

COMPANY BIOGRAPHIES

Behna

By Sonia Likhari

During an acting class I was trying to get a handle on the character of Ines in Lope de Vega's Peribanez. Two minutes of improvisation with another student, playing a pair of sisters in a typical Punjabi household, solved the problem. The seed for the characters of Dal and Simi was planted then. My own experience of women's relationships within a male oriented environment led me to develop those characters' stories into the play, Behna.

Sonia Likhari

Sonia Likhari *Writer*

Sonia took a sabbatical from her legal practice in 2004 to focus on a writing and performance career. Acting experience includes *Chopra Town* (BBC/Hat Trick) and *The Trouble With Asian Men* (Tamasha, Soho Theatre and tour) for which she was also a researcher. *Behna* (Sisters) is her first play. It was developed with Kali and originally performed as a workshop production at Soho Theatre. During a year with Tamasha as Artist in Residence she wrote *Eyrie*. Set in 1984 against the background of Operation Bluestar, this play is still in development. Other writing credits include *Silver Street* (BBC Asian Network), *Planet Ajay* (Foundation TV/CBBC), *Where's My Desi Soulmate?* (Rifco Arts), *Snapshots* and *Resolutions* (BBC Asian Network). She is currently under commission to Kali and Birmingham Repertory Theatre.

Sandeep Garcha *Mum*

Sandeep's career includes many roles for TV, Theatre, Radio and Film. TV includes *Horizon* (BBC), *Spooks* (BBC) and commercials including *Patak Sauces* and *Virgin Business Media*. Theatre includes *Darwaza Khula Hai*, *Ek Chader Maili Si*, *Paison Ki Hera Pheri* and *Behna* (2010). For Radio she has presented shows on Kismet (Sunrise Radio) and Asian Star, and is a regular guest for BBC Berkshire. Sandeep has also provided Voice overs for many documentaries, commercials and training films. Her Bollywood films include *Mr Bhatti On Chutti*, *Honour Killing* and *Life Goes On*.

Shaleen Hudda *Dal*

Shaleen trained at LAMDA and University of Windsor, Canada. Theatre includes: Hermia in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Shakespeare's Rose), Dal in *Behna* (2010 Birmingham), Parveen in *An Ode to my Sisters*, *Antony & Cleopatra*, *Hamlet*, *Richard III* (The Scoop, London), *The Title Of The Drama About Ante Is Written Here* (Blue Elephant), Lady Macbeth (Principal Theatre Workshop), *Parnya Have Shun* (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan) and *Pickles Puja and Pinups* (Bush Theatre). Commercials include: The Halcrow Group and Heart Radio. TV includes: Nisha Patel-Nasri in the TV documentary *Real Crime: A Very Special Constable*.

Hema Mangoo *Simi*

Hema was born and raised in Birmingham and graduated with a BA from East 15 Acting School, London. Theatre includes: *Behna* (Birmingham Rep/Black Country Touring & Kali Theatre), *Stronger* (Women & Theatre), *Apna Ghar* (Foursight Theatre & Black Country Touring), *Trashed* (Theatre Centre), *Layla Majnun* (MAC), *Paradise* (Birmingham Rep), *Behna* (2010, Birmingham). Film & TV: *Doctors* (BBC), *Belonging Series 9* (BBC Wales), *Hollyoaks*, (Lime Pictures), *Always And Everyone* (Granada), *(S)He's Perfect* (Cr8 Media), *Open Secrets* (Azko Films). Radio includes: Jasmin Chauhan on *Silver Street* (BBC Asian Network), *Divided We Fall* (Mannmade Productions Ltd), *One Thousand Days One Thousand Nights* (BBC).

Jessica Thanki *Stage Manager*

BA in Theatre Production. Since graduating in 2008, Jessica has stage managed the following shows: *The Maid*, *Rich Mix* (Odd Man Out Productions), *Double Dutch Espresso*, (Theatre Waah, Tristan Bates), *Measure for Measure* (BADA, Oval House), *Maybe Father*, (Talawa, The Young Vic), *Behna 2010*, (Kali, Birmingham Repertory Theatre & Black Country Touring), a studio tour of *It Hasn't Happened Yet* (Liz Carr) and company stage managed *Black I*, (Kali, Oval House) and *Gandhi and Coconuts* (Kali national studio tour).

Gurpreet Singh *Jag*

Gurpreet trained at LAMDA. Theatre includes various characters in *Paradise* (Theatre Rites), Islander in *Nation* (National Theatre), Ashish in *White Open Spaces* (Pentabus), Dhani in *Zameen* (Kali/Arts Theatre), Sebastian in *Twelfth Night*, Amiens/Hymen in *As You Like It* (both RSC), various characters in *Orientations* (Border Crossings), Ensemble/Understudy Sweetie in *Bombay Dreams* (Victoria Apollo), Manir in *East Is East* (New Vic Theatre), Cassio in *Othello* (Leicester Haymarket). TV and Film: Dupinder Badmarsh in *All About Me* (Celador), Ricky Patel in *Murder In Mind* (BBC), Rana in *Casualty* (BBC), Shop Assistant in *Sari and Trainers* (Channel 4 Film).

Balvinder Sopal *Masi Ji*

After a BA in Theatre/Media Studies at the University of Huddersfield in 2001, Balvinder started worked for Chol Theatre, a community based company in Huddersfield. She continues to work nationally in radio, theatre and TV. Recent theatre: *Tales of the Harrow Road* (Soho Theatre), *The House of Bilquis Bibi* (Tamasha), *Counted* (Look Left Look Right Theatre), *Table Manners* (Lawrence Batley Theatre). *Mela* (West Yorkshire Playhouse), *Beast Market* (Chol Theatre), *Fight Club* (Benchmark Theatre). Radio: *A Nursery Tale* (BBC Radio4), *Castaway-Markets* (BBC Radio Manchester), *Enemy of the People* (BBC Radio 4), *We're Not Getting Married*, *Silver Street* (both BBC Asian Network). Film/TV: *White Girl* (BBC1), *Adha Cup* (Channel4), *Waterloo Road*, *Emmerdale*.

Janet Steel *Director*

Artistic Director of Kali since 2003. Janet's directing career began in 1988 at Loose Change Theatre with her first full-length piece, *White Biting Dog*. Directing: *Behzti* (Birmingham Rep), *April in Paris*, *Bretevski Street*, *A Hard Rain*, *Top Girls* (Northampton Royal), Millennium Mysteries, *Big School* (Belgrade Coventry); *Antigone*, *The Mother*, *Orpheus Descending*, *An Ideal Husband*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *The Knockey*, *Serious Money* (Rose Bruford). For Kali: *Calcutta Kosher*, *Chaos*, *Paper Thin*, *Deadeye*, *Zameen*, *Another Paradise*, *Ghandi & Coconuts* and eleven public readings of new work.