

June 24th

THE EDINBURGH FESTIVAL FRINGE 2003

indian ink present

PICKLE

By Jacob Rajan and Justin Lewis

Ballroom, Assembly Rooms, August 2nd – 25th, 11.45am – 1.30pm

Indian Ink are one of New Zealand's most respected theatre companies, winning many accolades – including a Fringe First and a Stage Best Actor nomination - for *Krishnan's Dairy*, seen at the Traverse in 1999. The company now makes its return to Edinburgh with *Pickle*, another fabulous, funny and touching East-Meets-West tale of love and hope. *Pickle* completes a loose trilogy of plays by Indian Ink and will join the repertoire to be toured over the next few years.

In *Pickle*, Indian Ink poignantly explore the themes of love, death and what is worth preserving using their unique magical realist style, half masks and music: Set in the faded glory of the Empire Hotel ("your taste of the Orient on Oriental Parade!"), Jojo the bellboy (Jacob Rajan) is in fact a heart surgeon, but as a recent arrival from India lives in a broom cupboard and works as a night porter. Ammachy runs the hotel with an iron fist and has one big problem; her niece is nearly blind and she will not be married. Sasha knows she must not marry because she is cursed – everything she loves dies. And then one night Mr G. Reaper checks into the Hotel....

Pickle is the result of an extensive research and rehearsal process, and incorporates subjects as diverse as heart surgery, pickle making, the true story of a girl who was married to a dog and the gypsy spice trail, as well as contemporary immigration issues that will strike a chord with UK audiences. And yet all this is presented with a light touch, an inventive jack-in-the box set, incidental music and dance, beautiful half and full masks and some excellent mouse acting. Three performers – Jacob Rajan, Ansuya Nathan and Nick Blake - play nine characters, with Ben Wilcock providing live accompaniment of original music by Conrad Wedde. Justin Lewis directs.

Pickle received a record seven nominations in New Zealand's theatre awards 2002, and won the supreme award, "Production of the Year" and widespread critical acclaim.

****** This is a piece of absolute enchantment... one of the tenderest, most life-affirming shows on the Fringe" (The Scotsman on Krishnan's Dairy)*

"A piece of total theatre which offers humanity and psychological insight in a package of good plain laughs, luminous performances and brilliant staging" (NZ's Evening Post on Pickle)

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LISTINGS

Indian Ink in association with Martin Sutherland and James Seabright, www.FestivalHighlights.com presents **PICKLE** by Jacob Rajan and Justin Lewis

Directed by Justin Lewis

(N.B. The title was altered for Edinburgh from *The Pickle King* to avoid confusion with another show of a similar name at this year's festival.)

www.indianink.co.nz

Ballroom, Assembly Rooms, George Street, August 2nd – 25th

(not August 5th, 12th, 19th); 11.45am – 1.30pm

Press night: 3rd August

Box Office: 0131 226 2428 (www.assemblyrooms.com)

E-mail address for press tickets: presstix@assemblyrooms.com

Biographies

Indian Ink was formed by Jacob Rajan and Justin Lewis in 1996. From a mix of Eastern and Western theatrical traditions they have developed a style that uses laughter to open the audience to more serious themes. A love of mask and its ability to free the audience's imaginations has led them to develop a style of theatre that has taken mask into New Zealand's theatrical mainstream. Indian Ink has developed a loose trilogy based around three themes – love, happiness and what is worth preserving. Created by Jacob and Justin, the plays mine the immigrant experience to reveal human stories that touch people of all countries and cultures. They have been described as contemporary classics by the media. *Krishnan's Dairy*, *The Candlestickmaker* and *Pickle* have been both popular and critical successes and Indian Ink are now in discussion with the New Zealand Film Commission to explore the possibilities of turning them into film.

Jacob Rajan (Writer and Performer) Jacob has a BSC in Microbiology and a Diploma in Primary Teaching. A graduate of Toi Whakaari: The New Zealand Drama School, Jacob has also investigated contemporary and traditional theatre forms in India. Alongside his work for several other companies in New Zealand and at the Perth and Adelaide Festivals, Jacob wrote *Krishnan's Dairy* and performed it throughout New Zealand and in Edinburgh, and was nominated for The Stage Award for Acting Excellence. Jacob co-wrote *The Candlestickmaker* and *Pickle* with Justin Lewis and toured them throughout New Zealand and he received an accolade for his performances in *Pickle* at the Chapman Tripp Theatre Awards 2002. His television credits include *Cover Story* and Dr Ashwin Bashir on the long running NZ soap *Shortland Street*. In 2001, he featured in the TV3 drama *Fish Skin Suit* written by Briar Grace-Smith.

Justin Lewis (Writer, Director and Producer) graduated with a BA in History and Italian before going on to train at The John Bolton Theatre School in Melbourne. Justin has built his career developing new works. He has written, directed and produced 11 original pieces since 1994. These include dramas, theatre in schools, pantomimes and dance / theatre works. Highlights include *Stepping Ashore*, *Sinbad*, *Boots and All* as well as *Krishnan's Dairy*, *The Candlestickmaker* and *Pickle*. He has won two Production of the Year awards for his work with Indian Ink. As a director of Auckland's Nti, Justin is involved in the ongoing development of new works across a number of disciplines.

Nick Blake (Performer) won a List 'Pick of the Fringe' award for *The Odyssey* on the Fringe in 1987. Nick has a Diploma of Fine Arts in painting and stage design, trained at the National Circus School of France for 2 years, received instruction in puppetry from Philippe Genty and studied mask in Bali. Nick worked as an actor and designer at NZ's Court Theatre in the early 1970s, as an actor in England and as a clown and comic acrobat in France. Nick was a founder and director of the pioneering physical theatre company Dramadillo in the 1980s when he devised, wrote, designed and performed in many productions which toured nationally and internationally and has directed shows for the NZ Puppet Theatre. Nick has worked as an actor and director in many New Zealand theatres and at international festivals and was nominated as Best Supporting Actor and Best Director at the 2002 Chapman Tripp Theatre Awards.

Ansuya Nathan (Performer) graduated from NIDA (Sydney – Australia) in 1999 where she performed in *The Libertine*, *The Imaginary Invalid* and *Whale Music*. In 2001, she produced *The School of Night* for Cabin Crew at the Old Fitzroy Theatre and promptly joined the Tamarama Rock Surfers, the independent theatre company that run the venue. Ansuya spent a good deal of 2002 in New Zealand working on *Pickle* for which she received two Chapman Tripp award nominations, including Most Promising Newcomer and Best Actress. She then returned to Sydney and the Old Fitzroy to perform in *A Moment on the Lips*, a new Australian play, which was both a critical and commercial success.