

MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY



BLOOM

MUSIC BY

KATIE WESTON

LYRICS BY

TOM GLEISNER

BOOK BY **TOM GLEISNER**

DIRECTED BY **DEAN BRYANT**

RELAXED PERFORMANCE
VISUAL STORY



Wominjeka / Welcome

Melbourne Theatre Company acknowledges the recognised traditional owners of the land on which Arts Centre Melbourne stands, the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung people. Melbourne Theatre Company also acknowledges the Yalukit Willam Peoples of the Boon Wurrung, their deep and long-standing connections to the land and waterways which we work on, and their generosity in working with us.

We pay our respects to all of Melbourne's First Peoples, their Elders past and present, and their enduring connections to Country, knowledge and stories.

Relaxed Performance

The Relaxed Performance of *Bloom* will take place on Wednesday 16 August at 2pm.

Relaxed Performances focus on relaxing or adapting the theatre environment while maintaining the creative integrity of the show. Relaxed Performances are for anyone who would benefit from a more relaxed environment.

During a Relaxed Performance:

- We may make minor changes to sensory elements of a show, such as reducing bright lighting or loud noises
- There is a relaxed attitude to noise and movement
- You are welcome to bring in, and use, stimulating devices
- The theatre doors remain open and the house lights remain on, but dimmed, throughout the performance
- Your seat number will be on your ticket but you can move to an empty seat if you'd feel more comfortable sitting somewhere else
- You can leave the venue at any time and a designated quiet area is available in the foyer.

Visual story

Visual Stories are designed to help prepare you for your visit. They include information about the venue and what will happen during the performance. Visual Stories are suitable for people who wish to be familiar with what to expect prior to attending. Please note that the information includes spoilers which may impact on your experience of the production.

This Visual Story has been prepared by Melbourne Theatre Company in consultation with the Arts Centre Melbourne Access & Inclusion team.

Contact

If you would like more information in the lead up to your visit, please contact Melbourne Theatre Company on **03 8688 0900** during business hours or email **info@mtc.com.au**

The production

***Bloom* is a heartwarming new musical comedy that celebrates the power of music to connect us across generations.**

Venue

This production of *Bloom* will be performed at the Playhouse, which is inside Arts Centre Melbourne. The Playhouse is wheelchair accessible.

Length

Bloom runs for approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes with no interval.

Age recommendation

Bloom is recommended for ages 13+.

Theatre guidelines

- Face masks are strongly recommended indoors
- Photography is not permitted during the performance. Mobile devices (e.g. iPads) are permitted to be used for live captioning and to assist with communication – please inform the ushers or ask for assistance. It's always fine to use a device in the foyer or quiet areas
- At the end of the show, we ask you to join us in a Deaf clap, by waving your hands in the air, as some audience members find clapping hands together really uncomfortable.

Content warnings

This production contains coarse language, mature themes and sexual references.

Scripted dialogue contains description, mention or reference to:

- Racially sensitive commentary – inference of slavery as staff feel overworked
- Overtly sexual language/ innuendo – one character wants to paint another nude
- Loss of a loved one – multiple mentions of the passing of a loved one
- Serious illness – references to dementia
- Mental health – references to lack of mental health support for the elderly
- Addiction – references to prescription medication for elderly patients, recreational use of marijuana, alcohol and cigarettes
- Dysfunctional/separated families – inference of divorce and custody of children
- Living with financial hardship – reference to lack of funding/support for the elderly leading to mistreatment
- Fire/arson – description and enactment of uncontrolled fire within aged care home
- Mistreatment of elderly – description of mistreatment and lack of compassion

Sensory warnings

- Conversations about death – multiple references to end of life for and by residents within aged care home.

Physical enactments of:

- Partial male nudity (character appears in his boxer shorts)
- Smoking
- Use of nail clippers (although it looks like an actor's fingers are hurt, this action is mimed and no injury occurs)
- Using gardening shears unsafely (the shears are blunt and this action has been carefully rehearsed)
- Light slapstick violence (this action has been carefully rehearsed and no actors are hurt).

We may make minor changes to sensory elements of this show, such as reducing bright lights or loud noises. Please be aware of the following:

- This show is a musical, with performers singing and playing music live. If the music gets too loud during the performance, you can cover your ears with your hands or put on some headphones
- Some sudden noises may occur, including a fire alarm, buzzing intercom sounds and a vacuum cleaner.

Venue information

Bloom is being performed at Arts Centre Melbourne.
The building has a spire on the top.



Entering the building

You might go into the building through the car park on Kavanagh Street, or through the doors at the St Kilda Road entrance.

When you get to the building you will see other people who are also going to see shows. Some of them might be seeing *Bloom* like you.



You will also see people wearing black uniforms. They are called ushers. They can help you with directions or answer any questions you may have about the performance.



Find your way

There are three theatres inside Arts Centre Melbourne. Today you are going to the Playhouse Theatre.

You might need to walk down some stairs or use the elevator to get to the Playhouse. The friendly ushers will help you find your way.



The place might be quite busy when you arrive, so you might wish to allow yourself extra time or wear headphones if it's noisy.

Before going inside the Playhouse Theatre, you may like to use the bathroom. Accessible toilets are available on all levels, so please feel free to ask an usher for directions.



Seating

The doors to the theatre will open about 30 minutes before the start of the show. You can go into the theatre and find your seat early if you want to.

You will see an usher waiting at the door to the theatre.

You will need to show the usher your ticket before you go inside. The ushers can

help you find your seat or you can find it yourself.

Remember, your seat number is on your ticket but if you want to change seats you can. Just wait until all the audience is seated. Once everyone is inside the theatre you can move to an empty seat if you'd feel more comfortable sitting somewhere else.



During the show

The play will go for about 1 hour and 45 minutes. There is no interval but if you need to take a break during the show you can leave your seat and come out to the foyer area. You can do this whenever you need to.

There will be a quiet area in the foyer that has comfortable beanbags and soft lighting where you can relax if you want to.

You can return to the theatre and watch the rest of the show whenever you feel ready.



After the show

To say thank you to the artists for their work, we ask you to join us at the end of the show in a Deaf clap. This means using an Auslan sign for clapping by waving your hands in the air. So clap and cheer, so if it gets too loud you can cover your ears.



The show

This show is called *Bloom*.

The story is about people who live and work in an aged care home called Pine Grove. The show is a comedy, but it also has sad moments and raises difficult themes such as death and the loss of a loved one. It's okay if you find this upsetting and need to take a break.

This is a musical, so the actors talk, sing and dance. There is also a band of musicians at the back of the stage – you might see them during the show. Sometimes a song begins, then actors speak their lines, then the same song continues. People might clap or cheer when songs finish.

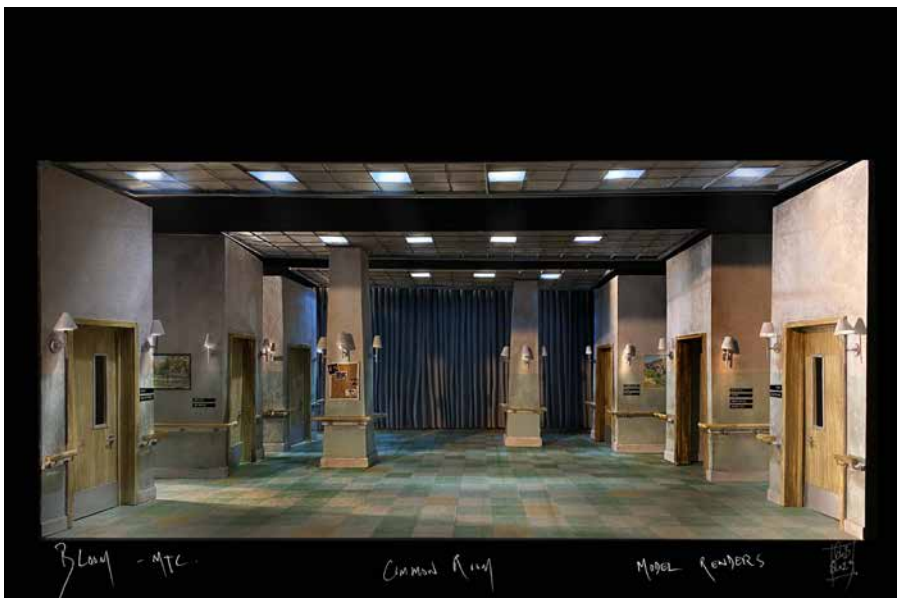
The set

We spend most of the play in the common area of Pine Grove aged care home. There is a forced perspective in the set design so it looks deeper than it really is from the audience's perspective in the seats.

During the show, the set will change to create new locations. We go into the

bedrooms of characters who live at Pine Grove. We also go to the park, with pillars transforming into trees. At the end of the show, the stage transforms for a music concert at Pine Grove.

This picture is of the set model created by Set Designer Dann Barber.



The characters

Ten actors play different characters to tell the story in the play. Some actors play multiple characters, so you will notice they wear different costumes and change their voice and movement.



Finn

This is Finn, a young music student. Finn saw an advertisement for free accommodation at Pine Grove in return for light duties such as cleaning and talking with the residents.

Finn is played by actor Slone Sudiro.





Rose

This is Rose, the newest resident at Pine Grove. She would rather not live in an aged care home.

Rose is played by actor Evelyn Krape.

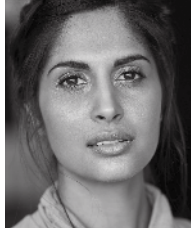


Mrs MacIntyre

This is Mrs MacIntyre, the manager of Pine Grove who shouts a lot. Mrs MacIntyre has been cutting costs at Pine Grove to save money.

Mrs MacIntyre is played by actor Anne Edmonds.





Gloria and Ruby

This is Gloria and Ruby who are staff members at Pine Grove. Gloria is a nurse who has worked at Pine Grove for eight years. Ruby is a nurse in her mid-twenties.

Gloria (below left) is played by actor Christina O'Neill.

Ruby (below right) is played by actor Vidya Makan.

Lesley

This is Lesley, a resident at Pine Grove. Lesley is a painter who is secretly in love with Doug.

Lesley is played by actor Jackie Rees.





Betty

This is Betty, a resident at Pine Grove and a compulsive thief. Betty falsely believes her son has lots of different jobs and that he will be visiting soon. Betty uses a mobility scooter.

Betty is played by actor Maria Mercedes.



Chef

This is Chef, a staff member at Pine Grove who makes food that everybody hates.

Chef is played by actor Maria Mercedes, the same actor who plays Betty.





Doug

This is Doug, another resident at Pine Grove. Doug is a practical tradesperson who once had a full, meaningful life and now feels useless after having a stroke.

Doug is played by actor Frankie J. Holden.



Roland

This is Roland, another resident at Pine Grove. Roland is a pompous, forgetful former actor.

Roland is played by actor John O'May.





Salvatore

This is Salvatore, another resident at Pine Grove. Salvatore is heavily medicated and unresponsive.

Salvatore is played by actor Eddie Muliaumaseali'i, the same actor who plays Trev, Inspector and News Reporter.



Trev

This is Trev, an overworked cleaner at Pine Grove. He wears overalls. Trev sometimes has a vacuum cleaner that makes noise.

Trev is played by actor Eddie Muliaumaseali'i, the same actor who plays Salvatore, Inspector and News Reporter.



Inspector

This is Inspector. He comes to Pine Grove to assess the living conditions.

Inspector is played by actor Eddie Muliaumaseali'i, the same actor who plays Salvatore, Trev and News Reporter.



News Reporter

This is News Reporter, who appears towards the end of the play.

News Reporter is played by actor Eddie Muliaumaseali'i, the same actor who plays Salvatore, Trev and Inspector.



The story

Lights come up on the reception area of Pine Grove, an aged care home. The building is old and not well maintained – it doesn't look like a nice place to live. We hear the sound of a radio advertising jingle playing on loop.

We meet two people about to move in. Rose, an older woman who is moving to

Pine Grove to live, but would rather not live in an aged care home, and Finn, a young music student. Finn saw an ad for free accommodation in return for light duties.

Finn and Rose sing a song 'Nowhere Else to Go'. The song is about how they have ended up at Pine Grove.



Next we meet the manager of Pine Grove, Mrs MacIntyre, who welcomes Finn and Rose. Mrs MacIntyre has been making big cuts on spending at Pine Grove to save money.

We meet Gloria and Ruby who are staff members at Pine Grove. Gloria and Ruby introduce Rose and Finn to the other residents.

The staff and residents sing 'Chasing the Clock'. This song is about how hard it is working and living at Pine Grove and what Finn's jobs will be. At times during this song, the actors will stop singing and will talk instead.





We meet the older residents, including Betty, Lesley, Salvatore, Doug and Roland.

Finn swears and we hear about the swear-jar, where the residents have to put money every time they say a swear word.

We meet Chef, whose food everyone hates. Chef carries a big knife that looks dangerous, but it is a blunt prop and nobody is in danger. Chef is played by the same actor who plays Betty.

We also meet Trev, the overworked cleaner. Trev is played by the same actor as Salvatore.

Mrs MacIntyre makes more cuts to save money – such as cutting back on cleaners and moving the evening meal to 4.30pm.

Finn goes to his room. It consists of a single bed, a side table and chair. He starts to unpack his bag, including a slightly wilted marijuana plant in a pot.

Finn sings 'I Just Need a Break'. The song is about needing things to go his way.





Mrs MacIntyre speaks into a public address (PA) system announcing that there will be no more gardening club. The residents are upset about this.

Ruby gives pills to Rose. These are theatre props, not real pills.

Ruby tells Rose that she wishes she could go back to university. Rose sings 'Maybe It's Time'. The song is about taking a chance and saying 'yes' to life.

Mrs MacIntyre makes more cuts to spending.

Finn is not doing his job well and Ruby is annoyed by this.

Gloria sets up for Morning Melodies, a singing activity with the residents. The residents sing 'Sunny Days' but it sounds awful.





Rose visits Finn in his room. She sees his marijuana plant. Finn reveals that his mum isn't alive and he can't move home because his dad doesn't approve of his music career. Rose reveals she hates living at Pine Grove and would do anything to go outside.

Mrs MacIntyre makes more cuts, this time cancelling the residents' psychologist.

Ruby and Gloria argue about Finn – Ruby thinks he's lazy and Gloria wants to give him a chance.

A fire alarm goes off. It will be loud and will sound like a real fire alarm but it is just a sound effect in the story.

We learn that Rose has set off the alarm by smoking cigarettes in her room.

Mrs MacIntyre cancels the shopping excursion. This upsets the residents who are keen to go outside.

Gloria and Ruby argue because Ruby wants to make a complaint about Mrs MacIntyre, but Gloria disagrees.

Ruby sings 'The Best Is Yet To Be.' The song is about being unsatisfied with how things are, and being optimistic about the future.



Doug reveals to Finn that he is in love with Lesley. Finn encourages Doug to talk to Lesley about his feelings for her.

Rose encourages Ruby to go to university but Ruby feels a sense of obligation to Pine Grove.

The residents are restless after so many cancelled events and excursions. Doug and Roland argue and fight over a book. They might look very angry but the actors have rehearsed this and will not hurt each other. Mrs MacIntyre rushes in and Ruby, Gloria and Rose all confront her about the ongoing cuts.



Mrs MacIntyre sings 'Everything I Do'. In this song she points out everything she does for the residents.

Gloria excuses why Mrs MacIntyre is stressed – there's an annual inspection coming up. Gloria tells Ruby they can't make a complaint because if Pine Grove is shut down the residents will be without a home.



Ruby and Finn sing 'People Like You' and complain about each other. Finn thinks Ruby is uptight. Ruby thinks Finn is lazy and entitled.

Rose gives Finn a piano lesson and tells him he has potential but he's wasting it.

Finn tells Rose he has found somewhere else to live, but he's not sure if he'll go.





A new day. Everyone is excited to go on an excursion to the art gallery.

Ruby reveals the bus has broken down. Everyone is upset. Doug knocks over a tray of cups and becomes distressed, yelling at himself angrily.

Finn talks to Doug and helps him to calm down – Doug says the worst thing about Pine Grove is that nobody needs you.

Doug sings ‘The Story of My Life’ about how he used to feel needed and how his wife Nancy got sick and died. The other residents join and we hear about their past lives. We hear about Rose being a teacher and travelling the world, Lesley being an artist, Betty moving from her home country and Roland’s life as an actor.

Gloria runs a game of Bingo with the residents.

Rose is missing and Mrs MacIntyre is alarmed. But then Finn enters riding a modified tandem bike (a wheelchair is attached to the front of the bicycle) with

Rose up front as passenger. We learn that Doug helped to modify the bike and Finn took Rose to a concert. Ruby thanks Finn for taking Rose out.



Salvatore, who still hasn't said a word since we first saw him, is looking through his photo album. Finn sees a photograph of Salvatore with an instrument – a concertina – in the album. A concertina is like an accordion.

Mrs MacIntyre cuts the beauty therapist this week. Ruby does make-up for the residents.

Lesley explains to Finn that she has feelings for Doug.





Mrs MacIntyre on the PA announces a 'code red'. An alarm also rings out. This is her code that means the Inspector is coming.

The Inspector arrives, ready to inspect the conditions at Pine Grove. This character is played by the same actor who plays Salvatore and Trev.

Mrs MacIntyre and the residents sing 'Here at Pine Grove' in which they pretend Pine Grove is a good place to live in order to trick the Inspector.

Rose reveals to the Inspector that they haven't been outside for months but no one supports her and Mrs MacIntyre pretends Rose is making it up. They pass the inspection.



Mrs MacIntyre leaves the centre for a few hours.

The residents, helped by the remaining staff, get the bus going and drive themselves to a park.

The stage changes, with rolling green hills appearing, the roof lifting and the pillars transforming into trees, with photographs for leaves.

You might notice the musicians visible at the back of the stage.

The residents enjoy the fresh air. Ruby tells Finn she's thinking about going to university. Finn reveals he has grown to enjoy living at Pine Grove.

At the park we learn that Rose is not well – she is short of breath.

Finn brings out a concertina and plays it for Salvatore. Finn plays the instrument and Salvatore speaks for the first time. In fact, he sings beautifully. The residents sing along.

Mrs MacIntyre finds them and sends everyone back to Pine Grove. She bans them from using the bus as well as all leisure activities – including singing.

As Mrs MacIntyre speaks, we return to Pine Grove – the stage changes back to its previous drab indoor

appearance, as if the characters have travelled back to Pine Grove.

Finn runs secret choir rehearsals for the residents. Roland reveals he has an amazing singing voice.

The residents sing a call-and-response with Finn.





Rose mentors Finn at the piano, teaching him a classical piano piece by Chopin. Finn acknowledges that music is important to him and wants to help people with his music. Rose says Finn's talent is a gift and gifts are for sharing.

Doug asks Finn to help him write an email to Lesley. Out of this email comes a song.

Doug and Finn begin singing a song called 'All This Wasted Time'. Ruby and Lesley join the song. The song is about the two couples admitting they were wrong and that they love each other.



Choir rehearsal number two is underway: Roland enquires about bump-in (a theatre term which describes the process of moving a production into the theatre). Ruby thinks having a concert is a good idea and suggests they do it at Pine Grove and charge money

so they can repair the bus. They convince Mrs MacIntyre to go along with this in order to promote the home.

There is a television news report announcing the upcoming concert, with the actor playing Salvatore playing the News Reporter.



Rose gets sick and it becomes apparent she is dying. As they care for Rose, Gloria sings 'Being There With You.' The song is about caring for people in their final days of life.

During this song, we see Rose die while Finn and others comfort her. Remember the performer is just acting in this scene,

but it might feel sad and could be confronting. The actor who plays Rose will be back onstage to take a bow at the end of the show.



After Rose dies, the residents and staff gather for a memorial service. They continue singing 'Being There With You' as a eulogy in memory and celebration of Rose's life.



Mrs MacIntyre makes a PA announcement that the concert will be starting soon.

The members of the choir wear robes with flower-shaped collars.

Gloria reveals that the ticket sales have only raised a hundred dollars. Gloria then pulls out the swear jar with \$1,300 inside.

Mrs MacIntyre announces another 'code red' as the Inspector arrives.

The Inspector reveals that Rose made a complaint against Mrs MacIntyre before she died and we learn that Betty helped Rose by stealing Mrs MacIntyre's records from her office.

The Inspector fires Mrs MacIntyre. Gloria is put in charge as a temporary manager and Finn is allowed to stay on at Pine Grove as a music therapist.



Betty concedes that her son is not coming to visit but tells Finn she'll imagine that he is her son.

Ruby congratulates Finn on his new job at Pine Grove and reveals that she is starting a course at university. They make plans to catch up at the park.

Gloria introduces the choir, calling it the 'Rose-Bonetti Memorial Choir'. Giant paper flowers appear as decorations for the concert.

They sing a song 'Grow a Little Older' about aging with people you care for.

During the song we hear that Gloria is the new permanent manager of Pine Grove and hear the announcement that Mrs MacIntyre has moved on to running a childcare centre.

Rose and Mrs MacIntyre join the choir in their own robes with flower-shaped collars. The show ends.

The performers line up for a bow so the audience can say thank you with applause. We ask you to join us in a Deaf clap by waving your hands in the air with the same energy that you would use to clap your hands together.



Photography

Photographs of Arts Centre Melbourne by Jason Lau, Andy Drewitt and Kate Disher Quill. Production photographs by Pia Johnson. Costume renders by Charlotte Lane. Set render by Dann Barber.

MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY

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DEVELOPED BY WORKING DOG AND MTC'S NEXT STAGE WRITERS' PROGRAM, SUPPORTED BY
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NEXTSTAGE

MTC IS ASSISTED BY THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT THROUGH THE AUSTRALIA COUNCIL, ITS ARTS FUNDING
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