

ON CUE

BLACK SWAN
STATE THEATRE
COMPANY



Above: Steve Rodgers, Geoff Kelso, Rob Johnson and Luke Carroll in *The Torrents* (2019). Photo by Philip Gostelow.

INSIDE



CELEBRATING WA TALENT



BEHIND THE SCENES



CREATING WORLD CLASS THEATRE

A NOTE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Thank you to all of you who joined us for our sell-out season of *The Torrents*, bringing Oriel Gray’s great play to the stage, finally.



The *Torrents* is a play that has been neglected and having full houses in rapturous applause, laughter and intent listening to her words was wonderful. On opening night, her son said, “we can’t change history, but tonight Black Swan redeemed it”. That’s something we can all feel proud of.

2019 has been an incredible year we’ve had to date. The season of **Where the Heart Is** has been fun, full of talent and big ideas. Thank you for joining us for the first four productions of 2019: *Our Town*, *You Know We Belong Together*, *Water* and *The Torrents*.

We’ve had exceptional wins, both on and off the stage. We are honoured to have won the Perdaman Workplace Diversity Excellence Award. Black Swan has a long tradition in promoting diversity and inclusion on stage and in the Black Swan office – reflecting and celebrating our Western Australian community. We are proud to lead the national industry in the re-balance for gender diversity. Programming works and employing a wide variety of people makes

our lives more interesting as we pursue an authentic experience of Australian lives on stage.

During the year we’ve seen classics, comedies, a world premiere and a remounted season. In the summer, *Our Town* captivated us with a stellar core cast and 90 members of the Perth community. The encore season of *You Know We Belong Together* moved Perth audiences for the second time around. We are delighted to share that Julia Hales was a WA Business News 40 Under 40 winner and has been a successful applicant in the Australia Council Artist with Disability Mentoring Initiative. Julia will commence work with Black Swan in 2020.

The world premiere of *Water* was a timely play ringing with truths. We’re so proud of the skilful and talented team who brought this extraordinary new writing to life. And having just closed *The Torrents* here in Perth we’re thrilled to be packing up the set and costumes to take it to Sydney, where it will be presented in the Sydney Opera House with our co-presenters Sydney

Theatre Company. It’s one of their best-selling shows of the year and we can’t wait to share the talents of some of Perth’s finest with a Sydney audience.

Coming up, we have rehearsals about to start for *Medea*, we’re continuing to prepare for our collaboration with Barking Gecko Theatre, *Fully Sikh* and if you enjoyed *The Torrents* then you’ll be lucky enough to see the actor who played Kingsley again soon. Luke Carroll is joining an all-star cast in the brilliant comedy by Nakkiah Lui, *Black is the New White*. We’re pleased to announce that Miranda Tapsell, an actor with a lot of heart (*Top End Wedding*, *The Sapphires*) will be delighting us on stage with this show in September. I’d love for you to join us for the rest of **Where the Heart Is**.

Clare Watson
Artistic Director

CELEBRATING WA TALENT

There was a warm and creative buzz at this year’s Performing Arts WA Awards, as the theatre and dance community celebrated and reflected on 2018. Congratulations to all the nominees who have contributed to the vibrancy of the arts in our state and make every day an inspiring adventure. We are thrilled to have won eight awards in the following categories:

- ☆ **Best Production** - *You Know We Belong Together* (a co-production with Perth Festival and DADAA)
- ☆ **Best New Work** - *You Know We Belong Together*
- ☆ **Best Director** - Adam Mitchell, *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*
- ☆ **Best Stage Design** - Tyler Hill, *Hir*
- ☆ **Best Actor (Female)** - Amy Mathews, *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*
- ☆ **Best Actor & Helpmann Award nominated Best Actor (Male)** - Kelton Pell, *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*
- ☆ **Best Newcomer (Female)** - Mackenzie Dunn, *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* and *Assassins*
- ☆ **Best Supporting Actor (Male)** - Will O’Mahony *Assassins*

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



Black is the New White
11 SEP – 22 SEP



2019 Season Launch
Save the date 16 SEP



Fully Sikh
10 OCT – 27 OCT

BEHIND-THE-SCENES

Sally Richardson on casting *Medea*.



I'm thrilled to have been given the opportunity by Artistic Director Clare Watson to direct *Medea*. A wonderful adaptation by Kate Mulvany and Anne-Louise Sarkis. I've had my eye on this award-winning work for some time now and am excited to be leading its WA premiere. Kate is one of the country's best playwrights and actors, and a dear friend. It's wonderful to be working on this script having last directed her work *The Danger Age* for Deckchair Theatre in 2010. This is a contemporary *Medea* as experienced and told by her two children. The casting of these young performers (who will never leave the stage) is critical to the play's success.



Setting the scene for our *Medea* casting process:

It's early on Sunday morning and members of our *Medea* team are in the Western Australian Youth Theatre Company (WAYTCo) space at King Street Arts Centre. We are prepping for what will be a day long call out process. We will meet with up to 100 boys aged between 10 and 16 years of age. In this group, we are looking for a core group of emerging artists to join us for an eight-week long workshop. The process will result in casting four boys who will join us for Black Swan's production of *Medea*.

In a wonderful first-time collaboration with WAYTCo, we have the hands-on support of General Manager Mollie Hewitt. She is busily writing down details as the queues of young men and their families snake off down the corridor. Executive Producer/ WAYTCo Director James Berlyn snaps a polaroid of each participant – and then the day is off and running.

The call out has four rotations of 30 young men. At the end of the day we are sitting around a table making the tough decisions to narrow down our workshop group to 25. What follows over the next eight weeks is an introduction to *Medea*: the script and process. For these committed and focused 25 young artists, the program is an opening into professional practice.

The *Medea* creative team, designer Bryan Woltjen, composer Melanie Robinson, actor Alexandria Steffenson (our actual *Medea*), and teaching artists join us for these workshop sessions. The sense of camaraderie and teamwork grows over the weeks. By the final session, we know if will be heart-breaking to have to farewell many of these young artists as we move into the final casting and rehearsal process. In front of a packed room of parents and loved ones, as these young men present their rehearsed scenes, the warmth and appreciation for their talent is palpable.

At present:

We have now cast four outstanding, courageous, adventurous and dynamic

young artists for *Medea*. Congratulations to Jack Molloy and Jesse Vakatini who share the role of Leon; and to Jalen Hewitt and Lachlan Ives who share the role of Jasper. WAYTCo have also created a special boys' project (for Fringeworld 2020) to be offered to those artists not selected for *Medea*. This is a fantastic outcome, built on process and collaboration.

Medea is at the State Theatre Centre this August.

Sally Richardson
Director

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT: FULLY SIKH

Sukhjit Kaur Khalsa shot to fame in Australia and around the world with her poetry on *Australia's Got Talent*. But before she went viral, Sukhjit was a brown, hairy Sikh girl growing up in the suburbs of Perth. *Fully Sikh* is her story.



I am a spoken word artist who has transitioned into a theatre-maker. It's been such a transformative experience these last couple of years and I have creative developments to thank for that. I still remember my first creative development for *Fully Sikh* in April 2018. I had no idea what to expect. I was so used to working as a solo artist, touring the world with a suitcase full of three to five minute poems. All performed as stand-alone pieces. How was I going to bring this artform into a 75 minute show?

The creative developments quickly alleviated my reservations about moving into theatre. When I entered the room, I realised the development process was there to support me, inspire my writing and was an opportunity to play! A week-long adventure to explore the work in the stage it's in.

In the back rooms of the State Theatre Centre, we infused the walls with Mum's recipe for daal and roti. We circulated the halls with an array of musical instruments. My mind has been buzzing after each creative development showing: itching to write the next draft.

With each creative development, the team has grown – introducing a new element to the *Fully Sikh* family/creative process. The first development involved Matt Edgerton (Director), Pavan Kumar Hari (Composer & Musician), and a range of actors. I did lots of show and tell from my childhood, shared stories of growing up in Leeming and brought my mum in to experiment with some cooking! We created a rough structure of what we thought the show was going to be about and what characters were important to tell this story.

The second creative development focused on Pavan's music and what he needed from us to do his magic on stage. The next creative development involved us looking at the script in its fourth draft and giving it a thorough edit. Matt and I got to work on characterisation and Clare Watson (Black Swan's Artistic Director) came in to give us some of her dramaturgical gems.

Our last development focused on the aesthetic feel of the show. We worked with Isla Shaw (Set & Costume Designer) and Tim Collins (Sound Operator). Isla's set design was explored and blocking of the space. As the performer, I got a feel for what props felt right, and what cultural elements needed some more TLC. It was wonderful to see Tim and Pavan work together experimenting with sound.

With each showing, we've invited different members of the community. This is to see how the poetry and the delicate issues we touch on are received by the audience. Now we are all off doing our "homework" and will come together again for rehearsals in September. I'm so privileged to work with such an exceptional team of skilled arts practitioners.

Thank you for holding this space for my story, my family, and my community.

Come see us at the State Theatre Centre in October!

Sukhjit Kaur Khalsa

KPMG

Embracing the Arts, enriching WA

Storytelling is essential to creating an inspiring culture for everyone to embrace. That is why KPMG is proud to support the Black Swan State Theatre Company.

KPMG.com.au

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HELP CREATE WORLD CLASS THEATRE

We invite you to donate to Black Swan to help us create world class theatre, right here in WA.



We are **your** State Theatre Company. We bring people together to tell beautifully crafted stories that are important to Western Australians. Stories that captivate and entertain us and give us a fresh perspective on the world in which we live.

We know you love theatre, and we do too. By making a donation in 2019, you will help us:

- Stage 120 performances for our community
- Inspire an audience of over 40,000
- Commit to employ 90% WA artists
- Showcase two new WA stories
- Support our local workshop in set building and scenic art



You can donate securely via our website, or call us on 6212 9300 and we can help you make your donation and organise your tax deductible receipt.

As a not for profit registered charity, we need your support. Together we'll make 2019 a year of exceptional theatre.



SPOTLIGHT ON BLACK SWAN ARTISTS

Yvan Karlsson



Yvan Karlsson is the latest Teaching Artist to join the Black Swan team. Yvan is a Director, Movement Director & Multi-Disciplinary Performer. He has trained with STEPS Youth Dance Company, Spare Parts Puppet Theatre The Curious School of Puppetry (UK) & most recently Force Majeure.

Yvan was selected for the Next Generation Programme Asia in Tokyo, completed a choreographic residency at Lizierés in France & was nominated for an 'OFFIE' (Off West End Theatre Award) for 'Best Choreography/Movement' for his work on EAST at The Kings Head.

Recently returned to Perth, Yvan is one of the co-creators for Circus MAXIMA's CATCH! and was selected to participate in Perth Festival's 2019 LAB artists.

Yvan's speciality for Black Swan is running our Physical Theatre workshops and he most recently worked with students from Dianella Islamic College before their upcoming production. We're honoured to have him as part of our team.

If you would like to book Yvan for your school email zoe@bsstc.com.au or find out more on our website here: <https://www.bsstc.com.au/education/workshops/>

EMERGING WRITERS' GROUP ANNOUNCED

Black Swan State Theatre Company's Emerging Writers' Group has been the hotbed for many successful plays, and has amongst its alumni Gita Bezard, Chris Isaacs, Tyler Jacob Jones, Frieda Lee, Joe Paradise Lui, Will O'Mahony, Zoe Pepper, Clare Testoni and Mararo Wangai.

The Emerging Writers' Group for 2019 include; Michelle Aitken, Zac James, Doreshawar Khan, Daley King and Sam Nerida. They will work with Black Swan's Director of New Writing Jeffrey Jay Fowler.

A key outcome is the development and workshop of their scripts for a free public play reading.

Free play reading dates to be advised soon.



Doreshawar Khan

Doreshawar Khan is a writer and creative born in Pakistan. Her play *Zmakkah* recounts the final hours of the last human on earth, an Afghan mercenary named Havvah, who is on a mission to deliver a valuable cultural artefact to a sacred site before she runs out of oxygen.



Michelle Aitken

Michelle Aitken is a theatre-maker and performer with a BA in Dance from WAAPA and an interest in dismantling the patriarchy. Her play *Kind Regards*, is a questionably autobiographical new script about family, peace offerings, and unrequited emails.



Daley King

Daley King is an eclectic theatre maker with Māori heritage. His writing generates the unpredictable and uncomfortable, examining the elusive fringes of society and the furthest corners of humanity. *Curiosity* is an intimate exploration of social isolation, human connection, and universal loneliness, through the eyes of a troubled social worker and their intriguing client, who bond over a mutual fascination with David Bowie and the Mars Rover.



Zac James

Zac James is a Wongi, Yamatji and Murri First Nations creative specialising in acting and writing. His play *1942* explores the life of a young Indigenous family and the struggles they face during the throes of WW2, on and off shore.



Sam Nerida

Sam Nerida is a performance maker and a producer, concerned with all things rhythm, humour, and the bending of form. Sam is writing a new performance piece *Fumble*, a work to celebrate healing, queer love, and family.

Our Town - “A sweet, gentle play.”



Photo by Daniel James Grant.

You Know We Belong Together - “Positive, life affirming and celebratory work!”

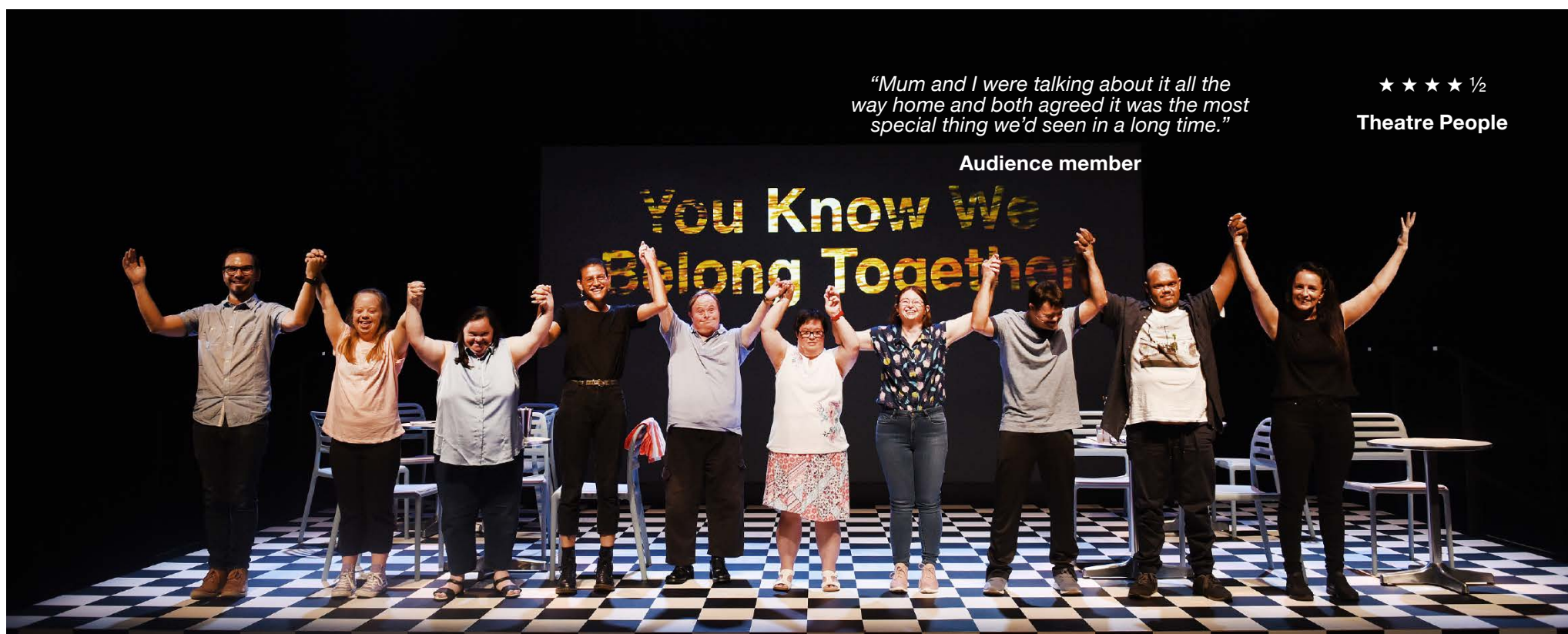


Photo by Toni Wilkinson.

Water - “Compelling new Australian work.”



Photo by Daniel James Grant.

BLACK SWAN'S SOCIAL PAGE

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.

OUR TOWN OPENING NIGHT IN THE STATE THEATRE CENTRE COURTYARD

Photos by Rebecca Mansell.



YOU KNOW WE BELONG TOGETHER OPENING NIGHT IN THE HEATH LEDGER THEATRE



WATER OPENING NIGHT IN THE STUDIO UNDERGROUND



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