

BALLOON DOG

WOULD YOU OPEN YOUR DOOR TO A STRANGER?



Accessibility Guide

An accessibility guide is a resource designed to help audiences understand what to expect from a performance, with a focus on making theatre welcoming for everyone.

We hope that this guide is a useful planning tool for anyone who might benefit from clear information about the environment and experience.

By sharing details about the set, lighting, sound, and audience interactions, we hope to create a space where everyone can enjoy the story comfortably and confidently - ensuring that nothing stands in the way of fully enjoying the story, the performances, and the magic of the theatre.



For specific Venue accessibility information, please go to:

<https://indianink.co.nz/accessibility/>

WARNING

This document includes spoilers. If you don't want to know details about the show, don't read any further.

Introductory Information:

Balloon Dog will run approximately 1 hour and 20 minutes without intermission.



Balloon Dog takes its inspiration from **Kabuliwala** by Rabindranath Tagore. Tagore's original short story was set and written in 19th Century Calcutta however this contemporary adaptation places the action in modern day Auckland. The story follows Kabir, a lonely migrant worker, who forms an unexpected friendship with Mini, a talkative five-year-old girl, after she sees him walking by her house.

As the bond between Kabir and Mini grows, it tests the assumptions and provokes the anxieties of her family. Their interactions open deeper questions about belonging, identity, trust, and human connection in a world where people are quick to judge outsiders.

The story is woven with humour and pathos, showing how even the smallest cross-cultural encounters can reveal universal truths we share about family, longing and our place within a community.

Cast bios and photos here



Jacob Rajan

Character: Ravi

Ravi is dressed in a cream vest, white shirt and pants, and a trilby shaped straw hat, creating a warm, slightly vintage and polished style. Towards the end of the show, he wears a white dressing gown.

Male, 60, South Indian, 5'6, average build, thinning curly black hair, salt and pepper beard, brown eyes.



Alisha Jacob

Character: Sara

Sara wears a soft, textured cream jacket with matching light-toned pants and flats. Towards the end of the show, she wears a white dressing gown.

Female, early 20's, Indian, 5'7, slender build, black hair and brown eyes.



Jehangir Homavazir

Character: Kabir

Kabir wears a casual, understated outfit with a dark windbreaker jacket, loose gray pants, and black shoes, for most of the show. For some scenes he wears a muted plaid blazer and button-up.

Late 20s, Parsi, 5'7, stocky build, bushy black hair, bushy black beard, brown eyes.



David Ward

Musician

David is dressed in a minimalist, all-black outfit with a fitted top and a cap, giving a sleek, understated look.

Clean-shaven mid 40's male Pakeha, brown/silver hair, grey/green eyes, 178cm



Sam Mence

Tour & Production Manager

Sam is the Tour & Production Manager, who is not seen on stage during the show, but you may spot him in the foyers before or after the show.

Male, glasses, dressed in black, thirties, medium length brown hair with blue eyes, average build, 175cm.

The character of Mini is represented through shadow puppetry, dance, physicality from the actors and, at the end, by a physical puppet.

For full Cast & Creative Bios visit:

<https://indianink.co.nz/our-plays/balloondog/>

Set:

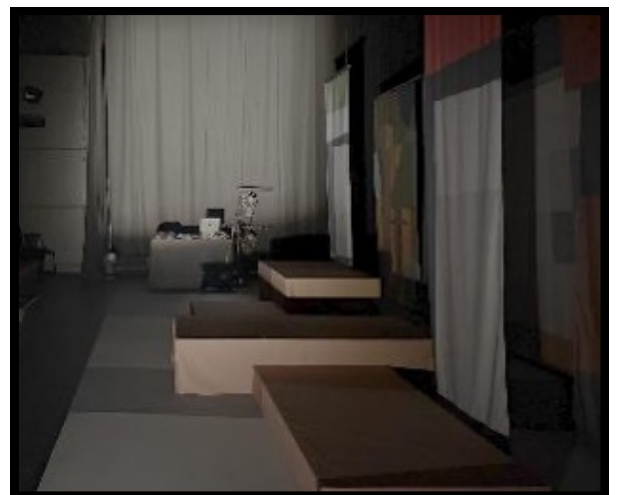
The stage sits against a completely black background, so all attention lands on the set itself.



Five tall fabric panels hang side by side at the back, like soft curtains, each covered in abstract blocks of warm oranges, reds, dusty pinks, muted greens and soft blues. The layered rectangles and squares feel modern and playful — like a geometric painting brought into three dimensions.

In front of the panels, low rectangular platforms in matching tones are arranged at different heights, forming a stepped, modular landscape for performers to sit, stand, or climb on. The floor continues the colour-blocked design in soft greys and creams, tying everything together. There are no other objects — just bold colour, clean lines, and sculptural levels, creating a minimalist art installation built for performance.

David (the musician) sits to the side of the stage behind a keyboard. He has a number of other instruments and items to make sound effects around him.



Lighting:

The auditorium lights will be dimmed throughout the show. There is lighting along the stairs and railings.



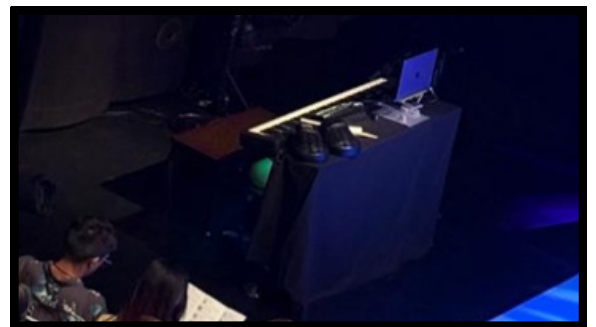
The lighting is warm, focused, and theatrical. The stage is surrounded by blackness, so everything beyond the set feels like it disappears. There are several sudden lighting changes throughout the performance.

Key moments are:

- Opening scene: The show begins in darkness with the opening scene in darkness before the stage lights turn on.
- During the show there are two moments where the stage goes dark apart from a flashlight that is used by one of the actors.

Sound:

Sound plays an active role in the storytelling, shifting between light, playful moments and more emotionally charged or dramatic scenes.



A live musician is positioned to the side of the stage and performs throughout, underscoring the action and helping to shape the atmosphere in real time. Voices are heard both onstage and from offstage, at times extending the world of the play beyond what is physically visible.

There are several sudden or heightened sound moments during the performance. These include sharp effects and a pronounced crash in a backyard setting. Some sounds occur without long build-up and may feel abrupt. Audience members who are sensitive to loud or unexpected noise should be aware that volume levels rise at key points in the show.

Teeth as Mask:

Masks are a theatrical form often used in Indian Ink shows. A mask creates a necessary gap between the actor and the character they play. This gap opens a space for the performer and the audience to fill with their imagination.



In this show, we use teeth as mask. The three actors wear prosthetic teeth over their real ones. These mask teeth encourage the performers to transform their voices and bodies allowing for a heightened theatricality and style of playing.

Special Effects:

The only special effect during the show is shadow puppetry which is used to enhance the storytelling experience. The first use of this is by Ravi who holds a flashlight towards the back of the set where Kabir entertains Mini with a succession of shadow animals he forms with his hands.

The second use of this is towards the end of the show where a flashlight is used from behind the set to illuminate the panicked interaction between Ravi and Sara in silhouette.



Physicality & Dance:

Balloon Dog places emphasis on physical performance. Performers use expressive, and at times high-energy, choreography to convey character and emotion.

This ranges from gentle, stylised gestures to more vigorous ensemble movement. At times, performers may move quickly across the stage or use repetition and rhythm to build intensity. The energetic nature of the staging may create moments of heightened atmosphere.



Audience Interaction:

Balloon Dog essentially has two modes of interaction with the audience. In one mode the performers speak directly to the audience from their character's point of view. In the second mode the performers enact a part of the story for the audience to witness. The performers remain on stage throughout the show, and there is no physical or individual interplay with audience members.

Kabir will ask the audience some knock knock jokes, but the audience are invited to reply as one.





Triggers:

Balloon Dog does involve the discussion of murder and violence. There is no violence or murder depicted on the stage, but a prop knife is brought out towards the end of the show.

Behind the Scenes



Balloon Dog Trailer
[Click here](#)

Kabuliwala Short Story
[Click here](#)

Teeth as Mask
[Click here](#)



Justin talks about the idea behind the play
[Click here](#)

Jacob talks about the story that inspired the play
[Click here](#)

Jacob explains **Balloon Dog**
[Click here](#)

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Life's full of plot twists - don't miss ours! Join our mailing list or follow us online and you'll get sneak peeks at new shows, ticket deals, and stories that might just change the way you see the world.



Want to know more?

Reach out to Pene Lister (Producer) on pene@indianink.co.nz