

# Austen Con

**Saturday 6 November, 2021 - 9am to 5pm**

Online and also in person at:

**Abbotsford Convent - 1 St Heliers St, Abbotsford**

[www.24carrotproductions.com](http://www.24carrotproductions.com)

A fantastic mix of live and online events, **Saturday the 6th of November 2021** heralds the greatly anticipated fourth annual **Austen Con**; a much-loved celebration and exploration of all things **Jane Austen**.

One of England's most beloved novelists, **Jane Austen** was born in 1775 and wrote from a young age, initially to amuse her family. Her six major novels, of which *Pride and Prejudice* is probably the best known, are set amongst the British landed gentry and lauded worldwide for their wit, romance, and social commentary.

Running in the beautiful surrounds on Melbourne's **Abbotsford Convent**, this year lucky ticket holders can partake in activities that range from **crafting**, a **speed dating game** and **dancing**, an **escape room**, **the art of letter writing** and lively discussions on an array of Austen inspired topics with a wonderful mix of guest presenters and expert enthusiasts.

Running across three separate spaces, the line-up for this year's diverse and entertaining program includes:

**Sewing with Kelly Lock (In person/Zoom): 9am - 9:30am**

During the registration and introduction to the day, **Kelly Lock** will demonstrate a sewing project that can be taken with participants and worked on as they listen to different presentations.

**Behind the Black Veil with Sam Hirst (In person/online): 9:30am - 10:30am**

This talk looks at Austen's choice of 'Horrid novels' in *Northanger Abbey* and what they tell us about the genre, its publishing practices, women's place in it, and the benefits of reading far too many Gothic mysteries.

**Escape Room (In person/online): 10:30am - 1:30pm**

This **Austen-inspired Escape Room** runs for three sessions on the hour from 10:30am, ending at 1:30pm. An audio-only room, it harnesses the power of imagination to take participants through a perplexing puzzle as characters from much-loved *Sense and Sensibility*.

**Before Bridgerton: Representations of Race in Georgian Fiction (In person/online): 10:30am - 11:30am**

Join writer **Lauren Burke** and 19th Century Literature **Professor Dr. Lydia Craig**, for this discussion about the Georgian-era novels *Ourika*, *Fashionable Connexions*, *The Woman of Colour* and *Sanditon*. These books provide fascinating insights into what life was like for people of colour in high society around **Jane Austen's** time.

**A Network of Spies and Scandal: Pamphlets in Regency England with Zan Cammack and Diane Neu (In person/online): 10:30am - 11:30am**

Pamphlets in Regency England were anything but innocuous or random objects, they were forms of networked social communication that were used to disseminate information, much like blogs and Twitter today. This discussion will be a fun journey through the world of Regency social media.

**A\_tistic (In person/online): 11:30am - 12:30pm**

**Hannah Aroni** and **James Matthews** are co-directors of **A\_tistic**; a team of multidisciplinary neurodiverse artists, consultants and educators. Using their style of *Spectrum Theatre* they aim to bring autistic lives, insights and experiences to the stage. With this talk they will interrogate *Pride and Prejudice* through a neurodivergent lens.



### **Speed Dating Game: Austen Edition (In person/Zoom): 11:30am - 12:30pm**

Ever wondered what it would be like to make friends with Marianne Dashwood, or go on a date with Bingley? This session will answer that question. This event is inclusive of all genders and sexualities, including those who may just be looking for a new best friend.

### **East India Company with Kelly Gardiner and Sharmini Kumar (In person/online): 1pm - 2pm**

The **British East India Company** played a big role in Austen's world and in her fiction, even though it was never mentioned by name. With this discussion Austen's connection to this multinational corporation is unpacked, along with the ways it influences her writing.

### **Letters with Kelly Lock (In person/Zoom): 1pm - 2pm**

Letters were a key part of Austen's plots, but they were also an art form in their day. Learn about the art of writing letters... and folding them to avoid spies!

### **Cabaret and DJ (In person/Zoom): 2pm - 3:30pm**

A wonderful array of Melbourne performers bring their unique perspectives to themes in Austen's work. Includes a sneak peek of the brand new show *Sense and Sensibility: The Musical*.

### **Dancing (In person): 2pm - 4:30pm**

Limber up and join George and Jenny in one of the most popular activities at **Austen Con**. They'll teach you everything you need to know about all the right steps for the ball.

### **Non-Canonical Pairings with Zoë Hodge, Kaitlyn Blythe (In person/online): 3:30pm - 4:30pm**

Should Lizzy Bennet have ended up with Darcy? Would Anne Elliot and Elinor Dashwood make a good match? Could you ship Black Panther and Mary Crawford? Panellists will bring to the table three non-canonical Austen-pairings to discuss and defend.

### **Fashion Show (In person/online): 4:30pm – 5:00pm**

The opportunity to show off your creativity and style! Prizes for the most creative and most elaborate costumes, as well as the best mash-up.

*"In previous years we have run separate in person Austen Cons and an online Austen Con, but this years' event will be a hybrid, with in person sessions and online content as well."*, adds **24 Carrot Productions** Artistic Director **Sharmini Kumar**.

*"This means we can enjoy outstanding local and international talent, as well as find ways to connect in person and online with our guests - the best of both worlds. Among all the other wonderful elements to the Convention, this year we also have our Speed Dating event, where actors will play characters from Austen novels and people will get five minutes with a selection of those characters to ask them questions and try and impress them. It's all going to be a lot of fun."*

Following on from **three highly successful years**, the 2021 **Austen Con** is proudly COVIDSafe and an event suitable for all ages. The current global pandemic has created a unique opportunity for international access to select aspects of the convention with great mix of events being streamed on **YouTube** and **Zoom** with most **accessible for 48 hours** afterwards. Ticket price to the 2021 Convention also includes access to the popular **Online Market Hub** and vendors will be present on the day too, selling wonderful wares.

A true highlight on the Victorian Events Calendar, **24 Carrot Productions** are delighted this year to welcome back participants to the fourth annual **Austen Con**.

**Saturday 6 November, 2021**

**9am - 5pm**

**Tickets (Complete Event Access): \$50 Full, \$40 Concession, \$20 Online Access**

*(please note: additional charges for craft materials apply)*

**Location: Abbotsford Convent (North Magdalen Laundry and Industrial School) - 1 St Heliers St, Abbotsford**

**Full program, bookings and enquiries online at [www.24carrotproductions.com](http://www.24carrotproductions.com)**