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# OPEN HOMES

## PROGRAM

Presented by La Boite  
& Backbone

By Jeffrey Tan (Singapore)

# BACKBONE

# OPEN HOMES

Presented by La Boite & Backbone

By **JEFFREY TAN**  
25 **OCT** — 10 **NOV** 2019



## STORYTELLERS

Amanda & Troy Case  
Virginia & Bob Dyer  
Valerie Ferdinands  
Léonie Flood  
Lauren & Simon Fung  
Angela Chaplin & David Gerrard  
Abdul Ibrahim  
Michael Jeh & family  
Anshula & Michael Jones  
Gerald Keaney  
Sam McGeown  
Leon Miller  
MJ O'Neill  
Dee, Renny & Oscar Rennie  
Colin Young

## THEATRE FACILITATORS

Ayeesha Ash  
Grace Edward  
Katrina Graham  
Todd MacDonald  
Nadine McDonald-Dowd  
Sean Mee  
Lucinda Shaw  
Katherine Quigley

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

At La Boite and Backbone we acknowledge the country on which we work, and the traditional custodians of this land - the Turrbal and Jagera people.

We give our respects to their Elders past, present, and emerging.

We honour the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the First Australians, whose lands, winds and waters we all now share, and their ancient and enduring cultures.

This country was the home of storytelling long before we existed, and we are grateful to share our stories here today.

## PRODUCTION

**CREATIVE PRODUCER** Sanja Simić  
**PRODUCTION MANAGER** Daniel Sinclair  
**ASSISTANT PRODUCTION MANAGER** Jaime Ng  
**STAGE MANAGERS** Jaimeson Gilders, Helen Gillespie, Siobhan Martin, Aleea Monsour, Jaime Ng, Steve Pirie, Angela Ponting, Adam Sleeman  
**PROJECT ASSISTANTS** Stephen Quinn, Sampson Smith  
**PHOTOGRAPHY** Joeli Gribben  
**ASSISTANT PHOTOGRAPHER** Elisabeth Burke  
**SEASON 2019 GRAPHIC DESIGN** Gangplank  
**IN-HOUSE GRAPHIC DESIGNER** Larke Stirling

**LA BOITE** THEATRE COMPANY **BACKBONE**



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.

Produced & supported by  
Dedicated to a better Brisbane

NATIONAL ARTS COUNCIL  
SINGAPORE



**“OPEN HOMES IS OFFERING A DIFFERENT WAY OF SUSTAINED ENGAGEMENT WITH THEATRE MAKERS AND AUDIENCES, BRINGING MEANINGFUL STORIES TO OPEN YOUR MINDS AND HEARTS.”**

*Open Homes* is a very special intimate theatre project with ordinary everyday people. It was created in 2015 in Singapore to find out if ordinary, everyday people would open their minds, their hearts and their homes to share stories about their lived experiences. 25 Homes were involved in 2015 and it inspired the Singapore International Festival of Arts to commission another edition in 2017 with 30 homes!

This version in Brisbane with La Boite and Backbone is very special for me because I did my undergraduate at Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane in the mid-90s. Thus coming home to Brisbane to find 15 diverse homes around the Brisbane river has been an insightful experience about how diverse Brisbane has become!

With the ever changing demographics of population, evolving culture of urban cities, how do people connect with each other? *Open Homes* invites both residents and audiences to connect face to face for an hour, getting to know the other in the comfort of a home. Hopefully, leaving with a new perspective or an invitation to reflect on one's life. Indeed meeting an old friend for the first time in an intimate way. Who are they? Why do they do what they do? What is important for us?

Collaboration is a very important urban social skill in our complex socially connected society. Although we can get connected quickly with less barriers, how much do we know the other? How do we communicate? When we collaborate, we have to listen deeply, discover similarities and highlight our differences. By examining diversely rich cultures, we meet somewhere, where issues and ideas can dialogue, confront, question or spark debate.

The process of *Open Homes* takes six months for residents and Theatre Facilitators to explore, identify and shape what they like to share in the final four shows. Sharing meaningful, essential and inspiring stories of lived experiences right in the heart of their homes.

Working closely with La Boite, Backbone and the eight theatre facilitators in Brisbane, has helped me to clarify the methodology and purpose of *Open Homes*. This project is enriched by the different generations of theatre practitioners, stage managers, front of house managers and volunteers.

Thank you for coming along on this journey!

**JEFFREY TAN**  
Lead Artist (*Open Homes*)

# NOTES PROGRAM



## WELCOME TO OPEN HOMES

*Open Homes* is a big beautiful and generous invitation. In a world where we seldom meet, greet or know our neighbours, *Open Homes* affords us a rare opportunity to meet the people we live amongst, who have opened their homes and their hearts to share a part of themselves with us. It's a very special way to connect us and, in doing so, open us up to each other.

More and more we are told to fear the 'other' - the refugee, the Muslim, the foreigner - anyone different from what the mainstream establishment deem as "normal". Whether it's Trump or Brexit, Border Force or fear mongering politicians domestically, we are encouraged to shut our doors and listen to our single stream of social media or news - it is killing us. It's creating a place of fear and suspicion and I think its robbing us of the very thing that makes us human; our ability to connect and care for each other. Brisbane is brilliantly diverse and growing all the time - *Open Homes* is a great opportunity to experience that diversity in all its beauty.

Diversity is the key - to connect with a multiplicity of voices in the city we need to connect via a multiplicity of avenues. The Southside located Backbone is a vital youth organisation in Brisbane with a long history of grassroots connection. La Boite is 94 years young and situated in Brisbane's north affording us the opportunity for a broad (but by no means complete) snapshot of the life of this city. Jeffrey Tan comes to us from Singapore where he has presented this project a number of times, bringing an outside view of our fair city, reflecting it back at us, and providing a fresh perspective for the curation of the project.

### TODD MACDONALD

Artistic Director & CEO - La Boite Theatre Company

# PROGRAM NOTES





## WELCOME TO OPEN HOMES

I grew up in Jamboree Heights in the 80's. The neighbourhood was our playground and our cultural education. Simple things like knowing when to take your shoes off or when to help out in the kitchen, indeed how to help out in the kitchen. It was all there, all the nuances and differences and intricacies that make up a complex multi-cultural society are all learned through playing at someone else's house, knowing who your neighbours are and feeling like you are invited over, like you had a place to belong.

A lot has changed in the past 30 or so years. Fences went up, our fears became fuelled by a never ending media cycle, our capacity to bond with our neighbours and build trust reduced by our necessity to stay up to date with our entire social network through a simple app in the palm of our hands.

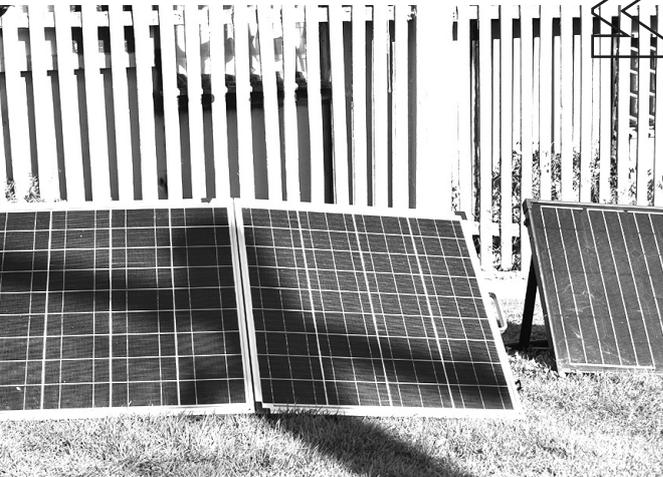
Jeffrey Tan's *Open Homes* project holds a mirror to our society - are you ready to step inside a stranger's home, connect and reflect?

*Open Homes* is something Brisbane, like every metropolitan city needs. An excuse for us all to come over to someone else's house, to be transformed by the journey of a stranger. For the Storytellers, this is a special time to honour the journeys they have had and to stand proud in a moment and look at a lifetime of learning. To find the beauty and humour in that and share that with pride in your own home, surrounded by strangers.

If it takes a village to raise a child, it takes many companies to raise a project like *Open Homes*. Without our big sister company La Boite, this is not a project Backbone could run to the scale that it is currently being done. So, for potentially for the first time since we left home in 1994 and became our own company, Backbone is happily playing at La Boite's house to make *Open Homes* a reality and welcome our new friend over from Singapore, Jeffrey Tan.

**KATHERINE QUIGLEY**  
Artistic Director & CEO – Backbone

# PROGRESS NOTES





# BRISBANE NORTH

## LIFE'S RECIPES

By Valerie Ferdinands

Facilitator: Ayesha Ash

Valerie and her family moved from India to Australia in the late 1960s with only their recipes, love of cooking, music, and humour.

Join them as they take you on a moving journey through the recipe book of their lives. From India to Australia to the studios of *My Kitchen Rules*, Valerie's story proves you never know what life's got in store on the 'back burner'!

*\*This home has a pet dog.*

### PERFORMANCE DATES

Fri 25 Oct	6PM	Sat 26 Oct	6PM
Fri 25 Oct	8PM	Sat 26 Oct	8PM



## IN PURSUIT OF LOVE

By Anshula & Michael Jones

Facilitator: Sean Mee

Join Anshula and Michael in their new home to hear a story about finding and falling in love in an unlikely place.

Bound by love and faith, this young couple share the trials and triumphs of navigating a young marriage, bringing two worlds together in one home.

*\*This home is wheelchair accessible.*

### PERFORMANCE DATES

Fri 25 Oct	6PM	Fri 8 Nov	6PM
Sat 26 Oct	6PM	Sat 9 Nov	6PM

## UBUNTU

By Michael Jeh & family

Facilitator: Katrina Graham

Michael's story embraces the marriage of multicultural Australia and a restless journey around the world. It is the tale of a home of contrasts, where nothing is as it seems on the surface.

Ubuntu – *I am because you are.*

*\*This home has a pet dog and is wheelchair accessible.*

### PERFORMANCE DATES

Fri 25 Oct	6PM	Sun 3 Nov	6PM
Fri 1 Nov	8PM	Fri 8 Nov	8PM



# BRISBANE NORTH

## A SUCCESSFUL WOMAN

By MJ O'Neill

Facilitator: Katherine Quigley

From improvising noise music in old tyre factories to leading strategies for one of the world's biggest PR companies, join MJ as she shares how Red Hill helped her combat a lifetime of debilitating mental illness and adversity to build a happy, healthy life in her favourite city in the world.

### PERFORMANCE DATES

Fri 25 Oct	8PM	Sat 2 Nov	2PM
Sat 26 Oct	2PM	Sat 9 Nov	2PM

## LOOKING FOR A HOME

By Abdul Ibrahim

Facilitator: Todd MacDonald

Where are you from? Where is home? Abdul doesn't have an answer to this question. He doesn't feel connected to the country in which he was born. He has lived in many different countries... Australia's the one he wants to claim as his home. When people ask, he usually tells them the suburb he lives in, wrapping up the conversation.

Should he tell them what they want to hear?  
What would you say in his shoes?  
What is home to you?

*\*This home is wheelchair accessible.*

### PERFORMANCE DATES

Fri 25 Oct	8PM	Sat 2 Nov	8PM
Fri 1 Nov	6PM	Fri 8 Nov	6PM

## OPEN CLOSED DOORS

By Sam McGeown

Facilitator: Ayesha Ash

You are invited to walk with Sam through the many doors of his life. Travel through the streets of Belfast during the Troubles, see the blossoming of love amongst the underground of Osaka, journey with him as he moves toward those seeking asylum in Brisbane and then take a seat around Holland Park's most welcoming kitchen table.

*\*This home has a pet dog.*

### PERFORMANCE DATES

Sat 26 Oct	2PM	Sat 2 Nov	2PM
Fri 1 Nov	8PM	Sat 2 Nov	4PM





# SOUTH BRISBANE

## LOVE & FAITH

By Lauren & Simon Fung

Facilitator: Nadine McDonald-Dowd

Two people from very different cultures, backgrounds and up-brings learn how to love and accept each other's shortcomings through growing with their faith. Together they face life's challenges by grace, sifting through the chaos and working hard to raise their child in a flawed world.

### PERFORMANCE DATES

Sat 26 Oct	4PM	Sat 2 Nov	4PM
Fri 1 Nov	6PM	Sat 9 Nov	2PM

## KEEPSAKES, BOXES AND TREASURES

By Léonie Flood

Facilitator: Katherine Quigley

Léonie has traversed the globe in many different directions, inside her home is a trove of stories to be unveiled through a selection of treasures. Choose your own adventure as you unpack the memories and stories of her past, revealing unexpected adventures and worlds far from here.

### PERFORMANCE DATES

Sat 26 Oct	4PM	Sat 9 Nov	4PM
Sat 2 Nov	6PM	Sun 10 Nov	2PM



## AN ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO BECOMING FAB

By Colin Young

Facilitator: Lucinda Shaw

What does it take to become fabulous? This is not your typical make-over show. Meet the man behind the Drag Queen, as East Brisbane's own Colin Young flings open the (many) door(s) to his past. Since coming out at twenty one and a half, he has led an amazing life. Join him for this intimate look at his achievements and the acknowledgement of those he's most grateful to have known, met, and loved.

### PERFORMANCE DATES

Sat 26 Oct	6PM	Sun 3 Nov	2PM
Sun 27 Oct	2PM	Sun 10 Nov	2PM



# SOUTHWEST BRISBANE

## AT LAST

By Leon Miller

Facilitator: Katrina Graham

When life delivers an unexpected late life twist, one man embraces the chance to make a new home for himself.

Nestled on the banks of the Brisbane River, *At Last* is a story flowing with music, avant-garde cabaret, theatre and the strongest force of all...love.

### PERFORMANCE DATES

Sat 26 Oct	8PM	Sat 2 Nov	8PM
Sun 27 Oct	2PM	Sat 9 Nov	8PM

## LOVE IS LOVE

By Angela Chaplin & David Gerrard

Facilitator: Sean Mee

Angela and David have lived, worked and loved across the nation and many parts of the world. Their journey includes running theatre companies, collaborating on everything from new Australian drama to Shakespeare in the Park. They have curated events, commemorations, and festivals.

Notorious for their parties and storytelling, come and hear the backstage stories of their lives.

### PERFORMANCE DATES

Sun 27 Oct	4PM	Sat 9 Nov	4PM
Sun 27 Oct	6PM	Sun 10 Nov	4PM



## THE SECRET OF KISSING FOR 40 YEARS

By Virginia & Bob Dyer

Facilitator: Lucinda Shaw

Party – Work – Party – Repeat. Dogs, rock ‘n’ roll, motorbikes.

Meet the youngest couple on Jackson Street, happy in each other’s company, growing together in like-minded friendships. Dance, laugh, share stories, food and hopes with them together.

*\*This home has a pet dog.*

### PERFORMANCE DATES

Sun 27 Oct	4PM	Fri 8 Nov	8PM
Sun 3 Nov	4PM	Sun 10 Nov	4PM



# SOUTH BRISBANE

## MANCAVE

By Gerald Keaney

Facilitator: Todd MacDonald

*Mancave* invites you into Gerald Keaney's creative space; an opportunity to meet the street philosopher and expressive practitioner of many forms.

From Anarchy to DIY - creativity has always been at the center of Gerald's life, guided by critical thinking, social critique and the absurd.

### PERFORMANCE DATES

Sun 27 Oct	6PM	Sat 9 Nov	6PM
Sun 3 Nov	6PM	Sun 10 Nov	6PM

## URBANBLAKS

By Amanda & Troy Casey

Facilitator: Nadine McDonald-Dowd

As the concrete walls keep rising around us, community is what keeps us connected to who we are and where we have come from. How does a young couple living in inner-city Brisbane, with an extremely busy business-focused lifestyle, maintain their cultural identity?

Our whole world revolves around community, connections and relationships. It's engrained in us... it's who we are.

*\*This home is wheelchair accessible.*

### PERFORMANCE DATES

Sat 2 Nov	6PM	Sat 9 Nov	4PM
Sun 3 Nov	2PM	Sun 10 Nov	4PM



## RENNIE'S MANSION

By Dee, Renny & Oscar

Facilitator: Grace Edward

The Rennie family are hoarders of the good kind. Collectors of treasures with a story, just like them. They love music, art, theatre, all with a side of great cocktails and lots of laughs.

Their home is busy, loud and a little on the weird side, which suits them all perfectly. Loving to entertain, they welcome you to the Rennie Mansion.

*\*This home has a pet dog.*

### PERFORMANCE DATES

Sat 2 Nov	6PM	Sat 9 Nov	8PM
Sun 3 Nov	4PM	Sun 10 Nov	6PM

# LA BOITE 2019 PARTNERS



**Queensland  
Government**

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



**Australian Government**

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

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