

# TOUCH OF PINK

A Film by Ian Iqbal Rashid

With  
Jimi Mistry  
Kyle MacLachlan  
Suleka Mathew  
Kristen Holden-Ried

(Canada/UK, 2004, 91 minutes)

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# TOUCH OF PINK

## Credits

### CAST

Alim.....Jimi Mistry  
Spirit of Cary Grant.....Kyle MacLachlan  
Nuru.....Suleka Mathew  
Giles.....Kristen Holden-Ried  
Hassan.....Brian George  
Dolly.....Veena Sood  
Khaled.....Raoul Bhaneja  
Delia.....Liisa Repo-Martell

### CREW

Written & Directed by.....Ian Iqbal Rashid  
Produced by .....Julia Sereny  
Jennifer Kawaja  
Martin Pope  
Executive Producer.....Charlotte Mickie  
Associate Producers.....Brent Barclay  
Andrea Glinski  
Director Of Photography.....David A. Makin  
Production Designer.....Gavin Mitchell  
Composer.....Andrew Lockington  
Editor.....Susan Maggi  
Costume Designer.....Joyce Schure

## **LOG LINE**

Two's company, three's a crowd, four's mayhem. Alim thinks he's sharing his fabulous life in London with the spirit of Cary Grant and boyfriend Giles. But when his mother comes over from Toronto determined to bring her son back into the conservative folds of family and community, the whole charade begins to unravel.

## **SHORT SYNOPSIS**

Alim (Jimi Mistry) is so caught up in the romance, style and dreams of old Hollywood that he thinks he's living with the spirit of Cary Grant (Kyle MacLachlan). A young, Ismaili (South Asian) Canadian based in London, Alim lives with a handsome, charming intelligent English boyfriend, Giles (Kristen Holden-Ried), who is completely unaware of his lover's fantasy life. Alim and Giles are happy together, despite Cary's presence, until Alim's mother Nuru (Suleka Mathew) shows up for a visit. Totally unaware that her son is gay, let alone that he is living with Giles, Nuru has come to London to find Alim a proper Ismaili-Muslim girlfriend and to convince him to come home to Canada. With his mother in the picture, Alim's different worlds quickly begin to collide, and he has to choose between his fantasy life with Cary and the earthlier pleasures of real life. "Touch of Pink" combines a contemporary clash of cultures, values and sexuality, with the pleasures of an old fashioned romantic comedy.

## **LONG SYNOPSIS**

Alim (Jimi Mistry) is a young, Ismaili (South-Asian) Canadian, who thinks he's living with the spirit of Cary Grant (Kyle MacLachlan). He's living in London, working as a stills photographer in the movie business, and trying, with Cary's help, to live up to the glamorous standards of old Hollywood.

Alim's partner Giles (Kristen Holden-Ried) is a handsome economist who's charming, intelligent, comfortable with who he is – and completely unaware of his lover's fantasy life. Alim and Giles are happy together, despite Alim's secret, until Alim's mother Nuru (Suleka Mathew) shows up for a visit, and the whole charade begins to unravel.

Nuru, a widow, lives in Toronto, in complete ignorance of her son's life in London – and in an intense, but loving, sibling rivalry with sister Dolly (Veena Sood), which she is decidedly losing. When Dolly's son Khaled, a dentist, announces his big wedding plans to a Muslim girl, Nuru despairs. She feels her life does not measure up to her sister's. She becomes determined to get Alim back to Toronto, to at least attend the wedding festivities and return into the fold of the family, and hopefully, to find his own bride.

Nuru's arrival in London creates a problem for Alim – but it's the sort of problem a man like Cary can handle – and he confidently suggests a solution: Giles will henceforth be known as the roommate; and Alim, the “married” gay man, will suddenly become the single straight man. The plan seems perfect to Alim, but it comes as a shock to poor Giles, who nevertheless agrees to play along. When Nuru won't be put off by Alim's bachelor ruse, and insists that he must find a ‘nice Ismaili girl’ to marry, Cary – always thinking on his feet – suggests a fiancé, to be played by Giles' sister Delia. But, following an argument, Alim angrily admits to his mother that he's not engaged and storms off to work. Cary follows him, impressed by the ‘documentary style’ of telling the truth.

Meanwhile, in an effort to smooth things over, Giles takes Nuru out for a day of sightseeing in London and, slowly and unexpectedly, Nuru grows fond of Giles. The trip awakens memories of the time she spent in London years before, when she was trying to get over the loss of her husband – and, a Cary Grant fan herself, she was searching for her own Hollywood ending. Giles seems like the sort of man she wishes she had met all those years before.

But Giles can't be Nuru's Hollywood ending, as a jealous Alim makes clear when he finally comes out to his mother. Nuru is horrified and feels betrayed, and immediately makes plans to go home to Toronto. Her dreams, and her chances of trumping Dolly, are shattered. The wonderful wedding and little grandchildren she has hoped for will never happen, and she fears that she won't have a happy ending of any kind.

Giles is appalled by Alim's treatment of Nuru, and leaves. Alim is distraught, and frustrated by Cary's eternally upbeat, and normally welcome, advice.

Realizing that the best solution to his problems is the truth, and that illusion isn't always the answer, Alim sets out for Toronto. He hopes to finally come clean, but instead, ends up telling more lies – this time to protect Nuru. Alim goes to all the family pre-wedding celebrations, and much to Nuru's pleasure, starts to enjoy himself. Cary, fearing Alim is slipping away, decides to start “Indianising” himself to fit in.

Then, Khaled comes over to see Alim after his stag night. He wants to ‘start with a kiss’ – and Nuru overhears, appalled. It slowly becomes clear that Khaled has been keeping some secrets of his own, and has no intention of being truthful with his soon-to-be wife. As Nuru confronts Khaled, she realizes that by contrast Alim is truly honest about who he is and truly in love with Giles.

Cary is happy with this scene, as he's pretty certain it's time to go back for a ‘happy ending’ in London – as he can't imagine that anyone would now go to Khaled's wedding. But he hasn't counted on how important family is to Nuru, and to Cary's surprise, Alim agrees to escort his mother to the event.

It is at the wedding that all of Alim's worlds finally collide – Nuru is desperate to be honest with Dolly; Cary is trying to fit in; Khaled is trying to avoid Nuru and Alim; Dolly is determined to maintain dream-wedding perfection; and suddenly Giles arrives – and Alim realizes he has to choose between his fantasy life with Cary and the earthlier pleasures of real life.

## About the Production

“Real life can’t and shouldn’t be like a Hollywood movie, and that’s the thrust of this film,” says writer/director Ian Iqbal Rashid. “We’re bewitched by those images, the idea of happily ever after, that there’s one person out there who is meant for us. But most of us are also savvy enough to know that way of thinking really screws us up. We’re seduced by Hollywood values, yet we know they’re not good for us.”

“As a kid, I loved the old Hollywood romantic comedies, particularly the so-called sex comedies from the 50’s and 60’s. But as I grew older, my feelings towards those films became more ambivalent. I couldn’t decide whether to feel affectionate toward them or resent them because I was so absent from their imagery – and so clearly absent from Hollywood’s imagined audience for these films. In the end, I think that was the main inspiration for ***Touch of Pink***. What I wanted to do was to create a movie that was in the spirit of those 50’s and 60’s romantic comedies but that would have someone like me in the centre.”

Sienna Film producers Jennifer Kawaja and Julia Sereny first met Rashid on a trip to London, while financing their feature, “New Waterford Girl”. ***Touch of Pink*** was still very much in its nascent stages, but the nature of the project made it a logical Canada-UK co-production and Martin Pope of Martin Pope Productions was the ideal UK producer. “Martin liked Ian’s writing and his understanding of how the mythology of Cary Grant and Hollywood fit into the main character’s world. We were all committed to keeping the film funny and accessible while exploring the ideas and themes Ian was working through,” explains Kawaja.

***Touch of Pink*** appealed to Kawaja and Sereny because it expanded on the themes which Sienna Films’ previous projects, “New Waterford Girl” and “Marion Bridge”) had begun to explore. “All of these films deal with characters that are ultimately required to be true to themselves even though they are slightly out of step with the rest of the world around them,” elaborates Sereny.

***Touch of Pink*** pays homage to an old-fashioned screwball genre while planting its feet very much in the 21st century. The story rests on a ‘coming out’ conflict, but the larger theme pushes much further. Not only has Alim hidden his sexual identity from his mother, he’s virtually divorced himself from his family’s South Asian culture as well. The spirit of Cary Grant aides him in his efforts, as Cary’s frames of reference simply don’t include that culture.

Ian Iqbal Rashid’s romantic comedy arrives at a fortuitous time for South Asian auteurs, on the heels of Gurinder Chadha’s Golden Globe-nominated *Bend It Like Beckham*, Mira Nair’s *Monsoon Wedding*, *The Guru*, Deepa Mehta’s *Bollywood/Hollywood*, *East is East*, Asif Kapadia’s *The Warrior*, and work by

M. Night Shyamalan (*The Sixth Sense*) and Shekhar Kapur (*Elizabeth, Four Feathers*). “Cinema is such a huge part of the lives of people in and from the sub-continent,” says Rashid. “Those of us who have migrated to the west have carried that love of cinema with us.” However, “there’s a tight-rope walk between assimilating into Western culture, and yet keeping a sense of who you are,” Rashid explains. “The process of assimilation can erase aspects of identity, both cultural and personal, which are special and unique. Yet, it’s very seductive to become part of a dominant culture, to belong to the home team – and ***Touch of Pink*** is about that as well.”

Rashid’s inspiration is personal as well as socio-political. “My family, which is of Indian origin, migrated to East Africa. My mom, a real old movie junkie, loved Cary Grant films in particular. She’d tell me about how the movies they used to get in East Africa were 20, sometimes 30 years behind the times. So in the 60’s she was looking at films from the 40’s. ***Touch of Pink***’s first incarnation was as a short story, based on Rashid’s relationship with his mom – how they both loved old movies even though they failed as models when applied to their real lives. It was about a woman who comes to London looking for a gleaming, glamorous Western city that resembles the ones she glimpsed in old Hollywood films; instead, she is confronted with the London of the swinging 60’s.”

The plot changed as it became a screenplay, but the relationship between mother and son remains central with an added twist. “Making this film is an affectionate form of revenge against all I had to put up with in my own family,” Rashid admits. “Choosing to be a filmmaker went so against the immigrant dream my family had adopted of me becoming a doctor or dentist or some sort of professional. When I told them, I felt like I had just announced that I was going to become a baby-killer, or something. These immigrant values are reflected in the South Asian community in this film. There’s this pressure on Alim to do the right thing by becoming successful in conventional terms. Alim can only escape this pressure by putting an ocean between him and his family. Yet as the film progresses, he realizes that by running away, he has also rejected a big part of who he is. The first half of the film is quite screwball, the mother doesn’t know the son is gay and this whole ‘coming out’ thing happens. But in the second half, the film deepens, and it becomes about Alim accepting who he is and coming back to Toronto to reclaim himself – to become whole.”

***Touch of Pink*** is the newest addition to the emerging genre of comedies about second-generation young people freeing themselves from the expectations of their parents’ traditions. Set between the UK and Canada, 30 years after the start of the western migration of South Asian refugees from East Africa, ***Touch of Pink*** tells the story of a mother and son from Kenya and how the layers of cultural influences, both East and West, reverberate through their lives. But by spinning the spirit of Cary Grant into the mix, this film takes the culture conflict genre even further.

## Alim

Jimi Mistry carries the lion's share of the film in the role of Alim. "The struggle is not just about his sexuality," Mistry explains. "It's about Alim feeling comfortable, first with himself, then in the company of his nearest and dearest, his family. We all have that when growing up - we go off to find ourselves, but at some point, we come back."

For Rashid, Alim is something of an autobiographical character – and the similarities are deliberately numerous, except "the spirit of Cary Grant ain't sitting next to me ... I don't think," he says. "Alim's a difficult character, he's really quite neurotic – as am I. But Jimi keeps you rooting for Alim, which is vital. He brings his own boyish good looks, charm, and charisma to the role. He's even got a 30 inch waist! He's the perfect alter-ego."

## The Spirit of Cary Grant

It has been said that Cary Grant gave such silky, seamless and transcending performances that, as much as he was an actor, Cary Grant became a state of mind. When invoking an icon, however, one must tread carefully. Throughout development of the project, the question of how to cast the spirit of Cary Grant was always tantalizing. To make the role work, several factors had to be delivered – the look, the voice, the mannerisms. "We needed an actor who wasn't just going to do an impersonation," Rashid explains, "but one who could give a rounded performance while capturing the essence of what made Cary Grant special." The thing to keep in mind is that the Cary Grant in the film is actually a creation of Alim's, an emanation of his psyche, so we could take a few liberties, but the actor really had to nail the characterization without becoming a caricature. Anything too cheesy would negatively affect our view of Alim."

While MacLachlan's reputation as a fine actor preceded him, what really impressed Rashid was that "He looks like an old movie matinee idol, especially that amazing profile of his." Rashid had been watching *Sex and the City* and then attended a West End performance of *On An Average Day* a two-hander with MacLachlan and Woody Harrelson. "I can't remember anything about the play. All I could think was I'd found my Cary Grant. He possessed the elegance, wit, and slightly period handsomeness that the character required. We sent him the script the next day and he immediately said he liked it."

"I'm not playing Cary Grant, exactly," explains MacLachlan. "Let's just say I'm doing a facsimile or a generation or two removed from Cary Grant. More important to me is that I represent to Alim certain qualities he feels are important. Qualities like the ability to handle himself in any situation: whether it's an elegant conversation over a dinner table or a fight sequence. Alim can rely upon me to get through life. The key idea behind Cary is that he seemed to always have it



together and when he didn't have it together, he had the ability to make everything seem like it was okay. He'd just take a moment, have a laugh and come up with something, and he'd be able to turn it on a dime. And Alim realizes over time that he doesn't need to rely on me for those qualities; he has them in himself, which is something that I've been telling him through the course of the film."

## **Nuru**

Casting the role of Nuru came with its own set of challenges. A part this complex and resonant is rare for an older actress – let alone an older South Asian actress. Rashid explains: "Powerhouse comic mama though Nuru is, she's also beautiful, even sexy. There's something hard in Nuru that's refused to let her just become someone's mother – she has a life, a history, all of her own."

"The first time I auditioned for the film, I was only given two scenes," Mathew remembers. "Those two scenes were so heartbreaking and funny that they stayed with me for a very long time. After I read the entire script for the first time, I felt like my heart would burst. A good physiological response is a great sign. You feel like you're connected to magic."

"Su's facility with comedy, combined with her beauty – a beauty warmed by an honest, earthy quality, immediately caught my eye. She so had the job." Rashid remembers.

## **Giles**

When Kristen Holden-Ried who plays Giles, first walked into his audition, Rashid's first thought was "Nope.... I had in my head the idea that Giles should physically resemble Kyle's spirit of Cary Grant: dark hair and dark eyes. But I quickly threw all that out the window. Kris as Giles had exactly what I was looking for: the same warmth, elegant charm and grace under pressure that Alim's guardian angel possessed, but with a sexy 21<sup>st</sup> century edge."

As for playing the role, Holden-Ried says, "Well I can sum it up in our very first rehearsal. I had never met Jimi before and we were going to be playing very intimate moments opposite each other. We walked into the room and we sat down to rehearse and Ian said "OK, this is going to be an improv and you're just at a table and it's your first date." And I reached across the table to take Jimi's hands and they were ice cold and sweaty, and so were mine, and we looked at each other and we're like "Thank God! We're on the same page!" And it's been like that ever since. We went out and had a few and got to know each other and ever since we're always in sync, so it's been a pleasure."

## **Dolly and Hassan**

Veena Sood and Brian George round out the key cast as Dolly and Hassan, the deliriously happy parents of Alim's soon-to-be-married cousin, Khaled. "Brian and Veena are known as great comic actors. And yet they're also able to bring incredible vulnerability to their characterizations. They have this ability to be both hilarious and touching, sometimes in the same scene, sometimes in the same moment," says Rashid. Brian George is best known as Babu Bhatt on "Seinfeld", while Veena Sood is one of the co-founder of Canada's Loose Moose Theatre Company, world renowned for their invention of the comedy improv games of Theatresports.

**Touch of Pink** is a whimsical observation of family and cross-cultural conflict, which reveals Rashid's keen empathy for the romantic human condition. "The film is very much based on my family and my own life," Rashid says in conclusion. "When you think about it, having an autobiographical central character who talks to the spirit of Cary Grant to get through life probably marks me as border-line psychotic." But there were other reasons for the Hollywood references. "I also wanted to pay tribute to the scores of people from the non-Western world who have been devoted, adoring audiences for Hollywood films, but seem rarely to factor in the audience of Hollywood's imagination. In the end, and in the beginning, I wanted to make an old-fashioned Hollywood-style romantic comedy – I so love those films – but crucially with someone like me in the centre. And naturally, with someone like Cary Grant as my co-star!"

## The Look, the Nostalgia, The Romance

First thoughts about the look of ***Touch of Pink*** brought to mind the glossy feel of films from the 50's and 60's, but Ian Iqbal Rashid quickly realised that such a look might have a tendency to suffocate everything else. "I wanted to make a contemporary film with contemporary concerns. So a weaving in of old Hollywood fantasy and the real modern world, which includes a South Asian family and community, had to take place," Rashid explains.

Rashid's approach was to create a progressive emergence from a Hollywood fantasy into contemporary reality. "In the beginning, while Alim believes he's living an ideal movie life, the film has more of that old movie feel," Rashid says. "I wanted London to have an idealised look and feel. But as Alim becomes aware of his illusions, real life – and his family's Indian influences and aesthetic – steps in to intrude more and more. Our DoP, David Makin, came up with the idea of using different stocks for the scenes in Toronto and the scenes in London – contributing to giving each a different feel and tone".

The magic of the movies was not restricted to Alim's fantasy of Cary Grant. So much of ***Touch of Pink*** is not as it appears. With only three shoot days on location in London, Toronto did its share of standing in for the British city. Kyle MacLachlan was pretending to be the spirit of Cary Grant. Jimi Mistry, who is British, played a Canadian. Kris Holden-Ried and Liisa Repo-Martell are Canadians playing British. Brian George, Suleka Mathew, and Veena Sood are all Canadian but use adopted Indian accents.

Kyle MacLachlan's portrayal of Cary Grant's spirit was supported by costume design inspired by films including: *To Catch a Thief*, *North By Northwest* and *Gunga Din*. His outfits were selected to match plot elements in ***Touch of Pink*** while paying homage to Grant's films. Alim's wardrobe was intended to match Cary's in each scene – except with a contemporary interpretation using clothes by pre-eminent British designer Paul Smith whose menswear has an unmistakable Englishness augmented by the unexpected. As the film progresses and Alim starts to separate from the spirit of Cary Grant, he starts to dress differently.

The film was shot in both London and Toronto. It felt both comforting and appropriate for Rashid to make his first feature in the cities that have become his two homes (he moved to London from Toronto almost 15 years ago). As Rashid says, "Returning to Toronto has been a joy – the crew here was great and it was wonderful shooting in a city that was so film-friendly. Astonishingly, and quite by chance, the location for our first week of filming turned out to be a run down apartment building in Flemingdon Park, which faced the very building I actually grew up in. The balcony of the apartment we shot in looked over the primary school I attended and the old age apartment-building where my grandmother

lived and died – the very landscape which was in my head when I wrote this story.”

A significant challenge with the film was to create a soundtrack, which understood the many different elements in the script, paid homage to them and pulled them together. As Rashid was writing the script, he could hear film music in his head from the 50’s and 60’s – from composers such as Henry Mancini, Frank de Vol and Bernard Hermann.

“I was particularly interested in the musical comic “stingers” that used to pepper those films – the little musical phrases which were used to underline comic moments. Andrew Lockington, our composer, came up with some wonderful themes that caught the flavour of those films and then we took it a step further. When Alim comes to Toronto and spends time with his South Asian family, we did the 50’s style comic stingers with Indian instruments. Andrew also composed the Indian score as well. But we tried to use the Indian music as it is used in Hollywood, rather than Bollywood, used in a more ambient, less melodramatic way. So again, lots of pushing and pulling of cultural forms and strategies.”

The Lies of Handsome Men sung by Cleo Laine, a recent song, was licensed because of its ballad themes, and Lockington and Rashid even sat down together to write their own songs.

“It was a great experience working with Andrew to create songs which worked for our film, for what we wanted to say and yet had touches of those wonderful styles. Sailing on the Real True Love, which is played over the opening credits, is an attempt at an ersatz Cole Porter, Rogers and Hart kind of tune. Loving the World, which is used over the central montage of the film – Giles and Nuru’s day out in London – has, I hope, more of a Burt Bacharach, 60’s-70’s feel to it.”

## Cast Biographies

**JIMI MISTRY (Alim)** is currently filming *The Truth about Love* with Jennifer Love Hewitt and Dougray Scott. He most recently completed filming *Dead Fish* with Gary Oldman and Robert Carlyle, directed by Charley Stadler; *Thirty Things to do Before You're 30*, directed by Simon Shore, and the role of 'Benny the Book' in *Ella Enchanted*, directed by Tom O'Haver, which opened in North America in April.

Mistry starred in the title role in Universal/Working Title's comedy, *The Guru*, with Heather Graham and Marisa Tomei, directed by Daisy von Scherler Mayer. He co-starred in Damien O'Donnell's *East Is East*, a project he has been a part of since its first workshop and subsequent theatrical staging at Stratford East, The Royal Court and the West End. *East is East* premiered at the Cannes Film Festival to great critical acclaim and went on to receive nominations for five BAFTA Awards, winning for Best British Film. It also won Best Film at the Evening Standard British Film Awards, was named Best British Film of the Year by the London Film Critics, and was named Best Comedy Film at the British Comedy Awards.

Mistry's other feature work includes starring roles in Ismail Merchant's *The Mystic Masseur*, with Om Puri and James Fox; Don Boyd's modern-day Lear, *My Kingdom*, alongside Richard Harris, Lynn Redgrave and Paul McGann; and David Kane's *Born Romantic* with Craig Ferguson, Catharine McCormack and Jane Horrocks. He made his film debut as a sailor in Kenneth Branagh's *Hamlet*.

**KYLE MACLACHLAN (Cary)** made his Broadway debut as "Aston" in Harold Pinter's drama *The Caretaker*, directed by David Jones. Last year, MacLachlan starred on the London stage playing opposite Woody Harrelson in director's John Crowley's *On An Average Day* at the Comedy Theatre in London's West End.

MacLachlan is best known for his performance as FBI Agent Dale Cooper in David Lynch's groundbreaking series *Twin Peaks*, for which he received two Emmy nominations and a Golden Globe award. MacLachlan made his feature debut in Lynch's futuristic drama *Dune*, followed by his breakthrough role as Jeffrey Beaumont in Lynch's uniquely disturbing *Blue Velvet*.

MacLachlan also played the role of Charlotte's ideal man and heart surgeon Dr. Trey MacDougal on the acclaimed HBO series *Sex and the City*.

He has appeared in the independent films *Miranda*, with Christina Ricci and John Hurt; *Perfume* with Peter Gallagher and Paul Sorvino; and *Me, Without You*. MacLachlan also starred alongside Ethan Hawke in Miramax's critically well-

received *Hamlet* (2000), which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival. Directed by Michael Almereyda, this filmed version transplanted the Bard's setting to Manhattan with MacLachlan portraying a modern-day Claudius.

He was also featured in Mike Figgis's experimental film *Timecode*, the first film to be simultaneously shot with four digital cameras, in one continuous 93-minute take. MacLachlan previously worked with Figgis in the film *One Night Stand*.

MacLachlan's other work includes *The Trigger Effect*; *The Flintstones*, produced by Steven Spielberg; and Paul Verhoeven's controversial *Showgirls*. He also appeared as legendary keyboardist Ray Manzarek in *The Doors*, directed by Oliver Stone; *The Hidden*; as Josef K in *The Trial*, adapted by Harold Pinter, and co-starring Anthony Hopkins; and in Bruce Beresford's *Rich in Love*, co-starring Albert Finney and Jill Clayburgh.

He also starred with Samuel L. Jackson in HBO's award-winning telefilm, *Against the Wall*, the story of the 1971 Attica prison riots, directed by John Frankenheimer; and in the Showtime original film *Roswell*. MacLachlan made his directorial debut in 1993 with an episode of the darkly comic hit HBO series, *Tales From the Crypt*.

He currently resides in New York with his wife and their dogs Mookie and Sam.

**SULEKA MATHEW (Nuru)** was born in India, and raised in Canada. She has worked extensively as a professional actress for over fifteen years in film, television and theatre. Most recently, she appeared in *Republic of Love* by Deepa Mehta.

Best known in Canada for her five years on *Da Vinci's Inquest*, Mathew has earned three Leo Award nominations for Best Actress for her role in the critically acclaimed crime drama series. Television movie credits include *A Family Divided* and *In the Name of the People*. In addition to numerous television guest appearances on shows such as *The 11th Hour*, Mathew has had recurring roles on the series *The Crow*, and is currently in Stephen King's *The Dead Zone*.

In the fall of 2003, Mathew was part of the multi-discipline cast of *Shadow Pleasures* created by Veronica Tennant and inspired by the work of Michael Ondaatje.

**KRISTEN HOLDEN-RIED (Giles)** recently played the roles of F. Scott Fitzgerald in the Canadian mini-series *Hemingway vs. Callaghan*, and Harold Beckwith in the Gemini-award winning Canadian television movie *The Many Trials of One Jane Doe*, starring Wendy Crewson. He was also in Kris Lefko's directorial

debut, *Public Domain*, and the television movie *Ice Bound*, starring Susan Sarandon.

Holden-Ried had a recurring role in the TV series *Street Time*, and appeared in the features, *K-19: The Widowmaker* with Harrison Ford, *Chasing Cain*, *Going to Kansas City*, *Hendrix* and *Gossip*. He also appeared in the Emmy-nominated miniseries *The Crossing* starring Jeff Daniels, *Forget Me Never* starring Mia Farrow and Martin Sheen, *The Defenders: Taking The First*, and the television series *Riverdale*.

**BRIAN GEORGE (Hassan)**, best known for his portrayal of 'Babu' on *Seinfeld*, has had lead roles in some 30 film and 80 TV productions. Film credits include *Ghost World* with Thora Birch and Scarlett Johansson, *Keeping the Faith* with Ed Norton and Ben Stiller, and *Bubble Boy* starring Jake Gyllenhaal. George played Falsetto the Swami in *Inspector Gadget*, the UN Secretary in *Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery* and he appeared as Sgt. Gaby in *Murder at the Cannes Film Festival*.

On television, George has appeared in *Regular Joe*, *Live From Bagdad*, and has provided the voice for countless series including *Bob and Margaret* as Bob Fish and *Lloyd in Space*. George was on *Second City* and won a Dora Mavor award for Best Actor in a Revue or Musical for *Madeira M'Dear* at The Theatre in the Dell.

**VEENA SOOD (Dolly)** was born in Nairobi, Kenya, and is of East Indian descent. Sood has been acting since she was a teenager, in all disciplines; film, television, theatre, and radio. She has also worked for many major theatre companies in western Canada, including The Vancouver Playhouse, The Arts Club, and Alberta Theatre Projects. Sood is a co-founding member and originator of the comedy-improv *Theatresports*, which is now performed worldwide. Sood is also a three time Jessie Richardson nominee and winner for her acting work in the Vancouver theatre community.

Sood co-hosted CBC TV's women's talk show *In The Company of Women*, which aired nationally for three seasons. She was also a series regular on the PAX Family drama *Hope Island*. Recent film and television credits include leading roles in the CBC mini-series *Human Cargo*, and the recent MOW *Chasing Freedom*. Sood is currently featured in the new Nia Vardalos film *Connie & Carla*.

Sood recently enjoyed this year's Sundance Film Festival where she enjoyed celebrating her role of "Dolly" in the world premiere of the heartfelt comedy ***Touch of Pink***. (Please remember if you see the film this summer, that they aged her up, and she doesn't really have all those chins and wrinkles).

**RAOUL BHANEJA (Khaled)** was born in Manchester, U.K., and grew up in Ottawa, Canada and Bonn, Germany. Bhaneja is one of the stars of improvised hit *Train 48* for Global TV and appeared as a guest star on *The Eleventh Hour*, *The Associates* and has also starred in *The Newsroom*, *Twitch City*, *Street Time*, *The Famous Jett Jackson*, *The Jessica Holmes Show* and *Open Heart*.

Feature credits include *Ararat* directed by Atom Egoyan, *Extraordinary Visitor*, *Violet*, *Cold Creek Manor* directed by Mike Figgis, and *Picture Claire* directed by Bruce MacDonald. Upcoming releases include *Godsend* directed by Nick Hamm starring Robert De Niro and Greg Kinnear.

Raoul has just recently released his second cd, *Cold Outside* (Festival) with his award-winning blues band Raoul and The Big Time.



## **Filmmaker Biographies**

**IAN IQBAL RASHID (Writer/Director)** has written widely for British television including the critically acclaimed, cult hit series *This Life*, which won the BAFTA, Royal Television Society, and Evening Standard awards, and for which he and his co-writers won the prestigious Writers' Guild of England Award. He has written and directed two short films: *Surviving Sabu* (Hindi Picture/Arts Council of England), which won festival prizes in Vancouver, Zanzibar, and Mumbai; and *Stag* (Martin Pope Productions/BBC Films), which was selected for Time Out's Gala at the 2002 London Film Festival.

Rashid is also the author of three award-winning volumes of poetry and short fiction, the most recent of which is *The Heat Yesterday*. In 1999, he won the Aga Khan Award for Excellence in the Arts. He was the founder and first artistic director of Desh Pardesh, North America's first festival celebrating South Asian arts in the West. Rashid was born in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, grew up in Toronto, Canada, and has been living in England since 1990. He currently lives in London with his partner Peter Ride and their cats Googie and Boris.

### **SIENNA FILMS**

Based in Canada for the last 10 years, Jennifer Kawaja and Julia Sereny's most recent release is the acclaimed feature film *Marion Bridge*, starring Molly Parker. The film has had an extensive international festival run from London to Rotterdam to Sydney, as well as winning the Best First Feature Award at the Toronto Film Festival, and being named one of Canada's Top Ten by TIFF.

Previous productions include the box office success *New Waterford Girl*, starring Liane Balaban and Andrew McCarthy, which won awards at the Toronto and Atlantic film festivals for both its lead and writer, with writer Tricia Fish being named by *Variety* as one of the top ten writers to watch; *April One* starring David Strathairn; and *Saint Monica* starring Brigitte Bako, which premiered at the Toronto Film Festival and then went on to the Berlin Film Festival in children's competition. Long form TV productions include the award-winning *Society's Child*, *Erotica* and *Dinner At The Edge*.

Sienna is currently in pre-production on *I, Claudia*, a 90-minute theatrical adaptation for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

## **MARTIN POPE PRODUCTIONS**

Based in the UK, Martin Pope Productions' most recent release is the feature film *The Heart of Me*, directed by Thaddeus O'Sullivan, starring Helena Bonham Carter, Olivia Williams and Paul Bettany. It premiered at the Toronto Film Festival, and was the Closing Night Gala of the London Film Festival. It won Paul Bettany the Europa Best Actor award, and Olivia Williams Best Actress at the British Independent Film Awards.

Previous productions include the feature film *Lawless Heart*, which was released to acclaim in the UK and US, following festival showings including Locarno, Dinard, London and Tribeca. Awards for the film include the Evening Standard Film Award for Best Screenplay and the British Independent Film Award for Best Screenplay. Other productions include the feature film *Alive & Kicking*, TV film *Turn Of The Screw* and Ian Iqbal Rashid's short film *Stag*.

**DAVID MAKIN (Director of Photography)** began making 8mm movies with his brother Kelly at the age of 9. He continued his film education on set with his father (DP Harry Makin) and throughout film school, both in Toronto (Ryerson) and Los Angeles (AFI). After working through the ranks as a camera assistant and operator, Makin began working as a DP in commercials, then worked his way into TV with the comedy series *Kids in the Hall*. From there, he went on to do his first studio feature for the Kids in the Hall, *Brain Candy*, and went on to do *The Wrong Guy*, *Dog Park* and *Mickey Blue Eyes*. Makin works both in TV movies and features such as *Skulls 3*, *Held Up (Inconvenienced)*, *What Leonard Comes Home To*, *Mad TV* and *The Martin Short Show*.

**GAVIN MITCHELL (Production Designer)** began designing for the theatre in the UK in the mid-1960's, and moved into television and film with the BBC in the early 1970's. He immigrated to Canada in 1974 and quickly established his credentials there, winning an Anik award for his work on *A Gift to Last*, a CBC period piece. Growing with the Canadian industry, he has designed everything from comedy, period drama to science fiction. Mitchell won the Genie award for his work on the feature *Black Robe*. Mitchell has also produced some 48 hours of film drama for Canadian television.

**ANDREW LOCKINGTON's (Composer)** credits include Allan Moyle's *Xchange*, Cheryl Dunye's *Stranger Inside*, Mina Shum's *Long Life*. Before becoming an independent composer, Lockington spent 7 years working with his mentor Mychael Danna. During that time he worked on more than 20 feature films as an Orchestrator/Conductor, Composer's Assistant or Composer and with such directors as Ang Lee, Scott Hicks and Denzel Washington. Lockington recently finished composing the first season of Lifetime's *1-800-Missing* and is currently working on Michael McGowan's Feature Film *St. Ralph*.

**SUSAN MAGGI (Editor)** is an award-winning editor, and veteran of the Canadian film industry. She worked with Sienna Films on *New Waterford Girl* and *Society's Child*. ***Touch of Pink*** is their third project together. Maggi recently completed *A Wrinkle In Time* with Patricia Rozema and Miramax Films as well as *The Great Goose Caper*. She is currently working on the feature *St. Ralph* with Alliance Atlantis and Amaze Entertainment. Previous work includes *Men with Brooms*, *The Assistant*, *Rude*, *House* with Laurie Lynd and *Eclipse* with Jeremy Podewsa.