

BLACK SWAN STATE THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS



THE ALMIGHTY SOMETIMES

BY KENDALL FEAVER

19 JUNE – 5 JULY / SUBIACO ARTS CENTRE



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

2 hours 30 minutes (including interval)

Content warnings

Contains coarse language, depictions of and references to suicide, mental illness and prescription drug use, and flashing lights and haze effects.

Cover image

René Vaile

Rehearsal Photography

Tori Lill

Program Design

Troy Barbitta

The Almighty Sometimes was first performed at the Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester (UK) as a winner of the 2015 Bruntwood Prize for Playwriting, on 9 February 2018, directed by Katy Rudd. The Australian premiere of *The Almighty Sometimes* was presented by Griffin Theatre Company on 27 July 2018, directed by Lee Lewis.





A NOTE FROM THE WRITER, KENDALL FEAVER

I COMPLETED THE FIRST DRAFT OF THIS PLAY IN 2013, WHEN I WAS ONLY A FEW YEARS OLDER THAN ANNA.

At the time, newspapers were full of anxious language about a supposed medication “epidemic,” and my generation – Gen Y – was being described as the most medicated in history. It made me wonder what it meant to come of age not only through the usual storms of becoming – identity, desire, rebellion, fear – but also through diagnosis, treatment, risk, and medical consent.

My own life has included struggles with mental health, but I never wanted to write an autobiography in disguise. I researched as openly as I could, allowing each discovery to challenge, complicate and reshape the work. I was equally wary of familiar myths about tortured artists, creative genius, or writers writing about writing. But the deeper I went, the harder it became to ignore the role of creative writing in this world: as identity, expression and, startlingly, diagnostic evidence.

Each year, this small play finds new life in different places. Productions in Amsterdam, Istanbul, Manchester, Montreal, Singapore and across Australia have all, without fail, relocated the story to their own cities and towns. Anna may now belong to the far end of Generation Z, but the experiences at the centre of her story continue to resonate. Of course, the play is not only about Anna. It is also about the people around her. I expected frustration with shifting diagnoses, inadequate systems, and the limits of care. What I did not expect was to be so moved by love: by exhausted clinicians fighting to keep patients alive; by partners learning the painful shift between lover and carer; by parents, especially mothers, who could not and would not walk away.

That discovery changed the play. I came to understand motherhood as its own act of creation: immense, unsentimental, and almost unknowable. A parent’s love seemed to me as mysterious as the brain itself – difficult to map, powerful, and close to magic.

In the published playtext, there is a quotation from *The Bipolar Child* by Demitri F. Papolos, MD, and Janice Papolos: advice from a nine-year-old girl, who tells parents to take suicidal thoughts seriously and hold their child “until they feel a part of this world.”

That girl would be roughly thirty-three now. I wonder who she became, and what language she uses for herself. More than anything, I hope that for every moment of pain, life has offered her another that returned her to joy.

I am deeply grateful to Black Swan Theatre Company for bringing the play to life with such care, courage and imagination.

And to anyone in the audience who recognises something of themselves here: I hope joy finds you too, and finds you again.





A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR, EMILY MCLEAN



BEST PRACTICE IN MEDICINE TODAY GIVES PEOPLE AGENCY OVER THEIR OWN TREATMENT AND ALLOWS THEM 'THE DIGNITY OF RISK'. TO LOVE SOMEONE WHOSE ILLNESS CAN LEAD THEM TO RISKY BEHAVIOURS MAKES RISK UNTENABLE. *THE ALMIGHTY SOMETIMES* EXISTS IN THE IMPOSSIBLE SPACE BETWEEN THESE TWO PLACES.

It is astounding that is Fever's debut script. She creates a generous layered world that assumes we are intelligent and that our hearts are open. Her world holds opposing truths in the same space. She gives us the dignity of never telling us what we should think.

Thank you to the cast who use their own bodies, voices and hearts to animate the ideas and this story. It has been a wonderfully generous, funny room and the humanity they have brought to their characters is *Almighty*. Thank you to the creative team who have worked together to bring each artform into a single conversation to tell one story. Their expansive vision has been thrilling to work with.

The Almighty Sometimes is a love letter to families finding their way through mental health, to the difficult but powerful love between mothers and daughters, to medical professionals who know a patient's health and independence are both important, to those with mental illness whose creative thinking and unusual problem solving give us beautiful art, new knowledge and beautiful people. And lastly it is a love letter to young people finding their way in the world, taking risks, learning the hard (and only) way about being human and the profound richness and pain found within that.



A NOTE FROM THE SET & COSTUME DESIGNER, FIONA BRUCE

**IT'S A FEW WEEKS OUT FROM THE
OPENING NIGHT OF *THE ALMIGHTY*
SOMETIMES, WE ARE ALL IN A
PRODUCTION MEETING AND THERE IS A
PROBLEM.**

Marek, the scenic painter, is telling Emily, the director, and me that he has purchased every last tin of pure ultramarine blue scenic paint, there is no more left in Australia and the supplier can't say when the next batch will be manufactured. He is not sure that we will have enough to finish the set.

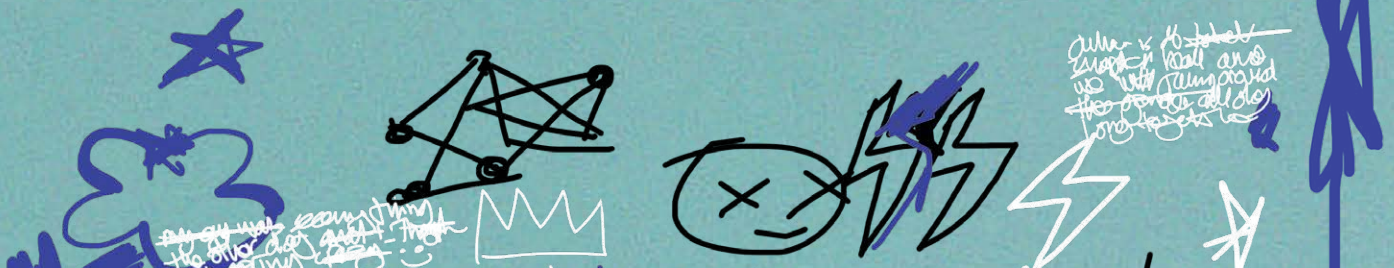
This blue is traditionally used as an accent colour, a little vibrant pop against a neutral base, balanced within a colour palette. It is not meant to cover

everything. Historically, this blue was made from the rare stone lapis lazuli. Artists used it sparingly at great cost for only their most revered subjects, like the Madonna's robes.

This blue is the sacred mother. This blue is the divine, the infinite, transcendent. It is enlightenment, creative genius and pure energy. This blue is protection, but it is also smothering. This blue is a child floating up into the sky, swimming down into the depths of the ocean. This blue is Merideth the Magnificent, Protector of the Sea. The stuff of stars, of space - before everything explodes. This blue is exhausting.

This blue is too much.

Back at the production meeting, Emily and I look at each other and grin. This is life imitating art and a good sign that we are onto something.





CAST, CREATIVES AND CREW

CAST

Harry Gilchrist
Oliver

'Ana Ika
Anna

Amy Mathews
Vivienne

Alison van Reeken
Renee

CREATIVES

Kendall Feaver
Writer

Emily McLean
Director

Fiona Bruce
Set & Costume Designer

Karen Cook
Lighting Designer

Rachael Dease
Composer & Sound Designer

Mia Holton
Video Designer

Nastassja Norwood
Fight Coordinator

Catherine Moore
Intimacy Direction

Julia Moody
Vocal Coach

Clay Chase
Design Secondment

CREW

Georgia Smith
Stage Manager

Beth Walters
Assistant Stage Manager

Cara Van Heemst
Wardrobe Maintenance

Kristie Smith
Production Assistant





HARRY GILCHRIST OLIVER

Harry Gilchrist will next be seen making his screen debut in ABC's upcoming crime drama *Dustfall*, opposite Anna Torv.

He recently graduated from the Bachelor of Fine Arts Acting at WAAPA, during which Harry played roles such as the Duke of Cornwall in Shakespeare's *King Lear*, the titular Orestes in Euripides' play *ORESTES*, along with many choral roles in shows such as the devised work *Samovila*. Following his graduation, he appeared on stage at the Old Fitz in a production of *Dear Elena Sergeevna*.

Being born and raised in Perth, Harry's childhood and teen years were sculpted on many different Black Swan State Theatre productions over this time. This turned into a strong desire and dream to take to the stage for this brilliant company and tell incredible stories from people across the country and globe. Harry sees this opportunity as an absolute privilege to be collaborating with amazing artists and sharing an important story that is very resonant in today's world.



'ANA IKA ANNA

'Ana graduated WAAPA in 2021 with a Bachelor of Arts (Acting), where she performed on stage in a number of leading roles, including as Marc Antony in *Julius Caesar*. Other theatre productions include *Grace* and *Let Me Finish*. for The Blue Room Theatre, in Perth. She also performed in *AMADEUS* at the Sydney Opera House alongside Michael Sheen for Redline Productions. Most recently, 'Ana won a Performing Arts WA (PAWA) Award for her performance in *A Doll's House, Part 2* at The Blue Room Theatre.

'Ana made her feature film debut in Australian comedy *It Only Takes A Night* alongside Eliza Taylor. For television, 'Ana has appeared in the Paramount+ Series *The Castaways*, *Black Snow* and a recurring role in the third series of *Bump*, both for Stan. Most recently, 'Ana wrapped filming on Australian creature-feature horror film, *Tarantulas*. A highlight of 'Ana's career so far, was narrating the audiobook for the award-winning, first mainstream Tongan-Australian novel, *Dirt Poor Islanders* by Winnie Dunn.



AMY MATHEWS VIVIENNE

Amy Mathews' career spans over twenty years, encompassing work across television, film and theatre.

Most recently, Amy won the Performing Arts WA Award (Outstanding Performer in a Supporting Role) for her work as Ivy Weston in, *August: Osage County* for Belvoir Street Theatre and Black Swan Theatre.

Her theatre credits include: *Bite The Hand* for The Last Great Hunt, *Water* and *Comaland* for Black Swan Theatre, as well as *Othello*, *The Tempest*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Macbeth*, and *The Taming of the Shrew* for Sport for Jove Theatre. She also received a PAWA Award for *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* and a Blue Room Award for *Toast*, both for Black Swan Theatre.

Her television credits include: *NCIS Sydney S2*, *Run, Home & Away* for which she won a Logie Award, *The Claremont Murders* and starring opposite Sam Neil as the lead role of Sasha Price in *The Twelve S2*.

Amy can currently be seen as Rachel Olsen in the Netflix feature, *Thrash*.



ALISON VAN REEKEN RENEE

Alison is a Boorloo-based actor. She studied at WAAPA and Curtin and has 30 years of experience performing, producing and theatre-making.

Most recent credits include *21 Hearts: Vivian Bullwinkel and the Nurses of the Vyner Brooke* (2024 and 2025) with Theatre 180, *The Vagina Monologues* (2024) with Lit Live, *A Doll's House, Part 2* (2024) with Red Ryder Productions, *Nocturna* (2021) with The Kabuki Drop, and *Toast* (2022), *Animal Farm* (2021), *York* (2021), the digital production *Unsung Heroes* (2020) with Black Swan State Theatre Company.

Alison has worked on several locally filmed Film and TV projects such as *Breakers*, *The Travellers*, *H is for Happiness*, and ABC series *The Heights*.

Alison has won several PAWA awards, and Blue Room Awards.

Alison has been a proud member of MEAA since 1996.



KENDALL FEAYER
WRITER

Theatre

Ballet Shoes at the National Theatre; *Alma Mater* at the Almeida Theatre; *My Brilliant Career* at Belvoir Street Theatre Sydney; *The Almighty Sometimes* at Royal Exchange Manchester

Awards

The Almighty Sometimes – Judges Award, Bruntwood Prize for Playwriting 2015; Best New Play, UK Theatre Awards 2018; Best Writer nominee, The Stage Debut Awards 2018; Winner, Nick Enright Prize for Playwriting 2019; Winner, Victorian Premier's Prize for Drama, 2019



EMILY MCLEAN
DIRECTOR

Emily McLean is a WAAPA Directing graduate, and a founding member of Red Ryder Productions. Some recent directing credits are - For Black Swan State Theatre Company, *Toast* (2022), *Animal Farm* (2021), *Unsung Heroes* (2020). For Red Ryder, *A Doll's House Part 2* (2024), *The Wolves* (2019), *Grounded* (2017, 2016). For WAAPA, *The Cherry Orchard* (2026), *Katzenmusik* (2025), *Summer Rain* (2021), *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (2021), *The Three Sisters* (2020), *A Streetcar Named Desire* (2018). For Curtin University, *Takeaway* (2023). For Independents, *Salted Pretzels* (2023). She directed The Performing Arts Perspectives between 2019 – 2023 and has taught Directing at Curtin University and WAAPA. Her recent dramaturgical work has been on *And So It Comes To Dust* (2026) and *Democracy Repair Services* (2023). She was on the Blue Room Theatre Board (2020-2024) and has won awards from Equity, PAWA and The Blue Room Theatre for her work.



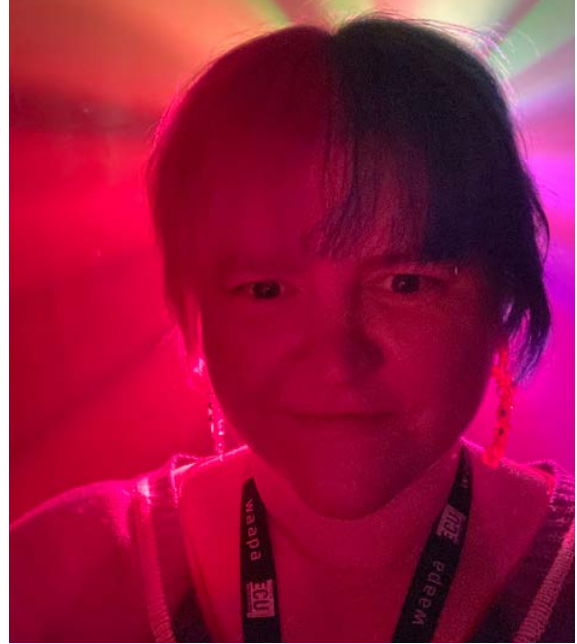
FIONA BRUCE SET & COSTUME DESIGNER

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 *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.



KAREN COOK LIGHTING DESIGNER

Karen is a lighting designer, production/stage manager and educator. With Black Swan, she has designed lighting for *Animal Farm* and *Unsung Heroes*. Other lighting design work includes *Operation Boomerang*, *Vignette Series*, *Cracked*, *Mother's Tongue*, *Windmill Baby* (Yirra Yaakin), *A Doll's House Part 2*, *The Wolves*, *Grounded* (Red Ryder), *The Little Prince*, *Hachiko*, *Tales from Outer Suburbia*, *Miss Lily's Fabulous Feather Boa* (Spare Parts Puppet Theatre), *Perpetual Wake*, *The Talk*, *The Advisors* (The Last Great Hunt). Karen has also toured nationally and internationally as a tour/stage manager, working in venues ranging from regional town halls and primary schools to major performing arts centres. She currently lectures in Production & Design at the WA Academy of Performing Arts.



RACHAEL DEASE COMPOSER & SOUND DESIGNER

Rachael is an award-winning composer and sound designer whose practice spans art music, dance, theatre scoring, installation and song writing. Classically trained, with roots in the art rock/pop world, and with a knowledge of sound design and production, Rachael creates music and sound that supports, enhances, elevates, and extends.

Rachael was the composer and sound designer for the large-scale immersive dance theatre event *Salamander*, a collaboration with director/choreographer Punchdrunk's Maxine Doyle and designer Es Devlin for Brisbane Festival. *Salamander* had a sold out and critically acclaimed world premiere season in which Rachael also starred as vocalist. Rachael previously collaborated with Maxine Doyle and Es Devlin on *Here Not Here* for Gothenburg Opera Dance Company in Sweden.

Composition and sound design for theatre includes: for Black Swan State Theatre Company, *Never Have I Ever*, *The Children*, *Dirty Birds*, *City Of Gold* (with Sydney Theatre Company), *August Osage County* (Belvoir St Theatre); *The Bleeding Tree*, *Animal Farm*, *You Know We Belong Together*, *Let The Right One In*, *Comaland*; *It's Dark Outside* (The Last Great Hunt); *Mary StuaRT* (Perth Festival); *House*, (Barking Gecko/Perth Festival); *8GB Of H*Ardcore Pornography* (Griffin Theatre Company); *Heart Is A Wasteland*, *Brothers Wreck* (Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company).

Installation design includes: *Vespers* (Fremantle Biennale); *Black Mass* (Perth Institute of Contemporary Art); *Immemorial* (The Crypt Gallery London/Lumens Studios); *Winter Feast 2018-2022, 2024-2026* (Dark Mofo); *Museum of Water* (Perth Festival); and *Like Embracing Ice* (Fremantle Arts Centre).

Rachael was awarded a Department of Culture and The Arts Performing Arts Fellowship in 2017, has won the Performing Arts WA Award for Best Music for *Let The Right One In* with Black Swan, won a Melbourne Fringe Music Award, and the Martin Sims award. She was also Besen Fellow at Malthouse Theatre, and is a graduate of the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts with a Bachelor of Music Composition.



MIA HOLTON VIDEO DESIGNER

Mia Holton is a visual artist specialising in videography and video design. Since 2005 she has designed and integrated video projection into various independent and mainstage theatre and dance performances. She has worked with Renegade Productions, Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company, Black Swan State Theatre Company, WAYTCO, Perth Theatre Company, Ochre Dance Company, Freeze Frame Opera, Tura New Music, Red Ryder Productions, Darlinghurst Theatre Company and Performing Lines. Mia was a founding member of CDV (Corazon de Vaca) a Spanish/Australian contemporary theatre company (2005-2012), part of Black Swan State Theatre's Hotbed ensemble 2010, artist in residence at Rorelson choreographic centre Malmo, Sweden 2010, and video designer for the gala opening of the new State Theatre Centre of WA, 2011. She graduated from ECU receiving the Best Electronic Artist award at SoCA, 2006.



NASTASSJA NORWOOD FIGHT DIRECTOR

Nastassja Norwood is the owner of Stage Combat Perth, holding accreditation from the Society of Australian Fight Directors Inc.

Recent credits include *Never Have I Ever* (2025), *City of Gold* (2022), *York* (2021), and *Oklahoma!* (2020) with Black Swan Theatre Company, as well as *Romeo and Juliet* (2024) with WA Ballet and *Carmen* (2023) and *Tosca* (2022) with WA Opera.

Nastassja graduated from WAAPA in 2013, with a Bachelor of Contemporary Arts in Contemporary Performance and Theatre Studies.

She is excited to be a part of the human experience brought to life by a dedicated team of story-tellers.



CATHERINE MOORE INTIMACY DIRECTION

Catherine is a Perth based actor, writer and acting coach. She is a graduate of the VCA, where she received the Irene Mitchell Award for Most Outstanding Actor.

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* (2018) and it's sequel *Still Unqualified* (2022) 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.

Catherine's Film credits include *Hooyoo*, *Birthright*, *Runt*, *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*, *Drop Dead Weird*, *Janet King*, *The Kettering Incident*, *Home and Away*, *A Moody Christmas*, *Crownies*, *Rake*, *Spirited* and *Chandon Pictures*. She is the voice of Janey Springs in the internationally popular video-game, *Borderlands*.

Catherine is also a revered Acting Coach and has worked on *Whale Shark Jack*, *Runt*, *H is for Happiness* and *Itch* to name a few and was a resident Acting Coach on *Home and Away* (2014-2018). She worked as Intimacy Co-ordinator on *Invisible Boys* which has been nominated for a Peabody Award.



JULIA MOODY
VOCAL COACH

BLACK SWAN STATE THEATRE COMPANY: *Blue, The Bleeding Tree, City of Gold, York, Clinton: The Musical, Next to Normal, The Red Balloon, Venus in Fur, Laughter on the 23rd Floor, The Seagull, Dust, Midsummer [a play with songs], Other Desert Cities, The Importance of Being Earnest, Madagascar, The Glass Menagerie, The Laramie Project.* Black Swan/ Queensland Theatre Company: *Other Desert Cities, The Clean House.* As an Actor: *The Pool, When The Rain Stops Falling, The Memory of Water.* OTHER THEATRE: As an Actor: Onward Productions: *The Deep Blue Sea.* Melbourne Theatre Company: *Educating Rita.* Company B: *Pallas, Walking Long Country.* Deckchair Theatre: *The Removalists.* Theatre South: *Europe, Daylight Savings.* Perth Theatre Company: *The Mule's Foal, Soul Mates.* POSITIONS: Associate teacher of Fitzmaurice Voicework, Lecturer then Head of Voice in the Acting Department at WAAPA (1995-2017), Voice Lecturer RADA (UK) (2017-19). Board of Australian Voice Association (2010-12), Board then Chair Blue Room Theatre (2005-09). OTHER: Voice Consultant for SBS, ABC and many other corporations, organisations and individuals. TRAINING: Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, and NIDA (Grad Dip in Voice Studies).



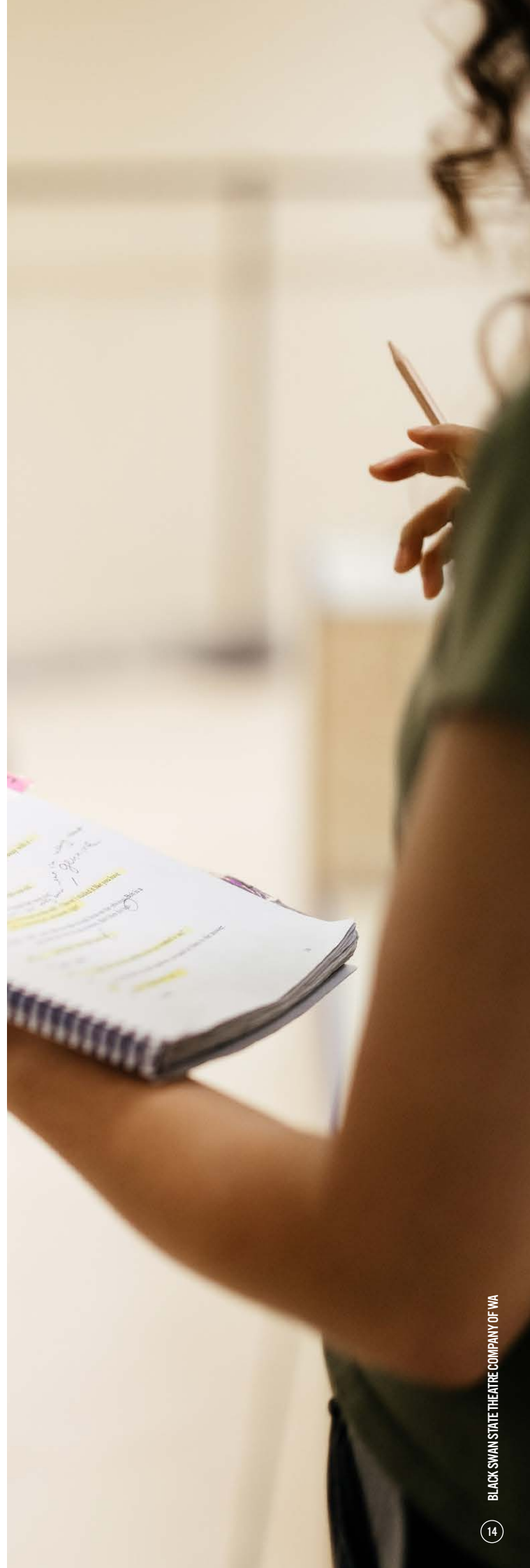
GEORGIA SMITH
STAGE MANAGER

Georgia Smith graduated from Curtin University with a BA in Performance Studies in 2015. She began her freelance stage management career in 2014. Georgia has worked with many of Perth's leading theatre companies including Black Swan State Theatre Company, The Last Great Hunt, and Spare Parts Puppet Theatre as well as countless independent companies presenting works at The Blue Room Theatre. She's toured internationally, *Bus Boy* (Rorschach Beast) to Brighton Fringe in 2018 and *The Great Ridolphi*, along with *Fag/Stag* and *Bruce* (TLGH), to Edinburgh Fringe in 2017; interstate with *String Symphony* (SPPT) to Dream Big Festival in Adelaide (2025) and with *JULIA* (Steamworks) to Sydney Dance company's 2022 INDance season. Georgia has toured regionally with *Hamlet* (Bogan Shakespeare, 2023), *Bang! Bang!* (Shona Erskine and Scott Elstermann, 2022) *JULIA* (Steamworks, 2021 and 2022) *Bali* (TLGH, 2018) and *The Lighthouse Girl* (BSSTC, 2018).



BETH WALTERS ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

Beth Walters is a recent graduate of WAAPA's Stage Management course. Her final WAAPA production was *Tivoli Lovely*, a new musical by Eddie Perfect, where she worked as Production Stage Manager and caller. During her final year of training, she also worked as a Stage Management Swing for Black Swan State Theatre Company. Since graduating, Beth has worked as an Assistant Stage Manager on *The Trial* (Lost & Found Opera) and continues to work across Perth in stage management roles, including with WAAPA. She is excited to be working with Black Swan again and to continue building her career within the Perth theatre community.



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DAY (AFTER DAY) IN THE LIFE OF THE USELESS

BY WILL O'MAHONY

HEATH LEDGER THEATRE / 29 AUG - 20 SEPT



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