



In association with



Supported by



WRITERS' BLOC SHOWCASE

A SPECIALLY CURATED SEASON OF ORIGINAL PLAYS BY INDIAN PLAYWRIGHTS FROM WRITERS' BLOC

December 2016 – March 2017



India has had a long and vibrant tradition of storytelling. Yet at the turn of the century, there was a huge gap in the quantity and quality of original theatre scripts, whether in English or other Indian languages. Very few writers were writing plays and even fewer were doing so as a profession or in a dedicated manner. Rage Productions approached us with a proposal to build capacity for playwriting in India. We approached Royal Court Theatre – UK’s home of new writing – to partner with Rage and us on this ambitious and exciting journey. Fifteen years since we began, there has been a palpable change in the playwriting scenario in India. Alumni from the Writers’ Bloc programme have contributed significantly to this positive shift. More power to them.



Through our work in capacity building the British Council aims to strengthen the arts sector by developing its capacity to innovate, to reach new audiences, to develop skills, and support livelihoods. I am delighted that more than 50 young playwrights have had an opportunity to work with mentors from Royal Court Theatre as part of the Writers’ Bloc programme to hone their talent and skills, to create new and exciting original work. It has been fascinating to see many of these scripts come to life on stage as part of the ensuing Writers’ Bloc Festivals that have showcased the writing.

It has been truly wonderful collaborating with Shernaz Patel, Rajit Kapur and Rahul daCunha of Rage who have worked tirelessly to manage this programme; with Elyse Dodgson and others at Royal Court Theatre for their tremendous creative inputs; with Jindal South West Foundation and the Bajaj Group, who have generously supported this initiative.

I am delighted to welcome you to Writers’ Bloc Showcase – a specially curated season of dramatised readings, performances and playwriting workshops across our nine British Council centres in Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chandigarh, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai and Pune. I do hope that you will be inspired by the writing and will enjoy the opportunity to interact with the playwrights who will share how Writers’ Bloc has illuminated and influenced their craft.

Alan Gemmell OBE
Director, British Council India

WRITERS' BLOC SHOWCASE

"ONE MIGHT ARGUE THAT WRITING CAN HARDLY BE TAUGHT AND TENDULKAR AND SHAKESPEARE DID NOT COME OUT OF WORKSHOPS, BUT WRITERS' BLOC IS MORE THAN AN ATTEMPT TO TUTOR. IT IS A CELEBRATION OF THE THREATENED ART OF PLAYWRITING. IT IS A PAT ON THE BACK, A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT AND AN OPPORTUNITY TO SCREAM 'WE EXIST' – JUST WHAT THE INDIAN PLAYWRIGHT NEEDS."

– Pragya Tiwari in the *Mumbai Mirror*

Playwriting has always faced extinction – the lure of cinema and television tempting the young writer. In 2002, nurtured by Rage Productions, the Royal Court Theatre and the British Council, the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities, Writers' Bloc was created as a unique programme for playwrights, which put the script at the focal point of the theatrical experience. Over the course of these 15 years, we have mentored and trained over 50 young playwrights and premiered 41 plays. This Showcase of 13 plays, staged across all nine British Council centres is a celebration of these amazing 15 years.

The British Council is presenting a selection of the best of the plays that have emerged from this collaboration at all nine of their centres around the country. The plays will be presented as staged readings and performances at all the venues, with each venue hosting two productions. Audiences will also get an opportunity to interact with the playwrights after the shows. That's not all, there will be a workshop at each venue for budding playwrights conducted by Writers' Bloc alumni.



What is Writers' Bloc?

Writers' Bloc is an initiative to discover, train and introduce exciting new playwrights to Indian audiences. Since its inception, forty one Indian playwrights have premiered plays through our festivals... playwrights from all over India...commenting in their individual styles and languages on the world we live in today. From life in a hustling metro to a tiny village in Manipur, from a war torn Kashmir to a middle class man facing redundancy at the work place, from hilarious political spoofs to bitter-sweet tales, thrillers to complex human dramas...the plays have enthralled audiences and led to almost all of our playwrights moving on to even bigger projects.

The process is at once simple and complex – playwrights from around the country are selected by a panel of theatre practitioners, the prestigious Royal Court Theatre and then put through intensive training workshops. The scripts that emerge are then staged at the Writers' Bloc Festival which is a collaboration between the British Council, Royal Court Theatre, Jindal South West Foundation, the Bajaj Group and Rage.

The Royal Court International Programme

Over the last two decades the Royal Court has led the way in the development and production of new international plays, facilitating work at the grass-roots level and developing exchanges which bring young writers and directors to work with emerging artists around the world. Through a programme of long-term workshops and residencies, in London and abroad, a creative dialogue now exists with theatre practitioners from over 70 countries, working in over 40 languages; most recently Chile, Cuba, Georgia, India, Lebanon, Mexico, Palestine, Russia, South Africa, Syria, Turkey, Ukraine and Zimbabwe. All of these development projects are supported by the Genesis Foundation and the British Council.

The Royal Court has produced dozens of new international plays through this programme since 1997, most recently *Fireworks* by Dalia Taha (Palestine) in 2015, *Djinns of Eidgah* by Abhishekh Majumdar (India) and *A Time to Reap* by Anna Wakulik (Poland) in 2013, *Remembrance Day* by Aleksey Scherbak (Latvia) and *Our Private Life* by Pedro Miguel Rozo (Colombia) in 2011, *Disconnect* by Anupama Chandrasekhar (India) in 2010.

The Royal Court has worked with emerging playwrights in India since 2002 and is proud to have participated in the development of new plays with Rage Theatre and the Writers' Bloc Festival for the last 15 years.

Rage

Rage's journey started in 1992 with *Are there Tigers in the Congo?* The Rage trio, Rajit Kapur, Shernaz Patel and Rahul daCunha, have since produced some of India's more memorable productions – *I'm not Bajirao*, which ran for over a hundred shows, *Class of '84* (which has completed over 200 performances and is still going strong), *Pune Highway* (completed 100 shows and has traveled to Germany, Holland, UK and Malaysia), Girish Karnad's *Flowers* (bringing together some of the greatest talent from around the country), *One On One*, *Me, Kash & Cruise*, *Chaos Theory* (all three of which have crossed the 50 show mark) and most recently *Mahua*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *The Siddhus of Upper Juhu*, *Naqqaash* and *Twelve Angry Jurors*. Rage have not only regaled audiences in India, but also in Amsterdam, Antwerp, Bonn, Dubai, South Korea, London, Malaysia, Muscat, Singapore, Sri Lanka and the USA. The company is also the force behind the playwriting initiative, Writers' Bloc, which has resulted in four successful festivals in 2004, 2007, 2012 and 2016.



WRITERS' BLOC SHOWCASE

SCHEDULE

MUMBAI

British Council
901, Tower 1, One Indiabulls Centre
841, Senapati Bapat Marg, Elphinstone Road West
Mumbai 400 013

FRIDAY, 2 DECEMBER 2016

7.00 pm: Dramatised reading of SHILLAK (Marathi)
Followed by a conversation with the playwright and the director

SATURDAY, 3 DECEMBER 2016

10.00 am to 1.00 pm: Workshop on playwriting by Anuvab Pal
7.00 pm: Dramatised reading of NAQQAASH (Hindi)
Followed by a conversation with the playwright and the director

CHANDIGARH

British Council
C515, 5th Floor, Elante Office Block
178A, Industrial and Business Park, Phase 1
Chandigarh 160 002

WEDNESDAY, 14 DECEMBER 2016

6.30 pm: Dramatised reading of STILL AND STILL MOVING (English)
Followed by a conversation with the playwright and the director

THURSDAY, 15 DECEMBER 2016

10.00 am to 1.00 pm: Workshop on playwriting by Neel Chaudhuri
6.30 pm: Dramatised reading of MAHUA (Hindi)
Followed by a conversation with the playwright and the director

DELHI

British Council
17, Kasturba Gandhi Marg
New Delhi 110 001

FRIDAY, 16 DECEMBER 2016

6.30 pm: Performance of OK, TATA, BYE BYE (English and Hindi)
Followed by a conversation with the playwright and the director

SATURDAY, 17 DECEMBER 2016

10.00 am to 1.00 pm: Workshop on playwriting by Purva Naresh
6.30 pm: Performance of MAHUA (Hindi)
Followed by a conversation with the playwright and the director

PUNE

British Council
917 / 1 Fergusson College Road
Shivaji Nagar
Pune 411 004

SATURDAY, 7 JANUARY 2017

10.00 am to 1.00 pm: Workshop on playwriting by Irawati Karnik
6.30 pm: Dramatised reading of JANAK (Marathi)
Followed by a conversation with the playwright and the director

SUNDAY, 8 JANUARY 2017

6.30 pm: Dramatised reading of PUNE HIGHWAY (English)
Followed by a conversation with the playwright and the director

HYDERABAD

British Council
4th Floor, SL Jubilee, Plot No. 1202 & 1215/A
Road No.36, Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad 500 033

SATURDAY, 21 JANUARY 2017

10.00 am to 1.00 pm: Workshop on playwriting by
Annie Zaidi
6.30 pm: Dramatised reading of HARD PLACES (English)
Followed by a conversation with the playwright and the
director

SUNDAY, 22 JANUARY 2017

6.30 pm: Dramatised reading of JAAL (Hindi)
Followed by a conversation with the playwright and the
director

KOLKATA

British Council
L & T Chambers, First Floor
16 Camac Street, Kolkata 700 017

FRIDAY, 10 FEBRUARY 2017

6.30 pm: Dramatised reading of
DJINNS OF EIDGAH (English)
Followed by a conversation with the playwright and the
director

SATURDAY, 11 FEBRUARY 2017

10.00 am to 1.00 pm: Workshop on playwriting by
Farhad Sorabjee
6.30 pm: Dramatised reading of HARD PLACES (English)
Followed by a conversation with the playwright and the
director

CHENNAI

British Council
737 Anna Salai, Chennai 600 002

WEDNESDAY, 1 MARCH 2017

6.30 pm: Dramatised reading of MUNDHIRIKKOTTE
(Tamil)
Followed by a conversation with the playwright and the
director

THURSDAY, 2 MARCH 2017

10.00 am to 1.00 pm: Workshop on playwriting by
Sunandha Raghunathan
6.30 pm: Dramatised reading of CRAB (English)
Followed by a conversation with the playwright and the
director

BENGALURU

British Council
Prestige Takt
23, Kasturba Road Cross
Bengaluru 560 001

FRIDAY, 3 MARCH 2017

6.30 pm: Dramatised reading of
DJINNS OF EIDGAH (English)
Followed by a conversation with the playwright and the
director

SATURDAY, 4 MARCH 2017

10.00 am to 1.00 pm: Workshop on playwriting by Ram
Ganesh Kamatham
6.30 pm: Dramatised reading of CRAB (English)
Followed by a conversation with the playwright and the
director

AHMEDABAD

British Council
A503-506, 5th Floor, Amrapali Lakeview Tower
Near Vastrapur Lake, Vastrapur
Ahmedabad 380 006

FRIDAY, 10 MARCH 2017

6.30 pm: Dramatised reading of
PUNE HIGHWAY (English)
Followed by a conversation with the playwright and the
director

SATURDAY, 11 MARCH 2017

10.00 am to 1.00 pm: Workshop on playwriting by Swar
Thounajam
6.30 pm: Dramatised reading of TUREL (English)
Followed by a conversation with the playwright and the
director

SHILLAK

Language: Marathi

Duration: 90 min; no interval

Age restriction: 12+

Written by: Sagar Deshmukh

Directed by: Pradeep Vaiddya

Produced by: Aasakta Kalamanch (Pune)

The Cast: Dr Vivek Bele, Rupali Bhave, Abhay Mahajan, Rucha Apte, Vinayak Lele, Mahendra Walunj

An average middle class family depends entirely on the father, the head of the house, for their daily needs. Shillak, (literally meaning savings or something that is left behind) peers into one such home and brings out the deep-seated distortions in this image resulting from today's times of retrenchments and lay-offs.

THE PLAYWRIGHT (Writers' Bloc Alumni)

SAGAR DESHMUKH



A lawyer by education, Sagar took his first theatre lessons at the Progressive Dramatic Association, Pune in 1999. He is a founding member of Aasakta Kalamanch, Pune – a prominent Marathi theatre company. He has acted in more than 25 Marathi plays including *Matra*, *Tichee 17 Prakarne*, *Uney Purey Shahar Ek* and *Mein Huun Yusuf Aur Ye Hai Mera Bhai*. His Hindi play *Piya Behrupiya* directed by Atul Kumar premiered at The Globe Theatre, London. He has also performed in English plays like *Kashmir Kashmir* and *Noises Off*.

As a writer Sagar has translated and adapted Bradley Hayward's *Legitimate Hooye* and Duncan Wells' *A Girl Who Lives Under My Bed – Matra Ratra* and *Bed ke Neeche Rehnewali*. His original works include *Talyat Malyat* and *Shillak*. He has also been a dialogue writer for *Eka Laganichi Tisri Goshta* – a television series.







NAQQAASH

Language: Hindi

Duration: 90 min; no interval

Age restriction: 16+

Written by: Asad Hussain

Directed by: Rajit Kapur

A Rage Production (Mumbai)

The Cast: Shubhrojyoti Barat, Prince aka Jaswinder, Sukant Goel, Gagandev Riar, Ajitesh Gupta, Nishchal Chandra, Ajit Singh, Anuj Khurana and Alka Sharma

The Women: Kajli Sharma, Anuradha Athlekar, Jahnvi Dave, Mahnaz Damania, Rati Tripathi, Vedheca Maelpani, Manjari Pupala & Swati Das

In the village without men, why are the women singing in the streets? Why is Aklu the knife maker, the only male who stayed? Will he be arrested? What really happened at the factory where Aklu's son works? Will the cops come clean or hide behind their smokescreen of contradictions? Who is the Oppressor, who the Oppressed?



THE PLAYWRIGHT
(Writers' Bloc Alumni)
ASAD HUSSEIN

Asad has translated the work of Moliere, Beckett, Sartre, Victor Hugo and Boris Vian into Hindustani. His original play *Song of the Swan* premiered in 2015 and his latest play, *Naqqaash* was a part of Writers Bloc. Asad is also a screenwriter with experience on feature films and TV. His writing credits include *Children of War*, *Laadli Laila* and *Mukti Bhavan*. He was awarded the prestigious MacDowell Fellowship for his writing.

STILL AND STILL MOVING

Language: English and Hindi

Duration: 90 min; no interval

Age Restriction: 16+

Written and directed by: Neel Chaudhuri

A Tadpole Repertory production (Delhi)

The Cast: Rajit Kapur, Anirudh Nair, Abhishek Lal, Neel Sengupta and Neel Chaudhuri

"I find myself talking about trains ...the order of things as observed from a train window. Clarity improving only with distance, the violent speed of the tracks colliding and parting ... Sleeping and waking, finding everything around you exactly the same and everything outside changed."

Still and Still Moving is a love story set in Delhi and Gurgaon.

THE PLAYWRIGHT (Writers' Bloc Alumni)

NEEL CHAUDHURI



Neel Chaudhuri is a playwright and director based in New Delhi. He is a Founder and Artistic Director of The Tadpole Repertory, a collective of writers, actors, directors and designers. Neel studied history and film and worked in Berlin before returning to India to work in the theatre. He was the Artistic Director of The First City Theatre Foundation from 2006 to 2009 where he wrote and directed his first five plays. His work includes *Taramandal*, winner of the MetroPlus Playwright Award (2010), *Still and Still Moving* (2011), developed in collaboration with the Royal Court Theatre and most recently, *A Brief History of the Pantomimes*. Neel is a member of the Lincoln Center Theater's Directors Lab in New York, and PLUTO, a coalition of international theatre directors. He is actively involved as a mentor to college theatre groups in Delhi and for the past five years has helped to run and programme Downstairs, a small performance studio in South Delhi.





MAHUA

Language: Hindi

Duration: 120 min; with Interval

Age restriction: 18+

Written by: Akash Mohimen

Directed by: Rajit Kapur

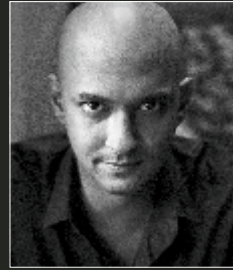
A Rage Production (Mumbai)

The Cast: Sadiya Siddique,
Dhanendra Kawde, Pawan Uttam, Ajit
Singh / Vikash Tomar and Mona
Ambegaonkar

The tribal village of Bihabund is being displaced by machines, by mines, by industrialization. Birsa struggles to fight for his land. But his hunting expedition goes awfully wrong, bringing two neighbouring villages to the brink of a major conflict. He now has to face a rather unique punishment. His only support is – an ailing grandmother, who was once the village head; a new bride, who is still the curse of the village and – MAHUA.

THE PLAYWRIGHT (Writers' Bloc Alumni)

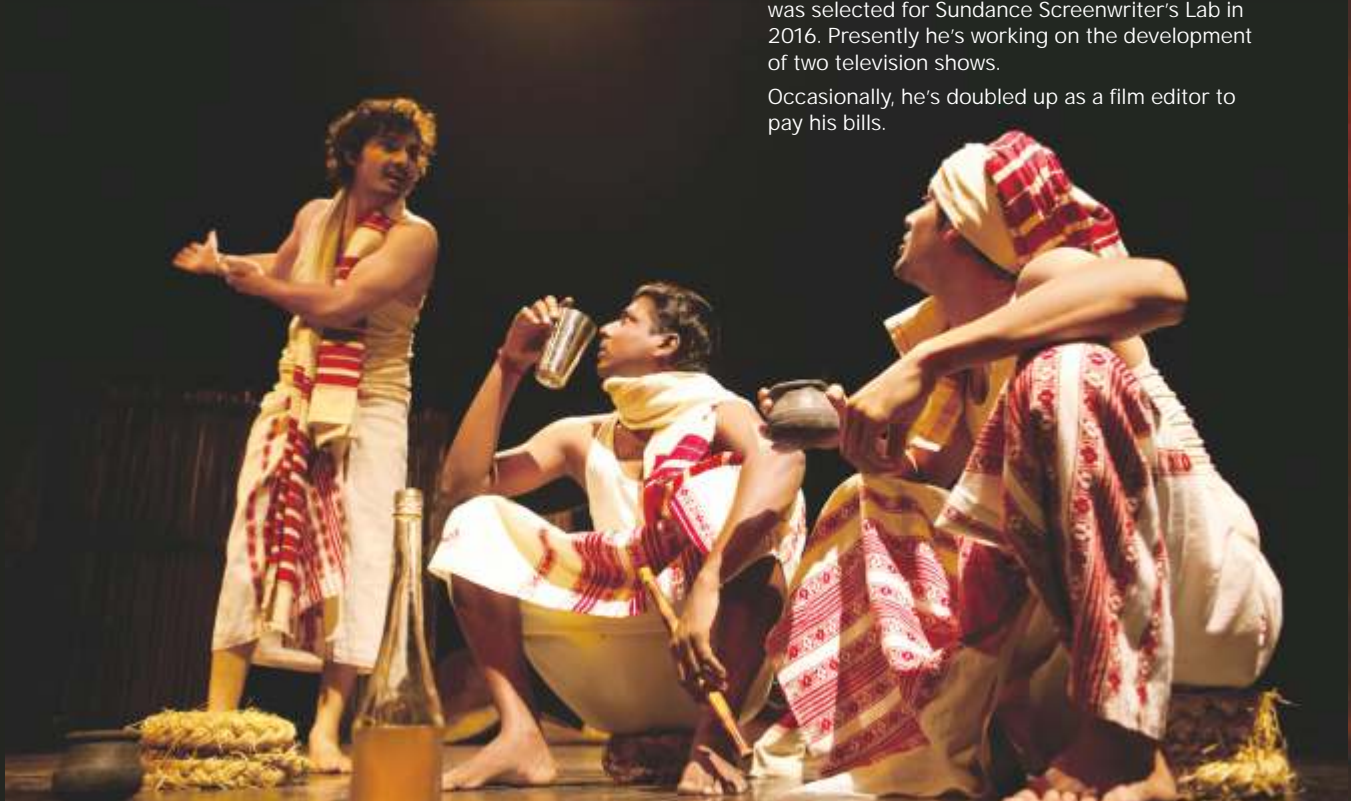
AKASH MOHIMEN



Akash is a prematurely bald and lanky writer who has been playing with words since an early age, but only in the last 6 years has he been sharing his imaginary friends with the world. His first play was a children's play *The Mighty Mirembayanna* and the *Prisoners of Peace*, a sci-fi fantasy tale. He took a major diversion from children's work and wrote the love story, *Mahua*, which opened the Writers Bloc 3 Festival in January, 2012. He went back to writing for children by adapting Badal Sircar's *Beyond The Land of Hattamala* which opened in June, 2012. He also dabbled with a stage musical, *Taj Express*, which premiered at the Esplanade Theatre in Singapore on June 2012. His fifth play was the dystopian satire, *Under the Chestnut Tree* (co-written with Siddharth Kumar), which was shortlisted for the Hindu Metroplus Playwright Award, 2013 and opened the Jagriti Theatre's New Writing Festival in February 2014.

More recently he co-wrote a feature film, which was selected for Sundance Screenwriter's Lab in 2016. Presently he's working on the development of two television shows.

Occasionally, he's doubled up as a film editor to pay his bills.





OK, TATA, BYE BYE

Language: English and Hindi

Duration: 120 min; with interval

Age restriction: 18 +

Written by: Purva Naresh

Directed by: Rabijita Gogoi

An Aarambh Production (Mumbai)

The Cast: Prerna Chawla, Geetika Tyagi, Sarika Singh, Aman Uppal, Monica Gupta, Shabnam Vadhera, Gagandeep Singh Riar, Arpita Banerjee, Krutti Saxena, Sulagna Guhathakurta and Gopal Datt

Pooja and Mitch come to India to make a documentary on caste-based prostitution, but it's not as easy as they hoped. Seema, the sex worker, is uneducated, but intelligent enough to make them run around in circles. Rupa's shy, but keen to explore the world outside. There is a trucker who thinks he is smart but always gets duped by the girls. A village full of sex workers where nothing and nobody comes for free...a price has to be paid eventually.

THE PLAYWRIGHT (Writers' Bloc Alumni)

PURVA NARESH



Purva is a playwright and theatre producer. Her Writers' Bloc play *OK Tata Tata Bye Bye*, which premiered in 2011, received a rehearsed reading at The Royal Court, London (2012), won the Laadli Media Award supported by UNFP for Best Play on Gender Sensitisation and was performed at The Curve, Leicester UK (2014). In 2015 Purva was part of the International Chain Play writing experiment conducted by The Lark, New York. In 2016 she was invited back to The Curve Theatre to develop a play to be produced by The Curve and Arts Council, UK, directed by Suba Das, which will premiere in Leicester in October 2017. She recently wrote, directed and produced *Ladies Sangeet* for the AADYAM arts initiative by the Aditya Birla Group, which opened to packed houses.

Her next play, *Jatinga*, for Bake House, Australia, is currently in development in Melbourne. She is also translating Nassim Soleimanpour's *White Rabbit Red Rabbit* from English to Hindi for India's leading Theatre Production House, QTP.

A recipient of the Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puruskar from the illustrious Sangeet Natak Akademi Purva's other award winning play is *Aaj Rang Hai* for which she received 15 nominations at the prestigious META Awards in 2011.





JANAK

Language: Marathi

Duration: 100 min; with interval

Age Restriction: 12 +

Written and directed by: Shardul Saraf

The Cast: Anil Rasal, Anita Date, Aarti More, Anand Patil, Ankush Kane

What happens when a family is let down by the system they wholeheartedly believed in? Should they accept it for what it is or leave it all behind and strive for something better? Being a true family, they obviously have different ideas on how to deal with it, resulting in some very humorous – and insightful – situations.

Janak is a satire and like all satires, it holds a mirror to our lives and will make us laugh at ourselves, and at the sometimes ridiculous positions we find ourselves in, at the hands of the system.



THE PLAYWRIGHT (Writers' Bloc Alumni)

SHARDUL SARAF



Shardul graduated in Theatre from the University of Pune bagging a Gold Medal. He has acted and/or directed a number of plays including *Safar* (by Vijay Tendulkar), *Punashch Honeymoon* (by Sandesh Kulkarni), *Saare Pravasi Ghadiche* (by Shafaat Khan), *Apvaad Aani Niyam* and *Sangeet Garvnirvaan*. He has also worked in films as an assistant director and as an actor. His film experience includes *Valu* (Dir - Umesh Kulkarni), *Gaabhricha Paaus* (Dir - Satish Manwar), *Carry On Pandu* (Dir - Chandrakant Kulkarni), *Aajcha Diwas Mazha* (Dir - Chandrakant Kulkarni) and *Salaam* - (Dir - Kiran Yadnyopavit). His writing credits include *Kamala* for Colours Marathi, the play *Raatrandin Aamha...!* and *Janak* which was part of the Writers' Bloc 4 festival in April 2016.





PUNE HIGHWAY

Language: English

Duration: 90 min; no interval

Age restriction: 14+

Written and directed by: Rahul daCunha

A Rage Production (Mumbai)

Pune performance

Written & directed by: Rahul daCunha

A Rage Production (Mumbai)

The Cast: Bugs Bhargava Crishna, Ashwin Mushran, Yamini Namjoshi, Shankar Sachdev & Rajit Kapur

Ahmedabad performance

Directed by Abhinay Banker

Produced by Aarambh Arts Academy (Ahmedabad)

The Cast: Kapil Sharma, Manan Gulabani, Bharat Molkar, Anjali Valani/Denisha Ghumra and Abhinay Banker





It is 5 a.m. Three friends are holed up in a seedy hotel room, off the Bombay Pune highway. They have just witnessed the stabbing of a fourth friend, in a robbery attempt by *goondas*. They need desperately to get back to Bombay, but are constantly thwarted by obstacles. A comic thriller that explores the survival of friendship in extreme circumstances. The play is filled with tension, nostalgia and humour.



THE PLAYWRIGHT (Writers' Bloc Alumni) RAHUL DACUNHA

Rahul began his theatre career in 1984, directing Tom Topor's courtroom drama *Nuts*.

In 1991, his production of Gurcharan Das's *Larins Sahib*, was the first Indian play to be staged at the Edinburgh Theatre Festival. In 1992, he along with friends Shernaz Patel and Rajit Kapur, founded the theatre company – RAGE. In 1996, he Indianised and adapted Herb Gardner's *I'm Not Rappaport* –

calling it *I'm Not Bajirao*. He cast Boman Irani and Sudhir Joshi, directing it to over 200 performances.

In 2002, he started writing his own plays – his *Class of '84* (2003), traces his years at St. Xaviers College; his *Pune Highway* (2004) challenged the bonds of friendship in a severe crisis; and his *Me, Kash & Cruise* (2008), reflected on 22 years of a changing Bombay.

Rage's plays have travelled to Scotland, England, Holland, Belgium, Germany, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Muscat, Dubai and the U.S

Yasmin Alibhai Brown writing in *The Independent*, London said of his play *Pune Highway*, 'It is as powerful and challenging as *'Look Back In Anger'* in 1956 & Pinter's early work'.

He's working on an original musical titled *#singindiasing*.



HARD PLACES

Language: English

Duration: 80 min; no interval

Age restriction: 16+

Written by: Farhad Sorabjee

Directed by: Nadir Khan

A Rage Production (Mumbai)

The Cast: Faezeh Jalali, Nadir Khan, Shernaz Patel

A hotel room in the middle of a divided desert. Outside, a bustling market. Inside, Aziz and Saira are plotting to rescue their mother from the far side of the border. Forced to use a megaphone to speak to her across no man's land, they invent codes to trick the soldiers who watch over them. But when time comes for confrontation, nothing is quite what it seems. Their conversation reopens old wounds and reawakens traumatic memories. Who is rescuing whom?

THE PLAYWRIGHT (Writers' Bloc Alumni)

FARHAD SORABJEE



Farhad Sorabjee is a Mumbai-based writer. His play *Hard Places* premiered in Mumbai as part of the first Writers Bloc festival in 2004. The play had a staged reading at the Eurotopiques Theatre Festival in Lille, France and went on to be commercially produced in the U.K. He has developed work with the International Department of the Royal Court Theatre, London and Rage Productions, Mumbai. His work was also produced as part of *One On One*, a series of monologues, and *36 Ghante*, a multi-lingual festival of plays by prominent writers, directors and actors in India.

His first novel *God on Every Wind* was published in the U.K. and shortlisted for the Commonwealth Writers Prize. The book is shortly being published in India.



JAAL

Language: Hindi

Duration: 110 min; with interval

Age restriction: 12+

Written by: Annie Zaidi

Directed by: Vinay Varma

Produced by: Sutradhar (Hyderabad)

Production Coordinator: Priyanka Vir

The Cast: Jay Jha, Prathyusha Madapathi, Nidhi Pandey, Prakash Phadnis, Poonam Chandna Golechha, Mayank Parakh, Sanjay Ratha and Vinay Varma among others

Even policemen and journalists don't want to go to Mohagaon. If they must visit, they definitely don't want to stay too long. The only person who is happy about being in the village is police constable Gopal. If anyone can solve the mystery of the missing engineer, it is him. But once he finds the truth, what's he going to do with it?

THE PLAYWRIGHT (Writers' Bloc Alumni)

ANNIE ZAIDI



Annie writes across several genres including reportage, fiction, drama and comics. She is the author of *Gulab*, a novella, *Love Stories # 1 to 14*, a collection of short stories, and a collection of essays, *Known Turf: Bantering with Bandits and Other True Tales*, which was short-listed for the prestigious Vodafone Crossword Book Awards (non-fiction, 2010). Most recently, Zaidi has edited *Unbound: 2000 Years of Indian Women's Writing*, an anthology of select extracts from some of the most significant texts written by Indian women, cutting across various languages and literary forms.

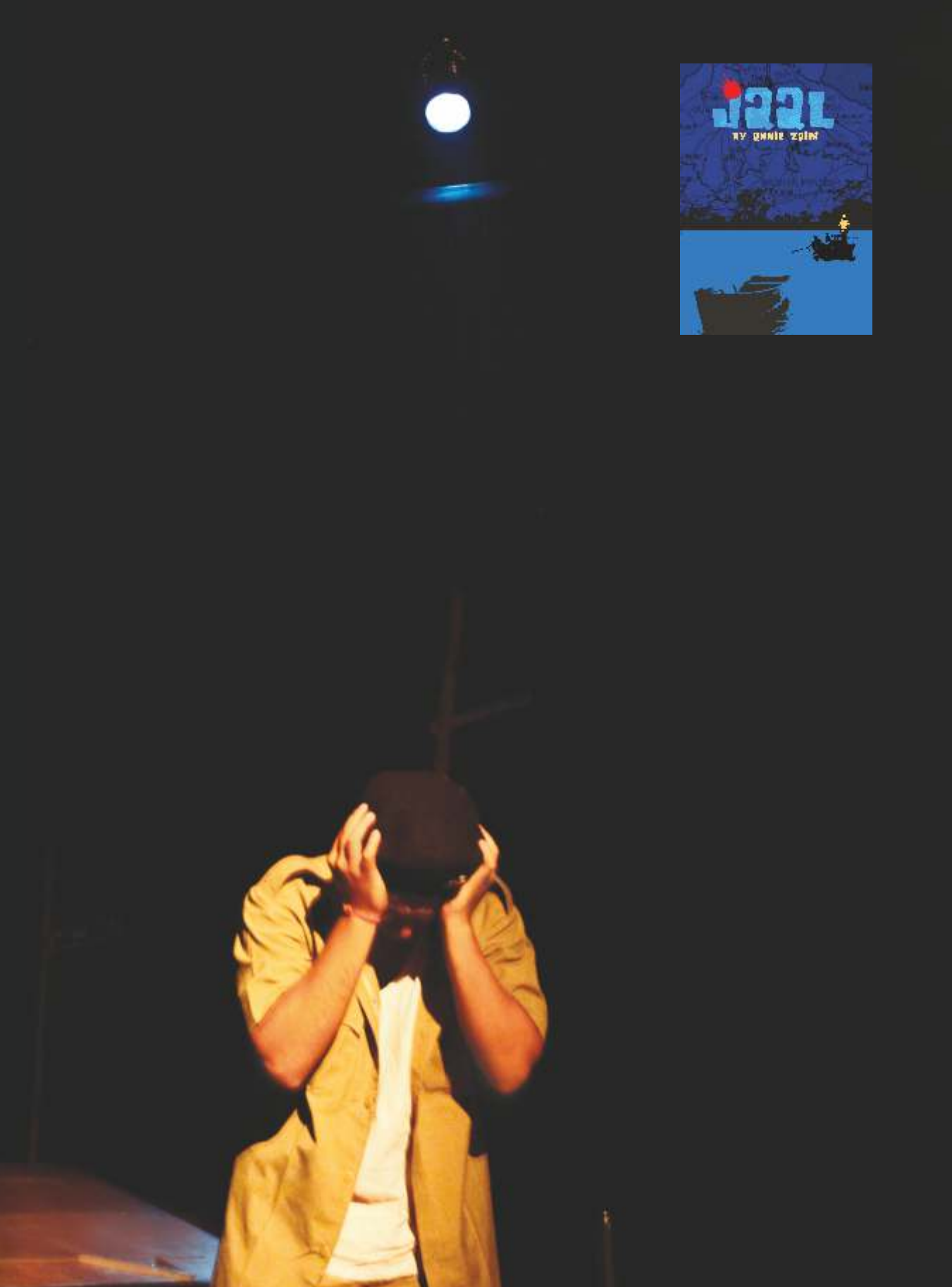
She is also the co-author of *The Good Indian Girl*, a series of inter-linked narratives, part fiction and part non-fiction, that trace young women's lives and liberties. Her essays and short stories have appeared in a number of anthologies including *Eat the Sky: Drink the Ocean*, *Walking Towards Ourselves*, *Mumbai Noir*, *Dharavi*, *Journeys Through Rajasthan*,

Women Changing India, *21 Under 40*, and the Griffith Review's *New Asia Now* and *Our Sporting Life* editions.

Her plays *Jaal* (Hindi) and *So Many Socks* (English) have been staged in Mumbai and other cities. The latter script was nominated for the META awards in 2013. Another script, *Name, Place, Animal, Thing*, was short-listed for The Hindu Metroplus Playwright Award in 2009. A radio play, *Jam*, was regional (South Asia) winner for the BBC's International Playwriting Competition 2011.

She worked as a reporter for several years, writing for a range of magazines and newspapers including *Caravan*, *Mint*, *Tehelka*, *Frontline*, *Mid-day*, *DNA*, *Elle* and *Conde Nast Traveller*. She has authored a booklet, *Who will See the Light?* an informal reporter's diary observing displacement, published by a non-profit advocacy group Vikas Samvad. The report was translated into Hindi as *Kiske Hisse Aayegi Raushni*.

Zaidi is also a filmmaker. A documentary, *In her Words: The Journey of Indian Women*, traces the lives and struggles of women as reflected in the literature they produce. She has also written six and directed four fictional short films.



DJINNS OF EIDGAH

Language: English

Duration: 90 min; no interval

Age restriction: 12+

Written by: Abhishek Majumdar

Kolkata performance

Directed by: Anubha Fatehpuria

Bengaluru Performance:

Directed by: Vivek Madan

Produced by: Indian Ensemble (Bengaluru)

A boy picks up a football. A doctor picks up a toy. A girl picks up a story. A boy picks up a shoe. A soldier picks up his gun. A boy picks up a stone. A vulture picks up a bone. A Djinn picks up from where he left off...*Djinns of Eidgah* is the story of Ashrafi and Bilal, two children stranded in the tragic impasse of Kashmir.

THE PLAYWRIGHT (Writers' Bloc Alumni)

ABHISHEK MAJUMDAR



Abhishek is a playwright, director, scenographer and currently the artistic director of Indian Ensemble, Bengaluru. His work has been performed in India, the UK, Europe and the USA.

He is a visiting associate professor of playwriting at New York University, Abu Dhabi and a Visiting Fellow of the Department of English Literature, Delhi University. He has been part of the International Playwright's residency at the Royal Court Theatre, London and the PEN World Voices in New York. In 2016, he was nominated as one of the 3 finalists of the Rolex Mentor and Protegee program, Geneva. He is a member of the Lincoln Center Director's Lab, New York and the Young Vic director's network, London. In 2016, he was invited as a guest director to the Cairo International Festival of Contemporary and Experimental Theatre.

His plays have been published by Oberon books (London), Penguin India and *Djinns of Eidgah* was recently part of the *Islam in Performance Anthology* (Bloomsbury) that looks at voices on contemporary Islam from South East Asia. In 2015, *Rizwaan* was translated to French and read as part of the 50 year celebrations of the Theatre Du Solleil in Paris. The Kashmir Trilogy (*Rizwaan*, *Djinns of Eidgah* and *Gasha*) has toured extensively since 2009 and is also taught in several universities in India and abroad.

Currently his Kannada play, *Dweepa*, is being performed in several parts of Karnataka as part of the 'Loka Sanchara' initiative of Ranga Shankara.

Oberon books is to release his first Hindi collection as an ebook in 2017.

Abhijit works in Hindi, Urdu, Bangla, Kannada and English.



MUNDHIRIKKOTTE

Language: Tamil

Duration: 90 min; with Interval

Age restriction: 16+

Written by: Sunandha Raghunathan

Directed by: Anitha Santhanam

Produced by: Guduguduppukari (Chennai)

The Cast: Kalieswari Srinivasan, Vasanth Selvaraj, M. Umar, Prasanna, Niran Viktor, Thirunavakkarasu

Let's bet that I'll make friends before last period tomorrow.

For 12 year old K.P and his mother Pavunu, Parangipettai in coastal Tamil Nadu, is an unfamiliar place. As they settle in, they soon become aware of their invisibility, their precarious position and the dangers of ambition for people like them. Mundhirikkotte asks whether one can make a right choice in a wrong world. As the lives of three different communities cross paths, each will have to make a choice that will change their lives forever.



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SUNANDHA RAGHUNATHAN



Sunandha is a playwright, screenwriter, actor and theatre director. She has worked with several theatre companies in Chennai – The Madras Players, Theatre Nisha and JustUs Repertory. A Kalaripayattu and Bharatanatyam student, Sunandha explores the physicality in her characters through the lens of these forms. Sunandha has written several short plays and worked as a Dramaturg with Theatre Nisha. Her short plays have been produced by Theatre Nisha, Strayfactory and have been showcased at the World Theatre Day celebration in Chennai.

She has also adapted and directed Guy De Maupassant and Hans Christian Andersen's *The Little Mermaid*. Her directing debut at the Short + Sweet Theatre Festival in Chennai won her many awards including best play. Her screenplay for *Irudhi Suttru*, a Tamil film on women boxers, released in January 2016 to critical and commercial acclaim.

In 2014 Sunandha was selected to be a part of Writers' Bloc, the Royal Court Theatre's New Writing workshop in India. During this workshop she developed *Mundhirikkotte*, her first Tamil play. Since its premiere at Writers Bloc 2016 in Mumbai, the play has been performed at Rangashankara and Chennai as part of The Hindu Theatre Fest.



CRAB

Language: English

Duration: 90 min; no interval

Age restriction: 12+

Written by: Ram Ganesh Kamatham

Directed by: Arghya Lahiri

A Q Theatre Production (Mumbai)

The Cast: Ankur Vikal, Freishia Bomanbehram, Devika Shahani and Ali Fazal

Rocky polishes a pair of boots.

Jojo smokes.

Priya is packing up.

Zamiel is climbing, wandering, searching...

Three lives twisted in different directions because of a fourth. Grappling with a world hanging in mid-air. Locked in a world where things move sideways. *Crab* opened at the Writers' Bloc festival in 2007. It subsequently was performed as a staged reading as part of National Theatre of Scotland's Diaspora programme in 2011.

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RAM GANESH KAMATHAM



Ram is a consultant with a professional background in media and communications, arts and culture, publications, research, and content development. He holds an M. A. in Anthropology of Media from the University of London and a M.Sc. in International Relations from RSIS, Singapore. From 2007-2014 he ran the Actors Ensemble India Forum (AEIF) during which he researched, created and produced critically acclaimed documentary films, stage-plays and public art. His awards include the Charles Wallace Award, the Sultan Padamsee National Playwriting Award, TFA Creative Writing Award, Asif Currimbhoy Playwriting Fellowship, the Robert Bosch Art Grant, the Sarai-CSDS Independent Research Fellowship and the Outstanding Original Script Award at Thespo. His publications

include plays, articles published in anthologies by Samuel French, Penguin, Sangam House, Hachette India and OUP. He was also one of twelve international writers in the Royal Court Young Writers Programme/BBC World Service online playwriting project Webs We Weave.

He currently works as a freelance consultant in Singapore.





TUREL

Language: English

Duration: 90 min; no interval

Age restriction: 14+

Written by: Swar Thounaojam

Directed by: Sunil Shanbag

Produced by: Arpana (Mumbai)

The river bank beside a small village in Manipur is the setting for an unusual friendship between Eigya, a lonely, widowed Brahmin and the younger Luwangcha. But the idyllic setting cannot mask the dark undercurrents within the community, and the troubled world outside.

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SWAR THOUNAOJAM



Swar Thounaojam is a playwright, theatre director and performer based in Imphal and Bangalore. She is a Charles Wallace India Trust awardee and a recipient of the Robert Bosch Art Grant. She has been part of The International Playwrights' Residency, Royal Court Theatre, London and the Lincoln Center Theater Directors Lab, New York. She co-wrote *C sharp C blunt* which won Best Original Script at META (Mahindra Excellence in Theatre Awards) 2014.

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