



BELVOIR ST
THEATRE

காடும் கடலும் ஁கூ லித இ஁ுடி

THE JUNGLE AND THE SEA

12 NOV – 18 DEC



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THE JUNGLE AND THE SEA

காடும் கடலும்

கனக வன இயுடி

12 NOV – 18 DEC

Co-produced with
Lingalayam Dance Company

CAST

Anandavalli Gowrie

Indu Balachandran

Musician (Veena)

Prakash Belawadi

Siva, Fr Joseph & others

Emma Harvie

Lakshmi & others

Nadie Kammallaweera

Madhu & Devla

Arjunan Puveendran

Musician (Mridangam & Vocals)

Jacob Rajan Kishan & others

Kalieaswari Srinivasan Abi

Rajan Velu Himal & others

Biman Wimalaratne

Ahilan & others

CREATIVES

Writer & Director

S. Shakthidharan

Writer & Director

Eamon Flack

Choreographer
& Cultural Advisor

Anandavalli

Set & Costume Designer

Dale Ferguson

Lighting Designer

Veronique Benett

Composer

Arjunan Puveendran

Sound Designer **Steve Francis**

Musical Supervisor **Alan John**

Fight Director **Nigel Poulton**

Fight Director **Tim Dashwood**

Vocal & Accent Coach

Laura Farrell

Vocal Coach **Amy Hume**

Design Associate

Keerthi Subramanyam

Assistant Director

Nithya Nagarajan

Community Engagement
Coordinator

Sujan Selven

Audience Development
Coordinator

Thinesh Thillai

Stage Manager

Luke McGettigan

Deputy Stage Manager

Ayah Tayeh

Assistant Stage Manager

Nitya Ganesh

Assistant Stage Manager

Tom Rogers

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Special thanks to: Father
Jegasothy, Ghandi McIntyre,
Sanchayan Kulasegaram, Sri
Sivakumaran, Suzanne Pereira

RUNNING TIME

2 hours 50 minutes
(incl. 2 intervals)

CONTENT WARNING

The Jungle and the Sea
includes themes of war,
trauma, sounds of artillery,
the use of haze and loud
sound effects.

**We acknowledge the Gadigal
people of the Eora nation
who are the traditional
custodians of the land on
which we share our stories.
We also pay our respect to
the Elders past and present,
and all Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander peoples.**

Front cover image by Dan Boud.
Rehearsal photos by
Sriram Jeyaraman



WRITER & DIRECTOR'S NOTE

S.SHAKTHIDHARAN

During war, life goes on. Even amidst violence and degradation there is still love, determination, cheekiness and delight. *Counting and Cracking* was written in honour of those who tried to halt Sri Lanka's descent into civil war. *The Jungle and the Sea* is written in honour of those who lived through the war, and the ways they found to uphold their dignity even when everything else was falling down around them.

After war, a nation is at a crossroads. How its leaders decide to tell the story of that war will shape the country's future for decades to come. Thirteen years since the civil war ended in Sri Lanka, there is still so much unresolved; so much unfinished business. A nation cannot heal in this state.

Sri Lanka is at a crossroads again today. I hope this play can be one small part of a process which helps my community turn an open heart to its past; and resolve to not repeat those mistakes in our future.

The Mahābhāratha and Antigone radically opened up the process of writing *The Jungle and the Sea*. These ancient texts gave us permission to depict the lives of ordinary people as that of something extraordinary - almost mythic. The result, somehow, is something even more true, even more real. The final work is fiercely its own thing, but we are indebted to these texts for the potential they were able to unleash in its form.

It took 10 years to research and write *Counting and Cracking*. Six years to convince the wider industry it was a story worth telling on the mainstage. Four years to cast that incredible ensemble of actors. Compared to all that, *The Jungle and The Sea* feels like it has happened in a flash. That a Sri Lankan story, with an international ensemble, might be part of the new normal here in the Australian arts industry does feel like genuine change. It needs to be a change that will continue.



WRITER & DIRECTOR'S NOTE

EAMON FLACK

In her essay 'The Iliad, or Poem of Force', Simone Weil writes about the "force" unleashed by war:

"From its first property (the ability to turn a human being into a thing by the simple method of killing him) flows another, quite prodigious too in its own way, the ability to turn a human being into a thing while he is still alive."

The characters in this play refuse to become things while they are still alive.

The actions they take in defiance of the forces unleashed on them are inspired by real stories of real people in Sri Lanka, and by characters from two great works of ancient literature. From the Mahābhāratha and from Sophocles' Thebes plays we picked out moments when characters insist on making choices in the face of war's chaos and absurdity, and from these assorted seeds we grew our own characters and storylines. Those of you who know Sophocles' Antigone will recognise the shadow of that great play in our Part Four.

Our characters are fictional, but the events that intervene in their imaginary lives are real events

which took place in the north of Sri Lanka in recent decades. The facts and details that make up the circumstances of the play are drawn from the mass of uncollected testimony that forms the history of the Sri Lankan civil war, and the situations faced by the characters were a reality for hundreds of thousands of people.

The revolve was written into the play from the outset, and a lot of what we wrote was imaginable because of what a revolve makes possible. A much broader range of physical action is possible with a revolve, but it is more than a useful tool for moving through time and space. It also opened our imaginations to the thematic possibilities of these stories, and it has ended up as a kind of force of history, fate, memory at work on the characters.

The music performed by Arjunan and Indu is Carnatic. In the same way that the choreographic storytelling of Bharatnatyam dance is accompanied by structured Carnatic improvisation, Arjunan and Indu are improvising within the dramatic structures of this play, not so much accompanying the actors as working on

the hearts and minds of the characters. Like the revolve, the music is a force at work inside the world of the play.

This show is a collaboration with Lingalayam Dance Company, founded and led by Anandavalli. Lingalayam is one of the country's great independent arts companies, and its proud history of using traditional artforms in new ways to tell stories about the contemporary world is an inspiration. There is a lot that is new and bewildering about the 21st century, but more and more I find myself thinking that there are some human experiences that you can only get

a grip on through the deep wisdom and rigour of older forms. I certainly think that when I see Anandavalli dance.

Many of these characters were written specially for these actors. This is a heroic team of artists and crew, full of joy and love and rigour. Their contribution to this show goes far deeper than is normal.

“நாங்கள் மறக்கவே மாட்டோம். We will never forget.”
Gowrie, Part Five.





CHOREOGRAPHER & CULTURAL ADVISOR'S NOTE

ANANDAVALLI

Sometime in 2019 Eamon called to ask whether he could have a chat with me, I presumed it was to do with *Counting & Cracking*, but when he asked me to play the role of Gowrie in *The Jungle and The Sea*, to say I was dumfounded is putting it mildly! I have spent my life as a Dancer, and Gowrie is largely an acting role.

Reading the script of *The Jungle and The Sea* I soon realised that the role of Gowrie had been written with me in mind - the dancing, the family and my yet unresolved relationship with my motherland, Sri Lanka.

The song I dance to, *Thunbam Nerkaiyil* (in times of sorrow) by the South Indian poet Bharathidasan exemplifies the glory of Tamil culture and has great potency within the scripting of this play. My visual image of Gowrie is that of a Banyan Tree - its branches letting down roots symbolising her family and a mother's dream for her children, until finally she is left

rooted to the soil she is unable to walk away from. My interpretation of this song epitomises the throbbing ache of a mother whose grief is entwined with the land, its music and dance.

These past 6 weeks have been challenging and all-consuming, as I have taken on a different *avatar* on stage, immersing my body and layering it with a new craft, and despite the emotional and physical pain at the end of each day of rehearsal, I am immensely grateful for this unpredicted opportunity, particularly at this stage in my life.

I am humbled by your presence and that you are here to partake in this journey with me and our incredible cast of Actors, Musicians and Creatives.

Warmly
Anandavalli
Artistic Director Lingalayam



Kalieaswari Srinivasan



Emma Harvie





Rajan Velu



Biman Wimalaratne



Anandavalli



Indu Balachandran



Kalieaswari Srinivasar



Arjunan Puveendran

2023

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