

## USA / MUSIC AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE



## TAYLOR MAC: A 24 DECADE HISTORY OF POPULAR MUSIC

**“One of the great experiences of my life”**  
New York Times

Glittering New York performance artist **Taylor Mac** is the darling of the US cabaret scene, hailed as its bedazzled shaman, radical angel and searing social critic. With **A 24-Decade History of Popular Music**, he has sculpted his magnum opus, a highly immersive and outrageously entertaining crash course in the 240 years of the history of American culture and dysfunction.

This once-in-a-lifetime event is a decade-by-decade walk through America from 1776 to 2016, told through the songs of the time, reinterpreted through a radical queer lens, and told from the perspective of groups whose stories are often forgotten, dismissed, or buried.

It was awarded the 2017 Kennedy for Drama Inspired by American History - last year's winner was Lin-

Manuel Miranda, the creator of the musical *Hamilton* - and was a finalist for the 2017 Pulitzer Prize for Drama.

The Kennedy prize jury called **A 24-Decade** “a vast, immersive, subversive, audacious and outrageous experience,” that uses a variety of techniques to “explode our country’s history” and show, in Mac’s words, how “in America the oppressor is forgiven but the outsider is vilified.”

Co-commissioned by a number of international partners including Melbourne Festival, this concert will be presented as four six-hour Chapters in the glorious surrounds of the newly-restored Forum Theatre. Making its world premiere in New York before touring to San Francisco, this very special Melbourne performance marks its third ever appearance.

**Chapter I (1776-1836):** Wed 11 Oct - The American Revolution from the perspective of the yankee doodle dandy, the early woman’s lib movement, an epic battle between drinking songs and early temperance songs.

**Chapter II (1836-1896):** Fri 13 Oct - Walt Whitman and Stephen Foster go head to head for the title of Father of the American Song culminating in the queerest Civil War Reenactment in history.

**Chapter III (1896-1956):** Fri 20 Oct - A Jewish tenement, a WWI trench, a speakeasy, a depression, a zoot suit riot all make the white people flee the cities.

**Chapter IV (1956-the present):** Fri 20 Oct - Bayard Rustin’s March on Washington leads to a queer riot, sexual deviance as revolution, radical lesbians, and a community building itself while under seize.

As you'd expect for a job this big, Mac’s brought a few friends along for the ride, including an orchestra — led by music director Matt Ray, who created new arrangements of all 246 songs — plus an ensemble of "Dandy Minions" and more than 100 special guests, acrobats, burlesque performers, puppets, choirs and marching bands supporting the cabaret icon fearless – or foolish – enough to embark on such a crazy quest.

## MEDIA CONTACT

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But always magically present is Mac, decked and bedazzled in gloriously irreverent regalia, created by long-time fellow traveller and costume provocateur, Machine Dazzle.

From murder ballads to speakeasy swingers, Women's Lib anthems to Walt Whitman, this is a show 240 years in the making and 24 hours in the telling. Far from a durational performance, it is a communal exercise that squares off against the country that declares itself the greatest democracy the world has ever known, but that isn't short on skeletons in and out of the closet.

Part celebration, part exorcism, all party, this extravaganza will take its place as one of the most spectacular moments Melbourne has ever witnessed.

### The Inauguration

Less an 'abridged edition' and more of a 'live and unplugged,' The Inauguration is Taylor Mac and five special international guests taking audiences on a whistlestop tour of 240 years of American music in under two hours. Get up close and personal in an intimate stage show that flows freely across the centuries, alighting at key moments to form a musical portrait that captures the tumultuous spirit of the country forever changing. Featuring songs from Mac's full marathon production in new arrangements alongside others improvised on the night, The Inauguration will be take place at Hamer Hall, Arts Centre Melbourne.

### The Wrap

Melbourne Festival 2017 closes out with a coming together of guests local and international under the expert guidance of the inimitable Taylor Mac. As parties go, they don't get bigger. Reprising iconic moments from the unforgettable masterpiece that is Mac's 240 Decades, along with improvisations and original contributions from some of the most exciting corners of this year's program, sign up to send this year's festival off with all the fireworks it deserves.

**Taylor Mac's** groundbreaking performance art concept A 24-DECADE HISTORY OF POPULAR

MUSIC is "a must-see for anyone who wants to see a kinder, gentler society." *Huffington Post*

**"We were simultaneously acting in the show, watching the show, and being forged into something new by the show."** *Vulture Magazine*

**"a staggering magnum opus"**  
*The New York Times*

\*\*\*\*\* **"With coruscating wit and ingenuity, Mac brings his vision alive roughly a decade at a time... so powerful it all but tears the roof off."**  
*The Guardian*

### A 24-Decade History Of Popular Music

Wed 11, Fri 13, Wed 18, Fri 20 Oct

5.30 – 11.30pm

24 hrs across four 6 hr

no interval performances

Standard \$699

Under 30s \$199

Ticketmaster 136 100

### The Inauguration

Thu 5 Oct

7.30pm

2 hrs, no interval

Premium \$99

A Reserve \$79 / \$69

B Reserve \$69 / \$59

C Reserve \$49 / \$39

Under 30s \$30

### The Wrap

Sun 22 Oct

7pm

2 hrs, no interval

\$59 / \$49

Under 30s \$30

[www.festival.melbourne](http://www.festival.melbourne)  
[#melbfest](https://twitter.com/melbfest)

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