

LAB KELPIE PRESENTS

SPENCER

BY KATY WARNER

PRESENTER PACK



LAB KELPIE

An Australian New Writing Theatre Company.

creative
partnerships
australia



City of
STONNINGTON

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ABOUT LAB KELPIE

“One of Australia’s most exciting independent theatre companies on the rise.” **Maxim Boon, The Music**

Lab Kelpie is a theatre company dedicated to the production of new work by Australian playwrights. A not-for-profit organisation, we actively seek out works that engage audiences by interrogating with intelligence and vigour how relationships, power and politics function in the twenty first century.

As strong advocates of new writing, we support Australian playwrights by commissioning, developing, presenting and touring their work, encouraging our writers to take risks and inspire audiences with the themes and messages they want to explore.

Previous works have toured nationally to regional and metro audiences, and overseas to the USA and New Zealand. In only its first five years, Lab Kelpie has presented upwards of 150 shows to over 10,000 audience members across 40 different venues and festivals.

ABOUT SPENCER

SYNOPSIS

Spencer is a new Australian comedy-drama that looks through the lens of a sports-mad dysfunctional family to explore themes of acceptance, forgiveness, identity and depression.

Told over the course of one weekend in a suburban Australian family home, Spencer tells the story of a tight-knit family led by single-mum matriarch Marilyn and her three adult children – wayward daughter Jules, mouthy coulda-been Ben and AFL player and golden-boy Scott.

About to meet the young son – *Spencer* – he never knew he had, Scott and the family have gathered home to help mark the occasion. With the surprise appearance of the father they barely remember, the entire family is forced to work together to clean up both the house and their own fractured relationships as the clock ticks down to Spencer’s arrival.

Employing classic Australian vernacular, lashings of humour, and recognisable characters in situations that speak to the way we live today, Spencer asks its audience to consider how much family defines who we are, if we can exist without them and whether we ever really grow up...

CREDITS

Playwright **Katy Warner**
Director **Sharon Davis**

Designers **Rob Sowinski & Bryn Cullen**
Producer/Stage Manager **Adam Fawcett**

Cast **Lyall Brooks, Jamieson Caldwell, Jane Clifton, Fiona Harris & Roger Oakley**

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CREATIVE BIOS

Katy Warner Playwright



Katy has a Master of Writing for Performance from the Victorian College of the Arts, and her plays have been presented across Australia and the UK. She is an AWGIE winner (*Reasons to Stay Inside*), recipient of the Melbourne Fringe Award for Best Emerging Writer (*These are the isolate*) and a 2016 Green Room Award nominee for *A Prudent Man*, which was selected to appear at the 2017 New York United Solo Festival. Other plays include *Dropped* (seasons in Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide and Edinburgh) and *nest*, nominated for Theatre503's Playwriting Award in the UK. Her fiction has received the Rachel Funari Prize for Literature and Overland Magazine's Neilma Sidney Short Story Prize. Her writing has been shortlisted for awards including the Lord Mayor's Creative Writing Prize and the Grace Marion Wilson Emerging Writers Prize. Katy is currently working on her debut novel, *Regime*, to be published by Black Inc. Books in 2018. katywarner.com

Sharon Davis Director



Sharon completed her actor training at the Victorian College of the Arts and has worked extensively throughout the industry as an actor, producer, voice over artist, director, and industry advocate. Recent notable roles include Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing* for Essential Theatre, Smeraldina in *The Servant of Two Masters* for Make a Scene and La Mama Theatre, *Australia Day* for Hit Productions, and *Mother & Son* for Queensland Theatre. She was co-creator and producer for Melbourne independent theatre company 5pound theatre, and is a founding performer for Melbourne based improv group Stiff Company. On screen, she has appeared in *It's a Date*, *Neighbours* and *Killing Time*.

Rob Sowinski & Bryn Cullen Designers



Lab Kelpie's 2016 production of *Elegy* was the first project of an enduring partnership between two of Melbourne's most in-demand lighting and set designers, which has since gone on to co-design *Company*, *Pygmalion*, and *The Resistable Rise of Arturo Ui*. Rob is resident designer for Lyric Opera and touring Sondheim company Watch This, guest designer for companies such as Melbourne Festival, MKA and Theatre Works, and he has worked all across Australia, Hong Kong, Tel Aviv, New York, New Zealand and Jerusalem. Bryn, a graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts (Fine Arts, majoring in Performance Technology), has also travelled the world as a lighting, vision and graphic designer. He has worked for major companies including Opera Australia and Melbourne Theatre Company.

Adam Fawcett Producer/Stage Manager



Adam is Lab Kelpie's co-founder and award-winning creative producer, having presented their shows since the company's debut in 2013. He has produced the premiere of Douglas Rintoul's *Elegy* (a 2016 Midsumma Premier Event), and Katy Warner's *A Prudent Man*, which won the People's Choice Award from over 460 shows at the 2016 Melbourne Fringe Festival. Adam also worked as producer for Influx Theatre to co-present *Animal* with Theatre Works, which went on to win four Green Room Awards in 2016. In 2018 he will produce Petra Kalive's *Oil Babies* in association with Darebin Speakeasy and Mary Ann Butler's *Broken* for Lab Kelpie. A published fiction writer, he is also collaborating with Lyaal Brooks on a brand new one-man touring show confronting euthanasia, grief and social isolation.

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CAST BIOS

Lyall Brooks Ben



A three-time Green Room Award nominee, Lyall's professional theatre credits include *North by Northwest* (Arts Centre Melbourne), *The Heretic* (Melbourne Theatre Company), *Sunday In the Park with George* (Victorian Opera) and *Savages* (fortyfivedownstairs). Television appearances include *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, *The Leftovers*, *Neighbours*, *Winners and Losers*, *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries* and *The Doctor Blake Mysteries*. He is also an established voiceover artist, starring in international animations *SheZow*, *Flea-Bitten!* and the Emmy-nominated *Get Ace*. Also an emerging theatre director and dramaturg, Lyall is a 2017 Theatre Works Associate Artist, and Lab Kelpie's Artistic Director. lyallbrooks.com

Jamieson Caldwell Scott



A graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts, Jamieson's most recent theatre credits include *Hamlet* for the Melbourne Theatre Company, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, *Macbeth* and *Romeo and Juliet* for the Australian Shakespeare Company, and the lead in HIT Productions' national tour of David Williamson's *Managing Carmen*. Television appearances include *The Doctor Blake Mysteries*, *Blue Heelers* and Channel 7's *The Power of Ten*. Jamieson is also resident actor, writer and director for Phunktional Arts, a theatre company committed to positive social change and focused on reaching and engaging at-risk youths.

Jane Clifton Marilyn



Jane is the genuine show-business all-rounder, managing to carve out a four decade-long career including TV appearances in a string of early Australian TV shows such as *Division 4*, *Homicide*, *Ryan*, *Bluey*, *Holiday Island* and the famous role as Margo in *Prisoner/Cell Block H*. In the music world Jane fronted the groundbreaking feminists-on-Countdown band *Stiletto*, had two top 10 pop singles with *Girl On The Wall* (solo) and *Taxi Mary* (with Jo Jo Zep) and has appeared in the smash-hit stage shows *Mum's The Word* and *Menopause The Musical*. As a novelist she has had three crime novels published and a memoir, *The Address Book*. Recent stage appearances include *Boy Out Of The Country* for Larrikin Ensemble and *Barassi - The Stage Show* for Jager Productions. janeclifton.com.au

Fiona Harris Jules



Fiona wrote and co-starred on the ABC sketch comedy show *Flipside*, Channel Nine's *Comedy Inc*, and Network Ten's *Skithouse*. She has played guest roles on *The Beautiful Lie*, *The Ex-PM*, *Mr & Mrs Murder*, *Offspring*, *Tangle*, *The Librarians*, *The Time of Our Lives* and *Beaconsfield*. Together with her husband Mike McLeish, she is also the creator and star of Princess Pictures' comedy series *The Drop Off*. She was head scriptwriter on series 3 of the ABC3 kids' series *Prank Patrol* and has also worked as story consultant on shows such as *Bed of Roses* and *The Time of Our Lives*. Fiona has recently released a series of children's books, *The Super Moopers*, and regularly co-hosts ABC 774 Evenings with Lindy Burns.

Roger Oakley Ian



Well known for his many television appearances on *Something in the Air*, *The Damnation of Harvey McHugh* and *Home & Away*, Roger is most prolific in the theatre. Over the decades he has acted in plays by Jane Austen in Hull, Tom Stoppard in Auckland, G B Shaw in Belfast, Hannie Rayson in Sydney, Ron Elisha in New York and Shakespeare all over the place. Some of his recent theatre appearances were in *August Osage County*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Circle Mirror Transformation*, *Richard III*, and *The Golden Dragon* for Melbourne Theatre Company; *Beyond the Neck* for Red Stitch; *The Nightwatchman* for Theatreworks; and the premiere and recent national tours of *Hello Goodbye & Happy Birthday* for Malthouse/Melbourne Festival. He has premièred many Australian plays and his roles in Michael Gurr's *Jerusalem* and *Sex Diary of an Infidel* won him Green Room Awards.

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PERFORMANCE SPECIFICS

COSTS (excludes GST)

Weekly Fee \$14,976 p/wk*
Remount \$17,043
Royalty 13%

* Excludes all travel/touring costs.

DURATION

90 minutes (no interval)

SUITABLE VENUES

Technical Rating C: Prosc Arch or Black Box with minimum stage size of 6m x 6m.

MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PERFORMANCES PER WEEK

7 performances

MINIMUM BREAK BETWEEN PERFORMANCES

120 minutes

APRA OBLIGATIONS

Producer to cover all APRA obligations.

TOURING PERSONNEL

The touring party consists of 7 people:

Role	Name
Touring Technician	TBC
Stage Manager	Adam Fawcett
Cast x 5	Lyall Brooks Jamieson Caldwell Jane Clifton Fiona Harris Roger Oakley

PERFORMANCE HISTORY

Year	Venue	Number of performances
May 2017	Chapel Off Chapel, Melbourne	14



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AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

OVERVIEW

We have a range of audience engagement opportunities available for the production, from exploring the themes of the play itself to sharing the artistic working methods of the writer and performers. Please see below for a sample, and read our separate **Community Engagement & Education Menu** for further details.

Q&A

Lab Kelpie can provide post show Q&As with the actors and, possibly, the writer and/or director. Whether informal meet and greets, community incursions or an allocated panel discussion at the venue, these are excellent tools for deepening the understanding of the work and its themes.

PERFORMANCE WORKSHOPS

Our touring cast's collective knowledge, skills and teaching experience covers a wide range of specialties: Playbuilding, Scene Study, Physical Theatre, even Breakdancing! All age groups can be catered to, even those younger than the show itself is suitable for.

WRITING WORKSHOPS

Using Spencer as a case study, award-winning writer and playwright Katy Warner can take participants through her own creative writing process before facilitating practical exercises to workshop their own ideas. Applicable to short and long form fiction, dialogue and monologue driven drama.

SECONDARY STUDENTS

An excellent example of contemporary Australian theatre, Spencer is suitable for study by senior secondary students of Drama and Theatre Studies. Playwright Katy Warner is a qualified secondary teacher and currently consults for Arts Centre Melbourne's Education department. She has created comprehensive teachers' resources and can facilitate all curriculum-based classes and workshops. Check the **Community Engagement and Education Menu** for suitability to your state's specific curriculum units/dimensions, or email education@labkelpie.com for further information.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Spencer presents an opportunity for the community to start conversations around some vital topics like self-acceptance, self-expression, identity, masculinity and depression. We are therefore very open to developing a community engagement or workshop program with each presenter tailored to the needs of their community. Contact us at education@labkelpie.com to begin the conversation.



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MARKETING

MARKETING COPY

ONE LINE

There's no such thing as fun for the whole family...

SHORT

There's no such thing as fun for the whole family...

A brand new comedy-drama looking at a gloriously dysfunctional Australian family, Spencer tells the story of a tight-knit family led by single-mum matriarch Marilyn and her three adult children – wayward daughter Jules, mouthy coulda-been Ben and AFL golden-boy Scott.

About to meet the young son – Spencer – he never knew he had, Scott and the family have returned home to help mark the occasion. With the surprise appearance of Ian, the father they barely remember, the entire family is forced to work together to clean up both the house and their own fractured relationships as the clock ticks down to Spencer's arrival. Starring Jane Clifton (Prisoner) and Roger Oakley (Home & Away), Spencer asks us to consider how much our family defines who we are, and whether we ever really grow up...

EXTENDED

There's no such thing as fun for the whole family...

A brand new comedy-drama looking at a gloriously dysfunctional Australian family, this is modern story telling at its best!

Told over the course of one weekend in a suburban Australian family home, Spencer tells the story of a tight-knit family led by single-mum matriarch Marilyn and her three adult children – wayward daughter Jules, mouthy coulda-been Ben and AFL golden-boy Scott.

About to meet the young son – Spencer – he never knew he had, Scott and the family have returned home to help mark the occasion. With the surprise appearance of Ian, the father they barely remember, the entire family is forced to work together to clean up both the house and their own fractured relationships as the clock ticks down to Spencer's arrival.

Starring Jane Clifton (Prisoner) and Roger Oakley (Home & Away) and supported by Lyall Brooks, Jamieson Caldwell and Fiona Harris, Spencer employs classic Australian vernacular, lashings of humour, and recognisable characters that ask us to consider how much our family defines who we are, if we can exist without them and whether we ever really grow up...

MARKETING MATERIALS

Lab Kelpie will provide each venue with a comprehensive **Marketing Toolkit**, including all performance, company and artist information, key audience demographics and advice on how to engage them and hot tips for your marketing, publicity and box office teams.

We will also provide access to our growing dropbox of marketing collateral including:

- Promo video individually branded to your venue
- Print-quality production and rehearsal photography
- Social media collateral
- Poster and flyer design templates
- Media release
- Pre-answered interviews with the writer

TEACHER'S RESOURCES

A comprehensive **Teachers' Resource Kit** has been prepared by playwright and qualified secondary teacher Katy Warner, including thoughts and activities to explore pre- and post-show. Covering the background, themes and structure of the play, as well as further reading, the kit is designed to prompt discussion and ignite ideas back in the classroom.

MEDIA QUOTES

★★★★★ "It quietly uncovers a simple yet universal truth - the flawed but undeniable power of unconditional love. This may very well be the birth of a future Australian classic." **The Music**

★★★★★ "Spencer is full of love and family and all the crap that happens with those two things. It'll stick in your mind." **Theatre People**

★★★★½ "Family comic drama at its finest." **The Lowdown Under**

"Left me feeling as good as watching *The Castle* or *Kath and Kim*. It's hilarious and it hurts in all the right places because it's us." **Sometimes Melbourne**

AUDIENCE REVIEWS

"It was awesome to see new Australian writing that is so very heart-warming, funny and straight to the uncomfortable truth of things."

"A really charming, fun piece... a terrific Australian story!"

"Theatre as it should be! Hilarious performances all round."

"An exceptional night at the theatre. Brilliant cast, fun soundtrack and thrilling storyline. A definite must-see on this year's theatre calendar!"

"I've already seen it twice!"

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VIDEO LINKS



SPENCER TRAILER

<http://www.labkelpie.com/spencer>



SPENCER ARCHIVAL

<https://vimeo.com/labkelpie/SpencerArchival>
(password: **scottybenjules**)

PRODUCTION IMAGES

High res production, rehearsal and marketing images provided. Samples images on the following page.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Spencer engages audiences of all demographics: lovers of comedy and domestic family drama, groups (girls' nights out, social clubs) and sports fans, and is a safe bet for couples and traditional non-theatre-goers (we're looking at you, husbands!).

CONTENT WARNINGS

MA 16+. Like most Australian homes, the play contains mild swearing. And some drinking and smoking. And a bit of snot.

SPONSOR OR OTHER ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This production was supported by City of Stonnington and Creative Partnerships Australia through MATCH and both of these bodies should be acknowledged on all collateral associated with the production. Specific logo and text requirements will be provided in the **Marketing Toolkit**.



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Images by Pier Carthew.

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PRODUCTION DETAILS

TECHNICAL SUMMARY

This is a front-on show best suited to prosc arch theatres, or end-stage/corner black boxes. Wide auditoria or unusual formats should be checked with Lab Kelpie before committing.

Our tech team will provide a comprehensive redrafted design for your individual venue using your existing stock, LX bars and dimensions to enable a full pre-rig to be undertaken. This redraft will be completed as soon as practical after contracting, and no later than three weeks prior to arrival.

CREW REQUIRED FROM VENUE

Pre-rig is required unless negotiated. Crewing figures may be negotiable for smaller venues.

Pre-Rig: 3 hours
2 x LX @ 3 hours

Bump In: 8 hours
2 x LX @ 6 hours (staggered)
2 x Mechs @ 6 hours (staggered)

Performance: 1.5 hours
1 x LX @ 3 hours

Bump Out: 3 hours
1 x LX @ 3 hours
3 x Mechs @ 3 hours

EXAMPLE SCHEDULE

0800 - 1200	Bump in set
1000 - 1200	Bump in touring LX
1200 - 1300	Lunch
1300 - 1730	LX focus and plot, test sound
1730 - 1830	Crew break
	Cast call and set familiarisation
1830 - 1930	Hour Call
1930 - 2100	Show
2100 - 0000	Bump out

STAGE

Minimum dimensions 6m x 6m with a height of 4m.

“Box” set featuring a main lounge room, a full-length OP wall with an archway to a semi-visible hall, a half-length PS wall, a back wall containing second archway leading to a barely-visible kitchen upstage PS, and a screen door leading off stage from the “kitchen” upstage PS. See attached images.

Venue to supply masking from edge of set to side stage. If downstage sightlines are an issue in shallow black box spaces, risers for the entire set may need to be supplied.

LIGHTING

The show utilises house stock plus some toured prac lighting. LX called by touring Stage Manager, from standard FOH position (bio box).

Venue to supply:

- Basic house stock
- Memory console
- Minimum 36-channel LX rig
- 3 x dimmable circuits on stage for toured set electrics

Lab Kelpie to supply (all tested and tagged):

- 2 or 3 hung prac lamps
- 3 on-stage lamps/electrics

SOUND

Touring stage manager will operate sound.

Venue to supply:

- Mixer with mini jack input
- Venue FOH speakers
- Small on-stage speaker with input at FOH SM position

Lab Kelpie to supply:

- Company iPods

WARDROBE & PROPS

Dressing room(s) for five cast including hanging space required. Washer, drier, iron and ironing board appreciated.

Lab Kelpie will travel with own props tables/shelves. Access to fridge pre-show required.

FREIGHT NOTES

Entire tech travels in a three-tonne truck. Access to loading bay preferable. Cast to travel in mini-bus.

CRITICAL ISSUES

The set is a small room approximately 6m x 6m, with a wall extending down the OP side at an angle. This may cause a sightline issue with some wider auditoria that may necessitate blocking out some seats. We will look at this when redrafting to your venue, but in the meantime please refer to the production images and contact us if you think this may be a concern.

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CONTACTS

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