



BLACK SWAN
STATE THEATRE
COMPANY OF WA

BLACK SWAN STATE THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS

Things I Know To Be True

WRITTEN BY
**ANDREW
BOVELL**

SHOWING
**27 MAY -
18 JUNE**

WHERE
**HEATH LEDGER
THEATRE**



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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.

Total running time:

Total running time: 2 hours 15 minutes
(including interval)

Content warnings:

This production contains mature themes including grief/loss, coarse language, use of herbal cigarettes and theatrical haze.

Hero Images

Frances Andrijich

Rehearsal Photography

Daniel J Grant

Design

Troy Barbitta

Things I Know To Be True was first produced by The State Theatre Company of South Australia and Frantic Assembly in 2016





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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Synopsis

A FAMILY ROOM, A KITCHEN AND A PATIO EXTENSION AT THE BACK OPEN TO A CLASSIC AUSTRALIAN BACKYARD. A HILLS HOIST, A LEMON TREE, A WELL-CUT LAWN, A ROSE GARDEN, A SHED UP THE BACK SOMEWHERE AND AN ANCIENT EUCALYPT TOWERING ABOVE.

The play takes place over a year.

The Prices seem like your typical tightknit, working class suburban family. Fran and Bob have worked hard to raise four loving, noisy, healthy kids; taking the stresses, strains and growing pains in their stride.

However, when the kids return home after flying the coop, buried truths come to the surface, turning everyone's world upside down.

As each season passes the focus shifts to each of their children as they go through a significant transition in their life, and we explore the impact these changes have on Bob and Fran. As the children move toward more certainty about their own identity the parents are becoming less sure about who they are.

Funny, poignant, and relatable, *Things I Know To Be True* is a beautifully complex story of love and loyalty that'll make you want to run home to squeeze your perfectly flawed family and never let go.





Writer's note **ANDREW BOVELL**

I WROTE THIS PLAY AS A SON WHO REMEMBERS HIS PARENTS STANDING ON THE PLATFORM AT EAST PERTH RAILWAY STATION IN 1983, WAVING ME GOODBYE AS I BOARDED THE INDIAN PACIFIC AND HEADED EAST TO FIND MY PLACE IN THE WORLD.

I can still remember the tears in their eyes and the worry on their faces and the hope that I would return soon. And I wrote this play as a father who, many years later, stood in airports and farewelled my own children as they left to find their place in the world, with tears in my eyes, worry in my heart and hope that they would return soon. Finding myself in my parents' shoes suggested something about the inevitable cycle of life which I have tried to capture in this play.

I found the shape of it in nature. The story unfolds over the course of a year. Each season focusses on the story of one of four children as they go through a crisis in their lives on their respective journeys toward the person they need to be. The play's themes of decline and renewal are reflected in the changing moods of the seasons. Change is difficult and sometimes it's painful and I try to grapple with that as honestly as I can. Sometimes we disappoint and hurt our parents. Sometimes we disappoint and hurt our children. Sometimes we love too much. Sometimes we don't love enough. Most of the time we just try to find the right place in between.

Finally, I wrote this play as a husband. My wife, Eugenia Fragos, and I have been together for forty years and we've bought up three kids. When the kids have gone you look at each other and say what was all that about and what now? If you're lucky, you get to fall in love all over again. At its heart, this play is about the resilience of a long-term marriage. It's tested along the way but it endures. The play is not about our marriage. It's not about my parents or my children but I couldn't have written it without them.

I'm grateful that *Things I Know To Be True* is a part of Kate Champion's first season at Black Swan. She's a director I have admired and hoped to work with for some time. She has assembled a wonderful cast and team of Western Australian creatives to tell this story. I hope that you enjoy it.



Director's note

KATE CHAMPION

THERE ARE SOME THINGS I KNOW TO BE TRUE.

I know that this story, written so skilfully by Andrew Bovell, contains a wealth of well observed truths about the mess of life and the complicated power of love.

I know that every time I re-read this play, I'm deeply affected by how it continually reminds me how precious life is and how quickly it can pass us by.

I know that, as my directorial debut with Black Swan, this play is a gift. It requires a very skilful cast and their utmost trust in me. I have been amazed by their generosity, sheer talent and enthusiasm for the story they're telling.

I know it takes a village to put on a play, from gifted creatives and a patient crew

to the tireless focus and belief from the whole company - production and wardrobe, administration, producing, marketing and more.

I know that every time I shepherd a play to the stage it takes a leap of faith, no matter how many times I've done it before.

I know that each one of us has to find a place in the world and our own sense of who we are and how we fit in. It can be difficult and fraught and can sometimes require us to leave the support of the people who believe they know us best.

I know that when we sit together in a darkened theatre, bearing witness to the stories of life, it is a truthful experience. We can't be fooled by an edit or a 3D effect. There is only one take and it's the take that's happening now, in front of us, this one time, this way. The undeniable truth of live theatre.



Set & Costume Designer's note ZOË ATKINSON

**IT SEEMS A NICE ILLUSTRATION OF A
RELATIONSHIP THAT I'M RIFFING OFF THE
DIRECTOR'S NOTES... AND IN TURN, THAT
HER NOTES RESPOND SO HAND IN GLOVE TO
THE PLAY ITSELF. TO THAT END:**

I know it to be true that some conversations can only happen outside, and that some can only happen inside, and that there are threshold conversations; in which people call, or linger, or flit between the two. I know that perspectives shift and change, and domestic life can swirl and settle but that it will inevitably move again, and that this shift plays on a loop, like the seasons themselves.

I know that theatre design is mostly about the negative space- the volume it doesn't fill; in which words and performers, and the other languages of story telling will live. It's in such space that the third, necessary and distinct environment of Andrew Bovell's play can be found: a place to imagine into.

I know I love Fran's tree. Its unbridled, ecstatically twisted non-compliance is a thing in which to dream, and to rest a soul made tired by the work of love and staying, and holding to that loop and its relentless return. Such a tree can only exist in that space of our imagining; it's a different thing to each of us.





Cast

Humphrey Bower	Bob
Caroline Brazier	Fran
Emma Jackson	Pip
Kaz Kane	Mark
Will O'Mahony	Ben
Laura Shaw	Rosie

Creatives

Writer	Andrew Bovell
Director	Kate Champion
Set & Costume Designer	Zoë Atkinson
Lighting Designer	Mark Howett
Composer & Sound Designer	Ash Gibson Greig
Show Head of Audio	Tim Collins
Vocal Coach	Luzita Fereday
Fight Choreographer	Nastassja Norwood
Stage Manager	Izzy Taylor
Assistant Stage Manager	Riley Billyeald
Dresser	Anna Weir





HUMPHREY BOWER BOB

Humphrey is an actor, director and writer based in Perth. He has worked with companies and artists across Australia in theatre, opera, dance, puppetry, film, TV, radio and audio book narration, and is also a sessional acting teacher and guest director at WAAPA. He is currently an Associate Artist at Black Swan.

Recent stage credits include *Mary Stuart* (Perth Festival 2022); *The Tempest* (Black Swan, 2021); *Savage Grace* (Steamworks, 2021); *The Cherry Orchard* (Black Swan/Perth Festival 2021); *The Golem* (The Blue Room, Perth, 2020); *The Apparatus* (The Blue Room, 2019 and *Sunset* (STRUT/Perth Festival, 2019).



CAROLINE BRAZIER FRAN

Caroline Brazier is one of Australia's most accomplished actors working across film, television and theatre.

Some of Caroline's television credits include *Rake*, *Packed to the Rafters*, *Offspring*, *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries*, *Tidelands*, *Home & Away*, *Mystery Road*, *Tropo*, *Joe Vs Carole*, *Wakefield*, *Wolf Like Me* and the soon to be released *Year Of*. Caroline's feature film work includes *Rogue*, *Locusts*, *Pulse*, *Three Summers*, *How to Please a Woman* and most recently opposite Liam Neeson in the US feature *Blacklight*.

Caroline has extensive theatre work with some of her work including lead roles for the Sydney Theatre Company's productions of *Death of an Anarchist*, *Dinner*, and critically acclaimed production of *Mary Stuart* in the role of Mary. Caroline reprised this role for Perth Festival in 2022.



CAST



EMMA JACKSON PIP

Emma's career has spanned theatre, film and TV since her graduation from NIDA. Theatre credits include: *Jesus Wants Me For A Sunbeam*, (National Theatre of Parramatta and return season for Belvoir); *The Effect* (Red Line Productions); *Vale* (STCSA); *Sunset Strip* (including a national tour) & *Stoning Mary* (Griffin Theatre Company); *Once In Royal David's City* (QTC/Black Swan); *The Blind Giant is Dancing*, *Food* (3 seasons, including National Tour, Belvoir), and *Fool for Love* (B Sharp/Savage Productions); *The Long Way Home* (Sydney Theatre Company); *Nothing Personal and Let the Sunshine* (Ensemble Theatre); and *Dead Man's Cellphone* (Melbourne Theatre Company). She also performed in *Reasonable Doubt* (Theatre Tours international) in London and at the Edinburgh Festival.

Emma won the Marten Bequest Travelling Scholarship in 2006 and relocated to New York to train with Anne Bogart and the SITi Co and intern with The Wooster Group.

Recent screen credits include: *The Claremont Murders* (ESA Productions), *How To Please A Woman* (Feisty Dame Productions), and *True Colours* (Bunya Productions).

Emma is thrilled to be getting back on stage again after completing her Master in Screen Studies at WA Screen Academy.



KAZ KANE MARK

Kaz Kane is a 2011 WAAPA graduate and has had an expansive career on stage and screen. They have appeared as Johnno (Echelon Productions), Craig (*Legally Brown*), Chris (*The Morning Show*) and Metastopholes (Short+Sweet Melbourne Fringe winner 2013), Turkish Tolly in *Gallipoli* (Channel 9), and in their first feature film *Holding The Man* with director Neil Armfield.

In late 2015 Kaz moved to the UK to pursue their career as a multidisciplinary artist. It was there as they developed and cultivated cabaret and drag persona Cazeleon, a multi award-winning cabaret chameleon born out of rebellion and liberation. In performance, they fuse masculine and feminine qualities both vocally and visually to accentuate the power and beauty beyond the binary while challenging the social constructs of gender roles.

In early 2018 they premiered their first solo show *Cazeleon: The Movies In My Mind* at the Adelaide Fringe Festival in which they won Best Emerging Artist Award and made lasting impressions with their innovative, political and boundary pushing production.

Following the success of the Adelaide *Cazeleon: The Movies In My Mind* was picked up by The Gilded Balloon to do a full season at Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

Currently, they are a resident artist with London Jazz collective, The Black Cat Cabaret and the head promoter at The Harem Of No One; elevating and celebrating marginalised voices from the Southwest Asian and North African (SWANA) community. This year they completed a tour of Australia for Sydney World Pride. Most recently, they appeared in the award-winning production of the world premiere *All The Fraudulent Horse Girls*, a new Australian play written by Michael Louis Kennedy at The Glory, London.

This is Kaz's debut performance with the company.



WILL O'MAHONY BEN

Will is an actor, writer and director based in Perth. Acting credits include *Oil*, *The Tempest*, *Assassins*; *Hir*; *Angels in America, Part One*; *Glengarry Glen Ross*; *Flood*; and *Twelfth Night* (Black Swan). He has written six plays, with both *Tonsils + Tweezers* and *Coma Land* receiving mainstage productions for the company in 2016/17.

For six years, Will led ATYP's Fresh Ink program as a mentor to emerging Western Australian playwrights, and teaches acting, playwriting and directing at WAAPA. Awards: 2018 PAWA Best Supporting Actor for *Assassins*; 2017 PAWA Best New Work for *Coma Land*; 2015 Black Swan Emerging Writer's Award for *Tonsils + Tweezers*; 2014 PAWA Best New Script and Member's Choice Blue Room Theatre Award for *Great White*; 2012 Equity Award Best Supporting Actor for *Red*.



LAURA SHAW ROSIE

Raised in New Delhi, internationally educated, and connected to the world. Laura returned to Australia to immerse herself in her performance studies of Theatre and Dance, and most recently from WAAPA. Amongst other credits, Laura has played Marianne in *Tartuffe* on stage, and has appeared on screen as Holly in *Playin' Possum* for the WA Screen Academy. Laura was selected as one of the few to perform in the Global Shakespeare Sonnet project in 2020, winning the poetry prize from The Speech and Drama Teachers Association of Western Australia in 2021, and winning People's Choice award from the Vice Chancellor Shakespeare awards. This is Laura's debut performance for the company.



KATE CHAMPION DIRECTOR

Kate has decades of experience working in theatre, dance-theatre, opera, musicals, film and circus - in genres ranging from devised original work, new Australian plays, classics, comedy, multi-art form work, interactive and physical theatre. Kate was the founding artistic director of Force Majeure, an influential dance theatre company based in Sydney, premiering five original main stage works for major festivals and touring regionally, nationally, and internationally.

Kate works extensively on large-scale projects, and for major theatre companies as well as in the small-to-medium and independent theatre scene. Kate had a 26-year career as a performer and dancer with companies both nationally and internationally and created two acclaimed solo shows.

Kate has won Helpmann, Australian Dance, Green Room and Mo Awards.



ZOË ATKINSON SET & COSTUME DESIGNER

Zoë studied scenography at the Prague Academy of Performing Arts in the Czech Republic, and the Institut Internationale de la Marionette in France. Since returning to Australia in 1997 she has worked nationally and internationally in opera, dance, theatre and the visual arts. Zoë has been working with Black Swan since 1999, when she designed *Plainsong* with the late founding director, Andrew Ross. She has since designed over fifteen productions for the company, the most recent being *Oil*, *York* and *The Tempest*. Zoë has co-created and designed the Perth Festival events *Home* and *Boorna Waanginy*, for which she was also Artistic Associate; and Amy Sharrocks' *Museum of Water*. Other recent work includes Yirra Yaakin's *Hecate*, Performing Lines' *Black Brass* and BREC's *The Smallest Stage*.

Zoë has been the recipient of numerous grants and awards, including a Green Room for The Splinter Group's *Lawn* and a Helpmann for the Malthouse Theatre/Black Swan production *The Odyssey*. Zoë lives in Perth and is the mother of two boys.



MARK HOWETT LIGHTING DESIGNER

Mark Howett, originally from Busselton Western Australia is proud to stand on Noongar Boodjar. He went on work experience as a 15-year-old in 1979 at the National Theatre with dreams of becoming an actor. After two weeks, he joined the theatre family working as a lighting technician. He was later awarded a scholarship by the Department of Culture and the Arts to study Theatre Design, specialising in Lighting Design under the tutelage of Jennifer Tipton at the School of Drama, Yale University.

Mark is a multi-Greenroom and Helpmann Award-winner who has worked not only as a lighting designer but a video and set designer for international productions in theatre, film, dance and opera. Over the past 10 years, he has focused his energy on directing more film and theatre. In 2016 he was appointed as Artistic Director of Ochre Contemporary Dance Company, Perth.

Many of his works are touring or have successfully toured in Australia and overseas. These include: *No Sugar*, *Up the Road*, *Amalgamate*, *Crying Baby* and *Gulpilili*. West End Lighting Design credits include *Evita* 2014, *Cabaret* 2012, *A Country Girl* 2010, *Three Days In May* 2011, *Dreamboats and Petticoats* 2009 & 2013 and *A Daughter is a Daughter* 2009.



ASH GIBSON GREIG COMPOSER/SOUND DESIGNER

Ash has composed the music for over 180 hours of TV documentaries, docu-dramas, features, and short films. 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. Ash also won a Green Room Award for his work on Malthouse Theatre's *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, and has worked with Black Swan, Queensland Theatre, and Sydney Theatre Company.

Ash was composer for the acclaimed 2017/19 Perth International Arts Festival opening event, *Boorna Waanginy: The Trees Speak*, the PC/console games *Battlestar Galactica: Deadlock*; and *Warhammer 40k Battlesector*. Recent work includes the animated feature film *100% Wolf*, five seasons of the National Geographic documentary series *Drain the Oceans*, the upcoming ABC documentary miniseries *Ningaloo/Nyingullu* with Tim Winton, and *INXS: Reimagined* with Perth Symphony Orchestra.



LUZITA FEREDAY VOCAL COACH

Luzita is an experienced Dialect Coach and Lecturer in Voice with a career spanning 30 years in film, TV, and theatre. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Acting) from the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, a postgraduate Diploma from the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, and a Master of Arts (Performing Arts) from the West Australian Academy of Performing Arts.

Luzita has worked as a Dialect Coach on a wide range of productions, including theatre productions like *Mary Stuart*, *Angels in America*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, and *Once The Musical*, as well as TV shows like *BALI 2002* (Stan/Channel9). She has also worked as a Lecturer in Voice at WAAPA since 2010, teaching into the Bachelor of Arts (Acting) and Bachelor of Arts (Music Theatre) programs. In addition, Luzita provides communication skills training to corporate clients and community groups.

Her research and interest in the Australian voice have led to her being interviewed for various media outlets, including an ABC National online article, Channel 7's *Sunrise*, ABC Radio Sydney, Hobart, Perth, and ABC TV News Perth.



NASTASSJA NORWOOD FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER

A graduate of the Contemporary Performance and Theatre Studies Course at WAAPA, since 2013 Nastassja has trained with and assisted Andy Fraser of Stage Combat Perth at a variety of companies and institutions, including WAAPA, WA Opera, and Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company. Nastassja was also a regular fixture at the Western Regional Stage Combat Workshops from 2014-2017 and attended the 2016 Paddy Crean International Stage Combat Workshop at the Banff Centre for the Arts in Alberta, Canada.

Recent work includes: Black Swan Theatre: *Oklahoma!* (2020), *York* (2021), *City of Gold* (2022) and WA Opera: *Tosca* (2022), *Carmen* (2023).



IZZY TAYLOR STAGE MANAGER

A graduate of WAAPA's BA of Performing Arts, Izzy has most recently worked with Black Swan on *Toast* (2022) as Stage Manager and *City of Gold* (2022) as Assistant Stage Manager.

Izzy engages across many theatrical disciplines from plays, musicals, ballet, events, and devised works. Recent work includes Stage Manager for *Project 10*, (2022-23, West Australian Ballet), Stage Manager for the premieres of both *Unheimlich* (2021, Performing Lines WA and PICA) and *Minneapolis* (2021, Performing Lines WA), and Assistant Stage Manager with Black Swan for *Playthings* (2021) and *The Tempest* (2021). Outside of stage managing, Izzy also works as a stage technician.



RILEY BILLYEALD ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

Riley is a freelance Stage Manager who has worked across a wide range of productions spanning various art forms, including dance, musical theatre, classic plays, installations, and devised works.

Her experience includes a secondment on *City of Gold*, Assistant Stage Managing on *Toast* with Black Swan State Theatre Company, and Stage Managing *Barracking For The Umpire*. She has also worked with a variety of companies and festivals, including City of Melville for their Midwinter Festival, Barking Gecko's *Cicada*, Enneagon Movement, and Perth Festival.

Jurrungu Ngan-ga

[Straight Talk]

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LES HICKFORD
WORKSHOP MANAGER



ZOË ATKINSON
DESIGNER



MAREK SZYLER
SCENIC ARTIST



LYNN FERGUSON
WARDROBE MANAGER

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BLACK SWAN
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Things I Know To Be True

WRITTEN BY
ANDREW BOVELL

SHOWING
27 MAY – 18 JUNE

HOME TRUTHS FROM WA'S BACKYARD. Don't miss this beautifully complex family drama about the Prices – a seemingly typical tightknit, working-class suburban family. With the kids having flown the coop, Fran and Bob should be slowing down and smelling the roses that Bob so lovingly cares for. But as stories of their brood's struggles are revealed they find themselves in a fight to hold their family together. Funny, poignant, and relatable, *Things I Know To Be True* will make you want to run home and squeeze your perfectly flawed family and never let go.



Jurrungu Ngan-ga [Straight Talk]

CREATED BY
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SHOWING
15 – 23 SEPTEMBER

DANCE AS RESISTANCE. Set within 'the prison of the Australian mind', *Jurrungu Ngan-ga* twists and turns its way through indigenous and refugee stories, cutting into the raw nerve of government sanctioned brutality in prisons and detention centres. With hypnotic storytelling, this new dance theatre work gives victims a face, and interrogates our capacity to lock away and isolate that which we fear. Brutally beautiful, it arrests your attention, dares you to look away, and dreams of the day we will know solidarity in difference.



Dirty Birds

WRITTEN BY
HAYLEY McELHINNEY &
MANDY McELHINNEY

SHOWING
18 NOVEMBER – 10 DECEMBER

THERE'S NO HOME LIKE PLACE. Blurring the lines between truth and fiction, *Dirty Birds* journeys through the past, present, real, and absurd, as two big hearted 'losers' carve out a place for themselves in a new world. Sisters Mary and Martha must leave their humble abode. They can't seem to get it together. What's more, they're not even sure who they are, which is which and where they should go. Drinking endless cups of tea and searching through memories, they look for something that will shake them from their predicament before it's too late.

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