

BLACK SWAN STATE THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS

The Children

BY LUCY KIRKWOOD 24 AUG - 15 SEP STATE THEATRE 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

1 hour 40 minutes
(no interval)

Content warnings:

Contains coarse language,
strong themes of death, haze,
and use of herbal cigarettes.

Hero Image Photography

Simon Westlake

Rehearsal Image Photography

Daniel J Grant

Design

Troy Barbitta

The Children was developed
with the kind support of the
Berwin Lee Foundation and
first performed at the Royal
Court Jerwood Theatre,
Downstairs, Sloane Square, on
Thursday 17 November 2016.





A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR MEL CANTWELL

**THE CHILDREN IS ONE OF THOSE RARE
PIECES OF WRITING THAT IS AT ONCE
INTRIGUING AND DEVASTATING - ITS
LENS FOCUSED ON THE HUMAN
CONDITION, ITS IMPACT GROUNDED IN
THE LIVE EXPERIENCE.**

Kirkwood's characters are in constant conflict and evolution, with themselves and each other. They, like the cast, are rich in experience and intellect; dynamic; vulnerable and funny.

In the making of this production I am surrounded by a creative team that brings all the qualities and skills necessary to navigate a work that is technically and emotionally demanding. It requires a phenomenal level of commitment and honesty, and a generosity of spirit that I think sings loud through the work.

The environment, and the Environment figure largely in the realisation of this work and its design. I have the good fortune here of working with my long-term collaborators Rachael Dease, Matthew Marshall and Bruce McKinven. There is great joy in building lasting artistic relationships, and they are integral forces in creating the atmosphere of this production.

Humble thanks go to the brilliant Lucy Kirkwood for allowing us to adapt the language of the work to bring it closer to home, and to Kate Champion for her inspired programming – presenting us with a play that is completely of the now; relevant, challenging and prescient.

It is my hope that you find its delicacy and bravery as profound as I do, and that your time with these extraordinary words and actors stays in your heart and mind beyond the bounds of the theatre and this performance.



CAST

Nicola Bartlett	Hazel
Humphrey Bower	Robin
Caroline Brazier	Rose

CREATIVES

Lucy Kirkwood	Writer
Mel Cantwell	Director
Bruce McKinven	Set Designer
Matt Marshall	Lighting Designer
Rachael Dease	Composer & Sound Designer
Izzy Taylor	Stage Manager
Kira Feeney	Assistant Stage Manager
Matt Erren	Lighting Programmer/Operator
Jordan Lee	Head Mechanist
Etain Boscato	Fly Programmer
Andy Cross/Sabi Art & Design	Prop SFX





SET DESIGN

BRUCE MCKINVEN'S SET DESIGN FOR *THE CHILDREN* CREATES A POWERFUL VISUAL METAPHOR FOR ISOLATION AND VULNERABILITY.

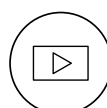
"Rose arrives to ask a question. The magnitude of the question is slowly revealed through the play. The consequences it poses for Hazel and Robin, and indeed the legacy to the community – are enormous.

This is an intimate play set in a single room of a small cottage – but the backdrop it is set against is of a far greater scale.

This sense of scale is what I responded to. A highly focussed and isolated environment set within an abstracted notion of the post-apocalyptic world in which these characters have found themselves."

- Bruce McKinven, Set & Costume Designer

IN CONVERSATION



Watch this In Conversation video to hear the three stars chat about their careers, perspectives on the industry, and reveal how their own personal histories have shaped their work in this captivating play.



NICOLA BARTLETT HAZEL

Nicola has been embedded in the performing arts industry in Australia for the last 35 years. After graduating from NIDA, Nicola pursued a career in TV, film and stage acting and was involved in multiple projects, receiving the PAWA Award for her role in Edward Albee's *The Goat or, Who is Sylvia?* and appearing at the Rome, Sydney and Melbourne International Film festivals for her lead role in the feature film *Little Sparrows*.

Theatre acting credits include *Antigone*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Face to Face*, *Soul Mates*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Unexpected Man*, *Jimmy and Pat Meet the Queen*, *The Ghost's Child*, *Old Love*, *Is This Thing On*, *Signifying Nothing* (a winner at the 2017 Adelaide Fringe Festival) and *And I'm the Queen of Sheba*. Her television and film work includes *Ship to Shore II*, *Parallax*, *Rapture of the Deep*, *Contagion*, *Three Acts of Murder*, *Sororal*, *The Reckoning*, *The Legend of Gavin Tanner*, *Antecedents*, *Factory 293*, *Work From Home*, *Whet*, *Council*, *Emerald Way* and *The Twelve* (Season 2).



HUMPHREY BOWER ROBIN

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. He is currently an Associate Artist at Black Swan.

Recent stage credits include *An Imaginary Life*, *Things I Know To Be True* (Black Swan, 2023); *The Tempest* (Black Swan, 2021); *Mary Stuart* (Perth Festival, 2022); *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 ROSE

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

Caroline's many leading role credits on TV include *Rake*, *Packed to the Rafters*, *Offspring*, *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries*, *Tidelands*, *Home and Away*, *Mystery Road*, *Troppo*, *Joe Vs Carole*, *Wakefield*, *Wolf Like Me*, *Year Of*, *Silver*, and *The Twelve*. Caroline's feature film credits includes *Rogue*, *Pulse*, *Three Summers*, *How to Please a Woman*, *Runt* and *Blacklight*.

Caroline also has extensive theatre credits, including stand out lead roles in the Sydney Theatre Company's productions of *Death of an Anarchist*, *Dinner*, and the Company's acclaimed production of *Mary Stuart*, in the role of Mary. Caroline reprised this role for a sold-out season at Perth Festival in 2022. Caroline most recently starred in Black Swan's *Things I Know to Be True*.



LUCY KIRKWOOD WRITER

Theatre Includes: *Rapture* (Advertised as *That Is Not Who I Am*), *Maryland*, *The Children*, *NSFW* (Royal Court); *Like Rabbits* (Brighton Festival); *Chimerica* (Almeida/Headlong/West End); *Hansel & Gretel*, *Beauty & The Beast* (National); *Housekeeping* (Theatre Uncut/Southwark/Latitude); *Small Hours* (Hampstead); *Bloody Wimmin* (Tricycle); *It Felt Empty When the Heart Went at First But it is Alright Now* (Clean Break/Arcola); *Psychogeography*, *Guns or Butter* (Union); *Tinderbox* (Bush); *Hedda* (Gate).

Awards include: Olivier Award for Best New Play (*Chimerica*); Evening Standard Award for Best New Play (*Chimerica*); Susan Smith Blackburn Prize (*Chimerica*).



MEL CANTWELL DIRECTOR

Melissa is a director, writer, and performance maker. She takes a holistic and inclusive approach to her practice and is committed to developing and showcasing innovative performance works for adventurous audiences.

Previous roles in the sector include Artistic Director of Perth Theatre Company, Associate Director (PTC) and Program Manager of The Blue Room Theatre. Highlights for PTC include *Tender Napalm*; *Blackbird*; *Equus*; *The Ugly One*; *The Goat or Who is Sylvia*; *From the Rubble*. Recent directorial works include *Mary Stuart* for Perth Festival and Performing Lines WA; *The Arsonists* (WAAPA); *Whale Fall* (Perth Festival and PICA); *Nocturna* (The Kabuki Drop); *Slap and Tickle* (Adelaide Cabaret Festival); *The Average Joe* (Fringeworld); *Blink* (Winter Arts Festival) and *The Elders Project* (Fremantle Festival / Art on the Move).

She received an Emerging Leader's fellowship from ISPA (International Society for Performing Arts) and has been a guest artist and speaker for numerous national festivals and institutions. She has a BA (Film, ECU) and post-graduate Bachelor of Performing Arts (Directing, WAAPA). Mel has been a guest lecturer and director for Notre Dame University; ECU and WAAPA and has been commissioned by PICA, Playlab, Black Swan, City of Perth, Lotterywest, Barking Gecko and Perth Festival. She is Co-Artistic Director of Lost and Found Opera and Creative Director of The Kabuki Drop.



BRUCE MCKINVEN SET & COSTUME DESIGNER

Bruce is the Senior Production Designer for *Dark Mofo* Festival in Hobart designing most of the festival's major events including *Winter Feast*. He is also Artistic Associate for Brisbane Powerhouse, designing a series of new outdoor event spaces for the performance venue and contributing to the upcoming *Melt* Festival as a key creative.

Bruce has a 30-year career designing for theatre, arts festivals, dance and events across Australia, working with some of the nation's leading practitioners and companies, including Company B Belvoir, Bell Shakespeare, Adelaide Festival, Brisbane Festival, Perth Festival, Queensland Theatre Company, Sydney Theatre Company, La Boite, Expressions Dance Company, Dance North, Queensland Ballet, Force Majeure, Australian Dance Theatre and Singapore Dance Theatre.

For Black Swan he has designed *Prima Facie* (Set), *Dirty Birds*, *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, *Let the Right One In*, *Switzerland*, *Clinton the Musical*, *Next to Normal*, *The White Divers of Broome* (Set), *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*.

Bruce has a long collaboration with Mel Cantwell, having previously worked together at Perth Theatre Company, The Kabuki Drop, and most recently at the Perth Festival, designing *Mary Stuart*.



MATT MARSHALL LIGHTING DESIGNER

Born and raised in Perth Western Australia, Matthew Marshall is a graduate of the West Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) Production & Design course in 2000.

Recent designs include *Dido & Aeneas* (Opera Queensland) *The Barber of Seville* (Seattle Opera & Des Moines Metro Opera), *Gatsby at the Green Light* (Sydney Opera House/Caper & Crow), *Il Tabarro* (Victorian Opera), *Der Ring des Nibelungen – The Ring Cycle* (Opera Australia), *Le Comte Ory*, *Così Fan Tutte*, *The Unruly Tourists*, *Macbeth* (New Zealand Opera), *Chorus!* (Opera Australia), *Vigil: Awaken* (Sydney Festival), *Velvet Rewired* (Organised Pandemonium), *Oil* (Black Swan State Theatre Company), *Ballet at the Quarry*, *Goldberg Variations* (West Australian Ballet), *Eirebourne* (Mellen Events/Mpire), *The Crowd & I* (Australian Chamber Orchestra), *A Winters Journey* (Musica Viva), *Dark Mofo Night Mass* (DarkLab), *Mary Stuart* (Perth Festival/Performing Lines), *The Marriage of Figaro* (New Zealand Opera), *James Galea's Best Trick Ever* (Sydney Opera House), *City of Lights* (Perth Festival), Tim Minchin's *The Absence of You* music video, *Cinderella* (Seattle Opera), *Turn of the Screw* (New Zealand Opera), a new full length ballet *Tchaikovsky* (Tulsa Ballet), *La Bohème* the outdoor Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour (Opera Australia), *American Idiot* Australian National Tour (Shake & Stir/QPAC), *Athalia* (Pinchgut Opera), *Askungen* (Royal Swedish Opera), *Carmen* (Oper Leipzig), *Club Swizzle* (Roundhouse London), *La Cenerentola* (Oper Leipzig, San Diego Opera).



RACHAEL DEASE COMPOSER & SOUND DESIGNER

Rachael Dease is an award-winning composer and sound designer encompassing art music, dance and theatre scoring, installation and songwriting. Her compositions often explore memory, ritual and human connection. Awards include the Martin Sims Award and Melbourne Fringe Music Award for her critically acclaimed song cycle *City of Shadows*, PAWA for Best Music for *Let The Right One In* and *The Bleeding Tree*, and the 2021 WAM Award for Best Experimental Artist. Work for theatre and dance includes the Helpmann Award-nominated *It's Dark Outside* (The Last Great Hunt) and *Sunset* (Strut Dance/Maxine Doyle). Residencies include PICA, The Arctic Circle and Malthouse Theatre. In 2020, Dease released *Hymns for End Times* which was performed with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra for Perth Festival 2021. In 2022, Rachael collaborated with Maxine Doyle and Es Devlin on *Here Not Here* for Gothenburg Opera Dance Company and continued this collaboration in 2023 with *Salamander* for Brisbane Festival.



IZZY TAYLOR STAGE MANAGER

A graduate of WAAPA's BA of Performing Arts in Stage Management, Izzy engages across many theatrical disciplines from plays, musicals, ballet, events, and devised works. In the past three years they have worked with Black Swan on *Barracking for the Umpire* (WA Regional Tour), *The Pool*, *Things I Know To Be True* and *Toast* as Stage Manager and *City of Gold*, *The Tempest*, and *Playthings* as Assistant Stage Manager.

Other projects include Stage Manager for *The Hypotheticals* (The Last Great Hunt), Production Stage Manager for *At the End of the Land* (Too Close to the Sun), Company Stage Manager for *The Gruffalo* Melbourne Tour (CDP Theatre Producers), three-time Stage Manager & Technical Mentor on *Project 10* (West Australian Ballet), and Stage Manager for the premieres of both *Unheimlich* (Performing Lines WA & PICA) and *Minneapolis* (Performing Lines WA). Outside of stage managing, Izzy also works as a stage technician in props, lighting, mechanist and wardrobe teams.



KIRA FEENEY ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

Kira Feeney (she/they) is a proud Palawa who grew up on Wathawurrung land in Victoria and moved to Boorloo in 2021 to study the Aboriginal Performance course at WAAPA. There, they found a passion for Stage Management and went on to complete their Advanced Diploma in Stage Management. Since then, she has worked as an ASM for Black Swan on *The Pool* (2024), *Ilbijerri* on *Big Name No Blankets* (2024), *Yirra Yaakin* on *Brothers Wreck* (2024), and Stage Managed *Bad Feminist* (2023) at The Blue Room Theatre.





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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.

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BY KATE MULVANY

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