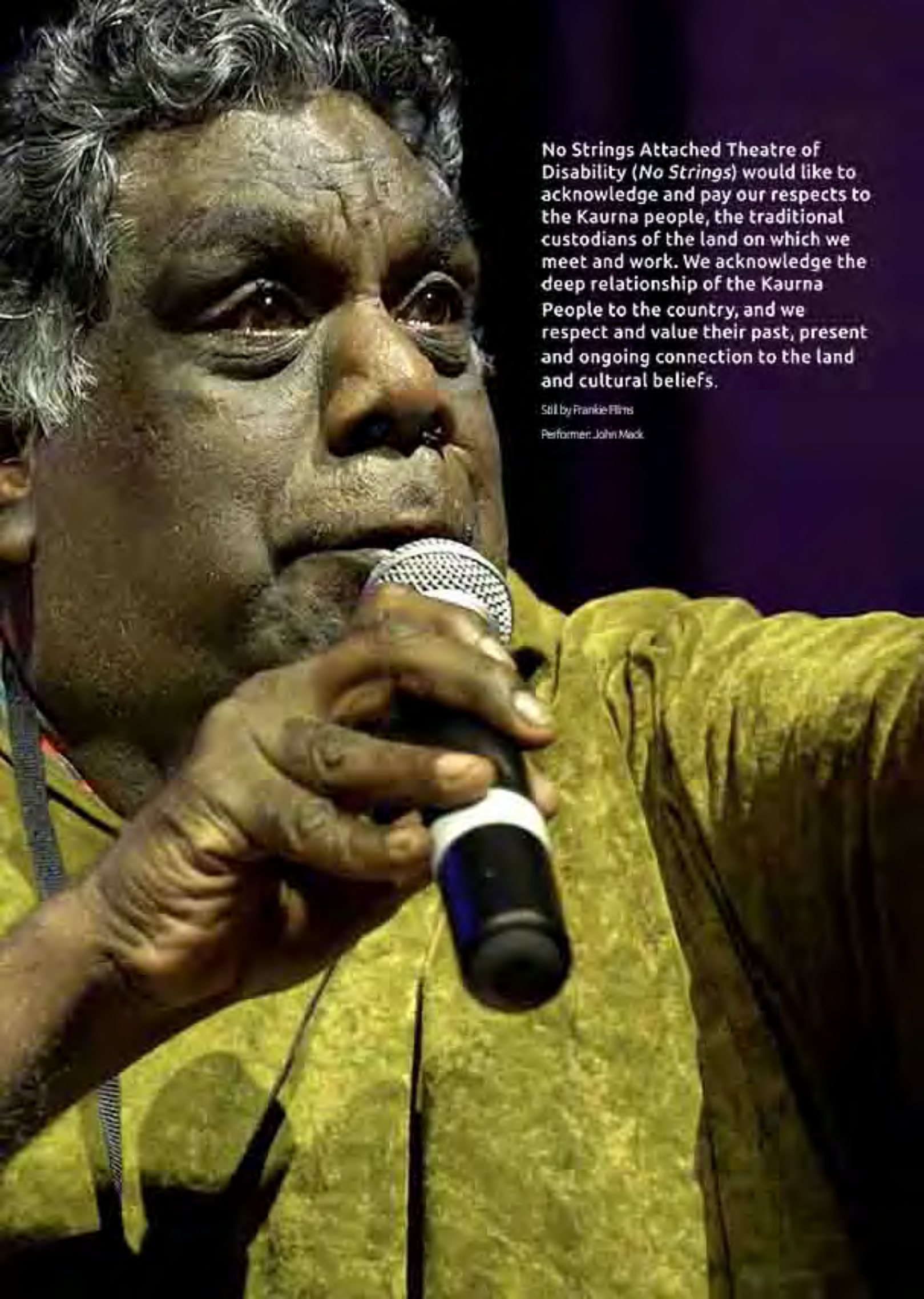




**2021**

**NO STRINGS  
ANNUAL REPORT**



No Strings Attached Theatre of Disability (*No Strings*) would like to acknowledge and pay our respects to the Kurna people, the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet and work. We acknowledge the deep relationship of the Kurna People to the country, and we respect and value their past, present and ongoing connection to the land and cultural beliefs.

Still by Frankie Films

Performer: John Mack



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# 2021 PERFORMANCES

## **Ignition Point 21**

- Woodville Town Hall
- 25 & 26 February

## **No Strings does Cabaret**

- Woodville Town Hall
- 3 July

## **Open Homes**

- OzAsia Festival, 6 host homes across Adelaide, from Golden Grove to Aldinga
- 22 October – 7 November

## **SAME-SAME 2.0**

- Melbourne Fringe, Online
- 8 October

## **ReConnect! 21**

- Woodville Town Hall
- 2 & 3 December

## **Encounters & Experiences**

- Art Gallery South Australia
- 5 December



Photo by Raché Osborn

Performers: Marc Berry, Dylan Haines-West

Teaching Artist: Catherine Purling









# WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

## Theatrics Workshop

JAMES ABBOTT  
ANGELA FEEHAN  
DYLAN HAINES-WEST  
RHYS HICKMAN  
ANNDI KERSHAW  
MELINDA KLEINE  
DUNCAN LUKE  
JESHUA PATERSON  
TRICIA PUCKRIDGE

## Stagecraft Workshop

SIDNEY DEBBA  
RACHEL HIGH  
JOANNA GOUMAS  
RAYMOND PEK

## Thematics Workshop

FIONA BAKER  
RACHEL HIGH  
COREY HOOPER  
CHRIS KARAMOSHOS  
DUNCAN LUKE  
HANNAH MALE  
TRICIA PUCKRIDGE  
KOBİ TAYLOR  
ANTON SAGRILLO

## Troupe Workshop

MARC BERRY  
MICHAELA CANTWELL  
PETER CASTRIQUE  
AIMEE CRATHERN  
DYLAN HAINES-WEST  
RACHEL HIGH  
ALEXANDRA HILL  
CHRIS KARAMOSHOS  
JOHN MACK  
KYM MACKENZIE  
ANTON SAGRILLO  
KOBİ TAYLOR  
ZOE WALKER

## Creative Writing Workshop

WAYNE ECKERT  
RACHEL HIGH  
ALEXANDRA HILL  
RYAN ROWLAND

## Studio Workshop

JESSICA AGIUS  
FIONA BAKER  
PAUL BENNIER  
DAVID BUZZACOTT  
PADDY FIRSTER  
KATHRYN HALL  
KYM MACKENZIE  
TRICIA PUCKRIDGE  
BENITA MAE RODDA  
RYAN ROWLAND  
JACK SADLER  
ANTON SAGRILLO  
RICHARD SAMAI  
DAMIEN TURBIN  
DYLAN ZYJNIK



# 2021 SNAPSHOT



## Weekly Workshop Programs (in person hours)

Troupe 1451 hrs

Studio 1498.5 hrs

## Specialist Programs (in person hours)

Acting for Film Intensive 350 hrs

Embodied Presence Intensive 207.5 hrs

## Community Outreach Workshop (in person)

Starts at the Art Gallery 39 hrs

Diverse Ways of Creating - the SAME-SAME experience 36 hrs





**32**

SA Events



**5**

Interstate Events



**5**

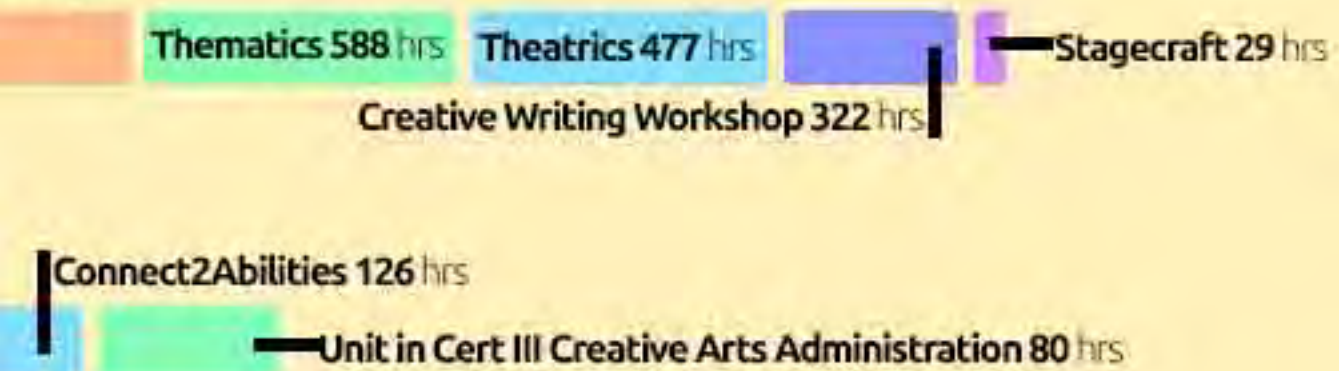
Overseas Events



**222**

International Projects  
(Hours Online)

hrs)



hours)





# FROM THE CHAIR

No Strings Attached Theatre of Disability is the theatre that redefines disability. I stepped into the role of board Chair in mid-2021, seeing leadership change at the apex of the organisation. No Strings also saw its first CEO, Kari Seeley, appointed in November 2020, enabling her to take the organisation forward in calendar year 2021. In another tumultuous year, No Strings achieved a great deal through new leadership and creatively, both digitally at local and international festivals and in the physical world, as outlined in the artistic report.

2021 was another difficult year for No Strings and indeed organisations in the arts, tourism, hospitality and sport, most of which operate as non-profits organisations which have a reliance on undertaking performances and hosting events in order to earn income. COVID-19 raged across the world. While South Australia was more fortunate than most other locations in the world, restrictions on performances and events being held put additional pressure on the organisation. For the board, there were many challenges.

A board's role is to govern by policy: in order to achieve that goal, the board spent a considerable amount of time reviewing and approving policies that would enable the board to perform the role of a governing board, giving the CEO responsibility and accountability to act within jointly understood frameworks. Indeed, the professionalisation of the governance role continued apace in 2021.

The board reviewed the governance framework of No Strings, in order to meet the strategy, advocacy and compliance requirements of the organisation. The review resulted in changes to the board papers; separation of roles to ensure compliance, as well as to provide oversight of executive functions in an accountable and responsible manner.

The board established a governance and risk sub-committee to oversee compliance matters that span areas such as the NDIS, Finance, accounting, human resource management, and general administration. Michael McCrea, with many decades of experience in banking, proved to be the ideal Chair of this new Committee. Thank you, Michael, for guiding the board in this essential and time-consuming area.

We saw the appointment of one new board member, Andi Snelling, a well-known and highly-regarded artist with disability, strengthening our board skill set in the essential domains of arts and disability. Andi has provided sound advice to the board given her skill set. Thank you, Andi, for your contribution.

The pressures of a second year of COVID-19, with limited opportunity to draw in larger audiences to No Strings performances, put additional stresses on the organisation, outlined in the Treasurer's report. The pressures encountered and the decision of the previous board to run a deficit in order to invest in the future, saw No Strings run a deficit. The costs were associated to one off re-positioning of No Strings, as well as working through the change in strategy and structure for the organisation. The change in strategy entailed more workshops that bring in much needed income to No Strings, thus supporting the artistic performances (eg, SAME-SAME2.0 and Ignition Point), developed over the longer term, funded by additional grants. There was nonetheless still considerable artistic activity undertaken, often of a digital nature, developmental in focus, and with prestigious international partners. Undertaking artistic work requires cash. Cash is obtained from workshops that provide a sustainable environment, even where other events have been cancelled by COVID-19. The deficit aligned with that approach.



This board has approved a surplus for the current budgeted year and we intend to oversee it during the coming calendar year. We have developed a forward-looking strategy, supported by the refreshed strategic plan. It was necessary to refresh the strategic plan in a year dominated by a global pandemic, to ensure its relevance to taking No Strings forward. The board has also implemented a focused monitoring process reporting actual monthly and year-to-date progress to the full board at each board meeting

On behalf of the Board, I would like to acknowledge the outstanding work of our staff, teaching artists, volunteers and members. I also acknowledge the independent artists who collaborate with No Strings through our workshops, building their skills, that enable them to take up opportunities for independent artistic work, made possible by No Strings development. We are proud of their development and forays into the world of the arts as independent artists.

Of course, none of this would be possible without the financial support of the Federal and State Governments, through COVID grants, which enabled us to retain all staff, and double the paid hours of South Australian creatives.

Thank you to everyone involved. Thank you for your time, your commitment, your funding, and your volunteer support. My thanks also go to the board for their hard work, commitment and engagement, speaking with one voice as we move forward with No Strings.



**RUTH RENTSCHLER OAM**

Chair of the Board

No Strings Attached Theatre of Disability

# CEO REPORT

2021 was another exception year for No Strings – again!

We refreshed our Strategic Plan 2020-2022, and undertook our 2nd year of our current three-year Funding agreement with Arts South Australia. The organisation undertook international collaborations with partners in South Korea and Singapore. Those partnerships delivered: an online collaborative 3-session workshop program, Connect2Abilities; 24 shows in 6 different host homes in Open Homes (as part of the OzAsia Festival); and 5 shows of SAME-SAME2.0 (presented in the Melbourne Fringe, with performances in New Zealand and Adelaide scheduled for early 2022).

We were delighted to once again partner with Flinders University by providing another group of students the opportunity to undertake their formal placement with No Strings for Semester 1. These students provided invaluable performer support for our Ignition Point Fringe performances, and ongoing support during workshops through to the middle of the year.

There was a growing interest from participants for a focussed skills development program held during the school holiday break from regular classes. We responded by presenting several Intensives, including Embodied Presence with Roel Voorbij and Acting for Film with Paulo Castro.

We were able to (finally) present a tailored training program for one subject (Plan a Career in the Creative Arts) of an accredited Cert III: Creative Arts Administration. This was presented in partnership with the Centre for People Development (CPD), with thanks to a generous grant from the Future2 Make The Difference Grants Program, through the Foundation of the Australian Financial Planning Association. This grant enabled CPD and No Strings to present an 8-week program, in which mentors worked 1-on-1 with 5 of our No Strings participants. Each mentee developed their own career plan, built industry networks, created their own skills portfolio, gathered references and testimonials, practiced their audition and interview skills, and successfully completed all assessments. We are absolutely delighted to report that all 5 participants achieved satisfactory completion of this first subject towards a nationally accredited Cert III qualification.

Thanks to our extraordinary artistic and administrative team, and with further financial support from Arts South Australia, here are a few more highlights:

- Doubled our Ignition Point audience numbers
- Doubled the number of weekly workshops on offer
- Developed our First Creative Operations Manual
- Undertook a Board Professionalisation project
- Developed an articulation of our Artistic Voice
- Attended several Disability Expos – including Mt Barker and Victor Harbor
- Undertook presentations at:
  - o Practicing Teaching Artsits in Asia online forum
  - o Flinders University Disability Studies sessions
- Updated our Policies and Procedures, in line with a successful NDIS Audit.



Phew! What a year! It has been a privilege and honour to serve you all in this, my first year as CEO, and I look forward to working with you all to continue to challenge barriers, push boundaries, and celebrate all that people living with disability are capable of achieving!

And it's always a pleasure to acknowledge all of our continuing sponsors and supporters, without whom we could not do what we do:

Arts South Australia, through the Department of Premier and Cabinet  
Bendigo Bank West Beach – especially for the Community-POS machine for our events; City of Norwood Payneham and St Peters – for significant rent assistance. Jessie Showell – for fabulous design work. Community Bridging Services – for financial and organisational support. Seeley International – for continuing financial support. Kathryn McGowan PR & Events – for extensive media and PR networking support and finally, to you, our many donors, supporters and members, who continue to invest financially to underpin the ongoing viability of No Strings.

Thank you, one and all,

Kari Seeley  
CEO



**KARI SEELEY**  
CEO  
No Strings Attached Theatre of Disability



# ARTISTIC ACTIVITY

With funding support from Arts South Australia, we engaged Kate Larsen to help us create No Strings' first-ever Creative Operations Manual, to capture our co-creation methodology utilised in our theatre skills development workshops program. Another outcome of this work included the development of a formal Artistic Vision for the organisation, develop through a series of consultations with internal and external arts workers connected with No Strings. Together, these pieces of work have laid the foundation for further workshop program expansion scheduled to take place in 2022.

There were several changes in our Artistic Team throughout the year. In February we were delighted to appoint a new Creative Producer, Kerry Ireland. During her 5 months with us, she oversaw the cataloguing and storage of an extensive new costume bank, as well as heading up the No Strings team for Connect2Abilities. In the middle of year, she landed her dream job in production at the Adelaide Festival Centre. We thank Kerry for her short time with us, and wish her well on your new adventures – and hope we get to work with her and the AFC team in the future.

For the first time ever, we presented No Strings does Cabaret at the beautiful Woodville Town Hall in July. The event featured Aimee Crathern and Lucy Lopez Rivera, two of our No Strings performers, as well as Tutti's amazing Sisters of Invention. We were then delighted to receive a significant grant from the City of Charles Sturt, supporting our events at the Woodville Town Hall in December 2021 (ReConnect), and in March 2022 (Ignition Point! 22 at the Fringe). We look forward to continuing to develop our partnership with the City of Charles Sturt in the future.

We undertook a number of international collaborations in 2021, some online, some hybrid, and some in-person, including:

Connect2Abilities – collaborating with CultureMaru in South Korea, to explore friendship and culture through the zoom platform. Participants exchanged typical cultural games and movement, and shared personal stories and points of connection;

SAME-SAME 2.0 – the second iteration of our online inclusive collaboration between No Strings and Diverse Abilities Dance Collective (DADC), through Maya Dance Theatre and Theatre Today in Singapore. That collaboration then undertook a 3-city international (online) tour of Fringe Festivals, including Melbourne, New Zealand, and Adelaide; and





Open Homes presented at the OzAsia Festival 2021 – this was a First For No Strings! We worked online with Jeffrey Tan from Singapore, and six host storytellers in Adelaide, to develop and deliver 24 performances across three weekends at the OzAsia Festival. One of our performers, Lucy Lopez Rivera, was one of the host storytellers.

Jermaine Hampton continued to oversee the workshop programs and the expanding workshop teaching team. We were very blessed to be able to return to in-person weekly workshops in 2021. However, we also kept the zoom option available throughout the year. This proved really helpful for participants who otherwise would have had to miss a week, either due to transport issues, feeling too tired to travel, or having to isolate at home due to others being unwell.

We continued with our new Creative Writing Workshop throughout 2021, welcoming a new Lead Teacher, Brooke Marshall, and also new participants. Although we did not self-publish a new work this year, our participants started working in script formatting. The class explored the process of translating their creative writing ideas into performance scripts.

Several of our weekly workshops were over-subscribed, so the Artistic Team created two new theatre skills development workshops to accommodate new participants.

Congratulations to our Artistic Associate, Jermaine Hampton, and his ever-expanding teaching team, for creating Theatrics and Thematics (both on Thursdays) and Stagecraft (an extra workshop on Saturdays). This was a huge undertaking, and it was such a joy to see all the new participants showcase their new skills at our end-of-year showcase performances for ReConnect! 2021.

We were delighted to be invited to be part of the "Start at the Art Gallery" kids program in December. We took along our outdoor No Strings Encounter Crew, and conducted indoor workshops with our No Strings Experience Crew. These sessions were very well received and we can't wait to join in the fun of "Start at the Art Gallery" again very soon!

As always, we could not put on such fabulous performances and community engagements without the support of many sponsors and supporters, as well as all the families and staff who support our performers through rehearsals and multiple performances. Thank you for all you do!

We thank our Artistic Associate, Jermaine Hampton, and the whole Teaching Team for their artistic leadership and contribution throughout another amazing year of creativity and collaboration.

Congratulations on an amazing 2021 – truly unlike any other!

Photo by Redlie Osborn

Performers: Aairzee Crathern, Bruce Walker, Tim Seeley



# LOCAL COLLABORATIONS

No Strings does Cabaret was a first for us! While constantly changing the bar for theatre this is the first time officially dipping our No Strings toes into Cabaret water. The show was a joyous celebration of song and music, featuring the vocals of two of our stars Aimee Crathern and Lucy Lopez Rivera, both accompanied by local legends Tim Seeley on bass and Bruce Walker on guitar.

We were lucky enough to have a guest performance from Tutti's Sisters of Invention fresh off their official Cabaret Festival shows, and then ending the night with the world-renowned pianist Kym Purling and his Trio - John McDermott on drums, and Dylan Paul on acoustic bass. All this celebration of music was enjoyed under a canopy of fairy lights in the fully renovated Woodville Town Hall. It was a true night of wonder and amazement for all.

During the intervals of music Kathryn Hall and Paddy Firster entertained the crowd with their witty repartee.

As well as a celebration of music and talent No Strings does Cabaret was a fundraiser, complete with a Wine Wall, and a Lucky Squares board, featuring some wonderful prizes.

We set a target of \$10,000 to raise on the night to go towards further professional development of our performers. This includes the development and delivery of a second iteration of formal, adapted and accredited, Cert III training in "How to Plan a Career in the Performing Arts" as well as other projects currently in development, and we reached this goal!!

Review:

*"What a wonderful, exhilarating, joyous and entertaining evening of music to celebrate the positive role music plays in the lives of performers and spectators...the whole event was nothing less than inspiring"*

- Janice Bailey, Adelaide Theatre Guide





# RECONNECT! 2021

After another year of snap lockdowns and restrictions we were so happy to ReConnect! with everyone at our end of year showcase, celebrating International Day of People with Disability (IDPWD) on December 3rd at Woodville Town Hall.

Each and every No Strings performer was on stage, showcasing what they have been working on during weekly theatre skills workshops throughout the year.

This year's ReConnect! highlighted our performers' dedication to creating great theatre in a collaborative way experienced through four vignettes: (Dys)Connection, Loving our Imperfections, The Painters, and That's Not Helping.

Everything we do at No Strings gives voice to the lived experiences of our performers - providing access and opportunity for actors living with disability to step into the spotlight, telling their own stories in their own voices.







ReConnect! Vignettes:

'(DYS)CONNECTION'

Presented by THEATRICKS

With Stephanie Cavallaro and Catherine Purling

'LOVING OUR ~~OWN~~ PERFECTIONS'

Presented by TROUPE

With Stephanie Cavallaro, Tyson Olson, and  
Catherine Purling

'THE PAINTERS'

Presented by THEMATICCS

With Roel Vorbij and Mitre Khammash

'THAT'S NOT HELPING'

Presented by STUDIO

With Tyson Olson, Mitre Khammash, Stephanie  
Cavallaro, and Catherine Purling.

# OPEN HOMES

Behind every door of every home, there are stories that might never be told. Open Homes was a chance to hear them.

Featuring personal and moving accounts from everyday people, audiences were invited into the homes of strangers to hear their stories. First conceptualised by artist Jeffrey Tan for the Singapore International Festival of Arts, this season included six generous Asian Australian storytellers as they hosted listeners and shared stories of their own lived experiences of making Adelaide home.

A rare opportunity for a very small audience, Open Homes uses no actors – just real people sharing their terraces, backyards, and apartments in this series of fleeting yet intimate encounters. Understated, sincere and humbling, it is an authentic theatre-going experience about the importance of fostering community and taking a moment to walk in someone else's shoes.

Through the Oz Asia Festival, No Strings and Jeffrey Tan (Theatre Today) presented stories by six Australasian families across Adelaide including No Strings' performer, Lucy Lopez Rivera, in her performance 'Australia for Me'.

Reviews:

*"Australia for Me with Lucy Rivera Lopez was enchanting and delightful. The OzAsia Open Homes show showcases the great value immigrants have given to the Australian psyche. They are private and intimate [shows] but filled with an untapped education of how real people have lived the real, sometimes hard and sometimes easy lives after coming to a new land. Thank you, Lucy, for sharing your stories."*  
- Anastasia Lambis, HI FI Way

*"Like a warm hug, Open Homes welcomes show-goers into the residences of a range of Adelaideans to hear their stories."*  
- Paula Thompson, Arts Hub

*"Open Homes is a wonderful chance to share a brief but authentic connection with someone we might not otherwise meet. It seeks to inspire us to foster community and "take a moment to walk in someone else's shoes", and it achieves these aims beautifully."*  
- Jo Vabolis, InDaily





Photo by Kim Sealey  
From left: Bruce Walker, Felicia, Julie Reinholdt, Kathryn Hall, Jeffrey Tan, Bianca Araujo



Still captured from C44  
Performers: Gabriel & Hannah.com