



**Media Release: 22 January 2011**

Phizzical Productions present

## **Comic Couplings**

*Two satirical tales about bed-sharing & a marriage proposal*

**Saturday 5 - Sunday 6 February 7.30pm**

**Embrace Arts at the RA centre**

Richard Attenborough centre, Lancaster Road, Leicester LE1 7HA

FREE parking at the Medical Sciences Building car park next door.

For 14+ years. Duration: 95 mins

Phizzical Productions make their debut at Leicester Comedy Festival next month with two Victorian farces.

These one-act plays celebrate the bi-centenary of English writer John Maddison Morton's and the 150th anniversary of the Russian writer Anton Chekhov. This unique combination presents a struggle to balance the economic necessities of careers, living arrangements, sexual tension, marriage and what the characters themselves actually want. They show the characters' desperation for and against marriage as comical.

### **Saint and Sinner**

Letting a room to Mr Saint by day and to Mr Sinner by night works well for Mrs Sharp, until Mr Saint is unexpectedly given a day's holiday and the two lodgers meet. Left alone while she sorts out another room, they discover they share more than the same bed.

This popular 'bro-mance' was written by James Morton Madisson in 1846 and is originally titled Box & Cox. The phrase "Box and Cox" entered the Oxford English Dictionary and is defined as '*applied allusively to an arrangement in which two persons take turns in sustaining a part, occupying a position, or the like.*'

### **The Proposal**

Valentines Day marks a special moment in a relationship especially when a young woman expects to be swept off her feet by her handsome beau. In this Anton Chekhov's tale, a nervous young man comes to propose marriage to his neighbour's daughter. But

[www.phizzical.com](http://www.phizzical.com)

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their squabbling threatens to destroy their chances of a match.

The director Sâmir Bhamra says, *“I spent most of last year at weddings or commuting to work in London. To my amazement, I discovered some landlords venturing into bed-sharing to-lets to cope with the lack of social housing and make a quick pound. Unlike a hotel, I could rent a bed by the hour, and leave my belongings there until the next time I needed to stay over. Meeting a range of people at conflict with their loved ones, I felt there was a peculiar comedy to each situation. It was ironic that I came across these short farces that reflect human comedy and are still relevant today.”*

**Cast:**

Tickets for Comic Couplings cost £7.50 (£5 concession). They are available from Embrace Arts, RA centre, University of Leicester, tel 0116 252 2455, or visit the website [www.embracearts.co.uk](http://www.embracearts.co.uk)

**Notes to Editors:** Further details are available from Gillian Garratt, Marketing Manager, Embrace Arts, email [gg81@leicester.ac.uk](mailto:gg81@leicester.ac.uk), tel 07973 188898.

Embrace Arts, Richard Attenborough centre, PO Box 138, Lancaster Road, Leicester LE1 7HA. Box office: 0116 252 2455; e-mail: [arts-centre@le.ac.uk](mailto:arts-centre@le.ac.uk).

**Cast:** Saif Al-Warith, Bhella Candenti, Pritesh Chauhan, Shahid Khan

Saif Al-Warith

Born in Iraq, Saif attended The University of Northampton where he studied Acting at the equivalent of a BA Hons level. Since taking early leave from his studies, he has landed the lead role in several short films such as ‘Heart of Darkness’ and ‘The Forgotten Prime Minister’ and also filmed major television campaigns for big brands. He has also toured professionally in the government funded project ‘Be.Come’ which introduces college students to a taste of higher education life.

Bhella Candenti

Bhella is making her professional debut in Comic Couplings. Trained at Birmingham School of Acting in Physical Skills and Stage Combat, she is currently in the final year studying for a BA Hons English and Drama Studies at De Montfort University. Her credits include ‘As You Like It’ at Stratford’s Swan Theatre and The Cagebirds. Bhella is part of the youth advisory board for Phizzical Productions and has been nurtured by the

company over the last two years.

### Pritesh Chauhan

Leicester born actor, Pritesh has acted in West Side Story and Oliver Twist with the Leicester Amateur Operatic Society, Shaadi Ke Rang, and Kahani Sapnon Ki. This is his fourth production with Phizzical Productions, having acted in Precious Bazaar, What You Fancy, and Jean Genet's controversial 'The Maids'. Originally a dancer, he has toured nationally and internationally.

### Shahid Iqbal Khan

Shahid is a hard-of-hearing actor who was trained at Carol Godby's Theatre Workshops based in Bury. He performed in several festivals of short plays that gave him the experience and confidence to perform. Shahid took part in the BollyIdol talent development initiative by Phizzical Productions in 2005 and he was cast in "What You Fancy", a modern adaptation of Twelfth Night. Shahid is involved with Manchester Muslim Writers, an association which has encouraged him to experiment in writing short stories and poetry.

### **Funded by:**

Comic Couplings is funded through the Creative Innovation programme that is part of Igniting Ambition, the regional festival programme which celebrates the hosting of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Igniting Ambition is funded by Legacy Trust UK and the European Regional Development Fund.

### **About Phizzical Productions:**

Phizzical Productions is a theatre-dance company founded in 2003. The Leicester based company has become a leading exponent in contemporary dance and theatre by creating platforms to nurture and showcase Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) talent.

Their recent summer participatory initiative Power of Dance was aimed at young people aged 16 – 25 years old to create a new dance-opera by working with internationally renowned choreographers.

### **About Embrace Arts:**

As the University of Leicester's arts centre, Embrace Arts offers opportunities to everyone to participate without barriers in ways that challenge and inspire. Its welcoming 180-seater performance area, art studios, extensive exhibition gallery and bright foyer space enable people to engage with the arts as audiences, performers

and learners.

Still one of the few arts venues that can boast a fully-accessible facility, Embrace Arts provides a focal point for cultural life on campus and in the wider community.