

Bawang Merah Bawang Putih

An Indonesian Tale of Garlic and Shallots

Saturday 7nd November 2015, 7pm, Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre, SOAS

Choreography by: Ni Madé Pujawati

Music ('12 violin pieces') composed by: Nick Gray

Dancers (Lila Bhawa Indonesian Dance UK):

Ni Madé Pujawati - the rich widow and the old woman

Déwi Ariati - her spoiled daughter Bawang Merah

Widhya Rachmawati - her step-daughter Bawang Putih

Musicians:

Lyri Milgram - violin

Natalie Bradbury - kendang (Balinese drum):

Rachel Hewitt – vocal

The story of Bawang Putih Bawang Merah (a Cinderella tale) is well known throughout the Indonesian and Malay world.

A rich widow has a spoiled daughter Bawang Merah (Shallot) and an honest, hard-working step-daughter Bawang Putih (Garlic), whom she and her daughter mistreat and force to do all the menial tasks while they relax and enjoy themselves.

One day while doing the laundry Bawang Putih loses a sarong in the stream. Desperate to retrieve it she runs along the river and comes to a decrepit hut where an old crone lives, who promises to return the sarong if Bawang Putih will clean and cook for her, which she does to the old woman's satisfaction. She also offers Bawang Putih a choice between two pumpkins - one large, one small. Bawang Putih takes the smaller one. On her return she is told to cook the pumpkin, but when it is opened, it contains priceless jewels, which the mother and Bawang Merah promptly seize.

Hearing how Bawang Putih obtained the pumpkin, the mother tells Bawang Merah to throw a sarong in the river and make her way to the old woman's house. As before, the old woman promises to return the sarong if Bawang Merah will clean and cook, but she quickly gets fed up and demands a pumpkin. Grabbing the big pumpkin she makes her way back, but cannot wait till she gets home and breaks the pumpkin open only for a poisonous snake to leap out and bite Bawang Merah who dies. Her mother and Bawang Putih go in search of Bawang Merah and find her body in the woods.

The music – '12 Violin Pieces' was originally written by Nick Gray for solo violin in 2007. In 2015, Ni Madé Pujawati created this new choreography to this revised version.