

A NOTE FROM THE Artistic Director

Twenty-five years ago Janet Holmes à Court founded a brave, new venture, Black Swan, and I am honoured to have played a role in leading the company into its new home and cementing its future as the state theatre company of Western Australia.

In our 25th year, Black Swan has a feast to offer you. We started the year with a bang when we launched the Bridging Company and empowered the professional debuts of stunning WAAPA talent. I launched my first season at Black Swan in 2008 with Sam Walsh as Chair, now Black Swan's Patron. So it seemed fitting that in my last year at Black Swan, I had the opportunity to join Chair Mark Barnaba in hosting Sam at our production of *LOADED: A Double Bill of New Plays*, which was directed, designed and written by exciting WA artists.

I am directing two plays for Black Swan this year. The first, *Angels in America*, is a brilliant play that captured the cultural war erupting in the US in the 1980's and offered compassion and laughter. *Angels in America* is about resilience, about tolerance, about surviving tragedy through humour, self-knowledge and community.

At the beginning of this year, my husband, son and I stood in the snow in New York City's Central Park and studied the sculpture of the angel that plays such a central role in this play, one of the greatest American plays of the 2nd half of the 20th century. There is nothing romantic or peaceful about that angel standing accessible, proud and magnificent, and yet I cannot avert my eyes from the ferocity and determination, striding through a park, inhabited by the young and the old, the hope-filled and the hapless.

It seems the perfect moment to revisit the play, as we watch fundamentalism and liberal values clash, each fighting for the right to breathe freely. How can a play about a beautiful young man, faced with HIV at

a time when it was thought to be a death sentence, make us laugh, let us breathe, and remind us of the power of compassion? Come and see this play, and watch it unfold with grace and humour.

Tartuffe is our final offering for the season. It is audacious and hilarious as it skewers all of us with the rapier wit of Molière and Australia's Justin Fleming combined in an updated tale of sex, religion and hypocrisy. Darren Gilshenan and Steve Turner on stage together – who could resist?

We have filled this year with new Australian work. On the mainstage, newly appointed Artistic Director of Malthouse Theatre – and former Associate Director of Black Swan – Matthew Lutton directs *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, an adaptation of the book so loved by many Australians for its intrigue and mystery. *Clinton: The Musical*, penned by Australian brothers Michael Hodge and Paul Hodge, has met with great success in Edinburgh and New York, but it has never been done in Australia. Now we bring this bawdy, vulgar, shameless

production to you under the steady hands of director Adam Mitchell. *A Perfect Specimen* will grace the Studio Underground, brilliantly written by astonishing WA talent Nathaniel Moncrieff and directed with panache by Stuart Halusz.

The jewel in our crown this year is an international work, in many ways. Based on an old Chinese fable, written by an acclaimed German playwright, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* will be brought to life here in Perth by a mix of Chinese and Australian artists. I'm very excited to see Black Swan's first international collaboration.

So come to our shows and fill our foyers. Let's eat, drink and feast together raising our glasses to life, laughter and most of all, theatre. That will give me the chance to say to you in person what I will now say in writing, "Thanks for having me, WA. It has been grand."

Kate Cherry
Artistic Director



inside



25 Years On



International Connections



New artists abound



Locked and loaded

Dates For Your Diary



▲ 1 - 17 April

Rio Tinto Pre-show talk:

Thursday 7 April 6.45pm (free)

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



▲ 28 May - 19 June

Subscriber Briefing:

Monday 23 May, 6.15pm (free)

Open Dress Rehearsal:

Saturday 28 May, 2.30pm (free) [tbc]

Rio Tinto Pre-show talk:

Thursday 2 June, 6.45pm (free)

Post Show Q&A: Thursday 9 June, after the 7.30pm performance (free)



▲ 30 June - 17 July

Post-show Q&A: Thursday 14 July, after the 8.00pm performance (free)

Black Swan Snippets

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 1234.

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.

WELCOME

Introducing Amy Welsh, our new Ticketing & Subscriptions Officer! Amy has extensive experience in both theatre and ticketing: she has degrees in Performance and Acting, and has ticketing and event experience including Perth Arena and Convention Centre. So next time you visit or call us, say hello to Amy!

CONGRATULATIONS

Congrats to our Education & Community Access Assistant, Goya on completing her Masters of Music Therapy degree whilst working with us, and recently landing her dream job! Fortunately we don't have to say goodbye, Goya will stay in her role here for one day a week.

Welcome to Black Swan's new partners!

Welcome to all our new partners who have joined with Black Swan to support our 2016 season.



Australia China Business Council
澳大利亚中国工商业委员会



Australian Government



Australia-China Council

DIGITAL

The Precinct

Gerard Daniels

Would your company benefit from our partnership with Black Swan?
Contact Monique Beaudoire, Partnerships Manager at Monique@bsstc.com.au.

Out and About in Northbridge

There are some great places near the theatre to grab a meal and a drink before the show, including our two fantastic restaurant partners who have special deals just for you!

The Standard



Around the corner on Roe Street, only a hop, skip and a jump from the State Theatre Centre, The Standard Bar Garden & Kitchen is the perfect leafy getaway in the heart of Northbridge. Ask them about their pre and post theatre menus, available between 5-7pm and 10-12pm: two courses for \$35 and three courses for \$45.

No Mafia



No Mafia provides an intimate yet vibrant atmosphere for your pre or post-show meeting place. Located on William Street, just a stone's throw from the State Theatre Centre. Show your ticket to receive a complimentary glass of House White or Red Wine or a glass of Prosecco with any meal purchase on the day of your show.

For a range of other great offers from our partners including Hyatt Regency, Thrifty Car & Truck Rental and Big Sky Entertainment, please refer to your subscription package or contact Black Swan.



Playwright, Tom Wright

"It's one of those rare things in Australian literature which has transcended its origins and become a myth," says [playwright Tom] Wright. Joan Lindsay's 1967 novel and Peter Weir's 1975 film were so evocative, they created a kind of faux-history.

"People still clamber all over the rock and say 'this is where it happened', as though it was history," says Wright.

"Even though we know it didn't happen we like to think it did. It raises an interesting question about necessary myths. Sometimes societies invent myths because they need them. It's like a refraction of the Fred McCubbin paintings of lost girls, all the way through the stories of Lindy Chamberlain and missing children. There's a big psycho-social neurosis in the

Australian body politic that floats around, and Lindsay's genius was she captured it in a way that still seems pressing."

Wright says the play is an adaptation of the novel rather than the film. "We were given permission by the Lindsay estate to adapt it. One request was this wouldn't be some attempt to set this in the 21st century or change the sexes

... I didn't want the story to be transposed into some new scenario where suddenly it's a 2016 scene with Caulfield Grammar boys. That would have been alarming!"

Picnic at Hanging Rock is at the Heath Ledger Theatre from 1 to 17 April. Tickets on sale now through Ticketek.

Excerpt from The Sydney Morning Herald, 19 February 2016.

Picnic at Hanging Rock:

ADAPTING A CLASSIC

Where to start with distilling this iconic Australian story? Millions remember it in fragments; tufts of lace, wisps of long blonde hair, knowing looks from ethereal schoolgirls and a drowsy bush landscape cut from the frame of many a 19th-century painting.

Then and Now

In 2016 Black Swan celebrates its 25th year, sharing the milestone with Tony Kushner's highly lauded, ground-breaking production *Angels in America, Part One: Millennium Approaches*.

Enjoying its world premiere in May 1991, just months before we were founded in July the same year, *Angels in America, Part One* follows the tumultuous journey of two couples during the HIV/AIDS epidemic in New York City during the Reagan-era. As we present Kushner's masterpiece in May, let's look back at the world, theatre, and Black Swan 25 years ago.

Internationally, Iraq's occupation of Kuwait, under the leadership of Saddam Hussein, had drawn a coalition of United Nations forces into the war, enacting Operation Desert Storm. In the shadow of the USSR, the Balkan War raged, and Russian President Mikhail Gorbachev's resignation led to the dissolution of the Soviet Union and a host of newly independent nations. And a South African referendum favoured a new, multicultural constitution that saw apartheid dismantled once and for all.

Culturally, the world mourned the loss of iconic performer Freddie Mercury, the lead singer of the band Queen,

who fell victim to HIV/AIDS; celebrated the release of the album *Nevermind* by Nirvana which launched the early 1990s Grunge era; and was introduced to Tim Berners-Lee's web browser (the precursor to the modern-day Internet).

American basketball star Earvin 'Magic' Johnson's announcement that he was HIV-positive shocked the world, emphasising that people of all sexual orientations were susceptible to the disease. He became a symbol for beating the HIV 'death sentence' and made inroads to reducing the stigma and discrimination against those affected. However, AIDS was still the second leading cause of death among men aged 25-44 and the World Health Organisation estimated that nearly 10 million people were infected worldwide.

In theatre, *Miss Saigon* premiered on Broadway to rave reviews. However, it was *The Will Rogers Follies* that won Best Musical at the 45th Tony Awards for bringing the life and career of famed comic and performer Will Rogers

to West End. Neil Simon's play *Lost in Yonkers* won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama.

At home, West Australian Minister Bob Hawke led a Federal Labor government, only to be replaced by then-Treasurer Paul Keating in December to finalise the once-secret 'Kirribilli agreement'. In WA, the Royal Commission into the WA Inc scandal saw the dealings of former Premier Brian Burke and several prominent businessmen closely examined.

It was then that Black Swan's founding Chair Janet Holmes à Court and founding Artistic Director Andrew Ross came together to create a new theatre company, with Will Queckett and Duncan Ord. The move was inspired by Ross' production of *Bran Nue Dae* at the 1990 Festival of Perth, and Janet Holmes à Court remains our patron to this day.

Angels in America, Part One: Millennium Approaches is at the Heath Ledger Theatre from 28 May to 19 June. Tickets on sale now through Ticketek.

Written by Samuel Cox.





Pictured: centre, Dr Wang Xiaoying; from left, Tao Chen, Clint Bracknell, Felix Ching Ching Ho, Kate Cherry, Richard Roberts, Yan Zhao, Huaxiang Zhang

International Collaboration Kicks Off

We recently had the pleasure of hosting our friends from the National Theatre of China in Perth for a few days as we kick off our collaboration on the upcoming production, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*.

Director Dr Wang Xiaoying, Assistant Director Tao Chen, Costume Designer Yan Zhao and Prop/Mask Designer Prof Huaxiang Zhang flew in from Beijing for a few days of introductions and design meetings. They were joined by the Australian side of the team, Assistant Director Felix Ching Ching Ho, Set Designer Richard Roberts, Composer Dr Clint Bracknell, Lighting Designer Mark Howett, and Black Swan's Production team.

Amid back-to-back meetings on design and vision for the production, Dr Wang sat down with *The West Australian* to chat about what he is looking forward to, and what audiences can expect. Here's excerpts from the article:

WA and China share time zones and should do more to share each other's culture, according to Beijing's leading theatre director.

Black Swan State Theatre Company's first international

partnership has taken another step forward with a visit by National Theatre of China director Wang Xiaoying.

The highlight of Black Swan's 25th anniversary this year will be its co-production of Bertolt Brecht's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, directed by Wang and featuring an Australian cast and a mix of designers from both countries.

July's world premiere in Perth — with seasons proposed

next year at festivals in Beijing and Shanghai — will cap three years of work between Wang and outgoing Black Swan artistic director Kate Cherry.

"In the international world of commerce, there is a lot of collaboration," he said through an interpreter. "There should be more collaboration in the realm of culture, not only for getting people to know each other better but for other reasons as well."



Step Up Your Support - We're halfway there!

We are happy to share with you that we are now over halfway to our matched funding target! Thanks to Creative Partnerships Australia, an initiative of the Australian government, who will match dollar for dollar all donations until 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 - including you, our valued supporters. The Step Up Your Support campaign will support our artist development programs and our 'International Collaboration Project', an artistic exchange with the National Theatre of China and our production of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*.

The Caucasian Chalk Circle was a fitting bridge to walk across together because Brecht had been a big influence on Chinese theatre and because the German playwright had reworked a 14th-century Chinese play, *Circle of Chalk*, by Li Xingdao. "I am hoping to see this really interesting production on the opening night whereby you have Australian actors performing a German play which is inspired by a Chinese play with some Chinese production and design elements," Wang said.

One anticipated element in the production — the plan to marry Chinese and indigenous Australian culture — has been diminished, with Noongar-language songs no longer included as had been indicated in the *Black Swan* program late last year.

Wang said his knowledge of Aboriginal culture and music was too narrow and it was too difficult to cross that barrier.

Both sides of the production team — which includes assistant director Felix Ching Ching Ho, costume designer Yan Zhao, prop/mask designer Huaxiang Zhang, composer Clint Bracknell and set designer Richard Roberts — would learn much from each other in creating the show together.

"I am even more excited about having this production in my home country," Wang said. "I also hope it will go to other festivals in Australia and other countries so they can see the collaboration between Australia and China in this cultural arena."

The cast of 14 includes local actors Caitlin Beresford-Ord, Adam Booth, Kylie Farmer, Luke Hewitt, Geoff Kelso, Lynette Narkle, Kenneth Ransom, Katya Shevtsov, Steve Turner and Alison van Reeken.

Their challenge would be to learn Chinese theatre and opera techniques so the play could be taken "home", Wang said.

"I expect they will be quite excited to pursue these possibilities."

The Caucasian Chalk Circle is at the Heath Ledger Theatre from 30 July to 14 August. Tickets on sale now through Ticketek.

Excerpts from article by Stephen Bevis in *The West Australian* on 10 February 2016.

All About Artists

Black Swan's strength lies in artist development, and we've made it a core strategic focus for the Company. We want to promote Western Australian talent and develop pathways for artists and artistic careers.



Pictured, from left: the 2015-16 Emerging Writers Group, Zoe Hollyoak, Mararo Wangai, Zoe Pepper, Jeffrey Jay Fowler, Finn O'Branagain, Mikala Westall and Izaak Lim

One initiative is the newly established Bridging Company, a professional pathway for artists coming through WAAPA and onto global stages. This year the Bridging Company consisted of an ensemble of eight graduates who made their professional debuts in *LOADED: A Double Bill of New Plays*, as part of the Black Swan Lab.

Another pathway is our Emerging Artists Program and Resident Artists Program. These existing programs have blossomed over the years, and we are happy to announce this year's participating artists:

Mark Howett - RESIDENT DESIGNER
Lawrie Cullen-Tait - RESIDENT DESIGNER
Hellie Turner - RESIDENT WRITER
Luke Hewitt - RESIDENT ACTOR
Joe Lui - EMERGING DIRECTOR, mentored by Kate Cherry
Chris Donnelly - EMERGING LIGHTING DESIGNER, mentored by Mark Howett

EMERGING ACTORS
Shalom Brune-Franklin
Brittany Morel
Stephanie Panozzo
Jessica Paterson
Adam Sollis
Lincoln Vickery
Megan Wilding
Hoa Xuande

Our Emerging Writers Group is a pathway for new playwrights and writers. The group meets once a month to discuss and develop their work and by the end of the year they will all have written plays that receive a public reading.

We can't wait to see what these inspiring new talents bring to our stages and beyond in the future!

We have already reached 69% of our \$50,000 goal and are asking for your support to help us to the finish line. Whether you have been with us since the very beginning or are new to the Black Swan family, we invite you to Step Up and help us realise our vision and this incredible opportunity to be featured on the international stage and showcase Western Australian artists.

So please help us reach our goal - take the opportunity now to increase your donation and it will have double the impact! You can use the donation form on the last page of this newsletter, or head to our website, www.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 call 0417 187 025.

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australia

Where Has the Time Gone?

In our 25th birthday year we've realised that several staff members are marking some long-term anniversaries of their own at Black Swan. We wanted to hear from them about their time here, and thank them for their contribution.

Kate Cherry, Artistic Director – 8 years

Chantelle Iemma, Artistic Coordinator – 8 years

Alena Tompkins, Education & Community Access Manager – 8 years

"My most favourite memory from my time here is moving from the Old Masonic Hall into the State Theatre Centre. It was a momentous occasion, so exciting, the start of a new era and being part of a company that was on the cusp of great change."

Amanda Luke, Finance Manager - 7 years

Kerry Miller, Marketing Coordinator – 6 years

"My favourite productions so far are *When The Rain Stops Falling* and *Next to Normal* – they may seem quite different but actually deal with very similar themes."

Lynn Ferguson, Wardrobe Manager - 5 years

Mandy Elmitt, Cutter – 5 years

Garry Ferguson, Production Manager – 5 years

"My favourite memory from my time here was seeing *Signs of Life* open at the Sydney Opera House."

Jordan Nix, Partnerships Coordinator - started as an intern 5 years ago, a staff member for 4 years

"*Other Desert Cities* would have to be high up the list of my favourite productions."

Polly Low, Literary Advisor – 4 years in the artistic team, Polly has acted in many Black Swan plays over the years

"Every production teaches us something and/or transports us somewhere out of the ordinary. I can't pick a favourite."



From the Archives

A quick look at past Black Swan productions

***The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (2008)**

2016 won't be Black Swan's first production of this Bertolt Brecht masterpiece. In 2008 we kicked off the newly-established HotBed Ensemble, our emerging artist program led by director Adam Mitchell, with a performance of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. This version by Frank McGuinness was performed at PICA. The HotBed Ensemble went on to perform another production later that year, *Portraits of Modern Evil*.



School's Back in Session

Black Swan's Student Ambassador Program is now in its fourth year and in full swing! We are thrilled to announce the new group of Year 12 high school students who will spend 2016 representing the company to their school and peers.

Caitlyn Donnelly, Tranby College

Jessica Spies, Sacred Heart College

Nicholas Warrant, Christchurch Grammar School

Zach Little, Kolbe Catholic College

Each student and their nominating teacher receive two tickets to every Black Swan production in 2016 as well as opportunities to connect with artists, creatives and administration staff throughout the year. We look forward to working with our ambassadors to inspire young people to engage in the arts independently following their school years.

LOADED: A Double Bill of New Plays

High-calibre talent to kick off the year

"How fantastic to see two new West Australian plays in Loaded. Tense, engaging, terrifying, funny."

CLAIRE, PATRON

★★★★

"Tight, tough-minded pieces with considerable power and sophistication. The ensemble cast is excellent, the work of the creative team outstanding."

THE WEST AUSTRALIAN



Girl Shut Your Mouth



"...a gift to any audience member that enjoys excellent theatre. Well cast, well directed and sublimely written."

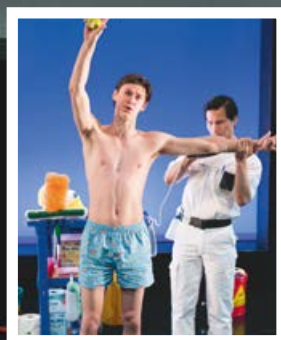
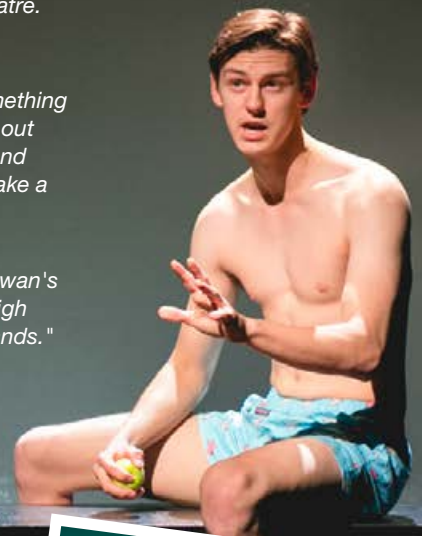
TWEET PERTH

"I would be astounded to find someone who did not take something away from the performance that they simply had to talk about with someone, anyone. Well-performed, well-presented and well-conceived, if the State Theatre Company wanted to make a statement... they made one."

PELICAN MAGAZINE

"Between these two plays, introducing new talent to Black Swan's audiences with fresh ideas presented to the company's high standards, the development of local drama seems in safe hands."

AUSTRALIAN STAGE



Tonsils + Tweezers

LOADED: A Double Bill of New Plays Opening Night in the Studio Underground



Liz O'Sullivan, Vicki Robinson, Craig Yaxley, Andree McIntyre and Will Robinson



Louise Murray and Stephanie Powell



Larissa Fernandez and Navik Shah

If you have seen yourself on this page and would like the photo, email kerry@bsstc.com.au.
For more social pics visit the Watch & Listen pages at www.bsstc.com.au or visit [f](#)

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Picnic at Hanging Rock

Newspaper Partner



Angels in America

Associate Partners



Tartuffe



Picnic at Hanging Rock

Regional Partner



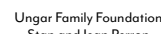
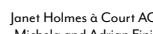
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Season Partners



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ENCORE! GIVING PROGRAM - DONATION FORM All donations over \$2 are fully tax deductible

My Gift 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*

I wish to join the ENCORE! giving program by donating \$_____ ☐ Tick here if you wish for your gift to remain anonymous

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Email andree@bsstc.com.au Or call Amber on (08) 6212 9320 with your credit cards details

Terms and Conditions Gifts of \$50 and above will be recognised under our private giving program ENCORE! All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

*The matched funding campaign is supported by Creative Partnerships Australia through the "Plus1" program. They will double every donation we receive up to \$50,000.

**Thank you for your
generous gift!**