

LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE ANNOUNCES CAST FOR WORLD PREMIERE OF *BHANGIN' IT: A BANGIN' NEW MUSICAL*

La Jolla, CA – La Jolla Playhouse is pleased to announce the cast for its world-premiere production of *Bhangin' It: A Bangin' New Musical*, book by **Mike Lew** (Playhouse's *Tiger Style!*) and **Rehana Lew Mirza** (Playhouse's DNA Series' *Child of Colonialism*), music and lyrics by **Sam Willmott** (*Yo, Vikings!*), with additional music by Grammy Award nominee **Deep Singh**. The piece will be directed by **Stafford Arima** (Broadway's *Allegiance*), with choreography by **Rujuta Vaidya** (*Slumdog Millionaire* Academy Awards performance) and musical staging by **Lisa Shriver** (Playhouse/Broadway's *Jesus Christ Superstar*), along with Bhangra specialist **Anushka Pushpala** (Artistic Director of Bhangra Empire). The show is scheduled to run in the Playhouse's Mandell Weiss Theatre **March 8 – April 17, 2022** (press opening March 20).

The cast features **Ari Afsar** as "Mary," **Aryaan Arora** as "Mohan," **Bilal Avaz** as "Amit," **Jesse Bhamrah** as "Gobind," **Brandon Contreras** as "Billy," **Laura Dadap** as "Constance," **Henry Walter Greenberg** as "Noah," **Jason Heil** as "Wallace," **Terrance Johnson** as "Jake," **Jaya Joshi** as "Sunita," **Madison McBride** as "Lily," **Anu Mysore** as "Shetal," **Amey Natu** as "Big Bob," **Alka Nayyar** as "Rekha," **Zain Patel** as "Varun," **Devi Peot** as "New Mary," **Vinithra Raj** as "Preeti," **Ramita Ravi** as "Shilpa," along with **Nikki Mirza**, **Gerry Tonella** and **Levin Valayil** as swings.

"We are overjoyed to welcome this extraordinary cast to the Playhouse. They bring an incredible vitality to a show that is very much of our current cultural moment. *Bhangin' It: A Bangin' New Musical* is an utterly charming and vibrant new work about finding your identity and building community, and we can't wait to share it with audiences this spring," said **Christopher Ashley**, the Rich Family Artistic Director of La Jolla Playhouse.

While East Lansing University senior Mary Darshini Clarke has spent her entire life trying to figure out where she fits in, she has always found community dancing on the school's prestigious bhangra team. But when she becomes the self-appointed captain of a new team of enthusiastic novices more interested in making friends than the right moves, Mary quickly learns that carving out her own path complicates her journey. As the pressure of the big national competition approaches, can both teams learn that what makes them unique could actually be the key to their success? Bursting with vibrant dance and electrifying music, *Bhangin' It: A Bangin' New Musical* is an exhilarating and joyous new musical comedy for America today.

La Jolla Playhouse is a place where artists and audiences come together to create what's new and next in the American theatre, from Tony Award-winning productions, to imaginative programs for young audiences, to interactive experiences outside our theatre walls. Founded in 1947 by Gregory Peck, Dorothy McGuire and Mel Ferrer, the Playhouse is currently led by Tony Award winner Christopher Ashley, the Rich Family Artistic Director of La Jolla Playhouse, and Managing Director Debby Buchholz. The Playhouse is internationally renowned for the development of new plays and musicals, including mounting 105 world premieres, commissioning 60 new works, and sending 33 productions to Broadway – including the hit musical *Come From Away* – garnering a total of 38 Tony Awards, as well as the 1993 Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre.

-- more --

FACT SHEET**WHAT: *Bhangin' It: A Bangin' New Musical***

Book: Mike Lew and Rehana Lew Mirza
Music and Lyrics: Sam Willmott
Additional Music: Deep Singh
Director: Stafford Arima
Choreographer: Rujuta Vaidja
Musical Staging: Lisa Shriver
Bhangra Specialist: Anushka Pushpala

WHEN: March 8 – April 17, 2022 (Press Opening: March 20)
Tue/Wed at 7:30pm; Thu/Fri/Sat at 8pm; Sun at 7pm; Sat/Sun at 2pm

WHERE: Mandell Weiss Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse
2910 La Jolla Village Drive, La Jolla, CA 92037

WHO: Scenic Design: Robert Brill
Lighting Design: Amith Chandrashaker
Projection Designer: David Bengali
Stage Manager: Julianne Menassian
Costume Design: Linda Cho
Sound Designer: Jonathan Deans
Dramaturg: Natasha Sinha
Casting: Calleri/Jensen/Davis; Jacole Kitchen

Cast:	Ari Afsar	Mary
	Aryaan Arora	Mohan
	Bilal Avaz	Amit
	Jesse Bhamrah	Gobind
	Brandon Contreras	Billy
	Laura Dadap	Constance
	Henry Walter Greenberg	Noah
	Jason Heil	Wallace
	Terrance Johnson	Jake
	Jaya Joshi	Sunita
	Madison McBride	Lily
	Anu Mysore	Shetal
	Amey Natu	Big Bob
	Alka Nayyar	Rekha
	Zain Patel	Varun
	Devi Peot	New Mary
	Vinithra Raj	Preeti
	Ramita Ravi	Shilpa

Swings: Nikki Mirza, Gerry Tonella, Levin Valayil

BACKGROUND: Winner of the Richard Rodgers Award, *Bhangin' It: A Bangin' New Musical* is an exhilarating piece that celebrates the traditions we inherit from yesterday and those we create for tomorrow. When a young woman finds her identity cannot be defined by checking a box, she sets off on a quest to dance to her own beat. Drawing from competitive Bhangra and mixing it with other Indian and Western dance forms alike, *Bhangin' It: A Bangin' New Musical* is a brash, intoxicating and joyous musical for America today.

SPONSORS: Mintz, Dowling & Yahnke, Show Imaging

TICKETS: (858) 550-1010; LaJollaPlayhouse.org

Due to changing COVID-19 conditions, COVID safety requirements will be updated closer to the performance dates.

(858) 550-1070 | 2910 La Jolla Village Drive, La Jolla, CA 92037 | LaJollaPlayhouse.org