

THE SAPPHIRES

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Detailed Content Advisory

This document contains warnings and spoilers and may be updated as the production evolves.

The following information is provided to assist audiences, teachers and carers in making informed decisions about attending the performance.

About the Show

Set in regional Victoria and Vietnam during the late 1960s, *The Sapphires* follows four Aboriginal women who form a singing group and travel to Vietnam to entertain troops during the war. What begins as an opportunity to pursue their dreams of music and success becomes a journey shaped by friendship, love, identity and resilience.

As the women perform for soldiers far from home, they encounter the realities of war, racism and cultural displacement, while navigating personal challenges including relationships, family expectations and an unplanned pregnancy. Through music, humour and emotional storytelling, the work explores the strength of sisterhood and the enduring power of connection in the face of adversity.

Content Advisory

This production contains coarse language, adult themes, and depictions of racism, war and violence, and the use of theatrical haze. It contains culturally sensitive content and may contain images of those who have passed. Recommended for ages 12+.

Sound, Lighting and Sensory Effects

You can expect:

- Loud sound effects, including gunfire, explosions and helicopters
- Amplified music and live performance
- Sudden and dynamic sound cues
- Theatrical haze

These elements may be adjusted for specific performances where possible and may affect audiences sensitive to sound or atmospheric effects.

Detailed Content Notes

(The following section contains spoilers about key events in the play.)

Racism and Historical Language

- The play includes references to racism experienced by Aboriginal people in Australia.
- Dialogue contains historical racial slurs and discriminatory language reflective of the 1960s setting, including terms used by characters within the context of the time.
- Characters discuss systemic racism, exclusion and prejudice (e.g. barriers to employment, public life and representation).
- Racist language is also directed toward Vietnamese people during wartime.
- These elements are presented critically and reflect the lived experiences of the characters.

War, Violence and Threat

- The production is set during the Vietnam War and includes ongoing references to armed conflict.
- Sound design includes gunfire, explosions, helicopters and military activity.
- Characters are exposed to dangerous environments, including active conflict zones.
- A scene involves a character being isolated and approached by soldiers in a moment of implied sexual threat.
- A scene involves a character stepping on a land mine, creating sustained tension and implied life-threatening danger.
- Characters experience near-miss situations involving gunfire.
- The narrative includes references to death, injury and the risks faced by soldiers and civilians during wartime.

Pregnancy and Abortion Themes

- A central storyline involves an unplanned pregnancy.
- A character experiences ongoing physical symptoms, including vomiting (morning sickness), which are depicted on stage.
- Characters discuss choices relating to pregnancy, including references to abortion.
- One character recounts a past abortion experience, including the circumstances, physical environment and emotional impact.

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- These discussions include themes of fear, secrecy, trauma and limited access to safe care.
- Themes of bodily autonomy, responsibility and differing perspectives on pregnancy are explored through conflict between characters.

Coarse Language

- Coarse language is used throughout the production, including colloquial Australian expressions and occasional stronger terms.
- Language includes insults, arguments and emotionally heightened exchanges between characters.
- The tone and frequency reflect character relationships, setting and period.

Sexual References

- Dialogue includes sexual references, innuendo and adult humour.
- Characters make comments relating to sexual relationships and attraction.
- Sexualised language is occasionally used in a comedic or colloquial context.
- A moment of implied sexual threat occurs within the narrative (see War, Violence and Threat).

Alcohol Use

- Characters consume alcohol on stage in social and performance settings.
- Alcohol use is depicted casually and in some instances contributes to behaviour and interactions between characters.
- Characters smoke on stage using herbal cigarettes.

Emotional Themes and Distress

- The play explores themes of identity, belonging, racism, family relationships and the emotional toll of war.
- Characters experience fear, homesickness, vulnerability and interpersonal conflict.
- Scenes include emotionally intense arguments between family members.
- Themes of abandonment, separation and uncertainty are present.
- The story includes moments of grief, loss and unresolved trauma.
- A storyline involving a child separated from their family in a war setting is depicted and may be distressing.

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Cultural Advisory

This production contains culturally sensitive stories and may include images, names or references to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have passed. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander audiences are advised of this content.

Age Suitability

Recommended for audiences aged 12+.

This recommendation is provided as a guide based on the maturity required to engage with the production's themes, language and depictions.

Younger audience members may attend at parent or carer discretion.