

Paradise or the Impermanence of Ice Cream — Pre-show Notes

Prepared by Ambre Lee and Jelaine Ng

for Singapore Theatre Company (STC)

Introduction and Audio Described Show Information

Welcome to this introduction of *Paradise or the Impermanence of Ice Cream*, a collaboration with STC and Indian Ink's sensational new play about life's impermanence – where love, ice cream, and the mysteries of death intertwine in unexpected ways.

The audio described performance is at 3pm on Sunday, the 26th of May. It is 80 minutes long with no interval.

The audio description will be delivered through the Sennheiser MobileConnect app on your phone. Please download the app ahead of time and bring your own earphones.

Your audio describers are Ambre Lee and Jelaine Ng

Synopsis

Kutisar is dead, and lost between paradise and hell. On an existential post-mortem journey to correct mistakes of his past, Kutisar joins the feisty Meera on a madcap quest to save the critically endangered vultures that play a vital role in Parsi sky burials.

This monologue channels seven characters, weaving the afterlife and a dash of Bollywood disco and little nods to Singapore into the real-life mystery of India's vanishing vultures.

Infused with serious laughter and exquisite puppetry, this show is a rumination of the enigmas behind death, rich with existential angst and the sweetness of traditional Indian ice cream.

Creative Credits

Paradise or the Impermanence of Ice Cream is written by Jacob Rajan and Justin Lewis. It is performed by Jacob Rajan.

The Dramaturg is Murray Edmond.

The Set Designer is John Verryt.

The Costume Designer is Elizabeth Whiting.

The Puppet Designer, Builder and Puppeteer is Jon Coddington.

The Composer and Sound Designer is David Ward.

The Lighting Designer and Production Stage Manager is D. Andrew Potvin.

The Sound Operator is Adam Ogle.

The Projected Imagery Photographer / Editor is Bala Murali Shingade.

Cast, Characters, and Costumes

Throughout Jacob Rajan's solo performance, he channels various characters. We first meet Kutisar.

Kutisar

Kutisar has his hair combed in a slicked back style. He is dressed in a blood red ruffled collar crumpled button up long sleeve shirt, accented with random black dye stains all over. His loose fitting shirt is unbuttoned down to his torso, revealing a white undershirt. Together with this, he wears a pair of black harem pants, featuring a loose billowy fit through the hips and thighs, tapering down to a more fitted look below the knees. The pants boast a mix of irregular vertical stripes in red and beige hues. His look is completed with a pair of tan brown soft canvas shoes.

As the story progresses, we are introduced to seven other characters: Young Kutisar, a Bouncer, Meera, Farooq, Dr Rao, Dr Vibhu Prakash and a Money Lender. The fluidity of character switches are marked through subtle adjustments in voice and physical mannerisms.

Young Kutisar

Young Kutisar moves with agility, he tends to sway his arms in a loose, relaxed manner.

Bouncer

The Bouncer of the night club stands with his arms crossed tightly over his chest, one hand stroking his chin, fingers brushing his jawline.

Meera

Meera has a distinctive mannerism of stroking her long hair that cascades down to the left of her shoulders.

Farooq

Farooq is Meera's cousin. When in conversation, he speaks with a downward gaze, showing that his height sets him above those around him.

Dr Rao

Dr Rao is a wealthy old lady, a university professor. She walks at a slow, measured pace, with a soft bend in her knees. Her gait includes a slight limp that originates from her hips, causing her to sway gently with each step. Dr Rao often touches and rubs her palms against her wrists as she speaks.

Dr Vibhu Prakash

Dr Vibhu Prakash is the director of the Bombay Natural History Society. His physicality is often marked by the act of smoking cigarettes.

Money Lender

The Money Lender's actions are often related to his spectacles, whether he is wearing or cleaning them. His mannerism is distinguished by repeated finger tapping, a gesture marked by the tapping of fingertips on one hand to the fingertips of the other hand in a rhythmic manner.

The Vulture

Puppeteer, Jon Coddington, operates a very realistic life-size vulture puppet. The control mechanism is located within the body of the puppet and on its head. The skeletal framework of the puppet is made of cane and aluminum, allowing intricate detailing and movement of the head and neck as well as its wings. The vulture's body is covered in a muted, earthy tone muslin cloth, draped and shaped to mimic the bird's plumage. The bird's head, neck and feet are bare, revealing a pink skin tone, with wrinkles and folds giving a sense of age and wear.

Set and Setting

The stage is bare, with a single abstract structure positioned off-center to the right.

Its asymmetrical design features two sections of differing heights. The left side is elevated above the right. The greyish-purple structure is characterized by clean lines and a distinct absence of sharp edges or curves.

The actor and puppeteer make nimble use of the abstract structure throughout. The asymmetrical arrangement lends itself to a multitude of settings such as a rugged rock, a vantage point of a hill or an operating table. The puppeteer utilizes the structure as a perch for the vulture, whereas the actor comfortably assumes various poses such as squatting, propping a leg onto its surface or reclining on it.

A five-panel system works as a single expansive screen. It integrates various colors and mediums as a dynamic canvas for each scene.

As the setting shifts, the collective canvas adapts, displaying a range of vibrant landscapes, abstract designs and images for the backdrop of each scene.

The actor does not use any props.

Setting 1: The Bardo

Kutisar is surrounded by darkness, illuminated by dark blue and purple hues. The backdrop has silhouettes of tall skeletal trees against dark purple skies.

When Kutisar ventures off the island to explore, he is greeted by elements of fire and wind. The backdrop changes according to each element of nature.

As Kutisar returns to The Bardo throughout the play, the backdrop shifts to a dark purple background with thick black strokes scattered across.

Setting 2: Nightclub

The backdrop consists of a kaleidoscope of bright purple, yellow, cyan and red.

When outside the club, the colors streak vertically, punctuated by sporadic black dots. Inside the club, the colors morph into swirling orbs, creating a vortex against a black background.

Captions flash across the backdrop, serving as a lifeline for the audience throughout the whirlwind of activity and noise of the club.

During a moment of slowed time, the swirling obs mimic the leisurely movements of the music and actions.

Setting 3: Malabar Hill

The backdrop unfolds into a view atop a hill, with the sky painted in hues of purple, yellow and soft peach. City buildings stand as silhouettes with gentle glows of yellow light emitted from their windows.

Setting 4: Towers of Silence

The backdrop morphs into a deep purple, with thick black strokes scattered across its expanse. It is similar to The Bardo.

Setting 5: Kulfi Shop

The backdrop of the Kulfi Ice Cream Shop is saturated with magenta, yellow, cyan and green shapes, painted in the fluid style of watercolor. They overlap each other. Their tops and bottoms are curved while their sides remain straight. As the play progresses, the shapes become circles.

Eventually, we get to see the exterior of the Kulfi Shop, rendered in dark shades of blue, using watercolor strokes.

Setting 5: Doctor's Apartment

The backdrop transforms into the same color and style of the Kulfi shop, but in squares. It vibrates, responding to the noise in the scene.

Setting 6: Bombay Natural History Society and Vibhu's Lab

The backdrop consists of big squares and thin rectangles, consisting of the same color palette of the Kulfi Shop and the Doctor's Apartment. Blue and orange faded dots are speckled across.

Setting 7: The Cattle Dump

The backdrop features splotches of red, reminiscent of drying blood, against a white clean surface. The crimson markings resemble ink or blood dropped into water, the edges diffusing into a faded shade of yellow.

Setting 8: Outside The Fire Temple

The backdrop has watercolor strokes in varying shades of deep blue, complemented by accents of light green and dark red. The strokes suggest outlines of pillars and steps in a temple.

Setting 9: The Roof Terrace

The backdrop features the same varying shades of deep blue, portraying rooftops against a clear light blue sky. A triangular shape suggests a narrow rectangular roof on the left, while on the right, a rectangular building with wire antennae stands. Specks of yellow, purple, and black circles are scattered throughout the scene.

Access Information

STC aims to provide an excellent experience and service for all patrons who may require additional support to access our venue and enjoy our events.

For accessible booking options, please contact us at 6733 8166 from 10am to 6pm Monday to Friday.

The nearest parking options are Robertson Quay Hotel, located at 15 Merbau Road, Singapore 239032, opposite the theatre's front door, or the Robertson Walk Carpark at 11 Unity Street, Singapore 237995.

For Public Transport options, the nearest Bus Stop is B13211.

The nearest MRT stations are Clarke Quay (NE5), on the Northeast Line and Fort Canning (DT20) on the Downtown Line.

Please inform the staff at the front door that you are there for the Touch Tour and they will bring you to the assembly point.

Please have your mobile device and headset with you. The Box Office will have headphones and devices on standby if needed.

KC Arts Centre, the home of STC, is assistance dog friendly. It is also accessible for wheelchair use from both the front and rear entrances. There is currently 1 wheelchair space on row Q in the theatre stalls.

If you require a wheelchair space, or would like to understand more about transferring options, please contact our venue team via email at boxoffice@srt.com.sg or call 6733 8166.

We at STC look forward to welcoming you and hope you have a wonderful time with us!

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