

## Eastern Eye Arts Culture and Theatre Awards

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Meera Syal with her Eastern Eye Outstanding Contribution to the Arts Award with the Deputy Indian High Commissioner His Excellency Dr Virander Paul, Kalpesh Solanki, Group Managing Editor of AMG and Shailesh Solanki AMG's Executive Editor.

I won a Brit, I won a Tony but I have also won an ACTA."

Executive editor of Eastern Eye, Shailesh Solanki, said: "British Asian artists are a vital part of the creative industries and make an invaluable contribution to the diversity of our nation. It's great to see the Eastern Eye Arts, Culture and Theatre Awards recognise and celebrate the work of these outstanding artists."

Winners included the late Saeed Jaffrey, the Victoria and Albert Museum and Indian artist Paresh Maity, whose works were shown in London last week.

Kathak exponent Nahid Siddiqui, regarded as a doyenne of the classical dance form, received an editor's award, as did Maity, one of India's leading water colour painters.

Jennifer Jaffrey collected the editor's award on behalf of her late husband, an international star who was popular in India and Britain.

The V&A, whose India Festival for Fabric of India and Jewelled Treasures were huge draws last year, also won the Eastern Eye Editor's Special Award.

Eastern Eye columnist and chair of the judging panel, Amit Roy, said the increasing rise of Asians in film, TV, fine arts and music led to the creation of the ACTAs.

"We believe the South Asian artistic fraternity can contribute towards making Britain an even better country," he told guests at the Royal Festival Hall on Sunday.

Those in the 700-strong audience included accomplished and rising stars such as Sanjeev Bhaskar, Kulvinder Ghir, Naughty Boy, Nikesh Patel, Preeya Kalidas and Aysha Kala.

Bhaskar won the best actor (theatre) prize for his role as a panic-stricken householder in Dinner with Saddam at the Menier Chocolate Factory, which proved a huge hit with audiences and critics alike.

Preeya Kalidas, star of the musical, Bend It Like Beckham, walked away with the best actress (theatre) award.

Dev Patel and Kiran Sania Sawar won best actor and actress for film, respectively, while Nikesh Patel won the best actor (TV) gong for his role as a civil servant in the recently-concluded Channel 4 drama, Indian Summers. Shobu Kapoor, familiar to TV audiences in her most recent role as Mrs Khan in the BBC sitcom Citizen Khan, won the best actress award.

Acclaimed filmmaker director Asif Kapadia won the best director award for his moving documentary Amy, about the late singer Amy Winehouse.

Multi-talented musician, producer and songwriter Naughty Boy bagged the award for music.

Dara, a play about Mughal emperor Sha Jahan's sons Dara Shikoh and Aurangzeb, staged at the National Theatre, won the best production award.

Bollywood film Bajirao Mastani, a period drama starring Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh, also won an award.

There were prizes for literature, dance, comedy, photography and radio too, as Anita Anand, Sonia Sabri Company (whose founder was a pupil of Nahid Siddiqui), Nish Kumar, Ram Shergill and Ritula Shah picking up awards.

Guests were entertained by Eastenders actor Phaldut Sharma who performed on a tap dance to Panjabi MC's popular tune Mundian to bach ke as well as the Bollywood Brass Band, while the event was compered by DJ Nihal.

WRITER and actress Meera Syal was honoured with the top award at the inaugural Eastern Eye Arts, Culture and Theatre Awards (ACTAs), which celebrated the achievements of the British Asian community in the arts. Syal, who has enjoyed a successful career as an author, actress in film, television and on stage, was presented the award for outstanding contribution to the arts at the first ever awards ceremony on Sunday (22)

She was among 21 winners on the night when the ACTAs honoured individuals and organisations in categories ranging from theatre to music, literature, the visual arts, film, and television to theatre.

Hosted by the Asian Media and Marketing Group, publishers of Eastern Eye and Garavi Gujarat news weekly, the awards are the first of their kind in Britain.

Ed Vaizey, the minister of state for culture, communications and creative industries, was the keynote speaker at the event which was held as part of the Alchemy festival at the Southbank Centre in London.

In his remarks, Vaizey spoke of the importance of diversity in the British arts industry and said: "I think it is a fantastic great event. When we think about all the awards that we could win in the future, people could say I won an Oscar,

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