

A NOTE FROM THE Artistic Director

Where to even begin!

I am writing this from my hotel room in beautiful New Zealand as I direct the second remount of *La Traviata*, but Black Swan is never far from my mind.

Let me set the scene. I make a short weekend trip back to Perth in late May. We have Shakespeare on the main stage, both rehearsal rooms full with two very different world premiere productions by Australian playwrights, a Live Broadcast to regional audiences, planning for the second leg of the *Midsummer* [a play with songs] regional tour and a regional schools tour of *Shakespeare Shenanigans*. On top of all that, planning for 2015 has already started!

This must be the busiest couple of months in Black Swan's 23 year history and we couldn't be more thrilled.

I am still on a high from Sigrid Thornton's triumphant turn in *A Streetcar Named Desire* and WA's own Luke Hewitt and Jo Morris gaining national recognition for their work. This is a production we can all be proud of and I thank everyone for their excitement, bravery, generosity and curiosity that saw the show run for an unprecedented four week season.

Roger Hodgman's *As You Like It* was a contemporary breath of fresh air for Shakespeare.

Reimagining a classic play is always a risky gamble, but I'm sure you'll agree Roger's masterful direction stayed true to the spirit of the play while highlighting the humour and modern-day relevance. And the set! How lucky are we to have Christina Smith as part of the Black Swan family. Time and time again Christina raises the bar and produces magic.

We follow two classics with two world premiere productions from Aidan Fennessy and Suzie Miller made possible through our Rio Tinto Black Swan Commissions program. Both writers will be familiar to Western Australian audiences, Aidan wrote and directed *National Interest* for us in 2011 and Suzie's daring collaborations with Barking Gecko resulted in front-page newspaper coverage.

Aidan and Black Swan Associate Director Stuart Halusz have done a stellar job in bringing us the thrilling two-hander *The House on The Lake*. When I first read Aidan's script for *The House on The Lake* I couldn't put it down. Neither could anybody I handed it to. What is truth? Why do we lie?

What really happened to David? *The House on The Lake* was our second Black Swan Lab production and another showcase of wonderful emerging talent from the creative team.

On the main stage, Suzie Miller's *Dust* showcasing Perth on stage like never before. A giant cloud of red dust blankets Perth, effectively locking the city down. With their world turned upside down, our characters are forced to stop and take stock of their lives. How they love, what they are scared of, what is truly important to them. A visceral production, tender, uplifting and unforgettable.

Soon we will start rehearsals for *The Seagull* with Greta Scacchi and her daughter Leila. We are working with another favourite Australian playwright, Hilary Bell, who will adapt Chekhov's sweeping family masterpiece. When Greta steps onto the Heath Ledger stage it will be a moment to remember.

Of course you can join us for the complimentary subscriber briefing during production week and be the first to get a glimpse of Fiona Bruce's stunning set design and hear how we plan to bring Arkadina, Konstantin and Nina to life on the Heath Ledger Stage. See you then!

Kate Cherry
Artistic Director



inside



Suzie's Dusty Day



An evening with Ben Elton



Lights, Camera, Action!



Top notch thriller

Dust 28 June – 13 July

Rio Tinto Pre-show talk: Wednesday 03 July, 6.45pm (free)

Post Show Q&A: Thursday 10 July, following 7.30pm performance (free)

Closing Night Party: Sunday 13 July, following 5.00pm performance (\$40 through Ticketek)

The Seagull 09 August – 31 August

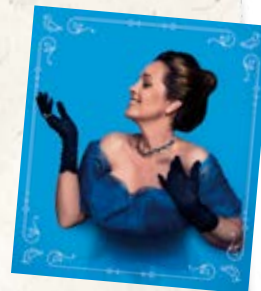
Subscriber Briefing: Monday 04 August, 6.15pm (free)

Rio Tinto Pre-show talk: Thursday 28 August, 6.45pm (free)

Post Show Q&A: Wednesday 20 August, following 11.30am performance and Thursday 21 August, following 7.30pm performance (free)

High Tea: Saturday 16 August, 1.00pm (\$48 through Ticketek)

Closing Night Party: Sunday 31 August, following 5.00pm performance (\$40 through Ticketek)



Last edition we announced our nominations for The Performing Arts WA Awards. We're thrilled to announce that at the awards night we won three awards, including the big one! **Boy Gets Girl** was awarded Best Production and Best Designer to Fiona Bruce for her set and costumes – that hanging bedroom is certainly a highlight to remember! Vivienne Garrett also won Best Supporting Actor, Female for her role in **Other Desert Cities**. Congratulations to everyone involved!

Community Award

FOR OUR BOARD MEMBER

Congratulations to Black Swan Board Member Nicola Forrest, who recently received the Community Award at the Western Australian of the Year Awards. Alcoa of Australia sponsored the Community Award so another Black Swan Board Member, Alan Cransberg was on hand to help present the award and celebrate Nicola's achievement.

Images courtesy of Celebrate WA.



*Above: Nicola Forrest
Right: Alan Cransberg with Nicola Forrest*



Black Swan Snippets

THANKS INTERNS!

We may not always give them the fun tasks, but we really do love our interns! Ryan Lewis, Sara Agostinelli, Claire Mouchemore, Sarah Nelson and Phoebe Sullivan, thank you all for your assistance in our marketing, sponsorship and education departments. We couldn't do what we do without you.

WELCOME NEW STAFF

In the coming weeks we will welcome Monique Beaudoire, Partnerships Manager and Maria Sioulas, Marketing & Audience Development Manager to the team. Maria and Monique both have arts backgrounds and bring a lot of talent and experience to Black Swan. We can't wait for them to start!

ACCESSIBLE THEATRE

Black Swan aims to make all our activities accessible to patrons and the theatre experience inclusive of your needs. With captioned performances, tactile tours, audio headsets and much more, please let us know of any needs and we will happily help make your visit to the theatre as easy as possible.

PATRON SURVEYS

A huge thank you to everyone who fills out our online surveys following each production. The results from these surveys help us to identify our strengths and weaknesses, improve your experience and inform our future programming. Plus you can win free tickets by filling one out!

INSIDE THE MIND OF THE PLAYWRIGHT: Q&A WITH SUZIE MILLER

It's not long now until Suzie Miller's *Dust* hits the Heath Ledger stage and we really can't wait! Suzie recently caught up with our friends at Out in Perth for an interview and they've be kind enough to share it with us. Read some our favourite excerpts below or jump online to the Black Swan Blog to read the full interview.



What inspired you to write this play? What were you hoping to achieve with the script?

The play arrived in a form that was instantly exciting to me. Initially my memory of the Sydney dust storm was one still immediately accessible, I was then in London during the volcanic ash fears and the grounding of airlines fleets, and later reflected on various other life moments where we tend to reach out for human connections. In discovering characters who were urban, contemporary and struggling with common issues I felt an unrelenting desire to weave all of these elements together.

The play seems to have an apocalyptic atmosphere. What were you hoping to explore with this setting? Is it indicative of environmental destruction or is it more to do with the turmoil of the characters in the play?

The atmosphere is to create a day of heightened reality, a time that might be at the end of everything, or a day that stands alone. The theme is really about how we as humans react in circumstances when there is no real form of comfort other than the truth in our own selves and in looking for the same in others. When things are beyond our control, when uncertainty abounds we tend to be able to communicate about that which really matters, not only to those we love but to complete and utter strangers. I wanted to explore the magic of those moments, and what might emerge from them.

You've said that you aimed to create characters who are uniquely Western Australian, how did you go about this?

I spend a lot of time in Perth, and have spent a more time than I would like in airport lounges so the FIFO, character, Ian came from those experiences. Ian was developed further by talking to a number of FIFO's in the lounge on a particularly occasion when my flight east was delayed by nearly 12 hours – these men gave me a real insight into how they manage relationships and families with this unique fly in, fly out work situation. The character of mine manager Eddie, came to me after extensive interviews with a high level mining manager, and of course in my previous theatre work *Driving into Walls* interviewed over 400 young Western Australians which thoroughly informed my 16 year old character Ailsa. I have also caught loads of Perth cabs, and been involved in discussion with many cabbies who come from other lands and cultures, and have also been lucky to have established strong personal relationships with members of the West Australian indigenous population. All of these experiences you will see inform various characters.

How did the Western Australian landscape inspire your approach to writing the play?

The WA landscape has had a huge impact on me – because it's vastness and the fact of the WA state being the largest of all in this country, has stopped me in my tracks.

No other city have I experienced that has such a sense of land. I have repeatedly noticed that Western Australians have a really interesting connection to the space and beauty of WA landscapes. It is interesting to come into a community and realise something so profoundly different about Australians based on the geography of the state itself. It feels like this awareness has created an understanding of distance and a unique resilience not only those who live in isolated WA towns but also in its city dwellers.

Do you have a particular topic or message that you're hoping people will take away from the play?

I would like audiences to take away what resonates with them personally and with their own lives. The actors are doing such a superb job in lifting the characters off the page, and so many of the dilemmas faced by the characters are familiar to us all. I think the play ends on a really hopeful wave, and despite sadness and fragility shows strengths and opportunities for resolution and, indeed, how to find the strength and resilience to go forth.

Sometimes there are days where we are each stopped in our tracks, and as people we connect in ways we wish we could do so in more ordinary circumstances. Maybe audience members will find that momentum, that capacity to seek truth and connection without having to wait for a day of uncertainty. I do feel that we live more fully when we experience such connection and curiosity about each other.

Dust plays until 13 July.



UP CLOSE & PERSONAL WITH Ben Elton

Our private giving circle, the Local Larrikins, recently hosted a hilarious and informative Arts Panel with Ben Elton! Ben provided guests with insights into *Gasp!*, coming to the Heath Ledger Theatre in October, as well as his extraordinary career, including fourteen bestselling books such as *Popcorn* and *Inconceivable* as well as some of TV's most popular comedy series (*Blackadder*, *The Young Ones*), West End plays and the hit musical *We Will Rock You*.

Originally titled *Gasping* and produced in 1990 at the Theatre Royal Haymarket in London's West End starring Hugh Laurie, Ben Elton has revisited his original play and re-imagined it for a new century and a new country. This major rewrite relocates the story to an Australia grown giddy on the resources boom. Ben Elton took guests through the creative process of his work and provided wonderful insights into his career which included giving advice to budding comedians and artists alike!

The Local Larrikins are a giving circle supporting Western Australian work and engaging young people with the magic of theatre. The group's mission is to engage young Western Australians with the fantastic world of theatre, bring our productions to new levels of influence and interest and to support a Western Australian focused production each year.

If you would like to discuss Local Larrikins further, please contact Andree McIntyre, Black Swan Philanthropy Manager on 0417 187 025 or email andree@bsstc.com.au.



Philip and Lucy Moyle, Giles Everist



Ben Elton and Sandy Honey



Alison, Carolyn and Simon Stewart



Allison and Geoff Barr

Staff Q&A: Jess Knight

Many of you may have already met our new Ticketing Administration Officer, Jess Knight. For those of you yet to meet her, we thought who better to kick off our new series of Black Swan Q&As!



Welcome to Black Swan! Can you tell us a bit about your background before you came to Black Swan?

I am an academic junkie with three degrees and a massive HECS debt! I hold a Bachelor of Fine Arts, a Masters in Screen Studies and graduated this year with a Bachelor of Arts Management. (Fun fact- Black Swan's General Manager, Natalie Jenkins was one of my favourite lecturers!)

Between studies I have travelled, seeing most of America classic road-trip style, parts of Europe, New Zealand, Samoa and Israel. I lived for a good year between Edinburgh and Cambridge. Most of my friends are artists and musicians so I spend a lot of time in creative pursuits and volunteering with festivals and on arts projects. My most recent employment was interning with the Brisbane Powerhouse Programming team as part of my final year secondment, and ticketing with the 2014 Perth International Arts Festival.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

Read, drink wine, eat delicious food, watch movies, see bands, head down south, spend time with friends and immerse myself in the Perth arts scene. Oh and did I say go to the theatre?

What's your favourite thing about your job?

I get to do three of my favourite things, that I would be doing otherwise, but paid!

Favourite Black Swan production?

So far I've only seen *As You Like It* and *The House on The Lake*. The cast was brilliant in *As You Like It*, bringing alive Shakespeare on his 450th birthday and I loved the set and lighting design in *The House on The Lake*, not to mention the brilliant dialogue. Having been to the script read for *Dust* I am quite excited about seeing something local, written and directed by women and with powerful contemporary, yet universal themes about the environment, disasters, the apocalypse and humanity. I think *Dust* is set to be my favourite.

Best piece of advice you've been given and by who?

"Don't do too much without thinking and don't think too much without doing" - Bruce, my first year Fine Arts Sculpture Lecturer from Curtin University.

Regional Roundup

Our Education and Community Access team have certainly been busy the last couple of months, hitting all corners of Western Australia with workshops, tours, community programs and a live broadcast. Have a read of what we've been up to across the state.

WA STORIES

Black Swan has worked with the people of Carnarvon for two years and the WA Stories project came to a close in early April with an exquisite staged presentation of a piece titled *How High The River?* This was the culmination of research, writing and workshops led by director Karen Hethey and writer Francis Italiano. Dancers, actors, visual artists, photographers, cultural consultants, volunteers, musicians, photographers, regional ambassadors, community members and Black Swan artists – this was a truly collaborative project. Stories of floods were gathered and workshopped into a presentation that reflected the Carnarvon community and the experiences its people have living where the beautiful Gascoyne River meets the ocean.



Below photo by Anton Blume



LIVE BROADCAST OF SHAKESPEARE'S *AS YOU LIKE IT*

For the fourth time since we became the first Australian theatre company to broadcast to regional audiences, Black Swan again beamed a live performance to audiences around WA. More than 1,100 attendees joined us from 11 regional and 2 metro venues, 26 Community Resource Centres and countless homes. With a cast of 14 and a complex staging of this classic, Black Swan again leads the way in taking our highly accessible main stage works to the regions.

MIDSUMMER *[A PLAY WITH SONGS]* regional tour

The second half of this hilarious regional tour kicked off in early June for a two week tour encompassing Broome, Karratha, Tom Price and Carnarvon. After a hugely successful tour of the South-West earlier this year, we couldn't wait to get the team out on the road again.



SHAKESPEARE SHENANIGANS regional tour

Originally created with Big Sky Entertainment for 2013's 4ARTS Performing Arts Education Festival, *Shakespeare Shenanigans* has been met with resounding success. Following a headline spot at the Busselton Fringe Festival of the Arts and a four week schools tour in metropolitan Perth, it is heading off on a regional tour. The fabulous fighters and Shakespearean stalwarts, Andy Fraser and Stuart Halusz will visit Carnarvon, Exmouth, Karratha, Port Hedland and Kalgoorlie.

Warm Up with a *Winter Retreat* at Hyatt Regency Perth

There's no need to brave the cold when you can stay in with our Winter Retreat Package.*

From \$225 per night, you'll enjoy an overnight stay in a Hyatt King Room, with a complimentary in-house movie and car parking for one vehicle. And why rush off when you can relax for longer with a late check-out and a complimentary breakfast or brunch buffet for two in our award-winning restaurant, Cafe.

To book, call 13 1234 or visit perth.regency.hyatt.com

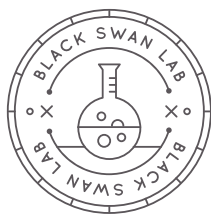


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WELCOME TO THE Black Swan Lab!

In its inaugural year, the Black Swan Lab has produced two world premiere productions, *Flood* by Chris Isaacs, and *The House on The Lake* by Aidan Fennessy. The Black Swan Lab is an exciting project which enables our artists to explore new works, new collaborations and new paths. Our Emerging and Resident Artists are given the opportunity to utilise the wonderful space in the Studio Underground to produce immersive theatre experiences and work with seasoned artists to nurture and develop their skills.

The Black Swan Lab is proudly supported by the Patrons Club. With their generous commitment, the Patrons Club will support the activation of the Studio Underground as a flexible and versatile space to program diverse theatre experiences. Emerging Artists have the opportunity to learn the workings of a state theatre company and be provided with mentoring and guidance while they provide fresh insights and approaches. We hope to learn as much from them as they learn from us.

The following people have confirmed their support of the Patrons Club for 2014. We thank them for their support.

- Janet Holmes à Court AC
- Stan and Jean Perron
- Adrian and Michela Fini
- Ungar Family Foundation

If you are interested in supporting the Black Swan Lab, please contact Andree McIntyre on 0417 187 025 or andree@bsstc.com.au

GREAT NIGHTS AT THEATRE: Romance, Mystery and Desire!

It's been raining theatre here at Black Swan. From the steamy New Orleans streets of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, to the Forest of Arden in *As You Like It* and a claustrophobic hospital room in the thrilling *The House on The Lake*, we truly have been around the world in 90 days! Thank you for your support of these productions and for making them so successful. Check out what other patrons and reviewers thought!



THE HOUSE ON THE LAKE: TWISTS AND TURNS

Playwright Aidan Fennessy's script fairly crackles with electricity as we approach the thunderous climax to events.
PERTH WALKABOUT

(Kenneth) Ransom is mesmerising. ARTSHUB

Flawless ... An unusual script that carries the 90-minute dialogue adeptly and smoothly to its unnerving conclusion.
INDEPENDENT THEATRE ASSOCIATION

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Associate partner for *Laughter on the 23rd Floor*.



130 Aberdeen St, Northbridge WA
PO Box 304, Northbridge 6865
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A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE: A MAGNIFICENT LARGE-SCALE DRAMATIC PRODUCTION

Cherry's insightful direction ensures the audience is kept on the edge of their seats. THE AUSTRALIAN

(Sigrid Thornton) is formidable as the ageing Southern Belle. Indeed it's hard to imagine anyone portraying the flawed beauty with more authenticity. PERTH NOW

One of the best live performances I've ever seen. A very strong cast. PATRON



AS YOU LIKE IT: THE PERFECT BLEND OF MELANCHOLY AND MIRTH

...a hearty, warm round of applause for some of Perth's finest. AUSTRALIAN STAGE

Loved it. The actors were superb! PATRON

The set was astounding. You always do interesting sets, but the juxtaposition of the 'court' in what looked like a foyer with the stunning forest was wonderful. PATRON



A Streetcar Named Desire Opening Night in the Heath Ledger TheatreMichelle Fornaiser, Andrew Lewis,
Nicola and Sophia ForrestMarc Stephan
and Laith AminChrissie Parrott
and Jo Morris*As You Like It* Opening Night in the Heath Ledger TheatrePhilippa Packer
and Sally SaviniPari Chandra
and Rachel Huber

If you have seen yourself on this page and would like the photo, email kerry@bsstc.com.au.
For more social pics visit the Behind the Scenes pages at www.bsstc.com.au or visit
Black Swan's Facebook page.

PLAY YOUR PART IN SUPPORTING OUR CREATIVE FUTURE!

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Black Swan State Theatre Company is
assisted by the Australian Government
through the Australia Council, its arts
funding and advisory body.



Government of Western Australia
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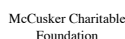
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