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WELCOME TO *THE NEIGHBOURHOOD*: A POWERFUL PREMIERE SIGNALS A STRONG START TO SEASON 2020

La Boite Theatre Company starts its 2020 season with impact and inspiration, presenting the world premiere of *The Neighbourhood* from **8-29 February 2020**.

This uplifting, unflinching and deeply personal work features seven local story-tellers, with tales that span migrant and refugee experiences across generations, investigating the very notion of creating, fostering and discovering community.

The Neighbourhood is a companion piece to 2017's critically acclaimed production of *The Village* and continues the ongoing partnership between La Boite and Multicultural Australia.

Seven local artists tell their honest and authentic stories using a range of styles and art forms to transport audiences across countries, borders and oceans in search of a home.

La Boite CEO and Artistic Director **Todd MacDonald** said *The Neighbourhood* was a vital piece of storytelling that examined the ideas of belonging, diversity and community.

"The talent, the resilience, the passion and skills in this group of storytellers and artists is some of the best I've ever worked with and I'm beyond excited about this show," Mr MacDonald said.

"La Boite is, and always will be, an advocate of change for the better, a voice that challenges perceptions and champions inclusivity and diversity; with a firm eye to the future and a hope to make change in society for the better."

The storytellers include **Aurora Liddle-Christie**, a Jamaican and Australian First Nations multidisciplinary artist who uses spoken word, performance, singing and songwriting; Indian-born LGBTIQ+ activist and spoken word and body-movement artist, **Naavi Karan**; and award-winning poet **Anisa Nandaula** who left Uganda at eight years old.

Nima Doostkhah, born in Iran during the Iran-Iraq war, tells his story through acting, dance and photography while fellow Iranian refugee and former political prisoner **Cieavash Arean** harnesses the power of music.

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Actor **Amer Joseph Thabet** recounts his move from Syria to Australia and multi-instrumentalist **Dr Matt Hsu** draws on his diverse global upbringing to explore the grey areas between cultures.

The storytellers' deep community roots resonated with co-creator **Aleea Monsour**, a theatre-maker and director who has lived in the same Brisbane neighbourhood all her life.

"For me, community is support and joy, it is a feeling of power through coming together. It is food, shared meals, music and storytelling," Ms Monsour said.

"This show brings to life an essential and untold story of 'neighbourhoods' here in Australia, right now, through live music, spoken word, and personal storytelling."

Fellow co-creator and Empire Theatres Youth Arts Director **Ari Palani** said the artists involved in the production represented the vibrancy of perspectives in the chorus of Australia's diverse narrative.

"Our artists come from every stage of the migration and resettlement journey, from escape through to the birth of new generations within Australia and they are not defined by their status or the words used to describe them," Mr Palani said.

***The Neighbourhood* plays La Boite from 8-29 February 2020 before performing at Toowoomba's Empire Theatres from 27-28 March 2020.**

Tickets available now at laboite.com.au

The Neighbourhood is presented by La Boite and Multicultural Australia, in association with Empire Theatres.

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PRODUCTION OVERVIEW

SEASON DATES	Saturday 8 – Saturday 29 February, 2020
PREVIEWS	Saturday 8 – Tuesday 11 February, 2020
OPENING NIGHT	Wednesday 12 February, 2020
VENUE	Roundhouse Theatre, La Boite Theatre Company, Musk Avenue Kelvin Grove
TICKETS*	\$35-\$56
DURATION	70 mins
BOOKINGS	laboite.com.au or (07) 3007 8600
SPECIAL EVENTS	HWY Chatterbox (post-show artist talk) Tuesday 25 February, 6:30pm AUSLAN-interpreted performance Tuesday 25 September, 6:30pm
AGE SUITABILITY	The Neighbourhood contains first-person accounts of displacement and loss.
STORYTELLERS	Aurora Liddle-Christie, Nima Doostkhah, Cieavash Arean, Amer Joseph Thabet, Matt Hsu, Anisa Nandaula and Naavi Karan
CO-CREATORS	Todd MacDonald, Alea Monsour and Ari Palani
ASSISTANT CREATIVE	Ngoc Phan
SET & COSTUME DESIGNER	Adam Gardnir
LIGHTING DESIGNER	Ben Hughes
SOUND DESIGNER & COMPOSER	Brady Watkins
STAGE MANAGER	Pip Loth
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER	Jamie Ng

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ABOUT LA BOITE

La Boite is a story of people, passion, purpose and place. La Boite holds a unique place in the hearts and minds of artists and audiences in Australia. As Australia's longest-running professional theatre company, La Boite has represented the adventurous and alternative for more than 90 years.

In 2020, under Artistic Director Todd MacDonald, La Boite Theatre Company continues to develop and present vital new Australian work in our home venue, Australia's only purpose-built theatre-in-the-round the Roundhouse Theatre, and throughout Australia through our touring and partnership programs. We work with a diverse cross section of artists and audiences to passionately represent and connect with the community we live in.

We are committed to collaboration, which starts and ends with our artists. Our Artist Development Programs span from commissions and workshops through to dedicated developments of new works, as well as participation in our annual HWY Festival. Our Youth & Participation programs cultivate the next generation of performers in the Queensland Arts Industry.

We actively seek out collaborations with exciting partners to create new work and expand the possibilities of form. In the past, La Boite has presented work with Brisbane Festival, Circa, Sydney Theatre Company, Belvoir, Griffin Theatre Company, Opera Queensland, Dead Puppet Society, The Farm, Playlab and QUT Creative Industries.

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