



## The Thelmas: *Coconut*

**UK Tour: Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> May – Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2018**

Based on writer Guleraana Mir's real experience of interracial and intercultural relationships, *Coconut* will embark on a UK tour this summer. This fresh new play challenges dated Asian female stereotypes with an honest portrait of the contemporary British Asian experience. With its unremitting humour, Mir explores the impact of religion and faith – and the lack of it – in modern romance.

As her faith wanes, Rumi enjoys a glass of wine and a bacon sandwich more than a trip to the mosque. A British Pakistani woman, born and raised a Muslim, she may have hit the jackpot with Simon who is willing to convert to Islam to keep her family happy. But, as Simon begins to explore his faith, Rumi's world begins to spin off its axis.

*Coconut* will see the professional debut of Kuran Dohil as Rumi. The cast will also include Jimmy Carter (*The Giant Killers*, Edinburgh Fringe; *Othello*, Baron Court's Theatre; *Romeo and Juliet*, Iris Theatre) as Simon and Tibu Fortes (*A Midsummer's Night Dream*, Shakespeare's Globe; *Requiem*, BBC/Netflix; *People Just do Nothing*, BBC3) who will play Riz and the Imam.

Although irreverent in tone, this dark comedy tackles grey areas of emotional and religious coercion. *Coconut* refers to the controversial term used to describe someone who is brown on the outside and white on the inside and this production does not shy away from interrogating the contemporary British Asian experience.

*Mir's writing is side-achingly funny at times ... and deeply affecting at others ... hits both a zeitgeist and the universality of coming to terms with your own identity.* (FemaleArts)

Writer Guleraana Mir explains, *Coconut is a story I don't see being told, it is genuinely representative of the realities of living in a multicultural society; relatable, regardless of what culture you're from. It was very important to me, when creating the characters of Rumi and Simon, that they were honest, both to themselves and each other. Sometimes that honesty is hilariously funny, and other times it is painfully uncomfortable. But at the heart of the play is a woman trying to stay truthful to herself, in a way that we wouldn't really expect from an Asian stereotype, which is why audiences have loved her.*

Beginning life as a fifteen minute monologue produced as part of the Camden Fringe, the current production of *Coconut* is the result of research, development and support from the New Diorama Theatre's BAMER programme, Diorama Arts Studios and Park Theatre's Script Accelerator programme. The production is funded by Arts Council England. This tour is supported by In Good Company, the East Midlands' flagship artist professional development programme.

## Notes to Editors

Running time	80 minutes
Suggested ages	14+ due to profanity and themes of violence, emotional and religious coercion
Website	<a href="https://www.thethelmas.co.uk/coconut">https://www.thethelmas.co.uk/coconut</a>
Twitter	@TheThelmas #CoconutPlay
Facebook	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/TheThelmasUK">https://www.facebook.com/TheThelmasUK</a>
Director	Madelaine Moore
Writer	Guleraana Mir
Produced by	The Thelmas and Ovalhouse Theatre
Designer	Baska Wesolowska
Lighting Design	Jennifer Rose
Rumi	Kuran Dohil
Simon	Jimmy Carter
Riz/Imam	Tibu Fortes

## Tour Dates

11 <sup>th</sup> -28 <sup>th</sup> April	Ovalhouse, London 52-54 Kennington, Oval, London, SE11 5SW
16 <sup>th</sup> May	ARC Stockton Arts Centre, Stockton on Tees Dovecot Street, Stockton on Tees, TS18 1LL
19 <sup>th</sup> May	Derby Theatre, Derby 15 Theatre Walk, St Peter's Quarter, Derby, DE1 2NF
24 <sup>th</sup> May	Oldham Coliseum, Oldham Fairbottom Street, Oldham, OL1 3SW
26 <sup>th</sup> May	The Curve, Slough William Street, Slough, SL1 1XY
18 <sup>th</sup> June	Guildhall Arts Centre, Grantham St. Peter's Hill, Grantham, NG31 6PZ
19 <sup>th</sup> June	Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton Upon Trent Union Street, Burton Upon Trent, DE14 1EB
27 <sup>th</sup> June	Lincoln Drill Hall, Lincoln Freeschool Lane, Lincoln, LN2 1EY
28 <sup>th</sup> June	Old Library, Mansfield Leeming Street, Mansfield, NG18 1NG
29 <sup>th</sup> June	South Holland Centre, Spalding 23 Market Place, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE11 1SS
30 <sup>th</sup> June	Attenborough Arts Centre, Leicester University of Leicester, Lancaster Road, Leicester, LE1 7HA

## The Thelmas

The Thelmas are a female-led theatre company focused on championing the voices of women in theatre. They aim to disrupt traditional female narratives and make theatre that is big, bold and emotionally resonant. They are a New Diorama Emerging Company 2017/18. *Coconut* is their first touring production.

All enquiries, high res images and further information:

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