

ON CUE

BLACK SWAN
STATE THEATRE
COMPANY



Above: The cast of *Let the Right One In* (2017). Images by Daniel James Grant.

INSIDE



LIGHTING THE STAGE



EMERGING WRITERS GROUP



LIVE BROADCAST

A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

We entered 2017 as a year of new horizons. It has been full of joy and surprises and now we look to the new year and upcoming season of great “conversations”.



This year, Black Swan State Theatre Company has seen triumphs both on and off the stage. 2017 was the first year with new Artistic Director Clare Watson at the helm, and it is especially fitting that the season of *Let the Right One In* has wrapped up the year with a bang! This Australian premiere has been a phenomenal production – in showcasing the talents of our WA actors (three of whom are Noongar people) and the tremendous creative vision of our design team.

This spring we unveiled our education pilot program *Fitter. Faster. Better.* at two metropolitan and one regional primary school. This program is part live art experience, part game, part work out! Originally devised by Clare Watson for St Martins Youth Arts Centre, we are delighted to share this fantastic initiative with Western Australian audiences young and old alike.

At this year's State Arts and Cultural Partnership Honours Ceremony, Black Swan was thrilled to see many of our wonderful partners acknowledged for their significant contribution to the arts in WA. The success of the programs are a testament to the transformative effect long-term partnerships can have on the arts and cultural sector in WA and we thank these wonderful companies for working with us to enrich and enliven our community.

Congratulations to: Minderoo Foundation, awarded Honours in the Innovation and Sustainability category for the launch of the Black Swan Production Fund. The Production Fund was initiated at our inaugural Philanthropy Gala, another first for the company this year. This is a future fund established to provide long term security and enable the company to continue to develop works of exceptional quality. Wesfarmers Arts was awarded

Honours in the Outstanding Long-Term Partnerships category, for their collective support for WA's four major state performing arts companies. We thank them for their increased support of the development of theatre artists through the Black Swan Lab. In addition, congratulations to our beer partner Boston Brewing Co. for their win at the recent AMA Awards and our season partner The Standard for their win at the Good Food Guide Awards.

Next year we see a shift in programming with 'The Conversations'. The season has been designed as a series of mini-feasts – and with summer fast approaching and festival fever gripping Perth, we intend to celebrate this enriching culture year-round! We hope you will join us for the exciting year to come.

Natalie Jenkins
Executive Director

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

PLAY READINGS WITH THE EMERGING WRITERS GROUP
25 NOVEMBER - 9 DECEMBER
Reading:
Saturdays, 11am and 4pm (free)
More information and registration:
See page 5.

BLACK SWAN OFFICE HOLIDAY SHUT-DOWN
THE OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED FROM 22 DECEMBER FOR THE HOLIDAY PERIOD. WE WILL REOPEN TUESDAY 02 JANUARY 2018.
Office hours:
Monday - Friday 9am - 5pm

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01 – 04 MARCH 2018
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Sunday 04 March (free)



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by Ray Lawler

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HEATH LEDGER THEATRE

HIR
by Taylor Mac

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FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE LIGHTING DESIGNER

Chris Donnelly is a WA based Lighting Designer. You will remember his work as Assistant Lighting Designer in *Flood* (2014) and *LOADED: A Double Bill of New Plays* (2016). This year he has created the spectacular lighting design for *Coma Land* and below shares his insights to lighting *I Am My Own Wife*, the one-man show starring Brendan Hanson who played all thirty-six characters!

Can you tell us a little about the process you go through with the creative team in settling on the final ideas for the Lighting Design?

The lighting design is different to other design elements like set or costume, a large portion of it can't really happen until the blocking (the actors movement) is locked down. Cherish the set designer, Joe the director and I had a lot of conversations weeks out from rehearsals about the styles and looks we wanted to achieve. So, I had a pallet to work inside, but my design isn't locked down until it's programmed into the lighting desk, which happens about two or three days before opening night.

How do you convey the images in your head that you have imagined to the creative team?

There are a few ways. I can create mood boards and give reference images. If I want to convey a feeling more than a specific image I might send through some good photos of that feeling (perhaps a smoky dark forest or a huge warehouse with a single spec of light piercing the entire space). I'm fortunate that I've worked with the entire team before, so we understand each other's language and processes – so we can reference other works we've seen or worked on together. I also talk about light like you talk about food or art. I use lots of adjectives to create moods, for example. We'll break the set up with a big sweeping burnt orange back light. There will be little flecks of a slippery teal colour breaking up the space, falling onto the actor's face from over his shoulder.

We're looking for a lumpy kind of state, nothing too clean or even – It'll give him space to move around but won't give us much clarity in the detail of his face.

Director, Joe Lui, is also a lighting designer himself. Does that change the process at all? Is it easier or harder?

Joe and I came up together. We both studied at Murdoch Uni at the same time and got into lighting design at the same time. Joe and I used to work together a lot, we started a company together with some other friends and did dozens of shows over a few years. Then, we both started getting bigger gigs and didn't work together for a few years. It's been awesome being in the room again. He's been really great to work with, he doesn't step on my creative toes, but he understands exactly what I'm talking about and I can get super technical in my language – which is something you can't do with a lot of directors as they don't always understand the processes of lighting design (light angles and colours). It also means that I have to be very specific about what I talk about, which is great and keeps me working hard!

What key elements did you need to consider? How will the lighting contextualise the many characters and locations that need to be represented on stage?

The play takes place in two separate time lines: 'current day' 1993 and Charlotte's timeline of childhood to death. Brendan has to flip between dozens of characters and time lines very quickly. Some people

would consider using light to assist with this, but Joe and I decided that largely, the character swapping is so complicated we need to keep the lighting clean, even and uncomplicated. We're going to have specific lighting looks for the 1993 timeline and then we're going to treat the Charlotte timeline as a more traditional lighting design, it will breathe in and out and be more textured and creative. The idea is that whenever we return to the 'present day' timeline, the audience will realise based on the lighting look.

Did you need to make any compromises with your design? If so, what were they and what solutions did you discover?

Of course! Art is an ecosystem, there's dozens of things at play. You need to consider things like the size of the auditorium and the age of your audience – if you're in a 1,500 seat theatre doing an opera (where you typically have an older audience) you need to make it brighter so everyone can see properly. But in a smaller venue like the Studio Underground – we can afford to get more moody and dark. Also, in theatre lighting, it's very important to be able to see the eyes and face of the actors properly. So much of Brendan's acting is subtle face acting that if I'm spending all my time making big beautiful architectural lighting states and I don't make sure the audience can see him, a lot of the intent of the show will be lost. It's a balance between creating a beautiful installation and leaving space for everyone else (director, actors, set\costume and



sound designers) to have their art displayed properly too. The solution is always just a conversation. We make sure everyone's work gets its intent across. Sometimes a scene requires a big moody statement from the lights, sometimes seeing a prop or costume is the most important thing. We all need to work in synergy.

Did you always know that you wanted to be a Lighting Designer? Have you always been interested in the arts? If you weren't doing this as a career did you have a fall back?

No, I was super lucky to just fall into it! I was studying literature and just happened upon some production classes at uni. I didn't even do TEE (ATAR) drama! I also didn't (and don't) have a fall back. As soon as I started doing lighting design, I loved it. I commit to it fully and haven't considered other career paths. Maybe one day it will lose its shine, and I'll start thinking about other jobs, but for the moment, it's all I want to do.

First published in *Scenestr*
Thursday, 19 October 2017



Above: Brendan Hanson, *I Am My Own Wife* (2017). Image by Daniel James Grant.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Black Swan would like to thank our amazing network of passionate donors, giving circles and foundation, who have helped to deliver the magic of the theatre to Western Australians this year. Without your support, what we do simply wouldn't be possible!

In 2017 we welcomed Artistic Director Clare Watson, who oversaw the continued development of Black Swan's artistic vision and continued to grow our creative, regional and education programs. The generous support from our valued donors continues to contribute to the sustainability and longevity of Black Swan as Western Australia's state theatre company.

Earlier this year Nicola and Andrew Forrest and the Minderoo Foundation generously helped us to launch the Black Swan Production Fund. A future fund designed to ensure we can develop works of exceptional

quality that match the boldness and beauty of the state in which we live. Nicola has always been a passionate supporter of Black Swan philanthropically and through her position as a Board Member. When talking about her support of Black Swan Nicola says, "I love that it is our state theatre company and we're able to bring to life stories from our diverse population and communities." Working closely with Artistic Director Clare Watson and enjoying the creativity and integrity of her 2018 season, Nicola hopes in the future to see greater accessibility for people to engage in the arts. "Through greater collaboration and support, I'd like us to be able to continue developing stories

that reflect our current society, as well as recording the past. I believe Clare can help grow the Black Swan audience base as she brings new and bold works to the stage."

Janet Holmes à Court, our Founding Patron and part of the Local Larrikins giving circle is also a strong supporter of the work we do. Going to the theatre and listening to wonderful music has always played a big part in Janet's life and shaped her views on the role the arts plays in Western Australia. "I think it is extremely important that a state as big and relatively wealthy as WA has to have a state theatre company. It is a fundamental part of what every city and

state should provide for its community." Janet says.

Ongoing and new support from all donors, small and large, help to bring theatre to the stage. Black Swan greatly values all support we receive and if you would like to get in touch about making a donation or leaving a bequest please contact Philanthropy Manager, Andree McIntyre on 0417 187 025 or email andree@bsstc.com.au.

WORKING WITH OUR PARTNERS

Black Swan was invited by our Season Partner sponsor All Saints' College to participate in their Storylines Literature Festival. Held in October on their campus, the annual Festival promotes and fosters a love of youth storytelling through various art forms, so it continues throughout their lives.

Clare Watson gave the opening address of the Festival, speaking about storytelling in theatre. Next up, a panel of artists from *The Lighthouse Girl* gave students an insight into the process of adapting a novel for the stage. It featured Dianne Wolfer (Novelist), Hellie Turner (Playwright), Stuart Halusz (Director) and Lawrie Cullen-Tait (Set Designer). Actors Daisy Coyle (Faye) and Benj D'Addario (The Lighthouse Keeper) then performed an excerpt from the play.

Thank you All Saints' College for inviting Black Swan to be part of the Festival!



Above: Storylines Festival. Images by All Saints' College



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L-R: Andrea Fernandez, Tyler Jacob Jones, Geordie Crawley, Frieda Lee, Isabelle McDonald, St John Cowcher. Image by Philip Gostelow.

PLAY READINGS WITH THE EMERGING WRITERS GROUP

The Emerging Writers Group led by Director of New Writing Jeffrey Jay Fowler, is one of many artist development programs run by Black Swan State Theatre Company.

Emerging Western Australian playwrights apply for year-long support and meet once a month for discussion and mentoring, with the aim of developing their story and script writing skills. This public play reading is the culmination of this intensive program, where the playwrights work with professional directors and actors to further refine their plays for the stage. Writers St John Cowcher, Geordie Crawley, Andrea Fernandez, Tyler Jacob Jones, Frieda Lee and Isabelle McDonald will present their work in a public forum for the first time this summer. Play readings occur each Saturday from 25 November through to 09 December at the State Theatre Centre of WA.

WA writing has a unique flair and our emerging writers are no exception. We hope you will join us for the play readings. All play readings are free. Numbers limited, registrations essential. See <https://www.bsstc.com.au/for-artists/emerging-writers-group/play-readings-with-the-emerging-writers-group/> for full details.



SUMMER OF OUR LIVES by Tyler Jacob Jones (*25 November, 11am*)
A paranoid young girl befriends a mysterious alien creature and inadvertently convinces it that the world must be destroyed. A dark, contemporary musical comedy.

THE DOUBLE by Geordie Crawley (*25 November, 4pm*)

Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. But when Hugh arrives at Michael’s cabin near Logue Lake the similarities between them start becoming too much to bare.



WESTRALIA by St John Cowcher (*2 December, 11am*)

Jack and his girlfriend return to his small hometown for a funeral, uncover the dark secrets of Uliwagin, and the lengths people will go to save themselves.

DIG by Izzy McDonald (*2 December, 4pm*)

Doubt and guilt consumes Albany, 15 years on from the death of Trolley Girl, whose High Vis vest and Rollerskates made her shine like a star.



A NATIONAL PARK by Andrea Fernandez (*9 December, 11am*)

A modern tale of love between an unlikely duo who question if there really is a price tag on culture.

ALL HIS BELOVED CHILDREN by Frieda Lee (*9 December, 4pm*)

An homage to creation stories of the world’s religions, ALL HIS BELOVED CHILDREN is a playful modern myth about sex, violence, depravity and the creator’s first children.



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](https://www.bsstc.com.au/support) or fill out the form below to make your donation now.

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

Thank you for your generous gift!

LIVE BROADCAST

With the support of Lotterywest, Black Swan produced its seventh Live Broadcast in 2017. Filming and broadcasting live a performance of *Switzerland* by Joanna Murray-Smith on 1 September 2017. The production was broadcast in high definition, via Optus Satellite feed from the State Theatre Centre of WA to audiences across regional and remote Western Australia, as well as metropolitan Perth.

Black Swan’s commitment to broadcasting in HD is an important point of distinction from other WA performing arts companies who also broadcast to the regions. The quality of the broadcast reflects the production’s true design values and gives regional audiences the most tangible experience of being in the State Theatre Centre.

The broadcast included for the first time a University, two schools, a retirement community home and a brewery, with nine of the overall venues receiving the broadcast for the first time.

The 16 regional venues and 4 metro venues were:

Centennial Stadium- Albany, Curtin University- Bentley, Sun Pictures-Broome, All Saints’ College-Bull Creek, The New Lyric Theatre- Bunbury, Weld Theatre-Busselton, Camel Lane Theatre- Carnarvon, Boston Brewing Co. -Denmark, Esperance Civic Centre, Queens Park Theatre- Geraldton, The Brookman Street Theatre- Kalgoorlie, Moonrise Cinema-Karratha, Margaret River Cultural Centre, Moora Performing Arts Centre, Northam Senior High School, Perth Cultural Centre, Matt Dann Theatre & Cinema- Port Hedland, Three Springs Community Hall, Juniper Rowethorpe-Victoria Park and Wickham Picture Gardens.

The broadcast was also received via Westlink Satellite TV by 33 Community Resource Centres (CRCs).

August, Bencubbin, Boyup Brook, Bridgetown, Bruce Rock, Brunswick Junction, Cocos Islands, Coolgardie, Dalwallinu, Denmark, Donnybrook, Dowerin, Frankland River, Gingin, Greenbushes, Jurien Bay, Kalbarri, Kambalda, Kununurra, Lancelin, Manjimup, Mount Barker, Nannup, Norseman, Northcliffe, Quairading, Shark Bay, Tom Price, Toodyay, Walpole, West Arthur, Wyalkatchem, York.

A live welcome and introduction from Black Swan’s Executive Director, Natalie Jenkins, and Lotterywest’s CEO, Susan Hunt was included prior to the performance addressing the Heath Ledger Theatre audience and the many simultaneously watching across the state. It was a wonderful unifying experience.

People living in regional and remote areas of our state are disadvantaged from regular access to high quality theatre experiences, by virtue of distance and the cost of travel to Perth to attend theatre. Metropolitan audiences may also be disadvantaged by socio-economic factors, which limits their access to live theatre.

There has been an increase in venues taking the broadcast over the last seven years and we are thrilled to see such high engagement in the regions, generating a sense of community among audiences across the state.

“Thanks for keeping in touch throughout the preparation process with news articles and posters, greatly appreciated by all! Everyone had a great night. We had 42 in total! A great number for attendance in Shark Bay! We enjoyed it, and will definitely sign up for the next Live Broadcast...we are looking forward to finding out about it.”

Manager, Shark Bay CRC & Black Swan Regional Ambassador

“It was very enjoyable, sitting back in the comfy chairs, watching the audience take their places in the theatre, it was possible to imagine yourself part of the crowd except without any parking problems!”

Assistant Manager, Dalwallinu CRC

“We have an avid group of community members who look forward greatly to all Westlink simulcast events. Not only do we attract full houses every time there is a presentation but other community members who have access to Westlink also enjoy these events in their own homes. We for one will sadly miss these great opportunities for communities to come together and enjoy some of the privileges that are normally reserved for city residents. We had a full house of 22 for the Switzerland broadcast.”

Manager, Bridgetown CRC

NB: Westlink was decommissioned in September 2017.



Above: Boston Brewing Co. Denmark. Photo by Lee Griffiths.



Above: Backstage at the Heath Ledger Theatre.



Above: Patrons at Shire of Three Springs

Switzerland: ‘Visually captivating and seductive work.’



Left: Giuseppe Rotondella and Jenny Davis, *Switzerland* (2017). Photos by Philip Gostelow.

I Am My Own Wife: ‘Both hilarious and heartwarming’



Left: Brendan Hanson, *I Am My Own Wife* (2017). Photos by Daniel James Grant.

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.

SWITZERLAND OPENING NIGHT IN THE HEATH LEDGER THEATRE

Photos by Duncan Wright



Pam Ryan, Nola Burns, Melissa Greaves and Greg Street



Laurie Bell and Charlotte Diaz



Margie Bass, Rob McKenzie and Jean Perron

2018 SEASON LAUNCH IN THE HEATH LEDGER THEATRE

Photos by Rebecca Mansell



Elinor King and Andrea Fernandez



Kellie Parker, Natalie Jenkins and Nicky Firth



Paul Van Lieshout Hunt and Victoria Laurie



Paul Selwyn Norton and Shane Colquhoun



Claudia Dent and Peter Honey

I AM MY OWN WIFE OPENING NIGHT IN THE STUDIO UNDERGROUND

Photos by Court McAllister



Chris Donnelly and Claudia Blagaich



Clare Watson, Ivy Miller and Linda Savage



Joe Lui, Brendan Hanson and Helen Searle



Nigel Hearne, Kerry Sanderson and Mark Barnaba

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