



# RAGHAV HANDA

# TWO

 Brown's Mart Theatre



**Fri 5 Aug** 6pm    **Sat 6 Aug** 1pm & 6pm

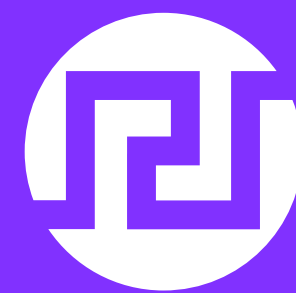
**Sun 7 Aug** 6pm

**Duration** 1hr

**NOTE** Contains flashing lights

**DARWIN**  
**FESTIVAL**

Proudly supported by



**PLAYKING**  
**FOUNDATION**

*Darwin Festival takes place on the land of the Larrakia people.*

*We wish to pay our respects to the traditional owners of this Country and to their ancestors. As the Festival welcomes contemporary artists and art from around Australia, we also celebrate the continuing culture of the Larrakia.*

Scroll through to read more about this performance of *TWO*.

Enjoy the show!

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## **ARTIST NOTE**

As Maharshi is a musician there are certain rules that exist between he and I in a classical performance context that may not be visible to a lot of people. For example, I can't get changed in front of him, and there are certain things I can't say in front of him. It would be unthinkable for me to touch his instrument, and for him to enter my space as a dancer.

That being said, we cannot let go of the fact that I am a contemporary dancer and a choreographer, and at the end of the day I am making works in a Western context where going against the rules is not a particularly unusual thing. So, challenging the rules of classical dance might be quite an easy thing to approach for me, but for Maharshi it may not be, given his training and performance

practice comes from a very different discipline and perspective. In this way *TWO* is a very personal work about the two of us, and Kathak is a set of principles we use to explore and understand our personalities and relationship.

I think it's important when audiences view the work to remember that it's fundamentally about two people. In *TWO* I'm creating a physicality and a language as I go along, and that's my overall aim as an Australian choreographer. Kathak provides us with a set of principles that we can interact with in the pursuit of creating something and exploring our relationship, as dancer and musician.

The audience has to be open enough to view this work as a work of two people from different backgrounds, both culturally – in that we're from different

states and don't speak a common language (our only common language is English) – and in our performance backgrounds. If you view the work as a work that is looking at a relationship dynamic, I hope you'll see that it's a piece that asks what it is like to make space for others; what it is like to share; what it is like to give up your power and to collaborate.

**Raghav Handa**





## **BIOGRAPHIES**

### **Raghav Handa**

*Creator, Choreographer & Performer*

Raghav Handa is an Australian choreographer and performer of Indian heritage. He has worked with Sydney Dance Company, Force Majeure, Contemporary Asian Australian Performance, Sue Healey, The National Theatre of Parramatta, as well as First Nations choreographers Vicki Van Hout and Marilyn Miller. Inspired by his birthright, his works combine traditional kathak principles and contemporary movement to create multifaceted and engaging explorations of modern Australian cultural identity.

Handa has worked in a variety of dance roles including choreographer, performer, collaborator, dance lecturer, artist

representative and mentor for young performers. His works *Tukre'* (2015), *Mens Rea* (2016) and *Folly & Time* (2018-19) have been performed across Australia and internationally to strong critical acclaim. In 2020, his work *Cult of the Titans* was performed by Sydney Dance Company as part their New Breed platform and his work *Dawn* featured in the Sydney Opera House digital season of Unwrapped. In 2020, he appeared in the Sydney Festival premiere of *DOUBLE DELICIOUS*, an immersive theatre work by the Contemporary Asian Australian Performance and Asia TOPA festival in Melbourne. In 2019, with support from Australian Council, Handa completed a residency with Attakkalari dance company in Bengaluru, India and appeared in Melbourne's Dance Massive season of *You Animal You* by Force Majeure. In 2021, he premiered *TWO* in Sydney with further seasons at Adelaide's OzAsia Festival, and participated in Australia Council's inaugural Transmitter



residency with Darwin Festival and Serendipity Arts India. His creations are woven through collaboration, incorporating diverse dance languages, spoken word, film and sculptural set design.

## **BIOGRAPHIES**

### **Maharshi Raval**

*Tabla Player & Performer*

Maharshi Raval is a musician and maestro tabla player from Benaras Gharana (school) living in Sydney. He started his initial tabla training from his grandfather Late Shri Gajanan Rabal and then joined Saptak School of Music and continued to learn under the tutelage of Late Pt. Nandan Mehta who was a disciple of the legend of Benaras Gharana Padma Vibhushan Late Pt. Kishen Maharaj, and has been learning for the last 34 years.

He has travelled extensively to various parts of the world as a soloist and an accompanist to Indian classical vocalists, instrumentalists and Kathak dancers and also won 1st prize for National Youth

Festival Tabla Competition. He has also performed at Saptak Festival's concerts quite often in front of audiences including Pt. Kishan Maharaj, Ustad Shahid Parvez, Ustad Zakir Hussain, Pt. Rajan-Sajan Mishra, Late Ustad Allarakha Khan, Pt. Ronu Majumdar, and many more.

Raval conducted and directed the tabla recital of 100 students aged between three and 16 years on the occasion of Indian Heritage Day, has performed on Australian national television shows like *X-Factor* with India Rose on Channel 7 and *Good News Week* with Sarangan on Channel 10. He runs a music institute called Shree Gajanan Cultural Mission – The Institute of Indian Classical Music and Dance at various locations in Sydney including Parramatta, Westmead, Cherrybrook, Castle Hill and Hornsby.

## **BIOGRAPHIES**

### **Justine Shih Pearson**

*Designer*

Justine Shih Pearson has an interdisciplinary practice as a designer, creative producer, facilitator, writer, arts researcher and advocate. Originally trained in theatre design at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, she has collaborated on projects for live performance, digital media, film/tv, online publishing, public spaces, hospitals and museums in cities in Australia, Europe, the UK, North America and SE Asia. Mixed race and multinational, growing up between the unceded lands of the US and Australia as part of the Chinese diaspora, she has a particular interest in intercultural performance with a focus on the Asia Pacific, and seeks to centre the

complexities of diasporic, postcolonial, Indigenous and migrant experience in her work. Shih Pearson is currently an Honorary Associate in the School of Literature, Art and Media at the University of Sydney and is working on a book on the concept of social reliance.



## **BIOGRAPHIES**

### **Karen Norris**

*Lighting Designer*

Karen Norris has designed productions throughout Australia and Europe; based in London and Nice from 1998 to 2008. Her recent designs include *Terrain, Lore* (Francis Rings Bangarra & NAISDA), *Songs Not To Dance To & Champions* (Martin del Amo), *On View* (Sue Healey), *CELLA* (Germany SF 2018 & Dance Massive 2019) and *Hiding in Plain Sight* (Narelle Benjamin), *KOTAHI* (Atamira Dance Company NZ), *Barbara and the Camp Dogs, Winyanboga Yurringa* (Belvoir Street Theatre), *The last Five Years & The Appleton Ladies Potato Race* (Ensemble Theatre), *Blak Box* (Barangaroo & SF 2019, Melbourne 2020 Urban Theatre Projects),

*Broken Glass* (Mooghalin SF 2018), *The Weekend* (SF 2019, NZ Festival 2019) & *Rainbows End* (Liza-Mare Syron), *plenty serious TALK TALK* (Vicky van Hout), *Blak Drop Effect* (Bankstown Arts Centre), *RED* (Liz Lea Dance), *Silence* (Karul Projects, BlakDance, Brisbane Festival 2020), *Explicit Contents* (Rhiannon Newton), *The complications of Lyrebirds* (Jasmin Sheppard CAC SF 2021) and *Sunshine Super Girl* (Andrea James, Griffith Regional Theatre, SF 2021).

## **BIOGRAPHIES**

### **Julie-Anne Long**

*Dramaturg*

Julie-Anne Long is an award-winning independent dance artist based in Sydney. Since graduating from the Victorian College of Arts in the early 1980s she has performed and choreographed on a wide range of projects with companies such as Human Veins, One Extra, Theatre of Image, Flying Fruit Fly Circus, Bell Shakespeare Company, Open City and Dance Works. From 1991-96 Long was Associate Artistic Director of One Extra Company with Artistic Director Graeme Watson. She has worked in a variety of dance contexts as mentor, dramaturg, curator and producer including Acting Director of dance research organisation Critical Path

(2006-07) and Dance Curator at Campbelltown Arts Centre (2009-10). She was awarded an Australia Council Dance Fellowship in 2007, which encompassed research, development and the realisation of a body of work entitled *The Invisibility Project*. Long has a PhD from University New South Wales and is currently a Senior Lecturer in Creative Arts at Macquarie University.

## **BIOGRAPHIES**

### **Performing Lines**

Performing Lines produces provocative contemporary performance by Australia's most audacious independent artists.

We curate a portfolio of work that is propelled by pressing questions and new ways of seeing the world. We champion the unconventional, the marginal, the rebellious and the new.

Our purpose is to take risks and to ensure that the breadth and plurality of Australia's creative potential is represented and celebrated.

Performing Lines is led by Executive Producer Marion Potts, with teams in Sydney, Melbourne, Perth and Hobart, with a network of producers and



presenters around the country and the world.

In everything we do, we acknowledge that we live on Aboriginal land and constantly learn from the wisdom of First Peoples. Where we are and the history that precedes us informs how we work and how we move forward.



## **CREDITS**

### **Creator, Choreographer & Performer**

Raghav Handa

### **Tabla Player & Performer**

Maharshi Raval

### **Designer**

Justine Shih Pearson

### **Dramaturg**

Julie-Anne Long

### **Lighting Designer**

Karen Norris

### **LED Frame Construction**

Alejandro Rolandi

### **Produced by**

Performing Lines

### **Images**

Joseph Mayers

This project is supported by the NSW Government through Create NSW and originally presented by FORM Dance Projects as part of Dance Bites 2021 at Riverside Theatres.

# DARWIN FESTIVAL

Darwin Festival is the centre piece of what makes August in Darwin the best time of year. Loved by locals and adored by visitors, this tropical winter festival invites you to experience the very best in

First Nations, Territory, Australian and international art, culture and music – not just as a spectator but to be one with it.

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