

# BROTHERS BOOK CLUB

BY THE MAMAS BOYS COLLECTIVE

A LA BOITE  
& BRISBANE FESTIVAL CO-PRODUCTION



LA BOITE  
THEATRE COMPANY



BRISBANE  
FESTIVAL

V1.0

# ABOUT THE SHOW

## SYNOPSIS

“Brothers always have each other’s backs.”

Jacob wants good grades, Albert wants to be taken seriously, Denzel wants to make a difference, Fetu wants to be a champion, Rangi wants a second chance, Darius wants to be one of the boys, Luis just wants everyone to get along, and they all want to get lucky.

Welcome to *Brothers Book Club*.

Once a month, the boys meet at Book Club to discuss, study, help (and roast) one another. These boys are best friends – they’re brothers. Everything at Book Club is awesome, but, when Rangi returns, differences surface and the world within and around Book Club begins to unravel.

Through the books they read, they learn about themselves as individuals, as men, and as a brotherhood.

Traversing theatre, hip hop, poetry, and the boys’ imaginings of classic texts, *Brothers Book Club* is as inspirational as it is hilarious and unflinchingly honest.

You’re going to want to be part of this Book Club. Join them for this world premiere at Brisbane Festival 2020.

## CAST & CREATIVES

**DIRECTOR** Claire Christian

**ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR** Ari Palani

**LIGHTING DESIGN** Katie Sfetkidis

**COMPOSITION & SOUND DESIGN** Wil Hughes

**CHOREOGRAPHER** Sammie Williams

**THE MAMAS BOYS ARE** Hosanna Alo Aloalii, Jordan Brexler, Filo Des Lesā, Ethan Enoch-Barlow, PJ Ieremia, Peter Hakiza Irankunda, Shan Lennar Aniel Jacobe, Damon Jackson, Jessie Men, Keavong Alson Men, Joshua Ratahi & Abdul Salman

## RECOMMENDED FOR

Suitable for grades 10 to 12

## WARNINGS

- Adult themes around race, culture and relationships.
- Some course language.

# CURRICULUM LINKS

## FORM, STYLE & CONVENTIONS

- Magical Realism
- Contemporary Performance
- Realism
- Multi-Form (dance, hip hop, poetry)
- Transformation of Classic texts

## SENIOR SYLLABUS UNITS

Grade 11 Unit TWO: Reflect

Grade 12 Unit FOUR: Transform

## SUBJECT MATTER

- Family
- Growing Up
- Culture and Community
- Literature
- Manhood/Masculinity
- Friendship

## PURPOSE

- Empathise
- Challenge or provoke
- Educate or inform
- Empower
- Celebrate
- Entertain

## CONTEXT

- Dramatic context
- Real context
- Philosophical
- Sociological
- Political
- Personal
- Cultural
- Technological

# ABOUT THE SHOW



**DIRECTOR** Claire Christian

## Q&A WITH DIRECTOR CLAIRE CHRISTIAN

*What's the history of The Mama's Boys and the work?*

We all met in 2014 through a youth arts program called TRACTION, which was run in Logan, and about bringing young people who were passionate about the arts together to make work. In 2017 the twelve boys and I started working on a play through the support of SunPac, as we wanted to write something that represented Logan, and culturally diverse young men. We were sick of reading plays, and seeing theatre that didn't really feel like our unique group, or that didn't have characters who were navigating what the boys were navigating. We have multiple different faiths, cultures, languages and experiences represented in just our small group - when you grow up in a community like Logan, you're used to seeing the world represented this way - but this isn't how art is often represented in Australia. Look at our TV shows or films. We only thought we'd write our play, hopefully get it published and that would be it - the project would be done, but once we'd written our play, we knew it would only be right for us to perform it. It was too uniquely ours. La Boite were at that first reading and have been super supportive of the work and its development since then. So, through development with La Boite since 2017 we've been collaborating and bringing our work to life. We formed The Mamas Boys as a way of solidifying our connection and the work we make together.

*Why should highschool students see this show?*

There is a rare and joyous thing that happens when young people see other young people telling alive, relevant and important stories about young people on stage. It rarely happens. It's an added layer of connection - because it's about representation. It's a powerful thing to watch something and thing, this is for me, it is about me, it was made by people like me. Whilst *Brothers Book Club* is about young people in school, it's about bigger questions about who we are as people, as children, as school students, as friends, as people with dreams, who have may have been told there's no way they'll come true.

It's about the smashing of colonised theatre as we see it - it's about defying the expectations of what a theatrical experience should be, or can be. The Mama's Boys are about doing things on their own terms, and making theatre that combines all of their loves and passions, to tell a story that they think is important.

Most importantly, it's going to be a good time - and high school students should have a good time at the theatre because we want them to keep coming back, and to maybe even make their own work.

*What should audiences expect to see?*

A wild amalgamation of theatre, hip hop, poetry, comedy, beats, classic stories like *To Kill A Mockingbird* and *Moby Dick* told with a Logan flair. It is a play about faith, culture, brotherhood, romance all swished about into a wild story book joy filled party where the Mama's Boys will welcome you into their family.



# MEET THE BROTHERS



**CAST** The Mamas Boys Collective

**DIRECTOR** Claire Christian

**ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR** Ari Palani

## AN UN-EDITED Q&A WITH THE BOYS FROM THE BOOK CLUB

QUESTION ONE: *Age and Fun Fact.*

QUESTION TWO: *Most exciting thing about performing Book Club?*

QUESTION THREE: *Why should this show be performed in Brisbane, Australia, 2019?*

### SHAN JACOBE

1. 19 and fun fact about me is I love food.
2. The idea and the dream that we are performing a play that we have developed for 3 years is finally being showcased at one, if not the best stage in Australia. This opportunity is a blessing.
3. Coming from a community and place where opportunities like this are rare. This show, showcases to people in our community or in any community that dreams do happen. This show represents our community, our childhood and our struggles.

### PETER IRANKUNDA

1. 20, I'm a firm believer that pineapples, without a doubt, should go wherever it wants, including of course on Pizza. Case closed.
2. The fact that we are sharing and inviting the audience into our world, where they get to witness our Art, Culture and Story. It's so exciting doing what we love the way we love doing it. Whilst amongst all this representing Logan and the kids in Logan, who I personally can't wait to see this show in particular, born out of the everyday lives of diverse students, be told as a main stage production. That's exciting.
3. This show, the art, and message with the inclusion of diverse characters from different upbringings, though being personal to us and Logan, has a universal reach to every single person to some degree. Whether it's to do with school, race, law or family. At this point in time especially, I believe this show can change or even spark a new ways of thinking in communities, schools or even household and reinforce the appreciation to the people around us.

# MEET THE BROTHERS

## KEAVONG ALSON MEN

1. I'm 22, will be 23 in November 2019. Fun fact will have to be that my favourite actor is Jim Carrey, who inspired me to be an actor in the first place as I grew up watching his movies. And favourite actress, Rebel Wilson just because she is amazing and hilarious.
2. The most exciting thing about performing Book Club is performing with the boys. The support and love we have for one another is undeniable. And when we fall, we pick each other back up. When we say "Brothers always have each other's backs", we really do!
3. Not just 2019, Brisbane, Australia, But it is definitely a start. This play is timeless and universal and I believe relevant, like Razzy's could be situated in Italy or somewhere. The issues that are explored is something we ourselves are still navigating. And it's a story we believe that can change a perspective and shed light on topics that were left in the darkness.

## FILO LESĀ

1. 20 yrs young and loving it! I'd rather eat a whole tomato than an orange. BTW Gordon the GOAT Ramsay tweeted. "Pineapple does not go on pizza."
2. Brothers playing the roles as brothers just makes it a whole another level. That we get to share our story with the world! The fact that we've always dreamt of being on professional stage, and we've finally got the privilege and opportunity to do so just gives me chills every time. I'm truly grateful.
3. A cultural dish with mixed backgrounds is irresistible. I do believe that by performing our work of art will create and open up doorways for many artist in the community to represent their stories as well. For this show to be performed around Brisbane will encourage everyone around the community that you can achieve anything as long as you BELIEVE.

## ETHAN ENOCH-BARLOW

1. 19, fun fact I think country music is actually bangin'.
2. We're all really excited for this show because we relate so much to the characters that when we perform it feels as if we're all just hanging like we usually do, but on a stage. That's ultimately what we want the audience feel as well, like we're just having fun hanging out and vibe-ing together. So Awesome.
3. This show is an opportunity for Brisbane to experience a story with unique perspectives that rarely get represented on the main stage. It's a chance for the youth of Logan City who resonate with this story to have their voice heard and their stories told through young people for young people. *Brother's Book Club* aims to excite in 2019 with bombastic rhymes, hilarious yarns and, genuine love between brothers.

# MEET THE BROTHERS

## PJ IEREMIA

1. I'm currently 20 years old turning 21 real soon! And a fun fact is that I'm obsessed with the 20th century (if that made sense) like Frank Sinatra, their vehicles, their movies, their style, the love life, Marlon Brando, James Dean, all things old! I just love it, though I wasn't born.
2. That I get to do this with my Aiga (family) these opportunities are so rare that you get to act and perform beside your brothers, but also so special to me that we get to share this awesome story literally about us to the world! It's means so much to us the opportunity but most importantly to our families and community!
3. Logan has always been negatively portrayed by the media, and though we might have had our moments in our community, this right here is one of our highlights, and I believe this story reflects what's going on in our schools and in our young people, not only in Brisbane, but ultimately in young people all over the world, that though our women are speaking out, which is so crucial in our society but we also tend to forget that boys and men are just as important, that it's ok to speak out, that it's not weak to be vulnerable and be yourself, and I feel that's what our story directly covers. I love it. I love this family. I love where this is going.

## JORDAN BREXLER

1. I am currently 21 years old. A fun fact about myself is that I absolutely adore the Fantasy genre, and enjoy writing stories.
  2. It's tricky pointing down just one thing when it comes to what's most exciting about performing Book Club. I've narrowed it down to two. The first is that drama and acting have been in my heart since Grade 7. So to look back at myself and see just how far I've come is surreal. From being a dorky kid in school to being a dorky adult that is now putting on a freaking show with La Boite can truly make you believe dreams can come true. The second is the ensemble itself. Those guys are my friends. My FAMILY. We've known each other and been working together for years, and in all honesty I can't imagine doing this without them. We always have each other's backs and I know we'll rock the stage!
  3. I deeply believe Book Club needs to be performed in Brisbane due to various societal factors. The first is because both the ensemble and cast is culturally and spiritually diverse. I've seen a lot of amazing shows, but I feel that the cast in most shows is entirely middle-aged white people (a little ironic as this is coming from a white guy haha). Theatre is a phenomenal thing, and every human being deserves the chance to share their own stories. To use their bodies and voices to spark conversation and even bring about change. Some of the greatest actors I've ever worked with are from different backgrounds, and that's amazing. It means we each bring something unique to the stage.
- Another reason is because the show is about young men. In all honesty, young men have it pretty damn rough. The world expects us to act a certain way, and expressing any form of emotion or vulnerability is constantly met with "man up" or "don't be a pussy". The group with the highest suicide rate is young men and it's scary because it feels like nothing is being done to change this. Book Club highlights the fact that young men can struggle with things and feel complex emotions, and that it's completely okay to be unsure of yourself. At the end of the day we're all human. Finally, Book Club needs to be seen simply because it is unlike anything that's been done before. It's crazy! It's a fusion of comedy, romance, rap, tragedy, dance, poetry, and much more. The audience won't know what to expect next and I am optimistic that they will be on the edge of their seats in anticipation.

# MEET THE BROTHERS

## DAMON JACKSON

1. I'm 21 years old. Fun fact: my favourite band of all time is probably ABBA and for that reason the Mamma Mia movies are my guilty pleasure.
2. I think the most exciting and amazing thing is being able to remember meeting up with the brothers and Claire at the SunPAC two years ago and discussing the play and the possibilities that may come from it. And then being able to slowly bring it to life through the workshops and developments throughout the two years have been awesome. Also, being able to perform a play in general is an amazing privilege but being able to perform one that you have created with family is a blessing.
3. Brisbane is a growing and multicultural city - so it's a chance for them to witness something fresh while also being able to relate to the story and its characters. Also, Logan hasn't always been shown in the media to be a favourable place so the fact that this play is coming from a group of boys from Logan, may be the first step into realising Logan's potential. And for some people, just witnessing the talent in Logan they always knew was there, but never really having the chance to show it.

## JESSIE MEN

1. 22. A fun fact is that I binge watched Harry Potter in 3 days and still think that it should've been Harry and Hermione together.
2. Most exciting thing about performing book club is that its special to us. Its cool because we get to tell our story our way, its the type of theatre that needs to be shown in Brisbane and also the world.
3. Why shouldn't this show be performed in Brisbane? This show is the new wave, rap, poetry, dance and comedy. It has EVERYTHING.

## HOSANNA ALO ALOALII

1. 20, fun fact is that I strongly believe that Christopher Nolan & Hans Zimmer are the best duo since Shaq & Kobe!
2. The most exciting thing about performing book club is performing alongside the great company and diversity of brothers that are here and journeying from beginning to where we are now. Being on a grand stage and sharing raw stories from a community where a lot of people can relate. Logan kids representing Logan. Southside we go hard.
3. Logan has had its fair share of negative portrayal in recent years and it's far from the truth. This show gives a heap of young people from Logan a hope and a future in what they can achieve! It gives an insight to what men go through and sheds light on the misconceptions about the mountaintops of manhood and the valleys of vulnerability. This show is jam-packed full of a variety of entertainment such as music, movement, rap, poetry, comedy and plenty more!



# MEET THE BROTHERS

## ABDUL SALMAN

1. I'm 21 years old. I'm the most curious person you'll ever meet... My mind is constantly buzzing with random facts.
2. The thing about Book Club that gets me going is the idea that brotherhood exists outside of blood. Having the opportunity to 'be' on stage to display this fact is an absolute honour! We are Logan and Logan is us.
3. This story, like all, has the potential to change the landscape of our collective understanding of human connection; especially with men. Even though it's in our essence, I think we need to be constantly reminded that it's okay because after all what you feel is valid; based on the fact that you feel it. In particular, what it feels like to be a young man today who is denied his nature, who needs an outlet, a role model and that's what these boys are to each other in many ways. Young men, young women or whoever you may be...this is a side of human interconnectivity never before seen on stage.



**PERFORMING** The Mamas Boys Collective at La Boite Season Launch Party

# CHECK IT OUT

Once you've booked your tickets, closer to the show date, we'll email you the full pre and post show activities. But for now, here's some research and discussion points you and your students can check out!

## REALISM & MAGICAL REALISM

**DEFINITION OF REALISM:** a style of drama crafted to create believable representations of life; roles and characters in Realism drama draw on real-life or life-like motivations.

**ELEMENTS OF DRAMA:** character, contrast, dramatic focus, language, mood, movement, place, relationship, role, situation, space, symbol, tension, time).

**CONVENTIONS OF REALISM:** fourth wall, three-dimensional characterisations, subtext and the inner- life/ psychologically motivated action, objective and super-objective and beats and units of action, magic-if, the given circumstances.

**CONVENTIONS OF MAGICAL REALISM:** supernatural intrusions into the fourth wall, surreal transformations, breaking out of realist action, fluidity of space, time and characterisation.

SOURCE<sup>1</sup>

## CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES TO THEATRE MAKING

Contemporary practitioners don't tend to start with a style or form. Playwrights and theatre makers start with a story, a theme or a central dramatic question, and then through developing the work, applying dramaturgy and drafting, will decide what tools (conventions) are best suited to tell the story effectively.

This results in:

- A hybridisation of form
- A spectrum of realism conventions
- The prioritising of story and dramaturgy - 'Why this play now?'

At La Boite, we program our season to ensure that we are telling the stories that need to be told now, that we are representing the people that need to be represented now, and that we are creating theatre that is contemporary and relevant. Therefore each of our shows sit across a range of style and forms, including *Brothers Book Club*.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/portal/syllabus/?organisation=4234c6be-05f2-43f7-8caa-c94f828d4aa0#!/app/4234c6be-05f2-43f7-8caa-c94f828d4aa0/syllabus/>

# CHECK IT OUT

## MASCULINITY & MANHOOD IN THE 21ST CENTURY

'Voices of the New Masculinity' – GQ Magazine:

<https://www.gq.com/story/voices-of-the-new-masculinity>

'Pharrell on Evolving Masculinity and Spiritual Warfare' – GQ Magazine:

<https://www.gq.com/story/pharrell-new-masculinity-cover-interview>

'What Does it Really Mean to be a Man' – Washington Post:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/brand-studio/harrys/what-does-it-really-mean-to-be-a-man/>

VIDEO: 'What is Being a Man?' – Reach Out:

<https://au.reachout.com/articles/what-is-being-a-man>

## COMMUNITY / CULTURE

'Why it's So Important for Kids to See Diverse TV and Movie Characters' – The Conversation:

<https://theconversation.com/why-its-so-important-for-kids-to-see-diverse-tv-and-movie-characters-92576>

INFO-GRAPHIC: 'Face the Facts: Cultural Diversity' – Australian Human Rights Commission:

<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/education/face-facts-cultural-diversity>

VIDEO: 'Rebecca Hatch on Her Culture and Music' – Reach Out:

<https://au.reachout.com/articles/rebecca-hatch-on-being-a-role-model>

'7 Shows That Actually Have Diverse Casts' – Reach Out:

<https://au.reachout.com/articles/7-shows-that-actually-have-culturally-diverse-casts>

# TICKET PRICES

## **TICKET PRICES**

Each school booking includes one complimentary teacher ticket with every 10 students.

STUDENT TICKETS ..... \$27.50  
ADDITIONAL TEACHER TICKET..... \$35.00

## **CURRICULUM & WORKSHOP ENQUIRIES**

Visit [laboite.com.au/education](https://laboite.com.au/education) or contact Maddie Nixon our Youth & Education Producer at [maddienixon@laboite.com.au](mailto:maddienixon@laboite.com.au) or 3007 8600

## **SCHOOL BOOKING ENQUIRIES**

Visit [laboite.com.au/education](https://laboite.com.au/education) or contact [schoolbookings@laboite.com.au](mailto:schoolbookings@laboite.com.au) or our Box Office at 3007 8600





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