

A NOTE FROM THE Artistic Director

Once again the end of the year has crept up on us! With the holiday season comes our final *On Cue* edition for the year. From whip-cracking dramas to biting comedies; a family favourite and a musical rollercoaster, it's been a year full of what we do best and what we love to do - creating theatre that wows you, that moves you, that entertains you.

At the close of our 24th year, Black Swan is looking back not just on the last 12 months, but all the way back to our beginnings - where we've come from.

This company began its creative life with a production of *Twelfth Night* set in Western Australia that set the course for our first 25 years of life. That production celebrated WA's diversity of cultures, pioneering colourblind casting in Australia and reveling in the theatricality of the WA landscape. Rooted in Shakespeare we aspired to make work that promotes curiosity, balance and unity.

Recognising the unique and exciting opportunities of WA's geographical isolation from the rest of Australia, and our strong connections to the rest of the world, we nurtured Western Australian audiences and artists, and promoted our artists within the state, nationally and internationally whenever we could. We grew, slowly but surely, by focusing on the artists and stories that we were passionate about.

As we look forward to our 25th birthday next year, I want to focus here on one important aspect of our company and our future: education. Black Swan firmly believes in cultivating a rich future for WA theatre through education.

By that I mean not only the training and development of artists, which is hugely important to us especially in these times of uncertainty around smaller scale companies and organisations. The more we can support, strengthen and promote our wonderful WA artists, the stronger the arts scene will be in WA.

Theatre has the power to teach and enlighten. Our education and community access initiatives are extremely important in helping us develop new audiences. To this end, we have developed a comprehensive education and regional engagement program to develop confidence, leadership, imagination and problem solving skills, in addition to highlighting the joys of live theatre.

We are committed to nurturing creativity in many forms,

advocating it as a social and economic force that contributes dynamically to vital, resilient and collaborative communities, capable of meeting the challenges of the 21st century.

We recently held our first Education Season Launch event for educators to hear about what we are producing next year and all the added events and benefits that we have on offer for students at both high school and tertiary levels. In 2016, we have a trifecta of classic theatre ideal for students, including *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, *Angels in America* and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. We offer heavily subsidised 2-Play (\$60) and 3-Play (\$90) subscription packages for schools, as well as school group bookings.

So if you are an educator, have school-aged children or are part of a parents and citizens association, think about how Black Swan can have an impact on

your school or child and get in touch with our office.

We want to share our love of theatre and culture with all ages. By doing so, we can help ensure that theatre has a place in our world for another 25 years, and well beyond.

Thank you for your support, passion and enthusiasm. We'll see you next year.

Kate Cherry
Artistic Director



inside



2016 sparkles



New Talent



Unveiled



That's a wrap!

2015 BY NUMBERS

50,400

Total ATTENDANCE(WA-wide)



SUBSCRIBERS

2,524



110



ARTISTS



3,920

STUDENTS attended

performances at the
STATE THEATRE CENTREperformances
at other
venues

33

WORLD
PREMIERE
productions

3

WA
premiere
productions

2

over
20,000
kilometres TRAVELLED
across Western Australia

Step Up Your Support in Our 25th Year

We are excited to announce Black Swan has secured Plus1 Funding from Creative Partnerships Australia! Creative Partnerships Australia, an initiative of the Australian government, will match dollar for dollar all donations to Black Swan from now through to 13 May 2016, up to \$50,000.

In our 25th year, our vision is for Black Swan to be a theatre company of national significance, promoting collaborations of excellence and creating work within a vibrant hub that celebrates and excites our Western Australian communities.

The Plus1 Funding and our Step Up Your Support campaign will help us realise this vision. It will support our artist development programs and our 'International Collaboration Project', a 3 to 5 year artistic exchange between Black Swan and the National Theatre of China.

The first stage of this project is Dr Wang Xiaoying, Vice President of the National Theatre of China to come to Perth to direct *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* with WA and Chinese artists. Our vision for the second stage is for a Perth based Director to go to China to direct a production there; and finally a co-production between the two companies as the final stage. As Black Swan's first international collaboration, this is an incredible opportunity to be featured on the international stage

and showcase Western Australian artists while also allowing for an amazing cultural and artistic exchange opportunity for our artists.

We have until May 2016 to take advantage of this generous Plus1 funding – so please consider taking the opportunity now for your donation to have double the impact in our 25th year!

Whether you have been with us since the very beginning, or are new to the Black Swan family, we invite you to join us in our 25th year as we celebrate the past, and plan for the future. So Step Up Your Support and help us reach our \$50,000 goal. You can use the donation form on the last page of this newsletter, or head to our website: bsstc.com.au/support.

If you would like to discuss your donation, learn more about the Step Up Your Support campaign, or would like more information about Black Swan's Private Giving and Bequest programs, please contact Philanthropy Manager, Andrée McIntyre at andree@bsstc.com.au or 0417 187 025.

creative
partnerships
australia

Black Swan Snippets

TIS THE SEASON

The Black Swan office will be closed on Friday 25 December 2015 and will reopen Monday 4 January 2016. We wish you all a safe and happy holiday season!

GIVE THEATRE

Add some drama into the life of someone special with a Black Swan gift voucher or gift subscription! Simply choose a dollar amount or subscription package that you'd like to give; the recipient chooses the play(s) they want to see. Visit our website for more details.

STAY THE NIGHT

The night doesn't have to end after the show. You can book a stay at Hyatt Regency Perth and receive 10% off when you quote 'Black Swan'. To book your stay, simply call 13 12 34. Terms and conditions apply. Subject to availability.

GO GREEN

If you'd prefer to receive this newsletter by email, please let us know by contacting us on (08) 6212 9300 or information@bsstc.com.au.

Step into our world

WITH OUR 2016 SEASON

We are proud to announce our 25th anniversary season, where we reveal the hidden places and secret spaces of where we make our work, celebrate our past and look to the future.

The year begins with our young guns in the Black Swan Lab with *LOADED: A Double Bill of New Plays* featuring Gita Bezard's *Girl Shut Your Mouth* and Will O'Mahony's *Tonsils + Tweezers*. Presented as part of the Fringe World Festival 2016, this world premiere of new Australian works tells tales of friendship, regret, survival, jealousy and revenge. This is contemporary Australian theatre at its best.

Then to our first main stage production, an iconic Australian mystery in *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, a new play by Tom Wright adapted from Joan Lindsay's novel. Matthew Lutton directs this co-production with Malthouse Theatre. This much-loved, home-grown classic is a tense, modern retelling of the classic Australian nightmare with mystery, allure and a quiet sense of danger.

Followed by the WA Premiere of the award-winning play, *Angels in America Part 1 Millennium Approaches* by Tony Kushner. Kate Cherry directs this modern American masterpiece that is beloved by fans and critics alike. It's easy to see why this is one of the most important plays of the 20th century.

We head back into the Lab again for the tragic, true tale of Julia Pastrana in *A Perfect Specimen* by Nathaniel Moncrieff. The world premiere of this award-winning play, directed by Stuart Halusz, looks at the dying days of the travelling freak show and

the story of its star attraction, the ape-woman, and the man who married her.

The jewel in our crown is our first international collaboration with the celebrated National Theatre of China, in Bertolt Brecht's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. An epic work directed by Dr Wang Xiaoying bringing together Chinese and Australian cultures, this is an engaging parable of motherhood, ownership and identity set against the backdrop of a tumultuous civil war.

We round the year off with plenty of laughs. Just in time for the US presidential elections, we stage the political satire *Clinton: The Musical*, penned by Australian brothers Paul Hodge and Michael Hodge. This shameless and delightfully wicked musical wowed Edinburgh Festival and off-Broadway and now we present the Australian premiere.

We finish with Moliere's *Tartuffe*, a co-production with Queensland Theatre Company. A new version by Justin Fleming gives this classic a fresh new interpretation for modern audiences, with biting satire and subversive wit, this farcical adaptation set in today's Australia skewers hypocrisy – along with religion, sex, ambition and marriage – to uproarious effect.

Subscriptions and single tickets are now on sale for 2016. Subscriptions can be purchased through Black Swan, single tickets through Ticketek.

Dates For Your Diary

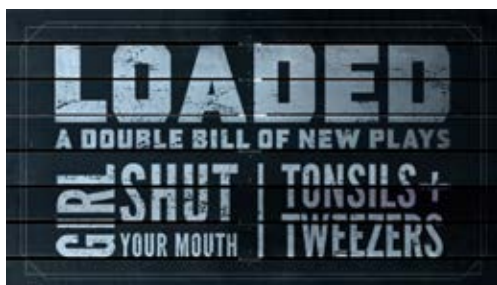
◀ 14 Jan – 7 Feb 2016

Post-show Q&A: Thursday 28 January, after the 8.00pm performance (free)

1–17 April 2016 ▶

Rio Tinto Pre-show talk: Thursday 7 April at 6.45pm, before the 7.30pm performance (free)

Post-show Q&A: Thursday 14 April, after the 7.30am performance (free)



LOADED: Double Barrelled Drama and High Calibre Humour



What do you get when you combine best friends, guns and ambition?
A double bill of two sure-fire comedies from acclaimed WA authors.

First up in the double bill, ***Girl Shut Your Mouth*** by Gita Bezard.

In a world where lives are ravaged by violence, a world where intelligence is punished, a world where funerals are commonplace, a group of friends debate the pros and cons of their existence. But Katie is one of the lucky few. She's been shot in the head, and that means she gets to leave.

Torn up with jealousy, Katie's friends make plans to get bullets of their own. But getting the bullet is easy - surviving is the hard part.

Then we head to the second show, ***Tonsils + Tweezers*** by Will O'Mahony.

Tonsils and Tweezers are best friends - inseparable since high school. But a freak accident 10 years ago keeps threatening to tear them apart. Don't worry. That won't happen. Because Tweezers has a plan. He's going to take out a gun and invite his friend to go shoot up their high school reunion.

These world premiere productions from some of Australia's finest young talents are sure to leave audiences in stitches, perfect for a bloody good night out.

LOADED: A Double Bill of New Plays is in the Studio Underground from 14 January to 7 February 2016. Tickets on sale now through Ticketek.

Q&A: Shalom Brune-Franklin

Shalom Brune-Franklin is one of four actresses in the upcoming *Girl Shut Your Mouth* by Gita Bezard. As a recent WAAPA graduate and newcomer to the Perth arts scene, we had a quick chat with her about where she's been and what's to come.



Q. You've had a lot happen over the past couple of months – winning the Chris Edmund prize, graduating, scoring a role in *Girl Shut Your Mouth*. What has it been like?

Shalom. It has quite easily been the craziest few months of my life. I went from being scared to graduate and leave the comfort of the WAAPA bubble to this overwhelming excitement for what is to come next and now I can barely wait for rehearsals to start! It's been the coolest experience ever.

Q. What is most appealing to you about *Girl Shut Your Mouth*?

Shalom. When I first read the script I fell in love with all four girls. Every one of them comes from the same place and situation but they are at such different places in their

lives, places we have all been. One is on the brink of starting over, two are desperate to get out of the situation they are in, and one doesn't want to "get out" or start over, she wants to see change happen and be a part of that change. When you think of just those things, they are universal, most people have been in that type of situation where they either run from, or fight for, something. That's one reason I connected to the play so deeply, and why I see so many different types of audiences connecting to it. It made me question what I wanted to change in this world, and most importantly it made me think.

The play is about young women struggling to get an education and being punished for wanting one. It's current and delves into a situation too

many women, young and old, are dealing with all over the world. It is exciting to be a part of something that in its own way is changing the world, by spreading awareness through performance. I think it's really exciting that *Black Swan* is putting this show on, it's daring and ground-breaking and that's the type of theatre I want to be involved in.

Q. What's the biggest thing you learned from your time at WAAPA?

Shalom. The most important thing I learnt was about people: sharing your experience with 17 other students that you spend around 10 hours a day with, 5 to 6 days a week, you learn everything there is to know about people and yourself. And that ties into the advice I took from WAAPA, and that is that there is no such thing as

just becoming a better actor, you have to become a better person in order to become a better actor. You have to learn to be generous and to listen off-stage before you can ever try to do it on stage.

The actual course itself is any actor's dream, it gives you a piece of everything – all the different techniques and methods in Voice, Movement and in Acting – and you can take what works best for you. If there was one thing I learnt most, it's to just be YOU. That's what people want to watch, someone being real and giving them something they can relate to.



Next to Normal Arts Panel

In October, during rehearsals for our last production of the year, *Next to Normal*, the White Swans donor group hosted an Arts Panel with Director Adam Mitchell, Musical Director David Young, and cast members Rachael Beck, Michael Cormick and Brendan Hanson.

The White Swans and other donors were treated to a behind the scenes experience, joining the cast and creatives in the rehearsal room to find out what goes into the staging of a rock musical. Cast members talked about their preparation for the production and David Young shared insights into the amazing musical score.



Matthew Lutton, Artistic Director of Malthouse Theatre in Melbourne, is returning to Perth to direct *Picnic at Hanging Rock* early next year. We are looking forward to having him back at Black Swan. Matt sent us a short video for our 2016 Season Launch, and here is an excerpt.

I'm very excited to be directing this co-production between Malthouse Theatre and Black Swan. I have quite a long history with Black Swan – I was the BSX Theatre Artistic Director in the early 2000's and the company's Associate Director in 2006. But what people probably don't know is that my first engagement with the company was actually on another Australian classic – I was the Assistant Director when I was 18 years old on Andrew Ross' production of Randolph Stow's *The Merry-Go-Round in the Sea*, which was staged at the old Playhouse Theatre. So it feels really fitting to be coming back and directing

a new production of another Australian classic, *Picnic at Hanging Rock*.

As you know this is a novel written by Joan Lindsay in the 60's and it tells the story of three schoolgirls and one teacher that went picnicking on Hanging Rock in 1901 and vanished without a trace. That mystery was never solved and the horror, I think, of this story that Lindsay wrote has been haunting the psyche ever since.

It was written in the 60's but I think it also speaks to us so eloquently today about our white and post-colonial understanding of landscape, our struggle with landscape, and our fear in Australia of

things that are intangible or imperceptible. It's a work that we probably know very well from the Peter Weir film made in the 70's but this is not a version of the film on stage. This is a piece of theatre that really goes back to the novel itself and is looking at how to use language – how to use words to conjure the epic landscape and vistas that Lindsay includes in her writing. And because it's so based on language it really requires a fantastic ensemble of performers. It's a piece conceived of five actors who are playing all the roles – teachers, students, men and women – and we've put together a really virtuosic cast to pull off this feat.



We've created a creative team and cast that really bridges the East and the West coasts in a new production of an Australian classic. I'm very excited by the work and I'm very excited to be coming back and collaborating with Black Swan.

Don't miss *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, a new play by Tom Wright adapted from Joan Lindsay's novel, at the Heath Ledger Theatre from 1 to 17 April 2016. Tickets on sale through Ticketek.

How High The River Painting Unveiled

In 2014, Black Swan completed a three year community project called WA Stories in Carnarvon. Writer Francis Italiano worked with the Carnarvon community throughout 2012-13 to research and develop local stories into the play script, *How High The River*. The script draws from the real life stories shared by people from Carnarvon and unique to this town, stories of country, of the river, stories of cultures, of plantations, of love and struggle.

In 2014 Director Karen Hethey continued the creative development of the play with local artists and members of Carnarvon community to bring some of the stories from the script to the stage in a series of engaging vignettes. As part of that staged presentation, Carnarvon artist Bonni Ingram contributed her painting skills to create a riverbed for the dance scene.



After the presentation, Bonni and Art Producer, Sabrina Dowling Giudici revisited and further developed the artwork. The result is a striking art piece that embodies the spirit of the Gascoyne River.

After a recent welcome and unveiling ceremony, we are proud to have this beautiful and important artwork hanging within the State Theatre Centre of WA.

From the Archives

A quick look at past Black Swan productions

The Sapphires (2010)

Black Swan and Company B Belvoir presented the world premiere of *The Sapphires* by Tony Briggs, as part of the Perth International Arts Festival. Briggs' mother was the real-life inspiration for this story, based on her experience in Vietnam and with singing group The Sapphires with her sisters and cousins. This production went on to tour Canberra, London and Korea.



Ian De Nazareth (PMH Foundation), Artistic Director Kate Cherry, Sam Allen (Technip), Matt Fuller and Stitches the Bear!

We were thrilled to welcome guests from Princess Margaret Hospital for Children to the theatre for a performance of our family production, *The Red Balloon*. Over 150 children and parents attended as part of the PMH group, and Stitches the Bear made an appearance in the foyer too! Special thanks to our partner Technip and the Princess Margaret Hospital Foundation for making the event possible.

We were also very proud to host the Mental Illness Fellowship of Western Australia for a specially scheduled performance of *Next to Normal*. Guests of MIFWA filled the entire Heath Ledger Theatre and were welcomed by Mental Health Commissioner Tim Marney, MIFWA CEO Monique Williamson and Black Swan Artistic Director Kate Cherry. A big thank you to our Principal Partner Rio Tinto who made the event possible and for their continued commitment in supporting access initiatives that allow us to share our work with new audiences.



Black Swan General Manager Natalie Jenkins, MIFWA CEO Monique Williamson and Black Swan Artistic Director Kate Cherry.

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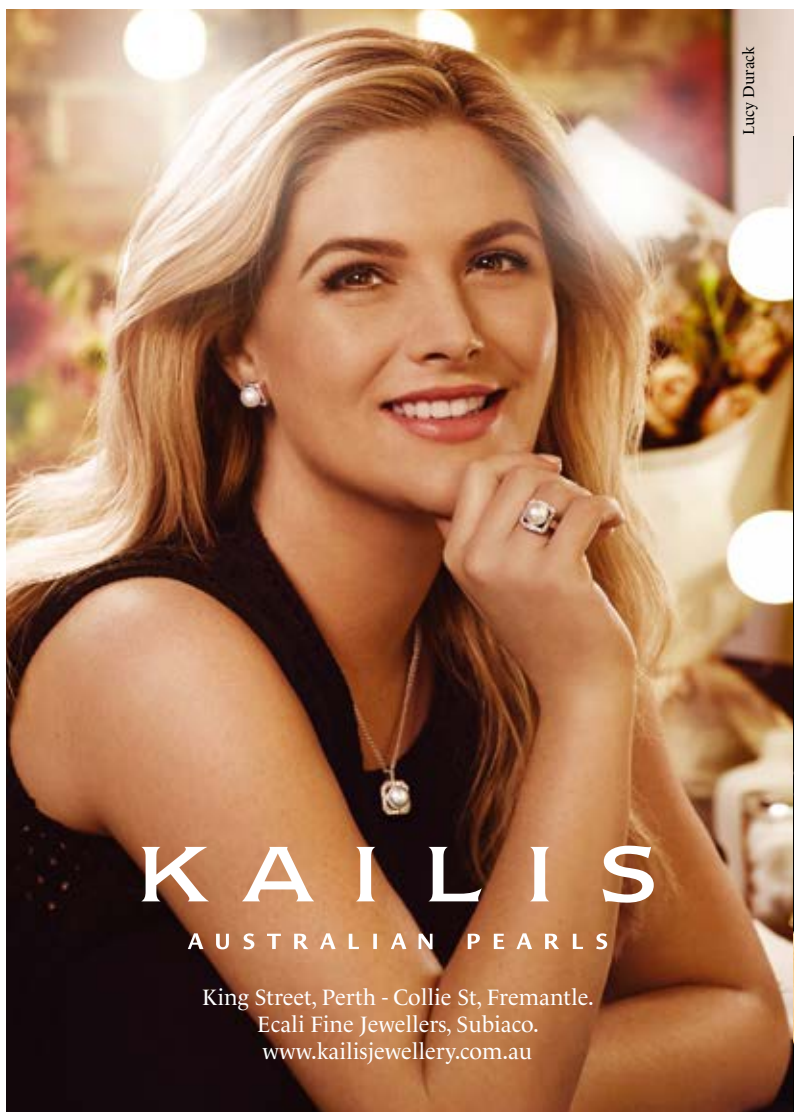


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Lucy Durack

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What a great end to the year! Three fantastic productions ushered us from winter to summer. Although very different from each other, each production discussed what it means to be alive, studied how we are affected by our environments and celebrated the unconquerable human spirit.

Extinction

"Crackles with unexpected wit... A deeply grounded piece of theatre... and refreshingly real." THE AUSTRALIAN

"Extinction is deep, it is entertaining... some classic moments that had me in stitches. Loved it." PERTH WALKABOUT

"Amazing performances and a fantastic play - best Black Swan play I've seen for years!" MAYA, PATRON

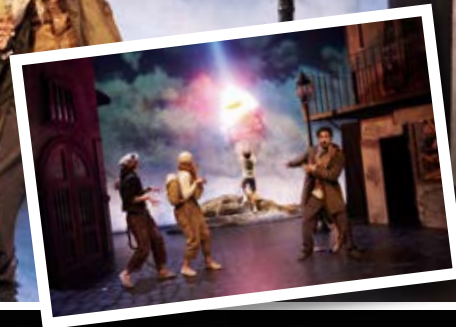


The Red Balloon

★★★★★

"A stunning piece of work that takes the entire family on a magical adventure. The use of space, the characters' physicality and the inclusion of puppetry was what made the entire show so entrancing and had me grinning from ear to ear." THEATREPEOPLE

"A memorable and tender stage adaptation that will easily transfix three generations of a theatregoing family." THE AUSTRALIAN



Next to Normal

"[The actors] display faultless musicality in this emotionally charged musical... Rachael Beck is a petite powerball." THE AUSTRALIAN

"Fight to get a ticket for Next to Normal. An outstanding production in every way." STAGE WHISPERS

"Whether you are a fan of musicals or not, Next to Normal is recommended viewing. It's more than just entertaining, it is a masterpiece blending of music and story that got me right in the feels. I think for me the (manic) high point of Black Swan's 2015 season." PERTH WALKABOUT



Extinction Opening Night in the Heath Ledger Theatre

Extinction cast and crew



Stephen Davis, Alex and Warwick Hemsley



Kim Stewart, David Jameson, Liz and Jim Lightfoot and Diana Jameson

Next to Normal Opening Night in the Heath Ledger Theatre

James Bell, Rachael Beck and Michael Cormick



Janet Holmes à Court and Gabi Vincent



Rose and Tim Moore with Craig and Marilyn Burton

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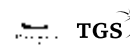
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In 2016, our 25th year, we invite you to Step Up Your Support and have your donation matched by Creative Partnerships Australia until 13 May 2016*

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