

A NOTE FROM THE General Manager

This is my second note since starting as General Manager in 2014, and I am happy to say that the time I've been with Black Swan has been nothing short of wonderful. I certainly joined at a significant time for the Company, a time of change and growth.

In 2014 we extended our capacity to present an increased number of productions, of a bigger scale and with higher production values. We presented eight productions – six mainstage and two as part of our new Black Swan Lab; three of which were World Premieres of new Australian works.

One production, the blockbuster success *A Streetcar Named Desire*

starring Sigrid Thornton, virtually sold out before it even previewed!

We had over 55,000 patrons attend our productions in Perth in 2014, and 10,600 of those were students - our highest ever student attendance. Overall audiences increased by 9.5%, with a record 26.6% increase in subscribers.

And we didn't just stay in Perth! We took theatre to over 4,000 regional Western Australian audiences that year, through two regional tours and a live broadcast. We also conducted over 100 workshops at schools and community venues both regionally and in Perth.

As we are now mid-way through 2015, I can assure you that this year is stacking up to be just as good. Our three productions so far have surpassed all targets with over 17,500 patrons in attendance. We have two World Premiere productions still to come.

Plus two firsts of another kind: Black Swan's first musical and first family show.

We are excited to explore and develop these new territories for Black Swan. Hopefully we'll produce more amazing results and bring new people to the theatre.

This year, thanks to our Principal Partner Rio Tinto, we also launched a new audience development initiative, Rio Tinto \$20 Tickets, which has been incredibly successful. We are very grateful to Rio Tinto for providing this outstanding opportunity for new audiences to access theatre in Western Australia. You can read a bit more about that on page 2.

And again we are spreading the Black Swan love from Perth across WA. We have another regional tour this year, this time of our education production, *Shadowboxing*. We are continuing our live broadcast program with the broadcast of *Blithe Spirit* to 11 regional venues, 2 metro locations and over 30

regional Community Resource Centres. And we have already conducted over 30 workshops with many more scheduled to come.

From all of these stats and figures, I think it is clear that Black Swan is producing excellent theatre, expanding our reach and offerings, and exposing more and more people to arts and theatre.

I have loved meeting all of Black Swan's fans – our subscribers, sponsors, donors, industry and government supporters. Our 25th anniversary is coming up next year and we have some exciting things in store for you to celebrate this milestone. In an uncertain time, we are incredibly grateful to have the support we have to continue this great company – hopefully for another 25 years and many more!

Natalie Jenkins
General Manager



inside



Conjuring laughter



Hannie Rayson



Dramatic ventures



The reviews are in

Blithe Spirit 18 July - 9 August

Subscriber Briefing: Monday 13 July,
6.15pm (free)

Rio Tinto Pre-show talk: Thursday
23 July, 6.45pm (free)

Post-show Q&A: Thursday 30 July,
after the 7.30pm performance (free)



Extinction 19 September - 4 October

Subscriber Briefing: Monday 14
September, 6.15pm (free)

Rio Tinto Pre-show talk: Thursday
24 September, 6.45pm (free)

Post-show Q&A: Thursday
1 October, after the 7.30pm
performance (free)



Rio Tinto \$20 Tickets



Black Swan launched a new audience development initiative at the beginning of the year, thanks to our Principal Partner, Rio Tinto.

Designed to get even more people into the theatre, the **Rio Tinto \$20 Tickets** initiative is a low cost ticket subsidy scheme, sponsored by Rio Tinto and modelled on similar schemes at Sydney Theatre Company and the National Theatre in London. Both of these have proved extremely successful in attracting new audiences to the theatre by providing a limited number of low cost tickets, subsidised directly by a corporate partner.

Rio Tinto \$20 Tickets were available for our first two mainstage productions and we are happy to report that the initiative has been very successful already! Over 80% of purchasers of *Glengarry Glen Ross* were new to Black Swan, and 10% were patrons who had not been to a Black Swan production in over a year. We look forward to welcoming new patrons and spreading the love of theatre!

Black Swan Snippets

CELEBRATE WA

Artistic Director Kate Cherry was honoured to be nominated for the Celebrate WA Award in the Arts & Culture category. Congrats to colleague Henry Boston of the Chamber of Arts and Culture, who won the award.

OPEN DRESS

Recently we've begun offering subscribers the opportunity to attend open dress rehearsals. This event is at the discretion of the director, so may not be offered for every production. If you didn't receive invitations for the 2 past productions, please contact us to update your email.

The Red Balloon 1- 17 October

Rio Tinto Pre-show talk: Wednesday 14
October, 12.45pm (free)

Post-show Q&As:
Wednesday 7 October,
after the 10.30am
performance and
Saturday 10 October,
after the 5.00pm
performance (free)



Show Business

Making theatre for our community is an expensive undertaking. Not many people know, but Black Swan is a not-for-profit organisation and revenue from our ticket sales cover only 33% of the cost to produce theatre.

We seek sponsorships from the business sector to help keep our ticket price affordable. That way, more people in our community can be entertained and enriched by the theatre we produce.

Would your business benefit from a Black Swan partnership?

We offer a range of partnership benefits including brand profiling, hospitality and networking opportunities. We've thrown out the cookie cutters. Each Black Swan partnership is unique, with benefits and leveraging opportunities tailored to achieve the objectives of our business partners.

- Enhance your brand
- Strengthen relationships
- Profile your brand
- Connect with other partners
- Engage your employees
- Leverage to maximise your investment

To discuss how we can help you do business contact Monique Beaudoire, Partnerships Manager on (08) 6212 9305 or monique@bsstc.com.au

LIVE BROADCAST

Our live broadcasts continue in 2015 with Noël Coward's *Blithe Spirit* being broadcast to regional WA venues and Community Resource Centres on the Westlink network on Saturday 1 August. More information can be found on our website!

CASTING UPDATE

The Red Balloon is now fully cast! St John Cowcher, Ella Hetherington, Ben Mortley and Sarah Nelson are joined by child actors Dylan Christidis, Eloise Hunter, Rory McLaughlin and Katie Price for this magical family production.

BLITHE SPIRIT: conjuring laughs through the ages

Noël Coward and Roz Hammond – what a combination! When you add a sharp script, strong design and a passionate team, you have a fantastic production on your hands.

Debuting to great success on the West End in 1941 with almost 2,000 performances, setting a record for non-musical plays in the West End that was not surpassed until *The Mousetrap* in 1957 – and conquering Broadway soon after, *Blithe Spirit* is widely considered to be one of Coward's greatest works and has had many revivals. It's even been adapted for film, television, radio and a musical.

Roz Hammond sat down with Limelight Magazine to talk about the success and secrets of *Blithe Spirit*.

Q. You're about to play Madame Arcati in a new production of Noël Coward's *Blithe Spirit* – how do you prepare?

A. I was fortunate to play Ruth in a MTC/STC production some years ago, so I feel like I know the play quite well. For preparing for Madame Arcati, I am reading about mediums and spiritualists of the day.

Q. What do you think is the secret of the play's longevity since 1941?

A. What a wonderful premise – a séance for a bit of a lark and your ex-wife's ghost materialises and causes havoc and the medium who summoned her has no idea how to get rid of her!

Q. She may not be the biggest part, but Madame Arcati invariably steals the show. What is her secret?

A. Well, she's quite daffy – very "other worldly" and unfortunately not that great at her job – hence the mischief that ensues.

Q. For which of the characters – Charles, Ruth or Elvira – do you feel most sorry?

A. Oh definitely Ruth! Her husband's dead ex-wife to whom he was devoted – reappears – still the free spirit that she ever was. Nightmare!

Q. Madame Arcati has been played by actors from Margaret Rutherford to Angela Lansbury. Who has been your favourite and why?

A. I was lucky enough to be in the production with Miriam Margolyes playing Madame Arcati. She was truly phenomenal and as you can imagine, completely hilarious.

Q. What is your favourite Madame Arcati quote?

A. Well, it's hard to go past "I smell ectoplasm strongly".

Right: Actor Roz Hammond. Photo by Robert Frith, Acorn Photo



Noël Coward on writing *Blithe Spirit*

For some time before 1941 Noël Coward had been thinking of a comedy about ghosts. His first thoughts centred on an old house in Paris, haunted by spectres from different centuries, with the comedy arising from their conflicting attitudes, but he could not get the plot to work in his mind.

After his London office and flat had been destroyed in the Blitz, Coward took a short holiday with actress Joyce Carey to coastal Wales. She was writing a play about Keats, and he was still thinking about his ghostly comedy:

"We sat on the beach with our backs against the sea wall and discussed my idea exclusively for several hours. Keats, I regret to say, was not referred to. By lunchtime the title had emerged together with the names of the characters, and a rough, very rough, outline of the plot. At seven-thirty the next morning I sat, with the usual nervous palpitations, at my typewriter. Joyce was upstairs in her room wrestling with Fanny Brawne. I smoked several cigarettes in rapid succession, staring gloomily out of the

window at the tide running out. I fixed the paper into the machine and started. Blithe Spirit. A Light Comedy in Three Acts.

I will ever be grateful for the almost psychic gift that enabled me to write Blithe Spirit in five days during one of the darkest years of the war. For six days I worked from eight to one each morning and from two to seven each afternoon. On Friday evening, May ninth, the play was finished and, disdaining archness and false modesty, I will admit that I knew it was witty, I knew it was well constructed, and I also knew that it would be a success."

Blithe Spirit is at the State Theatre Centre from 18 July to 9 August 2015. Tickets on sale now through Ticketek.

HANNIE RAYSON: Then and Now

One of Australia's favourite playwrights, Hannie Rayson, has written a new play called *Extinction* and we are proud to present the World Premiere later this year.



We last worked with Hannie when we presented her play *The Swimming Club*, another World Premiere, in 2010. She made a speech at our 2010 Season Launch, and we wanted to share part of it again now. It is as relevant as ever, and speaks to why *Extinction* is such an important work as it grapples with our humanity, our conscience and what we hold dear.

One of the great things that happened to me when I was in my twenties was the discovery of Fremantle Arts Centre Press. When I was at university doing English we did not study Australian literature. The pendulum has swung back and that is rapidly becoming the situation again in many Australian universities today. But let me tell you about the effect that had on me.

It never occurred to me that anything profound about the human condition could occur in an Australian lounge room. Experiences of passion and beauty and profundity only happened to Russians. Hovering around the samovar. In a Chekhov play. Or to homosexuals languishing in French prisons a la Genet. Or to people angsting in Norwegian drawing rooms (like Ibsen's plays).

Here in Australia we were funny. But we weren't deep. We weren't significant. Our lives were not the stuff of art.

Then along came little publishing houses like McPhee Gribble in Melbourne and Fremantle Arts Centre Press here. And I discovered Helen Garner, Tim Winton, Joan London. Robert Drewe. It was truly epiphanous for me. To read their novels and of course countless others from an Australian stable, was a truly validating experience. It wasn't just the tremendous thrill of being part of this nationalist project of creating culture, it was deeply personal. The streets where I walked, the people I

talked to in the greengrocer, the beaches, the bush, my own family, my friends, our reflections on life, our troubles and tragedies, our dreams. These were the stuff of literature.

We were interesting. Suddenly this place was becoming a dynamic, interesting place to live where people were grappling with ideas and juggling them with all the great Aussie passions. The Footy. The beach. Barbies. Drinking. Eating. Laughing. Or making love. And it was all happening under a great big blue sky. With the smell of gum trees after a rain. Or the burning asphalt of summer. Or in red dirt, or white sand.

These are places we know. They sing to us of belonging here. To this country.

Our hearts, our voices, our humanity.

Extinction is at the Heath Ledger Theatre from 19 September to 4 October. Tickets on sale now through Ticketek.



From the Archives

A quick look at past Black Swan productions

The Merry-Go-Round in the Sea, 1997

Black Swan presented the world premiere of *The Merry-Go-Round in the Sea* at the Subiaco Theatre Centre. Written by Randolph Stow and adapted for the stage by Dickon Oxenburgh and Andrew Ross, this production is considered a landmark production by Black Swan.



MEET THE ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Jeffrey Jay Fowler

Here at Black Swan we're lucky to have two very hardworking Associate Directors, Stuart Halusz and Jeffrey Jay Fowler, contributing to the artistic side of the company. In addition to this role, they both juggle a lot of other balls. We asked Jeffrey Jay Fowler to tell us a bit about being an Associate Director and what that means.



Q. Jeffrey, what does your role as Associate Director at Black Swan entail?

A. As an Associate Director of Black Swan I assist in programming our seasons, workshoping our commissioned plays, mentoring emerging playwrights, being the eyes and ears of the company by seeing as much theatre in Perth as I can, hosting Q&A nights, liaising with sponsors and being a consultant and support for Kate Cherry.

Q. What is the appeal of this role for you?

A. It gives me great creative freedom as well as the opportunity to work at a large, established theatre company. It's a job I had my eye on for a long time, and it has truly met my expectations for personal and professional development.

Q. What is your favourite part of your role as an Associate Director?

A. The most rewarding part is mentoring the Emerging Writers Group and helping

the next generation of West Australian artists create new Australian works.

Q. In addition to Associate Director, you're also a playwright, director and actor. What's it like to switch between those roles?

A. I've always felt that playing many different parts in the theatre has given me empathy for what my co-workers are experiencing. Each time I change positions I keep in mind what it's like to be in someone else's shoes.

There's no role I enjoy too much more than the others, though over the years I've found that creating new works or re-inventing old works as a writer/director feels the most satisfying in the end. I truly believe that new work that responds to the time and place it's made in is the way that theatre keeps its relevance in a fast changing world.



Regional Drama

We have been busy this year bringing drama to regional Western Australia. In addition to our live broadcast of *Blithe Spirit* to regional WA later this year, we've also held school holiday workshops and a regional tour. Almost 450 regional community members have engaged with us so far in 2015.

As a result of community consultation between Black Swan and the Shire of Ashburton, we were invited to design and coordinate two school holiday programs in 2015. Teaching Artists Caitlin Beresford-Ord and Ella Hetherington spent the April school holidays with young people in Onslow and Pannawonica, respectively, running drama workshops for all ages. Over 60 children enjoyed the improvisation, physical theatre and drama for fun workshops with our amazing teaching artists!

Caitlin Beresford-Ord will be heading back to Onslow later this month to conduct more workshops and will also work with the seniors group, Onslow Keepers on their Oral Histories Project, again through the Shire of Ashburton.

In June we completed the first leg of a tour of our new education work, *Shadowboxing*. The tour went to Kwinana, Mandurah and Esperance, playing to over 380 students, teachers, community members and guests. Additional legs of the tour are scheduled for August and October this year, heading to the Gascoyne and Pilbara. We are very proud of this show, our second work created specifically for education and regional programs.

We look forward to our regional live broadcast and more time with our regional audiences throughout the rest of the year!

CONNECTIONS MAKE THE WORLD GO ROUND

When it comes to growing your business across borders, connections count. That's why ANZ connects you to insights and expertise in markets across Asia Pacific. So when you need to reach your customers, suppliers and business partners, you know you'll have the right people at the right places.

LEGACY LEADERS AT BLACK SWAN

Spotlight on: Anita Clayton

Leaving a bequest to Black Swan marks a meaningful bond to theatre, and the future of Western Australian art and culture. A bequest is a truly enduring way to ensure that future generations are able to enjoy and revel in theatre for years to come.

As a long term subscriber and supporter of Black Swan, Anita Clayton shares her story and reasons for choosing to become a Black Swan Legacy Leader.

It has been almost 10 years that Anita and Black Swan have had an enduring relationship, built on a love for theatre and passion for the arts. From productions at the Octagon to the Playhouse, Anita has followed Black Swan through many stages and has seen many landmark productions including *Cloudstreet*, *Bran Nue Dae* and *The Sapphires*.

With a long history supporting Black Swan, Anita explained that being a subscriber has improved her quality of life. "The theatre is a space where you can escape, unwind, relax and be taken to new worlds," said Anita.

Anita values the art of theatre and how productions can present you with different points of view that you may have never considered. "The theatre reinforces how fortunate we are as Western Australians and enables me to appreciate my own life. Most of all, being a subscriber encourages me to attend productions that I wouldn't normally choose, however I often end up enjoying them the most," added Anita.

Anita's decision to become a Black Swan Legacy Leader and leave a bequest to Black Swan was centred on leaving behind a memory the way that she wanted. Anita has divided her estate between a number of organisations that have made an impact on her life, including Black Swan.

"Everyone should have an opportunity to see good theatre and take part in it if they want to. It is so important to produce local works, employ up and coming local talent and ensure the arts are accessible to young people," said Anita.

Anita encourages others to consider investing in Black Swan through a bequest and becoming a Legacy Leader. "Exposure to the arts and especially theatre is important for the community." In her opinion it is as important to make a contribution to the arts as it is to the medical and children's charities.

For more information on Legacy Leaders please contact *Andrée McIntyre*, Philanthropy Manager at andree@bsstc.com.au or 0417 187 025.



Anita (second from right) and Jim Clayton with actors Adam Booth and Roz Hammond

Subscribers and general ticket buyers alike embraced our first two mainstage productions of 2015. Sharp, witty and stylised, these productions made a very successful start to the year, and we can't wait for more.

Dinner: decadently delicious drama



"If you like your comedy jet black and your insults like a dagger to the heart you'll enjoy Dinner with its absurdist culinary delights and vitriolic dialogue."

PERTH THEATRE REVIEWS

"The performances, directed by Kate Cherry, were really what made this production memorable. Walton and Davis were standouts, though all were commendable." WA TODAY

"Disturbingly entertaining ... If the quality of the rest of the year's productions are as good as this one, we are in for a good year." AUSTRALIAN STAGE

Glengarry Glen Ross: always be closing

"Cherry's vigorous, uncomplicated staging, supported by a talented, finely balanced cast, does justice to it in this impressive production."
THE WEST AUSTRALIAN

"Black Swan have acquired an excellent cast and crew for this latest production, and they have brought David Mamet's play to life with vibrancy and vigour." PERTH WALKABOUT

"Under the guiding hand of director Kate Cherry the whole meaning, depth of the rich dialogue, the tension and hateful competition suddenly came to life. It is rare that you leave a theatre so overwhelmed by the standard of acting you have just seen. Black Swan at its very best."
INDEPENDENT THEATRE ASSOCIATION



Dinner Opening Night in the Heath Ledger Theatre



Tasma Walton and Rove McManus



Peta Maddock, Fiona Lander and Chaise McHenry



Alvin Fernandez, India Mehta, Sheree Dornan and Michelle Tindale

Glengarry Glen Ross Opening Night in the Heath Ledger Theatre



Damian Walshe-Howling, Kate Cherry and Peter Rowsthorn



Bobbie and Eric Pearson, Lucy and Roger Lewis



Kate Atkins, Craig Yaxley and John Atkins

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Production Partners



GLENGARRY GLEN ROSS



BLITHE SPIRIT



EXTINCTION



THE RED BALLOON

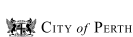


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GLENGARRY GLEN ROSS



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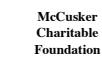
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