

MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY
— EDUCATION PACK PART A —

MELBOURNE TALAM

BY RASHMA N. KALSIE

4 — 20 MAY
SOUTHBANK THEATRE
THE LAWLER

23 MAY — 9 JUNE
REGIONAL TOUR

MTC MELBOURNE
THEATRE
COMPANY

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Welcome



Welcome to the world of *Melbourne Talam*. This new play from Rashma N. Kalsie is about belonging, told through the stories of three young people from India trying to make Melbourne their home. As Melbourne's primary home of live storytelling, we are proud to present the world premiere of this bold new work that is rich with comedy and drama. *Melbourne Talam* is our 2017 Education Production, embodying MTC's commitment to programming theatre that speaks directly to today's young audiences. For some students, the lives of the characters in this play may echo their own experience. For many others, these stories will offer a new perspective on Australian life.

MTC Education helps you to get the most out of your visit to the theatre and to make meaningful connections between the work we do at MTC and your VCE studies. This vibrant production will put our city's contemporary social issues at centre stage, and we look forward to continuing the conversation with you throughout the year.

Brett Sheehy AO
Artistic Director

MTC Education 2017

mtc.com.au/education

VCE Drama workshops	5 — 7 June
VCE Theatre Studies workshops	19 — 21 June
<i>Macbeth</i> workshops	8 — 9 June
<i>Noises Off</i> comedy workshops	22 — 23 June
HQ Tours	On demand

To book a workshop email schools@mtc.com.au or call **03 8688 0963**.

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.

Preparing to see *Melbourne Talam*

Part A of the *Melbourne Talam* Education Pack is designed to help you prepare to see the MTC production as part of your VCE Drama studies. This is a *pre-show* pack with information about context, setting, characters and the playwright. This resource will help you to get the most out of your visit to the theatre, priming you to see beyond the performance and consider the connections to VCE Drama. **Once you've seen the production, download Part B** of the Education Pack for further insights to the stagecraft elements, dramatic elements, performance styles, non-naturalistic conventions and production photography to help you unpack the show. The extract below from the VCE Drama Study Design is a reminder of the Key Knowledge required and the Key Skills you need to demonstrate in your analysis of the play.

Drama Unit 3 – Area of Study 3 – Outcome 3

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse and evaluate a non-naturalistic performance. To achieve this outcome, the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 3.

Key Knowledge

- The ways in which non-naturalistic performance styles and conventions are used in performance
- The ways in which characters are represented in non-naturalistic performance through the actors' use of expressive skills
- The ways in which dramatic elements, conventions and stagecraft are manipulated to enhance non-naturalistic performance
- Drama terminology associated with performance styles, traditions, and practitioners from contemporary and cultural traditions relevant to non-naturalistic performance

Key Skills

- Analyse the representation of characters within a non-naturalistic performance
- Analyse and evaluate the manipulation of dramatic elements, conventions and stagecraft within a non-naturalistic performance
- Analyse non-naturalistic performance styles within a production
- Analyse and evaluate the use of expressive and performance skills in non-naturalistic performance
- Analyse and evaluate establishment and maintenance of the actor-audience relationship in a non-naturalistic performance
- Use drama terminology appropriately to analyse and evaluate a non-naturalistic performance

Synopsis

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 *talam* – it's rhythm – right. A sudden and calamitous event changes the lives of all three, and their future in Australia.

Characters

Jasminder Singh

Jasminder is 19 years old and in Australia on a student visa. He comes from the town of Gurdaspur in the state of Punjab, India. Jasminder didn't have a great future in India, but he is upwardly mobile. He idolises his uncle Sarabjit who owns a big business in London and drives a BMW. He shares a studio apartment with his housemates, Ranbeer, Mohit and Parminder. Jasminder is a Sikh, a follower of the Sikhism religion. He values courage and fearlessness, but he is not hip. Jasminder is finding that the pressures of studying abroad, paying rent and finding work are making life difficult.

Sonali Chugh

Sonali is 29 years old and has been in Australia for two years. She works in retail and loves fashion. Sonali comes from a wealthy family in Delhi, and is desperately trying to maintain a glamorous lifestyle in Melbourne. Sonali is divorced from Vivek, and is fervently chasing a new relationship with Andrew, a customer at the shop where she works. She is full of disdain for other Indians, and passionately believes that Melbourne is the city of her soul. To an extent, Sonali's family has ostracised her because of the divorce, perceiving her as money-hungry and wanton. Sonali has a penchant for wine, but has few friends in Melbourne.

Poornachandra Rao

Poornachandra (Poorna) is 24 years old and in Australia on a work visa. He comes from the city of Hyderabad in the southern Indian state of Telangana. Poorna has been in Melbourne two months and is working in software development and IT, however he is competing for his job and might be forced to leave Australia. His parents are concerned with social status and keeping up appearances, and they look more favourably on Poorna's career than his brother's aspirations in the beauty industry. Poorna is struggling to adjust to life in Melbourne and is homesick for Hyderabad.



Expressive Skills

Consider the characters described above. As an actor, think about how you would create each character using voice, movement, facial expression and gesture. Write your ideas down in a table, then perform your interpretation in character to a partner by improvising dialogue based on what you know.

Other Characters

The playwright has described the three central characters as archetypes, however there are many more characters in *Melbourne Talam*. The cast of three also play: Sonali's brother, Vivek (Sonali's ex-husband), passengers on trains, Poorna's work colleagues, Poorna's boss, Jasminder's housemates, Andrew (Sonali's date), a teacher, an agent, an Indian girl, an Australian man, Sonali's father, and more.



Look For

During the performance, look for how the actors use their expressive skills to create each character. Also watch out for the techniques they use to transform between characters.

Cast and Creatives



Rashma N. Kalsie
Playright



Rohan Mirchandaney
Jasminder



Sahil Saluja
Poorna



Sonya Soares
Sonali



Petra Kalive
Director



Andrew Bailey
Set & Costume Designer



Rachel Burke
Lighting Designer



Darius Kedros
Composer
& Sound Designer

Setting

The play takes place in the present day in Melbourne, a city that might also be considered a character in the play. Flagstaff Railway Station, an underground station on the metro network, is a central location. However, as the story jumps back and forth through time and place, we also visit three cities in India: Hyderabad, Delhi and Gurdaspur.



Markets surrounding the Charminar in Hyderabad.
Photo by Amlan Mathur/Getty Images.

Hyderabad

Hyderabad has no metro (although one is currently under construction), so traffic is appalling and the city can be slow. Consequently, Hyderabadis generally have an easy-going attitude. The city is also home to “Cyberabad”, a leading IT hub in India housing giants such as Facebook, Google, Microsoft and IBM. With just over twice the population of Melbourne, Hyderabad is a city where traditional biryani restaurants, teahouses and palaces, collide with modern-world malls, multiplexes and towers. The official language of Hyderabad is Telugu, however many people speak Hyderabad Urdu – a hybrid of Urdu, Telugu, Telangana and Hindi – with a sense of pride.



Paharganj (Main Bazaar) in Delhi.
Photo by Bartosz Hadyniak/Getty Images.

Delhi

Officially called the National Capital Territory of Delhi, Delhi is actually a cluster of cities. Delhi has a cheap and efficient metro, making travel between the many bazaars, mega-malls, temples and sprawling web of neighbourhoods easy. Home to almost 25 million people, Delhi is one of the most populous cities on the planet. This population density means Delhi is the largest commercial centre in northern India, however the World Health Organisation identified Delhi as the most polluted city in the world in 2014. Hindi is the official language of Delhi, however Urdu, Punjabi and English are also commonly spoken.



Golden Temple in Amritsar, Punjab. Photo by Luciano Mortula/Getty Images.

Gurdaspur

Gurdaspur is a city, more on the scale of a town, in the northern Indian state of Punjab and shares a border with Pakistan. The city has a population a little over half that of Melbourne. Gurdaspur is a modern city founded by the British, and it houses the administrative headquarters of Gurdaspur district. Sikhism is the most practiced faith in Punjab. The holiest of Sikh shrines, the Harmandir Sahib (or Golden Temple) is located nearby in the city of Amritsar (pictured left). The official language of the Gurdaspur district is Punjabi, with the Majhi dialect spoken in the city of Gurdaspur.



Research India

Research these places and collect images of each, annotating them with information. Also consider:

- What are the major sights to see in each place?
 - Did you come across any surprising travel advice regarding local customs?
 - What modes of transport are available?
-



Some facts about India

- India is the world's largest democracy, with 1.2 billion people.
- Life expectancy in India is 64 years (men), 68 years (women).
- Only about 1 in 100 marriages in India end in divorce, one of the lowest rates in the world.
- Currency: Rupee. For the price of one Big Mac in Australia, you could buy three in India.
- India is expected to be the world's most populous country by 2050.

Photo by Bardocz Peter/Getty Images.



Melbourne

Melbourne is the second-largest city in Australia and the capital of Victoria. The city has an extensive train, tram and bus network, with expansion underway. Frequently voted the “most liveable city” worldwide, Melbourne is home to a vibrant arts community and loyal sports fans. A multicultural city, Melbourne is home to almost 4 million people, representing around 140 cultures. Australia has no official language, although English is generally regarded as the de facto national language. Over 250 Indigenous Australian language groups covered the continent at the time of European settlement in 1788, but today only around 120 of those languages are still spoken.

Melbourne CBD seen from Southbank.
Photo by Gordon Bell Photography/Getty Images



Discuss Melbourne

The playwright suggests that Melbourne might also be considered an **antagonist** in the play. Discuss what this might mean.

Structure

The play follows the journeys of three young people from India, each narrating their own story. The script begins on a train platform in Flagstaff Railway Station where we meet all three central characters. From here, their stories take different trajectories and the script jumps back and forth between each. As we follow each narrator, we also visit their friends and family in India, and the nostalgic world of their memories. Our protagonists' lives collide again at Flagstaff later in the story, this time with a climactic event that changes the lives of all three.



Look For

As you are watching the production, pay attention to the structure. How long does each scene last? Do scenes overlap? How are flashbacks used? How often are all three characters in one scene together?

What is *talam*?

“*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.” – Rashma N. Kalsie



Rhythm

How would you describe Melbourne's rhythm? Write a passage or create a soundscape that captures the city's *talam*. Annotate or write a brief rationale explaining your artistic choices, and any predictions about how the dramatic element of rhythm will be incorporated into the production.

Carnatic Music is commonly associated with southern India and is considered one of the oldest systems of music in the world. It is a highly complex system of music with melodic scales and rhythmic cycles, and an elaborate pattern for identifying them. The music also has a highly devotional element.



Carnatic Music

Learn more about Carnatic Music and listen to some examples at carnaticindia.com



Discuss Dramatic Elements

Thinking about the play's structure and the meaning of *talam*, discuss how might Rhythm and Sound be used in the performance? Revisit the VCE Study Design to see how the dramatic elements of Rhythm and Sound are defined.

Contextual Information

Coming to Melbourne from India

A central theme in *Melbourne Talam* is **belonging**, and each of the characters is struggling to make a foreign city their new home. Their experiences mirror that of many people who come from India to Australia for study, work or family. In recent times, the media has reported on several events that highlight the challenges facing Indians in Australia.

Under Attack

In mid-2009, Indian student Baljinder Singh was stabbed in the stomach with a screwdriver at Carnegie railway station. Shortly after, 25-year-old Sravan Kumar Theerthala was stabbed in the head with a screwdriver at a party in Hadfield. These and a spate of other attacks on Indian students prompted a large overnight protest on the steps of Flinders Street Station where about 2,000 people voiced their anger and frustration with the ongoing violence.

In January 2010, Indian accounting graduate Nitin Garg was fatally stabbed in a park while walking to his workplace, Hungry Jacks. His teenage attacker was later arrested and sentenced to 13 years in prison, but the crime also deeply affected the victim's housemates, Sandeep Sandeep and Parminder Singh.

The Violence Continues

A few years later Manrajwinder Singh, a young man studying in Australia on a temporary visa, was brutally bashed while celebrating the end of semester with friends. He was knocked unconscious and admitted to the Alfred hospital in a critical condition. Fortunately he survived, but his recovery was plagued by fears of having his visa cancelled. Media outlets reported that this attack contributed to a 70% drop in the number of Indian students travelling to Victoria.

Officials often hesitate to label such attacks as racially motivated, instead referring to such crimes as opportunistic. Sometimes, however, there is little room for doubt. In 2016 13-year-old Harjeet Singh was assaulted on a bus by three strangers in Eltham. Harjeet was verbally abused before one of the attackers hit him and tried to remove his turban, a proud sign of his Sikh faith. Later in 2016, Indian citizen Deepak Singh was found dead in his car in Melbourne. He had allegedly been stressed about his visa status in Australia, and he was suspected to have committed suicide.

Do you or someone you know need help? Visit beyondblue.org.au to access resources to help you support a loved one, keep the conversation going, or seek support for yourself. You can also contact your school wellbeing team, or call **Lifeline** on **13 11 14**.

Looking for Work

Like some characters in *Melbourne Talam*, finding suitable employment in Australia can be difficult for vulnerable overseas workers. Over a period of several months beginning late 2014, two Indian national visa-holders studying in Australia were short-changed thousands of dollars when their employer paid a flat rate far below minimum wage. Legal action commenced in 2016 after the employer failed to respond to a Compliance Notice. Similarly, a 7-Eleven franchise owner was penalised over \$200,000 in 2016 for underpaying employees. Moreover, employees were being made to work significantly more hours than their timesheets suggested. It was also reported in 2016 that the number of IT professionals from India in Australia on 457 (temporary work) visas being paid base salaries had tripled, while experienced Australian IT professionals were paid much higher.

Finding Success

However, the picture is not universally bleak. Among the many people from India who find success in Australia, the finalists in last year's Victorian International Education Award included three Indian students: Amit Sarwal, Sahil Puri, and Balaji Trichy Narayanaswamy. Balaji won the award for International Student of the Year – Regional. Balaji is studying a Doctor of Philosophy at Deakin University, Geelong and has a Masters in Engineering in Industrial Metallurgy. In addition, Balaji also engages in community roles including in the 'Good Start Breakfast Club' for the Australian Red Cross, and as a learning support volunteer with EdConnect Australia.



My name is Singh

Did you notice that the name Singh appears several times here? In the **Sikh** religion, the tenth Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, gave all Sikh men one last name: Singh (Lion). Similarly, all Sikh women have one last name: Kaur (Princess). This egalitarian act sought to remove the barriers between people that were created by surnames tied to social status and caste, instead promoting equality of all people.

- Research the Sikh religion online.
 - Why might the character of Jasminder Singh wear a turban?
 - What other symbols are there in the Sikh religion?
 - In pairs, hot seat the character of Jasminder, who has just arrived in Melbourne on a student visa.
-



Discuss Context

After reading the contextual information, discuss the following questions:

- What might a play that responds to these events be like?
 - What themes might be explored?
 - What might the families of these victims of crime be feeling thousands of kilometres away in India?
 - Why might drive dishonest employers to underpay employees?
-

Performance Styles

Melbourne Talam will be presented in a non-naturalistic performance style. You may be able to identify similarities to the work of Bertolt Brecht (Epic Theatre) and Jerzy Grotowski (Poor Theatre) through the use of conventions such as direct address, narration, flashbacks and multiple roles. In particular, the stagecraft elements are highly non-naturalistic, as myriad different locations must be represented on the stage in rapid transformations of time and place. The play will also include the manipulation of some naturalistic conventions.

The Director's (Petra Kalive) vision for the production is integrated into the set design. The design will be grounded in the key location of Flagstaff Railway Station, a place Kalive describes as "intermediate", all about "arrivals and departures". In her discussions with Andrew Bailey (Set & Costume Designer), Kalive spoke of how the space will have to be transformative enough to exist in multiple worlds. She also plans to have all actors on stage at all times, and will incorporate sequences of repetitive movement that invoke elements of physical theatre and dance. More information from Petra Kalive will be available in Part B of this Education Pack.



Look For

Look for non-naturalistic conventions like those described above and remember specific moments in the play to discuss.

About the Playwright



Rashma N. Kalsie

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 *Padma Shri Prahasana* (India Habitat Centre, Delhi), *The Day I Left Home - Melbourne Talam* (MTC NEON Readings 2015, MTC Cybec Electric Festival, 2016), *The Lost Dog* (Walker Gallery & Arts Centre 2012 and 2014), *The Rejected Girl* (Mumbai Theatre Guide One-Act Plays Shortlist) and *Meri Script Hai Kahan* (Eventura Creations 2003); 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 feminafiction.com. Rashma studied TV Journalism from Academy 18 (a school of TV18), Screenwriting from University of Toronto, Playwrights' Workshop (Mahesh Dattani and India Habitat Centre), and Natyashastra Workshop (Dr. Bharat Gupta). Rashma is an AWG Associate Member.



In conversation with Rashma N. Kalsie

What inspired you to write *Melbourne Talam*?

When I was writing and researching my first play about Australian Indians, *The Lost Dog*, in 2014 I stumbled on the story of Shiva, an Indian student who had gone missing from Dandenong, a few kilometres away from where I was living at the time. My brother had come to Melbourne as a student and I had lived in an apartment with Indian students when I had first moved to Melbourne in 2006. From my experience I knew the life of an Indian student was tough but Shiva's was an extreme case. SBS Punjabi journalist, Preetinder Singh, who had been following Shiva's story shared some sad stories involving Indian students. Meanwhile, I was talking to/interviewing Indian students at La Trobe University and skeletons were tumbling out of cupboards. Somewhere along my research I read the heart-breaking story of a 19-year-old Indian student in Perth who had committed suicide. Somewhere around that time I decided to do a story on Indian students.

The accident in the play is a true incident that happened at Flagstaff station. There were many inspirations behind the play but all the stories started weaving together in 2014 when I submitted an application for an opportunity.

Are there any moments in the play that are autobiographical?

The racial abuse scene is the most autobiographical episode in the play. It happened to me at Flinders tram stop when I was in the middle of writing *Melbourne Talam*. No sooner had it happened, than I knew I was going to use it in the play.

What are the big ideas you're exploring in the play?

The themes of displacement, migrant experiences, alienation, and migrants' attempts at cultural assimilation are at the heart of the play. But above all, this play is an ode to Melbourne. Melbourne is a living character in the play. I believe cities affect its people as much as the people define the city. I am exploring Melbourne in this play as much as I am exploring other themes.

Why did you choose these three central characters from three separate cities?

I wanted to use characters from different parts of India (Delhi, Gurdaspur and Hyderabad) and from different socio-economic backgrounds. All the characters speak different languages (Hindi, Punjabi and Telugu), are on different visas (spouse, student and work visas) and have different needs. But they are united in their objective of making Melbourne home. The use of different characters give the play a rich and colourful tapestry. I wanted to paint on a big canvas and for that I needed colours. India is a diverse country and to paint a true picture I had to bring in characters from different parts of India.

A lot has happened in the world since you began writing *Melbourne Talam*. What is particularly relevant about the play in 2017?

Since I started writing *Melbourne Talam* the world has become more conservative and hostile. There's more suspicion and less love. I fear the play has become more relevant than before.

How would you describe your process as a writer?

I usually start with a theme and a central idea on which the play would hinge. I take a long time taking notes, creating characters and their needs. Once I am in sync with my characters I work out the structure and the scenes. Dialogue comes last. I don't touch my computer until I have worked out the scenes on cards and pinned them on the board. I write in drafts and it takes me several drafts and rewrites to complete the script.



Discuss Playwriting

Having read this interview, what insights does the playwright give you into the play?
How might the performance styles support the themes and big ideas?
What play-making techniques does the playwright use?

The Script

Melbourne Talam was inspired by real-life events and the playwright has interwoven her own experiences into the story.

The development process

Rashma N. Kalsie started writing the script, originally titled *The Day I Left Home – Melbourne Talam*, in 2014 and it received a reading at the 2015 MTC NEON Festival. The following year, the script received two public, semi-staged readings by professional actors, with the assistance of directors and dramaturgs as part of the MTC's Cybec Electric play readings. In mid-2016, the play was programmed for MTC's 2017 season, and the title was shortened to *Melbourne Talam*. In October that year, the script received a one-day development at MTC HQ, where the playwright, director, members of the cast and MTC staff worked to refine the script. To do this, the playwright spoke about her intention and personal connections to the story, the director brainstormed her vision for the production, and actors shared their reflections on each character's journey. Over the next few months, the playwright continued to refine the script until it was ready for rehearsals to commence.

Non-naturalism in the script

Consider the playwright's introduction to the play:

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



Discuss Non-Naturalism

- What does this introduction tell you about how the play might be staged?
 - What stagecraft elements might be used and how?
 - How might locations be represented non-naturalistically?
-

Script Excerpts

The following excerpts from the script offer you ways to interact with the text before seeing the production. The excerpts are accompanied by activities and prompt questions, which will assist you to better understand these moments in the play.

1. Poorna reflects on his interactions with other Australians at the railway station while waiting for his train:

POORNA: It's alright if they don't want to talk to me. I am a happy outsider, under no pressure to fit in. Though we came here with a lot of preparation we even tried to learn the Australian slang on YouTube. Shashi forwarded 'How to talk Australian slang' videos.



Australian Slang

Research a YouTube video on Australian slang.

- Does this paint an accurate picture of Australian vernacular?
 - What words would you add/omit?
-

2. Poorna discusses feeling homesick with his competitive work colleague, Shashi:

POORNA: Don't you miss home? Don't you long for the sounds of Hyderabad the call of the koyal, the ring of the temple bells, the azaan, the song of the hawkers, horns and hooters oh Hyderabad is so musical.



Hyderabad Soundscape

Research some of the sounds Poorna mentions. Create a soundscape inspired by this passage that evokes the cacophony of Hyderabad.

- How could you incorporate your soundscape into a performance non-naturalistically?
-



Look For

During the performance, look for how the dramatic element of **sound** is used to enhance the performance.

3. Sonali tries yoga in an effort to move on from a series of unsuccessful relationships and confronting events:

SONALI: One-two-three-four-five-return-four-three-two-one-stop. Oh! Surya Namaskar is so invigorating, it's helping me get on with my life.



Yoga

Yoga originated in ancient India. With your class, try doing Surya Namaskar (sun salutation) – there are many instructional videos on YouTube.

- Discuss how you feel before and after the yoga.
 - Discuss why people do yoga, and why Sonali might do yoga.
-

4. Poorna fondly remembers his home, Hyderabad, while sitting on a train in Melbourne one evening:

POORNA: I'm not used to so much silence - this train is quieter than my home in Hyderabad. You can't imagine the noise in our house - old gramophone records, guitar, tambura, Classical music, Metal, Rock, *Tollywood* songs, Bollywood songs, cricket commentary, news telecasts, TV serials, non-stop noise. We Hyderabadis love to talk - our buses roar with noise.



Research Tollywood

Research *Tollywood*: a part of India's cinema industry, creating films in the Telugu language.

- How is Tollywood different from Hollywood and Bollywood?
 - Watch some Tollywood trailers on YouTube.
 - What kinds of stories are depicted?
-



Discuss Mood

Discuss how the dramatic element of Mood might be manipulated in this scene. Revisit the VCE Study Design to see how the dramatic element of Mood is defined.

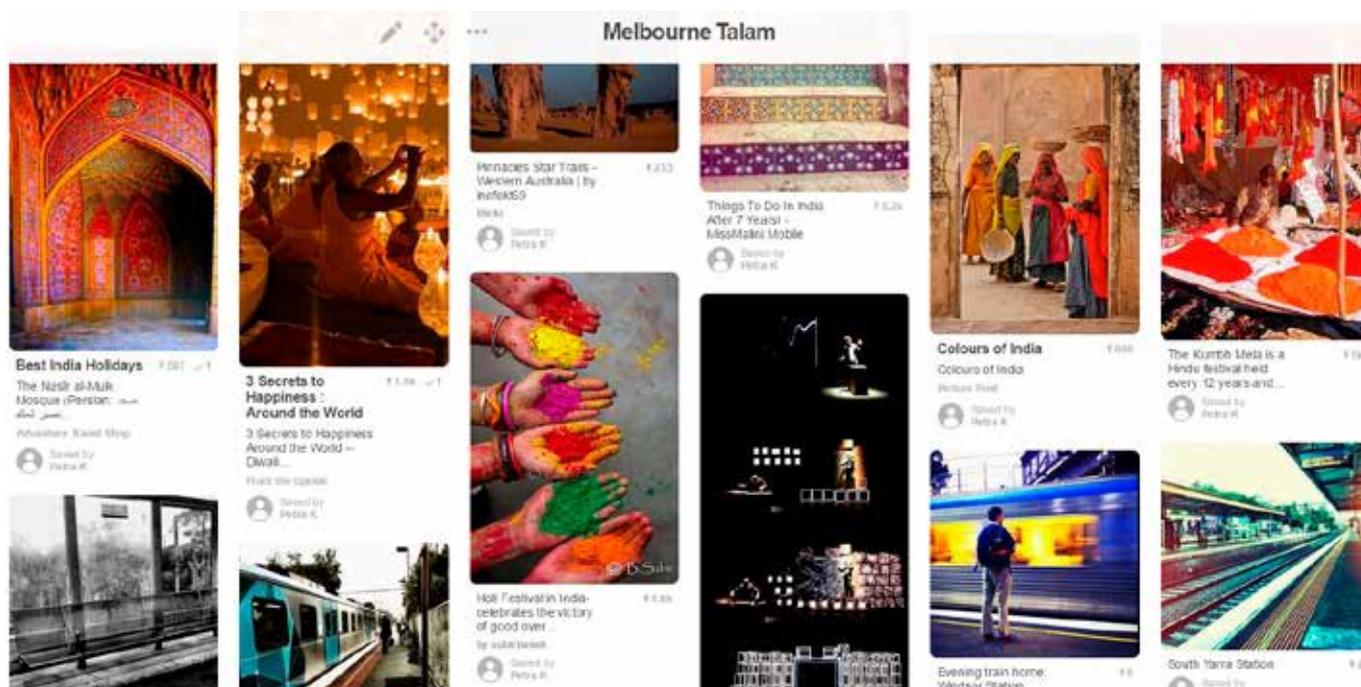
Design Sneak Peek



Reference photos of Flagstaff Railway Station taken by Andrew Bailey (Set & Costume Designer).

In preparing to design *Melbourne Talam*, Andrew Bailey (Set & Costume Designer) thoroughly researched Flagstaff Railway Station. He visited the location, took measurements of benches and photographed elements such as tiles, light fittings, typography on signs, and tactile warning strips. His research informed his set design for the production.

The design process, like most of theatre, is highly collaborative. Petra Kalive (Director) created a Pinterest board with reference material to show other members of the creative team what direction she envisioned the production heading.



Pinterest board shared by the creative team.



Mood Board

Create your own mood board with reference images that evoke your own aesthetic for the design of *Melbourne Talam*. Annotate each image to highlight features that inspire you. Also keep in mind that the set design will have to be dynamic enough to create several different locations, as well as being flexible enough to tour around regional Victoria. More information about the set design, and other stagecraft elements, will be available in Part B of this Education Pack.

Further reading

Keen to do some more research before you see the play? The sources below offer some interesting reading that will help you think about the story's relevance to contemporary society:

- Michael Bachelard, *Tough times for young Indians who dare to dream* on smh.com.au
- Ellen Barry, *In India, a Small Band of Women Risk It All for a Chance to Work* on nytimes.com
- *Train to Pakistan* – a novel by Khushwant Singh
- Mosiqi Acharya, *Australian Police renews search for missing Indian-Origin Delivery man, Shiva Chauhan* on sbs.com.au

References

Setting

Hyderabad: *Hyderabad Metro Rail* on hmrl.telangana.gov.in; *Introducing Hyderabad* on lonelyplanet.com; *Hyderabad Language* on hyderabadplanet.com.

Delhi: *Statistical Abstract of Delhi 2014* on delhi.gov.in; *Delhi's air among the dirtiest in world: WHO study* on hindustantimes.com; *Languages in Delhi* on mapsofindia.com.

Gurdaspur: *Story of Gurdaspur City* on punjabmonitor.com; *Different punjabi languages* on unp.me.

India: *India Country Profile* on bbc.co.uk; *Utpal Dholakia* on psychologytoday.com; *10 projections for the global population in 2050* on pewresearch.org.

Melbourne: Noel Pearson, *Indigenous tongues deserve recognition as official languages* on theaustralian.com.au; *Indigenous Australian Languages* on aiatsis.gov.au.

Contextual Information

Anthony Dowsley, *Student Baljinder Singh robbed and stabbed at Carnegie station* on heraldsun.com.au; Paul Millar and Ben Doherty, *Indian anger boils over* on smh.com.au; Adrian Lowe, *13 years for Nitin Garg murder* on theage.com.au; Catherine Graue, *Indian student's bashing sparks calls for change to Australia's migration laws* on abc.net.au; Ellen Whinnett and Tawqeer Hussain, *Indian student numbers plunge after fresh attack* on heraldsun.com.au; Camille Bianchi, *Sikh teen shaken after alleged turban attack on bus* on sbs.com.au; Shamsheer Kainth, *'Stressed over permanent residency' in Australia, Indian commits suicide* on sbs.com.au; Shamsheer Kainth, *Indian restaurant faces court over underpaying Indian employees* on sbs.com.au; Shamsheer Kainth, *Exploited 7 Eleven workers' visas will not be axed* on sbs.com.au; Anna Patty, *Proportion of Indian IT workers on 457 visas on rock bottom pay triples* on smh.com.au; SBS Hindi, *3 Indian student finalists in the Victorian International Education Awards* on sbs.com.au; Sikh FAQ on sikhcoalition.org.



The script for *Melbourne Talam* will be available from 29 March.

Studying the script will help your students go deeper in their analysis of the play, and sustain their memory of special moments in the production

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Attendance Information

This production contains coarse language, mature themes and references to suicide. If you need to debrief with somebody about the themes in *Melbourne Talam*, your school wellbeing coordinator is a good person to ask. There are also helpful resources online at beyondblue.org.au.

Part B of this Education Pack will be available once the production opens. To read more about visiting with school groups visit mtc.com.au/education.

Duration

Approximately 75minutes,
no interval.

Bookings

Melbourne season:

Email schools@mtc.com.au
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Regional Tour:

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Enquiries

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