

Britain's got Bhangra: World's first Bhangra musical Playing in Stratford East

Submitted by [Sonia Shah](#) on Saturday, 8 May 2010 [2 Comments](#)



Photo credit: Theatre Royal Stratford East/Rifco Arts

Bhangra music has been blaring away across the nation for a while and it is often spilled into Bollywood movies, but now it is taking a new form. "Britain's got Bhangra" is the world's first Bhangra musical and is currently the hot stepper on stage.

It's all singing and dancing – from a bus on the sets which quickly transform into the gossiping, competitive Punjabi women's kitchen, if not a wedding scene bunched up with drunk, Sikh men. The interiors of a typical home in Southall, a shifty night club, a temple and a retro recording studio shuffle in between.

Blending authentic, sweet-sounding symphonies of Punjabi lyrics, infused with Bhangra drum beats, rap and comedy, this is the brainchild of Pravesh Kumar from Rifco Arts, a British-Asian theatre company. The production features the prominent Bollywood choreographer Andy Kumar, and composer Sumeet Chopra who has worked with reputable British Asian bands such as the Dhol Foundation and Punjabi MC.

The production kicks off with bouncy beats. The continuous flow of colourful costume changes are bewitching, ranging from vibrant, sequined saris to modern western dressing to even shiny rapper-style wardrobes and leopard skin coats.

The main character, Twinkle, plans to shine his light on London with his melodious tunes. Fresh from India, his singing saves his soul from the miserable weather, the unfriendly people and Margaret Thatcher's era in the country. He packs in his job as a Southall driver to show off his Punjabi vocals and becomes a wedding singer, pickling the production with plenty of masala. Along with his partner Rocky, he gets snapped up by a shark-like producer, Mrs Shindie. Enthralled in the excitement of showbiz, Twinkle rocks and rolls away with one of his female band singers in the back scenes, behind his wife's back.

Karma catches up when an Eminem wannabe with the likes of Ali G shows up, stealing Twinkle's spotlight. The new star dazzles the glamorous and ruthless Mrs. Shindie with his own beats. Rocky dies and Twinkle's producer drops him like a hot aloo gobi. It's back to square one as he sees bling replacing Bhangra.

Almost two decades go by and along comes Twinkle's illegitimate son who possesses the same musical talent and is on the lookout for his father. Now there's more shame to be shoved down the Southall bus driver's throat as the rest of the community and the wife discover his past.

Being a musical, all hope is not lost. Twinkle's wife finally accepts her husband's sinful deeds and son and they're all one happy family. Inspired by his son, and his wife's support, he sets out to challenge his ex producer and prove to the rest of the world that Bhangra is back, the bling is out and that he's still got what it takes.

The twists and turns in the highly energetic dances and the plot will make the audience want to tap their bhangra heels.

The sparkling cast of Britain's Got Bhangra can be seen at the Theatre Royal in Stratford East until 16th May