

Dishoom!

Rifco Theatre Company, Watford Palace Theatre and Oldham Coliseum Theatre
presents the world premiere production

Tuesday 2 – Saturday 13 October 2018

By Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti

Directed by Pravesh Kumar

Designed by Neil Irish

Press Night: Tuesday 2 October, 7.30pm

Featuring songs from the smash hit Bollywood film *Sholay*, this world première production of comedy drama ***Dishoom!*** follows Simon and his friends as they find their inner superheroes.

Summer 1978, Simon and his friends should be looking forward to leaving school, but the National Front are on the streets, Simon's Bibi is ashamed of him and his Dad spends his life hiding in the pub. When Simon's cousin Baljit comes to stay, she introduces him to the Bollywood classic, *Sholay*. Inspired by the film's dynamic duo, Jai and Veeru, Simon and Baljit set out to change their world forever.

Rifco Artistic Director **Pravesh Kumar** directs, and, after working with Rifco Theatre Company over the last year, 17-year-old **Bilal Khan** makes his professional stage debut in the lead role of Simon. Bilal himself was born with cerebral palsy and will be taking on the role of a young man with a disability who is struggling to find his place in the world around him.

Pravesh Kumar commented "Gurpreet's funny, heart-warming and political new play shines a spotlight on attitudes to disability in the South Asian community, something we really need to talk about. 2018 is an important moment for the UK and this story, set in 1978, with the rise of the right and attitudes to difference on the up. A bleak reminder of history on repeat."

Bilal Khan added, "I can't wait to start my first professional acting journey and I am honoured to be involved with this brilliant piece of new writing. Pravesh and the team have been really supportive throughout this opportunity from assistance with my touring needs to professional development workshops."

Writer Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti has written extensively for stage, screen and radio. Her first play *Behsharam* (*Shameless*) broke box office records at Soho Theatre and the Birmingham Rep. *Behzti* (*Dishonour*) was sensationally closed after protests at the Birmingham Rep in December 2004. *Behzti* won the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize, the play was then translated into French and did sell-out tours in France and Belgium. *Behud* (*Beyond Belief*) was co-produced by Soho Theatre and Coventry Belgrade and shortlisted for the John Whiting Award. *Khandan* had a sell-out run at the Birmingham Rep before transferring to the Royal Court. Recent credits include *Elephant*, Birmingham Rep; *Fourteen*, Watford Palace Theatre; the feature film *Everywhere and Nowhere*; Dci Stone, Radio 4; *Londonee*, Rich Mix; *Dead*

Meat, Channel 4 and *An Enemy of The People* (BBC World Service). She is a Creative Associate at Watford Palace Theatre and a member of the writing team of *The Archers*. Her first collection of plays, *Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti: PLAYS ONE*, is published by Oberon Books.

Director **Pravesh Kumar** started Rifco Theatre Company in 1999 to make a different kind of theatre for a community that could not see themselves represented on English stages. His theatrical directorial debut was in 1999 with a UK tour of *Bollywood - Yet Another Love Story*, which opened to packed houses at The Riverside Studios, Hammersmith. He has gone on to achieve critical acclaim for Rifco's productions. His first short film, *Gods On Mountains* was shot entirely on location in the Himalayas and was nominated for the Satyajit Ray Short Film Award in 2009. He was Associate Director on the musical *Wah! Wah! Girls*, which opened in the West End as part of World Stages. He also writes and directs *MummyJi Presents*, a live theatre variety digital show, which was originally commissioned by The Space, a collaboration between the BBC and Arts Council England.

Dishoom! comes to Oldham as part of a national tour, which also includes Watford Palace Theatre, Queens Theatre Hornchurch, Warwick Arts Centre and Derby Theatre.

- Ends -----

Notes to Editor:

Dishoom! runs from Tuesday 2 – Saturday 13 October 2018 at Oldham Coliseum Theatre.

Tickets can be booked on 0161 624 2829 or at www.coliseum.org.uk

Link to production page: <http://www.coliseum.org.uk/plays/dishoom/>

For further press information, please contact Shelly Ramsdale on 0161 785 7012 or shellyramsdale@coliseum.org.uk

Or

Gabriella Drinkald on 07944 539 524 or gabriella@katemorleypr.com

Images:

A high-resolution JPEG of the artwork for ***Dishoom!*** is available to download from Dropbox via: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/k59y3ht2rzhsjfx/Dishoom.jpg?dl=0>

Production Team:

Pravesh Kaur Bhatti – Director

Neil Irish – Set Designer

Andy Kumar – Costume Designer & Choreographer

Rory Beaton – Lighting Designer

Arun Ghosh – Composer

Chris Murray – Sound Designer

Dishoom! Tour:

Watford Palace Theatre

Wednesday 12 September – 22 September

watfordpalacetheatre.co.uk

01923 225671

Queens Theatre Hornchurch

Tuesday 25 September – Saturday 29 September

01708 443333

www.queens-theatre.co.uk

Oldham Coliseum Theatre

Tuesday 2 October – Saturday 13 October

www.coliseum.org.uk

0161 624 2829

Warwick Arts Centre

Tuesday 16 October – Saturday 20 October

www.warwickartscentre.co.uk

024 7652 4524

Derby Theatre

Tuesday 23 October – Saturday 27 October

01332 59 39 39

www.derbytheatre.co.uk

Coproducing Partners:

Rifco Theatre Company

Artistic Director, Pravesh Kumar founded Rifco Theatre Company in 1999 in Slough and since 2011, Rifco has been Resident Company at Watford Palace Theatre.

Rifco develops and produces new plays and musicals, touring nationally to some of the UK's most prestigious regional theatres. They present theatre of scale and spectacle that is authentic, topical, thought-provoking, rich and entertaining which celebrates and reflects contemporary British Asian experiences, culture and society.

Rifco's success lies in understanding their audience. A vital part of creating new work is through listening and working alongside British Asian communities. Kumar's work is 'homegrown' and he believes in gently challenging perceptions and warmly reflecting the communities he knows.

Rifco are committed to diversifying the kind of work seen in our British theatres. They do this by commissioning British Asian playwrights and working with as many diverse actors, designers, directors that they can find. They also provide opportunities for British Asian talent to develop their ideas and careers through our Rifco Associates and Rifco Studio strands.

Oldham Coliseum Theatre

Oldham Coliseum Theatre is a cultural and educational charity that works with over 150,000 individuals per year.

The Coliseum has a rich history in Greater Manchester dating back to 1885. It provides a wide variety of distinctive theatre performances and participatory activities for people from all communities in Oldham, Greater Manchester and beyond. It creates original productions, of which up to half are newly-commissioned work, which are presented at the Coliseum and on tour. Intrinsic to the town's on-going regeneration, the theatre works with its local communities and young people to develop creative programmes to facilitate learning, engagement and community cohesion.

The Coliseum is actively engaged with Oldham Council and Arts Council England to deliver a new theatre in the town by 2020.

Watford Palace Theatre

Watford Palace Theatre is a 21st century producing theatre, making new work across the art forms of theatre, dance, outdoor arts and digital, and developing audiences, artists and communities through exciting opportunities to participate. In 2015 it won the UK Theatre award for Promotion of Diversity.

Watford Palace Theatre commissions and produces plays from a range of new and established writers. Recent premieres include; *Poppy + George* by Diane Samuels, *Coming Up* by Neil D'Souza, *Jefferson's Garden* by Timberlake Wertenbaker; *Love Me Do* by Laurence Marks and *Maurice Gran*; *An Intervention* by Mike Bartlett (in co-production with Paines Plough); *Shiver* by Daniel Kanaber; the Ideal World season of three new plays - *Perfect Match* by Gary Owen, *Virgin* by E.V.Crowe (in co-production with nabokov), *Override* by Stacey Gregg; *Jumpers for Goalposts* by Tom Wells (in co-production with Paines Plough and Hull Truck Theatre); *Our Brother David* by Anthony Clark; *Our Father* by Charlotte Keatley; and *Family Business* by Julian Mitchell.

Creative Associates are central to Watford Palace Theatre's vision these include Resident Companies Rifco and Tiata Fahodzi; Mahogany Opera Group; Scamp Theatre; Kate Flatt; Shona Morris; Charlotte Keatley; Gary Owen; Alice Birch and Timberlake Wertenbaker.