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3 August 2018

## FULL CAST FOR WORLD PREMIÈRE & UK TOUR OF GURPREET KAUR BHATTI'S DISHOOM! ANNOUNCED

Rifco Theatre Company, Watford Palace Theatre and Oldham Coliseum Theatre  
presents  
the world première production  
**DISHOOM!**  
By Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti

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Oldham Press Night: Tuesday 2 October, 7.30pm

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Wednesday 12 September – Saturday 27 October

Director **Pravesh Kumar**; Set Designer: **Neil Irish**; Lighting Designer: **Rory Beaton**  
Choreographer and Costumer designer: **Andy Kumar**; Composer: **Arun Ghosh**  
Sound Designer: **Chris Murray**

**Rifco Theatre Company**, in a co-production with **Watford Palace Theatre** and with **Oldham Coliseum Theatre**, today announces the full cast for the UK tour of the world première production of **Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti's *Dishoom!***. Artistic Director **Pravesh Kumar** directs **Elijah Baker** (Mark), **Seema Bowri** (Bibi), **Georgia Burnell** (Donna), **Omar Ibrahi** (Dad), **Gurkiran Kaur** (Baljit) and **James Mace** (Keith) alongside previously announced **Bilal Khan** (Simon).

Opening at Watford Palace Theatre on Tuesday 18 September, with previews from Wednesday 12 September, it will then tour to Queens Theatre Hornchurch, Oldham Coliseum Theatre, Warwick Arts Centre before concluding its run at Derby Theatre on Saturday 27 October.

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 find their inner superheroes and set out to change their world forever.

Featuring music from the smash hit Bollywood film *Sholay*, this comedy drama follows Simon and his friends as they find their inner superhero and set out to change the world together.

**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.

**Elijah Baker** plays Mark. His theatre credits include *Childsplay* (UK tour), *Hoods and Halos* (The Albany) and *On the Middle Day* (The Old Vic). His television credits include *Babylon*, *My Murder*, *The Sarah Jane Adventures*, *Injustice* and *Dustin Baby*; and for film, *Tango One*, *We Still Kill the Old Way*, *Vendetta* and *Deviation*.

**Seema Bowri** plays Bibi. Her theatre credits include *Croydon Avengers* (Ovalhouse), *My Country* (National Theatre), *Night at the Bombay Roxy* (Swamp Studios), *Lisa's Sex Strike* (Northern Broadsides), *Calcutta Kosher* (UK tour), *Come Out Eli* (Arcola Theatre) and *The Big Magic* (Polka Theatre); and for television she played series regular PC Leela Kapoor in *The Bill*.

**Georgia Burnell** plays Donna and this marks her professional stage debut. She will be appearing in the film *Mary Queen of Scots* later this year.

**Omar Ibrahim** plays Dad. His theatre credits include *Cosmic Clown* (VAULT Festival/Buxton Festival Fringe), *Ricky Whittington* (New Diorama Theatre) and *Working Christmas* (Old Fire Station Theatre).

**Gurkiran Kaur** plays Baljit. Her theatre credits include *Pink Sari Revolution* (UK tour), *The Test* (Southwark Playhouse), *Globe Town* (Rich Mix), *Tiddlywinks* (Theatre503), *Still Life* (Kali Theatre), *Not in My Name* (Fuse Theatre) and *Lotus Beauty* (Gate Theatre). Her television credits include *London Kahanis* and *Oxasians*.

**Bilal Khan** plays Simon and this marks his professional stage debut. Khan 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.

**James Mace** plays Keith. His theatre credits include *Real Life Becomes A Rumour* (White Box Theatre) and *Desperate Measures* (Jermyn Street Theatre). His television credits include *Marcella* and *Liar*.

Artistic Director of Rifco Theatre Company **Pravesh Kumar** directs *Dishoom*. He started the 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: *Pyar Actually*, *Miss Meena & the Masala Queens*, *Laila The Musical*, *Britain's Got Bhangra*, *Happy Birthday Sunita*, *It Ain't All Bollywood*, *There's Something About Simmy*, *Airport 2000*, *Meri Christmas*, *Where's My Desi Soulmate?*, *The Deranged Marriage* and *Break The Floorboards*. 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. Pravesh is currently writing a new main stage musical and leads on the Rifco Associate programme.

- 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](http://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](mailto:shellyramsdale@coliseum.org.uk)

Or

Gabriella Drinkald on 07944 539 524 or [gabriella@katemorleypr.com](mailto:gabriella@katemorleypr.com)

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#### 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

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#### ***Dishoom!*** Tour:

**Watford Palace Theatre**  
Wednesday 12 September – 22 September  
[watfordpalacetheatre.co.uk](http://watfordpalacetheatre.co.uk)  
01923 225671

**Queens Theatre Hornchurch**  
Tuesday 25 September – Saturday 29 September  
01708 443333  
[www.queens-theatre.co.uk](http://www.queens-theatre.co.uk)

**Oldham Coliseum Theatre**  
Tuesday 2 October – Saturday 13 October  
[www.coliseum.org.uk](http://www.coliseum.org.uk)  
0161 624 2829

**Warwick Arts Centre**

Tuesday 16 October – Saturday 20 October

[www.warwickartscentre.co.uk](http://www.warwickartscentre.co.uk)

024 7652 4524

**Derby Theatre**

Tuesday 23 October – Saturday 27 October

01332 59 39 39

[www.derbytheatre.co.uk](http://www.derbytheatre.co.uk)

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**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 21<sup>st</sup> 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.