

DON'T SING IN THE KITCHEN, OR YOU'LL MARRY AN OLD MAN



"Welcome to Dayang's chicken curry stall. Through her mother's recipe Dayang brings you the rich flavours, smells and stories of her home. Where ever home is, it isn't far when there is a bowl of warm food in front of you."

ASM productions is proud to be presenting the debut performance of *Don't sing in the kitchen, or you'll marry an old man* at the **George Town Festival 2015**; a one-woman show about home, nostalgia and belonging. The audience will be taken on a journey with the protagonist, Dayang, as she discovers what home means, and how she creates a place to belong in her adopted home of London.

Don't sing in the kitchen, or you'll marry an old man is a play created in collaboration with writer and director Dr Anna Sulan Masing and actress Safiah Durrah. Both Anna Sulan and Safiah are Malaysians living in London. It is a very special opportunity to be returning home with this show, and both are honoured to have been invited to be part of the **George Town Festival** this year.

Although set in London this play will speak to any audience, as no matter how far away you have moved from where you grew up – the next street over, or the other side of the world – we all have to find our own place to belong. We all seek to make peace with our past, our future, and ourselves. Malaysians will see familiar characters, stories and experiences, and an international audience will be able to connect with the feeling of discovery.

For Dayang, her path of self-acceptance and belonging is through food and as Dayang tells her story, she cooks chicken curry. The smells of the cooking will encompass the audience, creating a truly special space and relationship between audience and performer and the play will finish with the sharing of the curry. Performance is like finding a place to belong in the world; a performer shares a story and with the audience, they create a community. This play aims to create a unique connection with the audience, through storytelling and the act of eating together.

Safiah Durrah is Malay and originates from Kuala Lumpur. She first moved to London to study performing arts 9 years ago. After graduating she continued studying and completed her MA in acting for Film and TV at East 15, London. Safiah has worked in Malaysia and the UK, for film and theatre. With a background in dance Safiah brings an energy to the stage that is unique and always with a sparkle of humour. Food has been an important part of her life, growing up in Malaysia it is hard for it not to!

"There is so much love in cooking. Especially when cooking for other people. What goes into our belly is a long labour of love going back to the people who brought the food to us - farmers, butchers, servers etc."

Dr Anna Sulan Masing is Iban and grew up in Sarawak, New Zealand and has lived in London for 14 years. Anna Sulan completed her doctorate in early 2014, which looked at how identity changes when space and location changes. Anna Sulan examined this through the performance practices of the Iban women and used food as a metaphor for these changes. Food plays an important part of Anna Sulan's research, writing and her identity. Like any Malaysian, she could talk about food 24/7, given half the chance! Anna Sulan's work has been performed in the UK, Germany and Malaysia.

"Sharing our stories - our tears, our successes - and of course our food, builds a community, a sense of identity and a place of belonging; this is what I want to do with theatre. I want to share, to build, to create. Food and theatre is a natural combination, they are both emotional and play on the senses – they both bring comfort and joy"

George Town Festival is an international annual, month-long celebration of arts, culture, heritage and community. Inaugurated in 2010 in honour of George Town's designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Festival transforms the city into a global stage, showcasing world-class performances, installations and collaborations from international and local artists alike.

PLOT OUTLINE

Quintessential Malaysian girl Dayang moved to London 5 years ago, madly in love with a blond haired blue eyed boy from Kent. Homesick and craving her mother's food she set up a Malaysian Market stall in Broadway Market. Business boomed, and she is now a regular on the London Market scene.

This play takes place in London on a Thursday lunchtime as she cooks and serves her daily regulars. It is a month before Dayang turns 30 and this week she needs to sign the final papers of her divorce; and so she starts to question her life, her choices, and what she left behind.

Through cooking for her regulars Dayang learns about her own strengths, her ability to not only survive, but to succeed in her new home of London. And, she discovers who she is and who she has always been – a woman capable of great love and wonderful friendship.

Don't sing in the kitchen, or you'll marry an old man will be performing Friday 21st & Saturday 22nd August.

www.georgetownfestival.com

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www.annamasing.com

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www.safiahdurrah.com

