a mixtape for maladies

by Ahilan Karunaharan அகிலன் கருணாகரன்

Relaxed Performance Show Information

# Show Information

**Seventeen tracks on an old mixtape reveal bittersweet memories of a family’s resilience behind every song.** This powerful new work by Ahilan Karunaharan is a love letter to his homeland and a lament.

This is a story about family memories, told through songs on an old mixtape. The play follows Sangeetha across two time periods: the present day, and in 1950s Sri Lanka as a young woman.

In the present day, Sangeetha is living in Lower Hutt with her son, Deepan, who has found an old mixtape filled with songs. As Deepan plays the 17 songs one by one the story of what happened to their family unfolds.

In 1950s Sri Lanka, Sangeetha's life is filled with music. She lives with her sister Subbalaxmi and brother Vishwanathan, and she has a crush on Anton at the general store who plays all the latest hits. But as the country slips into civil war, the family must keep each other safe.

Across the play, Sangeetha recalls and processes her memories of 1950s, and her & Deepan begin to interact with characters from the past.

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You can watch the full show via this link: [WATCH DRESS REHEARSAL ON YOUTUBE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2zeB4Ez3MhA&ab_channel=AucklandTheatreCompany)

**Location:** ASB Waterfront Theatre, 138 Halsey Street, Auckland Central, Auckland 1010. Entry through the glass doors on Halsey Street.

Step free access, and wheelchair accessible seating and toilets available.

More information: <https://www.atc.co.nz/asb-waterfront-theatre/know-before-you-go>

**Time:** 1 hour and 30 minutes, with no interval. The relaxed performance on Tuesday 18 March is at 7pm. For the relaxed performance there is no lockout policy, and the internal theatre doors will remain open for the whole show.

# Pre-show Demonstration

Before the show starts on Tuesday 18 March, we will have a pre-show demonstration on stage at **6.30pm**. Please meet at the theatre box office. This will introduce the lighting, sound, special effects, surprises, and characters, and we will talk about what the show will be like. We will also talk about how the relaxed show will work. This document will give you even more details about the show.

# Relaxed show features

During the relaxed performance, audience may come and go, move around, visit breakout spaces, and use comfort and fidget items. If you need to leave during the show and then come back, please return to your same seat. Please don’t go onto the stage with the performers. The internal theatre doors will be open, and the external doors will remain closed. You can leave the theatre at any time. To come back into the theatre, an usher will let you in when it’s okay to return. You might have to wait outside the closed doors for a moment. If you’d like assistance to come and go, please let theatre staff know.

If you need to use devices for accessibility, please put them on silent. At the start of the show, the whole audience will be reminded with an announcement that during the relaxed performance it’s ok for the audience to be themselves.

# Lighting

During the podcast scenes, the lighting is generally dim to give the effect that we’re in a garage. During the 1950s Sri Lanka scenes, the lighting is bright and colourful. During many of the songs, the whole stage is lit, including a golden curtain framing the top of the stage.

* The lighting switches between the plainly lit garage where Deepan is recording his podcast in the right corner of the stage, and the colourful memories of 1950s Sri Lanka
* At the start of the show when Deepan presses play on his tape player, there are sudden bright lights and loud sounds of static to reveal his mum Sangheetha’s childhood home. He presses stop, and the scene snaps back to the plain garage lights. He presses play again, and the lights switch again.
* This method of switching between the modern-day garage and the 1950s memories is used for most of the play. The switching is broadcast to the audience by dialogue and action.
* About an hour into the play, Deepan and Sangeetha are drawn back into the 1950s memories, and the boundary between the past and present is blurred as they enter the world of the family experiencing civil war.
* The auditorium lights will be on dimly throughout the show, so the auditorium will never be entirely dark. There is lighting along the stairs and railings.

# Sound

* Famous songs in Tamil will be playing in the auditorium before the show.
* The show includes seventeen music tracks in Hindi, Tamil and English which are sung live, with an onstage band. The band is to the left side of the stage.
* At times the music and sound effects are very loud. There are large speakers which can send the sensation of vibration through the audience.
* There are sounds of a cassette playing, pausing, clicking and whirring across the show.
* Background music often plays underneath the characters speech.
* The theatre has speakers at the front and back of the audience, so sounds can come from all around.
* Loud static plays when Deepan first presses play on the tape player.
* Loud gunshots surprise the characters after the scene in Anton’s shop when the siblings finish eating their cream bun and drinking soda.

# Special Effects

There are no special effects.

# Audience Interaction

During the story in 2025, Deepan is recording his podcast. While he records, he talks directly to the audience as if they are listening to the podcast.

There is no other audience interaction.

# Triggers

There are frequent descriptions of acts of war and violence. The play explores repressed memories, trauma, civil war, and migration. There are three swear words used by Deepan at the beginning of the play, when he first presses play on the cassette player.

The play explores memories of a happy and peaceful childhood that’s affected by civil war. Characters make choices about whether to join militant groups and about how to keep each other safe.

When a character in the story dies, their death is described, and they walk off stage; no violence is depicted.

Toward the end of the play young Sangeetha performs a dance that expresses her distress.

# Want to know more?

Reach out to Sam Phillips, Auckland Theatre Company’s Head of Learning and Participation, on [sam@atc.co.nz](mailto:sam@atc.co.nz) or on 0212986253. Sam will also be at the ASB Waterfront Theatre, and will present the pre-show demonstration.

This show information by Auckland Theatre Company used a template designed and provided by [Arts Access Aotearoa](https://artsaccess.org.nz/).