

# DEB

BY THOMAS WEATHERALL  
STUDIO UNDERGROUND  
23 MAY – 8 JUNE

CREATIVE LEARNING RESOURCE PART B





# HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

**BLACK SWAN'S CREATIVE LEARNING RESOURCES ARE ALIGNED WITH THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM FOR DRAMA, ENGLISH AND LITERATURE. THESE RESOURCES ARE OFFERED IN TWO PARTS, DESIGNED TO ENHANCE THE VIEWING EXPERIENCE AND TO SUPPORT FURTHER EXPLORATION POST-SHOW.**

**Part A** is to assist your excursion to the theatre by providing background information about the play, pre-show activities and research opportunities.

**Part B** includes production images, behind-the-scenes footage, and post-show analysis activities.

**Icons** to look out for within each pack include:



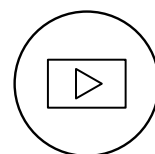
**ACTIVITY**



**DISCUSSION**



**READING**



**VIDEO**

Black Swan State Theatre Company of WA produced this Creative Learning Resource.

Compiled by Christie Sistrunk (Creative Learning Manager).

Design by Troy Barbitta.

Black Swan State Theatre Company of WA acknowledges the Whadjuk Nyoongar people as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and live. We pay respects to all Aboriginal Elders and people and stand united towards a shared future.



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# CONTENT WARNINGS & CURRICULUM LINKS

## CONTENT WARNINGS

This production contains strong themes of depression and suicide, and coarse language.

- **Mental Health:** Strong depiction/references to depression, death/terminal illness, and grief.
- **Substance Use:** References to substance use and cigarette smoking.

Detailed content warnings can be found [here](#).

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## CURRICULUM LINKS

### Literature

Unit 3: Texts in Context  
Unit 4: Interpreting Text

### Drama

Unit 3: Representational, Realist  
Drama



# THE ARTISTS

## CAST



**OWEN HASLUCK**  
MARK



**TYREN MACLOU**  
UNDERSTUDY (MARK)

## CREATIVES



**THOMAS WEATHERALL**  
WRITER



**IAN WILKES**  
DIRECTOR



**CHERISH MARRINGTON**  
SET & COSTUME  
DESIGNER



**MATTHEW ERREN**  
LIGHTING DESIGNER



**JARRED WALL**  
COMPOSER & SOUND  
DESIGNER



**SOPHIA MORGAN**  
STAGE MANAGER





# SPARKING MENTAL HEALTH CONVERSATIONS

**BLACK SWAN STATE THEATRE COMPANY, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH HAWAIIAN AND YOUTH FOCUS, OFFERS A SAFE AND INCLUSIVE SPACE FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION, WITH THE AIM TO BREAK DOWN STIGMA AND SUPPORT MEANINGFUL CONVERSATIONS AROUND MENTAL HEALTH.**

With 40% of young people facing mental health challenges, *Blue* offers a timely opportunity to engage students in meaningful dialogue.

Teachers bringing students to *Blue* are invited to a special **post-show panel on Saturday 31 March, following the 3.30pm matinee in the Studio Underground**. Featuring mental health professionals, and director Ian Wilkes, this open discussion will extend learning beyond the stage, deepening classroom conversations around mental health, resilience, and empathy.



# DESIGN

## SET

Designer Cherish Marrington has created a minimalistic set that invites transformation. Movable blocks are repositioned by the actor to reconfigure the space, while two standing flats constructed from a reflective material refracts and distorts light, the body, and spatial boundaries, evoking a sense of shifting perception. These movable elements, along with varying levels, are

actively manipulated by the performer, allowing the space to evolve in response to the play's emotional and narrative journey.

At one key moment in the play, condensation forms on the flats, evoking the healing properties of water. This visual element becomes a metaphor for emotional release, cleansing, and renewal, mirroring the character's inner turmoil and gradual journey towards healing.



- What technical or design challenges might be involved in creating condensation onstage?





# COSTUME

The character of Mark wears a formal black suit to symbolise the formality of grief, commonly associated with funerals and worn as a mark of respect.



- Discuss how this costume was used within the play to align with the character's emotional journey.
- Design a costume for an unseen character in the play. Consider texture, colour, style, silhouette, and symbolism in your design. Share your design and explain the reasoning behind your choices.

# LIGHTING DESIGN

Matthew Erren's lighting design is key to bringing not only the set to life, but also in underscoring the mood and meaning of various scenes.

- How does the dark background in the set allow the lighting to shape the space and highlight the performer?
- In what ways do the reflective surfaces on the set affect the lighting and contribute to the dream-like atmosphere?
- How can changing the angle, brightness, and colour of the lights alter the mood of a scene?
- How does the shifting of light in the space help to convey the way we see Mark's world?



Create a lighting design for a key scene in the play. Consider which moods are present in the scene and how the following elements can be used to highlight them.

- **Colour:** Which colour reflects the emotion?
- **Angle:** Where should the light be placed?
- **Intensity:** Bright or soft lighting?
- **Movement:** How could light or reflection show the emotional journey?

Briefly explain why you chose those lighting effects and how they enhance the emotional tone of the scene

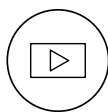




# SOUND DESIGN



MUSIC PLAYS A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE NARRATIVE OF *BLUE*, WITH THE WRITER THOMAS WEATHERALL SUGGESTING SONGS WITHIN THE SCRIPT TO ENHANCE THE STORY.



**Listen** to Weatherall's suggested tracks below and reflect on the emotions these pieces evoke.



- Discuss Jarrad Wall's sound design and how it enhanced the emotional tone of the production and key scenes.
- If you were to choose a song for a key scene in *Blue*, which song would you pick and why?

*I Don't Want to Set the World of Fire* (1941) The Ink Spots

*Puff the Magic Dragon* (1963) Peter Paul and Mary

*Mr Blue* (1959) The Fleetwoods

*The Devil and the Sea* (1968) St. John Green



# POST SHOW ACTIVITIES

## AUDIENCE FEEDBACK

"THE USE OF LIGHTING & THE MINIMAL BUT IMPACTFUL PROPS BOUGHT YOUR ATTENTION COMPLETELY INTO THIS POWERFUL MEMOIR. THE DIRECTION & PRODUCTION ARE TO BE COMMENDED. JUST LOVED THIS!"

"A GREAT PRODUCTION BY A YOUNG PLAYWRIGHT AND A YOUNG ACTOR."

"I NEVER EXPECTED THAT A SINGLE ACTOR COULD BRING SO MUCH LIFE TO 90 MINUTES."



**Written activities** to support post-show analysis of the production.

- How did the play blend reality and memory? Were there key moments where this was especially apparent?
- How did the non-linear structure affect your understanding of the protagonist's journey?
- What symbols or metaphors stood out to you, and what might they represent?
- How did the minimalist set enhance the protagonist's emotional journey?
- Which themes and/or scenes resonated with you most and why?

### **Drama activities (Small groups)**

- Recreate a key moment from the play using physicality only. How does the scene's meaning change when expressed non-verbally?
- In small groups, devise a prequel or sequel scene for the play, to share with the class.

### **Drama activities (Individual)**

- Write and perform a monologue from the perspective of another character from the play.







## BLUE & BLACK SWAN'S CREATIVE LEARNING PROGRAM IS PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY

### PRINCIPAL PARTNER



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CLAYTON UTZ



### SUPPORTING PARTNERS

ALEX HOTEL



## BLACK SWAN FUTURE FUND

Supported by Minderoo Foundation, generous philanthropists, and legacy gifts, Black Swan's Future Fund was established in 2017 to build a strong financial foundation to support growth and sustainability. The investment fund enables the delivery of works of exceptional quality, scale, and ambition. We thank those who have supported the Future Fund, in particular, we acknowledge the extraordinary generosity of Nicola and Andrew Forrest, and look forward to creating many more opportunities for our artists and audiences.

### FUTURE FUND FOUNDING PARTNER





**Black Swan State Theatre Company**

PO Box 337, Northbridge, WA 6865

**T** (08) 6212 9300

**E** [learn@blackswantheatre.com.au](mailto:learn@blackswantheatre.com.au)

**W** [blackswantheatre.com.au](http://blackswantheatre.com.au)

