

MAIL TODAY

News for the new world

OLD WORLD CHARM

This edition of the Old World Theatre Festival is all about new ventures and familiar faces

by Adila Matra

EVERY year this time around, theatre lovers are in a tizzy. The Old World Theatre Festival is the guilty party. In its 12th edition, this celebration of not just the best, but also the freshest plays of theatrics seem to have an irresistible lineup, even as the organisers had quite a struggle with sponsorship.

Mahmood Farooqui and Danish Hussain will open the festival and rightly so, with a first time performance of iconic tales of *Betal Pachchee* (Vikram-Betal Tales) along with *Tilisme-e-Hoshiruba* (Hoshiruba Tales). Vikram Kapadia's *Bombay Talkies* is a series of monologues revealing private lives of individuals living in Bombay (now Mumbai). "There are four actors including me, and eight characters. So each actor plays two roles", says Kapadia.

"It is serious and hilarious at the same time. Though I have named it *Bombay Talkies*, the characters could be from any metropolitan", he adds. While the Hindi adaptation of *Bombay Talkies* premiered recently in Mumbai, its original English version took to stage as early as 2011. "Corruption, child



The cast of 'Two To Tango Three To Live': Saurabh Shukla, Achint Kaur, Preti Mamgain and Sadiya Siddiqui; (right) Ashvin Gidwani's 'Scent of a Man'.

abuse, loneliness, exploitation, pollution—*Bombay Talkies* will take up everything without which the metro experience is incomplete", Kapadia says.

Ashvin Gidwani has been the son of theatre for over 19 years. And he is finally ready for his directorial venture. *Scent of a Man* which will be up on stage for the first time at the Old World Theatre Festival, 2013. As they say, when it's right, it's right. Gid-

The iconic tales of 'Betal Pachchee' by Mahmood Farooqui and Danish Hussain will kickstart the festival

wani, who has been a producer for all these years, slipped into the role of a director with ease and also seems to have done quite a lot of homework: "I worked on the script alone for nine months", he says.

Gidwani's *Scent of a Man* is naughty but also tosses enough bits for the philosopher. "I have created two couples. Each one has crossed the other's path during some point in life and a dinner

turns disastrous as skeletons start tumbling out of the closet", says Gidwani. True, the marriages are at stake but, Gidwani hasn't had a second thought about filling the plot with sarcasm and witty comebacks. With an experienced cast of Bhavna Patel, Devon Khote (grandson of veteran actress Durga Khote), Suchitra Pillai (who was Saif Ali Khan's dominating girlfriend in *Dil Chahta Hai*) and Ash Chaudhary (standup comedian), Gidwani might just have created the perfect debut.

Saurabh Shukla (film, theater

and television actor, director and screenwriter) with his *Two To Tango Three To Live* and Lushin Dubey with *Enlited*, are other crowd pullers of the festival. Also, on the list are Meera Vasisth's *Lal Ded*, Lilette Dubey's *O Paris Of Desire*, and *Khalijabai Of Karmudi Terrace* by Quasar Thakore Padamsee. It definitely yells full house, so rush and grab a seat.

The Old World Theatre Festival will be on at ITC and Epicentre, Gurgaon from Oct 11 to 20. Tickets are available at the venue and at www.habitatworld.com.

