



MELBOURNE TALAM

BY RASHMA N. KALSIE

MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS

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by Rashma N. Kalsie

4 – 20 MAY

Southbank Theatre, The Lawler

— Cast —

Jasminder Singh Rohan Mirchandaney
Poornachandra Rao Sahil Saluja
Sonali Chugh Sonya Suares

— Production —

Director Petra Kalive
Dramaturg Chris Mead
Set & Costume Designer Andrew Bailey
Lighting Designer Rachel Burke
Composer & Sound Designer Darius Kedros
Movement Director Lyndall Grant
Voice and Dialect Coach Geraldine Cook-Dafner
Dialect Consultant Leith McPherson
Stage Manager Lisette Drew
Rehearsal Photography Nick Tranter
Production Photography Jeff Busby

— About the play —

Three young people see each other across a crowded Flagstaff station. They just missed the train. Now they wait. And think. They think about home: Punjab, Delhi, Hyderabad. And about how they just can't seem to get Melbourne's rhythm right. And of all the impossible things they must do to stay. And their time is running out.

This production runs for approximately one hour and fifteen minutes, with no interval.

Melbourne Talam was presented as a staged reading at MTC's 2015 NEON Readings in association with MTC CONNECT – a partnership with Multicultural Arts Victoria – and at Cybec Electric in 2016, directed by Alex Pinder and read by Rayesh Gunasekera, Sahil Saluja and Suhasini Seelin.

Melbourne Theatre Company acknowledges the Yalukit Willam Peoples of the Boon Wurrung, the Traditional Owners of the land on which Southbank Theatre and MTC HQ stand, and we pay our respects to Melbourne's First Peoples, to their ancestors past and present, and to our shared future.





From the playwright

Rashma N. Kalsie



Melbourne Talam is a play that exists both in imagination and on the streets, offices, hospitals, apartments, tram stops and train stations of Melbourne, and is painted as much through stage action as the recesses of the mind. Melbourne is not only a city where

the protagonists live but it is a living character with many faces. The play uses elements of presentational and representational theatre to tell many stories, and the audience completes the play by putting together the pieces of the puzzle.

Talam (Tamil) or *tala* (Sanskrit) is a term used in Indian music. *Talam* is the base on which the notes of musical compositions and poetry rest. It is the rhythmic cycle of a musical composition. In the context of the play, 'talam' means the rhythm of Melbourne.



From the director

Petra Kalive



What first drew me to Rashma N. Kalsie's play *Melbourne Talam* was its rhythm. Rashma has created a play that deftly weaves multiple narratives, time shifts, place shifts and manipulates the rhythms of language and structure. All of this contributes to a rich, surprising and dynamic piece. The play primarily takes place in Melbourne today with three Indian migrants from very different parts of India – Delhi, Hyderabad and Gurdaspur.

Rashma's play was developed through MTC CONNECT, the NEON Readings and Cybec Electric play development programs. I am very proud to be working on this play for MTC Education. It is so important to tell stories from other cultures and communities on our main stages. I believe it is especially important for young people of colour to see themselves represented. They are the ones who will contribute to a diversity of work in Australia in the future. If these young people do not see their stories or people like them on stage, they internalise a message that they do not belong at the centre of the conversation.

This is a story of Melbourne right here and now. It is about growing up, finding a place in the world and connecting with the people around us. Like India, this play is eclectic in its theatrical style, vibrant and transformative. It asks the audience to keep up and go with the flow. I hope you enjoy the rhythm of *Melbourne Talam*.

Cast & Creative Team



ROHAN MIRCHANDANEY

Jasminder Singh

Rohan Mirchandaney is appearing in his Melbourne Theatre Company debut production with the world premiere of *Melbourne Talam*. His other stage credits include *Tigers Be Still*, *Dog Sees God: Confessions of a Teenage Blockhead*, *Così*, *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *Servant of Two Masters*. He worked with director Tony Rogers on the *How to Talk Australian* web series that was a viral comedy hit online. Rohan also works as a punch-up comedy dialogue writer having recently contributed notes and scenes for the cross-cultural Australian romantic comedy *UnIndian*. In 2015 Rohan was awarded a scholarship opportunity to study at the Atlantic Acting School in New York City. Following his work in the fifth season of *House Husbands* (Nine Network), Rohan has recently joined the cast of the upcoming thriller feature *Hotel Mumbai* alongside Dev Patel and Anupam Kher, shooting in both Australia and India.



SAHIL SALUJA

Poornachandra Rao

Sahil Saluja is an Indian actor based in Australia and has just completed a feature film called *The Colour of Darkness* as the lead character, Giriraj. Sahil has been training at the Melbourne Actors Lab under Peter Kalos since 2013. He has also trained at VCA, Second City School of Improv in Chicago and TAFTA. He spends his time between India and Australia and is part of the NCPA (National Centre of Performing Arts, Mumbai) Repertory Theatre Company under the direction of Dr. Akash Khurana (an award winning Indian actor and director). In Australia, Sahil's short films *Hospitality* (VCA) and *Phoenix* (VCA) were selected to be a part of the 2016 Melbourne International Film Festival. Sahil has played lead roles in *King in Exile* (Adelaide Fringe) and *Emma's House Special* (Melbourne Fringe). He performed in productions of *Richard III*, *Measure for Measure* and *Julius Caesar* as part of the Rude Mechanicals Theatre Company in Michigan before he moved to Australia. Sahil has been part of Rasma N. Kalsie's *Melbourne Talam* since its origin at MTC NEON in 2015.



SONYA SUARES

Sonali Chugh

Sonya Suares' theatre credits include *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Arcadia*, *The Vagina Monologues*, *Rappaccini's Daughter*, *One for the Road*, *In the Family*, *The Pajama Game*, *Don Giovanni*, *Madame Butterfly* and touring Shakespeare into schools/wineries. Her feature films are *Wil*, *Knowing*, *My Year Without Sex* and *The Last Ride*; small screen highlights include *Rush*, *Very Small Business*, *East West 101*, *Prank Patrol*, *Lowdown*, *Winners & Losers*, *It's A Date* and *Legally Brown*. In 2012, Sonya founded Watch This, producing and performing *Assassins*, *Pacific Overtures* and *Company* to critical acclaim and a total of 12 Green Room Award nominations. In 2015, she performed in *We Get It* (Elbow Room) for MTC NEON and delivered the inaugural Poppy Seed Festival as Festival Director. In 2016, Sonya worked on a total of seven scripts with Melbourne Theatre Company, Belvoir and Playwriting Australia's National Playfest, toured *Company* to regional Victoria and *We Get It* to Brisbane Powerhouse. This year, she performed *Cerita Anak* (Polyglot and Papermoon Puppet Theatre) at Arts Centre Melbourne and will bring *Merrily We Roll Along* (Watch This) to Southbank Theatrem, The Lawler in June/July.

(From left) Rohan Mirchandaney; Rohan Mirchandaney and Sahil Saluja



Cast & Creative Team



RASHMA N. KALSIE

Playwright

Rashma N. Kalsie is an Indian writer-playwright based in Australia. She is the founder of Indian Diaspora Dramatics Association. Rashma's work includes the plays *The Day I Left Home – Melbourne Talam* (Melbourne Theatre Company's Cybec Electric and NEON readings), *Padma Shri Prahasana* (India Habitat Centre, Delhi), *The Lost Dog* (Walker Gallery & Arts Centre), *The Rejected Girl* (Mumbai Theatre Guide One-Act Plays Shortlist) and *Meri Script Hai Kahan* (Eventura Creations); the novels *Ohh! Gods are Online* (Srishti Publishers & Distributors) and *The Buddha and the Bitch* (Purple Folio); and over 100 scripts for TV shows with B.A.G. Films and News and Entertainment Television. She has published articles and shorts in print and online magazines – *Woman's Era*, *Manushi*, *garamchai.com* and *feminafastfiction.com*. Rashma studied TV Journalism at Acadmey 18 (a school of TV18), Screenwriting at University of Toronto, Playwrights' Workshop (Mahesh Dattani and India Habitat Centre), and Natyahastra Workshop (Dr. Bharat Gupta). Rashma is an Australian Writers Guild Associate Member.



PETRA KALIVE

Director

Petra Kalive has extensive experience as a director and dramaturg of new works for the stage. At Melbourne Theatre Company she has directed *Beached*, winner of the 2010 Patrick White Award, the Cybec Electric reading of *In the Kingdom of Cha*, and was Assistant Director on *Constellations*. Her acclaimed adaptation of Peter Goldsworthy's novel *Three Dog Night* toured nationally in 2009. She was Dramaturg at Red Stitch from 2009 to 2012, Assistant Dramaturg at Malthouse Theatre in 2010, and Assistant Director on *Macbeth* (STC). Petra has directed for Arena Theatre Company, Complete Works Theatre Company, St Martins Youth Arts Centre, and La Trobe and Monash University performing arts programs. She is currently Artistic Director of Union House Theatre at Melbourne University. Her most recent work as a director includes *Redemption* by Anthony Crowley (La Mama), *Macbeth and Macdeath; a Coda* (Union House Theatre), and the much-acclaimed *Taxithi*, which played two sell-out seasons at fortyfivedownstairs.



ANDREW BAILEY

Set & Costume Designer

Andrew Bailey studied Design at the VCA School of Production, graduating in 2004. Some of his recent designs include Melbourne Theatre Company's *Double Indemnity*, *Lungs*, *The Boy at the Edge of Everything*, *What Rhymes with Cars and Girls*, *The Effect* (2014 Green Room Award nomination), *Beached*, *Happy Ending*, *The Golden Dragon*, *On the Production of Monsters* (2012 Green Room Award nomination), *The Joy of Text*, *Songs for Nobodies*, *Ruby Moon*, and, for MTC Education, *Explorations: A Streetcar Named Desire*. Some of his other independent/site-specific designs include *Grief and the Lullaby* (Theatre Works Flight Festival), *The Stream/The Shore/The Boat/The Bridge* (Next Wave Festival; 2012 Green Room Award), *Southern Crossings* (Green Room Award), *Pillow Talk*, *24003* and *This is Our Youth*. Andrew currently holds the position of Production Design Coordinator at Melbourne Theatre Company.

From left: Sahil Saluja and Sonya Soares; Rohan Mirchandaney and Sonya Soares



Cast & Creative Team



RACHEL BURKE

Lighting Designer

Rachel Burke has worked nationally and internationally with Australia's leading arts companies for more than twenty-five years. Her industry awards include six Green Room Awards for Excellence in Theatre Lighting Design, 2005 and 2010 IES Victorian and National Awards of Excellence in Lighting Design and Helpmann Award nominations for *Black Medea* (Malthouse/Belvoir) and *Marlin* (MTC/Arena). Selected theatre design for Melbourne Theatre Company: *Buyer and Cellar*, *Cock*, *Solomon and Marion*, *True Minds*, *Constellations*, *True West*; The Australian Ballet: *Art to Sky*, *Cinderella*, Stephen Baynes' *Swan Lake*, *Dark Lullaby*, *Ballet Imperial*, *Unspoken Dialogues*, *Molto Vivace*; Malthouse Theatre: *Walking into the Bigness*, *Black Medea* (with Belvoir), *Cargo*, *Woman Bomb*, *Parramatta Girls* (with Belvoir), *Moth* (with Arena Theatre Company); Playbox: *Wolf*, *Glass Mermaid*, *Good Works*, *The Incorruptible*, *Night Fall* and *Rapture*. Rachel has a substantial body of work in the independent theatre sector including long-term work with Nadja Kostich, Peta Murray, Angus Cerini, La Mama, fortyfivedownstairs and Red Stitch. She has recently designed critically acclaimed and sold out seasons of *SHIT* (Dee & Cornelius) and *The Season* (Tas Performs) for Sydney Festival 2017.



DARIUS KEDROS

Sound Designer & Composer

Sound Designer and Composer Darius Kedros works across theatre, virtual reality, art installation, and podcasts. Since relocating to Melbourne from the UK in 2013 he has created work for ABC's Radio National, the Festival of Live Art, Scienceworks, Federation Square, MIFF, Melbourne Music Week, and Asia TOPA among others. Collaborations with Australian artists include Susie Dee, Triage Live Art Collective, Matt Scholten, and Tim Minchin. His northern hemisphere credits include The Rambert Dance Company, Momentum Pictures, the BBC, and Virgin Records. An early adopter of new media and technologies, Darius has most recently turned his hand to spatialised audio in virtual and mixed reality projects, and is actively exploring these emerging artforms.

(From left) Rohan Mirchandaney and Sahil Saluja; Sonya Suares



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