TE AHUREI TOI O TĀMAKI
AUCKLAND
ARTS FESTIVAL

2026

MERRIGONG THEATRE COMPANY

A Place in the Sultan's Kitchen (or How to Make the Perfect One-Pot Chicken Curry)

By Joshua Hinton

Thursday 12 — Sunday 15 March 2026
Rangatira, Q Theatre

A Merrigong Theatre Company production, supported by Creative Australia, Create NSW and Wollongong City Council.

This project was supported through the Giving Program by Carolyn Vincent · Ubuntu Foundation.

MADE AT MERRIGONG

NSW GOVERNMENT

1 hr 10 mins no interval
Contains descriptions of violence.
Recommended for ages 12+.

A Merrigong Theatre Company Production

Director & Production Designer
Leland Kean

Vision & Sound Designer
Dominic Hinton

Dramaturgy & additional writing
Simon Hinton

Cast
Joshua Hinton
Dominic Hinton

Lighting Designer
Jasmine Rizk

Hero Image
Children of the Revolution

Production Images
Tracey Leigh Images

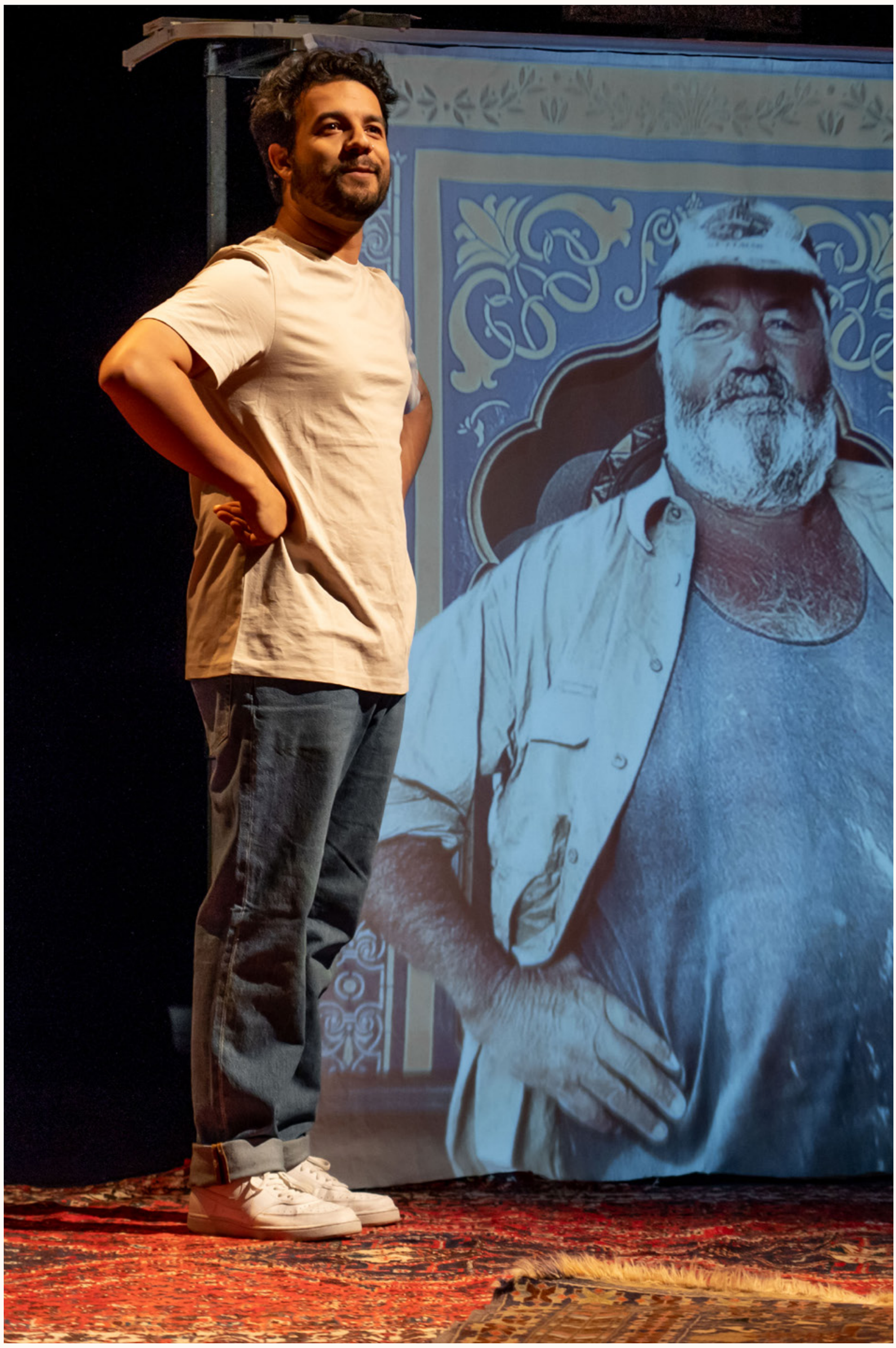
Cover image by Tracey Leigh Images

Acknowledgements

The Company would like to thank:

Mary Fassy, Phillip Hinton, Ann Hinton, Simon Hinton, Shabnam Hinton, Dom Hinton, Sean Hinton, Afnan Fassy, Vidya Fassy, Nabil Fassy, Nick Vagne, Lachlan Grogan, Flynn Mapplebeck, Mic Gruchy, Chris & Pat Beer, Keith Mcdonald, Darwin Price, Billie Prescott, Music Jam 'n Bread.

Leland Kean, Annie Clapton, Corey Potter and all at Merrigong Theatre Company.



ASIA
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About the Company

Merrigong Theatre Company is a vibrant, regional production company, operating the Illawarra Performing Arts Centre and Wollongong Town Hall.

Merrigong produces, presents and tours exciting contemporary theatre and supports the development of a wide range of theatre makers.

Merrigong presents a diverse annual season of theatre, dance and children's programming, and hosts numerous commercial and community performing arts events in their venues.

About the Show

Woven from the threads of a sweeping family epic, *A Place in the Sultan's Kitchen* is a charming, funny and moving fusion of theatre and good food.

Creator Josh Hinton fills the room with music, stories and exotic smells as he attempts to make his grandmother's chicken curry, live on stage (and you get to eat it). Through childhood memories and family folklore he transports us from the backstreets of Sri Lanka to a bustling India, from a schoolyard in Iran to a South African farm, to his home in Wollongong.

It's a show for anyone who's searched for where they belong in this world, who's lived between different cultures, or who has loved and lost family.

Sultans Kitchen
Indian Restaurant
DINE IN-BYO
TAKE-AWAY

From the Writer

The show began as an exploration of my cultural identity, through stories of my grandmother in Iran and India. As writing progressed, I realised quite quickly that I couldn't accurately explore this without looking at all the different parts of my family — the numerous cultures and beliefs.

While what has ended up on the stage is just a fraction of these stories, one thing has become quite clear — who I am, and who I'm becoming, is a reflection of all of these people, memories and experiences.

Along the journey of making the show, I've also realised that so many people in our Australian society share this experience of living between different cultures, not necessarily feeling like they totally belong in one.

— Joshua Hinton

Joshua Hinton

Writer

Joshua Hinton is a Wollongong-based actor, singer/songwriter and theatremaker. For Merrigong Theatre Company he is the co-ordinator and head tutor of Merrigong's Creativity Camp, their regular holiday programme.

In 2021 he received Wollongong City Council funding to record a number of his original songs with his duo, Dom and Josh, for the Jam 'n Bread NewGen Global Project.

Dominic Hinton

Vision & Sound Designer / Performer

Dominic Hinton is a Wollongong-based singer-songwriter and sound designer. He graduated from SAE Institute with a Bachelor of Audio, where he was able to work on sound design for several short films.

Credits include Vision & Sound Realiser for *Yandha Djanbay (Go Slowly)* by Kirli Saunders, 2025; and the Vision & Sound Designer for *A Place in the Sultan's Kitchen (or How to Make the Perfect One-Pot Chicken Curry)*, 2024.

Jasmine Rizk

Lighting Designer

Jasmine Rizk is an accomplished lighting designer and programmer known for expertly synchronising lighting with music to enhance the emotional and visual impact of every performance. Passionate about collaboration and innovation, she ensures every lighting design supports and elevates the artistic vision of the project.

Credits as Lighting Designer include *Tina – A Tropical love Story* (Brisbane Festival 2025); *Katie Noonan – Jeff Buckley's Grace* (Sydney Festival 2025); *In The Heights* (Joshua Robson Productions); *Ratburger* (CDP Theatre Producers); *An Australian Songbook* (Robyn Archer); *Menopause The Musical Tour* (SK Entertainment, 2023); *Blacklisted* (Sydney/ Adelaide Fringe Festival); *Mrock* (ATYP); *Jekyll & Hyde 25th Anniversary Concerts*

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(Concertworks); *The Boomkak Panto* (Belvoir St Theatre); *Well Behaved Women, Catch Me If You Can, The Pirates of Penzance or The Slave of Duty – Rewired and Rebooted* (Hayes Theatre Co); *Small Mouth Sounds* (Darlinghurst Theatre Company); *Kings of the Keys Tour*; *ATI, The trees have voices, the feet have ears* (NAISDA); *Fade, Zombie Thoughts* (NTofP); *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Lost Boys*, *Letters to Lindy National Tour*, *Something That Happened* (Merrigong Theatre Company), *Annie*, *School of Rock*, *Strictly Ballroom*, *Priscilla*, *Chicago*, *Jersey Boys* (SoPopera Productions); *Heathers* (The Mitchell Old Company) and *Henry V* (The Roxy Theatre).

As Associate Lighting Designer: *Rent* (LPD Productions); *Sampa The Great* (Volume Festival); IDK (Force Majeure); *Edward the Emu* (MonkeyBaa); *City of Gold* (STC & Black Swan State Theatre Co.); *Opening Night, Into The Woods* (Belvoir St Theatre) and *Scaredy Cat* (Terrapin Productions).

Lealand Kean

Director

Leland Kean is the Artistic Development Manager for Merrigong Theatre Company.

He has over 25 years professional experience as a Director, Producer, Designer, Dramaturg, Curator and Arts Manager. Prior to joining Merrigong in 2015, Leland was the Artistic Director of the Tamarama Rock Surfers Theatre Company.

During his decade long tenure with the Rock Surfers he programmed and produced over 100 new Australian works and established both the Old Fitzroy and Bondi Pavilion Theatres. Since graduating from the NIDA director's course in 1997, his career has been committed to the development and production of new Australian work and artists. He has directed and produced

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premieres and productions of the work of many of Australia's most prominent writers including Suzie Miller, Sue Smith, Alana Valentine, Kay Proudlove, Brendan Cowell, Toby Schmitz, Aiden Fennessey, Tim Minchin, Travis Cotton, Stephen Carlton, John AD Fraser, David Williamson, Tim Baker, Lachlan Philpott and Drew Fairley.

For Merrigong he has directed productions of *Lost Boys*, 2018; *The Surfer and the Mermaid*, 2019; *Dear Diary* and *As Luck Would Have It*, 2022; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 2023; *A Place in the Sultan's Kitchen (Or How to Make the Perfect One-Pot Chicken Curry)*, 2024; and *Yandha Djanbay (Go Slowly)* , 2025. He produced the national tour of *Letters to Lindy* in 2018 and has driven the development of Merrigong's The Strangeways Ensemble and Merrigong's artist development programme MERRIGONGX.

Te Ahurei Toi o Tāmaki Auckland Arts Festival is a melting pot of shared experiences, whakaaro, live entertainment and kōrero every March.

Ko ngā mahinga toi whānui me te ahurea ki Tāmaki Makaurau o nāianei te pūmanawa o te Ahurei.

The Festival's lifeblood is arts and culture in contemporary Tāmaki Makaurau. We care deeply about celebrating artists and their kaupapa, serving the creatives and communities behind the works we present, honouring te reo and te ao Māori in all that we do, and contributing to a better city and society. That's us. Koia pū!

Every March you'll see a big reunion with our city's arts community alongside our mahi towards better accessibility and education opportunities for our audiences. We're also passionate about the works we curate and our collaboration with the many people who make those experiences happen. We strive to celebrate with generosity; human connection and manaakitanga will always be at the heart of what we stand for.

When we're on, we're on a mission to make Auckland an amazing place to socialise and be entertained in. Whether you're discovering the city for the first time or rekindling your love for its hidden gems, we truly believe that the Festival has something for everyone.

18 unforgettable days and nights.
For the ❤ of TĀMAKI MAKAURAU.

TE AHUREI TOI O TĀMAKI

AUCKLAND ARTS FESTIVAL

5—22 o Māehe · March 2026

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