

## Interim Report August 2020

# Queer Heels Workshops

**Project Title:** Queer Heels Workshops

**Description of Project:** Queer Heels Workshops is an initiative of Adelaide based dance artist and producer, theatre maker, fashion stylist and Community Cultural Development practitioner Ben-Hur Winter, who has been a passionate LGBTIQ+ community supporter for over 2 decades through Queer art, culture and creativity via links to the Feast Festival in Adelaide, Mildura Pride, the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, The Center (USA) and Pride celebrations in Manila (Philippines). Aimed at connecting with queer young people their friends and allies in a safe space, sessions are aimed at encouraging participants to get fit, have fun, limber up and feel sassy to a refined selection of house, soul, R&B and popular music artists.



**Funds sponsored by the Parkestone Foundation:** \$500 to assist with launching the project at the Feast Festival, to help further promote it and to produce a high calibre promotional and souvenir video clip.

**Proposed Outcomes:** To establish a program of (monthly or weekly) dance workshops that aim to support creativity, character building and artistic expression through music and dance for queer young people their friends and allies while addressing thematic ideas, influences and perceptions around community, identity and social justice. The project is also aligned towards fostering more positive multicultural discourses through creative diversity, positive mental health, improved wellbeing, and by advancing a sense of LGBTIQ+ pride during these currently uncertain and difficult times.

**Interim Report and Reflection:** Queer Heels facilitator Ben-Hur Winter worked with ActNow Theatre's MakeSpace and delivered 2 sessions with a creative and passionate group of LGBTIQ+ young people as part of their Queer Youth Theatre Workshops on 29 October (co-facilitated by stage/screen actress and theatre educator Valerie Berry) and 5 November 2019. These sessions provided a great introduction to dance for 9 members of the Adelaide queer youth community. Participants found the workshops to be fun and challenging in a positive way that encouraged them to try new ways of *connecting*, *moving* and *creating*, individually, inter-personally through collaboration and teamwork as well as musically.



This led to a programmed workshop as part of the 2019 Feast Festival on 16 November from 1pm-3pm which was also held at ActNow Theatre's MakeSpace. As an artist run space, it has a wonderful customisable studio style setting that can be transformed into an intimate theatre for live performances as well. The printed festival program together with social media promotional posts and word of mouth were valuable publicity tools however with only 4 participants taking part the session didn't generate the same creative energy and momentum as the earlier sessions. The critical feedback from one of the participants about the workshop regarding pronouns and implicit elements included in the class material received by Feast was genuinely concerning and Ben immediately replied to offer some empathy, not to mention his trepidation about the matter. As a passionate supporter of LGBTIQ+ advocacy and community activism, being more inclusive of trans/non-binary individuals as well as black, indigenous and people of colour (BIPOC), is a conceivably important and relevant aspect of this project as well as more personally with regards to this authors work ethic wherein, more often than not, Ben-Hur operates primarily within non-LGBTIQ+ spaces/contexts).



Since the start of 2020 commencing in the month of January up until the 21<sup>st</sup> of March and under the auspices of *#thestylecollaborative* there have been several consolidated efforts to deliver Queer Heels Workshops. This started with a session at Dance Hub SA for 3 more seasoned dance artists/performers, 1 male model/aspiring singer and with Ben-Hur in the role of choreographer, the group worked together on developing a short song and dance number that could be

performed to diverse audiences in Adelaide. Attempts to try and deliver workshops continued and were scheduled on Saturdays throughout these months but with confirmed participants below a reasonable number these failed to go ahead.

The devastating COVID-19 public health crisis was then upon us and has since made regrettable impacts on the lives of all Australians. It has severely affected many locally especially those in hospitality, events, the arts and the education sectors. Now that organisations, traders and businesses are gradually resuming their operations in a minimal capacity and with strict guidelines in line with the state of South Australia's COVID Safe Plan, Ben is very grateful that The Parkestone Foundation has granted an extension of the project until after the 2020 Feast Festival.

### **Where to from here and project dates:**

Under the lexis *#thestylecollaborative Dance Education* Ben-Hur has applied to the Feast Festival for a proposed Queer Heels Workshop on Saturday 21 November at Hyperdance 120 Gouger St. Adelaide and will also endeavour to offer sessions in the months prior hopefully from September.





**1:00pm Saturday 16 November**  
**L2 Station Arcade 52 Hindley St. Adelaide**

An inclusive dance workshop designed for LGBTIQ+ youth and young adults, their friends and allies. Come on up to have fun, limber up and get sassy to great music and lyrical choreography. The workshop will be run by dance artist, producer and theatre maker Ben-Hur Winter.

Utilising Safe Dance practice, please bring sneakers or heels and wear your favourite workout ensemble.

Book online through the Feast Festival website, Facebook 'Queer Heels Workshop' or contact Ben on 0406874966.

Supported by:



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