

MUTIARA



Photo by Jalaru Michael Torres



Sydney
Festival
2024

MUTIARA

Marrugeku

WORLD PREMIERE SEASON

Seymour Centre, Everest Theatre

19-21 January

62 mins (no interval)

Cultural and content warning: This performance acknowledges brutal colonial policies and racial categorisation in language that may offend audiences. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander viewers are advised this performance may contain the images of people who have passed away. Parental discretion is advised.

CAST AND CREDITS

Mutiara is collaboratively created by:

Concept Sultari Amin Farid, Dalisa Pigram, Zee Zunnur and Rachael Swain

Co-choreographed and performed by Sultari Amin Farid, Dalisa Pigram and Zee Zunnur with Ahmat Bin Fadal

Cultural dramaturg Sultari Amin Farid

Dramaturg Rachael Swain

Composer and sound designer Safuan Johari

Set designer Abdul-Rahman Abdullah

Costume designer Zoë Atkinson

Lighting designer Kelsey Lee

Pearl diving history and Malay cultural advisor, silat training Ahmat Bin Fadal

Changing Partners performed by Dinah Shore

Puteri Remaja performed by Jasni

Silat performed by The Fadzil Ahmad Ensemble

Achim performed by Safuan Johari, Im Yu Young Park Minhee & Raghavendran Rajasekaran

Kabau (Safuan Johari Remix) performed by Senyawa & Safuan Johari

Lanyji (Boomerang) Recordings by Jason Richardson

VIDEO

Along the Northwest Coast of Australia and *The Pearlers* courtesy of The National Film and Sound Archive of Australia

CHOREOGRAPHERS' STATEMENT

Sultari Amin Farid, Dalisa Pigram and Zee Zunnur: To create *Mutiara* we shared stories from our lived experiences and descended into Broome's pearling history through the lens of ex-pearl diver, Ahmat Bin Fadal, who we affectionately call, Datuk, meaning Grandfather in the Malay language. Unpacking Ahmat's story from when he moved to Broome in 1962, we heard about the perilous nature of this job and watched his demonstration of the diver's dragging motion across the seabed collecting shells in their bulky suits and lead weight boots. Looking back into earlier histories of the pearl shell industry from the late 1800s we reflected on the political histories behind the mistreatment of Asian and First Nations people and their near-death experiences underwater. We employed Marrugeku's task-based improvisational practice to capture these histories and to embody the shapeshifting of the pearl divers as they navigated their sense of alienness on land and sea.

PRODUCTION

Production manager & lighting operator Aiden Brennan

Audio and video technician, and associate sound designer Raine Paul

Video editing and compositing Sam James

Company and stage manager Ngaire Pigram

Costume makers Lynn Ferguson, Jenny Edwards and Sandra Bardwell

Voice artist: Jason Chong

PRODUCING

Produced by Marrugeku Inc with Bahri and Co

Producer Natalie Smith

Associate producer Ngaire Pigram

Co-Producer Bahri and Co: Shaifulbahri Mohamad

ADDITIONAL MUSIC & SOUND RECORDING

The Twist performed by Chubby Checker

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The disputed, distorted figure of the Bomoh (traditional medicine person), manifests within the work as a disrupter and healer. The Bomoh conjures portals into different worlds to queer time and channel a century of dark stories of the pearling industry.

We bring to the work our expertise in intercultural and intergenerational collaboration; distinct practices of contemporary movement, Indigenous dance and martial arts; and our embodied ancestry of coastal Peoples that are globally connected. We placed ourselves in the shoes of those who gradually called Rubibi (Broome) home, but yet were denied a place in historical narratives and citizenship. We have made this work in solidarity – to reclaim these stories, to remember, to celebrate and to honour.

MARRUGEKU

Marrugeku, an Indigenous intercultural dance theatre company based in Broome, is an unparalleled presence in Australia today, dedicated to Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists working together to develop new dance languages that are restless, transformative and unwavering.

Marrugeku is led by co-artistic directors: choreographer/dancer Dalisa Pigram and director/dramaturg Rachael Swain. Working together for close to three decades, they co-conceive and facilitate Marrugeku's productions and research laboratories, introducing audiences to the unique and potent structures of Indigenous knowledge systems and the compelling experience of intercultural performance. Marrugeku's performers come from diverse backgrounds and disciplines, collaborating to co-create each production. Marrugeku's patron is Yawuru cultural leader and national reconciliation advocate Senator Patrick Dodson.

www.marrugeku.com.au @marrugeku

GOVERNMENT PARTNER

CITY OF SYDNEY 

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Marrugeku is assisted by the Australian Government through Creative Australia, its principal arts investment and advisory body. Marrugeku is supported by the Western Australian Government through the department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries and the NSW Government through Create NSW.

THANK YOU

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