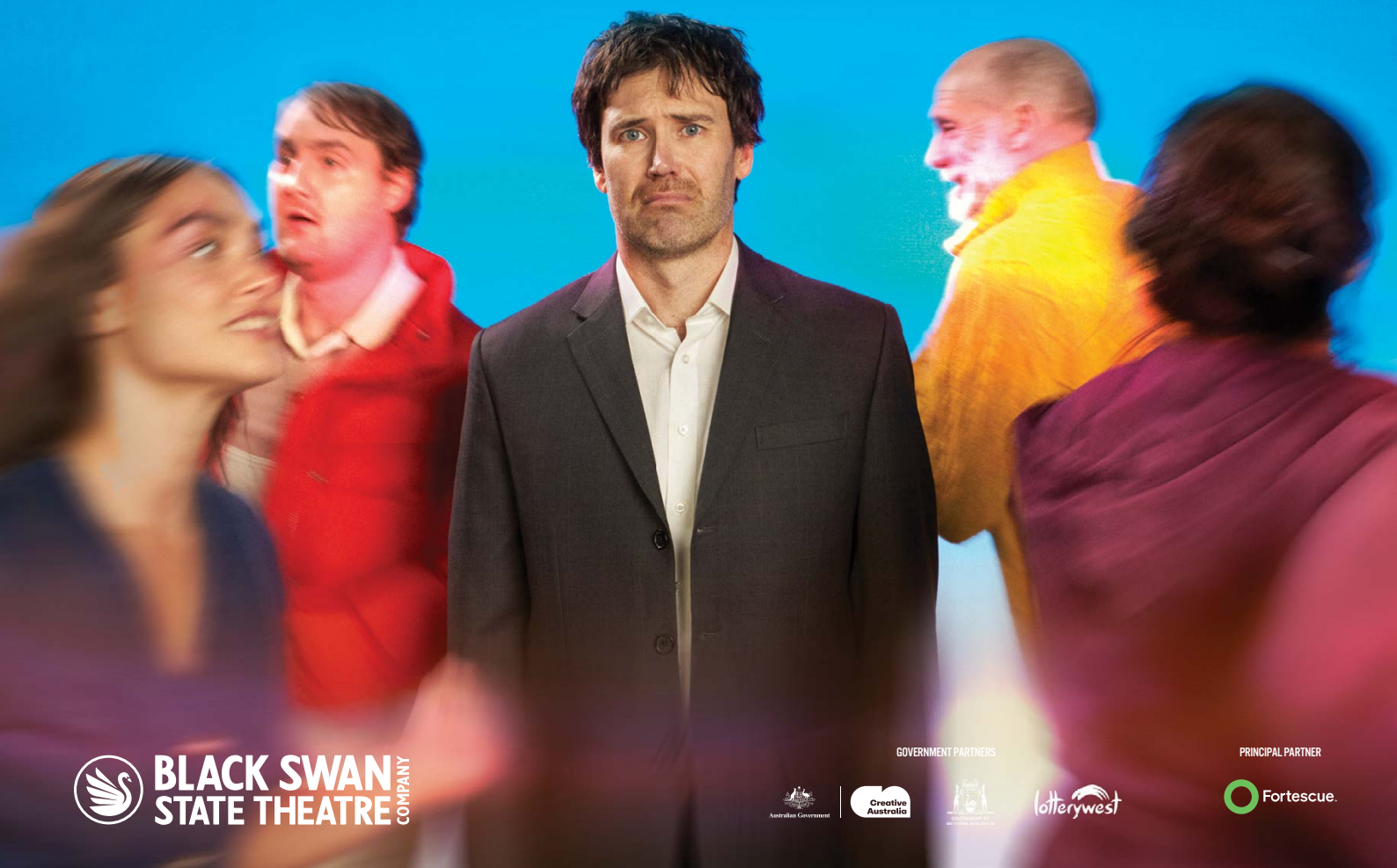


DAY (AFTER DAY) IN THE LIFE OF THE USELESS

BY WILL O'MAHONY

HEATH LEDGER THEATRE / 29 AUG – 20 SEPT



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Black Swan State Theatre Company of Western Australia acknowledges the Whadjuk people of the Nyoongar Nation as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and live.

First Nations People have been telling stories on this country for many thousands of years, and we acknowledge their incredible contribution to the cultural and environmental landscape we reside in. In addition, we acknowledge and recognise all First Nations People with whom we work and whose lands we travel to in Western Australia. We pay our respects to all Elders past and present, and their ancestors that walked this country before them, as we stand united towards a shared future.

Total running time

1 hour 45 minutes (no interval)

Content warnings

Contains coarse language, references to suicide, mild violence, use of haze and flashing lights.

Cover image

René Vaile

Rehearsal Photography

Tori Lill

Program Design

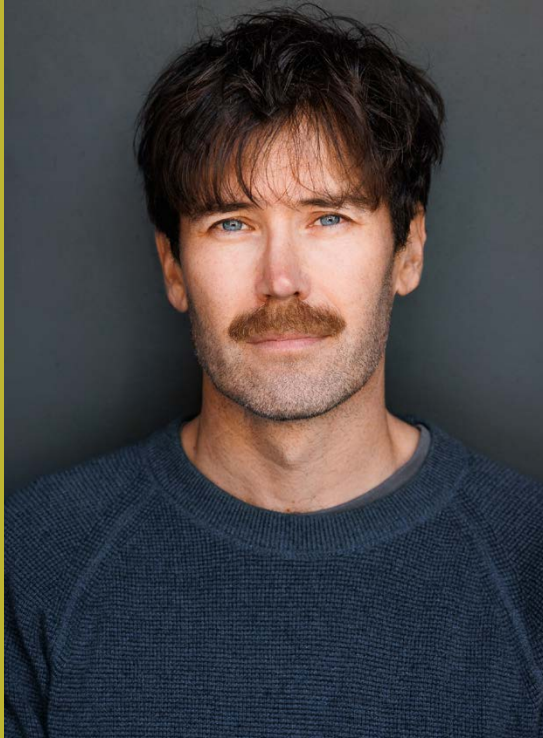
Troy Barbitta

Acknowledgements & Thank You's

Drum improvisations performed and recorded by Daniel Susnjar.

Flute performed by Sonia Croucher.





A NOTE FROM THE WRITER, WILL O'MAHONY

***DAY (AFTER DAY) IN THE LIFE OF THE USELESS* BEGAN AS A SERIES OF SCENES, ONE BUILDING ON THE NEXT.**

The build, I quickly discovered was an absurdist nightmare. Pete is caught in a life that refuses to let him rest. In this universe, a misstep becomes a trip, becomes a stumble, becomes a pratfall, becomes a faceplant, becomes a plummet becomes an etc. There is no safety net. There is no relief. Life is an ever-accelerating whirlygig of bad decisions, bizarre encounters and broken hearts. The irony of its genesis? It was largely written whilst I lay in bed.

In his book *Nexus*, historian Yuval Noah Harari writes:

"Humans are cyclical beings who live by biological time. Sometimes we are awake; sometimes we are asleep. In contrast a network of computers can always be on...If an organism never has a chance to rest it eventually collapses and dies. But how will we get a relentless network to slow down and allow us some breaks?"

Day (After Day) In The Life Of The Useless is an attempt to capture the oddity of our present. It seems we are living through the not so slow-motion demise of the Anthropocene. Is the human, for the first time in over 200,000 years, finding itself displaced from the centre of the narrative? As self-learning AI continues to plant its tentacles deeper and deeper into the most influential and intimate corners of our shared lives, we must all be asking ourselves: What comes next? Whatever it is, it will hardly be familiar. Some see the apocalypse; others, cornucopia. I suspect it might be both, depending on how well one is positioned, how well one adapts, and how gracious the victors choose to be – human, machine, or both.

Through Pete, we see an average person making below average decisions at the dawn of this new world order. It would be easy to see him as stupid. It would be equally easy to see him as unlucky. What he is is human. Someone evolved for yesterday's world but not necessarily tomorrow's.

My heartfelt thanks to everyone who has contributed to the making of this play and production. It has been the opposite of frictionless. Gloriously so. I assure you, at no point has AI been used to correct its many flaws. Why would I? In imperfection hides beauty.



A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR, ADAM MITCHELL



THERE IS SOMETHING PRETTY SPECIAL ABOUT A THEATRE COMPANY INVESTING THIS MUCH CARE, TIME AND ATTENTION IN MAKING A NEW WORK. NEW WORK IS UNCERTAIN BY NATURE.

There's no blueprint, no history to fall back on, and no guarantee that the thing you thought was brilliant on Monday will still seem brilliant on Thursday. Black Swan has given us the time and space to do just that...

A lot of our conversations in the rehearsal room have circled around humans being replaced by technology, but we quickly found that whether AI is going to replace our jobs was actually the least interesting question.

The more unsettling one is: if a machine can do what I do faster, cheaper and better, what am I here for?

We've built a world where being useful is very closely tied to having value. Our jobs, what we produce, and efficiency have become shorthand for who we are. We're encouraged to achieve and optimise. So, what happens when someone discovers they are no longer needed?

And then there is that wonderfully awkward word: useless.

It sounds like an insult (and it's used very much in that way in our play), but the more we talked about it, the more interesting, and oddly liberating being 'useless' became. Perhaps the things that aren't economically useful are precisely the things that make us most human... kids are useless. Friends are useless. Theatre makers are often spectacularly useless.

Maybe AI doesn't make humans useless. Maybe it just forces us to confront the fact that usefulness was never a particularly good measure of a human being in the first place.

And, at the risk of peeking behind the curtain, theatre is gloriously inefficient. There are far more streamlined ways of sharing stories with people these days. But there is something about a room full of people agreeing to be in the same place, at the same time, imagining something together, that feels increasingly valuable.

I want to thank Will for his unending search for a brilliant turn of phrase. It's no mean feat to cobble together a work of this scale and strangeness, and he has done it with such generosity and grace.

And thank you to our wonderfully good-humoured rehearsal room, our actors, creatives, crew and everyone at Black Swan. New work is messy. There are arguments, accidents and, occasionally, happy discoveries. We've certainly had our share of all three.

Whether any of it is useful remains to be seen, but we've had a very good time being useless together, and we love that you've made the equally useless decision to spend your evening with us!



A NOTE FROM THE SET DESIGNER, **FIONA BRUCE**

ONCE UPON A TIME, THIS SET DESIGN WAS AN OFFICE CUBICLE.

Then that office cubicle went on a wonderful adventure as Adam, Will, Mark and I asked ourselves: "What would an artificial human enrichment environment look like if we were held captive by our AI overlords and kept in a human zoo?"

You know, just usual set design stuff.

Set design is usually a process of refinement, where, after many iterations, a design is distilled into a clear and unified concept that helps visually orient an audience. This show was a little different. Instead, layers of old concepts were allowed to remain, stacked on top of one another, leaving visible traces and watermarks throughout the space. The result is a deliberate breakdown of

visual unity, as fragments of discarded ideas resurface and evolve.

The set plays with simulations of nature, contrasting textures, colours and geometries. It is awkward and illogical. It asks more questions than it answers, and it certainly disregards any responsibility to orient the audience. Ironically, this seemingly carefree approach has required more dramaturgical rigour and arguments with Adam than anything I have done before.

The script offers wonderfully open-ended design possibilities, and it is equally exciting to see Black Swan continue its commitment to developing new work and presenting artists with opportunities to take risks, experiment, and imagine worlds that are delightfully strange.

Give me this over an office cubicle any day.

Early set concepts made by human, rendered with AI.





A NOTE FROM THE COSTUME DESIGNER, RHIANNON WALKER



WORKING AS A DESIGNER, I CREATE INTERPRETATIONS FROM IDEAS – FROM THE WRITER, THE DIRECTOR, AND THE PERFORMERS.

I then imbue the mix with my own ideas, drawing from a vast array of visual information I am constantly collecting, such as artworks, fashion, and architecture. So how does the designer's process of interpreting these "prompts" differ from generative AI?

During my process, I questioned the use of AI as opposed to human design methods. I looked at what makes an AI-generated image so obviously AI. If AI read this script, what would it misunderstand? The aim was not to imitate AI, but to create visual representations of its limitations and use the "essence of AI" to push the barriers of reality.

I used colour to link the performers to the characters they play, echoing the way AI clings to a decision and then repeats it until the prompt is disrupted. As the characters become progressively more distorted, "AI-like mistakes" become more visible – a belt as a shoe buckle, a bag strap left over but missing the bag, and monochromatic styling taking over. I want the audience to look at the characters Pete interacts with and feel that something is off about them.

This work gave me the opportunity to push the colourful costume designs into the realm of the wacky and absurd whilst keeping Pete recognisably human. His costume changes only through lived experience – he loosens his jacket to a disgruntled date, becomes increasingly more dishevelled, and carries visible traces of what has happened to him. The costumes assist in many moments of humour while also helping to pose the important question: if we aren't careful, will AI take away what it means to be human?





CAST, CREATIVES AND CREW

CAST

Will O'Mahony
Tess Bowers
Nathaniel Langworthy
Steve Le Marquand
Catherine Moore

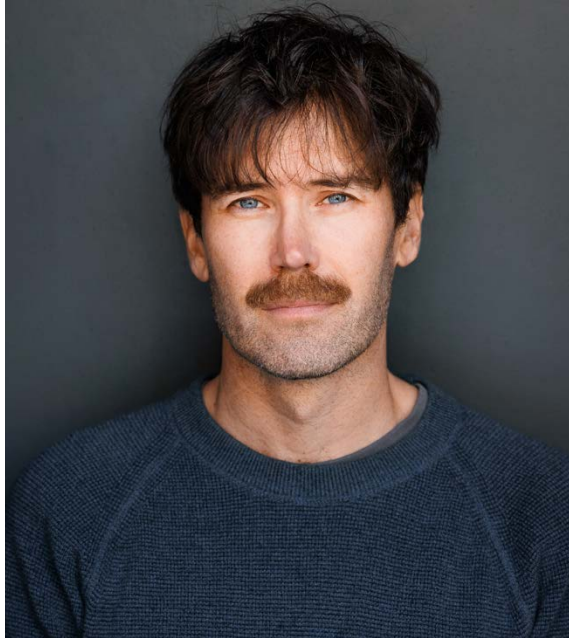
CREATIVES

Will O'Mahony
Writer & Associate Director
Adam Mitchell
Director
Fiona Bruce
Set Designer
Rhiannon Walker
Costume Designer
Mark Haslam
Lighting & Video Designer
Ash Gibson Greig
Composer & Sound Designer
Tyrone Earl Lraé Robinson
Movement Choreographer
Chris Isaacs
Dramaturg

CREW

Shannen Moulton
Stage Manager
Beth Walters
Assistant Stage Manager
Amy Webb
Head Dresser
Delia Stanley
Wig Supervisor
Lucinda Maggi
Wig Supervisor
Lily Sherwood
Wig Assistant
Lucinda Pickett
Wig Assistant
Ella Wiley
Wig Assistant
Zahra Smart
Wig Assistant





WILL O'MAHONY WRITER, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR & CAST

Will O'Mahony is an actor, writer and director that has been practicing on Whadjuk Noongar country, Western Australia for almost twenty years. Recent acting credits for BSSTC include: *Never Have I Ever*; *August: Osage County* (BSSTC/Belvoir co-pro); *Things I Know To Be True*; *Oil*; *The Tempest*; *Assassins*; *Hir*; *Angels In America*; *Millennium Approaches*; and *Glengarry Glen Ross*.

Will is also an award-winning playwright. He has written and directed six plays, with both *Tonsils+Tweezers* (2016) and *Coma Land* (2017) receiving mainstage presentations with BSSTC. His other produced works include *Great White* (2013), *The Mars Project* (2015), and *Minneapolis* (2021), which was shortlisted for the Griffin Award in 2018.

Will also lectures at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts and is currently working on his first feature film.



TESS BOWERS CAST

Tess Bowers is an Anglo-Indian Australian actor based in Sydney.

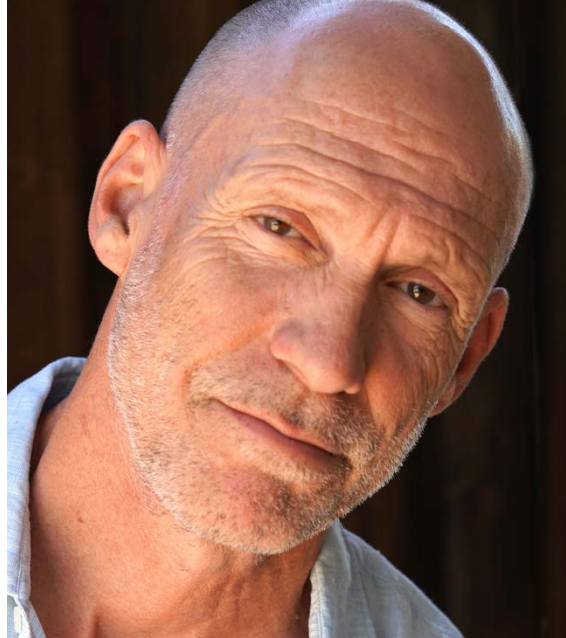
Tess' screen credits include the thriller series *Watching You*, the final series of Netflix's *Heartbreak High* and Stan's darkly comic mystery series *He Had It Coming* as Maya. She can next be seen in Paramount's *Dalliance* opposite Heather Mitchell.

She graduated from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts with a Bachelor of Arts (Acting) in 2023 after completing both the Diploma of Acting and Diploma of Screen Performance.



NATHANIEL LANGWORTHY CAST

Originally from Perth, Western Australia, Nathan trained at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) and the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA). His stage and screen credits include *Mikki vs the World*, *The Fall Guy*, *Shadow of Doubt*, and *Two Weeks*. Nathan is a versatile performer known for bringing authenticity, depth, and a strong presence to both stage and screen.



STEVE LE MARQUAND CAST

Steve Le Marquand is a highly regarded Australian actor whose career spans film, television, and stage. His feature film work includes *Penny Lane Is Dead*, *Beast of War*, *Christmess*, *June Again*, *Locusts*, *Escape and Evasion*, *Red Dog: True Blue, Broke, Kill Me Three Times*, *One Eyed Girl*, *A Few Best Men*, *Beneath Hill 60*, *Men's Group*, *Last Train to Freo*, *Kokoda*, *Razzle Dazzle: A Journey Into Dance*, *Lost Things*, *Vertical Limit*, *Two Hands*, *Mullet*, and *South Pacific*.

On television, Steve's appearances include *Treasure & Dirt*, *Mystery Road: Origin*, *Reckless*, *Deadloch*, *Invisible Boys*, *The Twelve*, *Population 11*, *Australia's Sexiest Tradie*, *Les Norton*, *Rake*, *Riot*, *Janet King*, *Blue Murder: Killer Cop*, *Wentworth*, *Old School*, *The Moodys*, *The Elegant Gentlemen's Guide to Knife Fighting*, *Small Time Gangster*, *Underbelly: Razor*, *Laid*, *Sea Patrol*, *Pink Dragon*, *All Saints*, *Farscape*, *Crash Palace*, *Young Lions*, *Blue Heelers*, *Wildside*, *GP*, *Murder Call*, *Big Sky*, *Water Rats*, *Police Rescue*, and *Home & Away*.

On stage, Steve has performed for Sydney Theatre Company in *The War of the Roses*, *Gallipoli*, *The Serpent's Teeth*, *Tales from the Vienna Woods*, and *Holy Day*, as well as for Melbourne and Sydney Theatre Companies in *Don's Party*. His work with Belvoir includes *Jasper Jones*, *An Enemy of the People*, *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, *Death of a Salesman*, *Paul*, *The Spook*, *Buried Child*, and *Waiting for Godot*. Other stage credits include *Green Park*, *Ugly Mugs*, *Songket*, and *The Return* for Griffin Theatre, *Barracking for the Umpire* for Black Swan State Theatre Company, and *Gaybies* for Darlinghurst Theatre Company. Steve also co-wrote, produced, directed and starred in the stage adaptation of *He Died with a Felafel in His Hand*.



CATHERINE MOORE CAST

A graduate of the VCA, Catherine is a Perth based actor, writer and acting coach. She has worked extensively with Theatre companies across Australia including Ensemble, Sydney Theatre Company, Bell Shakespeare Company, Griffin and Black Swan State Theatre Company.

Alongside Genevieve Hegney, Catherine co-wrote and performed in the critically acclaimed and wildly popular *Unqualified* and its sequel *Still Unqualified* for Ensemble Theatre Sydney. Their next commission, *Fly Girl*, was critically lauded and performed to sold out houses at Ensemble in 2025. *Fly Girl* won the Blake Beckett Trust Female Playwrights Award and was shortlisted for the prestigious Victorian Premieres Literary Award for Drama. It was published by Currency Press and is currently being adapted into a film with Easy Tiger Productions.

Catherine's Film credits include *Hooyoo*, *Birthright*, *How To Please a Woman*, *H is for Happiness*, *Raising Thunder*, *Being Gavin*, *Julian*, *Celestial Avenue* and *Big Reef*. For TV she has appeared in *Run*, *The Twelve S3*, *Invisible Boys*, *Itch S1 & S2*, *Drop Dead Weird*, *Janet King*, *The Kettering Incident*, *Home and Away*, *A Moody Christmas*, *Crownies*, *Rake*, *Spirited S1 & S2* and *Chandon Pictures*. She is the voice of Janey Springs in the internationally popular video-game, *Borderlands*.



ADAM MITCHELL DIRECTOR

Adam is an award-winning stage director known for his inventive Theatre, Music Theatre and Opera productions. He was the Associate and Resident Director at Black Swan State Theatre Company and has directed more than twenty productions for the company. Highlights include; *When the Rain Stops Falling* and *Next to Normal*. Most recently he directed; *Dead Man Walking* Freeze Frame Opera, *The Snow Barking Gecko* Arts, *Classic Adventures* (WASO), *The Wedding Singer* (WAAPA), *The Hypotheticals* for The Last Great Hunt, and *Oil* at Black Swan. He regularly directs for The Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA), has worked with The National Institute of Dramatic Arts (NIDA), West Australian Opera, Victoria College of the Arts, West Australian Symphony Orchestra, Playwriting Australia, Sydney and Melbourne Theatre Companies, Barking Gecko Arts, Freeze Frame Opera, The Australian Theatre for Young People and is the Artistic Director of The Performing Arts Perspectives and The Perth Playwriting Festival. He is a 40under40 Award winner and has received Equity Guild, Blue Room Theatre, and PAWA Awards, as well as the Martin Sims and The West Australian Arts Editor Awards.



FIONA BRUCE SET DESIGNER

Fiona Bruce is a set and costume designer from Perth/Boorloo, working across professional and independent theatre. Previous designs for Black Swan State Theatre Company include *The Almighty Sometimes* (2026), *Speaking in Tongues* (2025), *The Glass Menagerie* (2022), *Animal Farm* (2021), *Every Brilliant Thing* (2021), *Water* (2019), *The Seagull* (2014), *Dust* (2014), *Midsummer [A Play with Songs]* (2013), *Shrine* (2013), *Boy Gets Girl* (2012), *Yellow Moon* (2010) and *The Shape of Things* (2010).

Fiona has also worked with Perth Festival as a Brand Activator and Scenic Designer (2020-2023) and currently teaches production design at the West Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA).

Fiona's academic qualifications include a M. Communication Design (RMIT), B. Performing Arts, Production and Design (WAAPA) and B. Arts, Performance Studies (Curtin University).

As a visual storyteller, Fiona is interested in how the spaces, objects and clothing we interact with help shape our understanding of the world. She enjoys the collaborative nature of performance making and the way each project challenges her to make new artistic and technical discoveries.



RHIANNON WALKER COSTUME DESIGNER

Rhiannon Walker is a set and costume designer whose work spans Opera, Theatre, Dance and Music Theatre. Her work is grounded in visual storytelling, collaboration and a strong sense of theatrical world building. Production highlights including *In-Synch and X-it: Ballet at the Quarry* (2019) for West Australian Ballet, *The Little Prince* (2023) and *Dead Man Walking* (2025) for Freeze Frame Opera, *Foley Vision* (2024) for Scott Elstermann, *Urine Town* (2025) for Western Sky Projects and *UnEarthly* (2026) for Hayman Theatre Company. Rhiannon has a long-standing creative relationship with Freeze Frame Opera, having designed ten productions for the company. A five-time Performing Arts WA Awards nominee from 2023 to 2025, she has also contributed to two Best Production wins. Rhiannon trained at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts and has worked consistently in the industry for more than ten years. She is a proud member of the Australian Production Design Guild.

Rhiannon is delighted to make her Black Swan State Theatre Company debut with this production.



MARK HASLAM LIGHTING & VIDEO DESIGNER

Mark's practice is a hybrid of technical production, design, direction and performance, with a particular interest in raw performance styles and the integration of media into contemporary performance. Through his company, kdmindustries, he makes electronic visual theatre, mashing the digital and meat worlds to examine human responses to cataclysmic change.

He has worked with many leading Australian and international contemporary arts companies and practitioners across performance, dance, music and visual arts practice and has toured over 50 works across 4 continents. He has built projects with Erth Visual and Physical, Performing Lines, Marregeku, Black Swan State Theatre Company, Branch Nebula, Stalker Theatre, Societas Raffaello Sanzio, The Farm, Legs on the Wall, Co3 Contemporary Dance, Force Majeure, Company B and Sydney Theatre Company as well as unique festival performances with artists such as Wesley Enoch, Nigel Jamieson and Shaun Gladwell. He has also lit some of the world's top DJs (Fatboy Slim, Carl Cox, Sasha) and fashion houses (Alexander MacQueen; Gucci).

He lives in Western Australia, with a mermaid and their kid.



ASH GIBSON GREIG COMPOSER & SOUND DESIGNER

Ash has been Perth-based for his entire career, and has been composing music for theatre since his first paid gig in 2000, and for Black Swan since 2006. Ash has also created music and sound for theatre companies including Sydney Theatre Company, Malthouse Theatre, Queensland Theatre, The Last Great Hunt, and Barking Gecko. Ash has composed the music to over 200 hours of TV documentaries, docu-dramas, and kids' dramas that have screened globally; four feature films, and two global franchise games.

Ash has won 2 Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Association Awards with a further 2 nominations, two APRA/Australian Guild of Screen Composer Awards with a further 9 nominations, and 6 W.A. Screen Awards for his work on documentaries and TV series, and a Green Room Award with David J Franzke for Malthouse's *Picnic At Hanging Rock*. Ash has also created music for live performance and light/video shows, and has been privileged to help tell creation stories of the Nyoongar people (*Boorna Waanginy: the Trees Speak* for the Perth International Arts Festival and Evernow Festival) and Yindjibarndi people (*Ngurra Nyujunggamu* for the Read Earth Arts Festival).

Ash has also gained acclaim for his orchestral arrangements with shows such as Perth Symphony Orchestra's *INXS: Reimagined*, and *Nirvana: Reimagined*, which recently toured to Canada and the UAE.

Ash was composer for the PC/console games *Battlestar Galactica: Deadlock*; and *Warhammer 40k Battlesector*. Recent work includes the animated feature film *200% Wolf* (recorded by the West Australian Symphony Orchestra), five seasons of the National Geographic documentary series *Drain the Oceans*, *Australia's Sleep Revolution* with Dr Michael Mosley, the ABC Australia documentary miniseries *Ningaloo/ Nyinggulu* with Tim Winton, and revolutionary VR documentary *The Great Kimberley Wilderness* narrated by Luke Hemsworth, and the currently showing *The Great Barrier Reef*.

Ash has always loved creating music and sound for theatre, and is delighted to return to Black Swan after working on *Things I Know To Be True* in 2023.



TYRONE EARL LRAÉ ROBINSON MOVEMENT CHOREOGRAPHER

Tyrone Earl Lraé Robinson, is an award-winning Perth-based dancer, choreographer, director, teacher, mentor, curator, and dramaturg, working across dance and theatre. Practicing professionally since 2010, Robinson has collaborated with independent artists and companies both nationally and internationally.

His choreographic practice is driven by storytelling and a deep interest in how movement can shift the way we see the world and relate to one another. Robinson's work is known for its strong physicality, immersive atmospheres, and striking surreal imagery that is both visceral and visually compelling.

In 2021, Robinson co-founded OFF-base Dance alongside long-time collaborator Shuling Wong. Established as a platform for culturally and creatively diverse contemporary dance, OFF-base Dance has since presented three original works in Perth – *YOU ARE*, *Madre Muerte*, and *ACID TRIP* – each receiving multiple awards, nominations, and strong public response. Through OFF-base, Robinson continues to develop ambitious new work while contributing to the growth of Australia's independent dance landscape.



CHRIS ISAACS DRAMATURG

Chris is a writer, deviser, performer, dramaturg, current literary director/associate artist at Black Swan State Theatre Company, and founding core artist of The Last Great Hunt. He has worked extensively as a tutor at WAAPA, a mentor for young artists through ATYP, and a dramaturg across the Perth independent sector.

As a dramaturg, and in his role at Black Swan State Theatre Company, Chris has assisted in the development of *Dirty Birds* (by Hayley and Mandy McElhinney), *The Pool* (by Steve Rodgers), *Raised In Big Spirit Country* (created by Naomi Pigram Mitchell), *Carol* (by Andrea Gibbs), and *Day (After Day) In The Life Of The Useless* (by Will O'Mahony).

Chris has also worked as a dramaturg on *Shadow of a Doubt* (by Rachel McMurray), *Telephone* (by Gita Bezard and The Last Great Hunt), and multiple short works for young writers through ATYP's National Studio Program and Fresh Ink Programs.



SHANNEN MOULTON STAGE MANAGER

Shannen is a WAAPA graduate from the Bachelor of Performing Arts, specialising in stage management. She has previously worked with Black Swan State Theatre Company as Assistant Stage Manager on *The Pool*, *The Seed*, *Speaking in Tongues*, and *Carol*.

She also stage managed the multiple PAWA award winning: *Same Time Next Week* (Scott McArdle & Nick Pages-Oliver), and *Shadow of Doubt* (Fine Comb Theatre) and was touring stage manager for *FAG/STAG* (The Last Great Hunt) 2025 season.

Shannen's most recent work as Stage Manager includes: *The 7 Stages of Grieving* (Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company), *Concrete Echoes* (Ta'alili, STRUT Dance, Performing Lines), and *STELLARPHANT* (Barking Gecko Arts).



BETH WALTERS ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

Beth Walters is a Perth-based Stage Manager and Assistant Stage Manager, and a recent graduate of WAAPA's Stage Management course. Since graduating, she has worked as Assistant Stage Manager on Black Swan State Theatre Company's *Almighty Sometimes* and on Lost & Found Opera's *The Trial* for Perth Festival. During her training, Beth also worked as a Stage Management Swing with Black Swan, and was Production Stage Manager and caller for her final WAAPA production, *Tivoli Lovely*, a new musical by Eddie Perfect. She is delighted to be returning to Black Swan for this production.



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