

Approaching Empty

Thursday 11 – Saturday 13 April 2019 at Oldham Coliseum Theatre

An Tamasha, Kiln Theatre and Live Theatre Production

By Ishy Din

Directed by Pooja Ghai

Designed by Rosa Maggiora

Approaching Empty is a brand new, razor sharp drama from **Ischy Din**, the award-winning taxi driver–come–playwright whose writing career started at Oldham Coliseum Theatre in 2007.

Forget business, this is war...

In a scruffy minicab office, Mansha decides it's time to create his own destiny and offers to buy a business from his lifelong friend Raf. As the realities of the state of the business slowly unravel, these two best friends must confront the difficulties of going into business with those closest to them.

Set in North East England, in the aftermath of Margaret Thatcher's death, this compelling drama lays bare the everyday struggles of a post-industrial generation of South Asian British men.

Ischy Din is a taxi driver from Middlesbrough whose first short theatre script *£1.50 to Pay* came second in the British Asian writing competition BANG held by Oldham Coliseum Theatre, Tamasha Theatre and BBC Writers Room in 2007. His first full length play *Snookered* – a comedy set in a Middlesbrough pool hall - premiered at University Campus Oldham as part of the Coliseum's Out and About Season in 2012, winning the Manchester Theatre Award for Best New Play, before opening at London's Bush Theatre to further critical acclaim.

Approaching Empty is directed by **Pooja Ghai**, former Associate Director of Theatre Royal Stratford East, where her credits included: *Rapunzel*, *Counting Stars*, *The House of In Between*, *Home Theatre* and *Angelic Tales*. The cast features **Kammy Darweish** as Mansha (*All My Sons* (Nottingham Playhouse), *East is East* (Nottingham Playhouse/Northern Stage/UK tour); **Karan Gill** as Shazad (*The Lovely Bones*, *Child of the Divide* (UK tour); **Nicholas Khan** as Raf (*Wonderland* (Nottingham Playhouse), *Our Town*, *Animal Crackers* (Royal Exchange Theatre); **Rina Fatania** as Sameena (*The House of Bilquis Bibi*, *Wuthering Heights*, *A Fine Balance*, *Child of the Divide* and *Strictly Dandia* (Tamasha Theatre); **Nicholas Prasad** as Sully (*Henry V* (New Generation Festival), *Much Ado About*

Nothing (Rose Theatre Kingston); and **Maanuv Thiara** as Tany (*King Lear* (Bristol Old Vic), *Hamlet* (Almeida Theatre), and *A Passage to India* (Park Theatre).

- Ends -----

Notes to Editor:

Approaching Empty runs from Thursday 11 – Saturday 13 April 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/approaching-empty/>

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

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. The Coliseum creates original productions each year, 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.