

ARTS & VENUE PARTNERS

Thank you to our arts and venue partners for their valued partnership in creating and sharing digital content, with special thanks to Sydney Opera House, as well as facilitating ticket cancellations and donations for our shared audiences in 2020.



NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

OUR SUPPORTERS

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

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The Late Anthony Gilbert AM

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Martin Dickson AM & Susie Dickson

Graham Froebel

Virginia Henderson AM

David Pumphrey

LEGACY GIFTS

We remember and honour those who have generously supported Bell Shakespeare through a bequest.

The late Brian Timothy Carey

The late Anthony Gilbert AM

The late Catherine Guy

The late Barbara Wright

LEGACY CIRCLE

We honour and thank our supporters who have notified us that they intend to leave a gift in their will, allowing us to plan for the future with confidence and continue to touch the lives of millions of Australians.

Rick Burrows

Linda Herd

Dr David Howell & Sarah Howell

Bruce & Natalie Kellett

Jane Kunstler

Diane Matthews

Dr Alana Mitchell

Dr Anne Reeckmann & Dr Gary Holmes

David & Jenny Templeman

Anonymous (22)

INFINITE SPACE

Thank you to our Infinite Space capital campaign donors who are helping us build a future for Bell Shakespeare.

Julia Ritchie

Ruth Ritchie

Jann Skinner

Gene Tilbrook

Alden Toebs & Judi Wolf

Anonymous

THE NOBLES

Dr Brett Archer

Keith Bayliss & Holly Mitchell

Andrew & Catherine Caro

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Helen Williams AC

WE HAPPY FEW

Special thanks to our We Happy Few giving circle who supported us in the early days and have come together to support the Infinite Space capital campaign.

Sandra & Bill Burdett AM

Tim Cox AO & Bryony Cox

Michael S Diamond AM MBE

Jim Dominguez CBE AM & Sue Dominguez

Bill Hayward OAM & Alison Hayward

Virginia Henderson AM

Timothy Pascoe AM & Eva Pascoe

Lady Potter AC CMRI

David & Jill Pumphrey

Charlie Shuetrim AM & Sandy Shuetrim

George & Sabrina Snow

Ezekiel Solomon AM

Anonymous

We would also like to thank our donors who contribute up to \$1,000 – every gift makes a difference to what we are able to achieve.

“I could be bounded
in a nutshell and
count myself a king
of infinite space...”

Hamlet, Act 2, Scene 2

THE DREAMERS

Special thanks to our major donors for giving us the space to dream.

Ilana Atlas AO & Tony D'Aloisio AM

Dr Kimberly Cartwright & Charles Littrell

Kevin Cosgrave

Martin Dickson AM & Susie Dickson

Lachlan & Rebecca Edwards

Kathryn Greiner AO

La Trobe Financial

Anne Loveridge

Low Family Foundation

Nick & Caroline Minogue

Dr Anne Reeckmann & Dr Gary S Holmes

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR’S CIRCLE

Thank you to our 2020 Artistic Director’s Circle members who are passionate about the process of making theatre and are supporting and observing this year’s mainstage and education seasons.

Darin Cooper Foundation
Lachlan Edwards & Rebecca Edwards
Shannon Finch
David & Deborah Friedlander
Linda Herd
The Low Family Foundation
Sam Sheppard
Alden Toevs and Judi Wolf

ANNUAL GIVING

We are incredibly grateful for our annual donors who contribute essential funds via Supporting Cast and Sharing Shakespeare to the cost of our core operations. This ensures we are able to focus our efforts on finding new ways to create, collaborate, and educate on the mainstage and beyond including the life-changing opportunities provided through our learning and outreach programs nationwide.

\$50,000+

Philip Crutchfield qc & Amy Crutchfield
Tom & Elisabeth Karplus**
Sue Maple-Brown am*
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Sally White oam

\$20,000+

Robert Albert ao & Libby Albert**
Dr Kimberly Cartwright & Charles Littrell
Louise Christie*
John Hindmarsh am
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Andrew Sisson ao

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Helen Williams ac
Anonymous (12)

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Anonymous (12)

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*Supporting for 10+ years



Waitara Public School workshop © Marnya Rothe

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Christopher Doyle & Co.


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