

ON CUE

BLACK SWAN
STATE THEATRE
COMPANY OF WA



The Cherry Orchard Cast Sunset Heritage Precinct (2021) – Photo by Daniel J Grant

INSIDE



MEET OUR TICKETING TEAM



ANIMAL FARM WITH VAN BADHAM



MAALI FESTIVAL IS COMING

NOTE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



It's time to get cosy, the Nyoongar season of Makuru has begun. It's the fertility season when the maali (black swans) are preparing to nest and breed, you'll see lots of them at this time of the year, in their pairs. They mate for life.

Here at Black Swan we've been having a creatively rich and fertile time as we draw close to our 30th birthday. We're looking forward to celebrating the inaugural Maali Festival during NAIDOC Week. Maali Festival is conceived and curated by the

brilliant Ian Michael and Chloe Ogilvie. The concept was initiated back in 2018 when they were both Resident Artists. On 9-10 July, Maali Festival will fill the State Theatre Centre here in Boorloo with the art of the world's oldest living cultures. It's time to listen. It's time to acknowledge and it's time to dance!

Four years ago, I was sitting around my dinner table telling ghost stories on a rainy night with playwrights and theatre makers, Ian Michael and Chris Isaacs. That was the very beginning of our next work in the Heath Ledger Theatre, *York*. After four years of research, writing, listening to Elders, conversations with community, friendships, creative developments and design discussions...we can't wait to share this epic work with you, our audience. Some of you will have joined us for the first public reading of this play last year in the York Town Hall on Ballardong Country. This is an Australian ghost story inspired by events that have taken place across two centuries in one place. Our playwrights expertly take the audience on a whiteknuckle ride from humour to terror, from fiction to truth. Zoë Atkinson's design

is breathtaking, literally. Director Ian Wilkes and I are about to step into the rehearsal room with an incredible team of actors. We hope you'll join us.

In this edition of On Cue, you're going to meet some of the amazing people who make up the Black Swan family. You'll meet our tenacious and ever smiling ticketing team who have navigated capacity restrictions, lock down changes and inclement weather with grace and professionalism.

You'll meet Madison Gracie, who has been with our Ambassador program since it began nine years ago. We first met Madison when she was in High School and she's about to graduate from Arts Management at WAAPA. I'd also like to introduce you to Helen Carroll, Manager Wesfarmer Arts, one of Perth's most passionate and knowledgeable arts advocates.

It's a pleasure to introduce you to Lisa Hando, who has been a member for twelve years. Lisa organises a group of nine friends to join her at the theatre, all from the same Hockey Club.

You'll also meet Van Badham – playwright extraordinaire, political commentator and all-round good egg. Van has adapted George Orwell's *Animal Farm* for our upcoming production – it is a fierce, funny, up-to-the-minute contemporary take on the classic novella.

A fond farewell to the dynamic Nicola Forrest AO who is stepping down as Chair of Black Swan, and to long serving Board member Linda Savage. We all warmly welcome Francois Witbooi into the role of Chair.

Our 2021 season is called *With Love*, we adore our community of artists, supporters and audience. Just like the life-long commitment of a pair of maali, for 30 years at Black Swan we've been dedicated to telling WA stories and creating great theatre experiences. We look forward to 30 more years...

For you. About You. With you. See you at the theatre.

Clare Watson
Artistic Director

FAREWELL TO NICOLA FORREST AO AND LINDA SAVAGE

Nicola Forrest is stepping down as Chair of Black Swan and will be succeeded by current Deputy Chair Francois Witbooi. Nicola has been on the Board for eight years and for three years as Chair.

In that time, she has provided the company with a clear vision for ongoing sustainability and re-embedded the company with refreshed purpose, vision and values. With Nicola at the helm and in the face of Covid-19, we kept creativity alive in Western Australia, with the Board making a \$450K commitment to continue to employ our artists during lockdown. Despite not presenting most of our 2020 season, that decision kept 159 weeks of the 314 weeks of full-time work for our artists.

Nicola has always sought to build the vitality of this city and our state, by

connecting community authentically and meaningfully with the company. She is a founder of the Minderoo Foundation which enabled the Black Swan Future Fund through a donations campaign to bolster the Company's sustainable capacity. The Future Fund aims to build a strong financial foundation for Black Swan, enabling the creation of bold and adventurous theatre, bringing WA stories to the world. Since its inaugural year, the Future Fund has supported several standout performances, including 2020's celebrated reimagining of *Cloudstreet*.

After nine years Linda Savage is stepping down from the Black Swan Board. She has been a leading light for us all. Her legal expertise, tireless efforts, and encouragement with our giving circles

has been inspirational. Linda is a former Director of the Social Security Appeals Tribunal, Member of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, and Member of the Legislative Council of the West Australian State Parliament. She has been active in law reform, social justice, and establishing legal services for women and children for over three decades.

In 1997 Linda was the recipient of the Law Society of Western Australia's Outstanding Service to the Community and was named Woman Lawyer of the Year in 2010. She was also instrumental in establishing the Women's Legal Service in WA in 1996. Linda is on the Board of the National Drug Research Institute and the State Emergency Management Committee. In October 2018 she was



appointed an Ambassador for Children and Young People in Western Australia. She has a BA (Hons) in Politics (UWA) and a Law degree from Cambridge University.

We look forward to seeing both Nicola and Linda on opening nights and thank them both sincerely for their dedication to the company.

MEET THE BLACK SWAN TICKETING TEAM



Want to know more about our friendly ticketing team?

Additional premium seats have just been released so talk to the team about the advantage of a Black Swan membership with packages starting from \$185*

*Standard ticket prices for 3 play combo. Further concessions may apply.

Linda Pope

I was born and raised in Perth, and have a husband and a 6-year-old son (who keeps me on my toes!) I have been part of the Black Swan Family for around a decade, initially on a casual basis and more recently permanent part-time. I was introduced to Black Swan in 2011, while I was employed by BOCS Ticketing. Currently my position includes administration, customer service, processing of single tickets and ticket packages and all things show related. During my 15 years with Ticketing, I have had the opportunity to be able to work in various theatre venues as a Box Office Supervisor, including State Theatre Centre, His Majesty's Theatre, Subiaco Arts Centre, Perth Concert Hall and Playhouse Theatre. I enjoy working in the arts and the experiences it delivers; it has introduced me to many amazing people and a dedicated family of colleagues that makes my work enjoyable!

Rachel Doulton

I have always aspired to work in the Performing Arts. Ever since I was little and gazed up in wonder at *Giselle* dancing across that stage at His Majesty's Theatre when I was five years old, thinking that was

where I wanted to be more than anything else. This love of the arts has led to a lifelong journey that has taken me through Bachelor's degrees at both WAAPA and Murdoch University, as well as to performing abroad, singing Opera in Tuscany and Berlin. Whilst I still perform on occasion, my love for connecting with all kinds of people has found me in my own niche as Black Swan's Ticketing Coordinator, a role which I find incredibly rewarding and that I'm growing into day by day. It has been an experience of a lifetime to work at such a renowned organisation and I look forward to seeing where this journey takes me.

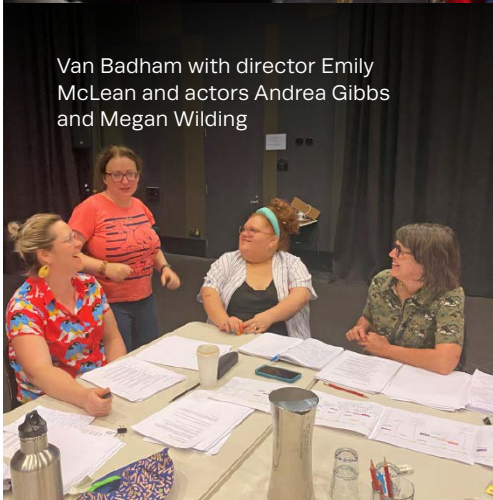
Emilie Monty

I have been part-time with Black Swan since November 2020 and have extensive experience in customer relationship management at various performing arts venues around Perth. The rest of the time I am an emerging visual artist with a particular focus on community arts and sound design. My goal is to help people to develop their own personal understanding of themselves and their community through the arts. This is why I love being part of the Black Swan team, meeting all of the wonderful people engaging with the arts and helping to connect people to the WA Stories.

Melbourne based writer, presenter, and theatre maker Van Badham



Van Badham with director Emily McLean and actors Andrea Gibbs and Megan Wilding



Director Emily McLean with Director of Production Stewart Campbell preparing for a Zoom meeting



Van Badham is a Melbourne based writer, presenter, and theatre maker. She is a courageous and successful playwright whose career took flight while she was living in the UK in the early 2000s. Her play *Banging Denmark* was a sell-out hit for Sydney Theatre Company, and Perth audiences are excited to see her adaptation of George Orwell's *Animal Farm*.

ANIMAL FARM INTERVIEW WITH VAN BADHAM

Van Badham's adaptation includes the whole *Animal Farm*-yard of characters, from Snowball to Boxer, performed by Andrea Gibbs, Alison van Reeken, and Megan Wilding. The show will feature video design by Michael Carmody, music composed by Rachael Dease, and set and costume design by Fiona Bruce. Directed by Emily McLean, *Animal Farm* will be performed in the Heath Ledger Theatre.

What kind of night can Black Swan audiences expect at *Animal Farm*?

It's gonna be like watching CNN, if the hosts during a political crisis were all standup comedians but also pigs and cows and you've just had twenty coffees and are trapped in a runaway train. Strap in!

Originally *Animal Farm* was going to be presented just before the US Elections in 2020. What is its relevance in 2021?

The relevance of this play is even greater in 2021, given that on the 6th of January a lot of would-be pigs and cows tried to storm the Capitol building in Washington. I don't think everyone realises how close the Trump years brought us to actual fascism.

You are a playwright, novelist, commentator, critic, and activist. What is your favourite medium for story telling?

Clearly, I love all of them, hence running around like a farce character trying to meet increasingly impossible deadlines. The great thing about writing across platforms is that some stories are better told through different media. Journalism is where facts go. The theatre is where you can speculate wildly. Mixing these two up makes for bad theatre and/or dysfunctional democracies.

You have said that this play is 'an algorithm of political madness for the YouTube Generation'. What role does digital media play in the script?

Digital media is the most effective platform for the dissemination of propaganda in world history. Of course the pigs are all over it. In Orwell's original, the pigs had slogans. In the play, they have their own YouTube channels.

When and how was your interest in the arts first sparked? Who nurtured your passion?

My dad was a club manager, so I grew up in clubland with loud carpet and "colourful gaming identities" and club acts and annual Christmas pantomimes. As a kid I was entranced by the stories shared by my parents about the larger-than-life people that they met as well

as by the transformations of ordinary things into extraordinary ones by the lighting and sound and costumes of the performances that I got to see. At my Nanna's house, there was a very theatrical pair of red curtains that separated the lounge room from the hallway and I was always forcing my cousins into costumes made of tablecloths and old neckties and creating skits to perform there. My parents encouraged it all because they found it very funny. I came from a family where no one had ever had an arts career (or a university education) so I really stumbled through the first few decades of my own career like a bit of a hapless rube but Mum and Dad found it all very amusing so I just kept doing it.

Where do you find inspiration? Who are your biggest influences?

I stumble on to inspiration – sometimes it's a newspaper article I can't stop thinking about, or a personal story I've been told that has affected me deeply, or sometimes there's something from my own life that I'm trying to gain a new perspective around. The ideas tend to percolate in the back of my head until someone offers me a writing job and the appropriate idea screams out "this one's for me!" and then I run with whatever the idea needs to meet the brief.

My biggest influence is my own taste. The great thing about no longer being a young writer and therefore feeling obliged to say yes to every job that comes along is being able to choose projects to do that I'd personally want to be the audience for. If you're not enthusiastic about your own projects, no one else is going to be enthusiastic about them either. So I'm influenced by space lizards and talking pigs and internet conspiracy cults and 1990s post-punk sharehousing and Spanish farces and this bizarre Trumpian political era the west barely survived and beach party movies. That's this week. Next week it might be something different.

What's playful and brave about this work?

Talking pigs, man. Still funny after all these years.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



Heart of the Art Club
Maali Festival Curatorial Process
Chloe Ogilvie and Ian Michael
Alex Hotel – Wed 30 June



York
Heath Ledger Theatre
10 Jul to 1 Aug



Every Brilliant Thing
Studio Underground
25 Aug to 17 Sep

SPOTLIGHT ON BLACK SWAN ARTIST

Madison Gracie

My name is Madison and 2021 marks my ninth year working with Black Swan. I first joined the company at just 15 years old when they first introduced the concept of Ambassadors back in 2013. I started as a High School Ambassador, before transitioning to a Tertiary Ambassador and now a Metropolitan Ambassador.

Working with Black Swan has given me a unique insight into the arts industry that has assisted my work with other organisations such as Perth Makers Market, Fringe World, and my own businesses. Some of my favourite

moments with Black Swan have included exploring the boundaries of what can be done on stage, such as the incredible expanding stage of the 2014 production *As You Like It*. In recent years I've also loved watching Clare Watson develop within the company and her contemporary influence on production, design, and casting.

I'm currently in my final year of an Arts Management Degree with the Western Australia Academy of Performing Arts whilst working full-time on my brand, Poppyseed Creative. The arts community in Perth is tightknit and I am so grateful to have made so many connections early on thanks to Black Swan.



“A really rewarding and inspiring workshop, with someone who has walked through the difficult process of taking an original piece of personal performance to stage and to learn techniques to combat writing blocks and inspire better creative flow. Really glad to see Black Swan provide these learning opportunities for the community and striving to breed more creativity in the Perth public sphere.” Justin Mosel-Crossley

CREATIVE LEARNING

Life-Learners embrace their Creativity.

In March, our Creative Learning department launched two exciting new programs for life-learners aged eighteen years and over: *Heart of The Art Club* and *Creative Ground Intensive Workshops*.

Heart of the Art Club is like a book club for theatre lovers. Open to all, these intimate social gatherings allow access to Black Swan artists. Join us from 6.30pm on Wednesday 30 June, at the Alex Hotel for our third Heart of the Art Club of the year, and hear about the curatorial process behind the Maali Festival.

Creative Ground Intensive Workshops are led throughout the year led by highly

skilled, passionate and practising theatre artists, who will create a supportive environment for participants to explore creative processes and meaningful self-expression.

On Saturday 13 March theatre maker and teacher Thomas Pappathanassiou facilitated “Bedrock for Performers” and “Unearthing Story for Writers,” as part of the *Creative Ground* Program. Participants explored a range of techniques for performance as well as a generative writing process pioneered by Cuban-born American playwright María Irene Fornés, a process used by Thomas when creating his award-winning solo performance *Looming the Memory*.

Upcoming Creative Ground Workshops

10am – 1pm Saturday 14 August – Physical Theatre

Learn how to create story and character through a range of physical theatre activities. This workshop is facilitated by Dr. Teresa Izzard.

2pm – 5pm Saturday 14 August – Setting the Scene

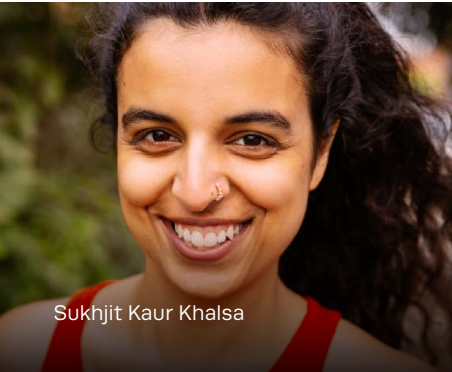
Sketch and create white card models for a play from our 2021 season. This workshop is facilitated by Lawrie Cullen-Tait.

Register at www.bsstc.com.au

CONGRATULATIONS TO WAOTY AWARD 2021 FINALISTS



We are thrilled to announce and offer our congratulations to Resident Artist Julia Hales and actor Sukhjot Kaur Khalsa (*Fully Sikh*) for being finalists in the Arts and Culture and Youth award categories respectively, at this year's Western Australian of the Year Awards!



Julia is also a joint winner in the inaugural HESTA Impact Awards. Nominated by Black Swan and My Place WA Ltd., these national awards celebrate health and community service professionals. Julia shared the \$10,000 'Individual Distinction' award for her contribution to improving diversity and inclusion through the arts for people living with Down syndrome and other disabilities. She intends to use the prize money to set up an inclusive artists' network, My Studio.



SINGAPORE AIRLINES

Proud sponsor of
Black Swan State Theatre Company of WA



MAALI FESTIVAL

9-10 July FREE EVENT



LIVE MUSIC *Electric Fields'* potent new music brings together the brilliance and creativity of music producer and composer Michael Ross, with the mesmerising sensitivity of Zaachariaha Fielding. *Electric Fields* bring moments of breathtaking beauty and power to the stage featuring Zaachariaha's traditional languages of the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara people.



LIVE MUSIC Soul Sisters *The Merindas* are the collective force of Ballardong Whadjuk and Nyoongar woman Kristel Kickett (from Tammin, WA) and Candice Lorrae of Jawoyn and Thursday Island heritage (born in Darwin, NT). Their unique sound has been described as "electronic pop with a dance-hall feel, alongside hip hop and R&B influences."



LIVE MUSIC From the small Aboriginal community of Woorabinda in Central Queensland, proud Pitjantjatjara/Torres Strait Islander woman, *Miiesha* seeks to use her R&B/Soul laced voice and music to bring people together.



LIVE MUSIC Singer-songwriter *Phil Walleystack* is an accomplished performing artist, musician, and author. An ambassador for arts in Western Australia, Phil was a finalist in the 2017 West Australian of the Year Awards (WAOTY) for services to the Aboriginal community, and a finalist in the 2018 WAOTY in the Arts and Culture Category.



PLAY READING *City of Gold* by Meyne Wyatt. Young actor Breythe left Kalgoorlie dreaming of a dazzling career. Returning home, he's alienated from country and lore. His cultural capital distances him from furious brother Mateo and activist sister Carina, all of them struggling with regret and responsibility after their father's death. Described as a howl of rage at inequality, injustice & wilful ignorance of this country's 21st century. A play for our times from a vital new voice.



PLAY READING *Brother's Wreck* by Jada Alberts. Ruben is full of anger and dancing on the edge, struggling to cope with his brother's death. As Darwin swelters, tensions in the house are high as Ruben slips further and further adrift from all those around him: his counsellor, his best mate, his sister, his beloved Aunty. When the summer storm finally breaks, the family must pull together and find the strength to bring Ruben back from the brink.



FILM SCREENING *Wirun*. A young Aboriginal girl must dig deep to own her performance of a Shakespearean sonnet for her high school drama class in this powerful Australian short film. *Wirun* was produced on the lands of the Woi-wurrung and Boon-wurrung people of the eastern Kulin nations.



THEATRE Created and performed by Nyoongar and Wadjella (whitefella) actors, *Bindjareb Pinjarra* explores the black and white versions of the Pinjarra Massacre of 1834. The play mixes drama with outrageous comedy and has been hugely successful across Australia since it was first performed in 1994.



THEATRE Suitable for Children *Bilya Kaatijin* by Zac James is the fourth and final story in Yirra Yaakin's Kaatijin series. Connecting stories from Nyoongar land (south-west Western Australia) to Wonguktha land (the northern Goldfields), Aotearoa (New Zealand) and the Kikuyu people of Kenya, Bilya Kaatijin teaches us about the importance of water to First Nations people around the world.

It's time to listen. It's time to acknowledge and it's time to dance.

During NAIDOC week, Black Swan celebrates the inaugural Maali Festival curated by Ian Michael (Nyoongar) and Chloe Ogilvie (Yamatji Nhanda). Over two days from 9-10 July, Maali Festival will fill the State Theatre Centre here in Boorloo with the art of the world's oldest living cultures. Maali is a Nyoongar term used for black swan. Come join

us for a Welcome to Country and Nyumbi, play readings, films, High Tea with Elders, family friendly events, community dinner, the world premiere of *York* by Ian Michael and Chris Isaacs (ticketed event), *Bilya Kaatijin* by Zac James, and a return of WA's longest running theatre work *Binjarreb Pinjarra* and more! Come and dance in the Courtyard to *Electric Fields*, *Ziggy Ramo*, *Miiesha*, *The Merindas*, *Phil Walleystack*, *Boox Kid* and *Flewnt*. This is resilience, this is pure celebration.

Please visit our website for the full program closer to the date. Registrations Essential.

SUPPORTING A CULTURALLY VIBRANT WA

Lisa Hando supports Black Swan State Theatre Company as a chance to see great theatre with good friends, and be a part of the WA community. We asked Lisa why she has been part of the Black Swan family for more than a decade.

I began supporting Black Swan when I first moved to Perth in 2009. I had started seeing some theatre in Sydney and when I moved, I wanted to experience the best WA had to offer. The State Theatre Centre was just opening, and after seeing some shows there I told my hockey team mates about the quality of the performances. We have been supporting ever since and recruited some more members along the way – there are nine of us now.

Black Swan gives me a way to catch up with friends regularly and see exceptional theatre – from acting to sets to costumes, and most importantly our post-show discussion over ice-cream or coffee! We look forward to this part the most. It is a chance to freely discuss our views and feelings that came up from the show, and we find we have learnt so much about ourselves and each other.

For me, support for the arts is support for our society. The arts, and particularly theatre, give us a way to see ourselves in a non-confrontational way. It's a place where we can reflect on how we feel about issues that we may not have been personally impacted by, like mental health, or immigrating to a new country,

or difficult relationships. These stories are a part of our society – theatre gives us a chance to step into someone else's shoes and understand each other better.

I feel I can count on Black Swan programs for artistic excellence. Black Swan commits to great theatre, filling our stages with new talent and high-quality productions. We have so much to offer on the national and international stage through theatre.

I want to belong to WA. WA stories speak to me, and I find those at Black Swan.

**Lisa Hando
Black Swan Supporter**



Black Swan relies on philanthropic support to keep WA's performing arts sector vibrant and full of opportunity. We hope you will consider supporting us with a tax-deductible gift this financial year. All support makes a difference. **For more information or to donate, please visit www.bsstc.com.au or call 08 6212 9300.**

23 YEARS WITH WESFARMERS ARTS

There are some terrific highlights that really stand out for me across the more than 20 years that Wesfarmers Arts has supported Black Swan. Definitely, the wonderful collaboration we were able to develop with Perth Festival, *The Odyssey*, which was a Wesfarmers Art Commission for Black Swan in 2006, was just a genuinely thrilling experience to be involved in helping make happen for Black Swan and Perth audiences.

The commissioning of new Australian theatre is certainly the most important,

and the most exciting, work that Black Swan does. I've also loved really everything Matthew Lutton has made with Black Swan – his singular voice really makes for thrilling theatre experiences that are as much poetic and deeply atmospheric works of art as they are dramatic theatre. I loved his *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, and his gorgeously surrealist production of Mishima's *The Lady Aoi* for Black Swan and the Festival of Perth back in 2007, which will stay with me forever as one of the most surprising and visceral theatrical moments I've ever encountered.

I guess I just love, when I'm in that darkened theatre, to be led by the hand into entirely new worlds of human experience – and of course that is precisely what Julia Hales and Clare Watson gave us with that great, great Black Swan production – *You Know We Belong Together*. I really feel that we have to demand of our theatre that it brings us alive to our humanity in the most direct, heightened and vivid of ways – bouquets to Black Swan for living and breathing this challenge!

**Helen Carroll
Manager Wesfarmers Arts**





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 of WA.

KPMG.com.au

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The Cherry Orchard

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

"A delightful experience"

Xpress Magazine



The Cherry Orchard

★ ★ ★ ★

"Director Clare Watson seems to have a knack for bringing classic works into modern times with ingenious twists"

The West Australian



Playthings

"I thoroughly enjoyed the journey I was taken on with Playthings, and I would recommend it to anyone who finds themselves nostalgic for times gone by, has a teenager themselves, or has forgotten what it means to be 13"

Perth Happenings



Playthings

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

"Scott McArdle develops his work from black box theatre to main stage production with aplomb, his script carrying its emotional load with fresh eyes for absurdities of the everyday."

ArtsHub

BEHIND THE SCENES PHOTOS



The Cherry Orchard Corporate Night
Stewart Campbell, Matt Woods, Rick Heath



The Cherry Orchard Corporate Night
John Jones, Jan Somas, Sally Jones, Grant Young



The Cherry Orchard Corporate Night
Jill Monroe, George Shevtsov, Duncan Ord



The Cherry Orchard Corporate Night
Kieran Clancy –Lowe, Gary Hupjè, Mark Nannup



Playthings Opening Night
Sarah Fenner, Claire Eaton, Heather Martin, Larissa Somm



Playthings Opening Night
Tamara Cook and Erin Donovan



Playthings Opening Night
Sarah-Jane Watkins, Jeremy Watkins, Deanna Faust



Playthings Opening Night
Barry McGuire, Joshua Witbooi, Francois Witbooi

If you see yourself on this page and would like the photo, email Irene@bsstc.com.au

For more social pics visit Black Swan's Facebook page.

Photos Matt Jelonek

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