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GUESS WHO'S MAKING THE *DAL MAKHANI*? "A NICE INDIAN BOY" STARTS MARCH 8 AT OLNEY THEATRE CENTER

Madhuri Shekar's comedy centers the foibles of a South Asian American family and their son's unlikely suitor

OLNEY, MD — February 7, 2023 — *A Nice Indian Boy* by Madhuri Shekar and directed by Zi Alikhan gets its regional premiere in Olney Theatre Center's Mulitz-Gudelsky Theatre Lab in a production featuring the work of one of the country's [fastest rising and prolific playwrights](#). Previews begin Wednesday, March 8 with **press invited to attend either Saturday, March 11 at 7:45 pm (limited availability) or Sunday, March 12 at 1:45 pm**. Interested critics should email sstraub@olneytheatre.org to request press tickets along with their preferred performance date and time. **The production is scheduled to run through Sunday, April 9, 2023**. Tickets are \$54-\$79 and available online at olneytheatre.org or at 301-924-3400.

Playwright Madhuri Shekar has proven herself a master of multiple genres since her first play *In Love and Warcraft* premiered at Atlanta's Alliance Theatre in 2014. Her writing has tackled video games, horror, science, historical drama, and science fiction. With *A Nice Indian Boy*, Shekar is firmly in the mold of the **great American kitchen sink dramas**, leavened by a good dose of comedy. A meet-cute at the local temple brings Naveen (**Carol Mazhuvancheril**) face-to-face with the man of his dreams: a fellow Marathi-speaking Hindu who loves the same Bollywood films and can cook a mean dal makhani. If his parents (**Lynette Rathnam and Abhimanyu Katyal**) were ever going to accept him bringing home a boyfriend, Keshav (**Noah Israel**) would be that boy except – he's white, raised by Indian foster parents who adopted him. But they're madly in-love and so off they head to the Gavaskar house, where Naveen's white boyfriend isn't the only surprise ready to walk through the door. That additional surprise comes in the form of Naveen's sister, Arundhathi (**Jessica Jain**) fleeing her own, more traditional marriage. **Surasree Das, Shaan Sharma, and Taylor Witt** serve as production swings and understudies.

Says director Zi Alikhan, "*A Nice Indian Boy* is a play that immediately felt like 'home' to me—a South Asian-American story that is fundamentally an American story, one that centers on family, generational progress, and love in all its forms. I'm unbelievably excited to find out how, through this play, Olney can be a home to so many folks for whom this story is extremely

familiar and to situate the Gavaskar family in the canon of families that have graced the stages here for the last ninety years.”

On the creative team, **Ambika Raina** serves as both the Choreographer and Assistant Director; **Frank Oliva** is the scenic designer, and **Danielle Preston** the costume designer; **Kenny Neal** is the sound designer, and lights are designed by **Emma Deane**. Olney Theatre’s Director of Community Engagement, **Shruthi Mukund**, serves as a cultural consultant and **Hope Villanueva** is the production stage manager.

DETAILS

A Nice Indian Boy

by Madhuri Shekar

Directed by Zi Alikhan

Begins: Wednesday, March 8, 2023

Official Opening: Saturday, March 11, 2023

Runs until: Sunday, April 9, 2022

Regular performances are Wednesday-Saturday at 7:45 pm; matinees on Saturday and Sunday at 1:45 pm. No Saturday matinee on March 11. Wednesday matinee on March 15 at 1:45pm.

SAFETY POLICIES

Mask are no longer required in the Mulitz-Gudelsky Theatre Lab, but are strongly encouraged.

ACCESSIBILITY

Audio described performance on Wednesday, March 22 at 7:45 pm

Sign interpreted performance on Thursday, March 30 at 7:45 pm

Tickets begin at \$54. Discounts available for groups, seniors, active military and students visit olneytheatre.org/discounts for details.

Purchase via olneytheatre.org or 301-924-3400

Special Events

Behind the Scenes

Playwright Madhuri Shekar interviewed by playwright Karen Zacarias

Saturday, March 11, 2023 at 5:00 pm

Mulitz-Gudelsky Theatre Lab

\$10/Free for members

Acclaimed DC Playwright Karen Zacarias (*Native Gardens* and many more) interviews her friend and colleague Madhuri Shekar, author of *A Nice Indian Boy*, in this special edition of Behind the Scenes. These two playwrights, with cultural origins in India and Mexico, discuss writing stories of the diaspora and clashing cultures in America.

Beyond the Stage

Not Your Aunty's Single Mixer with Comedian Vijai Nathan

Thursday, March 23, 2023 at 6:00 pm - 7:15 pm

Actors Hall

Tickets: \$40 (includes ticket to *A Nice Indian Boy* at 7:45pm)

Purchase using code **AUNTY**

Host: Vijai Nathan

Vijai is one of the leading Indian American female comedians making people laugh across America and internationally too. Vijai grew up as a “foreigner” (or at least that's what everyone called her) in the suburbs of Washington D.C. where she was born. Her material comes from her experience as an Indian girl in America - raising two immigrant parents, dating boys with mothers who wished their sons could find a nice blonde girl named "Tiffany," and the universal quest for love, understanding and a good pair of undies.

South Asian Film Festival presented in collaboration with [DCSAFF](#)

Sunday March 26, 2023

4:00 pm - 6:30 pm

1938 Original Theatre

Tickets: \$10

Olney Theatre is partnering with the DC South Asian Film Festival to bring present short films created and produced by filmmakers from the Diaspora. These creatives lean into their South Asian cultural heritage to inform their film making skills

Olney Theatre in the Community

How to Dance at an Indian Wedding (Bollywood style) at Silver Spring Town Center

Friday, March 31, 2023

7- 8:30 pm

Presented in collaboration with [SAPAN Institute](#)

Join The SAPAN Institute for a dance class to learn easy and fun steps that you can use on the dance floor at the next Indian wedding that you attend. We will be going through dance steps to popular songs that you will hear at any Indian wedding. No dance experience needed, all levels and ages welcome!

The South Asian Performing Arts Network and Institute is a volunteer-run performing arts company based in Washington, DC. SAPAN is dedicated to promoting and advancing all South Asian performing arts through dance, music, and theatre. In Hindi, the term “sapan” means dream. It is also the acronym for the “South Asian Performing Arts Network” and Institute. The SAPAN Institute – “Dream It. Live It.” Connect with us across social media [@sapanarts!](#)

Class hosted by The South Asian Performing Arts Network and Institute is a non-profit performing arts company based in Washington, D.C.

SAPAN promotes and advances South Asian performing arts through dance, music, and theater.

ABOUT OLNEY THEATRE CENTER

Mission

Olney Theatre Center for the Arts produces and curates theatrical performance for the diverse audiences in our community, and educates, learns from, supports and inspires a more inclusive generation of theater-makers.

Vision

We strive to become an arts and culture powerhouse, redefining the American regional theater movement by cultivating and sharing the creativity of our community.

History

Founded in 1938 as a summer playhouse, Olney Theatre Center (OTC) now produces year-round world and American premieres of plays and musicals, and reimaginings of familiar titles; presents the work of leading companies; tours nationally and locally; teaches students of all ages; and mentors the next generation of theatremakers. For more than 8 decades, OTC has brought impactful theater performance and education to our community, helping to grow the vibrancy and vitality of our home in central Maryland.

Over the years, some of the biggest names in theater and film have appeared on our stages, including Tallulah Bankhead, Helen Hayes, Jessica Tandy, Hume Cronyn, Bob Fosse, Phillip Bosco, Eve Arden, Eva Gabor, Burl Ives, Jose Ferrer, Carol Channing, Olivia d'Havilland, Tony Randall, Paulette Goddard, Dorothy and Lillian Gish, Jane Seymour, Anne Revere, Frances Sternhagen, Arthur Treacher, James Broderick, Olympia Dukakis, Sir Ian McKellen, Marica Gay Harden, John Colicos, Uzo Aduba, Alan Cumming, Cheyenne Jackson, Robin de Jesus, Wilson Jermaine Heredia, among many, many others.

Olney Theatre is now the cultural anchor of a rapidly changing region and serves one of the most diverse, best educated, and wealthiest counties in the country. Situated on the unceded land of the Picataway-Conoy people, the Olney area was once a rural farming community with a unique Quaker heritage. Now the area is occupied by every kind of family that makes up 21st Century America, along with major corporations, shopping districts, civic associations, non profit organizations and a diverse collection of houses of worship. Montgomery County's 1 million residents play a dynamic role in the Baltimore-Washington corridor, and is a driving force behind the region's creative economy.

As of September 2021, Olney Theatre Center employed 40 full time staff, 20 part-time positions, 26 early career apprentices and players, and more than 400 professional artists. The Theatre intends to continue expanding to better meet the needs of our community.

For more information, please visit olneytheatre.org.

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