



BLACK SWAN
STATE THEATRE
COMPANY OF WA

BLACK SWAN STATE THEATRE COMPANY OF WA AND THE BLUE ROOM THEATRE PRESENT

TOAST



BY LIZ NEWELL

5
MAY

15
MAY

STUDIO UNDERGROUND



TOTAL RUNNING TIME:
90 MINUTES (NO INTERVAL)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Content warnings: Mature themes including grief, death of a parent and addiction, and moderate coarse language. References to suicide. Recommended Age 15+

BLACK SWAN STATE THEATRE COMPANY OF WA ACKNOWLEDGES THE WHADJUK PEOPLE OF THE NYOONGAR NATION WHO ARE THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS OF COUNTRY ON WHICH STATE THEATRE CENTRE STANDS. WE PAY OUR RESPECTS TO ALL FIRST PEOPLES, TO THEIR ANCESTORS AND ELDERS. IT IS A PRIVILEGE TO BE TOGETHER ON NYOONGAR COUNTRY.



SYNOPSIS

THE CHILDHOOD HOME IS UP FOR SALE. THREE SISTERS ARE LEFT ADRIFT AND GRAPPLING WITH THE SUDDEN LOSS OF THEIR MOTHER, AND EACH OTHER.

Candice just wants to pack up a lifetime of memories without getting sentimental, while Alex – newly sober and dreading a relapse – sneaks old bits of Tupperware into her handbag. Their adopted little sister, Sydney, is doing pretty well, when she's not trying to tell her best friend she's in love with her. And the rookie real estate agent is only there to pay off her credit cards.

The Black Swan partnership with The Blue Room Theatre that brought you *Playthings* continues in 2022, inviting you into this funny and charming work about the family we're given and the family we choose for ourselves.

Winner of The Blue Room Theatre 2017 Awards for Best Production and Best Performance, *Toast* is a superbly written story about the surreal experience of loss, and a love letter to the people who hold our hand in the dark.



A NOTE FROM THE WRITER LIZ NEWELL



ANY WRITER OF ANY LEVEL OF EXPERIENCE HAS HEARD THE ADAGE “WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW”; PERSONALLY, I’M MORE INTERESTED IN THE THINGS I DON’T.

In the case of *Toast*, my initial interest was with the concept of sisters. I’m an only child, and have always found the idea of siblings – those odd people you can differ so greatly from, while simultaneously sharing the all-important figure of a parent – to be fascinating. It seemed unlikely to me that two people would have identical experiences with the same parent; there are so many variables, and parents are, as we all eventually learn, only human. The inconsistency of memory within an otherwise shared experience was rich storytelling ground in any case; I also wondered, perhaps morbidly, what would then happen to a sisterly relationship in the wake of immeasurable grief, when that mother is no longer present to speak for herself.

And I imagined, for who knows what reason, these sisters packing up the family home and finding a toaster amid all the detritus. If I ever figure out how I got from there to here, I’ll let you know.



Toast follows in a long, long line of stories about sisters, mothers, memory and grief. I like to think what sets it apart is the character of Sydney. She is of another generation to her sisters, and adopted into the family, and also a lesbian; her queerness, though not a point of contention in the slightest, others her as much as the unconventional way she entered the family. Sydney’s preoccupation is with belonging, and a fear of not having a place to do so, or a person to do it with.

The desire to belong is maybe the most human hope of all; to be seen for who we are, and to be accepted because of all our beautiful and brittle qualities, rather than despite them, as can happen. So there’s something powerful about centering the importance of a young queer woman’s journey in an otherwise fairly traditional narrative like *Toast’s*, and I am unspeakably proud we’ve done so. Representation matters, but positive representation saves lives. We have seen this time and again, and we will always need to see more of it.

Toast would not exist without The Blue Room Theatre. To reassemble the original, extraordinary cast and the majority of the design team five entire years after the first production is remarkable, and to be able to redevelop this story and share it with a wider audience courtesy of The Blue Room’s partnership with Black Swan is a true gift.

I’m grateful to our entire team of wonderful, talented, generous Toasties, but want to single out our director Emily McLean, who guides us all (not least me, the anxious writer) with more kindness and conviction than one person ought to have. Her friendship and mentorship means the world.

Thank you for joining us all to experience this world, and I hope you find a small comforting piece within it to take out into yours.

Liz Newell

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR EMILY MCLEAN



THE LAST TWO YEARS HAVE SEEN US EITHER LOCKED IN WITH, OR LOCKED AWAY FROM, OUR FAMILIES.

It has intensified every part of those relationships. These years have also invited death and grief right in. *Toast* is built on themes of family, grief and death. It is also about belonging, addiction, a coming out journey, adoption, women's work, and the complicated, primordial way siblings love each other.

In a garage three sisters pack up their mother's house. I love 'women's work' in Art. If we look carefully at the everyday rhythm and purpose of this work, we can see down history and through time, to the eternal issues of love and death.

Toast sits in a literary tradition of three sisters, and I am one of three sisters, born of my mother who is one of three sisters. (We have

six brothers between us too, who I don't want to write out of history - enough of that.) This show is in my DNA and runs deep in my family lines.

I first read a script by Liz six years ago and knew this was a voice that needed to be on a stage. We got *Toast* up in the magic space of The Blue Room Theatre. And now here we are in the State Theatre Centre as a part of the State Theatre Company's season. Liz's voice and stories are important. A writer who works with rigour, is playful with structure and creates multi-faceted characters is someone who should be supported. To create literate work that uses layers and levels of story and echoes of meaning thrown into space, takes time. It takes development. I applaud The Blue Room Theatre and Black Swan State Theatre Company for giving this play time and space to evolve.

I am grateful that Liz trusted me with their words and everything.

I am so grateful to the cast and creatives. A new work requires you to leave your ego at the door, put more skin in the game, stand on shifting ground for a long time and to apply dramaturgical rigour to your acting and creative process. This whole team has been thrilling, hilarious and so very exciting to work with. I am grateful for the high quality of work they have brought into the room.

Together we are thrilled to share this story with you, the audience. Thank you for coming to see a Western Australian story. It is for you and about you, always.



A NOTE FROM SET AND COSTUME DESIGNER SALLY PHIPPS



TOAST SPEAKS TO THE MEMORIES THAT WE HOLD, THE RELATIONSHIPS THAT KEEP US GROUNDED, AND TO THE PLACES AND ITEMS THAT WE CHOOSE TO STORE THESE MEMORIES IN. IT'S A BEAUTIFULLY POWERFUL EXPLORATION OF GRIEF, BRAVERY AND HUMAN CONNECTION.

Revisiting *Toast* this time around, Emily McLean and I were both drawn to exploring the significance of place, memories and family whilst keeping the design functional, practical and reminiscent of the original garage we created at The Blue Room Theatre back in 2017.



What we've created with the generous support of Black Swan's team of artisans and craftspeople, is an abstract space; a capsule of memories and stories, full of meaning and significance to the characters who inhabit the world of *Toast*.

The set has a strong sense of home, comfort and intimacy. When stripped back to its bare bones it reminds us of what really provides safety and comfort in times of loss; each other, our families, our memories and our connections.

The costumes are firmly placed in reality, reminiscent of the here and now. They act as an extension to the wonderfully complex and familiar characters Liz Newell, Emily McLean and the cast of *Toast* have created.

Ultimately the design sets out to evoke a sense of familiarity, comfort and nostalgia. Manipulated through lighting, sound and props, we are taken out of the hyper-real and into an interpretative space. My hope is that every audience member takes away a different, and very personal reading of the visual elements of *Toast 2.0*.

It has been an incredibly special experience to revisit this, five years on from the original production with a deeper and more nuanced insight. Knowing that the entire cast and creative team have remained on board has made this all the more special. It's been a pleasure to collaborate with everyone again - old Toasties and new ones!

CAST

GWEN	Teresa Jakovich
SYDNEY - ORIGINAL CAST	Anna Lindstedt
ALEX	Amy Mathews
SYDNEY	Sam Nerida
CANDICE	Alison van Reeken

CREATIVES

WRITER	Liz Newell
DIRECTOR	Emily McLean
SET & COSTUME DESIGNER	Sally Phipps
COMPOSER & SOUND DESIGNER	Rachael Dease
SOUND DESIGN ASSISTANT	Georgia Snudden
LIGHTING DESIGNER	Jolene Whibley
LIGHTING DESIGN MENTOR	Lucy Birkinshaw
FIGHT CONSULTANT	Lawrence Hassell
STAGE MANAGER	Isabella Taylor
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER	Riley Billyeald
DIRECTING SECONDMENT	Courtney Cavallaro
DIRECTING SECONDMENT	Molly Earnshaw





LIZ NEWELL WRITER

Liz Newell is a playwright and producer based in Whadjuk Noongar Boodjar with a particular interest in positive and empowering representations of queerness. They grew up in Menang country where they worked as an arts journalist and, briefly, a place called Whale World. In 2014 they were a member of Black Swan State Theatre Company's Emerging Writers' Group. In 2016 they founded Maiden Voyage Theatre Company to champion the voices of women and queer artists, and produced their play *Belated* (dir. Emily McLean) at The Blue Room Theatre.

In 2017 their play *Alone Outside* premiered (dir. Bridget Le May) as part of The Blue Room Theatre Summer Nights program, and was a finalist for the Martin Sims Award for Best New WA Work, with performer Jo Morris winning the Performing Arts Award. In 2017 Liz's play *Toast* (dir. Emily McLean) premiered, winning the Blue Room Theatre Award for Best Production, and Best Performance. *Toast* was also a finalist for the 2017 Performing Arts WA Awards for Best New Work, and Best Independent Production. In 2018 *Alone Outside* premiered in Melbourne produced by Lab Kelpie and in 2019 Liz developed two new play scripts. Liz has worked in various capacities for PAC Australia, Perth Festival, FRINGE WORLD Festival, and The Last Great Hunt. They are proud to be a Black Swan State Theatre Company Associate Writer.



EMILY MCLEAN DIRECTOR

Emily McLean is a WAAPA Directing graduate, a founding member of Red Ryder Productions and was a Black Swan Resident Artist in 2017 and 2019. Emily has worked for Black Swan, Perth Theatre Company, Deckchair, Red Ryder, WAAPA, Curtin, Maiden Voyage Theatre Company, and many of Perth's independent companies. For Black Swan, she has directed the world premieres of *Animal Farm* an adaptation by Van Badham, *Water* by Jane Bodie and *Dust* by Suzie Miller. Her most recent productions were *The Wolves* by Sarah DeLappe (Red Ryder, 2019), for which she won Best Director of an Independent Production at the PAWA Awards, and *Unsung Heroes* (Black Swan, 2020) which was filmed during Perth's lockdown. Emily directed *Toast* by Liz Newell (Maiden Voyage, 2017) and *Grounded* by George Brandt (Red Ryder, 2016) at The Blue Room Theatre. Last year at WAAPA she directed both *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* by Brecht and *Summer Rain* by Nick Enright and Terence Clarke. In the last ten years she has directed eight new Australian works and has won awards from Equity, PAWA and The Blue Room Theatre for her work.



SALLY PHIPPS SET & COSTUME DESIGNER

Sally Phipps is a Set and Costume Designer whose work spans across many art forms including theatre, film, events and styling. She graduated from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, specialising in Design for Performance (2013) and has since contributed set and costume designs for Black Swan State Theatre Company, *The Last Great Hunt*, *Lost and Found Opera*, Western Sky Productions, Maiden Voyage Theatre Company, Renegade Productions, WAYTCO and Hayman Theatre.

Sally has worked professionally in film since 2018 as a Production Designer, Art Director, Costume Designer and Stylist. Her Production Design credits include *Featherweight* (2018), *I'm Not Hurting You* (2019) and *Sparkles* (2020), her Art Direction credits include *Billy Beneath* (2020) for Perth Festival and her Costume Design film credits include *Touch* (2022).

Sally has Art Directed and Styled multiple music videos, commercials and campaigns for local and international artists and brands including Spacey Jane, Jack River, Shockone, Lotterywest, Kleenheat, Watches of Switzerland, Silverchain, P&N Bank, Crown Casino, FARE, Department of Health and Department of Premier's Cabinet.

Her awards include The David Hough Award for Outstanding Achievement (2013), The Design Institute of Australia's West Australian Graduate of the Year (2014) and The Blue Room Theatre Award for Best Overall Design (2017).



RACHAEL DEASE COMPOSER & SOUND DESIGNER

Rachael is an award-winning composer encompassing art music, film, dance and theatre scoring, installation and songwriting. Graduating from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, she won the inaugural Martin Sims Award at Fringe World, the Melbourne Fringe Music Award and received critical acclaim at New York Fringe Festival for her contemporary song cycle *City of Shadows*. Work for theatre includes *City of Gold* (Black Swan/Sydney Theatre Company as part of Perth Festival), *It's Dark Outside* (The Last Great Hunt) *Mary Stuart* (Performing Lines as part of Perth Festival), *The Bleeding Tree* (The Blue Room) and *House* (Barking Gecko). Residencies include Malthouse Theatre, Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts, Proximity Festival, Lumen Studios Italy and The Arctic Circle. In 2020 Dease released her album *Hymns for End Times* which was performed with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra for Perth Festival 2021. She has recently returned from collaborating with Maxine Doyle and Es Devlin on *Here Not Here* for Gothenburg Opera Dance Company.



GEORGIA SNUDDEN SOUND DESIGN ASSISTANT

Georgia Snudden is currently finishing her Bachelor's Degree at WAAPA, specialising in Sound. She has recently worked as the Sound Designer for Performing Lines' *Mary Stuart* for Perth Festival 2022, prior to this she worked as the Associate Sound Designer for The Kabuki Drops' *Nocturna*. She has worked as an RF technician on Black Swan's *York* and *The Cherry Orchard* as well as FOH engineer for the State Theatre Centre's venue Studio Underground for Fringe 2022. On top of her theatre-based experience Georgia also works in live sound freelance and for Audio Technik. She has worked throughout Perth venues such as Optus Stadium, RAC Arena and Perth Convention Centre alongside artists such as Ministry of Sound, San Cisco and Spacey Jane. Georgia spent 2019 - 2020 as a studio assistant with CRANK studio and has recently joined the team at Sundown Studios as an in-house engineer.



JOLENE WHIBLEY LIGHTING DESIGNER

Jolene Whibley is an emerging lighting designer, who has worked within the creative arts since 2017. Jolene's career began in Kalgoorlie Boulder where she gained her early experience through working on productions touring to the Goldfields such as the Western Australian Ballet, Yothu Yindi & The Treaty Project, The Wiggles and Killing Heidi. In 2019 she relocated to Perth to begin completing a Bachelor of Performing Arts (Lighting) at WAAPA, where she was able to gain further experience and finesse her design skills further in theatre, musical theatre, and dance. Jolene recently completed her WAAPA industry secondment with lighting designer, Matthew Marshall, on *Mary Stuart* presented by the Perth Festival & Performing Lines.



LUCY BIRKINSHAW LIGHTING DESIGN MENTOR

Lucy is an accomplished lighting designer and artist. Lucy's lighting practice encompasses theatre, opera, music theatre, concert lighting, dance, film and television. She trained formally in fine arts and lighting for performance. Lucy has designed lighting for companies such as STC, Perth Theatre Company, Malthouse, Griffin, Barking Gecko, The Aphids, Melbourne Opera, Lyric Opera Melbourne, WAYTCO, Performing Lines, My Darling Patricia, OpticNerve, Side Pony Productions, Hayloft Project, Magnormos, Red Ryder, Perth Festival, Opera in the Park, Australian Opera Studio and many others. She enjoys collaborating with a diverse range of directors, choreographers and composers. Lucy's distinctive approach to depth, contrast and beauty within her designs make her an identifiable theatre artist.



ISABELLA TAYLOR STAGE MANAGER

A graduate of WAAPA's BA of Performing Arts, Izzy has most recently worked with Black Swan on *City of Gold* (2022) as Assistant Stage Manager and is very excited to now return to the company as Stage Manager.

Their professional credits range from Stage Manager for *Project 10*, (2022, West Australian Ballet), the world premieres of *Unheimlich* (2021, Performing Lines WA and PICA, *Minneapolis* (2021, Performing Lines WA), to Assistant Stage Manager with Black Swan for *Playthings* (2021), and *The Tempest* (2021). They have been working as a Stage Manager and technical operator since 2017.



RILEY BILLYEALD ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

Riley is a freelance Stage Manager and recent graduate from WAAPA with a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Stage Management. She's worked across a broad range of artforms including dance, musical theatre, classic plays, installations, and devised works. She's proud of her work on *Julius Caesar* (2021) with Director Humphrey Bower and immensely enjoyed working with Shaun Rennie on *Sweet Charity* (2019) and *Mama Mia* (2020). She recently worked with Black Swan on *City of Gold* and will be returning in October for the rescheduled season of *Barracking For The Umpire*.

**"TOAST IS A LOCAL STORY
WRITTEN BY A FRESH,
RED-HOT WEST AUSTRALIAN
PLAYWRIGHT. THE TEAM IS
A DYNAMIC COMBINATION
OF SHINY, NEW TALENT AND
FABULOUS ALL-STARS".**

Emily McLean, Director





TERESA JAKOVICH GWEN

On graduating from WAAPA (Acting) in 2007, Teresa performed for ABC Radio National, Barking Gecko (*Run Kitty Run*) and Young Australia (*Shakespeare On Trial*). She was then a member of Bell Shakespeare's *Players* in 2011/12, performing Lady Capulet in *Romeo & Juliet* (SOH).

Recent theatre credits include: *The Tempest* for Black Swan, *Julius Caesar* (Portia), *All's Well That Ends Well* (Violenta), *Antony & Cleopatra* (Iris) for Sport For Jove Theatre Co., CDP's international tour of *The Incredible Book Eating Boy*, and *The Lunar Effect* (Old Fitz). TV credits include: *All Saints*, *Rescue Special Ops*, ABC series *Laid*, *Google's Hang Out In History*, and the SBS short *Old War*.

Teresa was the resident artist at Bell Shakespeare from 2015-2017 and directed their regional touring shows. She has her Masters in Literature and is an avid arts educator and university lecturer.



ANNA LINDSTEDT SYDNEY - ORIGINAL CAST

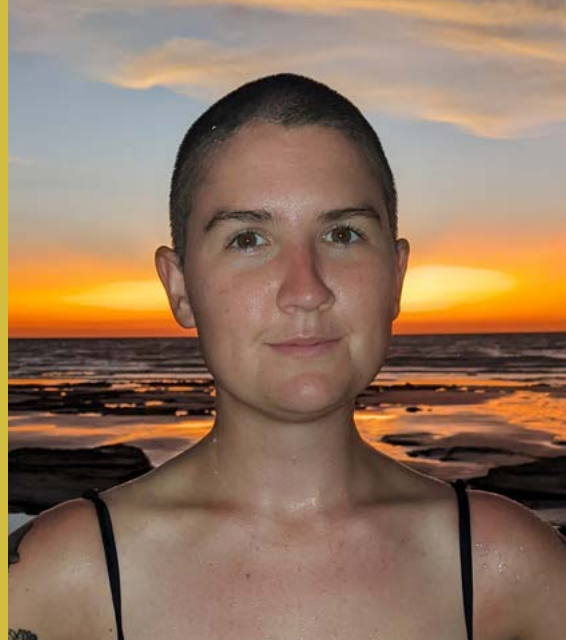
Anna Lindstedt is proud to be a storyteller on Whadjuk Noongar Boodjar. Since graduating from Curtin University in 2017, Anna has performed in *Toast* (Maiden Voyage, 2017), *A Region Where Nobody Goes* (Lindstedt & Davies, 2019), *52 Hertz* (Beyond the Yard, 2018-2019), *The Wolves* (Red Ryder, 2019), *Sink* (Beyond the Yard, 2020), *WHAT OF IT* (Lazy Yarns, 2021) and *Do I Look Like I Care?* (Bear Hands Co., 2021). Anna is a founding artist of independent theatre collectives Bear Hands Co. and Lindstedt & Davies. In 2021 she co-wrote and co-directed *Ugly Virgins* (Lindstedt & Davies), which won the Blue Room Theatre's Award for Writing and was nominated for the Award for Directing. She recently directed *Kind Regards, Michelle Aitken* (Hey! Precious, 2022) for Perth Fringe World, which won the Blaz Award for new WA writing.



AMY MATHEWS ALEX

Amy graduated from ACA in 2000. Her Theatre credits include *Bite the Hand* (The Last Great Hunt), *Water*, *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, *Coma Land* (Black Swan), *Toast* (Maiden Voyage), *The Anzac Project*, *Richard III Ensemble*, *Othello*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Tempest*, *Macbeth*, *Taming of the Shrew* (Sport for Jove), *Dangerous Lenses* (The Impending Room), *Transparency* (Seymour Centre), *Orange Flower Water* (Stella Green), *Chicom* (Brand Spanking New), *Push Up 1-3* (Cipher Productions), *The Lady's Not For Touching* (Sydney Writer's Festival), *Cigarettes and Chocolate* (See-Saw) and *Actors At Work* (Bell Shakespeare).

Amy's television credits include: *The Heights*, *A Place to Call Home*, *Crownies*, *Rescue Special Ops*, *Packed to the Rafters*, *Home and Away*, *All Saints*, *Blue Heelers*, *Skool Sux*, *Love Bytes*, *Jeopardy*, *Always Greener* and *Head Start*. Amy's film credits include no: *I Met A Girl* (Monsoon Pictures) and *Gabriel* (Redline) Films. Amy's award wins include PAWA 2018 Best Actor (female) *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, Blue Room Award 2017 Best Performance *Toast* and Logie 2007 Most Popular New Female Talent.



SAM NERIDA SYDNEY

Sam Nerida (they/them) is a performer, playwright, director and producer working on Whadjuk Noongar Boodja, and a graduate of WAAPA's Bachelor of Performing Arts. Performance credits include *The Wolves* (Red Ryder, 2019), *Is This Thing On* (Andrea Gibbs & Zoe Pepper, 2017) and the original *Toast* (Maiden Voyage Productions, 2017). In 2020 they were a Perth Festival Lab Artist and a KISS Club Artist, and participated in Black Swan's 2019 Emerging Writers Program. They directed *The Jellyman* for which they were nominated for Best Director (PAWA 2020), and they have written *Tissue* and *See You Next Tuesday*, the latter of which won Best New Work and Best Independent Production (PAWA 2019). They have worked for Murdoch University as a Digital Puppeteer, The Blue Room Theatre as their Associate Producer, Perth Festival as their Creative Learning Coordinator, and WA Youth Theatre Company as a teaching artist.



ALISON VAN REEKEN CANDICE

Alison is a graduate of Curtin University and WAAPA. She works regularly with Black Swan, most recently in *Animal Farm, York, Unsung Heroes (Digital Series), The Next Room/ The Vibrator Play, Summer of the Seventeenth Doll, Let the Right One In, Tartuffe* and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. She is co-producer of Red Ryder Productions and in 2016 performed solo show *Grounded*, and in 2019 acted in *The Wolves* at The Blue Room Theatre.

Alison often works with writers on new Australian work in productions such as *Dust* for Black Swan and *Toast* for Maiden Voyage, or in developments such as the Fresh Ink program with ATYP and Barking Gecko, and Black Swan's Emerging Writers' Program. Awards include wins at Equity Guild Awards for Best Supporting Actor in 2006 and Best Actor in 2011, and PAWA Awards in 2015 Best Supporting Actor, 2016 Best Actor, and 2017 Best Supporting Actor.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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