

exploring the canon



the
london of
hub

sustained theatre
raising the roof



arcola
theatre

What makes a play a classic?



Wednesday 9 February 2011
11am - 5.30pm

is a day of performance readings looking beyond the usual suspects to widen the repertoire of British Theatre

The Artistic Directors from **The London Hub of Sustained Theatre** want to look beyond the plays that are generally regarded as classics to champion plays that they think should be accorded canonical status.

Theatre directors; Mukul Ahmed, Katharine Armitage, Renu Arora, Topher Campbell, Tunde Euba, Simeilia Hodge-Dallaway, Trilby James, and Josephine Melville have worked closely with Artistic Directors from Arcola Theatre, ATC, Collective Artistes, Kali Theatre Company, Talawa Theatre Company, Tamasha, Tara and The Red Room to direct a series of extracts from diverse plays that are often neglected for revival in the national theatre landscape.

The plays:

Moon on a Rainbow Shawl by Errol John, directed by Simeilia Hodge-Dallaway

Borderline by Hanif Kureishi, directed by Mukul Ahmed

Death and the King's Horseman by Wole Soyinka, directed by Tunde Euba

The House of Bilquis Bibi by Sudha Bhuchar, directed by Renu Arora

To Rahtid by Sol B. River, directed by Topher Campbell

Calcutta Kosher by Shelley Silas, directed by Trilby James

Alterations by Michael Abbensetts, directed by Josephine Melville

Wedding Band: A Love/Hate Story in Black and White by Alice Childress, directed by Katharine Armitage

atc

ATC presents:

Moon on a Rainbow Shawl

by Errol John

Directed by: Simeilia Hodge-Dallaway

Artistic Director: Ramin Gray

Synopsis

Errol John's *Moon on a Rainbow Shawl* is set in a back yard of a shantytown in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad. It follows the life of 14 people whose conflicting dreams and desires create a fusion of high anger, frustration, disapproval and longing. The play won the Observer Play of the Year in 1957 and was produced by the Royal Court Theatre in 1958.

Cast:

Martina Laird - Sophia

Shyko Amos - Rosa

Tracey Saunders - Mavis

Elizabeth Alabi - Singer

Benjamin Cawley - Ephraim

Bevan Vincent - Actor

Finn Nainby-Luxmoore - Soldier

Steven Burrell - Voice

Why Moon on a Rainbow Shawl?

Errol John's play *Moon on a Rainbow Shawl* is not only a superbly well crafted play but it allows us to experience a crucial time of both political and social change in Black history. Set in Port of Spain, Trinidad in the late 40s (two years post World War II), Moon reflects the change in mentality of the people who would later influence Trinidad independence and also those who would become apart of the Windrush generation.

Previously produced in London and internationally, *Moon on a Rainbow Shawl* presents themes that are both universal and timeless.

As a Trinidadian born actor and playwright, Errol John wrote *Moon on a Rainbow Shawl* to increase the number of larger roles for black actors. With no compromises made, Moon has a staggering cast size of fifteen fully rounded complex characters, from every generation from baby to elderly who are all equally loveable and enjoyable to watch, direct and play. It is therefore no surprise that the play has attracted the attention of Victor Romeo Evans, Ram John

Holder, Dystin Johnson, James Earls Jones and Cicely Tyson who have all starred in previous productions.

John's celebration of culture, style, music and the Creole language together with his ability to balance humour with tragedy allows us to effortlessly immerse ourselves in the world of the play. We instantly become one with the characters, as we laugh and cry with them.

Moon on a Rainbow Shawl won the Observer Prize for best new playwright in 1987 and became a part of the required reading for schools in the West Indies. I think it rightfully deserves to be considered by all as classical play.

Simeilia Hodge-Dallaway



Simeilia Hodge-Dallaway is a freelance theatre director, drama lecturer and former Project Manager of the Royal National Theatre's Black British Play Archive. Her stage directing credits include, *Fit*

for Purpose by Catherine O'Shea (Pleasance Theatre, 2011) *Sucker Punch* by Roy Williams and *SW11* by Rachel De Lahay for the Alfred Fagon Awards at the National Theatre, Cottesloe Stage, *The Ark* by Omar El Khairy (Arcola Theatre), *Seventeen, Twenty-seven and Forty-Four* by Catherine O'Shea (Theatre 503), *The Suit* by Can Themba adapted for stage by Simeilia Hodge-Dallaway (Young Vic Theatre), *Anniversary* by Megan Ford (Old Vic Theatre) and *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When The Rainbow Is Enuf* by Ntozake Shange (Roehampton University of Surrey).

Simeilia has been selected as one of the six directors to take part in The Gate/ATC New Year's Revolution project where she will adapt South African Novelist, Alex La Guma story titled *And a Threefold Cord*.

Ramin Gray



After directing, designing and acting in many plays at University, Ramin began directing professionally in 1988 with a production of John Marston's *The Malcontent* at

the Latchmere Theatre in London. In 1990 he was awarded a Regional Theatre Young Director Scheme bursary which took him to the Liverpool Playhouse where initially he directed classic texts such Franz Wedekind's *Spring Awakening* and Arthur Miller's *A View From The Bridge*.

From 2000-09 Ramin was at the Royal Court Theatre, first as International Associate, then as Associate Director where he directed over fifteen world or British premieres, including *Push Up* by Roland Schimmelpfennig, *Terrorism* by the Presnyakov Brothers, *Ladybird* by Vassily Sigarev, *Way To Heaven* by Juan Mayorga, *Woman and Scarecrow* by Marina Carr, *Just a Bloke* by David Watson and *Scenes from the Back of Beyond* by Meredith Oakes.

Internationally Ramin has directed two plays by Simon Stephens, the German language premiere of Simon Stephens' *Harper Reagan* at the Salzburg Festival in a co-production with the Schauspielhaus Hamburg as well as *On the Shore of the Wide World* at the Volkstheater Wien where it won the Karl-Skraup Prize. In Moscow, Ramin's production of Marius von Mayenburg's *The Ugly One* is now part of the repertoire of Praktika Theatre.

Future plans include Mark Ravenhill's *Shoot/Get Treasure/Repeat* in Budapest and the Austrian premiere of Dennis Kelly's *Orphans* at Schauspielhaus Wien.

www.atc-online.com



Tara presents:

Borderline

by Hanif Kureishi

Directed by: Mukul Ahmed

Artistic Director: Jatinder Verma

Synopsis

Set during the riots in Southall in 1981. The play is about conflicting desires of different generations of immigrants. Amina is in love with Haroun who in turn is desperate to get out of Southall. Amina's parents want her to marry Farrukh from Pakistan and all this is happening while racists are beating on the doors in Southall.

Cast:

Richard Rees - Amjad

Jessica Manley - Susan & Yasmin

Farah Merani - Banoo & Amina

Why Borderline?

Hanif Kureishi's *Borderline*, written in 1981 and first produced by Joint Stock Theatre Group, remains one of a handful of post-war plays that will certainly be regarded as canonical. In part, this is because of its setting: Southall has become one of the symbols of post-War Britain. It has entered the modern mythology of the nation's transformation, along with Brixton and Notting Hill. It is from these centres in London that a Black and Asian presence burst into vibrant life, changing the country and its image of itself.

Kureishi's play, written over the 6-week period of research and rehearsal that was Joint Stock's method, is not only a fabulous document of a moment in our history, but also, 30 years on, a reminder of where we've got to. As Kureishi reflects in an article on the play a few years ago: 'what had protected the community from racism and disintegration [has come] to tyrannise it'

He means, of course, faith.

The unifying ideology of the early 80s was socialism, with very little talk of religion. In the current faith-dominated era, it is worth reminding ourselves that other visions of how to live our lives remain potent - and who can deny the continuing urgency of Yasmin's fine last line, when asked if the lights should be turned off, 'No leave them on. So people know we're here.?'

Kureishi's writing, ultimately, makes a case for *Borderline* to be considered part of the modern canon. It is witty, acutely observed, irreverent and full of wonderful imagery, as when Haroun describes why he has to get out of Southall:

'This place and the past, it's like an octopus. You drag one limb off you while another's curled itself round you.'

To which he gets the typical Kureishi response, from Amina, his girl-friend:

'You can still fuck me if you like. In the garden behind your father's restaurant.!'

Jatinder Verma

Mukul Ahmed



Mukul Ahmed graduated from London University with an MFA in theatre directing. Most recently he directed for Tara Arts and the British Council *Julius Caesar* which toured to

Bangladesh and India in December 2010 and *People's Romeo* for Tara Arts, which toured the UK in 2010. He curated the HotBed Season, which saw the re-opening of Tara Studio and as part of the season, directed an adaptation of *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen*. Other directing credits include: *Prints of Denmark* (Tara Studio/ Edinburgh Fringe); *The Girl and the Oil Pipeline*; *The Rape of Lucrece*; *Sonata*; *The Demon's Revenge* (Tara Studio) and *Bitesize* (Theatre 503). Previous assistant director credits include *The Black Album* (Tara Arts & National Theatre), *When the Lights Went Out*; *Marriage of Figaro*; *Merchant of Venice* and *The Tempest* (Tara Arts). Mukul Ahmed has worked with LIFT and widely in Community Theatre.

Jatinder Verma



Jatinder Verma (Artistic Director) Tara Arts marked its 30th year in 2007 with an acclaimed production of *The Tempest*. The company tours nationally and internationally, and co-producers

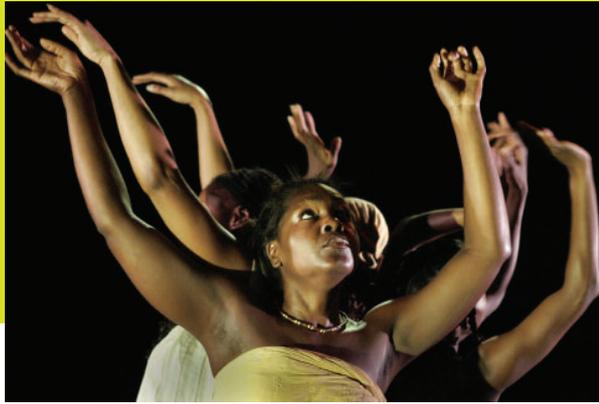
with Tara Arts include the National Theatre.

Jatinder first worked at the National in 1989, with his acclaimed version of Molière's *Tartuffe*. This was followed by a production of the Sanskrit classic, *The Little Clay Cart* and then *Cyrano de Bergerac*, in a version by Ranjit Bolt. In 2009, he directed Hanif Kureishi's *The Black Album*, in a joint NT-Tara Arts production.

In 2002 he produced *Journey to the West* for Tara Arts, a trilogy of plays which traced the story of Asian migration and settlement in the West over the 20th century. Based on oral testimonies given by three generations of Asians living and working in Britain today, the trilogy toured cities in the UK as a major day-long event.

Author of *The Story of Diwali*, a book for children, Jatinder has also published several articles exploring the nature of modern cross-culturalism. His frequent work on Radio and TV includes the Sony Award winning *Ashes to the Ganges* and the 3-part serialisation (with Claudia Mayer) of *The Mahabharata* (both for BBC Radio 4). Jatinder holds Honorary Doctorates from York, Exeter and Leicester De Montfort Universities.

www.tara-arts.com



The Lion & The Jewel

Collective Artistes present:

Death and the King's Horseman

by Wole Soyinka

Directed by: Tunde Euba

Artistic Director: Chuck Mike

Synopsis

Elesin Oba, the king's horseman, has a single destiny. When the king dies, he has to give his own life to lead his king's favourite horse and dog through the passage to the other world of the ancestors. Believing the suicide to be barbaric and illegal, the British colonial officer, Pilkings, intervenes with catastrophic results. Based on real events in colonial Nigeria, *Death and the King's Horseman* is a seminal play by Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka.

Cast:

Raphael Sowole - Olunde (Elesin's son)

Emily Wallis - Jane Pilkings (wife of the District Officer)

Why Death and The King's Horseman?

Death and The King's Horseman was set in 1944, written in 1975 and is probably even more relevant today than it ever was. As a race, humans have sojourned in outer space and shrunk the world into a 'global village'. However, in spite of these strides we are still increasingly involved in scrutinising the differences, rather than the similarities between the various peoples that inhabit this 'village'.

In a recent production of the play, a significant part of the scene we are reading today, in which a comparison is made between a British captain going down with his ship and a Yoruba Chieftain sacrificing his life for the greater good, was omitted from the performance. In my view, this was a grievous omission.

Soyinka is adamant that this play is not a tale of the clashing of cultures. And though we might argue the opposite, I believe this recent interpretation missed a very significant point. The 'cultural conflict' comes not so much from difference as it does from similarity. It is the unwillingness of the colonial administration to recognise this similarity that creates the hypocrisy and 'disrespect' Olunde refers to in this

scene with Jane Pilkings. Are not both the ship captain and the chieftain 'Captains of their Communities'? Why is one deed an act of honour and the other a tragic waste of life?

Theatre has the capacity to change perceptions and ideologies through challenging the status quo. It provokes an audience, making people ask themselves profound questions that quite often initiate action. Some may argue that *Death and the King's Horseman* is already included in our national canon. But, without this central scene, I question if audiences are properly challenged by the questions posed in this moving tragedy. This scene particularly challenges us to consider what lessons can be learned from our similarities and what actions taken to promote social cohesion within our immediate and diverse communities.

Tunde Euba



Tunde Euba is an actor/ director/ writer/ facilitator who has enjoyed a long and varied career in theatre. Starting out as an actor in Nigeria, where he trained, one of the first companies he

worked for was Collective Artistes. A regular face in their theatre productions, Tunde also featured in their devised shows for the local community. It was this devised work that was the impetus for Tunde to direct the partially completed play *Dawn of Decisions* at the University of Lagos Main Auditorium, where he also directed *Morning yet on Judgement Day* and *The Women in my Life*. Tunde would later explore other "areas of artistic expression" and turn his hand to writing. His first play *Gods & Bad Guys* premiered at Oval House Theatre where he later became Writer-In-Residence and wrote his next play, *Brand New Me*, which was inspired by a one week workshop with young people. Over the coming years

Tunde hopes to work his way through the Shakespearean canon!

Chuck Mike



Chuck Mike was born in Brooklyn, New York and has lived in Nigeria for over 30 years. A practical disciple of Wole Soyinka he is a distinguished actor, producer, director and social activist. Producer

of four festivals/seasons of theatre for CAFTAN (Collective Artistes Festival of Theatre Arts Nigeria), he is founding Artistic Director of The Performance Studio Workshop (Nigeria) and Collective Artistes (Nigeria and UK). His forte is "devising" Theatre for Development. His work has inhabited spaces ranging from villages across Southern, Western, and Eastern Africa to formal western theatres such as The Kennedy Centre, Lincoln Centre (USA), West Yorkshire Playhouse, The Royal Court (UK), MUSON Centre, and The National Theatre (Nigeria). His recent plays produced in Britain include *The Meeting*, *The African Company Presents Richard III*, *The Lion & The Jewel* (Barbican/Young Vic), *It's Just a Name*, *Trojan Women/Women of Owu* adapted by Femi Osofisan, *Sense of Belonging* devised by himself with the Performance Studio Workshop, *Things Fall Apart* (World Tour) and a Nigerian adaptation of *Yerma* (UK Tour) both adapted by Biyi Bandele. Other directing credits include; *The Gods Are Not to Blame*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Fences*, *Home*, *The Crucible*, *Makbutu* (after *Macbeth*), *Tegonni* (after *Antigone*) and *Death and the Maiden*.

www.collectiveartistes.co.uk



Tamasha presents:

The House of Bilquis Bibi

by Sudha Bhuchar

adapted from *The House of Bernarda Alba*
by Federico García Lorca

Directed by: Renu Arora

Artistic Directors:

Kristine Landon-Smith and Sudha Bhuchar

Synopsis

Bilquis Bibi rules over her household with a rod of iron and a stifling love which cages her five daughters. Like butterflies forever cocooned, they long to shimmer and show their true colours.

When her husband dies suddenly, Bilquis agrees for eldest girl Abida to become engaged to her nephew Pappo. He brings with him the hope of love and the American dream.

Bilquis turns a blind eye to the illicit nightly visits Pappo pays to his fiancée's balcony. But what will happen when she realizes that more than one daughter is staying awake for him?

Set in the Punjabi town of Jhang, it tells a personal yet subtly political story of small town lives with global ties in present-day Pakistan.

Performed in English with some Urdu and Punjabi.

Cast:

Sudha Bhuchar - Bilquis Bibi

Vineeta Rishi - Fida

Shalini Peiris - Amana

Babita Pohoomull - Sumayyah

Youkti Patel - Aroosa

Rina Fatania - Bushra

Sheena Patel - Abida

Why Bilquis Bibi?

What inspired me was the absolute seamless transition from rural Spain to modern day Pakistan. The domestic details and cultural specifics of this new work took on a life of their own, and yet were still in perfect synergy with the original. I was heartened by how delicately these themes of honour and oppression, which still exist in rural Pakistani communities, were given a voice. For me, this was such a rich and meaningful piece of work, that I felt it was imperative to be included in this growing and exciting canon of work we're exploring today. **Renu Arora, Director**

Renu Arora



© Robert Day

Renu is a British-Asian Director and Actor. Her recent directing credits include: *Eight*, Kings Head, Tara Arts and tour; *Aladdin*, St James' Piccadilly. She was a directing observer on *The House of Bilquis*

Bibi, (Tamasha) Hampstead Theatre.

Renu is soon to be one of the featured directors of the second Fragments season, Riverside Studios, in February.

Kristine Landon-Smith and Sudha Bhuchar



Kristine Landon-Smith and Sudha Bhuchar are joint founders and Artistic Directors of Tamasha. Kristine is a writer and director and Sudha is an actor and playwright.

Kristine Landon-Smith

Her 1996 production, *East is East*, was nominated for an Olivier award and her original production of *Fourteen Songs, Two Weddings and A Funeral* won the Barclays Theatre Award for Best New Musical. Her production, *Strictly Dandia*, was a sell-out success at the Lyric Hammersmith in both 2004 and 2005.

Kristine's freelance credits include directing with the Royal Court Theatre, Bristol Old Vic, Palace Theatre Westcliff, Nitro, Yellow Earth Theatre and more recently with the Royal Danish Theatre, where she directed the Con:FUSIONS workshop in Autumn 2005, aimed at developing cultural diversity in

Scandinavian theatre.

Kristine has also been a regular guest director at the Rose Bruford College of Speech and Drama and has taught at the National Institute of Dramatic Art, Sydney, Australia, the National School of Drama in India, Central School of Speech and Drama, London and L'Ecole Philippe Gaulier, Paris.

More recently, Kristine has directed *The Trouble with Asian Men* (artsdepot, Soho Theatre and UK tours), *A Fine Balance* (Hampstead Theatre and UK tour), Tamasha's first children's play, *Child of the Divide* (Polka Theatre, artsdepot and UK and US tours) and Tamasha's first play with a youth cast, *Lyrical MC* (London tour). In October 2008, she directed *Sweet Cider*, a new play by Tamasha Developing Artist Emteaz Hussain, the new musical *Wuthering Heights* (national tour March - June 2009) and most recently *The House of Bilquis Bibi* (national tour summer 2010).

Sudha Bhuchar

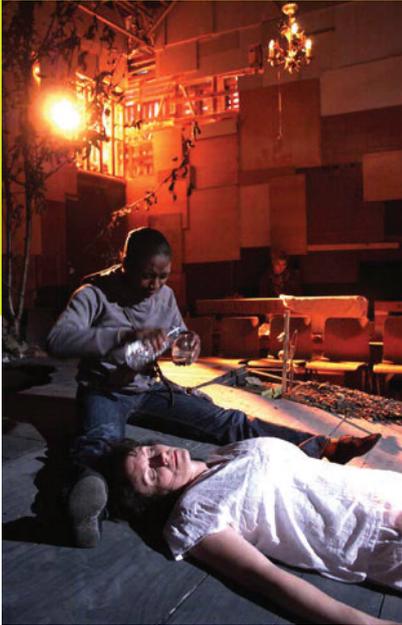
Sudha's many acting credits include, *Murder* (BBC) by Abi Morgan, *EastEnders* (BBC), *Doctors* (BBC), *Holby City* (BBC) and *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* (Royal National Theatre), and she was a regular on the BBC Radio drama *Silver Street*.

Her writing credits for Tamasha include *Balti Kings*, *Fourteen Songs*, *Two Weddings and A Funeral*, *Strictly Dandia* and *A Fine Balance* in which she also performed, in May 2006, her first children's play: *Child of the Divide* (Polka Theatre) and most recently her adaptation of Lorca's *The House of Bernarda Alba - The House of Bilquis Bibi*.

She writes regularly with Shaheen Khan and their many credits include three series of *Girlies* for BBC Radio 4 and *Balti Kings* (the stage play, as well as a six part series for Radio 4). Their screenplay, *The House Across the Street*, has been shown on BBC4 as part of a new writers initiative, and they have co-written an episode of *Doctors* for the BBC. Sudha also co-wrote a short film *Midnight Feast*, which was screened at the 11th Raindance Film Festival.

In 2005 Kristine and Sudha Bhuchar won the Asian Women of Achievement Award for Arts and Culture.

www.tamasha.org.uk



Protozoa

The Red Room presents:

To Rahtid

by Sol B. River

Directed by: **Topher Campbell**

Artistic Director: **Topher Campbell**

Synopsis

A lone voice screams from the depths of time.

Cast:

Sharon Duncan Brewster - Mouth

Why To Rahtid?

Sol River is a voice that many have not heard. Particularly in London. *To Rahtid* is that rare thing; an expression of a world view held in the aching belly of a race in pain. It speaks to all the unpalatable things about the Black Diasporic experience. The things we would rather not remember or feel. Namely the brutal assault on our soul and consciousness that has been going on for centuries. It speaks to both the unspeakable torture of the middle-passage and its subsequent degradation, the horror of systematic exclusion in western democracies and lastly and perhaps most tragically the way in which we turn on ourselves. But it is the WAY it speaks and the WAY Sol uses language, so condensed and so packed with emotion, that elevates beyond just a rant. Instead it becomes a plea for the human race itself.

Topher Campbell



Topher Campbell is a director of film, television and theatre. He has directed plays at numerous theatres across the country including West Yorkshire Playhouse, Young Vic, London, Derby Playhouse,

Contact Theatre, Manchester, Talawa Theatre, London and Leicester Haymarket. As Diversity Director/producer for BBC Radio Drama he established the Norman Beaton Fellowship.

In 2000 alongside artist/photographer Ajamu he set up rukus! Federation Ltd (www.rukus.co.uk). A company dedicated to presenting the best in work by Black Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual, Transgender (BLGBT) artists. rukus! Current projects include the *Play Mangina Monologues* and the UK's first and only BLGBT Archive now housed at the London Metropolitan Archive. In 2008 rukus! received the Archive Landmark Award by London Metropolitan Archive.

Between 2006-08 Topher was a Programmer for the London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival and is currently artistic director of The Red Room theatre and film company. For the Red Room he has directed four productions: *Journeys to work*; the acclaimed multi-media production *Unstated* written by Fin Kennedy, *Oikos* and *Protozoa* for the Oikos Project.

The Jellyfish Theatre part of the Oikos project has been nominated by What's On Stage for the AKA Theatre Event of The Year.

www.theredroom.org.uk



Kali Theatre Company presents:

Calcutta Kosher

by Shelley Silas

Directed by: Trilby James

Artistic Director: Janet Steel

Synopsis

In a crumbling Calcutta home, two sisters are forced to come to terms with their mother's secret history.

Cast:

Harvey Virdi - Esther

Shelley King - Sylvie

Why Calcutta Kosher?

This engaging play by award winning writer Shelley Silas examines how family and culture, time and distance, influence our sense of who we are. Set in the Indian Jewish community, it explores conflicts between old and new, east and west, tradition and truth. If the past is another country, where is home? The play is beautifully structured with strong female characters who have the power to both move and surprise an audience. The play has a timeless quality whilst being very much in the present and the themes explored appeal to a diverse audience. It was a joy to produce.

Trilby James



Trilby James graduated from RADA in 1990. Her theatre includes *Eurydice* (Chichester); *The Winter's Tale*, *Coriolanus* (ESC, Aldwych Theatre and World Tour); *The Merchant of*

Venice, *Shakespeare's Lovers* (ESC); *The Madras House*, *Orpheus* (Lyric Hammersmith) *Keyboard Skills* (Bush Theatre); *Hindle Wakes* (Royal Exchange Manchester); *Cigarettes and Chocolate*, *Bye Bye Blues*, *Selling Out* (Stephen Joseph Theatre Scarborough); *Mrs Warren's Profession* (Theatr Clwyd); *As You Like It* (Nottingham Playhouse); *The Tempest* (Derby Playhouse); *Three Sisters*, *Absent Friends*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Wolsey Ipswich). Trilby directed *Rabbit* at RADA in 2007 and Simon Stephen's *Motortown* in 2009 and *Pornography* in 2010.

Since 2000, Trilby has worked as a freelance director at ALRA, Arts Educational, Central School of Speech and Drama, East 15 and Mountview. Her productions include *As You Like It*, *The Tempest*, *The Winter's Tale*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *King Lear*, *Hay Fever*, *Babies*, *The Orchestra*, *The Thickness of Skin*, *Rabbit*, *Happy Families*, *A Warwickshire Testimony*, *Women of Troy*, *The Last Night of Ballyhoo* and *DNA*.

Janet Steel



Janet has been Artistic Director of Kali Theatre Company since 2003. She began her career as an actress. Her theatre work includes: *Cinders*, *A Colder Climate* (Royal Court Theatre),

Blood Wedding (Half Moon), *Romeo and Juliet* (Sherman Theatre & Albany Empire), *Oedipus Rex* (Tara Arts). Television credits include: *An English Christmas*, *The Bride*, *Gems*, *The Refuge* and *Shalom Salaam*.

Janet began directing in 1988 as assistant to Tessa Schneideman at Loose Change Theatre, producing UK premiers at BAC by Spanish authors, where she directed her first full-length piece, *White Biting Dog*. Her directing credits include: *Behzti* (The Birmingham Rep); *April in Paris*, *Bretevski Street*, *A Hard Rain*, *Top Girls* (Northampton Royal Theatre); *Exodus* (Millennium Mysteries at Coventry Belgrade); Brecht's *Antigone*, *The Mother*, *Orpheus Descending*, *An Ideal Husband*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *The Knockey* and *Serious Money* (Rose Bruford College). For Kali Theatre she has directed *Sock 'em with Honey* by Bapsi Sidhwa, *Calcutta Kosher* by Shelley Silas, *Chaos and Paper Thin* by Azma Dar, *Deadeye* by Amber Lone, *Zameen* by Satinder Kaur Chohan, *A Thin Red Line* by Sonali Bhattacharyya, *Another Paradise* by Sayan Kent and, *Behna* by Sonia Likhari.

www.kalitheatre.co.uk



Talawa Theatre Company presents:

Alterations

by Michael Abbensetts

Directed by: Josephine Melville

Artistic Director: Patricia Cumper

Synopsis

Alterations by Michael Abbensetts was first produced at the New End Theatre in 1978 and then again at Theatre Royal Stratford East in 1986. The central character, Walker Holt, is a man determined to succeed, and success to him means owning his own tailor's shop on Carnaby Street. As the play progresses everything that Walker holds dear is sacrificed to his dream of ownership: he no longer sees his wife and child, his sometimes girlfriend is angry with him. He even alienates his most loyal friend and only employee. By the time he looks around for someone to celebrate his achievements with him, he has driven everyone away.

Cast:

Victor Romero Evans - Walker Holt

Chris Tummings - Buster Gibbs

Anthony Ekundayo Lennon - Horace Moore

Why Alterations?

By turns *Alterations* is funny and angry, and often politically incorrect. *Alterations* deserves to be part of the canon of British theatre because of the universality of the questions it explores: what price success? Wave after wave of immigrants come to London looking to make a new life and chase their dreams. Is ownership the only way of really belonging? At the end of the play, Walker shouts out the window 'I've beaten you, you bastards'. Is it a triumphal exclamation or a hollow declaration to an uncaring world?

Josephine Melville



Josephine is a dancer, actress, singer, producer, writer, director, archivist and mother.

She has had an extremely varied career. Her transition to include acting was seamless and

she has many theatre credits to her name. As a founder member and Director of The BiBi Crew, Josephine wrote, produced and performed comedy shows, including *On a Level*, which was staged in London and toured nationally. The BiBi Crew were also invited to perform at The BAM Majestic Theatre in Brooklyn, New York.

As a co-founder member of Aarawak Moon Productions, Josephine co-produced numerous productions of their renowned *Bloggers* and *Junior Bloggers* shows and several productions of *The Lunar Lounge*. Josephine also co-wrote and produced the play *Shoot 2 Win*, which premiered at The Theatre Royal Stratford East and achieved an eight-week National Middle Scale tour, to critical acclaim. In 2010 *Shoot 2 Win* was performed on Broadway and in Brooklyn New York.

Josephine was Assistant to the producer Jan Ryan, on the West End Run of *The Harder They Come* in 2008 and Assistant Director on *The Harder They Come* National Tour 2010. She was Assistant Director on *Five Guys Named Moe* which ran at the Edinburgh Festival and The Theatre Royal Stratford East to amazing reviews. Jo went on to be Associate Director on *Red Riding Hood* at The Theatre Royal Stratford East 2010/11 Christmas pantomime.

She co-founded Eye 2 Eye Productions in 2001, which also has an archival and exhibition unit. The award winning *Posters & Poetry Exhibition*, is a unique collection celebrating Black British Artistes over the last 100 years. Josephine is also on the board of The Theatre Royal Stratford East.

Patricia Cumper



Patricia Cumper has been writing for the theatre for nearly thirty years. Her plays have been produced throughout the Caribbean, in Canada, the US and the UK. Her radio work includes

a RIMA winning drama series, a fifteen part serialization of *Small Island*, a Sony Silver award winning adaptation of *The Color Purple* and an original five part dramatization of letters from the Black Cultural Archives.

She is currently Artistic Director and CEO of Talawa Theatre Company and Trustee of English Touring Theatre and Standing on the Shoulders of Giants Theatre Company.

www.talawa.com



Arcola Theatre presents:

Wedding Band: A Love/ Hate Story in Black and White

by Alice Childress

Directed by: Katharine Armitage

Artistic Director: Mehmet Ergen

Synopsis

Set in South Carolina in the summer of 1918, *Wedding Band* is the story of Julia and Herman and the impossibility of their marriage. Despite their ten year relationship Julia, who is black, and Herman, who is white, still live in a state of danger and resentment. The play explores how the assumptions, prejudices and history of both the black and white communities disrupt and threaten the genuine love that Julia and Herman feel for each other. Julia is surrounded by women used to abusive or absent husbands and to the constant threat of the white community's racism. Herman's family experience greater freedom and prosperity but struggle to fit in; they are working class and paranoid about being thought German. However both the white and black communities are united in their shame and disapproval of Julia and Herman's relationship whose plans to escape to the north are tainted as the prejudices that surround them begin to infect their love. In a final turbulent scene between the two their anger and hate towards each other turns back towards love but Herman dies as his family wait outside to take his body away from the woman who is wife to him in everything except law.

Cast:

Ayesha Antoine - Julia

Michael Anthony Brown - Herman

Why Wedding Band?

We chose this play because, ironically, it doesn't deal with the issues involved in black and white. This is not a simple didactic tale of the facts behind interracial marriage but a portrait of two communities of people each full of their own personal mix of love and hate. Julia and Herman's relationship is so powerful because it is a constant confusing overlap of passion and resentment, their personal lives and those of the community become so interlaced that there is no clear path for them. The play explores prejudice in all its forms and in a way that

reveals how inescapable it is. *Wedding Band* is a complicated and beautiful portrayal of love, as well as the hate that threatens to overwhelm it. Despite it being steeped in the history of the time it is completely resonant and relevant today but has been utterly overlooked, especially in this country. Alice Childress grew up in Harlem and became the first black woman to receive an Obie award, but felt this accolade (i.e. being the first) only proved how overlooked black writing was. We feel this is a hugely significant and powerful play which should be part of the canon. It has the potential to be interpreted over and over again and to create an enriching and potent experience for many different audiences.

Katharine Armitage



Katharine recently graduated from the University of Manchester. She previously worked as assistant director on *The Painter* and *The Cradle Will Rock* (both Arcola).

Directing credits

include: *The Pillowman* (University of Manchester), *The Love of the Nightingale* (Edinburgh Fringe Festival), *As You Like It*, *The Tempest*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Blue Hutch Theatre Company) and for radio *The Hearing* and *Happy New Year* (Fuse FM).

Mehmet Ergen



Mehmet has been Artistic Director of Arcola Theatre since founding it in 2000. Previously he was Artistic Director of the Southwark Playhouse from 1993 to 1999 which he co-founded.

Mehmet is also Artistic Director of Arcola Istanbul which he founded in 2008.

He has won a variety of awards for his work including: the Time Out Award for Outstanding Achievement, the Peter Brook Empty Space Award (twice), a Time Out Award for Best Fringe Production, the Angela Carter Award and the Equity Award for Best Studio Theatre. Directing for the Arcola includes: *Release the Beat* by J. Johnson/ K. Lewkowicz, *Plebeians Rehearse the Uprising* by Gunter Grass, *I Can Get It For You Wholesale* by J. Wiedman/Harold Rome, *Jitterbug* by Bonnie Greer, *Chasing the Moment* by Jack Shepherd and Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People*.

Mehmet directs extensively abroad in Israel, Ireland, Canada and Turkey. He is founder of Yeni Kusak Theatre in Istanbul and runs Turkey's only new writing programme Oyun Yaz with the British Council.

www.arcolatheatre.com