



INTERVIEW WITH DAMON LOCKWOOD

Assistant Director for *The White Divers of Broome*



Black Swan: Please clarify what an assistant director does beyond the obvious 'assisting the director.'

Damon Lockwood: I see the Assistant Director role as an important sounding board for the director, cast and creatives alike. Final decision rests with the director, but any support the assistant can give in terms of opinion, offers and observations is the main focus of the role. I feel it is important for the assistant to remain humble as well, and be prepared to do what is required of them, given how rapidly things can change in the rehearsal room.

BS: You have acted in a few Black Swan plays this year with Kate Cherry as your director. Is it hard to shift roles? Does the relationship change?

DL: The relationship does change a little, but only in the sense of a deepening understanding between the two of us. One of Kate's great skills is to be open to suggestions intended for the benefit of the production she is currently working on, and to still have a clear vision of the final outcome she desires. I think we both have a real passion for the theatre and in this way our working relationship has continued to strengthen. I look forward very much to working for her as an actor again.

BS: You act, you are assisting the director, you are a comedian, a writer, a parent and even I'm out of breath just asking the question. Do you do all of this so you have material for your comedy act or is it necessary to be multi skilled in order to survive in this industry?

DL: Perhaps there is a chance the whole industry is a bit of a comedy act... no, as I said above, theatre is my utter passion and I care deeply about every facet of its creation. my personal feeling is to be able to have true and significant conversations with every member of the creative team, you must have at least some experience or real empathetic understanding of the crucial work they do in order to make each show thrive. I think the widest possible general knowledge is always going to serve you best if you wish to be a successful theatrical artist.

BS: What have you been a part of in the performing arts industry that you are really proud of and why? (A production, a role, writing...)

DL: In February 2012 I have a play I have written called *HorseHead* being performed in Rome, Italy. My own production company did a season of it in Perth in 2009 – a company associate from Teatro Allo Scalo saw it, fell in love with it, and made the necessary moves to produce the play for his company in Rome. It is a great thrill that a play of mine will be produced in another language in such a place as Rome. The play is about the mafia, though, so I hope it goes well or it may just be a one way ticket to Europe for me and my family...

Also, my position as an Artistic Associate for Black Swan State Theatre Company in 2012 fills me with a lot of excitement... as long as things go okay in Rome...

BS: What do you like most about your career?

DL: Ah, what a question! The people, the challenges, the magic of the live moment (as a professional improviser, I must admit I kind of love it a bit when things go 'wrong'), the lifelong relationships that are formed, the utter adrenalin rush of nailing a performance as a group. But I guess more than anything it is a feeling that being involved with this career is not a life wasted, and it helps in some very real sense of making the most of every moment.

BL: What intrigues you the most about this production, *The White Divers of Broome*? Why?

DL: The scope of the production is huge, and witnessing all the separate elements being fused together to create such a vital production is invigorating. Playwright Hilary Bell has done a monumental task of pulling a number of different stories, cultures and characters together in one succinct experience. As a proud West Australian it is fascinating to learn of another chequered, complicated part of our history.