

# Singh Tangos

by Bettina Gracias



kali  
THEATRE COMPANY

# Singh Tangos

The seed of *Singh Tangos* came from a writing exercise in one of Kali's workshops. It's early life was very different to its current form. Mr Singh was originally a traffic warden who was regularly transported into a fantasy world by his multi-coloured turban. I may still write that story. Cassie then emerged as an angry turban-wearing teenager who kept a trunk full of chocolate under her bed and locked herself in her room, escaping secretly through her bedroom window to buy supplies from the local petrol station. Her parents couldn't understand why she was continuously putting on weight. Tej was being pursued by a trainee white witch, practising her spells on him in an attempt to capture his love. Maybe all of this will be in the sequel.

It's hard to explain how a story develops or to understand where it comes from. It's a magical process that I don't particularly wish to analyse. When a story is finished, (and, like a painting, it never really is) it just feels right, as if it has always existed somewhere in the ether for us to pluck. The process of getting there is like peeling an onion, layer after layer, until reaching it's core, if you peel too far it vanishes.

The issues at the core of *Singh Tangos*; the business of fitting in, of finding an identity, of belonging to a community, are all a reflection of my core. Although the story, events and characters in the play are fictional, they mirror my family and the generational issues we as 'other' had to face. I did not follow Cassie's chosen path but her needs and desires for a 'traditional' life reflect a feeling of displacement that I and many second generation British Asians have experienced.

When working with comedy, some people miss the serious underlying issues being dealt with. I see comedy as power. The ability to laugh at ourselves and in the face of adversity is both a gift and a weapon. If you can take what's thrown at you and turn it into humour, it washes away the fear and the pain. You can use it to make sure the buggers don't get you down.

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Mrs Singh	Siddiqua Akhtar
Tej	Imran Ali
Cassie	Pooja Ghai
Mr Singh	Kaleem Janjua

Director	Caroline Ward
Designer	David Blight
Lighting Designer	Douglas Kuhrt
Movement Director	Victoria Worsley
Composer	Troy Banarzi
Sitar	Craig Pruess
Assistant Director	Ben Gove

Project Administrator	Christopher Corner
Stage Manager	Dave Danby
Prop Buyer	Clare Simmonds
Costume Supervisor	Jane Wrigley
Production Assistant	Parminda Dosanjh
Marketing Consultant	Suman Bhuchar
Press Representative	David Bloom for Guy Chapman Associates
Graphic Design	Greg Stogdon
Image Photographer	Kay Wahlig
Production photos	Robert Day

For Kali Theatre Co:

Artistic Director	Rukhsana Ahmad
Dramaturg	Penny Gold
Website Editor	Shyama Perera
Website Consultant	Sevan Bastajian

First performed at Derby Playhouse Studio 25 April 2002

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Kali would like to say thank you to Paul Gallacher of Screenwriters Workshop, Dudley Guppy of St Gabriels Hall, Peter Crompton, NIKKO UK LTD for the supply of Meccano, UCL Chemistry Department for loan of books, Jennifer Jones of Freemans Catalogues for valuable research material, Taurus Fashions for help with Costume, Alison Scott for loan of sewing items, Sainsburys, Electrepair (020 7380 0745) for the record player, Cosmopolitan for magazines, The Wrestling School for minidisc player and all those whose help came too late to be acknowledged here.

## Kali Theatre Company

Kali was founded in 1990 by Rita Wolf and Rukhsana Ahmad to encourage, develop and promote new theatre writing by Asian women through:

- Practical and creative workshops on theatre writing for newcomers
- Dramaturgical support, rehearsed readings and commissions for emerging writers
- Feedback to writers on submitted scripts from Asian women writers
- The presentation of full productions of new work in London and on tour

We seek out strong individual voices that can create compelling drama that is both challenging and innovative. Kali aims to present the distinct perspective and experience of Asian women to people from all backgrounds, and to celebrate that richness and diversity.

In April Kali started an exciting new period of development when it started to receive regular funding from the Arts Council of England and London Arts. Kali will present an annual programme of writing workshops, script surgeries, rehearsed readings and an annual tour of a new production.

Kali is about to shake up cyberspace by the launch of Kaliweb, our exciting new presence on the web. Here you will discover a forum that aims to encourage interest, debate and action in theatre as a whole. Up to the minute news about Kali's workshops, rehearsed readings and productions will sit alongside reviews of other fringe and mainstream shows, advice and last call notices for budding writers and archive footage from our past. There will be a lively arena in which you can debate whatever you want and get other like minded people to sit up and take notice. Why not tell us what you think of *Singh Tangos*? Log on to [www.kalitheatre.co.uk](http://www.kalitheatre.co.uk)

## "Cutting edge theatre at its best" What's On

### Company History:

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|------|--|
| 1990 | Readings and workshops on <i>Song for a Sanctuary</i> by Rukhsana Ahmad  |
| 1991 | National tour of <i>Song for a Sanctuary</i>   |
| 1992 | Workshops exploring Manto's <i>Black Shalwar</i>   |
| 1993 | Development work for <i>Tilak's Revenge</i> by Tanika Gupta.   |
| 1994 | Stagecraft and Writer's workshops for Asian woman<br><i>Dramatic Encounters</i> Readings of work by new playwrights  |
| 1995 | Reading at Watermans: <i>Meeting the Spinx</i> by Rukhsana Ahmad<br>Readings at Oval House <i>Natural World</i> by Joyoti Grech                            |
| 1996 | Readings at Watermans: <i>Ananda Sananda</i> by Tanika Gupta   |
| 1997 | National tour of <i>Natural World</i> by Joyoti Grech<br>Theatre Writing Workshops at Oval House<br><i>More Dramatic Encounters</i> Readings at Oval House |
| 1998 | Kali relaunched as a registered charity  |
| 1999 | <i>Moving into the Scene</i> Workshops by United Scenographers and Penny Gold<br>National tour of <i>Love Comes in at the Window</i>                       |
| 2000 | <i>River on Fire</i> by Rukhsana Ahmad Lyric Studio, Hammersmith   |
| 2001 | <i>River on Fire</i> national tour   |

Join Kali's mailing list so we can keep you up to date with what we're up to.

Let us have your details at: Kali Theatre Co · Suffolk House 1-8 Whitworth Place  
London · W1T 5JU · Tel. 020 7387 7949

Or go to the web site and fill in the online form there · Website: [www.kalitheatre.co.uk](http://www.kalitheatre.co.uk)



Kali has recently received a grant from London Arts through the Regional Arts Lottery Programme towards a successful period of organisational development of the company and acquisition of key items of equipment.