

ON CUE

25
YEARS



black swan
STATE THEATRE COMPANY



Above: Emily Weir, Georgia Landre-Ord, Darren Gilshenan, Hugh Parker and Jenny Davis in *Tartuffe* (2016). Image by Daniel James Grant.

INSIDE



WELCOME TO CLARE WATSON



2017 SEASON EXCITEMENT



STAR SPANGLED SUCCESS

A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Thank you for supporting us in 2016, our 25th anniversary year!



This was a big year, full of growth and change. We completed our first international collaboration, produced two co-productions with interstate companies, presented three world premieres in our Black Swan Lab, and saw about 40,000 people at our productions in Perth, not to mention the thousands of patrons who attended our regional tour and live broadcast. What a year!

Our final production of 2016, Moliere's *Tartuffe*, a new version by Justin Fleming, wrapped up here in Perth and is now playing in Brisbane with Queensland Theatre – no doubt inciting as much laughter and hilarity as it did here. We are very pleased that our outgoing Artistic Director Kate Cherry's final directing work for the company was seen by both Perth and Brisbane audiences – it was a fitting farewell for Kate.

I am busy working on an international tour for 2017, to send our production of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* to China. Although many of the details are still to be confirmed, this will be our first time performing in China with the possibility of up to seven cities participating in the tour, including Beijing and Shanghai. We also hope to get to Perth's sister city of Chengdu and to Hangzhou, which is in

Western Australia's sister state, Zhejiang Province.

After Kate's departure to her new role at NIDA in November, our new Artistic Director, Clare Watson has fully taken the helm. We are very excited to welcome Clare to the company and back to Western Australia, for this new phase in Black Swan's history, and look forward to Clare's direction both on and off stage. For an insight into Clare, her background and what she's looking forward to here at Black Swan, look to page 3.

On the artistic front, this year we began a new initiative with our cultural centre neighbours, The Blue Room Theatre called the Good Play Club. Aimed at local theatre practitioners, each session consists of a play reading and guided conversation lead by Black Swan Associate Director Jeffrey Jay Fowler

and an invited guest artist. The initiative has proven very popular, and Clare Watson was the guest speaker at a recent session, discussing *Medea*. We are very pleased to be working with The Blue Room Theatre, an organisation that is vital to the health of the performing arts sector in Western Australia.

Our 2017 season has now been announced, full of eclectic and exciting productions. Subscriptions are available now, as are single tickets. Why not give your friends and family the gift of a wonderful theatre experience with a gift subscription or gift voucher?

Thank you for your support throughout our 25th year. We hope you have a wonderful festive season, and look forward to seeing you at the theatre in the new year.

Natalie Jenkins
Executive Director

Support Black Swan by Giving!

Share our vision to further develop theatre in WA and make it sustainable and accessible. With your help we can enhance the cultural vibrancy of WA and develop future artists. Visit our website www.bsstc.com.au/support to make your donation now.

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



BLACK SWAN SNIPPETS

COMMISSION AWARDS

Two Rio Tinto Black Swan Commission plays received awards recently: playwright Hilary Bell took home an AGWIE Award for Children's Theatre for *The Red Balloon*, and Suzie Miller's *Dust* won Best Script at the WA Premier's Book Awards!

FAREWELL

After seven years with Black Swan our extraordinary Marketing Coordinator Kerry Miller is leaving to fulfil her dream of travelling around Australia. Thank you for everything Kerry. Have a great time and maybe we'll see you out on the road!

GIVE THEATRE

The holiday season is fast approaching! Give the gift of theatre with Black Swan's gift vouchers – the perfect present for the theatre lovers in your life. Purchase gift vouchers in any amount on our website at bsstc.com.au or call us on (08) 6212 9300.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



25 MARCH - 9 APRIL 2017

Subscriber Briefing:

Monday 20 March, 6.15pm (free)

Rio Tinto Pre-show talk:

Thursday 30 March, 6.45pm (free)

Post-show Q&A: Thursday 4 April, after the 6.30pm performance (free)



28 APRIL - 14 MAY 2017

Post-show Q&A: Tuesday 9 May, after the 6.30pm performance (free)

WELCOME TO CLARE WATSON!

Clare Watson has officially begun in her new role as Black Swan's Artistic Director, and we are very excited to welcome her to the Black Swan family!

Clare began her career as a high school teacher for 10 years, while also performing part-time. A graduate of the director's course at the Victorian College of the Arts, a job as Youth and Education Program Manager at the Malthouse Theatre segued into freelance work with Melbourne Theatre Company, Belvoir and State Theatre Company of South Australia.

She comes to Black Swan from Melbourne's St Martins Youth Arts Centre where, as Artistic Director, she transformed it into a highly collaborative company that is now presenting work in major festivals and with major Australian theatre companies. Clare has received several award nominations including best director at the Helpmann Awards and the inaugural best director award at the Melbourne Fringe.

To learn a bit more about Clare, we asked a few questions about her background and what she's looking forward to here at Black Swan:

You spent some time in Perth as a child. Do you have any favourite memories, or any favourite spots that you're looking forward to getting back to?

I was in Perth for my pre-school years and my earliest memories were all made in Perth. I remember sitting in the sand pit under the lemon tree. In fact my first ever business was as a four year old, collecting lemons and trying to sell them for 1 cent. Mum told me I was only allowed to sell them from the backyard - suffice to say, that limited my market capacity!

After moving, first to England and later to Melbourne, I would return every year to visit family in Perth - the call of the crows, the jacarandas, the vast Swan River and the endless blue sky have always been synonymous with Perth for me.

I've been here for a month now and I haven't been back to King's Park yet, which I'm looking forward to re-visiting. I have been enjoying all of the treasures of the cultural precinct and all of the fantastic cafes, restaurants and bars. And I've already found some great op-shops!

What is your favourite play?

I love that theatre is responsive to its time. That a play like *Hamlet* has been presented

in a myriad of ways in order to speak to its audience about madness, mortality, politics and power, but each time a company presents such a play it is imbued with its local context. Each production resonates with the history of the work, attached to the original with an umbilical cord, but also new meaning and relevance arise with every new audience. It's these plays that can essentially time travel that I really love the most but it is so difficult to pick one: *The Cherry Orchard*, *The Glass Menagerie* and *The Chapel Perilous* all rank high on the list right now. And I also love working with living writers on new plays, the collaboration and discovery in that process is incredibly satisfying creatively.

Is there anything you are most looking forward to in joining the Black Swan family?

I have already been so warmly welcomed by the Black Swan family - and it's a big one - the team, the artists who join us for each project, the Board and most importantly the audience. It's a family that are adventurous and passionate about theatre and I'm looking forward to sitting in the theatre with you all - laughing together, gasping together and then getting into the foyer

afterwards for impassioned and rambling conversations about the plays that we've seen and the world in which we live.

Is there something you're especially excited to sink your teeth into in your new role?

I've spent the last few weeks meeting local artists: actors, writers, designers and directors, and I can't wait to get started collaborating with these brilliant minds and world class artists. Nationally, Perth is leading the way in devised theatre practice and I look forward to celebrating this on our stages in years to come.

As fresh eyes looking at the company, is there anything you think Black Swan excels at particularly?

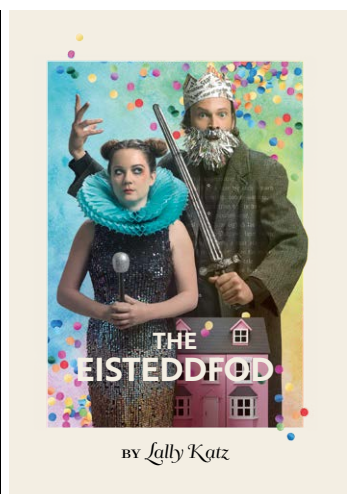
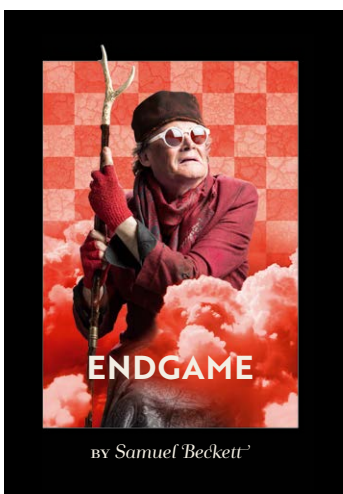
Black Swan began, led by the vision of Andrew Ross, as a theatre company that explores and celebrates West Australian stories. Looking across the 25 year history of the company, works including *Bran Nue Dae*, *Cloudstreet* and *The Sapphires* demonstrate the huge contribution that Black Swan makes to the nation's identity and cultural voice. Each of these works, while beginning their performance life on our stages, have gone on to have life on screen bringing West Australian stories to



an international audience. Black Swan excels at delivering local stories, characters and aesthetics to the audience on a breathtakingly ambitious scale.

Let *The Right One In* will be your directorial debut at the company. How did that show come to be included in our 2017 season? What drew you to it?

I first encountered *Let the Right One In* as a film and adored it, I found it heart-warming, unsettling and fantastically moody. Immediately, I thought it would make a perfect stage work but after some searching it seemed that the rights weren't available to create an adaptation. It turns out that The National Theatre of Scotland had beat me to it and their adaptation - by the team that also made Harry Potter and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time* - has played across Britain to rave reviews and full houses. Our production will be an Australian premiere. Kate and I, while discussing the 2017 season, chose for this production to be the final work in the year so as the city starts to sizzle you'll be able to join us in the stunning Heath Ledger Theatre where it will be snowing. We hope to see you there for this Romeo and Juliet with fangs!



EXPLORE NEW HORIZONS IN 2017

Eclectic and entertaining, our 2017 season represents the passing of the creative baton – from Kate Cherry, who has programmed the majority of the season with wonderful stories and talented artists, to new Artistic Director Clare Watson, who will direct her first production for the company at the end of the year.

In 2017 we discover new possibilities, celebrate the rich creativity of highly acclaimed artists and playwrights, and uncover hidden treasures and magical stories. This season places the stories of (extra) ordinary people in the spotlight. It encourages us to reflect upon ourselves, our lives and all of the chaos, passion, pain, laughter and love that comes with living.

Dive in with two highly acclaimed contemporary gems by Australian playwrights - Michael Gow's intimate and sweeping exploration of love and loss in *Once in Royal David's City*; and *Switzerland*, a tense and furious thriller by Joanna Murray-Smith. Look to the past with *The Lighthouse Girl*, a gentle play about war-time Australia; and the incredible and provocative Broadway biography set in war-time Germany, *I Am My Own Wife*.

Navigate the absurd and unusual with Samuel Beckett's rarely seen and engaging tragicomedy *Endgame*; and the adaptation of the gothic novel and film, *Let The Right One In*, a deeply moving and enigmatic tale of friendship and love. Embrace family with Lally Katz's *The Eisteddfod*, an exciting and intricate story about the drama of growing up; and Will O'Mahony's *Coma Land*, a magical story celebrating children, difference and the depths of parental love.

Ticket packages are available now and start from just \$150. Subscribing to a package offers preferential seating, discounted ticket prices, free ticket exchanges, great community discounts, invitations to exclusive events and behind the scenes opportunities.

To subscribe, head to our website www.bsstc.com.au for a full range of packages. Single tickets are also on sale via Ticketek.

Casting News

Since launching our 2017 season in early October, our Artistic department has been busy continuing casting for our eight productions next year. Here are a few new announcements:

- Penny Everingham and Kaye Stevenson join *Once in Royal David's City*
- Murray Dowsett completes the cast of *The Lighthouse Girl*
- *Coma Land* will see Humphrey Bower, Amy Mathews, Morgan Owen and Ben Sutton on stage
- Black Swan Associate Director Stuart Halusz will be on stage rather than backstage in *Let The Right One In*, joined by Ian Michael, Sophia Forrest, Rory O'Keeffe and Maitland Schnaars



READY, SET, GO

Over the past couple years, Black Swan has been working towards a goal – to build our own sets.

In December 2014 our Production department took up residence at a workshop space in Belmont. The space was leased to us by Artsworkshop, a commercial company who has built our sets for over 10 years. Plumb Construction eventually took over Artsworkshop, and in July 2016 we entered into an agreement that gave us more space in the workshop and bought a proportion of the existing machinery.

Our Wardrobe department also moved from a space in Northbridge to join the Production department in Belmont.

The space now houses both our Wardrobe and Set Construction departments and also has some storage. Led by Production Manager, Garry Ferguson, we currently have two full-time staff, Alex Fisher, Technical Manager and Les Hickford, Workshop Manager. Wardrobe Manager, Lynn Ferguson leads the wonderful wardrobe team. Casual staff are brought in as required to meet the demands.

To date we have built the sets for three productions solely by ourselves, *Tartuffe*, *Clinton: The Musical* and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. We look forward to stretching our set building muscles and seeing what we can do!



Top to bottom: *Tartuffe*, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* and *Clinton: The Musical*



From the Archives

A quick look at past Black Swan productions

Waiting for Godot, 1993

1993 marked the 40th anniversary of Samuel Beckett's *Godot*, which we celebrated by presenting this classic at the Subiaco Theatre Centre as a slapstick, surrealist comedy full of pathos. Starring Geoff Kelso, Kelton Pell and George Shevtsov (all of whom will star in our production of Samuel Beckett's *Endgame* in 2017) and Marta Kaczmarek and Kyle Morrison.

ENGAGEMENT AROUND WA

On the road in 2016 for four weeks in metro and regional schools and venues, our Education & Community touring production *Shadowboxing*, directed by Jeffrey Jay Fowler and written by Ella Hetherington, was well received by schools and regional communities.

We performed 19 times and presented countless workshops with the playwright and cast, performing to over 2,874 students, teachers and community members. This finished up two years of touring this production around the state and we are thrilled with the response from students in particular, who really connected to the themes that reflected their lives so well.

Additionally, we had hundreds of patrons attending our live broadcast of *Tartuffe* at 11 regional venues and 28 Community Resource Centres across WA. The broadcast was also presented locally at the Northbridge Piazza and Memorial Gardens in Victoria Park. As part of this project, three regional communities received professional acting workshops in Busselton, Geraldton and Margaret River.

Thanks to our partners Rio Tinto, Lotterywest, Chevron, Water Corporation and the Feilman Foundation.

STUDENTS OF THEATRE

We've had a bumper year of engagement with students this year, with mainstage productions *Picnic at Hanging Rock* and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* very popular with school groups and tertiary students.

Picnic at Hanging Rock, a co-production with Malthouse Theatre had 1,862 students and teachers on the edge of their seats for this thrilling retelling of the iconic Australian novel. And *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, our first international collaboration, saw 2,059 students and teachers attending to witness this mammoth Chinese Australian fusion of cultures directed by Dr Wang.

Teaching Artist workshops in schools remain a popular form of engagement with Black Swan professional artists across acting and design elements of the upper school drama courses. In 2016, 21 schools had our artists deliver professional workshops to over 300 students.



KAILIS

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The Caucasian Chalk Circle: 'a truly surprising collaboration'

"Sumptuously visual and aurally rich... quite an exhilarating production."

PERTH THEATRE REVIEWS

"It has all the hallmarks of an unforgettable theatre experience."

THE AUSTRALIAN

"A rare treat for lovers of theatre, a wonderfully directed show with influences from a variety of traditions. A fabulous opportunity to enjoy one of the world's most famous plays in a well-considered, expertly finished production."

STAGE WHISPERS



Clinton: The Musical: 'an absolute delight'

★★★★

"Crass, colourful and immensely entertaining theatre."

LIMELIGHT
MAGAZINE

"[An] amusing and intelligent satire... The cast could not be better."

THE AUSTRALIAN



"An absolutely brilliant, hilarious and thoroughly entertaining night. Black Swan at its best. Bravo!"

TRACY, PATRON

Seen on Scene

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

THE CAUCASIAN CHALK CIRCLE OPENING NIGHT IN THE HEATH LEDGER THEATRE



Sarah D'Onofrio, Jeremy Lieu, Patty Chong and John Palermo



Charlotte Diaz, Simon Walsh and Jackie Walsh



Julia Gobbert and Liam Gobbert

CLINTON: THE MUSICAL OPENING NIGHT IN THE HEATH LEDGER THEATRE



Simon Burke and Paul Hodge



Kim Hodge, Judy Kozak, Bev Lange and Howard Lange



Angela and Fred Chaney, Malcolm and Tonya McCusker, Fran and Ross Ledger



Justine Hyams and Holly Little

TARTUFFE OPENING NIGHT IN THE HEATH LEDGER THEATRE



Kenneth Ransom and Kate Cherry



Edward Nettleton and Beatrice McCarthy



Liam Ryan and Sara Polanski



Ella and Cam Worth

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