

British Theatre Guide

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Out of Bounds

Rajesh Gopie

Vkinn Vats, Shooting Stars Studio

Jack Studio Theatre

22 July–2 August 2025

Rajesh Gopie's *Out of Bounds* has a timeless and thought-provoking story that explores cultural traditions, generational bonds and selfhood.

There is an autobiographical feel to the events set in Inanda, Durban amongst the Indian community that arrived when post-slavery colonial Britain had to fill the workforce gap on South African plantations.

After their contracts were fulfilled, some of the indentured Indian labourers stayed on in what had become their new home, the grandfather of the play's narrator, Lall, being one of them.

Three generations on, Lall's grandfather is no longer around but grandmother Maji oversees a household headed up by her four sons, each with their wife and children.

It's a lot of people in a small, tin-roofed wooden house, and we see a young Lall buffeted by the extended family which raises him.

The adolescent boy is surrounded by models of manhood in tension, each character efficiently but carefully drawn by Gopie, and Lall feels the humbleness of his origins from an early age, a shame that stays with him as he grows up absorbing cultural and family mores.

On a wider level, Gopie's crafted monologue also provides a glimpse of how Lall's community fits within the ethnic hierarchy brought about by apartheid, and impressionable teenager Lall witnesses social unrest first-hand when his family is displaced by the violence of indigenous rioters.

Wealthy Uncle Raj gets a place in a prestigious district, which underlines Lall's confinement and ignominy at being rehoused in a downmarket township designated for Indians.

There is a tinge of nostalgia here, but this play is much more than that in its moving portrait of a young man transitioning to adulthood, rebelling, as he must, as he tries to untangle who he is all the while carrying the stigma of poverty and pushing against the unconscionable societal framework in search of escape.

Director Clare Stopford paces these 80 minutes carefully and uses projection and props minimally to enhance the storytelling. Jason Sardinha is impressive as Lall, the reluctant son of Coolie parents and the energetic narrator of this important and universal story of embracing one's heritage whilst finding one's own identity. Recommended.

Reviewer: [Sandra Giorgetti](#)