

2024 Program
Every Friday in July

Jim Moginie
Chris Abrahams
Sophie Hutchings
David Bridie

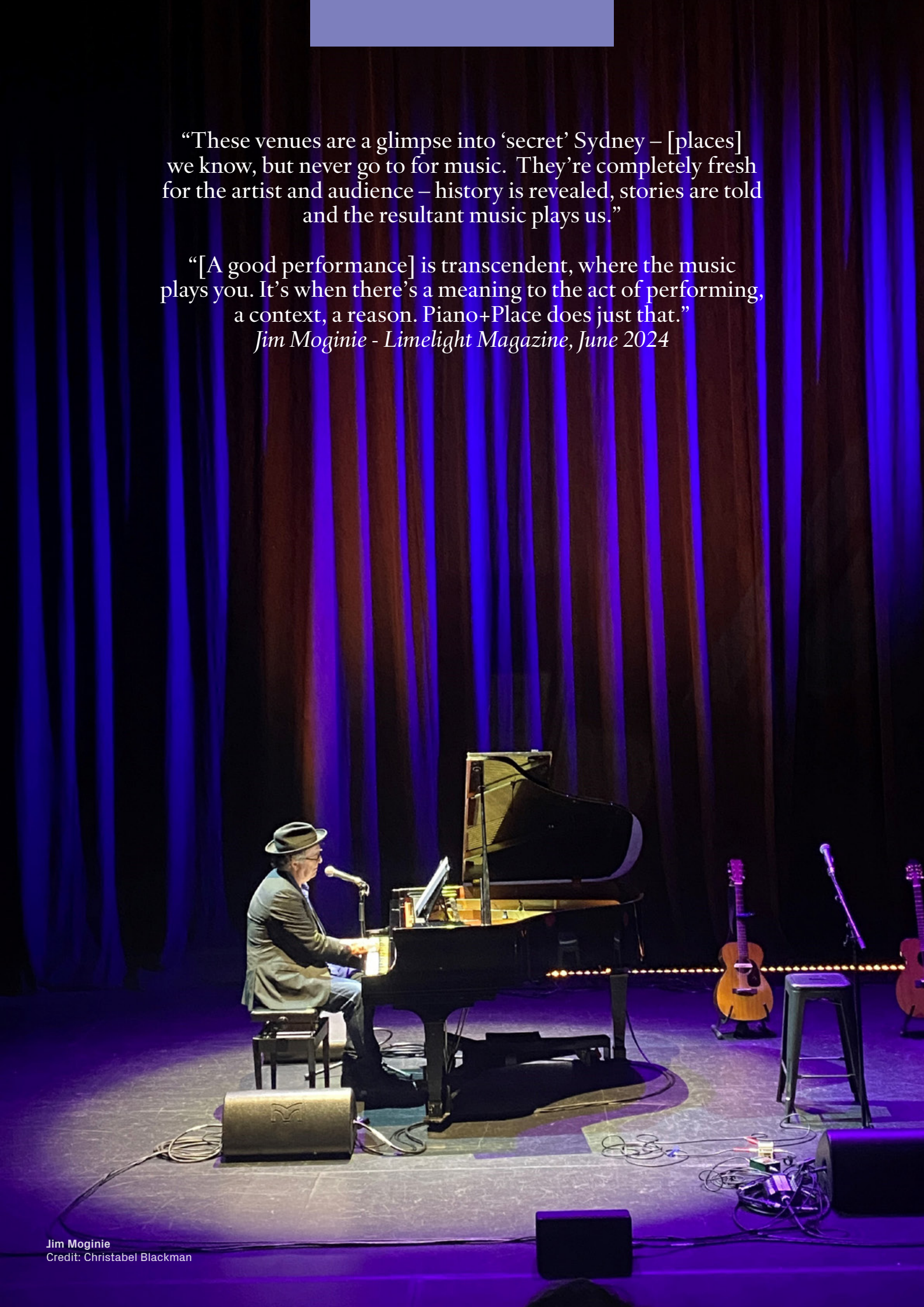


Piano+Place

“These venues are a glimpse into ‘secret’ Sydney – [places] we know, but never go to for music. They’re completely fresh for the artist and audience – history is revealed, stories are told and the resultant music plays us.”

“[A good performance] is transcendent, where the music plays you. It’s when there’s a meaning to the act of performing, a context, a reason. Piano+Place does just that.”

Jim Moginie - Limelight Magazine, June 2024





Ross Heathcote and Jim Moginie
at Paddington Town Hall
Credit: Keith Saunders

Welcome

Piano+Place connects prominent Australian piano artists with the rare opportunity to perform in unique Sydney venues.

It is a privilege and honour to team up with Jim Moginie as co-curator of this program. Inviting Jim to participate required no hesitation; his standing in the Australian music scene is unsurpassed, and he is a great supporter of local musicians. Together we worked with the support of the small and energetic team at Piano+ who have boldly embraced the concept and presented this series.

With Jim as the initial performer as well as co-curator, we created a 'hit list' of contemporary piano musicians that we – somewhat selfishly – wanted to hear. These are musicians for whom the piano is much more than simply a tool of trade. They are also all seasoned musical collaborators, in high demand, touring regularly, recording, and therefore infrequently seen in this context in Sydney. We were delighted to receive a universally positive response from these celebrated artists to be part of *Piano+Place*, to collaborate with their suggested venues, and to respond with a special performance.

Along with a desire for more live music venues in Sydney, Jim and I share a passion for the city's venerable, curious, surprising and unexplored places. We are truly grateful to have been able to collaborate with the great people working at The Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park, The State Library of NSW, Museums of History NSW and City of Sydney, who brought their own enthusiasm to this project.

The only element that was missing from these wonderful places was the piano itself, and so support from Kawai has ensured that beautiful instruments will be at the heart of each performance in *Piano+Place*.

Ross Heathcote

Co-curator

Artists

“I’m inspired and delighted
to be performing at this extraordinary place”
Jim Moginie

Jim Moginie



Credit: Christabel Blackman

Jim Moginie is a legend of Australian popular music. As a founding member of Midnight Oil, Jim has graced stages across the world in front of massive stadium audiences and has a global fan base as part of what is widely referred to as Australia’s most important band.

Jim met ‘Oils’ drummer Rob Hirst when they were schoolboys. This chance happening connected the two brilliant songwriters and musicians. Together and separately they have written a mighty chapter of the ‘great Australian songbook’. Some of Jim’s songs have become part of the national psyche – part of the soundscape of our lives and culture and have reflected the issues prominent here and globally.

Jim, whether on piano, keyboard or guitar has always been a master creative player, composer and interpreter, and is universally respected and admired by fellow musicians.

When not with the ‘Oils’, Jim has worked across a multitude of musical styles and collaborations. From contemplative atmospheric solo piano pieces to folk and interpretive guitar compositions, Jim is an explorer of musical possibilities. He has formed great musical partnerships including with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Irish traditional musicians, his Electric Guitar Orchestra, and Australian Indigenous musicians.



The Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park, an iconic building in Sydney, gives Hyde Park a monumental presence with its powerful art deco symmetry and grace. It sits as a sculpture would at the southern end of the park and is an unmistakable part of our city’s interwar aesthetic. Beyond and below the edifice itself are stories and experiences for visitors, collected and presented out of respect for those who’ve served as ANZACs in times of war and aftermath.

The brilliant staff and custodians of The Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park have collaborated closely with *Piano+Place* curators to enable the site to be the opening venue for the series. Anticipate a contemplative and atmospheric piano performance from Jim, as he interprets this context, and some of Midnight Oil’s most apposite songs.

The Anzac Memorial, Hyde Park
Friday 5 July, 7pm



“This house has always had music in it,
regardless of the occupancy, I can’t wait to
explore its acoustic space”
Chris Abrahams

Chris Abrahams



Credit: Tim Williams

Piano+Place is blessed to be able to present **Chris Abrahams** in this inaugural series. Chris is an acclaimed pianist in this country and has also garnered an immense following internationally.

Perhaps best known for his work in the extraordinary and category-defying trio *The Necks*, Chris is also an agile and widely sought after musical collaborator across several genres.

To attempt to describe a solo piano performance by Chris is difficult—his output is unique and multifarious, and very dependent on the context of each performance—however, here are some descriptions: patient beauty, at times mixed with a punchy minimalism. His work can be challenging, but also warmly accessible; sometimes characterised by hushed, cyclic phrasing that develops with powerful shimmering resonances. He possesses a very physical and visceral connection to the instrument.

Elizabeth Bay House
Friday 12 July, 6 & 8pm



Credit: Katherine Lu for Museums of History NSW

Even in the 1830s Sydney had trophy homes.

Elizabeth Bay House was known at the time of its completion as the ‘finest house in the colony’. Built for colonial secretary Alexander Macleay, after the governor, the most important public official in Sydney, Elizabeth Bay House tells a familiar story: of ambition and passion, of riches to ruin.

Engaging the most fashionable architect in Sydney at the time, John Verge, Macleay set about building the ultimate ‘Greek revival style’ trophy house, a shimmering, classical styled jewel box, perched in rugged bushland on the northern side of present day Potts Point.

Now surrounded by apartment buildings in the middle of one of the most densely populated suburbs in Australia, Macleay’s house was originally designed as the centrepiece of an extensive landscaped garden that cascaded down the slopes to the waterfront. Macleay was familiar with the ideas of 19th-century picturesque design and the Elizabeth Bay site provided the perfect opportunity to demonstrate those ideas.

Elizabeth Bay House is now an immersive museum, conserved, interpreted and presented by Museums of History, New South Wales. Its sweeping staircase with elliptical domed saloon, where Chris will perform, and elegant rooms with fine proportions and lavish furnishings reveal the tastes and aspirations of its original owner, marking a visit to Elizabeth Bay House as a truly memorable experience and step back in time.

“I play across Europe in curious historical and evocative venues, I’m so glad to see that Piano+Place is doing something like this in my own city!”
Sophie Hutchings

Sophie Hutchings



Sophie Hutchings is a rising star in Australian contemporary music. Sophie’s popularity in Europe and elsewhere means that a performance in her hometown of Sydney is a rare event.

Sophie’s compositions are characteristically explorative, immersive, transformative cinematic soundscapes, often weaving together strings with her acoustic piano performances. Her music is without geographical boundaries, and she is lauded for her abilities to evoke landscapes and places. She creates engaging piano music that exhibits a flair for drama and personal expression.

Sophie’s rare sensibilities and sweeping vision can take the form of a musical ‘road trip’, both figuratively and literally – as travel is often inspiration for her compositions. In the real world a nomadic Sophie travels light, but to be part of her audience is to virtually come along in her backpack for the journey.

Fresh from a fourteen date European tour that concluded at London’s Royal Albert Hall, Sophie will perform for *Piano+Place* at Paddington Town Hall accompanied by her regular collaborators Peter Hollo on cello and violinist Daniel Lopez.

Paddington Town Hall is a 125 year-old building that has witnessed so much of our city’s cultural and economic change. Designed in the ‘Victorian Free Classical’ style, the building is a symbol of prosperity and civic ambition of the late 19th century.

The room that Sophie and accompanying string players grace for *Piano+Place* has a colourful history. It has been the site of political watershed moments and high society gala gatherings, a place to be seen the 1930s with its new art deco trimmings and ‘soda fountain’, Sydney’s first Aboriginal ‘Deb Ball’, counter culture ‘happenings’ in the 1960s and 70s, and then roaring post-punk rock gigs in the 1980s.

Paddington Town Hall
Friday 19 July, 7pm

“Piano+Place is a wonderful project. I’ve always been in favour of seeking out-of-the-ordinary venues to perform ... the library gallery space is inspiring”
David Bridie

David Bridie



Credit: L.J Spruyt

Pianist, singer, songwriter, music producer and seven-time ARIA award winning artist **David Bridie** has enjoyed a distinguished career as one of Australia’s most well loved and innovative musicians.

A founding member and songwriter of the critically acclaimed musical groups Not Drowning Waving and My Friend the Chocolate Cake, David has also maintained a substantial career as a solo artist releasing six albums.

David’s creative output trips across an arc of genres. He is known for remarkable music that generates evocations of the Australian landscape and breathes with political resonance. His collaborations with First Nations artists are widely celebrated, working with artists such as Christine Anu, Archie Roach, Frank Yamma, along with George Telek and musicians of Rabaul.

David has scored the soundtracks for over 100 international and Australian films, television series and documentaries earning numerous AFI AACTA and Screen Music awards. He is a musical collaborator fired up by the possibilities of stories and place.

David’s performance for *Piano+Place* promises to be atmospheric and moving – responding to an exceptional piece of music from the library collection and set within a room that hints at colonial and Indigenous contact.



The State Library of NSW is a remarkable place.

With a history dating back to 1826, it’s the oldest library in Australia, housing significant heritage-listed collections and providing free and open access to information. Many of us in Sydney know it for its glorious reading rooms, where we may have spent hours as students or perhaps searched for traces of family history. But this much-loved institution offers so much more.

It is full of hidden gems, including beautiful heritage spaces, an underground auditorium and photography gallery and a magnificent rooftop bar, which even many Sydneysiders have yet to discover.

Another surprise is the Library’s remarkable art collection. For *Piano+Place*, the elegant Paintings Gallery, which holds just part of that collection in a stunning display of historic and contemporary portraiture, will transform into a performance venue.

The State Library of NSW
Friday 26 July, 7pm

About Piano+

Piano+ was launched in 2023 to build on the extraordinary legacy of the Sydney International Piano Competition and to strengthen and engage with a community of piano lovers right across Australia. Piano+ is enormously proud to present the inaugural *Piano+Place* series in our first annual program of events. We acknowledge the generous support from our partners; City of Sydney, Kawai, and the venue partners who have been collaborators and enablers to make this series possible.

The opportunity to lean into our plus sign, reaching outside our classical roots and working with the creative powerhouse of series co-curators Jim Moginie and Ross Heathcote has been revelatory. We have been thrilled by the enthusiastic response from each of the renowned artists and iconic Sydney venues that are featured in this first series. Each event will offer something truly unique, intimate and immediate – a rare treat for both audience and performers.

Piano+Place was inspired by the piano's role in shaping and interpreting stories through music, of bringing warmth to homes and binding communities together throughout history. We hope you enjoy stepping inside some of Sydney's most special places to learn more about them through these four wonderful Australian pianists.

Piano+ You

Piano+ is a not-for-profit, national organisation with a mission to celebrate exceptional pianists and great piano music, inspire audiences and support the careers and aspirations of talented young pianists. We rely on the generosity of passionate music lovers like you to enable our mission.

Cycle of Giving

We invite you to join the Piano+ donor community by making a donation through our Cycle of Giving annual giving program. Your donation at any level will provide the kind of patronage that supported Ludwig van Beethoven as he wrote a cycle of 32 piano sonatas.

Our Donors

We would like to thank the following Power of Ten donors who have been at the heart of Piano+'s most exciting moments, lending their significant support for the inaugural Piano+ 2024 Season:

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Bunny Gardiner-Hill
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Tony Strachan
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