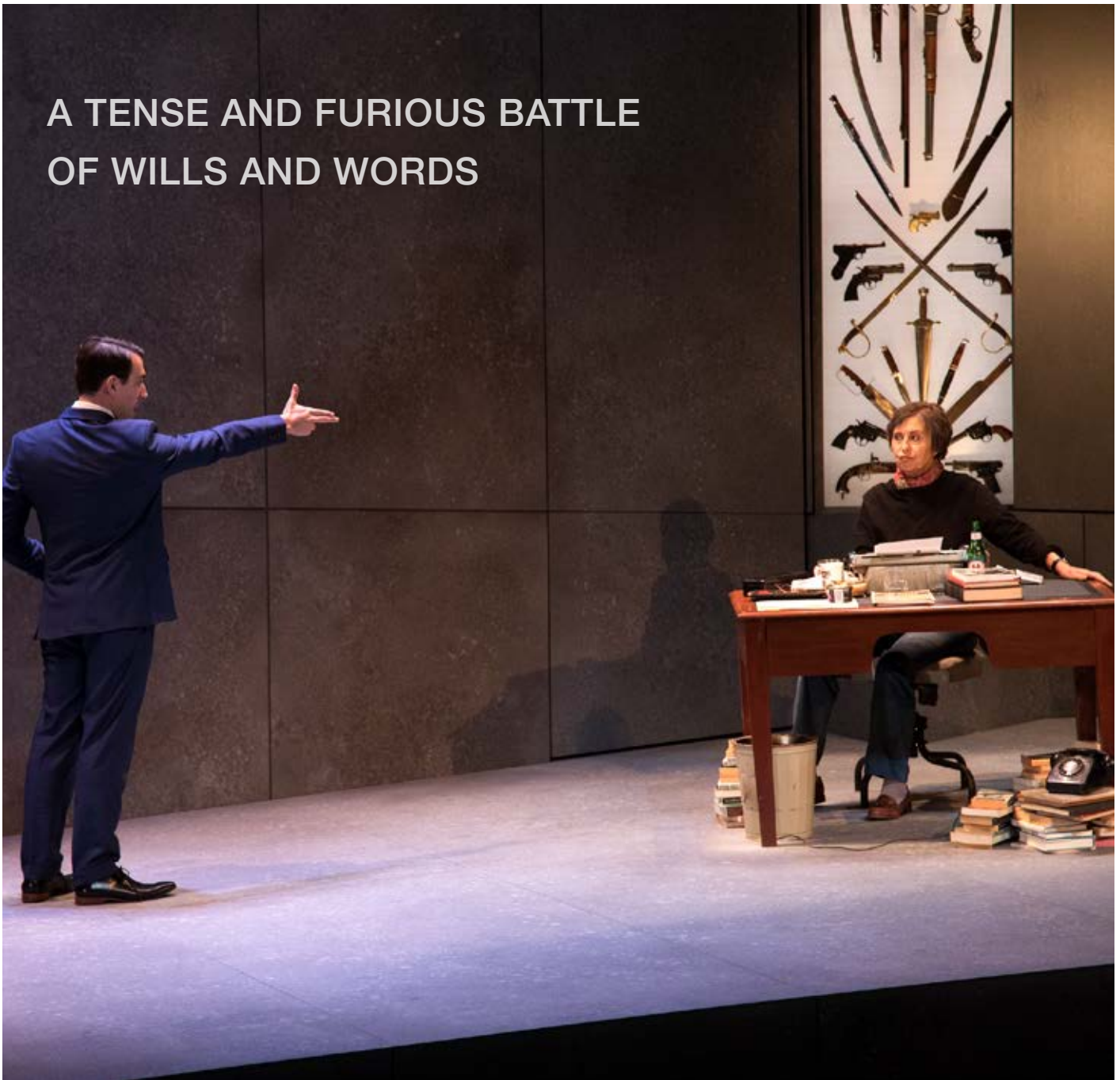


ON CUE

BLACK SWAN
STATE THEATRE
COMPANY



A TENSE AND FURIOUS BATTLE
OF WILLS AND WORDS



L-R: Jenny Davis and Giuseppe Rotondella, *Switzerland* (2017). Image by Philip Gostelow

INSIDE



REMEMBERING JIMMY CHI



ONSLOW KEEPERS



BLACK SWAN LAB

A NOTE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



We're launching slightly earlier this year (on 28 August) to coincide with the other state theatre companies around the nation. For those of you who can't make it to the launch event, we'll share with you the full details of the 2018 season on our website once we've launched. We're counting down.

In the Studio Underground, we've just finished *Coma Land* which was written and directed by Will O'Mahony – a keen mind and creative talent that we have also seen on stage as an actor with Black Swan. *Coma Land's* superb team of Western Australian artists and

There has been a lot going on at Black Swan of late. We're putting the finishing touches on our season launch for 2018 and the brochure is off at the printers. We had a lot of fun at the photoshoots working with exceptional actors and artists and we can't wait to share it with you.

actors brought alive a world beyond consciousness in a moving story about parents and children. This was a collaboration with Performing Lines WA and we loved working with their passionate and professional team.

Upstairs in the Heath Ledger Theatre, we've opened *Switzerland* by Joanna Murray-Smith starring Jenny Davis (OAM and Juniper Champion for Seniors at the WA Seniors Awards) in a tour-de-force performance as the sociopathic Patricia Highsmith. Joanna Murray-Smith's script will have you on the edge of your seat in this psychological thriller that invites us into the Swiss home of Highsmith in the last days of her life. She was a fascinating woman: a brilliant writer, a collector of weaponry and a lover of snails. Patricia Highsmith wrote 22 novels –

including 5 Tom Ripley works. She was also, famously, the first to write a lesbian novel with a happy ending, *A Touch of Salt*, which was recently adapted into the Academy Award winning film, *Carol*. Patricia Highsmith was herself a lesbian but lived a solitary life in her later years. Highsmith lived in a time in which her sexuality was forbidden and she underwent extensive therapy in an attempt to 'cure' her of her 'affliction'.

We're lucky to live in a much more tolerant world today. I'm sure, like me, your Facebook feed is full to the brim of 'Marriage Equality' posts at the moment and given we now only have days to register to vote I would urge you all to make sure your details are up-to-date. Please also encourage your friends and family to complete the survey when it arrives in

the mail. It seems absurd in this more tolerant time that we are being asked to put love to a vote and answer a survey about the meaning of family. Love is love. Family is family.

And finally, I would like to farewell a much loved and respected member of the Black Swan family. The prodigious talent that brought us *Corrugation Road* and *Bran Nue Dae*, has sadly departed but he leaves with us his wonderful music to remember him by for many generations to come.

There is so much to look forward to, both on our stage and in this coming Spring season. We look forward to seeing you at the theatre.

Clare Watson
Artistic Director

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



SWITZERLAND
19 AUGUST - 03 SEPTEMBER 2017

Rio Tinto Pre-show Talk: Thursday 24 August, 6.45pm (free)

Post-show Q&A: Tuesday 29 August, after the 6.30pm performance (free)



2018 SEASON LAUNCH
Monday 28 August, 6.00pm (free)



I AM MY OWN WIFE
12 - 29 OCTOBER 2017

Post-show Q&A: Tuesday 24 October, after the 6.30pm performance (free)



LET THE RIGHT ONE IN
11 NOVEMBER - 03 DECEMBER 2017

Rio Tinto Pre-show Talk: Thursday 16 November, 6.45pm (free)

Post-show Q&A: Tuesday 28 November, after the 6.30pm performance (free)

REMEMBERING JIMMY CHI

'A world of different dreams'

I remember the band Kuckles from the early 1980's when I saw them perform in Perth and again a few years on when they came to Melbourne for a Spoleto Festival and I presented them in a lunchtime concert at the Union Theatre at the University of Melbourne.

Watching in an audience of Melbourne university students I realised how different they were from any other Australian band. As I got to know them and their music better, I learnt how the unique history of Broome was at the unique heart of their music. Broome from the beginnings of the pearling industry became a community unlike any other in Australia. Music was the soul of Broome's community life. South East Asian influences from what is now Indonesia and the Philippines blended with Caribbean calypso. Gradually other layers accumulated with the Catholic dominated education with the German Fathers and Brothers and the Irish nuns. Jimmy Chi with his Aboriginal, Japanese, Chinese and Scottish ancestry was a quintessential Broome man. Within the extraordinary range of songs in his cannon all of these influences can be heard.

He approached the book of his first stage musical *Bran Nue Dae* the same way. All of the influences of his childhood and youth were employed, the Hollywood musicals and road movies he watched

at Sun Pictures, a classic Shakespearian comic plot, and the rituals of the church, and his own story and the stories of his collaborators.

His work challenged and changed the way other Australians saw Aboriginal people and their history, and it also challenged and changed the way Aboriginal people saw themselves.

Jimmy was a unique individual artist, a giant who was also a consummate collaborator. His work always came from deep within himself, his struggles with mental illness, his family and education, his friendships, his sense of identity and his Catholic faith. Amongst all those scores of songs there is not a word or a bar of music that is not rigorously honest.

I don't have the words to express the huge gratitude and privilege I feel to have worked with him and to have been embraced by his family and his lifelong Broome musician friends and collaborators.

*For only truth remains
For all things are just the same
For accepting is part of truth
When I give my heart to you
When I gave my heart to you
When I give my heart to you*

Quotations from: 'If I gave my heart to you' by Jimmy Chi, final song of Bran Nue Dae.

Andrew Ross
Emeritus Artist



Photo by David Dare Parker

Black Swan would like to acknowledge the passing, in June, of a hero of Australian theatre - Broome based playwright and musician Mr Jimmy Chi.

Jimmy was so integral to Black Swan's formative years, with his productions of the ground breaking *Bran Nue Dae* and later, *Corrugation Road*. These works led the way in promoting Aboriginal theatre in Australia and made such an impact across the nation, that they helped put Black Swan, and Western Australia, on the map. It was after the 1990 Festival of Perth production of *Bran Nue Dae* that Black Swan was founded in 1991, under the

chairmanship of Janet Holmes à Court and artistic leadership of Andrew Ross (now our Emeritus Artist). Andrew has written a touching tribute to Jimmy in this edition.

On behalf of the board and staff of Black Swan State Theatre Company, I would like to express our sorrow to his family for their loss and our deepest gratitude and respect to Jimmy and his community, for giving us such wonderful gifts that will forever stand the test of time.

RIP Jimmy Chi.

Mark Barnaba, AM
Chair



Salt Water Cowboys, *Bran Nue Dae*, 1993

Although I did not know Jimmy Chi well, I am aware of his wonderful contribution to the Arts in Australia - both in Western Australia and nationally. It was Andrew Ross' production of *Bran Nue Dae* by Jimmy Chi with the legendary Broome band Kuckles in the 1990 Festival of Perth, that inspired the development

of a new theatre company for WA that would tell West Australian stories, produce classics in a West Australian context, and recognise the skills of our indigenous people in its productions. That company was Black Swan - now Black Swan State Theatre Company.

Janet Holmes à Court AC
Founding Donor

GETTING TO KNOW: CRAIG YAXLEY

On Cue recently sat down with Board Member, Craig Yaxley to discuss what theatre means to him and his favourite things about Perth. Craig is also a Partner at KPMG, who are supporting Joanna Murray-Smith's two-handed thriller *Switzerland*.

You've been a long-term supporter of Black Swan in many ways. Why do you think it's important to support the arts?

The arts are so important to the vitality and cultural experience of living in Perth to help make it a vibrant city. Without a strong artistic community, a city lacks soul and a sense of community and diversity.

On a personal level I am a passionate supporter of the arts and I thrive on the creativity, commitment and passion of the Black Swan company which is consistently demonstrated by the executive team, staff, the production team and actors. I consider it to be a privilege to be a board member of our State Theatre Company and to be part of a very energised and committed board. It's also a way of giving back.

From a business perspective, KPMG partners and staff welcome the opportunity to be engaged in our community to bring our expertise and passion to help build a better WA. It's very much a win-win.

What have been some of your favourite Black Swan productions?

That's a difficult one, but the stand-outs for me have been *The Lighthouse Girl*, *Venus in Fur* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*. The production qualities and acting in these plays were outstanding, and make you feel proud to be part of the Black Swan team.

Clare Watson will unveil her first program as Artistic Director shortly. What are you most looking forward to with Clare's artistic vision?

I'm very excited about the artistic vision and fresh approach Clare brings to the role as Black Swan's new artistic director, and how she is seeking to engage with the broader Perth and WA community through her first season. She has really hit the ground running and she brings a balance of creativity and openness to what should be a very exciting season which I think will really resonate with our audiences.

What's top of your essential things to do in Perth?

I'm definitely a summer person, so I love going to the beach, or by the Swan River, and spending time outdoors. I also really enjoy and appreciate the choices we now have with an array of new restaurants, cafes and bars. Whenever I can



get away I love to head down south with friends and family, the beaches and wine region are second to none.

What's the best piece of advice you've ever been given?

Soon after we started our family a mentor at the time told me to always put your family first, and stressed the importance of keeping a balance between your professional career and your family life. I've always sought to keep this balance, although from time to time I haven't been as successful as I would have liked!

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With the help of our business sponsors, Black Swan continues to be a leading Australian theatre company, creating meaningful theatre experiences that celebrate and excite our community.

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JENNY DAVIS - FAVOURITE THINGS

Beloved Perth actor, Jenny Davis, currently stars in the WA Premiere of *Switzerland*. Most recently with *Black Swan*, Jenny has graced the stage as Madame Pernelle in *Molière's Tartuffe*, playing a bastion of morality. In *Switzerland*, we see Jenny perform the notorious and celebrated crime-writer, embodying the prickly Patricia Highsmith. Get to know Jenny, behind-the-scenes, with a few of her favourite things!



1. GARDEN

My husband and I created our courtyard garden surrounded by a red brick wall, which I love because it glows in the sun. I like lots of colourful plants in a garden and this is my favourite place to sit and day dream.

2. THEATRICAL COSTUME DESIGNS

My godmother worked for Motleys theatrical costume designers in London in the 1930s. These designs for a season by Sir John Gielgud of *The School for Scandal* were given to her as a wedding present. I knew from a very young age that I wanted to work in the theatre.

3. CLOCK

My husband and I both love antique clocks –the sound of home means a steady tick and the chiming of the hours. This one has a strike rather than a chime, but we love it because we bought it on our honeymoon in 1969 in Lymington in England. It's a shelf clock from the

1850's with a Scottish casing and American workings.

4. PATRICIA HIGHSMITH BIOGRAPHY:

My favourite book of the moment is a biography, "The Talented Miss Highsmith" by Joan Schenkar. It's a fascinating study of a very complex woman, the author of many famous and rather creepy novels, Patricia Highsmith, whom I will be portraying in the play, *Switzerland*, (by Australian playwright Joanna Murray-Smith) for Black Swan State Theatre Company later this year. It will be such fun to be in a psychological thriller!

5. FAMILY PHOTOS

The most important thing in my life is family. Consequently, we have family photos all over the house. My current favourites were taken at Christmas by photographer Stewart Thorpe of our beautiful son and daughter and their respective families. Our children both have wonderful partners so

we are doubly blessed, and our four grandchildren are an absolute joy.

6. PAINTBOX

This is my mother's Reeves paintbox from when she was a child in the 1920s. My mother is now 94 and has eyesight problems so can no longer send us cards painted in her delicate water colours, so it's lovely to have this as a memento to show our grandchildren who are all into art.

7. DEAR HEART

The little evening bag belonged to my Aunt Wynne who is the subject of a play I wrote for Agelink Theatre, *Dear Heart*, based on her WWII letters to her husband who was a POW in Java. My daughter, Rebecca Davis, and son-in-law,

Stuart Halusz, played Wynne and her husband, Mickey, and the play has toured around Australia and three times to the UK. Allen & Unwin also commissioned me to write the book – it's a family project very dear to my heart!

8. STICK VACUUM CLEANER

Just to show not everything in our home is antique, this is my favourite gadget of the moment. My family gave me a stick vacuum cleaner for my birthday – what joy after all those years of sweeping floors with a broom!

Note: First published as 'Photo Finish with Jenny Davis' in *The Sunday Times*, July 2017.

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 bsstc.com.au/support to make your donations now.



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IN THE COMMUNITY

REGIONAL

Our season of *The Lighthouse Girl*, the production based on the true story of Faye Howe, who at the outbreak of WWI transcribed Morse code messages from soldiers heading off to the front line, premiered in Albany before its extended season in Perth. It was a runaway sensation! We are very proud of the

overwhelming response to this new Australian work by Hellie Turner, based on the novels by Dianne Wolfer. Our aim as a state theatre company is to share theatre with all Western Australians regardless of location, and we are currently working hard to secure funding to tour this wonderful story across regional WA in 2018.

Our seventh Live Broadcast is just around the corner; Joanna Murray-Smith's psychological thriller *Switzerland*, will be broadcast from the Heath Ledger Theatre to 14 performing arts venues and cinemas, numerous community resource centres and homes across the state on Friday 1 September at 7:30pm.

The Live Broadcast would not be possible without the support of Lotterywest. Check our website for more information and to see if your town will be screening the Live Broadcast.



Images by Alena Tompkins

ONslow KEEPERS PROJECT

Black Swan teaching artists, Caitlin Beresford-Ord and Ben Collins, spent five days in Onslow in June getting to know local seniors in the community. Our artists learnt much about Onslow and its unique place in WA's north from a series of interviews conducted with the "Onslow Keepers". The conversations recorded, as part of a unique oral histories project, will also serve to give others a better understanding of their past and the complex relationships that form the foundation of the community.

Now in the post-production stages, Ben is developing these recordings into individual podcasts, to be available online and for future use by the community.

WORK EXPERIENCE

On August 25 and 26 Black Swan will open its doors and welcome 26 high school students for our new two-day intensive work experience program.

Students will hear from a wide range of industry professionals, including actors, directors, creatives and arts administrators as well as experiencing workshops in Stage Combat, Improvisation and Set & Costume Design.

They will have the opportunity to explore all the spaces in the State Theatre Centre on an extensive backstage tour and finish their experience by attending a performance of *Switzerland* by Joanna Murray-Smith.

The final work experience program for 2017 will occur on November 17 and 18. For more information visit: bsstc.com.au/education/work-experience-and-internships/

The Eisteddfod: 'Dark matter ignites the imagination'

★★★★

*"Difficult to watch, easy to admire, *The Eisteddfod* pushes boundaries of comfort and theatrical expectations"*

ARTS HUB

"The talented Jeffrey Jay Fowler has directed the play to within an inch of its life, teasing out each theme and sharpening each moment until it shines with all its might."

THE AUSTRALIAN

Image by Daniel James Grant

Coma Land: 'Beautiful, surreal and allegorical'

★★★★½

"Coma Land's power lies in taking us from laughter to tears and back again."

WE LOVE PERTH

"It's tense and thrilling stuff; the type of theatre you can only get with creatives who have mastered the execution... At 70 minutes, Coma Land never wears out its welcome."

THE THEATRE DIARY

"...perfect fare for an audience keen to follow a promising writer's progress."

THE AUSTRALIAN

Image by Philip Goswami

Seen on Scene

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

THE EISTEDDFOD OPENING NIGHT IN THE STUDIO UNDERGROUND

Photos by Rebecca Mansell



Leanne and
Boyd Milligan



Ellie Aitken, Charlie Aitken, Nicola Forrest
and Kate O'Hara



Megan Roberts, Suzannah Day,
Genevieve Day and Liz MacNeil



Gita Bezard and Adam Mitchell

COMA LAND OPENING NIGHT IN THE STUDIO UNDERGROUND



Andrew Lewis and
Michelle Fornaiser



Eliza Honey, Sophia Forrest
and Morgan Owen



Nina Levy, James Berlyn
and Belinda Edmunds



Brad van Luxemborg, Jane Bell,
Melanie Kneafsey and Jill Winning

Stay tuned for more information
after our 2018 Season Launch
on Monday 28 August.

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