

# LA BOITE

# THEATRE LTD

ANNUAL REPORT 2017



LA BOITE  
THEATRE COMPANY

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# COMPANY PROFILE



La Boite is a story of people, passion, purpose and place. Representation, diversity and respect are our values. In 2017 La Boite Theatre Company continued to develop and present vital new Australian work.

The stories, ideas and voices of our city and country are many and varied, and as such La Boite seeks to represent and engage in this beautiful and rich diversity; the diversity of form, of ideas, ethnicity, gender – of identity.

## VISION

A locally, nationally and internationally impactful theatre company known for its daring, passion and connectedness

## MISSION

To create exhilarating theatre that embraces audiences and elevates artists through engagement with its community

## WE VALUE

### *Process*

At the core of La Boite are the artists and their process. We believe in long term investment in development. We believe in discipline, patience and flexibility in our creative interactions.

### *Respect*

We embed diversity in all we do. We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which we create and are responsive and inclusive with our audiences, artists and staff.

### *Relevance*

We make work that is connected to our communities locally and globally. We respond to our environment, provoke change and encourage debate

## CORE PROGRAMS

### *Production Season*

La Boite delivers an annual season of professional productions at our Roundhouse Theatre home, drawing from our Artists in Residence Program and collaborating with diverse artists and organisations from across the nation and beyond.

### *Artist in Residence & Development Program*

These Programs extend the depth and rigor of our Production Season. Long term development seeks to lift quality, depth of engagement, and the relevance of our programs. In 2017 we engaged with three Artists in Residence who worked on our production season or in the development of new work, and delivered our second annual HWY Festival, which saw two weeks of showings, workshops, masterclasses and forums.

### *Youth & Participation Program*

Young artists and the youth based audiences, for which La Boite is renowned, are nurtured and developed through our Youth & Participation programs. In 2017 we continued our successful Ambassadors Program and Young Artists' Company, School Holiday Workshops and popular Acting Masterclasses for adults. Professional development workshops for teachers, curriculum-based workshops for school students, and internships for tertiary students and recent graduates again proved popular, and we continued our partnership with Yeronga State High School.

### *Touring & Regional Engagement*

Through touring and regional engagement programs, we seek to connect meaningfully with audiences and communities throughout Australia and internationally. In 2017, four La Boite productions and co-productions toured nationally and internationally.

# 2017 STRATEGIC GOALS AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES



## Produce and Present Compelling Theatre

7 productions produced or presented

96% of audiences surveyed rate their overall satisfaction as good or excellent

Successful collaborations including productions with The Little Red Company, QUT Creative Industries, Brisbane Festival, Dead Puppet Society, MDA Ltd, and Digi Youth Arts

5 new Australian works produced

8 new Australian works developed through HWY and Artists in Residence Program



## Develop Artists and New Work

3 Artists in Residence developed new work

8 projects developed or showcased through HWY

2016 Artist in Residence Michelle Law's *Single Asian Female* presented to sell-out crowds

"This is a new work of significant cultural value" *Single Asian Female*, Stage Whispers



## Connect and Collaborate with Diverse Communities and Artists

51% of all artistic engagements went to female artists

A record 47% of artistic engagements went to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse or Indigenous Australian artists

7 Youth & Participation programs offered, with 694 participants

Community Partnerships with MDA Ltd and Yeronga State High School.

National tour of *The Wind in the Willows* visited 18 venues and reached audiences of 5,942

Critically acclaimed season of *Prize Fighter* at Belvoir for Sydney Festival with audiences of 6,052

*Lady Beatle*, a collaboration with The Little Red Company, toured to Noosa, Adelaide and Lismore

2016 production *When One Door Closes*, a collaboration with Circa, toured to Canada for a season at Theatre Junction Calgary



## Build and Retain Diverse Audiences.

Total production and participation program attendance of 49,777, a 56% increase on 2016 attendance

42% of our audience was aged 30 or under

30% of audiences identify as Culturally or Linguistically Diverse, 20% of audiences were not born in Australia

Over 14,500 subscribers to e-news

3,234 first-time visitors to La Boite

7,119 students attended La Boite productions with their school



## Build Long Term Sustainability

A QUT, Queensland Government and private donor funded renovation to La Boite foyer delivered a world class bar and foyer facility, and theatre gantry

Bar and Café now run internally as a growth revenue stream

Introduction of new fundraising streams for donors and sponsors including Box Office Donations and Entre La Boite sponsor boards

67% of total income was earned income (non-grant income)

Record in-kind sponsorship over \$400,000 provided by La Boite partners

914 Kilowatt hours of performance lighting per mainhouse production.

37% decrease on 2016 levels

Grew reserves to 10.2%

# CHAIR'S REPORT



In 2017 La Boite stretched our wings – we took to the road with five of our productions being presented outside Brisbane, took on new business ventures with the opening of the La Boite Bar and Espresso Bar, gave our foyer and theatre a well-earned face lift, welcomed new funding partners and smashed our attendance records.

This was the first year of our 4-year funding agreement with both Arts Queensland and the Australia Council, and through this security of funding we are able to build our commitment to supporting and developing new artists through our Artists in Residence program and HWY creative development festival.

We were also awarded 3-year funding from Brisbane City Council commencing 2017/2018, and are delighted to join the ranks of the iconic Brisbane organisations that Council supports.

The 2017 production season was varied and dynamic. From the sell-out season of Michelle Law's hilarious and touching *Single Asian Female* opening the year, to Naomi Price's toe-tapping *Lady Beatle* raising the roof of the Roundhouse Theatre night after night; from the intimate, moving and so important real-life stories of refugees and asylum seekers in *The Village* to the psychedelic colours and sounds of *Laser Beak Man* during Brisbane Festival; there was something for everyone.

La Boite Board and Management responded to the #metoo campaign and revelations of sexual harassment in the Australian theatre sector reported in the Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance's industry

survey with a review of our policies and procedures and introduction of best practice inductions and reporting processes. We continue to actively participate in sector-led initiatives to introduce industry-wide standards and consistency of policies and procedures, and to endorse and implement education and culture change campaigns. #safetheatres

At a time when representation, dignity and respect are key priorities in the arts and media sector, and recognising that there is always more to do, we are proud that 51% of all artistic engagements in 2017 went to female artists, and a record 47% of all artistic engagements went to culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) or Indigenous Australian artists. This commitment to diversity and representing the community in which we live also translated to 30% of our surveyed audiences identifying as CALD. We continue to attract a young audience at La Boite with 42% of audiences aged 30 or under.

We owe gratitude to outgoing Queensland University of Technology Vice Chancellor Peter Coaldrake AO who has championed La Boite throughout this tenure, and never more so than in his final year which saw a renovation to the foyer, and the installation of a much needed lighting gantry in the theatre. We thank QUT, the Queensland Government and private donors for their funding of this project which has revitalised our public spaces and created incredible efficiencies in our production processes in the theatre. We look forward to working with new Vice Chancellor Margaret Sheil AO.

Our audience experience is really important to us, and we recognise this starts with booking a ticket, and ends with the journey home at the end of the night. We hope that our audiences are enjoying our new La Boite Bar as much as we are enjoying running it. Architects Bureau Proberts and builders Shape have designed and built the foyer as a "back verandah" for La Boite, referencing the origins of the company in a Queenslander in Hale Street, and audiences each night are spilling out of the foyer in to balmy Queensland nights. Running the bar and the daytime La Boite Espresso Bar have been great exercises in place-making and the interaction of artists, audiences, students, building tenants and staff is generating great conversations and seeding new projects.

We kicked off 2017 in spectacular style, with our 2015 production of Future D Fidel's *Prize Fighter* the hit of the 2017 Sydney Festival. Over 6,000 Sydneysiders saw *Prize Fighter* in its season at Belvoir, and we are thrilled that the production will tour nationally later in 2018. And Belvoir invited us back in 2018 where *Single Asian Female* recently closed a sell-out season.

In 2017, La Boite saw attendance figures grow 56% to 49,777. We saw growth in schools students coming to our productions, in participation in our Youth & Participation programs, and importantly in our national and international audiences through touring. In addition to our Sydney season of *Prize Fighter*, we took *The Wind in the Willows* on the road to 18 venues, our collaboration with The Little Red Company *Lady Beatle* played in Noosa, Lismore and Adelaide, and our 2016 collaboration with Circa, *When One Door*

*Closes* toured to Canada for a season at Theatre Junction Calgary. We are thrilled to be delivering on our strategic goals to connect with diverse communities and build our audiences through touring.

I'm pleased to be able to report that our artistic and strategic successes in 2017 also translated to our end of year financial result with a surplus of \$90,208. We still have some work to do to continue to build reserves to make sure we can continue to sustainably deliver on our strategic goals in the years to come.

We thank all those who support us – those who have sponsored or donated to La Boite over many years, or those who chose to give to La Boite for the first time in 2018 through our new initiative Box Office Donations. Just a small donation given at the time of purchasing your ticket can have a big impact on La Boite's capacity to support artists, provide access to the theatre for young people, and to create exhilarating theatre for our audiences.

Of course our successes, endeavours and progress would not be possible without the amazing and selfless efforts of the La Boite team of staff, management, Board, volunteers and the inspirational artists and arts workers that form the backbone of our company. I thank each and every one of these people sincerely and look forward to seeing what we can all create together in 2019 and following years.

**JULIAN MYERS**

Chair

April 2018

# EXECUTIVES'

# REPORT



The La Boite 2017 season was artistically one of the most diverse we have ever produced, was financially successful, and provided many rewarding growth and learning opportunities along the way. We proudly continued to work with some of Australia's best theatre makers, expanded our audiences in Brisbane and grew national audiences and profile through our touring activity, a highlight of which was a sell-out season of *Prize Fighter* for the 2017 Sydney Festival.

We created and delivered a season of performances that ranged from cabaret and verbatim theatre to an Australian classic. We continued to champion and support the voices rarely heard on Australian stages – writers whose backgrounds range from Chinese Australian to the African diaspora. We continued our work with First Nations young people with Digi Youth Arts and experienced writers including Steven Oliver.

The work we do is a long term investment which is not only a journey of artistic development but also, necessarily, a journey of audience development. We are thrilled by the new audiences coming to La Boite and are excited by the opportunity to continue this journey.

Importantly 2017 also saw the renewal of our venue and foyer, creating a space that allows us to fully engage with our communities. We undertook an inclusive and collaborative process with engaged and excited designers, builders and our partners QUT. We were delighted to see the Architect's research and respect for our history, as a venue in a cottage in Hale Street, manifest itself in subtle ways in the design of our new foyer, both acknowledging our rich past and setting us forward into an optimistic future.

2017 started off with the remount of *Prize Fighter* by Future D. Fidel at Belvoir as a part of Sydney Festival. It was a hit - Sydney audiences loved the work and flocked to it, expanding the impact of La Boite to a Sydney audience and laying the groundwork for an exciting national tour in 2018.

*Single Asian Female* premiered at La Boite in February 2017 and saw

the debut of a wonderful new theatre writing talent in Michelle Law. It was also the mainstage directorial debut of our own Claire Christian (Youth & Participation Producer). The work was a huge hit and we saw a significant increase in the diversity in our audiences, with 33% of the sell-out season coming from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Following a successfully creative development in 2016, in May we collaborated with our community partner Multicultural Development Australia Ltd (MDA) to create and present *The Village*. Created with a focus on high school audiences, but with broad general public appeal, this promenade work presented six stories of people from asylum seeker and refugee backgrounds. The remarkable aspect of the work was that the stories were written and performed by the people who actually lived them. *The Village* was a stunning meld of verbatim and documentary theatre that sold out and deeply affected many who saw it, as well as those of us who had the privilege to collaborate with the storytellers. This is a delicate work that required a deep and compassionate framework to keep the artists safe, which we were able to achieve through our partnership with MDA.

In complete contrast was our next work *Lady Beatle*, a co-production with The Little Red Company. Superstar Naomi Price and her incredible four piece band delivered an entertainment packed 80 minute work exploring the music of the Beatles that transformed the Roundhouse Theatre into a sizzling cabaret venue. We sold out a two week season and saw a new Beatles-loving audience coming to La Boite. *Lady Beatle* toured to the Adelaide Cabaret Festival, NORPA in Lismore, and Noosa.

Our next production was the Australian classic *Blackrock* by Nick Enright, which provided an opportunity for La Boite to deepen our vital relationship with Queensland University of Technology by casting eight Bachelor of Fine Arts, Final Year Acting students who undertook the project as part of their assessment. We were thrilled to provide this real world opportunity for the students to work with three of Brisbane's finest professional actors - Christen O'Leary, Amy Ingram and Joss McWilliam - and a professional design and



technical team. It was a privilege for us to guide these young actors in their professional debuts and witness them sensitively bring to life Enright's heartbreaking work. Their energy and talent allowed it to resonate powerfully. A bold production set in the round and beautifully designed by Anthony Spinaze, *Blackrock* still holds powerful messages for today's young people, evidenced by the response from the large schools audiences who attended.

Probably the most technically ambitious work La Boite has presented in years, *Laser Beak Man* was arguably the hottest ticket of the Brisbane Festival in 2018. Showcasing the extraordinary talents of local visual theatre company Dead Puppet Society, the work was co-produced with Brisbane Festival and Power Arts, and brought to life the acclaimed work of local artist Tim Sharp. This powerful collaboration left audiences gasping with joy at the extraordinary visual design collaboration between Justin Harrison (projection) and Jonathon Oxlade (set and costume), seamlessly integrating with the magical live score, composed and performed by Sam Cromack (Ball Park Music) with Daniel Hanson, Dean Hanson and Luke Moseley. The work was a spectacle with seven puppeteers (four from the U.S.) and the voice of Leigh Sales as the animated reporter. The performance season was complemented by an exhibition of Tim Sharp's work in the La Boite foyer.

To end the year, La Boite was proud to present the second season of the critically acclaimed new work *One The Bear*, conceived and produced by Black Honey Company with Campbelltown Arts Centre. A powerful hip hop theatre experience featuring the irrepressible duo Candy Bowers and Nancy Dennis, this work delivered an extraordinary outreach program, conceived and delivered by Black Honey Company and supported by La Boite, to young people who normally don't attend theatre. It is a vital ground breaking work in the Australian arts sector and we learnt an enormous amount working with the passionate and dedicated artists of this company. The work has inspired us to continue to create the most inclusive and safe spaces we can for all artists.

Our second annual HWY Festival demonstrated its capacity as both a professional development opportunity and audience development program. We grew attendance and participation numbers, and used the opportunity to share work in development with our audiences and community to understand how it speaks to and with audiences. With this knowledge, in 2018 we have programmed Suzie Miller's *The Mathematics of Longing* and continue development of Steven Oliver's *From Darkness Whence We Came*.

We were particularly proud that in 2017 our strategic partnering and investment in relationships led to La Boite productions touring nationally and internationally. Five productions were presented outside Brisbane, reaching new audiences of over 18,000. Excitingly, attendance at our Youth & Participation programs doubled, and our working relationship with the community of Yeronga State High School deepened.

In the year of #metoo we have had significant learnings about process and the culture of our organisation, and along with the majority of the sector we renewed our Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and Bullying policy. We recognise this as a significant time for our industry and La Boite is stepping up with our sector colleagues to shift existing cultures to create the most inclusive and equitable sector we can.

We've loved continuing to bring the voices, stories and theatre of our community to audiences in Brisbane and throughout Australia. See you at the theatre in 2018.

**TODD MACDONALD**  
Artistic Director/CEO  
April 2018

**KATHERINE HOEPPER**  
General Manager  
April 2018

# 2017 SEASON SUMMARY

## Production Season

### SINGLE ASIAN FEMALE

By Michelle Law  
11 Feb – 4 Mar

### THE VILLAGE

15 – 27 May

### LADY BEATLE

By Adam Brunes and Naomi Price  
25 May – 3 Jun

### BLACKROCK

By Nick Enright  
22 Jul – 12 Aug

### LASER BEAK MAN

By David Morton, Nicholas Paine & Tim Sharp with music  
by Sam Cromack  
9 – 30 Sep

### ONE THE BEAR

Written and composed by Candy B and Busty Beatz  
10 – 21 Oct

### LA BOITE HWY

12 – 24 Jun

### FESTIVAL OF AUSTRALIAN STUDENT THEATRE

17 – 19 Nov

	NUMBER OF PERFORMANCES/ PROGRAMS	ATTENDANCE TOTAL	PAID ATTENDANCE	BOX OFFICE
Performance Program	111	24,621	19,611	\$717,088
La Boite HWY performances	12	508	324	\$5,410
La Boite HWY workshops	9	118	88	\$2,174
Other Performances/ Events	12	1,194	504	\$1,776
Youth & Participation Programs	31	694	635	N/A
Touring	87	18,359	14,896	N/A
Other Ticketing Income	24	4,283	3,643	\$35,739
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>49,777</b>	<b>39,701</b>	<b>\$762,187</b>



SEASON 11 Feb – 4 Mar

NUMBER OF PERFORMANCES 20

PAID ATTENDANCE 5148

TOTAL ATTENDANCE 5651

BOX OFFICE INCOME \$201,329

#### CAST AND CREATIVES

**DIRECTOR** Claire Christian

**DESIGNER** Moe Assaad

**LIGHTING DESIGNER** Keith Clark

**SOUND DESIGNER** Wil Hughes

**FIGHT DIRECTOR** N-J Price

**STAGE MANAGER** Peter Sutherland

**ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER** Katie Hurst

**PERFORMED BY** Emily Burton, Patrick Jhanur, Alex Lee, Courtney Stewart,

Hsiao-Ling Tang, Emily Vascotto

#### REVIEWS

*It was funny, entertaining, and a great commentary of mother/daughter relationships, being single, being a woman, being a teen, being anything other than white anglo.*

– Audience feedback

*It was hilarious, honest and genuine. A wonderful piece of theatre that everyone can relate to on some level.*

– Audience feedback

*Its story embraces us all. It is a work that any Australian theatre company world be proud to produce.*

– The Australian

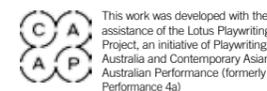
*The play is a gift to young women of colour... funny, touching and at times profoundly moving.*

– The Guardian

*A production that is genuinely funny, genuinely moving and genuinely thought provoking.*

– Australian Stage

Production Partner



La Boite & MDA Ltd present

# THE VILLAGE

Ordinary people in extraordinary situations



**SEASON** 15 – 27 May  
**NUMBER OF PERFORMANCES** 18  
**PAID ATTENDANCE** 1693  
**TOTAL ATTENDANCE** 1815  
**BOX OFFICE INCOME** \$31,439

## CAST AND CREATIVES

**DIRECTOR** Todd MacDonald  
**ASSISTANT DIRECTORS** Ayeesha Ash and Silva Asal  
**DESIGNER** Moe Assaad  
**SOUND DESIGNER** Wil Hughes  
**STAGE MANAGER** Peter Sutherland  
**STORYTELLERS** Muhammad Akram, Cieavash Arean, Arwin Arwin, Silva Asal, Ngoc Phan, Lili Sanchez, Joyce Taylor

## REVIEWS

*Heart-warming and eye opening; it helps to understand humanity and how we see each other.*  
– Audience feedback



La Boite & The Little Red Company present

# LADY BEATLE

By Adam Brunes & Naomi Price



**SEASON** 25 May – 3 Jun  
**NUMBER OF PERFORMANCES** 9  
**PAID ATTENDANCE** 2472  
**TOTAL ATTENDANCE** 2901  
**BOX OFFICE INCOME** \$117,767

## CAST AND CREATIVES

**CREATORS** Adam Brunes & Naomi Price  
**LIGHTING DESIGNER** Jason Glenwright  
**SOUND DESIGNER/AUDIO ENGINEER** Jamie Taylor (Australian Event Productions)  
**COSTUME DESIGNER** Leigh Buchanan  
**VOCAL COACH** Luke Kennedy  
**CREATIVE CONSULTANT** Amy Ingram  
**PERFORMED BY** Naomi Price with Mik Easterman, Andrew Johnson, Michael Manikus and Jason McGregor

## REVIEWS

*Naomi has the most amazing talent and the emotion she shows whilst performing makes it so much more entertaining. Her voice is incredible*  
– Audience feedback

*A stroke of genius.*  
– Australian Stage

*This one is extra special... I was so thankful to hear the soundtrack of my life played with such verse and love.*  
– The Courier Mail

*A stellar show... We're talking banger after banger.*  
– The Urban List

*Touching, relevant, inspiring, thought provoking - everything that theatre should be.*  
– Audience member



La Boite & QUT Creative Industries present

# BLACKROCK

By Nick Enright



**SEASON** 22 Jul – 12 Aug  
**NUMBER OF PERFORMANCES** 23  
**PAID ATTENDANCE** 4440  
**TOTAL ATTENDANCE** 5149  
**BOX OFFICE INCOME** \$147,480

## CAST AND CREATIVES

**DIRECTOR** Todd MacDonald  
**DESIGNER** Anthony Spinaze  
**LIGHTING DESIGNER** Verity Hampson  
**SOUND DESIGNER** Guy Webster  
**MOVEMENT AND FIGHT DIRECTOR** Nigel Poulton  
**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR** Matt Seery  
**VIDEO IMPLEMENTATION SERVICES** optikal bloc (Stephen Brodie)  
**STAGE MANAGER** Peter Sutherland  
**ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER** Erin Handford  
**PERFORMED BY** Thomas Cossetini, Annabel Harte, Ryan Hodson, Amy Ingram, Joss McWilliam, Ebony Nave, Christen O'Leary, Jessica Potts, Bianca Saul, Karl Stuijzand, Thomas Wilson

## REVIEWS

*I took a group of school students who are studying Realism so this show was relevant for our work program - it was also great for them to see QUT students performing.*

– Audience feedback

*A powerful and thought-provoking production.*

– Audience feedback

*As shocking, emotional and confronting as ever.*

– Blue Curtains

*An absolute winner.*

– Absolute Theatre

*Utterly riveting.*

– The Courier Mail



A La Boite, Dead Puppet Society and Brisbane Festival production in association with PowerArts

# Laser Beak Man

By David Morton, Nicholas Paine and Tim Sharp With Music By Sam Cromack (Ball Park Music)

**SEASON** 9 – 30 Sep  
**NUMBER OF PERFORMANCES** 22  
**PAID ATTENDANCE** 4232  
**TOTAL ATTENDANCE** 5251  
**BOX OFFICE INCOME** \$171,038

## CAST AND CREATIVES

**WRITER/DIRECTOR/DESIGNER** David Morton  
**WRITER/CREATIVE PRODUCER** Nicholas Paine  
**WRITER/ORIGINAL ARTWORK** Tim Sharp  
**COMPOSER** Sam Cromack  
**DESIGNER** Jonathon Oxlade  
**PROJECTION DESIGNER** Justin Harrison  
**SOUND DESIGNER** Tony Brumpton  
**LIGHTING DESIGNER** Jason Glenwright  
**PUPPET FABRICATION/PROPS MASTER** Jennifer Livingston  
**DRAMATURGS** Louise Gough and Todd MacDonald  
**ASSOCIATE PRODUCER** Judy Sharp  
**ASSOCIATE SOUND DESIGNER** Imogen Millhouse  
**TECHNICAL MANAGER/AIR ORB PILOT** Samuel Maher  
**STAGE MANAGER** Nicole Neil

**PUPPET FABRICATION/ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER** Matt Seery

**SOUND ENGINEER** Benn Sargood

**PERFORMED BY** Nathaniel P. Claridad, Lauren Jackson, Jeremy Neideck, Jon Riddleberger, Betsy Rosen, Helen Stephens, Maren Searle with special guest voice appearance by Leigh Sales

**BAND** Sam Cromack, Daniel Hanson, Dean Hanson, Luke Moseley

## REVIEWS

*It inspired happiness and joy which is much needed in the world right now.*

– Audience feedback

*Absolutely brilliant production!*

– Audience feedback

*A visual spectacular... A killer soundtrack.*

– The Courier Mail

*Visually splendid, highly entertaining and ultimately moving.*

– The Australian

*Heartfelt and moving.*

– Scenestr



La Boite, Campbelltown Arts Centre  
and Black Honey Company present

# ONE THE BEAR

Written and composed  
by Candy B and Busty Beatz

SEASON 10 – 21 Oct  
NUMBER OF PERFORMANCES 13  
PAID ATTENDANCE 1393  
TOTAL ATTENDANCE 2035  
BOX OFFICE INCOME \$48,035

## CAST AND CREATIVES

WRITER Candy Bowers  
COMPOSITION AND SOUND DESIGNER Busty Beatz  
SET DESIGNER Jason Wing  
COSTUME DESIGNER Sarah Seahorse  
LIGHTING DESIGNER Verity Hampson  
VIDEO DESIGNERS optikal bloc  
STAGE MANAGER Hope Haami  
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER Hayley Forward  
DIRECTORIAL EYE AND DRAMATURG Claire Christian  
DRAMATURG Sista Zai Zanda  
DIRECTORIAL EYE Susie Dee  
PERFORMED BY Candy Bowers and Nancy Denis

## REVIEWS

*It has brought an acute awareness to my thinking around cultural appropriation and Euro-dominance. It has felt uncomfortable but necessary.*

– Audience feedback

*I brought school students along who were completely entertained, challenged and inspired by the work they saw. They all wanted to go back and see it again - along with the extra teachers I took along. So well done everyone!*

– Audience feedback

*A story everyone needs to see and experience... Australian theatre is all the richer for having this play in its theatre.*

– Hot Chicks with Big Brains

*Art-activism at its best, performed with compassion, vibrancy and joy – backed up by a nuanced, critical understanding of its subject matter.*

– Daily Review

*One the Bear uses hip hop, fur and allegory to reflect on identity, discrimination, strength and celebrity.*

– Arts Hub

CAMP  
BELL  
TOWN  
ARTS  
CENTRE



# ARTIST

# DEVELOPMENT

# PROGRAMS

## 2017 ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE

The La Boite 2017 Artists in Residence were a diverse group of established and emerging creatives from Brisbane and beyond, who were embedded into our 2017 season through participation in our HWY festival and the bespoke development of new work and key projects. As a company we recognise that making high calibre work requires time and resources. As a result, La Boite Artists in Residence are supported in the development of their practice and/or a new work through consultation with the La Boite artistic team, access to space and a range of resources, creative development, presentation opportunities, and more.

In 2017, the La Boite Artists in Residence were:

- Digi Youth Arts, who re-visited an existing work *Dislocated* as part of HWY 2017 and presented a short season of *Losing It* at the Roundhouse Theatre, which focused on the experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people from Inala and Stradbroke Island.
- Steven Oliver, who was commissioned to write *From Darkness Whence We Came*, which had a number of creative developments and a public reading as part of HWY 2017.
- Black Honey Company, who re-visited and presented a moved reading of *Twelve* with an ensemble of local and interstate actors and musicians as part of HWY 2017. The company was also programmed as part of the La Boite 2017 mainstage season with *One the Bear*.

## HWY FESTIVAL OF NEW WORK

La Boite's HWY festival is an annual event that encourages a dialogue around the development of new Australian work, provides professional and skills development opportunities, and delivers a dedicated platform for local and national artists to showcase and demonstrate new ideas in front of an audience of peers and patrons.

In 2017, HWY was presented over two weeks in June/July and consisted of a series of curated showings, readings, workshops, forums, live music events, and masterclasses. Artists were invited to showcase and test new work in its developmental stages through formats ranging from a 30 minute pitch to a 2 hour reading. These events provide a platform for the industry and wider arts community to engage in a robust dialogue about the future of theatre in Brisbane. HWY artists hail from diverse backgrounds, recognised by La Boite for their relevance and potential.

## HWY PERFORMANCE PROGRAM

- *The Mathematics of Longing* by Suzie Miller
- *Juliet & Romeo* by Mark Rogers
- *From Darkness Whence We Came* by Steven Oliver
- *Dislocated* by Digi Youth Arts
- *Twelve* by Black Honey Company
- *The Pitch: Ideas Lab* with Steve Pirie, Benjamin Schostakowski, Caleb Lewis, Ayeesha Ash & Emele Ugavule, and Shari Indriani
- *Remembering Palestine* by Aleea Monsour
- *Found in Translation* by Jodee Mundy
- *Un-Australian* by La Boite & Essential Media

## HWY SESSIONS

- Live music in the La Boite foyer bar with Sue Ray (Week 1) and Ella Fence (Week 2)

## HWY WORKSHOPS & MASTERCLASSES

- *Physical Theatre Masterclass* with Alex Forero
- *Independent Producers Intensive* with Sanja Simic
- *Dressing the Theatre Space: Approaches to set and costume design* with Renee Mulder
- *Crankin' up the Volume: The basics of sound design for theatre* with Guy Webster
- *Gaming the Narrative: Participatory and Immersive theatre practice* with Caleb Lewis
- *Masterclass for Teachers: First Nations work in context* with Alethea Beetson and Claire Christian

## HWY CONVERSATIONS

- *Considering Identity: Deconstructing 'Australian-ness' through form*
- *Access All Areas: Making work with, for, and about artists with disability*
- *Artist Talks and Feedback*



## 2017 HWY HIGHLIGHTS

- Total participants at six HWY workshops was 118
- Total audience for the HWY Performance Program was 508
- 63% of artists involved in HWY 2017 were women
- 28% of artists involved in HWY 2017 identify as ATSI
- 28% of artists involved in HWY 2017 identify as CALD
- 93 artists were involved in HWY 2017 across four program areas

## ASSISTANT CREATIVES PROGRAM

In 2017, we launched the inaugural LB Assistant Creatives Program, which provided the opportunity for emerging to mid-career artists to work on a La Boite production as part of the annual mainstage season of shows. These paid positions aimed to enable emerging artists to learn from senior practitioners about the process of developing shows for established companies. During each project, an Assistant Creative was given an opportunity to shadow the director or lead artist in rehearsal, attend weekly production meetings, and observe the production week of the show through to opening night.

The 2017 LB Assistant Creatives were:

- Ayeesha Ash (Assistant Director, *The Village*)
- Silva Asal (Assistant Director, *The Village*)
- Matt Seery (Assistant Director, *Blackrock*)

## MEET THE ARTISTS

Meet the Artists events at La Boite are an opportunity for the general public and schools audiences to meet and engage in conversation with the cast and creative team of each mainstage production, through a facilitated Q&A post-show. These Q&As are hosted by a member of the La Boite artistic team and offer an opportunity to participate in an interactive discussion about the creative process with the creatives, as well as providing a behind-the-scenes look at each production.

## CHATTERBOX

The La Boite Chatterbox events were introduced in 2017 as an opportunity to engage in conversation about each mainstage production in the lead-up to the season. Curated by La Boite's Creative Producer, these events took the form of panel discussions with the core creatives and invited guests, in front of a live audience, in the Roundhouse Theatre.

In 2017, we held the following Chatterbox events:

- La Boite Chatterbox #1: Behind the scenes with the cast and creatives of *Single Asian Female* hosted by Benjamin Law
- La Boite Chatterbox #2: *Blackrock* through the ages hosted by Bri Lee
- La Boite Chatterbox #3: Thinking in three dimensions with *Laser Beak Man* hosted by Bec Mac

# YOUTH AND PARTICIPATION PROGRAMS

The youth based audiences, for which La Boite is famous, are nurtured and developed through our Youth & Participation programs. We have a broad suite of programs for youth participants aged 6 to 25. Our programs are inclusive and offer a number of scholarships and embedded engagements with diverse communities and schools.



## AMBASSADORS

The La Boite Ambassadors program has been successfully running for eight consecutive years, with the primary aim of supporting passionate young artists to engage with La Boite while simultaneously increasing the company's audience reach. We love the Ambassador program because not only does it support the company to grow, but it provides the opportunity for young artists to gain a real insight into La Boite and the arts industry. In 2017, we streamlined our program to better support 56 young adults who had been specially selected to become La Boite Ambassadors. Throughout the year, our Ambassadors were invited to attend all productions for free, network with professional creatives, observe open rehearsals and meet likeminded peers.

## YOUNG ARTISTS COMPANY

The Young Actors Company is an exciting training opportunity for young emerging performers between the ages of 12-18 years. In 2017 La Boite was delighted to have 28 enthusiastic students from Brisbane join the Young Artists Company, which ran for a total of twenty-six weeks. During this time students were led by professional theatre practitioners who taught them a wide variety of acting skills, helping them to hone their craft as performers and theatre-makers. All members were also invited to experience La Boite's productions for free.

## SCHOOL HOLIDAY WORKSHOPS

La Boite's School Holiday Workshops are a fantastic chance for children aged between 7-11 years to get creative with hands-on performance activities during the school holidays. Twenty-four young people participated in three week-long classes in 2017, focusing on creativity, confidence building and collaboration. The 2017 workshops were: *Musical Theatre* with Katie Swan and Maddison Roberts, *Puppetry* with Helen Stephens from Dead Puppet Society and *Making Movies* with Markwell Presents. All workshops ended with a custom made show for family and friends.

## ARTIST RESIDENCY: YERONGA

Through our continued partnership with Yeronga State High School, Youth & Participation Producer Claire Christian was able to offer skills development workshops for students from Yeronga. Students came to La Boite and worked in our theatre space, as well as working with La Boite in their classrooms. We employed and supported two young diverse artists to assist Claire in the facilitation of these workshops, Jessie Men and Peter Irankunda. Yeronga noted the importance of their relationship with La Boite and the enormous benefit to their students.

*"We learnt how theatre and acting works and we did fun activities. My favourite part was when we got to watch the actors acting and showing us the different stories and the emotions. I learnt that not all actors are good at writing and that made me a bit happy because I love acting but I'm not so good at writing. It had a big effect on me because I learnt how incredible it is*

*to bring a story to life. In the future I've always wanted to write a play about my life and have the chance to act in front of people and show them what my life was in the past. I have always wanted to share the bad and good through art, meaning acting or singing or even drawing. I'm so lucky and happy that I got a chance to go and see what it's like to be an actor and work in the theatre."* – Yeronga student participant.

## SCHOOL GROUPS

In 2017, 7119 students attended performances at La Boite in our 2017 season. All teachers received an Education Resource Kit tailored to the production with pre- and post-performance activities. Our Feature Teacher program engages current educators to contribute to our Education notes.

## ACTING MASTERCLASSES

La Boite hosted three series of eight-week acting masterclasses in 2017 and two specialised masterclasses, offering the opportunity for actors to investigate different approaches to acting and performance with leading practitioners.

Our three series were made up of eight weekly 3-hour sessions held on Monday evenings in La Boite's Rehearsal Studio and Theatre. 2017 tutors included Alex Forero, Emily Burton, Haroon Safarey, Claire Christian, Helen Howard, Michael Fletcher and Ngoc Phan. Thirty-nine actors participated in these workshops.

We offered a six-week masterclass with artist Chris Beckey that focused on working with classic texts. Twelve actors participated in this workshop.

We also offered a three-hour masterclass with actor Christen O'Leary. Sixteen actors participated in this workshop.

## ADDITIONAL WORKSHOPS

In 2017 we ran a one-off workshop called *She Was Asking For It* that sat alongside our production of *Blackrock*. Forty-one female and non-binary student leaders, and seventeen teachers, attended a two hour workshop discussing gender, the arts and issues impacting young women in 2017. The students and their teachers then attended the evening production of *Blackrock*. Feedback from the event was extremely positive with students and teachers thrilled with our commitment to having conversations with young people centred around our work on the mainstage. In the lead up to *One The Bear* Claire Christian and Candy Bowers worked with 13 schools and close to 250 students in a week of in-school workshops.

## TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We ran two teacher professional development opportunities in 2017. One three hour evening masterclass focussed on Verbatim Theatre with artist David Burton. 28 teachers attended. During HWY we also facilitated a full-day professional development for teachers with Digi Youth Arts Artistic Director, Alethea Beetson titled *First Nations Work in Context*. 21 teachers attended.

# TOURING AND REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT

**2017 saw the results of strategic partnering, building networks and ambitious planning, with La Boite productions touring nationally and internationally.**

*Prize Fighter* was presented by Belvoir and Sydney Festival for three weeks in January.

*The Wind in the Willows* toured to 18 venues nationally where audiences of 5942 saw the work and took part in workshops.

*The Wind in the Willows* toured to:

- Broome Civic Centre
- Matt Dann Cultural Centre
- University Theatres, University of Western Australia
- Bunbury Regional Entertainment Centre
- Mandurah Performing Arts Incorporated
- Goldfields Arts Centre
- Queanbeyan Arts Centre
- Griffith Regional Theatre
- Eastbank Centre, Riverlinks
- The Bowery Theatre
- Gasworks Arts Park
- Kyneton Arts Centre
- Darebin Arts and Entertainment Centre
- Mildura Arts Centre
- Horsham Town Hall Theatre
- Geelong Performing Arts Centre
- Stawell Entertainment Centre
- Clocktower Centre, Moonee Valley

*The Wind in the Willows* also undertook a small South East Queensland schools tour, including performing for free at a number of schools with the support of a La Boite donor.

Our 2017 co-production with The Little Red Company, *Lady Beatle* featuring Naomi Price, was presented at Noosa Long Weekend, Adelaide Cabaret Festival and at NORPA in Lismore.

*One The Bear* premiered at Campbelltown Arts Centre in July before transferring to La Boite for an October season.

When *One Door Closes*, our partnership with Circa from 2016, toured to Canada for a season at Theatre Junction Calgary in May 2017.

We continued to attend markets and pitching opportunities in 2017 to ensure the stories of La Boite's artists can be shared with audiences throughout Australia.



## DIVERSITY

La Boite's strategic plan embeds a focus on working with diverse artists, telling stories that reflect the rich community in which we live and reaching a diverse audience. In particular, in an extension of the work in 2012-2015 by the Theatre Diversity Associate, we are focused on culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) and Indigenous Australian representation at every level of La Boite. Whether it be artists, staff or audiences.

In 2017 a record 47% of all artistic engagements went to CALD or Indigenous Australian artists. This represents a significant growth on 2016's figure of 30%. A number of projects contributed to this figure, including the predominantly CALD casts of *Prize Fighter* and *Single Asian Female* and a large number of works in development by CALD and Indigenous Australian artists during the 2017 HWY Festival.

Building on our creative development in 2016, in 2017 La Boite and our Community Partner, refugee resettlement agency MDA Ltd premiered *The Village*, an interactive performance experience where audiences witness first-hand the stories of refugees and asylum seekers. Storytellers Muhammad Akram, Cieavash Areean, Arwin Arwin, Silva Asal, Ngoc Phan, Lili Sanchez and Joyce Taylor shared their stories with over 1500 schools students. *The Village* will return in 2018 for a season at Festival 2018 and at La Boite. #changetheconversation

## VENUE ACTIVITIES



### THEATRESPORTS 30TH ANNIVERSARY

In June, we partnered with the Sit Down Comedy Club to host a special 30th Anniversary TheatreSports show. A sell-out crowd roared with laughter and cheered for the teams which included firm favourites from the heyday of Theatresports at Hale Street, to 2017 Student champions.

### VENUE RENOVATION

Thanks to the support of QUT, Queensland Government and private donors, we completed a renovation of the Roundhouse Theatre foyer and installed a lighting gantry in the theatre. Bureau Probeta Architects and Shape Builders worked to a tight schedule starting in March 2017, and had us up and operational for *Lady Beatle* in May in our fresh new surrounds.

### VENUE HIRE – COMMERCIAL AND SECTOR SUPPORT

In 2017 we continued to welcome community and corporate groups in to our venue as external commercial or in-kind venue hirers including emerging and established artists, local theatre-makers, dance companies and schools.

Users of our unique Roundhouse Theatre, Rehearsal Studio and Bar included QUT, St Margaret's School, Clayfield College, TheatreSports, Brisbane Festival, Victorian College of the Arts, Platonic Music and Cirque Africa.

We hosted a total of 24 performances through venue hire which were attended by approx. 4,200 patrons and offered a total of \$32,231 worth of community venue hire in-kind to local community groups and emerging artists. This in-kind hire was supported by 1,700 hours from our volunteers and in-kind support by La Boite's technical staff.

### DIGITAL ARCHIVE

Launched in 2015 to celebrate the company's 90th anniversary, La Boite's Digital Archive is an extraordinarily complete collection of 90 plus years of trailblazing theatrical activity. It includes programs, venues, dates, photographs, lists of creative teams, reviews, newspaper clippings and memorabilia of all sorts. It also features a set of articles by content creator and curator Dr Christine Comans that illuminates the company's history decade by decade.

The archive has not stopped at 2015 but continues to be a dynamic repository for every La Boite season into the future.

A unique feature of the archive is its interactive capability and since its launch Dr Comans has received many contributions from the La Boite community and general public including an array of comments, personal stories, photographs and assorted memorabilia.

The archive is accessed at [90years.laboite.com.au](http://90years.laboite.com.au)

# PARTNERSHIPS

La Boite's partnerships are stronger today than ever. Each partnership with La Boite is unique and tailor-made to ensure we are able to offer increased opportunities for our partners to grow their networks, access our market through social media, and to enjoy our corporate hospitality offerings at the theatre.

We pride ourselves on our ability to create and sustain long-term partnerships that become an extension of the La Boite family. We are very honoured to have this wonderful list of corporate partners' and extremely grateful for their continued support



La Boite Theatre Company is assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its funding and advisory body



La Boite Theatre Company is supported by the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland

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*Dedicated to a better Brisbane*

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# PHILANTHROPY



With the strong and loyal support of our outstanding donors, who believe in our commitment to the future of theatre in Queensland, Australia and beyond, La Boite has developed the careers of dozens of new theatre artists; provided free and discounted tickets to young audience members; toured productions to regional and remote parts of Australia; and invested in our staffing, infrastructure and our unique home, the Roundhouse Theatre.

In 2017 La Boite's overall individual donor numbers increased by 612% largely due to the introduction of our online Box Office Donations Program where hundreds of ticket buyers added a small donation to the price of their ticket.

As a company La Boite understands the importance of giving back to those who support us. We continue to support other not-for-profit charitable organisations and community groups. In 2017 a total of \$7,163 worth of tickets were donated to community organisations.

## TAKE-A-SEAT

This program has encouraged over 135 donors to put their name on a plaque in front of a seat in the Roundhouse Theatre. We have now a third of the seats in the Roundhouse Theatre sold. Many donors have chosen this wonderful campaign to give a unique gift, mark a special occasion, or create a memorial tribute to a friend. This year our corporate partners marked their claim on various rows in the theatre. This one off donation of \$500 per seat sees the personalised dedication displayed for the life of the theatre.

## GIFT-A-TICKET

Campaigns such as Gift-a-Ticket allow La Boite to continue our commitment to the next generation of theatre makers and audiences. La Boite prides its self on creating opportunities, and Gift-a-Ticket \$25 donations enable us to support a young person to attend La

Boite. Free and discounted tickets are provided to young people aged 15 – 25 every year, helping to instil in a young person a life-long love of theatre.

Complementing the Gift-a-Ticket program, La Boite contributed an additional \$42,700 worth of tickets to schools to support students access to live theatre.

## GENERAL DONATIONS

In addition to our directional gift-giving programs, donors contributed to La Boite's productions and programs by donating to our general fund. In May 2017 we completed our six month "Match Funding Program" where every dollar raised to the total value of \$50,000 was matched by Creative Partnerships Australia through their Plus 1 Program. Due to the enormous response and support from our family of donors we not only reached our target but exceeded it to the value of \$62,956 within the allocated six month period.

## CORPORATE PHILANTHROPY

La Boite has many strong commercial Partners and Sponsors who help us achieve our goals, and these partners played a crucial role in the provision of financial or logistical support throughout the year. It is with great pride and admiration that we thank those companies that also made a philanthropic donation as part of their commitment to La Boite's success. In addition to cash sponsorship, in 2017 we received over \$400,000 of in-kind support from our corporate partners.

## BEQUEST PROGRAM

Our bequest program supports those who would like to make a meaningful gift now, to be realised at the end of their life, and to enjoy the special privileges this type of gift generates. All bequests to La Boite are fully tax deductible.

# DONORS

## THE LA BOITE CIRCLE

On behalf of the Board and Staff of La Boite please accept our heartfelt thanks for your generous donations in 2017.

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Mr Tim Fairfax AC & Mrs Gina Fairfax, Mr Julian Myers, Ms Lynn Rainbow Reid AM and Mr John Reid AO

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