

Marketing Kit

Square One: The Journey to bernie

Marketing Contact

Name: Bernadette McKinlay
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Work Title: Square One: The Journey to bernie

Artist Name: Bernadette McKinlay

Presentation Line & Billing

Bernie McKinlay presents
Square One: The Journey to bernie

Logos: To Be Advised

Artform

- Cabaret
- Live Music (Contemporary / Popular)
- Music Theatre / Opera
- Performance Art / Spoken Word

Performance Duration: 60 mins

Age Suitability: Adults; Young adults; Senior Adults

Marketing Copy: One Liner

When a QLD Catholic girl breaks free, pride takes centre stage.

Marketing Copy - Short

In the days of Joh Bjelke-Petersen and within the confines of Catholic Education, a young woman realises she's gay. *Square One: The Journey to bernie* tells the story of a girl growing up in Brisbane's 1960s and 70s, struggling to accept and reveal her true identity. Coming out in the conservative Queensland environment of the 1980s, bernie experiences rejection, but also finds her tribe. Now, standing proudly on stage, bernie invites us to witness her transformation from self-rejection to self-acceptance. It's a journey back to Square One, where bernie embraces her true self with courage, pride and humour. Classic popular songs from the times and woven into a story that is original and yet will be familiar to many.

Marketing Copy - Extended

In *Square One: The Journey to bernie*, Bernie invites us to join her, as she traces the arc of her life and the pursuit of her true self, through song, image and prose.

Her tale commences in early 1960s Brisbane, where a four-year-old Bernie dreams of becoming a go-go dancer, despite the influence of the era's gender norms and conservatism. Navigating the confines and confusion of being a girl in the 60s and 70s, Bernie arrives at young adulthood in the 80s to the realization that she is gay. This is the tumultuous era of Joh Bjelke-Petersen, police clashes, and the Fitzgerald Inquiry. This is the era when homosexuals are portrayed as deviants, paedophiles and criminals. This is the time of government driven discrimination.

Navigating this treacherous terrain within the confines of Catholic Education, Bernie becomes adept at concealing her identity. Driven by a desire for authenticity, Bernie breaks free from these oppressive forces, embracing newfound freedom. An opportunity in New York beckons, where she finds love, celebration of diversity and fulfillment.

Returning full circle, Bernie, the once-aspiring go-go dancer, now stands proudly on stage, celebrating her authentic self. She's back to Square One.

Audience Quotes

“Fabulous! The Journey to Bernie perfectly captured my experience as a gay woman in 1980s Brisbane. Bernie’s story made me laugh, cry and cheer. I loved every minute.” - **Louise**

“Such a courageous performance. Bernie took us on her journey and we were with her every step of the way. I love the way she wove the songs of each decade into her story. Great show! - **Kelly**

“The Journey to Bernie was a highly entertaining and informative show. I didn’t realise just how much discrimination there was for the LGBTQ+ community back in the 70s and 80s. A timely warning for our times.” - **Michael**

“Great voice, great story, great images. I loved this show. I couldn’t help singing along with the songs and relating to Bernie’s struggle to be her authentic self.” - **Celia**

Images

[Bernadette McKinlay Square One Photos QTouring](#)

Image Credits

Please ensure images are credited as Naz Muller Photography

Footage / Audio

<https://youtu.be/CM0wSLiBnfM>

Cast and Creatives List

The following is a complete list of the credits required on website and in house programs.

- Bernie - writer, producer, performer
- Lachie McKinlay - Animation
- Sierra Sweeny - Cosmic Pictures
- Naz Muller Photography

Bernie Bio



Bernie (she/her) lives and performs on Yuggera Turrbal Country as a proud queer singer, songwriter, storyteller, writer, and performer in Brisbane. Her work blends creativity, authenticity, and compassion with wry humour and an abundance of music. Bernie is passionate about helping mature-aged creatives rediscover joy, connection, and inspiration through music and storytelling.

Her repertoire spans heartfelt ballads, soulful folk melodies, vibrant musical theatre, and timeless jazz standards. Drawn to narratives of love, hope, loss, and life, she captivates audiences at renowned Meanjin venues, including the Brisbane Jazz Club, CYKAS, ISAS, New Tricks, and The Bearded Lady.

A highlight of her journey is “Square One: The Journey to Bernie,” a one-woman show that debuted at the 2024 Melt Open Festival at PIP Theatre. The production chronicles her evolution from a shy, closeted teen to the confident, proud queer woman she is today, inviting audiences to embrace self-expression and resilience.

Bernie believes that touring this show in regional Queensland will create spaces for reflection—allowing audiences to revisit experiences of discrimination and the historical challenges faced by the LGBTQ+ community. Her purpose is twofold: to validate shared experiences and to inspire others to live authentically and follow their passion.

Suggested Target Audience

Square One: The Journey to Bernie appeals to a diverse audience. It resonates with the LGBTQ+ community—especially older lesbians who recall Queensland’s conservative climate of the 1980s—and with young LGBTQ+ individuals seeking authentic representation. It engages young adults, seniors, and socially aware community members interested in Queensland’s political history. The show also attracts music and performance arts enthusiasts, particularly fans of cabaret, jazz, and folk. Perfect for community centres, libraries, and schools, this performance offers a transformative experience celebrating resilience, self-acceptance, and the enduring power of storytelling.

Social media and promotion ideas

[Square One Social Media Strategy](#)
