



The Australian Live Performance Database (AusStage) Dataset Codebook v2.0

June 2022



<http://www.ausstage.edu.au>

[AusStage](#) provides an accessible online resource for researching live performance in Australia. Development is led by a [consortium](#) of universities, government agencies, industry organisations and collecting institutions with funding from the Australian Research Council and other sources. Australian companies stage some of the most ambitious and innovative live performances, projecting images of Australian culture to audiences here and overseas. AusStage records the significance of these artistic collaborations and stimulates new approaches to collaborative research.

AusStage is committed to collecting and sharing information about Australian live performance as an ongoing, open-access and collaborative endeavour. The AusStage project office and server infrastructure are housed at Flinders University in Adelaide, South Australia. AusStage users come from across Australia and around the world. By sharing knowledge through AusStage researchers and consumers can learn more about Australian performance than ever before.

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Contributors

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AusStage and Contributors (2003-2022)

ACD-Engine Team

INTRODUCTION

AusStage Project History

AusStage, has always prided itself on its collaborative excellence: the original Management Committee consisted of scholars from eight universities and representatives from the Australia Council, the Performing Arts Special Interest Group (PASIG) and Playbox Theatre. Together these scholars, archivists and arts administrators designed a schema for a relational database to capture information on performing arts events in Australia, and on performances by Australian artists overseas.

In 2000, AusStage received its first LIEF (Linkage Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities) scheme funding from the ARC and the database was launched as an open access online resource in 2002. It has been further developed with seven LIEF grants (\$2 726 523), a significant NeAT (National eResearch Architecture Taskforce) grant (\$500 000, 2009-2011), small national grants (2010) and partner contributions from eighteen universities. It holds over 432,000 records of Events, Contributors, Venues, Organisations, and Resources (2022). AusStage brings together many existing resources from within the participating universities and other theatre research organisations and caters for future data collection and collaborative research. The project delivers both hardware and software to curate an extensive dataset on live performance in Australia and can handle complex relational queries across three strands of research: Australian theatre history; the cultural and commercial analysis of the production and consumption of performances; and audience analysis. It also has created a directory of research resources on the performing arts. In recent years, AusStage has integrated a suite of tools to create data visualisations and has pioneered the use of VR technology for performance research on its platform. In the current development phase, a system is being designed to link financial data to artists, companies, venues and events.

SUMMARY

The AusStage database

AusStage is a data set of live Events with dramatic content covering all of Australia plus International links.

Information about performances is recorded in six main ways:

- Events: A distinct happening defined by title, date and venue.
(In December 2021 there were 123 989 Events recorded in the database.)
- Contributors: An individual who contributes to creating, performing or producing an Event.
(December 2021: 181 568 Contributors.)
- Venues: A place where an Event happens, a building or a geographic location.
(December 2021: 11 793 Venues.)
- Organisations: A group or company involved in creating, performing, or producing an Event.
(December 2021: 19 734 Organisations.)
- Works: The abstract conception of an Event, typically a play script or score.
(December 2021: 19 776 Works.)
- Resources: Reviews, programmes, photographs, videos, books, articles, other ephemera, realia, and collections that relate to Events, Contributors, Organisations, Venues, Works or Genres.
(December 2021: 72 953 Resources with 12,500+ linking directly to digitized content held in freely accessible online archives.)

Data Scope

AusStage researchers have designed the database to be both extensive and inclusive and have defined the scope of the data set in the following ways:

1. Focus

The core record is the live Event – a distinct happening, defined by title, date/s and venue; typically, a performance or series of performances at a Venue. A Venue is also broadly defined as a place where an Event happens – a building, a tent, an outdoor environment, a locality. The year of the Event is required; full dates for first performance, last performance, and opening night may be recorded. AusStage also gathers factual information about the organisations involved in conceiving, producing or presenting events, the individuals who contribute in various ways to events, and the material artefacts, textual records and digital traces that form the documentary evidence of live events.

2. Genre

AusStage includes performances in a wide range of Genres: spoken-word theatre, ballet and dance, music theatre and opera, circus and puppetry, stand-up comedy, physical theatre and cabaret. AusStage has not set out to cover music-only events (concerts, recitals, rock bands,

etc) but some music events are included where they form part of a program collection. AusStage distinguishes between the live performance at a Venue, and recordings of live performance that are accessed elsewhere. Audio-visual recordings, radio broadcasts and television transmissions are entered as resources that relate to a live event. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the subsequent rise of Online Theatre Events (both streamed online or hosted at a Venue) can included in AusStage and categorised by the new secondary Genre of Online Theatre.

3. Geographic

AusStage includes performances of dramatic works made and presented in Australia. AusStage also includes Australian productions of works written by international authors, productions from overseas companies touring Australia, and some performances by Australian artists and companies presented in venues outside Australia. The AusStage data set reflects a metropolitan bias in the geographic distribution of performing arts activities: venues for live performance are often situated at the centre of population settlements.

4. Historical

Coverage is extensive for the years of prospective data entry from 2001 to the present, and for the years 1986 to 1996 for which data were sourced from the *Australian and New Zealand Theatre Record*. Retrospective data entry reflects the extent of performing arts collections, and the research interests and energies of the AusStage community. Data entry on the capital cities, particularly Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide, is strongest from the 1950s onwards. Coverage of the nineteenth and late eighteenth centuries is not yet extensive. The earliest event recorded in AusStage is [The Recruiting Officer](#), performed in a mud-wall hut in Sydney on 4 June 1789.

5. Status

AusStage includes performances by professional, amateur, pro-am, co-operatives, training schools and colleges, community theatres, and youth theatres. The AusStage [sustainability strategy](#) places an emphasis on professional production and government-funded organisations. Professional training schools and colleges are targeted by tracking graduate networks and campaigns to encourage feedback from artists on their own records. Amateur, community, and youth theatres are targeted through outreach, promoting AusStage to organisations and training volunteers to undertake data entry.

6. Sources

The members of the [Performing Arts Heritage Network of Museums Australia](#) contribute actively to the development of AusStage. Retrospective data entry has drawn on many collections, including the Prompt Collection at the National Library of Australia, the Wolanski collection at University of New South Wales Library, the Seaborn Broughton and Walford Foundation Archives and Performing Arts Collection, the Queensland Performing Arts Centre Museum Collection, and the University of Adelaide Library Special Collections and University Archive.

Gathering Data

AusStage welcomes contributions from all users - from artists, spectators, producers, agents, students, teachers, researchers, librarians, archivists and the public.

Users can [register](#) interest in AusStage and take an online Zoom [training](#) in data entry protocols and procedures to learn how to create, edit and copy records. Even if not registered, users can contribute information to AusStage by browsing, searching and sending record feedback or by emailing the AusStage Manager.

Disclaimer and Copyright

AusStage continues to be developed in terms of database technology, breadth of data, user interface and server technology. The AusStage management team continues to review and refine the methods used to gather information, and affiliated AusStage researchers continue to fill gaps, extend coverage and standardise records. Care is taken to ensure that information entered into AusStage is correct, however no responsibility is taken for errors or omissions in the data. The AusStage data set is extensive, but it is not yet comprehensive. Researchers wishing to use AusStage data for statistical analyses are advised to [contact](#) the AusStage Manager.

Researchers using the resources of AusStage, are reminded to acknowledge AusStage's Copyright as they would any other secondary source. For example, if data is downloaded to create individualized visualisations or graphics it is requested that it is clearly noted that the data has been harvested from AusStage.

For traditional publications, a sample acknowledgement is: This article/book/chapter/entry acknowledges AusStage: ©<http://www.ausstage.edu.au>/CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

The AusStage citation guide provides more detailed examples of how to cite AusStage records and is available at: <https://www.ausstage.edu.au/pages/learn/contribute/citation.html>.

PARTNERS AND USERS

Current AusStage Partners

Australia

- The University of Queensland
- The University of Melbourne
- Deakin University
- Monash University
- Queensland University of Technology
- The University of Newcastle
- The University of New South Wales
- The University of Sydney
- Edith Cowan University
- La Trobe University
- University of Tasmania
- Griffith University
- University of Wollongong
- Australian Dance Theatre
- Performing Arts Heritage Network of The Australian Museums and Galleries Association
- The Australia Council for the Arts

International

- Victoria and Albert Museum, UK
- University of Oslo, Norway
- The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong

Affiliated Databases

- IbsenStage
- GlastonburyStage – Victoria and Albert Museum

Aligned Organisations

- The Australasian Association for Theatre, Drama and Performance Studies (ADSA)
- Australian Academy of the Humanities
- Performing Arts Heritage Network of the Association of Museums and Galleries Australia (PAHN)
- Theatre Heritage Australia
- Digital Humanities Australia
- Australian Library and Information Association
- Association of Performing Arts Collections (UK)
- International Association of Libraries, Museums, Archives and Documentation Centres of the Performing Arts (SIBMAS)
- International Federation of Theatre Research

AusStage Users

- Academic Researchers
- Other research platforms
- GLAMR sector
- Government
- Industry
- Practitioners
- Students
- Historians
- Theatre goers

Researchers use AusStage for different kinds of research, including:

- large-scale surveys by genre, region or theme
- projects focused on artists, companies, venues or works
- performance as research and creative development.

AusStage supports researchers at each stage of the process:

- Planning - deciding what to research - extending the horizon - research proposals and funding applications.
- Process - finding out who has done what - exploring coverage of existing data - literature review and bibliography.
- Content - creating, gathering and doing the research - collecting new data - curation and analysis.
- Output - sharing research outcomes, presentations and publications - deposit data and resources as research outcomes.

Researchers work with AusStage in a variety of ways:

- Adding new data - extending coverage to new areas, filling in gaps, importing data sets.
- Curating records - enriching existing records, enhancing quality, thickening description.
- Documenting performance - depositing data, archiving resources, preserving the traces.
- Analysing - asking questions, requesting reports, analysing results.
- Exploring - visualising data as maps and networks, learning new analytical techniques.
- Sharing - data exchange, embedding in web pages, digital publishing.

AusStage provides information, support and advice to researchers working at all levels - honours and postgraduate, early career researchers and academics, and those working in the arts industry, government agencies and collections sector.

VARIABLE LIST AND DEFINITIONS

A detailed breakdown of each variable in the AusStage dataset is included below.

Biographical data

contributor: An individual who contributes in some capacity to the conception, production or presentation of an event. Contributors are distinguished by their name and date of birth. A new record is created when a Contributor changes name; former and subsequent names are recorded in the Other_Names field. Multiple Contributors with the same name should be distinguished by date of birth and function. Care should be taken to avoid unnecessary duplicates, with particular attention being paid to variations in spellings of the same Contributor. Contributors must be an individual, and may be human or non-human (eg animal, machine).

prefix: A Contributor's title. Mr, Mrs, Prof, Dr etc.

first_name: The Contributor's first name or initial. Free text, with capitalised initial letter. Use a hyphen if there is no first name. Mandatory.

middle_name: A Contributor's middle name/s or initial/s. Free text, with capitalised initial letter.

last_name: The Contributor's last name/s. Free text, with capitalised initial letter. Use a hyphen if there is no last name. Mandatory.

suffix: A Contributor's suffix. OAM, PhD, AM etc.

display_name: The Contributor's first name and last name. Auto generated by concatenating the First Name and Last Name, but editable.

other_names: Other names by which the Contributor is known. May include stage names, former or subsequent names, or alternative spellings of the First and Last Names. Free text, in natural order, with capitalised initial letter. Separate multiple names with ;.

gender: The Contributor's gender. Select either female or male.

nationality: The Contributor's nationality, whether by origin or adoption. Free text, with capitalised initial letter. Prefer self-identified nationality; consult Contributor if possible; otherwise nationality of origin. Hyphenated nationalities are acceptable.

place_of_birth: A Contributor's place of birth. Select from venue table.

place_of_death: A Contributor's place of death. Select from venue table.

dddate_of_birth: The day of the Contributor's birth. Enter as numerals. Display as numeric. Not visible to users on the public side, unless date of death is complete.

mmdate_of_birth: The month of the Contributor's birth. Enter as numerals. Display as text. Not visible to users on the public side, unless date of death is complete.

yyyydate_of_birth: The year of the Contributor's birth. Enter as numerals. Display as numerals. Not visible to users on the public side, unless date of death is complete.

dddate_of_death: The day of the Contributor's death. Enter as numerals. Display as numerals. Source from published obituaries or research publications.

mmdate_of_death: The month of the Contributor's death. Enter as numerals. Display as text. Source from published obituaries or research publications.

yyyydate_of_death: The year of the Contributor's death. Enter as numerals. Display as numerals. Source from published obituaries or research publications.

notes: Additional biographical information about the Contributor. Recommended use is to draw biographical information from published sources (Australian Dictionary of Biography, Parson's Companion to Theatre in Australia, and so on) or invite Contributor to provide information. Note source at end of field. Free text.

nla: The Contributor's Persistent Identifier at the National Library of Australia. Source from the National Library of Australia.

contributorid: A unique number identifying a Contributor. Automatically generated. Unique.

entered_by_user: The username of the user creating the record. Entered automatically on creation.

entered_date: The date when the record is created. Entered automatically on creation.

updated_by_user: The username of the user updating the data. Entered automatically on update.

updated_date: The date when the record is last updated. Entered automatically on update.

address: The Contributor's house and street address of residency. Free text. Use only when provided by Contributor. Not visible to users on public side.

suburb: The Contributor's suburb address of residency. Free text. Use only when provided by Contributor. Not visible to users on the public side.

state: The Contributor's state address of residency. Select from controlled list. Use only when provided by Contributor. Not visible to users on the public side.

email: The Contributor's email address. Free text. Use only when provided by Contributor. Not visible to users on the public side.

postcode: The Contributor's postcode of residency. Four-digit numeral. Use only when provided by Contributor. Not visible to users on the public side.

countryid: A unique number identifying the Contributor's country of residence. Select from Country table. Use only when provided by Contributor. Unique.

Event-level data

events: A distinct happening defined by title, date/s and venue; typically, a performance or series of performances at a Venue. This is the core table of Ausstage. Multiple presentations of the same production at different Venues (eg touring productions) are recorded as separate Events.

event_name: The title or name of an Event. Free text. Using preceding capitals except for articles, prepositions and pronouns. Mandatory.

umbrella: The festival or series in which an Event is presented. Enter only if applicable. Free text.

venueid: The unique number identifying the Venue at which the Event occurred. Displayed as Venue name, suburb, state (if Australia) or country (if overseas). Unique.

ddfist_date: The day of the Event's first public presentation even if a preview. Enter as numerals. Display as numerals.

mmfirst_date: The month of the Event's first public presentation, even if a preview. Enter as numerals. Display as text.

yyyyfirst_date: The year of the Event's first public presentation even if a preview. Enter as numerals. Displayed as numerals. Mandatory.

sndfirst_date: The date of the Event's first public showing, even if preview. Automatically generated.

ddopening_night: The day of the Event's opening public showing - not a preview. Enter as numerals. Displayed as numeric.

mmopening_night: The month of the Event's opening public showing - not a preview. Enter as numerals. Display as text.

yyyyopening_night: The year of the Event's opening public showing - not a preview. Enter as numerals. Displayed as numeric.

sndopening_night: The date of the Event's opening public showing - not a preview. Automatically generated.

ddl原因last_date: The day of the Event's last public presentation. Enter as numerals. Displayed as numerals.

mm原因last_date: The month of the Event's first public presentation. Enter as numerals. Display as text.

yyyy原因last_date: The year of the Event's first public showing. Enter as numerals. Displayed as numerals.

snd原因last_date: The date of the Event's last public showing. Automatically generated.

estimated_dates: Are the Event's dates are estimated? Binary selection: either yes or no.

status: The socio-economic status of the production of an Event. Encompasses a range from professional to amateur. Select from the controlled list. Mandatory.

world_premier: Is the Event a world premiere (being presented for the very first time)? Binary selection: either yes or no.

part_of_a_tour: Is the Event is part of a touring production? Binary selection: either yes or no.

description: A short description of the content or significance of the Event. Free text. Preferably derived from an existing resource and referenced in Description Source. Add referenced resource to the Resource table.

description_source: Denoting the source of the Event description entered in the free text field above. To be chosen from controlled list.

primary_genre: A category indicating the kind of Event, as defined by its main mode of performance. Select from the controlled list, noting associations between primary and secondary genres. 'Other' is to be used only as a last resort. Mandatory.

further_information: Any additional relevant information about the Event not already covered by the available fields. Not to be confused with Event description, which aims to summarise the content of the Event. Free text.

event status: Dropdown selection of Cancelled, Completed, Partially Cancelled or Postponed. This field was introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic to cater for changing Event scheduling.

review: Is the record reviewed? Binary selection: either yes or no. If yes, displayed as username of reviewer (from updated_by_user) and date.

eventid: A unique number identifying an Event. Automatically generated. Unique.

entered_by_user: The username of the user entering the data. Entered automatically.

dddate_entered, mmdate_entered, yyyydate_entered, sdddate_entered: Dates of entering by the user. Entered automatically.

updated_by_user: The username of the user updating the data. Entered automatically.

dddate_updated, mmdate_updated, yyyydate_updated, sdddate_updated: Dates of update by the user. Entered automatically.

Venue-level data

venue: A place where an Event happens. Venues are distinguished by their name and location. A new record is created when a Venue changes name.

venueid: A unique number identifying a Venue. Different venues with the same name are given different IDs. Unique.

venue_name: The name of a Venue. To be typed as free text. Care must be taken to prevent unnecessary duplicates, especially as some duplicates are justified by Venues with the same name in different locations. Where a Venue is located within a larger 'parent' venue it is given its own Venue record with the name of the Venue it is located within in the Other Names field.

other_names1: An additional or alternative name by which the Venue is known. Free text. Used for former or subsequent names of Venue, or names of related Venues either smaller 'child' Venues within, or larger 'parent' venues.

other_names2: An additional or alternative name by which the Venue is known. Free text. Used for former or subsequent names of Venue, or names of related Venues either smaller 'child' Venues within, or larger 'parent' venues.

other_names3: An additional or alternative name by which the Venue is known. Free text. Used for former or subsequent names of Venue, or names of related Venues either smaller 'child' Venues within, or larger 'parent' venues.

street: The number and street of the Venue's address. Free text.

suburb: The suburb of the Venue's address. Free text.

state: The state of the Venue's address. Select from controlled list.

postcode: The postcode of the Venue's address. Free text.

capacity: The number of spectators to which the Venue can present an Event. Prefer the highest number of the most common configuration. To be typed as a number.

contact: The name of a contact person for the Venue. Free text, with capitalised initials. Not visible on the public side.

phone: A contact telephone number for the Venue. Free text, numerically, including area codes. Format +xx x xxxx xxxx. Not visible on the public side.

fax: A contact fax number for the Venue. Free text, numerically, including area codes. Format +xx x xxxx xxxx. Not visible on the public side.

email: A contact email address for the Venue. Free text. Not visible on the public side.

web_links: A website address or URL for the Venue. Free text. 'http://' is required.

notes: Any other relevant information about the Venue not covered by other fields. Free text.

country: The country in which the Venue is located. Select from controlled list.

countryid: The identifier for the country in which the Venue is located.

longitude: The longitudinal geographic coordinate of the Venue. Free text, numerically, in decimals to five decimal points.

latitude: The latitudinal geographic coordinates of the Venue. Free text, numerically, in decimals to five decimal points.

regional_or_metro: Indicates whether the location of the Venue is within a specified type of area. Select from controlled list, eg regional, suburban, metropolitan.

elevation: The geographic measurement of elevation of the Venue.

radius: The measurement surrounding the longitude and latitude fields to which the Venue is accurate.

ddffirst_date: A two-digit number denoting the first day of existence of the Venue using the title denoted in name. Free text. Use leading zeros for single digit days.

mmfirst_date: A two-digit number denoting the first month of existence of the Venue using the title denoted in name. Free text. Use leading zeros for single digit months.

yyyyfirst_date: A four-digit number denoting the first year of existence of the Venue using the title denoted in name. Free text.

ddlast_date: A two-digit number denoting the last day of existence of the Venue using the title denoted in name. Free text. Use leading zeros for single digit days.

mmlast_date: A two-digit number denoting the last month of existence of the Venue using the title denoted in name. Free text. Use leading zeros for single digit months.

yyylast_date: A four-digit number denoting the last year of existence of the Venue using the title denoted in name. Free text.

Firm-level data

organisation: A group or company involved in the conception, production or presentation of an event. Organisations are distinguished by their name and location. A new record is created when an Organisation changes name.

organisationid: A unique number identifying an Organisation. Organisations that share the same name are given different IDs. Unique.

name: The name of the Organisation. Free text. Care must be taken to prevent unnecessary duplicates.

other_names1: Other names by which the Organisation is known. Free text. This field may be used to record former or subsequent names. It can also be used for variant names to avoid duplicate records.

other_names2: Other names by which the Organisation is known. Free text. This field may be used to record former or subsequent names. It can also be used for variant names to avoid duplicate records.

other_names3: Other names by which the Organisation is known. Free text. This field may be used to record former or subsequent names. It can also be used for variant names to avoid duplicate records.

address: The number and street of the Organisation's address. Free text.

suburb: The suburb, town or locality of the Organisation's address. Free text.

state: The state of the Organisation's address. Select from controlled list.

postcode: The postcode of the Organisation's address. Free text.

contact: The name of a contact person for the Organisation. Free text, with capitalised initials. Not visible on the public side.

phone1: A contact telephone number for the Organisation. Free text, numerically, including area codes. Not visible on the public side. Format +xx x xxxx xxxx. Append name of telephone line if known, eg box office, administration.

phone2: A contact telephone number for the Organisation. Free text, numerically, including area codes. Not visible on the public side. Format +xx x xxxx xxxx. Append name of telephone line if known, eg box office, administration.

phone3: A contact telephone number for the Organisation. Free text, numerically, including area codes. Not visible on the public side. Format +xx x xxxx xxxx. Append name of telephone line if known, eg box office, administration.

fax: A contact fax number for the Organisation. Free text, numerically, including area codes. Not visible on the public side. Format +xx x xxxx xxxx.

email: A contact email address for the Organisation. Free text. Not visible on the public side.

web_links: A website address for the Organisation. Free text. 'http:/' is required.

notes: Any other relevant information about the Organisation not covered by other fields. Free text.

countryid: A unique number identifying a country. Select from controlled list. Unique.

ddffirst_date: A two-digit number denoting the first day of existence of the Organisation using the title denoted in name. Free text. Use leading zeros for single digit days.

mmfirst_date: A two-digit number denoting the first month of existence of the Organisation using the title denoted in name. Free text. Use leading zeros for single digit months.

yyyyfirst_date: A four-digit number denoting the first year of existence of the Organisation using the title denoted in name. Free text.

ddlast_date: A two-digit number denoting the last day of existence of the Organisation using the title denoted in name. Free text. Use leading zeros for single digit days.

mmlast_date: A two-digit number denoting the last month of existence of the Organisation using the title denoted in name. Free text. Use leading zeros for single digit months.

yyylast_date: A four-digit number denoting the last year of existence of the Organisation using the title denoted in name. Free text.

place_of_origin: An Organisation place of origin. Select from venue table.

place_of_demise: An Organisations place of demise. Select from venue table.

Work-level data

work: A Work is the abstract conception of an event, typically (though not always) expressed as a material resource, such as a script or score.

workid: A unique number identifying a Work. Unique.

work_title: A name identifying a Work. Prefer the original name, as conceived by creator.

alternative_work_title: Alternative names for a Work. Use for alternative names, translations of name and variant spellings.