

MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 17 February 2010

ACCLAIMED QUEENSLAND PLAYWRIGHT OPENS LA BOITE'S INAUGURAL INDIE SEASON WITH NEW PLAY

***The Bitterling* – presented by Pentimento Productions and La Boite Indie**

Following hard on the heels of his controversial runaway hit *The Truth about Kookaburras* (Metro Arts Independents, 2009) Sven Swenson's new play *The Bitterling* premieres in March as the inaugural production of La Boite's Indie Season. The latest in Swenson's series of *Sundial Plays*, *The Bitterling* is a tale about an extraordinary family reunion at the height of Brisbane's disastrous 1974 floods.

Rose Cutler went missing 15 years earlier, leaving her infant son to be raised by her mother, Ruby. On Australia Day 1974, Rose unexpectedly surfaces from the violent waters that threaten the home of her mother and son.

For Ruby, who had already lived the agony of wondering if her prisoner-of-war husband was alive or dead, Rose's disappearance carried a cruel sense of déjà vu and for the second time in her life, Ruby had to raise a child alone. Rose's return is as astonishing as it is unforgivable.

To studious, apocalyptic teenager Kevin, his mother's emergence with the flood means a longed-for key to his identity, and quite probably a further sign that the world is about to end.

For Rose, going back may be the only way of moving forward.

Dubbed "The Bard of Brisbane" by Queensland Theatre Company Artistic Director and fellow playwright Michael Gow, Swenson is well known for works within his acclaimed interconnected series, *The Sundial Plays*, including *Vertigo & the Virginia* (Queensland Theatre Company, 1999) and his epic work *Road to the She-Devil's Salon*, the inaugural winner of the Queensland Premier's Drama Award (Queensland Theatre Company, 2003).

Production Details

Writer and Director | Sven Swenson

Designer | Tim Wallace

Lighting Design | David Walters

Composition/Sound Design | Phil Slade

Fight Director | Don Burgess

With | Louise Brehmer, Dash Kruck and Kaye Stevenson

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Venue | Roundhouse Theatre, Musk Ave, Kelvin Grove Urban Village

New Show Times | Tues & Wed 6:30pm, Thurs-Sat 7:30pm, Sun 5pm

Previews | 17 & 18 Mar

Opening Night | Fri 19 Mar

Season | 17 Mar – 4 Apr

Prices | Previews \$25 / \$22

Full Price \$28

Concession \$25

30 years and under \$20

2-Play Package (with 23rd Productions' *Blackbird*) \$45

THE BITTERLING CREATIVE TEAM

Louise Brehmer – Rose

As one of Brisbane's busiest actors, Louise is well known to audiences of La Boite, Queensland Theatre Company and Metro Arts productions. Recent Theatre highlights include: "*Private Fears in Public Places*, *Cooking with Elvis*, *MoDD-Romeo and Juliet* (Queensland Theatre Company), *Summer Wonderland*, *Creche and Burn* (La Boite Theatre Company), *Cribbie* (4MBS), *Popping Lead Balloons*, *Lovejunk* (DeBase Productions), *Microtrip 2- The Return Journey* (Sean Dennehy and Jo Thomas), *The Ghost Writer (...And Moor Theatre)*, *The Greater Plague* (Restaged Histories), *New Royal* (Metro Arts/SOOB), *He Died With A Felafel In His Hand* (Someone), *The Comedy of Errors* (QLD Shakespeare Ensemble), *Anne of the Thousand Days*, *Mrs Klein*, *The Miracle Worker* (Crossbow), *Hermes and the Naked Flame* (La Boite/QAC), *The Man Who Sold The World* (Zen Zen Zo), *Children of the Black Skirt* (Real TV), *The Pacific Solution* (Brisbane Festival Theatre Fringe), *Sexual Perversity in Chicago* and *The Duck Variations* (Rolling Jaffa) to name a few. She has extensive teaching experience and provided voices for three characters in the international animated children's series, *Farmkids*. Louise is a professional improviser and works as a Clown Doctor at The Royal Children's Hospital. A graduate of QUT, she has trained with Shakespeare and Company (USA) among others. She is a proud member of MEAA/Actors Equity. Louise has also performed in many public readings of new works for various companies, and has interpreted more of Sven Swenson's *Sundial* characters than any other actor. Some favorites include *Judi* in *Wiredancer's Waltz* for the inaugural National Play Festival; *Lilith* in *Silas Moorcroft's Bane* (Microtrip 2 –The Return Journey, produced by Sean Dennehy and Jo Thomas) and *Binny Broadfoot* in a reading of *Tiptoe* at the Adelaide APAM conference.

Don Burgess – Fight Director

Don appeared in the memorable role of 'Goony' in Sven Swenson's *The Truth about Kookaburras* at Metro Arts in 2009. He obtained his advanced certificate in Stage Combat at the International Stage Fighting Workshop in Perth.

Dash Kruck – Kevin

Dash Kruck's previous theatre credits include the title role in *Amadeus* (4MBS), *The Works* (Queensland Theatre Company), *The Amazing Magician* (Queensland Ballet), national tours of *Brave Hearts*, *Verbal Combat* and *Cheap Thrills* (Brainstorm Productions), *Romeo and Juliet* (QLD Shakespeare Festival), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (HRTC and Power of Will), *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Starlight). In 2007 Dash won a Matilda Award for his performance in the critically acclaimed one-man show *The Dressing Chair* (Nigel Munro-Wallis). Dash is currently touring with *The Fortitude Project* (QLD Arts Council) and directing *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for Starlight Theatre. His film and television credits include *3 Mile Limit* (Newland), *K9* (Metalmutt), *The Shak* (Channel 9), *Clarity* (McCleary) and *The Raven* (Gav Stevenson). He is a graduate of QUT (Drama) and The Actors Conservatory (Acting). Dash is a proud member of equity.

Phil Slade – Composition and Sound Design

Phil has composing music for more than 15 years, beginning his career writing and producing musicals, choral works and orchestral pieces. Along with his many film credits, Phil's theatrical credits include *The Wishing Well* (Matrix Theatre and La Boite Theatre Co.), *Oodgeroo*, *Danger Age*, *Sex:Cubed*, *The Drowning Bride*, *James and Johnno* and *Salt* (La Boite Theatre Company), *The School of Arts*, *The Exception and the Rule*, *The Rabbit Hole* and *Glass Menagerie* (Queensland Theatre Company), *Australia!* (Hothouse Theatre) *The Truth About Kookaburras* (Metro Arts and Pentimento Productions), *Little Hilter's Ode to the Australian Bentwood* (Metro Arts), *Citizen Jane* and *Cutting Loose* (Matrix Theatre Co.), *Caucation Chalk Circle*, *Love Labours Lost*, *As You Like It*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *The Creature are Stirring* (Harvest Rain Theatre Co.), *The Nativity*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Everyman* (Deus Maximus TC.). Phil won a Bell award for the music on *Sex:Cubed* and was a 2008 Matilda Award Finalist for his work on *The Glass Menagerie*.

Kaye Stevenson – Ruby

An actor with over 40 years experience Kaye has worked for all the major theatre companies in Brisbane, QTC, La Boite and TN! Theatre, and has appeared in over 60 productions. In 2008 she won a Matilda Award for Best Supporting Actress for her role as Emma in La Boite's production of *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*. Appearing in many Feature and Short Films and TV series, she also worked in ABC radio drama and has been doing commercial voice-overs for many years.

Sven Swenson – Writer and Director

Sven Swenson has worked as an actor in theatre, film, television and radio, and has produced and directed extensively across a broad spectrum of theatrical styles. As a playwright, Sven is well known for works within his interconnected series, *The Sundial Plays*, including *Vertigo & the Virginia* (Queensland Theatre Company, 1999) and his epic work *Road to the She-Devil's Salon*, the inaugural winner of the Queensland Premier's Drama Award (Queensland Theatre Company, 2003). Other writing highlights include *The Truth about Kookaburras* (Metro Arts 2009), *In Lieu of Flowers* (Queensland Theatre Company, 2001), and *Heavenly Bodies and Beautiful Souls* (Metro Arts 2006, The Beckett Theatre, New York, The Hudson Theatre, Los Angeles, 2007). Sven also wrote the screenplay for a short film of *Beautiful Souls*, now in post-production in Los Angeles. Sven's bitingly funny and deeply moving play *Dangerfield Park* was short-listed for the Queensland Premier's Drama Award, and *Wiredancer's Waltz* was showcased at the inaugural National Play Festival in Brisbane. His arena musical, *Bobcat Magic*, was collaboration with composer John Rodgers and proved a highlight of the 2005 Queensland Music Festival. Sven was the executive producer of the musical's independently released soundtrack. In May 2007, a developmental presentation of his musical, *The Siren's Kiss*, was staged at The Judith Wright Centre.

Tim Wallace - Designer

Ten Tiny Men (Valley Fiesta, 2009), *Scissors, Paper, Rock!* (Underground, 2008), *A Doll's House* (Starlight, 2008), *Children of Eden Harvest Rain*, 2007), *The Full Monty* (Lickety Split, 2007), *Oedipussy: The Spy Who Shagged Her Dad* (Bugfest, 2008), *Stalemate* (Bugfest, 2007), *It Must Be Love* (Bugfest, 2006), *The Emperor's New Clothes* (Stagedoor, 2006), *Snagged* (Vena Cava, 2005), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Bunbury, 2005). Tim's recent production credits include: Production Manager: *Sweeney Todd* (Starlight, 2009), *Terra Nova* (Starlight, 2009), *Private Lives* (Starlight, 2009). Production Designer: *The Truth About Kookaburras* (Metro Arts Independents/Pentimento, 2009), *Food of Love* (Queensland Shakespeare Ensemble, 2009), *Twelfth Night* (Starlight, 2009), *The Keeper* (Tin Can Theatre/Powerhouse, 2009), *Antigone* (Starlight, 2008), *Tartuffe* (Starlight, 2008). In 2008 and 2009 Tim was an Artist in Residence with Starlight Theatre Co-op based at Centre Stage Theatre in Spring Hill. He graduated from QUT in 2007 with a Bachelor of Creative Industries (Drama) and a Bachelor of Education.

David Walters - Lighting Design

For La Boite Theatre Company: *The Pineapple Queen*, *The White Earth*, *The Wishing Well*, *Summer Wonderland*, *Last Drinks*, *The Drowning Bride*, *Half & Half*, *Zigzag Street*, *Still Standing* and *Black Chicks Talking*. Prior to returning to Australia in 1986, David worked as a freelance lighting designer, lecturer and consultant in London and Iceland. Now Brisbane based, David has lit for most major Australian theatre companies with over 200 shows to his credit. Other theatre: For Queensland Theatre Company: *Gilgamesh*, *Ghosts*, *Moby Dick*, *Molly Sweeney*, *The Memory of Water*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Rabbit Hole* and many others. For QPAC: *The Waking Hour*, *Dancing On The Walls Of Paris*, *Legend*, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *The Red Tree*, *Boat* and *The Little Mermaid*. For the State Theatre Company of South Australia: *Macbeth* and *Twelfth Night*. For Melbourne Theatre Company: Design for Living and Birthrights. For Sydney Theatre Company: *Master Class*, *Amigos* and *Scenes from a Separation*. National tours include *Amigos*, *Money and Friends*, *Brilliant Lies*, *After the Ball* and *Master Class* and his work has toured internationally with *Dance of Death* (Bell Shakespeare). Opera: For Icelandic National Opera: *Carmen* and *Il Travatore*. For Opera Queensland: *Don Giovanni*, *Love Burns* and *Aggripina*. Dance: For Queensland Ballet: *The Nutcracker*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Carmen*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *Sleeping Beauty*; *Attitude* (Expressions Dance Company), and *Mirror Mirror* (The Australian Ballet). David returns regularly to Iceland where he works in both theatre and opera.

ABOUT LA BOITE INDIE

La Boite Indie is a curated season of four independent theatre productions, each of three weeks. For this work, La Boite will transform its theatre into a more suitable 98-seat black box. La Boite will provide financial, technical, marketing and artistic support. La Boite Indie aims to nurture a more sustainable independent theatre culture in Brisbane, to cultivate new audiences, to enable closer ties between independent practice and La Boite, and to help create outstanding, contemporary works for theatre made with passion and rigour. It is a much-needed new platform for independent theatre in Brisbane. We're very excited to have four vibrant independent theatre companies working with us at La Boite in 2010 and we look forward to seeing La Boite Indie grow year by year.

For further media information and interviews please contact:

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