

A NOTE FROM THE Artistic Director

This time of year is about reflecting on what's past and looking ahead at what's to come. 2014 was a big year for us, a year of growth, transition and success. And it was made possible by all of you and your passion for this company.

We surpassed our single ticket sales from last year and, our subscriptions have increased by a whopping 26%! I'd like to thank our loyal subscribers for their support and their active participation in the Black Swan family.

2014 was the year where Shakespeare's Forest of Arden sat alongside the dusty streets of Perth, hilarious ensembles alongside thrilling two handers and new, Australian works alongside legendary classics.

We broke our own box office records with *A Streetcar Named Desire*, a sold out and extended season with over 13,000 people clambering for tickets! *As You Like It* delighted us all – a beautifully realised production providing a wonderfully accessible approach to a favourite Shakespeare. Emily McLean spun her magic as *Dust* by Suzie Miller, commissioned by Rio Tinto, literally took the stage by storm. *The Seagull* wove its magic and mysterious beauty. *Laughter on the 23rd Floor* transported us to New York City and made us laugh uproariously.

And *Gasp!* shocked us with hilarious commentary on current times.

We broke new territory in the regions with our WA Stories project, began trials into the role of digital media in theatre and continued to build on our reputation as a leader in the sector. Plus, two regional tours and one live broadcast to regional WA.

We are a theatre company that does its best to be accessible to all. On that front, we presented six captioned and two Auslan interpreted performances for the hearing impaired, six tactile tours and audio described performances for the vision impaired, plus – a personal favourite of mine, as a mum – four babes in arms in the 'Observation Room', watching *The Seagull*. We love getting them hooked on theatre at a young age!

By now hopefully you have seen our 2015 season line-up. I couldn't be happier with our plans for next year. It's our most diverse season of plays yet; dark comedies feature alongside rock musicals, cult classics alongside world premieres.

And we've gathered talented artists across the board, from Noël Coward to Hannie Rayson, from Tasma Walton to Rachael Beck, from emerging talent to established artists.

And we're expanding our horizons even more with a family show, a first for Black Swan. There will be children on stage, backstage, in the audience – everywhere! I can't wait to dive into that chaos and the truly wonderful experience that will come from it.

We are happy to continue our relationship with the FRINGE WORLD Festival in 2015, and join the AWESOME Festival. It's relationships like these that help us spread our wings and reach people who might not know Black Swan.

I can't express how much the support of our subscribers, donors, sponsors and Board makes a difference to us as a company.

Black Swan wouldn't be where we are without you.

Thank you for continuing this journey with us. I wish you and yours a wonderful festive season and a happy New Year.

Kate Cherry
Artistic Director



inside



Our 2015 Season



Dinner party from hell



How do they do it?



Gasping with Laughter

Casting Update

Even though we've just revealed our 2015 season, we already have some casting updates:

Greg McNeill joins the cast of *Dinner*. Stuart Halusz will also perform in *Dinner*, alongside wife Rebecca Davis. This is not the first time they've performed in the same show; in fact, in 2013's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Stuart played Ernest and wooed Gwendolyn, Rebecca's character.

Luke Hewitt joins the all-star cast of *Glengarry Glen Ross*, Damian Walshe-Howling, Geoff Kelso, Will O'Mahony, Kenneth Ransom and Peter Rowsthorn.



Greg
McNeill



Stuart
Halusz



Rebecca
Davis



Luke
Hewitt



Damian
Walshe-Howling



Geoff
Kelso



Will
O'Mahony



Kenneth
Ransom



Peter
Rowsthorn

Black Swan Snippets

OFFICE CLOSED

Please note Black Swan's office will be closed from 5pm Wednesday 24 December 2014 until 9am on Friday 2 January 2015. Subscriptions and gift vouchers can still be purchased online. See you in the New Year.

THE PERFECT GIFT!

Stuck for a last minute gift? You can purchase a Black Swan gift voucher all year around on our website. Fill out the form online anytime and have the gift voucher emailed to you straight away - it's instant and easy. You can choose a monetary value or a subscription package. Give the gift of theatre!

LIVE BROADCAST

Subject to funding, we are continuing our live broadcast program in 2015! Noël Coward's *Blithe Spirit* will be broadcast on Saturday 1 August from the State Theatre Centre to regional and metro venues across WA. More information coming soon.

OUR THANKS

It's time to say thank you to all of the wonderful people who have helped us throughout the year, including Cathy Penglis; Brian Heller and the Arts Angels; and our Black Swan interns, Sara Agostinelli, Chantel Dyball, Sarah Nelson and Jordan Phoebe. Thank you all for your support!



Venus in Fur 15 January – 08 February

Post-show Q&A: Wednesday 28 January, following 8.00pm performance (free)

Dinner 14 – 29 March

Subscriber Briefing: Monday 9 March, 6.15pm (free)

Rio Tinto Pre-show talk: Thursday 19 March, 6.45pm (free)

Post-show Q&A: Thursday 26 March, following 7.30pm performance (free)



Rio Tinto Principal Partner for 3 more years!

We are very happy to announce that the partnership between Black Swan and our Principal Partner Rio Tinto will continue! Rio Tinto has signed on for another three years. We are thankful for their generosity and understanding of the importance of the arts.

Black Swan and Rio Tinto have partnered together for 17 years and over the course of this partnership, Rio Tinto has provided support to us at critical points in our development. More recently, the partnership has focused on the growth of Black Swan and developing a more sustainable business model. Renewing our partnership for another three years will make a direct contribution to the viability and longevity of Black Swan's future.

Commenting on the success of its partnership program, Black Swan Chair Mark Barnaba stated, "The partnership has been absolutely central to Black Swan's growth and achievements. It is rare in this day and age for such a long-term partnership between arts and business to exist and, with their renewed support, by the 20 year mark, Rio Tinto will have invested over \$3.2 million into Black Swan."

The partnership with Black Swan is Rio Tinto's largest performing arts sponsorship in Western Australia.

Through our partnership we have created the Rio Tinto Black Swan Commissions, a commissioning program of new Australian work from emerging and experienced playwrights; and we expanded our regional engagement program.

Together we are growing from strength to strength, and we cannot wait to see what the next three years bring.



Proudly supporting
Black Swan and
new works.

2015 IS A Season Full of Surprises!



We recently revealed our 2015 Season, a season of love and laughter, of pleasure and pain and, of course, unparalleled theatre. Full of magic, murder, greed, laughter, music and mayhem, our 2015 season consists of three comedies, two dramas, a family show and a rock musical.

We kick off the season with David Ives' ***Venus in Fur***, a sexy, gripping gem of a play that veers between laughter, sex and fantasy at a thrilling pace. Part of the Fringe World Festival, you've never seen the battle of the sexes quite like this! **15 January – 8 February**

Kate Cherry directs the deliciously dark tale of guests at the dinner party from hell in ***Dinner*** by Moira Buffini. Tasma Walton returns to her home state to star in this stylish black satirical comedy where nothing is off the table. **14–29 March**

Damian Walshe-Howling leads a stellar cast in David Mamet's ***Glengarry Glen Ross***, a multi-award winning story about greed, desperation and ruthless ambition. Directed by Kate Cherry, this American classic is modern and gritty drama at its best. **23 May – 14 June**

Roz Hammond brings delightful frothiness to Noël Coward's hilarious and fantastical comedy about astral bigamy, ***Blithe Spirit***. Widely considered Coward's greatest work, it's a playful look at what happens when love comes back to haunt us. **18 July – 9 August**

The world premiere of the environmentally aware drama, ***Extinction*** asks: how do we choose what's worth saving? Written by Helpmann Award-winning Australian playwright, Hannie Rayson (*Hotel Sorrento*, *Life After George*), it's a unique and timely drama. **19 September – 4 October**

A world premiere and a first for Black Swan, ***The Red Balloon*** by Albert Lamorisse is a tale of magic and friendship aimed at children 6–12 years old, families and those young at heart. A Rio Tinto Black Swan Commission that will be featured as part of the 2015 AWESOME Festival. **1–17 October**

We finish with celebrated music theatre star Rachael Beck in the electrifying rock musical of familial proportions, ***Next To Normal***. Recently voted the top musical of the 21st century, it enthralled Broadway audiences with music, fun and pathos. **7–22 November**

It's going to be a great year, so get involved! Subscriptions to Black Swan's 2015 season are now open. General tickets are also on sale for all shows. Contact us on (08) 6212 9300 to request a brochure or to subscribe.

Venus in Fur: A PROVOCATIVE AND GRIPPING COMEDY



Venus in Fur is a play about a play being adapted from the 1870's novel of the same name. Confused? It gets weirder. The novel, along with its author, Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, is the book that inspired the term masochism. Fortunately, the only pain this production will cause is split sides from too much laughter!

The play is a two-hander following writer-director Thomas, a playwright desperately trying to create the perfect adaptation (perhaps for reasons beyond the artistic, but that's neither here nor there) and Vanda, a fiery, salacious actress that just so happens to have the same name as the female lead. Thomas is enthralled by the brash sexuality Vanda brings to the role, while Vanda is thrilled by the thought of getting paid as an actor.

With its unusual structure, sassy dialogue and gripping combination of seduction and humour, it's safe to say that *Venus in Fur* is far from the ordinary play.

However, since its debut on Broadway in 2011, it has been lauded by audiences and critics alike, being nominated for numerous awards, including the prestigious Tony award. It even caught the eye of celebrated director Roman Polanski, who turned it into a film that dominated the festival circuit in 2013.

Filled with playful banter and more laughs than you can shake a whip at, *Venus in Fur* is sure to excite and enthrall, even as it shocks and surprises. There's no excuse for being tied up while this production is on! Be sure to catch it when it premieres as part of the Fringe World Festival.

Venus in Fur plays at the Studio Underground from 15 Jan – 8 Feb. Tickets on sale now through Ticketek.

BEST IN SHOW

Congratulations to Black Swan's Beer Partner, Mash Brewing on another banner year! At the 2014 Sydney Royal Beer & Cider Show, the Champion Draught Beer went to Mash's American Amber Ale, Russell. And in May, Mash's Copy Cat American IPA was named Champion Australian Beer at the Australian International Beer Awards. Congrats to the Mash team, and we can't wait to enjoy more Mash brews at the next show!

Congratulations to Black Swan's Design Partner, Dessein on their recent wins! At the International Creativity Awards in the US they received the Platinum Award for Black Swan's 2014 brochure and the Silver Award for the 2014 production posters. Dessein also received a two-page spread in the October 2014 edition of Campaign Brief, on their work with us and others. Very well deserved, they do beautiful work!



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Start talking



The Dinner Party from Hell

Moira Buffini's Olivier-nominated work, *Dinner* is a masterpiece of dark comedy. The barbs fly across the table like bullets, thick and fast, leaving egos splattered all over the stage and leaving the audience in stitches. The witty insults and range of taboo subjects create a palatable tension, making this dinner from hell a night that no one will be able to forget—no matter how hard they try!

Written in 2002, *Dinner* is a deliciously dark comedy sure to satiate the appetites of even the pickiest patrons. When Paige Janssen decides to throw a dinner party in honour of her husband's new self-help book, she goes all out. But her guests aren't expecting the succession of unusual dishes (to say the least) and the arrival of a final guest.

Actor Tasma Walton plays Paige, the dinner party host, and is joined on stage by Black Swan regulars including Rebecca Davis, Stuart Halusz, Greg McNeill, Steve Turner and Alison van Reeken. Tasma's career has spanned television and film, including *Home and Away*, *Blue Heelers* and *City Homicide*, and many people may know of her husband, Rove McManus.

We can't wait to see the cast sink their teeth into this razor-sharp comedy!

Dinner plays in the Heath Ledger Theatre from 14 – 29 March. Tickets on sale through Ticketek.



From the Archives

A quick look at past Black Swan productions

Cloudstreet, 1998

Black Swan, together with Belvoir Street Theatre, presented the world premiere of *Cloudstreet*, written by Tim Winton and adapted by Nick Enright and Justin Monjo. Directed by Neil Armfield, it was done in the Endeavour Boatshed in Fremantle as part of the Festival of Perth. It later toured to Sydney, London and Dublin. *Cloudstreet* was the second Winton work done by Black Swan, after *That Eye The Sky* in 1995.



Image: Georgina Gayler and Brendan Hanson in *Midsummer* [a play with songs], Regional tour of Western Australian in 2014.

SO FAR IN 2014
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TO TAKE THEATRE
TO OVER 4,231
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COMMUNITIES.
OUR PASSION
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WE DRIVE
THRIFTY CARS.

Thrifty
Car & Truck Rental

SAYING GOODBYE TO SHAKESPEARE SHENANIGANS

It's time to bid adieu to *Shakespeare Shenanigans*, our school production created in partnership with Big Sky Entertainment. Stuart Halusz, Black Swan Associate Director and co-creator and performer of *Shakespeare Shenanigans*, wraps up this wonderful project:

So it's finally time to say goodbye to *Shakespeare Shenanigans* after 18 months of sword-swinging, wrestling, fisticuffs, nose-grabs, hair pulls, scratches, bites and more kicks and punches than you could poke a stick at! Now that I mention poking sticks there was a fair bit of that as well, plus high-heeled thongs, fluoro miniskirts and a leopard-print G-string which raised a few eyebrows when it appeared on the props list for the show...

It certainly was a busy show and a great deal of fun, from our first performance at the 4Arts Festival in May 2013 to our final performance at MLC in October 2014. Comprising of three metro school tours and two regional tours which took us from Albany to Port Hedland, Geraldton, Kalgoorlie, and many places in between, we played to a total audience of 7,215 and conducted stage combat and verse-speaking workshops to many more.

We always felt it would be a success, as for co-creator and performer Andy Fraser and I it was a wonderful opportunity to explore our two shared loves – Shakespeare and stage combat. We imagined it would be an exciting production for drama teachers and their students to engage with, helping to make Shakespeare more

accessible and offer different insights into ways of teaching. Above all we hoped it would spark an interest in Shakespeare and theatre for those in our audience for whom this was perhaps their first experience of both. And it certainly did. For the kids at Gilmore College in Kwinana who ran up to their drama teacher after the show desperate to be involved; for the Port Hedland student who chatted to us at length about a professional career path after seeing us on screen in regional broadcasts and then on stage; for the screaming kids at the Australian Islamic College one day and Carmel College the next.

It really cemented in my mind the importance of Black Swan's regional and metro engagement with young people and educators, something I've always believed in and was gratified to hear first-hand the comments from teachers and students alike.

Big thank you's to Black Swan's Education & Community Access Manager Alena and her assistant Goya, Big Sky Entertainment's Rebecca Davis and Michelle



Fornasier, Production & Stage Manager James Nerva, Stage Manager Erryn Hanson, Set Designer Fiona Bruce, Sound Designer Ben Collins, and of course our Principal Partner Rio Tinto, Education & Regional Partner Chevron, Associate & Regional Partner Water Corporation, and Transport Partner Thrifty.

It takes a lot of people to make projects like this happen, the feedback from audiences both during and post-show makes it all worthwhile.

How Do THEY Do It? Theatre Tricks & Secrets



Have you ever wondered about what actors eat and drink on stage? Food and drink props, usually called "consumables", play a big part in setting the scene and helping the actors be authentic.

Food is quite straightforward: if the script calls for a certain food then the assistant stage manager sources that food, just like any other prop. Of course, they have to factor in enough for rehearsals and for every single performance. For example, over the *Laughter on the 23rd Floor* rehearsals and season, the actors consumed almost 200 bagels, Danishes and other baked goods!

But what about drinks? Surely the actors are not actually drinking alcohol on stage!

No, they are not. And stage managers around the world have come up with some pretty good tricks to make it look believable. In *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Sigrid Thornton was downing peach iced tea cordial, not whiskey. The Streetcar men drank non-alcoholic beer that had been transferred into prop beer bottles, but pineapple juice mixed with lemonade also makes a good beer substitute. The couples in *Day One, A Hotel, Evening* drank wine, red wine made of blackcurrant juice and white wine of apple juice mixed with water. In *Laughter*, the champagne was ginger ale, topped up with a bit of soda water right before it goes onstage to give it bubbles. For martinis and cocktails, jelly is often used because it can be brightly coloured and cannot be spilt.

The most important trick? Whenever coffee is to be consumed on stage, make sure it's decaf!

White Swans, one of Black Swan's private giving circles, have just celebrated the end of another successful year.

On 26 October they shared a drink in the lovely home of White Swans Michela and Adrian Fini, and toasted to the year that was, as well as looking forward to the 2015 season. General Manager, Natalie Jenkins and Black Swan would like to thank the White Swans for their continued support of our company and our vision. The group is excited about the innovative way they are able to support the electrifying rock musical *Next to Normal* in 2015, helping bring Australian television and stage actress Rachael Beck and acclaimed Broadway composer Carmel Dean to WA for this production.



Kate Cherry, Sandy Honey
and Mark Barnaba



Michela Fini and Natalie Jenkins



Linda Savage and Sallie-Ann Manford

Ending the year on a high note!

Two comedies rounded off our 2014 season, ushering in the silly season with laughter and jokes. Neil Simon and Ben Elton are certainly giants of theatre and comedy for a reason. These two productions reminded us that quality theatre doesn't have to be serious, and that serious messages can be told even while laughing.

LAUGHTER ON THE 23RD FLOOR: 1950'S NEW YORK HIJINKS

"It makes you cry with laughter. The set is stunning. The cast is brilliant. See it."
THE AUSTRALIAN

"Will surprise and delight audiences. It's good for the soul to get to laugh out loud in the theatre, whatever floor it's on. You should seriously consider taking the lift to the 23rd."
THE WEST AUSTRALIAN

"Loved the stylish 50's NYC office backdrop and the 50's fashion. Peter Rowsthorn, what a hoot! A clever and very funny play."
MICHELLE, PATRON

"A truly uproarious play. The comedy is richly written ... I know several patrons who have already seen this play more than once. A special theatre experience."
INDEPENDENT THEATRE ASSOCIATION

GASP!: MODERN DAY AUSTRALIAN SATIRE

"The ensemble is entertaining and at times hilarious. [Ben Elton's] not afraid to be outrageous... He's quite simply a master satirist."
THE AUSTRALIAN

"Thought provoking, hilarious, and so incredibly clever." NAOMI, PATRON

"Two hours of fast, frantic and funny entertainment that makes you laugh uncontrollably whilst sneaking a sucker punch of social commentary to your solar plexus – you'll finish the night short of breath either way." PERTH WALKABOUT

"Very funny and nice to have some current local references in a big production like this. Yet another winner for Black Swan!" PETER, PATRON



Laughter on the 23rd Floor Opening Night in the Heath Ledger TheatreThe Hon. Melissa Parke MP
and Warwick Hemsley

Terry and Amanda Folkers with Vicky Sare

Linda Savage, Peter Rowsthorn and
The Hon. John Day MLA*Gasp!* Opening Night in the Heath Ledger Theatre

Wesley Enoch and Ben Elton

Stuart Halusz, Mark Barnaba,
Rebecca Davis and Olivier LegrandKim Andrews, Christy Vukman, Kiran Day,
Giulia Edwards and Geeta Thakorlal

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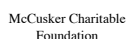
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