

AUSTRALIA



Image: Cameron Etchells

A PERTH FESTIVAL COMMISSION

WORLD PREMIERE

YOU KNOW WE BELONG TOGETHER

A Black Swan State Theatre Company,
Perth Festival and DADAA co-production

1 – 4 MAR
Studio Underground

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YOU KNOW WE BELONG TOGETHER

**STUDIO UNDERGROUND | 1 – 4 MAR | 60MINS NO INTERVAL
POST SHOW CONVERSATION | SAT 3 MAR, 4PM**

A Perth Festival commission

A Black Swan State Theatre Company, Perth Festival and DADAA co-production

Lead Artist Julia Hales

Director Clare Watson

Writer & Associate Director Finn O’Branagáin

Performers Joshua Bott, Patrick Carter, Lauren Marchbank, Tina Fielding, Melissa Junor & Mark Junor

Lighting Designer Joe Hooligan Lui

Set & Costume Designer Tyler Hill

Composer & Sound Designer Rachael Dease

Movement Director & Assistant Stage Manager Laura Boynes

Video Designer Michael Carmody

Dramaturg Deborah May

Film Maker Lincoln Mackinnon

Stage Manager Jessica Rogerson

Production Manager Stewart Campbell

Producer Perth Festival Anna Reece

Producer DADAA Simone Flavelle

Producer Black Swan State Theatre Company Natalie Jenkins with Chantelle lemma

Thanks to Madeline Stuart, Rosanne Stuart, Hermione Merry and family, Michael Cox, Taylor Anderton and a huge thank you to all the team at *Home and Away* and Channel Seven especially Lynne McGranger, Ray Meagher, Julie McGauran and Geoffrey Nottage.

Thanks to The Hales family, Emily and Lily, Lynn and Gordon, Charlie Fox, Jan Gothard and Lisa Mills.

Thanks to Mike Perjanik for his kind permission to use the *Home and Away* theme music and lyrics.

Finding Love film clips courtesy of the artists and DADAA’s Mixed Reality project.

I Am Okay With It courtesy of Lauren Marchbank and DADAA’s Mixed Reality project.

Latecomers not admitted

Please note: The comments, opinions and themes expressed in this production are solely those of the cast and creative team and do not reflect the views of Endemol Shine Australia or the Seven Network.

FANFARE

You were called to your seat tonight by a fanfare composed by 22-year-old brass player Holly Powley. Perth Festival’s Education Program, in partnership with ECU WAAPA, provided four emerging young composers a mentorship with Rebecca Erin Smith to develop fanfares for the Festival. These were recorded by professional musicians and replace traditional theatre bells at Festival venues. Visit perthfestival.com.au for more information on the Fanfare project and this composition.

WELCOME

Perth Festival welcomes Black Swan State Theatre Company in joining our pioneering initiative with DADAA to break down barriers in disability arts and to introduce exciting new voices to our Festival audience.

We are proud to have commissioned *You Know We Belong Together*, Julia Hales’ theatrical celebration of the power of love, the pursuit of dreams and living with Down syndrome. And I am delighted that Black Swan, under the artistic leadership of Clare Watson, has so wholeheartedly embraced the Festival’s commitment to celebrate diversity and difference. The involvement of the State’s major theatre company is a significant step in the Festival’s commitment towards greater access and expression for disability arts in partnership with DADAA.

It is also an important milestone to have the extraordinary work that DADAA does now realised with the State’s leading theatre company and in the spotlight of the Festival.

The Festival and DADAA are in the third year of a partnership to support exchanges between outstanding artists with disability from across Australia and around the world. I couldn’t be more proud of this outcome of our shared vision that has been created by an exceptional group of artists collaborating in Perth. It is exciting for us to be co-producing this world premiere production.

You Know We Belong Together is a celebration of love. Made with love. And I know you are going to love it.

WENDY MARTIN

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, PERTH FESTIVAL

In year three of our five-year partnership with Perth Festival I’m thrilled to see us working with the Festival team and Black Swan State Theatre Company on a Western Australian first. *You Know We Belong Together* is an incredibly unique local offering that brings a powerful new voice into the Perth cultural landscape. Julia Hales’ voice is a disability perspective on our national suburban dream – *Home and Away*’s Summer Bay, its relationships, and the hopes and dreams of us all, whether we acknowledge it or not.

For Julia and her cast, Summer Bay provides the perfect backdrop for her story – a narrative that we don’t get access to, that unique take on life through a disability lens. It’s a springboard in this time of the National Disability Insurance Scheme into a highly engaged conversation around life in 2018 for West Australians with disability, their dreams, their views and perspectives, their narrative. Our challenge as a society is to follow the example of Perth Festival and Black Swan in opening up professional pathways for artists with disability, whether as a writer, actor or participant.

Not long ago, disability employment options in WA were incredibly narrow. Our collective expectation of people with disability was low. *You Know We Belong Together* demonstrates the huge value of collective action. When we get behind a person with disability to realise their professional goals, just about anything is possible.

Enormous thanks to our teams from DADAA, Perth Festival and Black Swan, our sponsors and Boards for taking this leap with us, but most of all to Julia and the creative team and cast of *You Know We Belong Together*.

DAVID DOYLE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DADAA

A NOTE FROM DIRECTOR CLARE WATSON

You Know We Belong Together is a live documentary on stage presented by lead artist, Julia Hales. Julia and I were introduced late last year by Perth Festival artistic director Wendy Martin. It turns out that Wendy is quite the matchmaker; we hit it off instantly. Julia had already been researching and developing a work about finding love – some of her research interviews feature in *You Know We Belong Together*.

In our first meeting, Julia told me about her years of acting experience with DADAA, her training at WAAPA, her love of *Home and Away* and her wish ‘to make a show to help remind non-disabled people that people with Down syndrome are complex and emotional people, like them. That they also have regular desires like love and acceptance’. She was about to commence work with co-writer Finn O’Branagáin.

Down syndrome is a chromosomal condition that occurs at conception. It’s also called Trisomy 21. Typically, our chromosomes pair up – like a whole series of microscopic love stories. Trisomy 21 occurs when the Chromosome 21 pair is joined by a third to become a threesome. So, Julia and all of the wonderful artists that join her on stage – Lauren, Josh, Tina, Melissa, Mark and Pat – have one more Chromosome 21 to most of the audience. At a biological level, these artists have something extra. And Julia and her ensemble have certainly brought something extra to our process of creating this production – it has been one of the most invigorating and inspiring creative environments I’ve ever had the pleasure of working in.

While this is a play about Down syndrome that calls with no uncertainty for inclusivity, understanding and better representation of disability on screen, it is also a completely universal story about love, about loss, about family and about friendships. You’re about to make some new friends. We’re glad you’re here because you know that we belong together. Enjoy the show.

This play is dedicated to Carol Hales.

A NOTE FROM WRITER FINN O’BRANAGÁIN

Verbatim theatre normally takes place some time after the fact of the action. It is often compiled with extensive research and interviews and then pieced together, thread by thread – the writer becoming part detective, part storyteller, part compelling barrister for the subjects. It’s then handed over to a director and actors to make it come alive – a representation of other people, another time – illuminating a case for the audience. Sometimes the subjects can be surprised by how they ‘sound’, their representation folded in amongst other storylines, facts and threads of interest creating a documentary of a self that they might not quite recognise.

Some of the magic of *You Know We Belong Together* – sorry, the magic of Julia Hales – is that I have been able to do all this with her – researching and conversing and piecing it together, with Julia as both subject and performer. Having Julia as the lead artist has meant that at all times she’s in control of the documentation and presentation of her own story. Together with Clare Watson we’ve pressed forward with research lines of enquiry that interested us all, that strengthened Julia’s arguments. Together we’ve poured over our transcribed conversations, piecing together, thread by thread, illuminating a portrait of a remarkable woman, a celebration of a community, a case for the audience towards love and belonging. A documentary of a life still unfolding, dreams being lived, a person that the audience can recognise as someone in control of her own self and own story. Watching Clare and Julia shaping it on stage, seeing it come alive with a room of professional artists with and without Down syndrome. It’s been an honour to work with Clare and Julia in service of amplifying and articulating Julia’s story and passions and introducing audiences to her and the cast of magnificent people in the production and in the Down syndrome community.

BIOGRAPHIES



JULIA HALES

LEAD ARTIST

Julia Hales is a performer and writer with a 20-year history of working with DADAA to develop and realise her artistic goals. She is a highly valued member of DADAA's staff and facilitator of arts workshops. Julia is also active in the WA Down syndrome community, volunteering to work with babies and toddlers with Down syndrome and regularly speaking at Down Syndrome WA events.

Julia began developing as a performing artist with DADAA in 1997 and in 1998 was supported to audition for the WA Academy of Performing Arts' one-year course, to which she was accepted. She is a dedicated performer who creates works focused on universal desires of identity, fame and love. She is in constant pursuit of performance opportunities and skill development and has since co-devised her own work and performed at the State Theatre Centre of WA, The Blue Room Theatre, PICA and on ABC radio. She also performed with KCAT in Callan, Ireland in 2008.

In 2015 Julia was accepted into the Arts Access Australia and Australia Council for the Arts' SYNC leadership program. In 2015 and 2016 she worked on the DADAA/Hydra Poesis project, Digital Dialogues and began the process of researching and developing a new performance work, *Finding Love*. A grant from the Australia Council for the Arts in 2017 gave her the opportunity to collaborate on the writing and workshopping of this work with playwright Finn O'Branagáin.

An opportune meeting with Perth Festival artistic director Wendy Martin in early 2017 led to a meeting with Clare Watson, artistic director of Black Swan State Theatre Company. Julia's work quickly evolved into a Perth Festival, Black Swan, DADAA co-production for Perth Festival 2018.

A Blue Room Theatre LOFT grant extended Julia's creative development process with a workshop of the re-titled work, *You Know We Belong Together* with Finn O'Branagáin, Clare Watson, Laura Boynes, Lauren Marchbank and Joshua Bott in November 2017 and January/February 2018. And now you're seeing the world premiere of this work.



CLARE WATSON

DIRECTOR

Clare commenced in the role of artistic director of Black Swan State Theatre Company in October 2016 and had her directorial debut with the Australian premiere of *Let The Right One In* in November 2017. Previously, she was artistic director at St Martins collaborating with children and teenagers.

A graduate of Directing at the Victorian College of the Arts, Clare directed the critically acclaimed *What Rhymes with Cars* and *Girls* for Melbourne Theatre Company in 2015, which received four Helpmann nominations including Best Director. She was Female Director-in-Residence at Malthouse Theatre in 2014, is an MTC Women Directors Program alumna and has many award-winning stage credits to her name.



FINN O'BRANAGÁIN

PLAYWRIGHT

A 2012 graduate from NIDA's Graduate Diploma of Dramatic Arts (Playwriting), Finn's work has been presented nationally at The Women in Theatre and Screen's Festival Fatale, The World Theatre Festival, ATYP, Metro Arts, JUTE theatre and Mudlark Theatre Company, the National Young Writers' Festival, Wordstorm, 2High, the Nightwords festival at the Sydney Opera House, the Darwin, Sydney and Melbourne Fringe Festivals, Bondi Feast and The Blue Room Theatre. Later this year her 2015 co-written and performed work *The Epic* will tour to Tasmania, Queensland and New South Wales with ArtsOnTour. Finn is also a director and dramaturg, and former co-artistic director of Crack Theatre Festival (part of This is Not Art).



JOSHUA BOTT

PERFORMER

Joshua Bott is a dancer and visual artist who has been dancing all his life. He is the youngest of a family of ten and has two sisters who are professional dancers. Joshua has been mentored by dancer Sete Tele and is currently a core member of DADAA's Tracksuit Performance Group, performing three new works with them over the past three years. Josh is a Michael Jackson fan and this is the first time he has performed with Black Swan State Theatre Company.



PATRICK CARTER

PERFORMER

Patrick Carter is a Perth-based artist and performer. He first worked with DADAA's The Lost Generation Project in 2007 and 2008, demonstrating adeptness in a multitude of art forms including painting, dance, performance and musical composition. His works have been presented in a number of group exhibitions including Beyond the Western Edge, Kalgoorlie and HERE&NOW13 at the Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery. Most recently, Patrick's digital work *Dance* was part of New Light Festival in Adelaide and ENLIGHTEN Festival in Canberra. He is currently creating a new digital work *Bloom*. This is Patrick's first production with Black Swan State Theatre Company.



LAUREN MARCHBANK

PERFORMER

Lauren Marchbank found her true passion for dancing at the age of five and she has since trained in a variety of dance genres, including ballet, contemporary and hip hop. She has been a member of DADAA's Tracksuit Performance Group for four years. In 2017 she choreographed and performed her own solo at The Crown Theatre, and choreographed a solo work, *I Am Okay With It* for STRUT's SHORTS season. She also performed in *Inventories of Bodies in Movement* with French artist Christine Fricker. The filmed component of *I Am Okay With It* is included in *You Know We Belong Together*.



TINA FIELDING

PERFORMER

Tina started her theatre career with Poles Apart Theatre Company in Mandurah in 2014, performing in their show *The Journey*. From there she became one of the core ensemble actors and worked on *The Good, The Bad and The Ugly*. Tina also worked with world-renowned dancer and performer Claire Cunningham as part of the 2016 Perth Festival's PIAF Connect, in partnership with DADAA. In 2017 Tina worked on DADAA's Mixed Reality project with mentor Laura Boynes and creatively developed a new digital work titled *Star Of The Night*. This is Tina's first production with Black Swan State Theatre Company.



MELISSA JUNOR

PERFORMER

Melissa Junor was born in Perth. Her mother is from Papua New Guinea but of Chinese origin. Her father was English. She has a younger brother called Stuart. She went to school in Perth, but moved around a bit because her dad was a teacher and the family moved with his job.

Melissa had a job working for Target Distribution Centre after she left school. She met Mark at a Dancing for the Disabled class in Perth and married him in September 2000. The couple now live in the pretty holiday town of Augusta where they have their own house and look after themselves. Melissa says: 'I like being independent and sharing my life with Mark'.



MARK JUNOR

PERFORMER

Mark Junor started life in England but left when he was just 23 months to come to Australia. His dad is Scottish and his mum English and he has a brother called Graham, but he is in Victoria now with his family.

Mark went to school in Perth where he lived and got a job with Good Samaritan Industries, working there for 10 years, most of the time in the kitchen. He says: 'I fell in love with Melissa and asked her to marry me. We will have been married 18 years in September. I enjoy living in Augusta with my wife. We have lots of friends and get to do lots of things together.'

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Image: You Know We Belong Together, Perth Festival - Cameron Etchells

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ABOUT YOUR STATE THEATRE COMPANY

Black Swan is a company of national significance, creating exceptional theatre that nurtures Western Australian audiences and artists, and promotes our artists within the state, nationally and internationally.

TOGETHER IN ELECTRIC DREAMS

You Know We Belong Together by Julia Hales and collaborators is a production about the beauty and complexity of living with Down syndrome but at the same time it is much, much more than that. Theatre invites our empathy and strengthens our compassion – where the impossible becomes possible. And so, this work about belonging is paired as part of Black Swan's series of mini-festival feasts with *Skylab* by Melodie Reynolds-Diarra, a sci-fi comedy set in Esperance in 1979. This will be our first co-production with Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company who are this year also celebrating a very significant 25th anniversary.

We invite you to see both these **world premiere** productions, to join the conversation, to love hard and dream big 'Together in Electric Dreams'.

We give special thanks to our co-production partners: DADAA for the important cultural work they do in disability advocacy and promoting access; and to Perth Festival and Wendy Martin for commissioning and championing *You Know We Belong Together*. A work that stands as a true celebration of what binds us all as human beings.



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ABOUT DADAA

Working within a Community Arts and Cultural Development framework, DADAA is a leading arts and health organisation that creates access to cultural activities for people with disability or a mental illness. DADAA offers targeted programs that include a broad range of traditional and new media projects in Western Australian communities. Our programs range from entry-level workshops for those with no arts experience to professional mentorships for advanced artists.

DADAA has three arts and community centres – in Fremantle, Midland and Lancelin. We also have an audio description service that travels to Perth's major festivals and cultural events, and consultancy services in disability awareness training designed and delivered collaboratively with organisations across Perth.

DADAA works through significant local and cross-sector partnerships that bring arts and health together in a way that effectively responds to the needs of communities. DADAA also works actively in state and national audience development, disability advocacy, accessible programming, digital inclusion, and research and evaluation.

YOU KNOW WE BELONG TOGETHER

DADAA is delighted to have worked with Julia Hales over the past 20 years as she has developed her skills in writing, dance, theatre, screen and arts leadership. *You Know We Belong Together* has its origins in Julia's participation in DADAA's Mixed Reality program, during which Julia created the short film *Finding Love*.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to our co-production partners Black Swan State Theatre Company and Perth Festival.

DADAA would also like to thank Australia Council for the Arts and Blue Room Theatre LOFT grants for Julia Hales' creative development of *You Know We Belong Together* with Finn O'Branagáin and Clare Watson.

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