

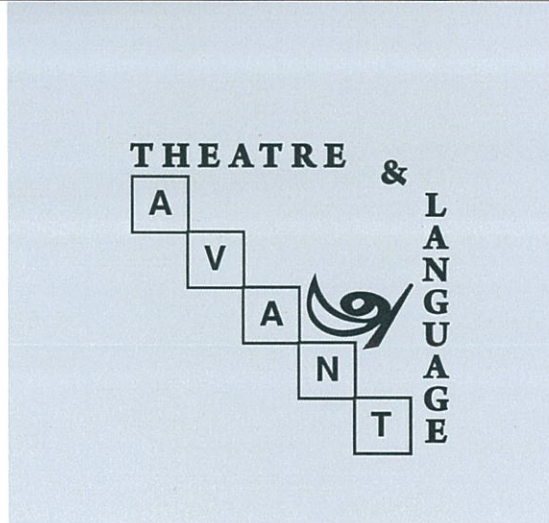
# AVANT THEATRE





# AVANT THEATRE





Avant Theatre and Language is turning 20 in 2021. Avant Theatre was started in 2001 in Melbourne, Australia and later incepted in Singapore in 2011. These have been nothing but glorious two decades of theatre production in both English and Tamil respectively.

Avant Theatre is an organisation created to reinvigorate and rethink the barriers between audience and actors in theatre performances. We have creatively explored and merged the boundaries between the performers and the audience in many of our theatre production. Various acting techniques and performance styles are introduced in our performances making process, so as to continuously spur the seed of creativity to enthusiastic and ambitious actors in their performance making journey with us. Each and every production is not just a challenge to us but also a mental educational stimulation of the contents and creative entertainment for audience at large.

Avant Theatre continues to takes on exciting ventures to promote multi-cultural art forms. It desires to be a hybrid theatre company by carving its name in Singapore and Melbourne's contemporary theatre scenes. Through the confluence of the best from East & West, inspired by various Asian and global theatre techniques, Avant Theatre aims to be the premier provider of high quality commercial theatrical performances.

This Coffee-Table book is an attempt to capture those evergreen and colourful memories of our journey.



**G Selva** Artistic Director



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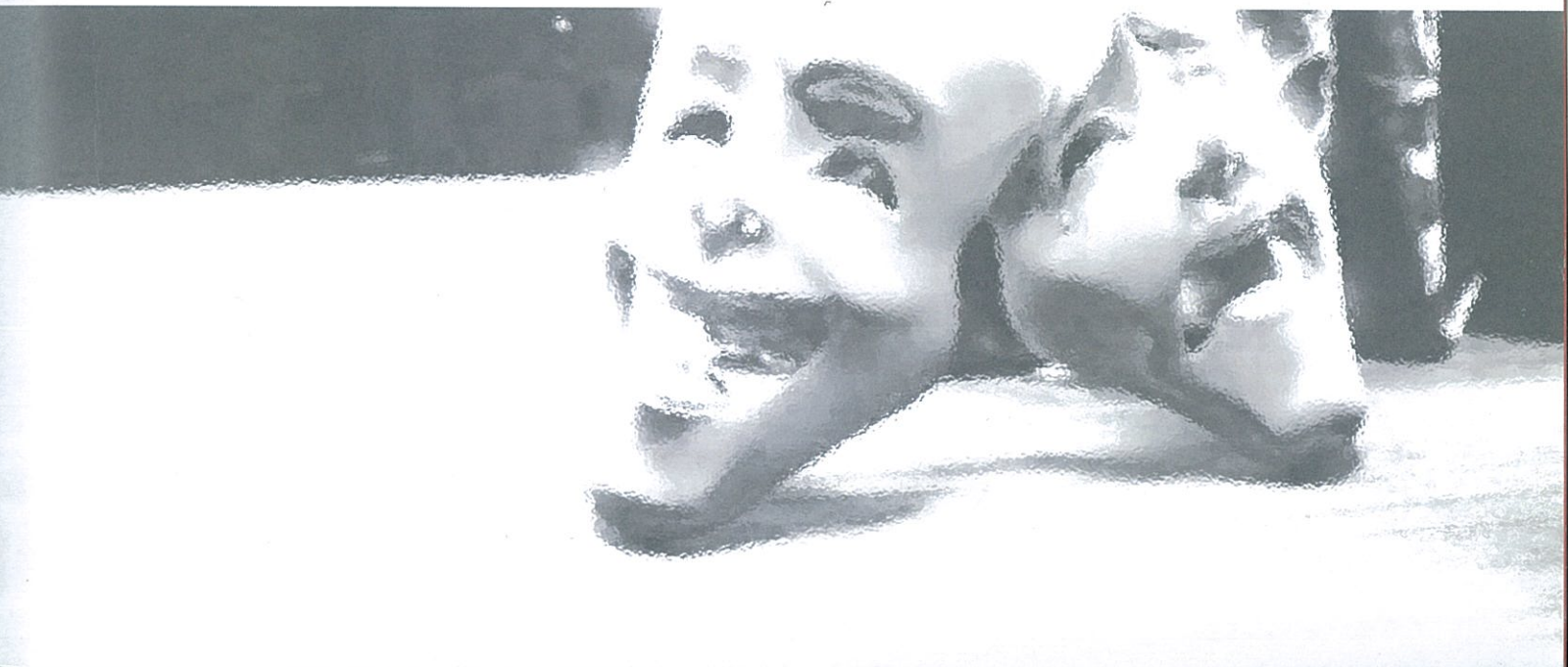
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## Avant, Australia



Avant, Australia is a non-profit organization registered with the Victorian Consumer and Business Affairs has been set up in Melbourne, Australia (B1587748C) in 2001 to serve as a platform to fuse, promote and instil various art forms so that art can grow, thrive and move forward in this world of constant change and advancement.





# CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

*Is awarded to*  
*Avant, Theatre & Language*

*in recognition of voluntary  
service to the community*

INTERNATIONAL  
YEAR OF  
VOLUNTEERS 2001

THE HON STEVE BRACKS MP  
PREMIER OF VICTORIA

THE HON CHRISTINE CAMPBELL MP  
MINISTER FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES

*Minister Responsible for I.Y.V.*



Nominated by Victorian Family  
Cultural Association Australia  
7th December 2001





## **Triple Bill**



Avant Australia's debut theatre production was in November 2001 where we did a bilingual collaboration with ethnic artistes from Singapore which served as a launching board for us to showcase both local and international talents in an independent production.

**November 2001**



WE HAVE A SERIOUS ISSUE TO DISCUSS THIS NOVEMBER

IT IS GOING TO MAKE YOU THINK, CRY AND LAUGH



A FIRST EVER ATTEMPT IN COLLABORATION!!

## AVANT, THEATRE & LANGUAGE

TOGETHER WITH THE MOST POPULAR TAMIL THEATRE GROUP IN SINGAPORE

**RAVINDRAN DRAMA GROUP**



Proudly Presents

# Triple Bill Special

(Tamil & English)

Date : 30 November, 1st December & 2nd December 2001

Venue : Monash Student Theatre @ Monash Clayton Campus

Time : 7.30 pm for all 3 nights

Ticket : \$12.00 (Conc for Students \$10.00)



For Tickets and Enquiries

**Call 9544-0895 or 0417-57-3828**

**E-mail : [avanttheatre@yahoo.com.au](mailto:avanttheatre@yahoo.com.au)**





## மெல்பர்னில் ரவீந்திரன் நாடகக் குழுவினர் 2/11/2001



ஆங்கிலத்தில் மேடையேறும் "புலம்பல்" நாடகத்தில் ஒரு காட்சி. சந்திரலேகா, கலைச் செல்வி, வனிதா, மல்லிகா ஆகியோர் இந்த நாடகத்தில் நடிக்கின்றனர்.



அமராவதி, புஷ்பா, சந்திரலேகா, கலைச் செல்வி, வனிதா, மல்லிகா ஆகியோர் நடிக்கும் "பிரசவம்". நகைச்சுவை நாடகமாக உருவாக்கப்பட்டுள்ளது இந்த நாடகம்.

சிங்கப்பூர் புகழ்பெற்ற ரவீந்திரன் நாடகக் குழு வரும் நவம்பர் 30, டிசம்பர் 1, 2 ஆகிய தேதிகளில் மெல்பர்னில் மூன்று தமிழ் நாடகங்களை மேடையேற்றுகிறது.

மெல்பர்னில் சேர்ந்த "திவேட்டை அண்ட வாசியேஜ்" என்ற நாடகக் குழு இந்த நாடகங்களை மெல்பர்னில் மேடையேற்றுகிறது. மெல்பர்னில் மோனாசு மானவர அரங்கில் நாடகங்கள் நடைபெறும்.

ஒவ்வொரு நாடகம் ஒவ்வொரு நாடகம் நடைபெறும். இதில் குழுவின் வட்டம், புலம்பல் (ஆங்கிலத்தில்) ஆகிய இரண்டு நாடகங்களையும் வெளிக் பக்கவாக்கத்தில் நாடகத்துறையில் ஆழக் கவனம் பெற்றவர்களுக்கும் சிங்கப்பூர் புலா ஆறுமுகம் எழுதி இருக்கிறார்.

ரவீந்திரன் நாடகக் குழுவின் சேர்ந்த அமராவதி, புஷ்பா, கலைச்சுவை மூலம் உருவாக்கி இருக்கும் நாடகம் "பிரசவம்".

ரவீந்திரன் குழுவின் சேர்ந்த எட்டு பேர் இந்த நாடகங்களில் நடிக்கின்றனர். மேலும் மெல்பர்னில் பரிலும் மானவரையும் இந்த நாடகங்களில் பங்கேற்கின்றனர்.

நற்போது மெல்பர்னில் பட்டக்கல்வியை மேற்கொண்டிருக்கும் குழுவின மூலம் கலைஞர்களில் ஒருவரான ஜி.செல்வராஜன் மூன்று நாடகங்களையும் இயக்குகிறார்.

குழுமேலும் சேர்ந்த புஷ்பா, ஆனந்தக்கண்ணன், அமராவதி ஆகியோர் துவண இயக்கம் செய்கின்றனர்.



நாகேஸ்வரன், ஆனந்தக்கண்ணன், நாகராணி நடிக்கும் "குறுகிய வட்டம்".

## S'pore Tamil group stages plays in Australia

By SUHAILA SULAIMAN

AS THE curtains at the Monash Student Theatre in Melbourne, Australia, part tonight, Singapore's Ravindran Drama Group (RDG) will score another "first" for homegrown Tamil theatre.

It made news in 1997 as the first Tamil theatre group here to have its own website. It now breaks new ground by being the first group to stage Singapore Tamil plays in Australia.

Although it has performed in Malaysia before, the Australia show is the biggest project in its 13-year history, says its president, Mr A. Kobi.

For the past 2½ months, eight actors, including TV artistes like Amara-vathy, Nagarani and Ananda Kanna, have been rehearsing diligently for the three-day run in Melbourne.

From tonight till Sunday, the group will be presenting to its target audience of Tamil-speaking Indians a 1¼-hour-long triple-bill of home-spun plays: Kurugiya Vattam, Prasavam and Lamenting.

While Kurugiya Vattam, a whodunit, and Prasavam, a comedy, are delivered in Tamil and in the more conventional style of acting, director G. Selvanathan is taking calculated risks with the English-language play, Lamenting.

Written by Puva Arumugam, Lamenting focuses on the lives of three women on the fringes of society. It was first performed at The Substation in November last year under an R(A) rating for its explicit language and gay issues.

For the show in Melbourne, Selvanathan has decided to expand it as an



A triple-bill of homespun plays will be presented by the group.

abstract piece that concentrates on the physical rather than the verbal. This version of the play has its intensity conveyed through what actress Vanitha can only describe as "weird movements and signs".

Selvanathan, 33, who has sought advice from playwrights and directors in Melbourne, is confident all three plays will be well-received.

He says: "I found out most theatre-goers there are ardent lovers of language and we've definitely got that in the Tamil plays."

"In the case of experimental theatre, it appears the community there has not really been exposed to it, so this is a chance for them to see things from a different angle."







## **Two Spicy Masala**



Next Avant invited International artists from Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore and India to create a successful blend for our production Two Spicy Masala\* (\*a powdery mix of herbs and spices) which added flavour and taste to the Melbourne Fringe Festival 2002.

**October 2002**



Melbourne Fringe 2002

Avant, Theatre & Language



Two Spicy Masala

2 - 5 October 02 @ The Space











## CERES 2002



Also Avant as part of its community and cultural initiative, partners with CERES (Centre for Education and Research in Environmental Strategies) a community environmental park to cultivate the idea of multiculturalism and cultural cohort among school children. Avant advocates the nuances behind cultural practices and the understanding and appreciation of arts of Asia to understand and appreciate the other members of the community.

2002 Avant among many other cultural and ethnic groups participates in the Annual Harvest Festival organised by CERES on an annual basis. Our debut performance was in CERES 2002 Harvest Festival where Avant staged a dance performance by Ms Pushpavalli who enacted the longing for the man, to rejoice during the golden harvest festival in South India province.







## Chakra



Four days of overwhelming support and encouragements from 2002 festival has given us the inspiration to work once again on another venture. For Melbourne Fringe Festival 2003, we are happy to partner with another Melbourne based devise theatre company, The Laughing Ostriches to present yet another enrapturing double-bill. A variety of young and budding talents tackled a wide spectrum of issues that teased, enticed and challenged the audience thinking. Asian art forms such as Bhutto from Japan, Wayang Kulit from Indonesia and Bharathanatyam from India and modern body art were explored in a movement piece where women share their inner deep dark secrets that shocked many.

**October 2003**



Avant Theatre & Language partnering with The Laughing Ostriches presents

# CHAKRA KRA *Revolution In Evolution*

An enthralling and enrapturing double bill depicting the permanence in-flexibility, happiness in sorrow, turmoil in enjoyment and the vernacular mainstream in the ever-changing circle which one experiences in Life's Chakra. Catch the best of both worlds as the East meets the West in this year's Melbourne Fringe where two Melbourne based theatre groups, Avant, Theatre and Language and The Laughing Ostriches collaborate in merging Asian and western art forms in their *One Wheeled Bull Cart* and *Samuthra*.



**One Wheeled Bull Cart** explores Women, Premarital Sex, Men and the Culture. Higher education, raised economic status, independent personalities - are these issues a threat to traditional Asian masculinity? Is the notion of a patriarchal world being challenged? She's blonde, blue eyes and independent. It's ok for her to have sex though she's not married. But you're Asian for god's sake!!!! They are living so far away from hot and humid Asia, but why are they still tormenting themselves with uncompromising customary traditional bondage? Meet these young people grappling with the notion of identity and cultural ennui. Join in their roller-coaster journey that tests their cultural roots in their new and exciting contemporary world.

**Samuthra** flows straight from the inner deep dark secrets of women who have dared to move from the East to West but with their lives still revolving around an incomprehensible third space. This movement piece interweaves monologues that will shock and tantalise you and taunt your visual appetite with various Asian theatrical dance/art forms such as Japanese *Bhutto* and Indian *Bharatha Natiya* dance tableau tapered with Indonesian *Wayang Kulit*. True dark secrets have been adapted for stage and will be shared to the privileged few. Both performance will challenge, shock, shake and move your senses with issues that are sensitive, intimate and repelling.

**CHAKRA is being performed**

@ 96F (96 Flinders Lane- Mel way: 2F J4- 03 9656 3180 Wheelchair Access: yes - Licensed: yes)

7.00pm - 8.15pm (2 plays back to back with 15 min Interval)

4th October - 5th October 2003 & Matinee on 5th Oct 03 - 3.00pm - 4.15pm

Tickets \$18 (Full) and \$15 (Conc.)

8412 8777 or [www.melbournefringe.com.au](http://www.melbournefringe.com.au)

0402 65 3088 or [www.avanttheatre.com](http://www.avanttheatre.com)

26 September-  
12 October

Tickets and information  
Telephone 03 8412 8777  
[melbournefringe.com.au](http://melbournefringe.com.au)

melBOURne  
FRINGE  
FESTIVAL  
2003

*The Laughing Ostriches*  
a devised theatre company













## CERES 2003



Avant as part of its community and cultural initiative partners with CERES to cultivate the idea of multiculturalism and cultural co hort in Melbourne Australia. Avant represents the Indian cultural and arts advocating the nuances behind cultural practices and arts of India and Asia. Avant Performed a Folk Dance item performed by Mr Kalaivannan, Ms Pushpavalli and Ms Lavaya Nair . Later a workshop was also conducted by Selva & Puva on some of the Indian folk Dance techniques, which was much appreciated by the crowd.







## CERES 2004



Avant was part of the CERES Harvest Festival 2004 where we presented the Harvest Festival of Punjab through the famous Bhangra dance performed by Mr Kalaivanan and Ms Lavanya Nair. This was followed by a dance demonstration workshop conducted by Selva and Puva with audience participation.







## Price



As part of 2005 Melbourne Midsumma Festival, we staged PRICE. PRICE is a captivating and sexily hilarious Indian Drag Performer's story that threw light on controversial issues affecting minorities. Issues such as how the gay community is looked upon by the Asian community in this time and age were explored in greater detail.

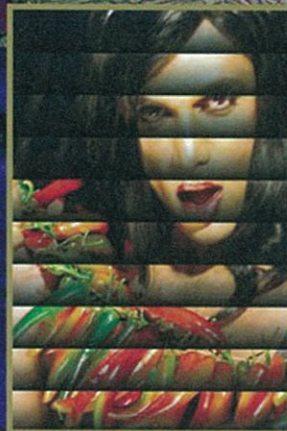
**January 2005**



Avant Theatre & Language present

# PRICE

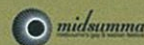
A play by Puva Aru, directed by G Selva  
and Bollywood Dance choreography by Kalaivanan



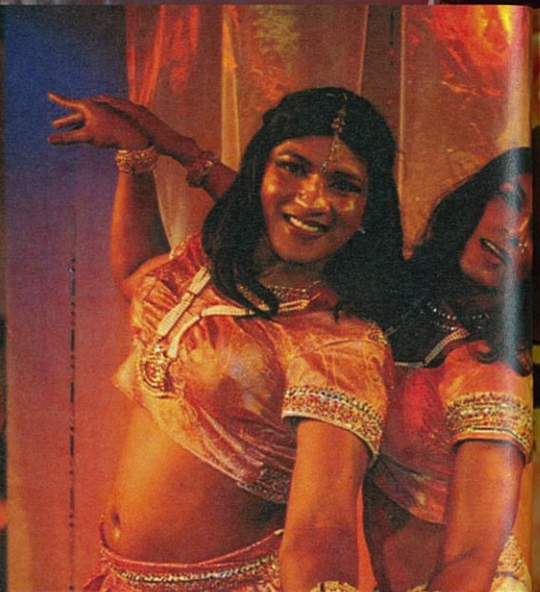
A captivating and hilarious  
story of an Indian Drag  
Performer with Bollywood  
Dance Performances.

**27-30 JANUARY, 7.30PM**  
**THE ARTS CENTRE, BLACKBOX**

BOOKINGS: THE ARTS CENTRE BOX OFFICE, [TICKETMASTER7.COM](http://TICKETMASTER7.COM) \* OR 1300 136 166 \*  
VISIT [WWW.AVANTTHEATRE.ORG](http://WWW.AVANTTHEATRE.ORG) FOR MORE INFORMATION













## **Polygamy**



In September 2008 Polygamy was staged as an independent project. Polygamy explored patriarchy, religion and identity of the marginalised.

**September 2008**



***Polygamy*** is set in Southeast Asia and tells the story of two women, a Hindu and a Muslim, married to the same man. The man has since converted to Islam after his second marriage and has taken a vow to treat his wives equally. Yet, the women sense partiality in this equality. The play exposes the double standards practised within a patriarchal society using religion as an excuse, leading to the re-construction of identity of the marginalised gender. The women fight with each other and yet protect one another as they recognise that they are still the victims within the society. This play will tease you, prompt you to think and also make you wonder why these two women are still married to this man when their marriage is anything but a marriage.

2nd, 3rd & 4th October 2008 at 8 pm  
The Guild Theatre, Melbourne University  
Tickets: \$25 (adult), \$20 (concession)  
and \$22 each for group of 10

Contact 0431377464 for more information  
Tickets can be booked via [www.melbournefringe.com.au](http://www.melbournefringe.com.au)  
or by calling 9660 9666 after 3 September 2008.

Written and directed by Dr Puva Arumugam

Cast: Puva Arumugam & Sheersha Perera

Dance Choreography: Sameer Kazi (Bollywood Dance Choreographer)

Tech and Logistics: Vani Rajendran, Kavitha Letchumanan & Damien Cheong













## Avant, Singapore



Here at Avant Theatre, we are always looking to explore and merge the boundaries between the performers and the audience. Various acting techniques and approaches are also introduced to the performers every now and then.

Each and every production is not just a challenge to us but also an endorsement in creating unexplored performance presentations for audience of all ages.

Avant Theatre also seeks to collaborate with overseas partners to present overseas performance presentations.



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