

## The Kitchen AUSTRALIAN EXCLUSIVE

### India

**A sumptuous, multi-sensory spectacle of smells and sounds, culminating in something for the taste buds too**



Photo: The Kitchen © KR Vinayan

*'It's the sort of escapist theatre that takes you back home, instead of further away from it ...'*

**The Hindu**

*'Roysten Abel is known for his thrilling, grand-scale stage productions. The Kitchen is no exception; it promises to stimulate the audience's four senses - sight, sound, smell and taste - all at once.'*

**South China Morning Post**

Indian director **Roysten Abel** makes his return to Sydney Festival with an exclusive and flavoursome fusion of folk traditions and theatrical spectacle. *The Kitchen* will be Sydneysiders' second taste of Abel's arresting creations, after *The Manganiyar Seduction*, presented by Sydney Festival in 2010.

*The Kitchen* is a wordless drama that unfolds between a husband and wife as they cook payasam, a traditional Indian dessert. Departing on a ritualistic and fragrant experience, the audience observes as the couple bond over preparing a meal from 150 kilos of rice, sugar, almonds, milk, cardamom, ghee and raisins. The process draws parallels between the act of cooking, relationships and life itself.

The performance is heated by a battalion of drummers playing the mizhavu – a traditional barrel-shaped copper drum from the South-Indian region of Kerala. The drummers are elevated in tiers on a gigantic 6.8 metre high structure as they provide the vigorous soundtrack to the performance in a meditative rhythm.

Inspired by a visit to the tomb of Sufi mystic and poet Jalaluddin Rumi, Abel describes this exciting and unconventional theatre piece as *"a metaphor for human evolution. It shows us how we get 'cooked' to be palatable to ourselves and to the people around us. It's about the journey of life."*

The sharing of payasam at the end of the performance is an intimate exchange between the storytellers and the audience. This references the traditional Indian practice of offering Prasad, or devotional food, in both Sikh and Hindu temples. The dessert is cooked and then first offered to God before being shared amongst the devotees.

Roysten Abel is a respected director who has created works that blend traditional and contemporary forms. He founded the Indian Shakespeare Company before branching out into the more unconventional theatre for which he is now renowned.

A delight for the senses, *The Kitchen* provides a unique theatrical, musical and culinary experience. It is truly a performance to be feasted on.

## MEDIA RELEASE

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# SYDNEY FESTIVAL 2015

8-26 JAN

### The Cooks

Mandakini Goswami, Dilip Shankar

### The Mizhav Players

Kalamandalam Rajeev  
Kalamandalam Hari Haran  
Kalamandalam Narayanan Nambiar  
Kalamandalam Dhanaraj  
Kalamandalam Ratheesh Bhas  
Kalamandalam Ammannoor Ravikumar  
Kalamandalam Vineesh  
Kalamandalam Jayaraj  
Kalamandalam Ezhikode Vineeth Namboodhiri  
Kalamandalam Sajith Vijayan  
Kalamandalam Manikandan  
Kalamandalam Saji Kumar

### Director

Roysten Abel

### Set design

Neeraj Sahay

### Set Execution

Amarjeet Sharma

### Chief set technician

Manoj Kumar

### Set technicians

Taqmeer Ahmad, Dharamveer, Brijesh, Sharma.

### Set Painters

Laiq Ali, Jaiprakash

### Set Fabrication

Harvik enterprises

### Light design

Roysten Abel

### Light fabrication

Modern Stage services

### Sound Engineer

S Manoharan

### Costumes

Mandakini Goswami

### Assistant director

Dinesh Yadav

### Stage Manager

Anil Ramachandra

### Production

Can & Abel Theatres

Where:

York Theatre, Seymour Centre

When:

22 – 25 January, 7:30pm  
Saturday at 4pm & 7:30pm

Duration:

75minutes no interval

Price:

Premium \$65  
A Reserve \$55/\$50  
B Reserve \$45/\$40  
C Reserve – Restricted View \$35/\$30

Booking:

Sydney Festival 1300 856 876  
sydneyfestival.org.au/kitchen

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