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to the media at www.vachikam.org/media**

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**LEGENDARY INDIAN ACTORS SHABANA AZMI AND JAVED AKHTAR TO STAR IN
NOV. 17 CHICAGO-AREA PERFORMANCE OF "KAIFI AUR MAIN"**

DOWNERS GROVE, ILL.—Internationally acclaimed Indian actress Shabana Azmi and her husband, noted poet and lyricist Javed Akhtar, will travel to Chicago to star in the theatre production "Kaifi Aur Main." This theatrical presentation celebrates the life and work of progressive Urdu poet and film lyricist Kaifi Azmi as seen through the eyes of his wife, noted actress Shaukat Kaifi.

Shabana Azmi, the daughter of Kaifi and Shaukat, will portray her mother on stage, while her husband takes on the role of Kaifi.

The Chicago-area performance of "Kaifi Aur Main" will be held on Friday, Nov. 17, 2006 at 8 p.m. at the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts, 9501 Skokie Blvd., Skokie.

To order tickets, please visit www.sulehka.com/chicago.

— MORE —

**“KAIFI AUR MAIN” IN CHICAGO
ADD ONE**

The North American tour of “Kaifi Aur Main” includes the following performances:

- Newark, N.J.: Saturday, Nov. 4, 2006, 6:30 p.m., NJPAC
- Philadelphia: Sunday, Nov. 5, 2006, 5 p.m., Branch Creek Auditorium, Harleysville, Pa.
- Boston: Friday, Nov. 10, 2006, 8 p.m., Collins Center of Performing Arts, Andover, Mass.
- Toronto: Saturday, Nov. 11, 2006, 7:30 p.m. Roy Thomas Hall
- Detroit: Sunday, Nov. 12, 2006, 6:30 p.m., Clarenceville Auditorium, Livonia, Mich.
- Chicago: Friday, Nov. 17, 2006, 8 p.m., North Shore Center for the Performing Arts, Skokie, Ill.
- Houston: Saturday, Nov. 18, 2006, 8 p.m., Cullen Performing Auditorium, University of Houston
- San Francisco: Sunday, Nov. 19, 2006, 6 p.m., Performing Arts Center, Chabot College, Hayward, Calif.
- Phoenix: Friday, Nov. 24, 2006, 8 p.m., Orpheum Theatre
- Los Angeles: Sunday, Nov. 26, 2006, 6:30 p.m., La Miranda Performing Arts Theatre
- Washington, D.C.: Friday, Dec. 1, 2006, 8 p.m., Schlesinger Center, Alexandria, Va.
- Atlanta: Saturday, Dec. 2, 2006, 8 p.m., Roxy Theatre
- New York City: Sunday, Dec. 3, 2006, 7:30 p.m., Alice Tully Auditorium, Lincoln Center

To order tickets, visit www.vachikam.org and contact the show organizer for each city.

“KAIFI AUR MAIN” IN CHICAGO ADD TWO

Awards

Shabana Azmi and Javed Akhtar both have garnered media attention in recent days as the recipients of prestigious awards. On Oct. 26, 2006, Shabana Azmi was presented with the International Gandhi Peace Prize in London for her work as a social activist. She is the first Indian to win this award. On Oct. 31, 2006, Javed Akhtar received the 21st Indira Gandhi Award for National Integration from India’s Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

These awards honor the legacy of Kaifi Azmi and Shaukat Kaifi, who also have been recognized for their contributions to society. Kaifi was a recipient of the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Fellowship, many honorary doctorates from Indian universities, and numerous national awards. Shaukat’s memoir, *Yaad Ki Rehguzar (Down Memory Lane)*, which served as the basis for “Kaifi Aur Main,” has drawn praise for its honesty and insight, and has been selected for recommended reading by the South Asian departments of nine U.S. universities.

About “Kaifi Aur Main”

“Kaifi Aur Main” has been described as a “theatrical collage” with the writings of Kaifi Azmi and his wife, noted actress Shaukat Kaifi, interwoven with performances (renditions or live recital) of Kaifi Azmi’s poetry and film lyrics sung by Jaswinder Singh with a live orchestra.

“KAIFI AUR MAIN” IN CHICAGO ADD THREE

Javed Akhtar, the couple’s son-in-law, created the narrative from their words and takes on the role of Kaifi in the production, while Shabana Azmi portrays her mother. Her performance has been called the best tribute a daughter can give to her parents.

During “Kaifi Aur Main,” audiences experience a personal journey through the 55-year marriage of Kaifi and Shaukat – from the earliest days of their romance, their social and cultural activism, his pioneering work as a lyricist in Hindi cinema, and his courage battling life-threatening illness.

Up-and-coming ghazal singer Jaswinder Singh sings Kaifi Azmi’s poetry and lyrics, accompanied by orchestra. Ramesh Talwar directs the production, which will be presented in Hindi.

“We are very proud to present ‘Kaifi Aur Main’ to theater-goers in Chicago, “ said Ketki Parikh, president of Vachikam, Inc., the national promoter for the production’s North American tour. “This show has been extremely well received, and it is a privilege to be able to share the life story and artistry of Kaifi Azmi with a wider audience.”

“KAIFI AUR MAIN” IN CHICAGO ADD FOUR

"Intensely moving"

Critics and theater-goers have responded enthusiastically to the production.

“It was one of the most memorable evenings that Bangaloreans have witnessed, a performance that left the audience spellbound, mesmerized, and some of us in tears,” wrote Dr. K. B. Mallya of MangaloreWorld.com. “It won't be an exaggeration if it is said that Shabana Azmi was at her emotional best, Javed Akhtar was at his narratory best and Jaswinder Singh was at his melodious best.”

A review in *The Hindu* praised the production as “unique in itself ... on the lines of *Tumhaari Amrita*, what with Shabana and Javed's thought-flow peppered with Jaswinder Singh's melodic intervention — about 15 numbers in all, both movie blockbusters and ghazals, penned by Kaifi. And what perfectly timed getaways they were!”

“Kaifi Aur Main’ is intensely moving,” stated film-maker Shyam Bengal. “A journey through India’s history told through the lives of the remarkable couple Kaifi and Shaukat, made all the more poignant by the marvelous rendition of their son-in-law Javed Akhtar and daughter Shabana Azmi.”

“KAIFI AUR MAIN” IN CHICAGO ADD FIVE

Anju Bhargava, a community activist and president of Asian Indian Women in America, commented: "Shaukat Kaifi is one of the nicest people I have met in the journey of my life. As I see it, Shaukat Apa is the face of another strong Indian woman, steeped in the Indian culture, sharing moments from 55 years of her married life, some intimate with humor, romance and camaraderie, some nostalgic, some thought-provoking, some controversial with differing viewpoints, through this theatrical performance, 'Kaifi Aur Main.' ”

“Kaifi Aur Main” is a presentation by the Indian People’s Theatre Association, one of the oldest performing arts groups in India. It premiered in May 2006 in Mumbai, India and has also been performed in Ludhiana, Hyderabad, Bangalore, and Dubai. Following the U.S. and Canadian performances, the production will be staged in London.

For more information about the production, please visit www.kaifiaurmain.com.

“KAIFI AUR MAIN” IN CHICAGO ADD SIX

About IPTA

The Indian People's Theatre Association was formed during the Quit India Movement in 1942. Upon its formal inauguration in 1943–44, IPTA took upon itself the challenge to bring theatre to the people with the objective of building awareness about social responsibility and national integration. IPTA soon became a movement and swept the length and breadth of India with its socialistic and nationalistic fervour.

Born as a result of a long-felt need among writers and artistes, IPTA brought about a sea change in the prevalent concepts about Indian theatre. It was formed to co-ordinate and to strengthen all progressive tendencies that had so far manifested themselves in the form of drama, songs and dances. Its roots lay in the cultural awakening of the masses of India, seeking to revive the cultural heritage of the country. Its initial impact was so powerful that a new form of expression took shape. It was to leave a lasting impression, making the arts an expression of the people's yearning for freedom, economic and social justice and a democratic culture.

IPTA is one of the oldest performing arts groups in the country. Indian cinema, performing arts like music and theatre and now even television have drawn their many personalities from IPTA.

“KAIFI AUR MAIN” IN CHICAGO ADD SEVEN

IPTA was founded by stalwarts like KA Abbas, Dr. Bhabha, Anil de Silva, Ali Sardar Jafri and Dada Sharmalkar. Over the last six decades many prominent artistes, writers, musicians, directors, dancers and singers have been a part of IPTA. These include Amar Shaikh, Shambhu Mitra, Homi Bhabha, Krishanchander, Kaifi Azmi, Majrooh Sultanpuri, Sahir Ludhianvi, Balraj Sahni, Mohan Segal, Mulkraj Anand, Romesh Thapar, Hima Devi, Annabhau Sathe, Shailendra, Prem Dhawan, Ismat Chughtai, Kanu Ghosh, Chetan Anand, Dina Pathak, Pt. Ravi Shankar, Sachin Shankar, Bahadur Khan, A.K.Hangal, Habib Tanvir, Abrar Alvi, Hemant Kumar, Adi Marzban, Salil Chaudhari, Tarla Mehta, Khayyam, Phani Muzumdar, Dev Anand, Shanti Bardhan, Chittoprasad, Harindranath Chattopadhyay, VP Sathe, Durga Khote, Keshavrao Date, Utpal Dutt, Ritwik Ghatak, Satyen Kappu, Sanjeev Kumar, Zul Vellani, Shaukat Kaifi, Manmohan Krishna, Basu Bhattacharya, Abid Razvi, M.S.Sathyu, Kuldip Singh, Ramesh Talwar, Sulabha Arya, Shabana Azmi, Farooque Shaikh, Kader Khan, Yunus Parvez, Mac Mohan, Javed Siddiqi, Sudhir Pande, Aanijjan Srivastava, Bharat Kapoor, Rakesh Bedi, and many, many others. The list just goes on and on and would read like a who’s who of Indian art and culture.

Over the past six decades IPTA has been at the forefront of the theatre movement in the country. IPTA Mumbai has staged more than 100 plays in various Indian languages — Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, Telugu, Kannada, and Punjabi — as well as in English.

“KAIFI AUR MAIN” IN CHICAGO ADD EIGHT

The year 1984 saw the formation of IPTA Balmanch, a children’s theatre wing, which staged plays with young artistes from different socio-economic backgrounds.

In 1972 IPTA started its Inter Collegiate Drama Competition in memory of Prithviraj Kapoor. This competition that recognizes budding talent on stage is regarded as one of the most prestigious drama competitions in Mumbai. It has given many artistes not only to the Hindi stage, but also to Marathi and Gujarati theatre.

In recognition of IPTA’s contribution to Indian culture, the postal department released a commemorative philatelic stamp on May 25, 1994 in Mumbai. Shri Arjun Singh graced the occasion as the chief guest.

Apart from staging Hindi plays at different venues across India and at select venues abroad, IPTA also organizes an Annual Theatre Festival every year in the month of May. Other activities include performances by IPTA’s music choir, language classes, seminars on performing arts, film screenings, workshops, theatre activities for children, etc.

All IPTA activities are conducted on a non-profit basis and all members voluntarily participate in these activities. This is a democratic organization that has members from all strata of society.

“KAIFI AUR MAIN” IN CHICAGO ADD NINE

About Shabana Azmi

An actress par excellence, Shabana Azmi has starred in some of the greatest Indian films such as *Ankur*, *Mandi*, *Arth*, *Khandar*, *Paar*, *Sparsh*, *Godmother* and *Tehzeeb* to name a few. Satyajit Ray, the noted film-maker, says in his book, *Our Films Their Films*, “Shabana Azmi in her very first film, ‘ANKUR’, firmly establishes herself as the finest dramatic actress of the country.”

Born to noted Urdu progressive poet and IPTA President Kaifi Azmi and theatre actress Shaukat Kaifi, Shabana has acted in films by virtually all of India's most famous arthouse directors, including Shyam Benegal, Satyajit Ray, Mrinal Sen, Aparna Sen and others, as well as in commercial and middle-of-the-road Hindi films, and some international films where she has essayed several strong female characters.

She has also acted on stage to considerable acclaim, in plays such as Harold Pinter’s “Betrayal for Singapore Repertory Theatre” – 2005, Tanika Gupta’s “The Waiting Room” for The National Theatre London – 2002, Ibsen’s “A Doll’s House” for Singapore Repertory Theatre – 1997, Urdu adaptation of Bertolt Brecht’s “The Caucasian Chalk Circle” for IPTA – 1980 and most notably in “Tumhari Amrita,” the Urdu adaptation of A.R.Gurney’s “Love Letters” – 1992–2006.

“KAIFI AUR MAIN” IN CHICAGO ADD TEN

Shabana Azmi has won the National Award for Best Actress five times, including three times in a row from 1983-85 for the landmark films *Arth*, *Khandar* and *Paar*. She has also won innumerable awards for acting including the Filmfare award for Best Actress three times and the Filmfare Lifetime Achievement Award. Internationally she is one of the most respected faces of Indian cinema and has won awards at festivals like Toronto Reel World International Film Festival, IIFA (Life Time Achievement 2005) and Chicago International Film Festival among others.

She is noted for her naturalness and intensity on-screen, matched by her fierce advocacy for the rights of women, minorities, and displaced slum-dwellers off-screen, both through activism and in her role as a Member of Parliament (1997–2003), with her consistent stand in defense of liberal values and the freedom of expression. She has also been involved with issues concerning development, reproductive health, housing for the economically weaker sections, public health and HIV AIDS. She has fought relentlessly against religious fundamentalism of all hues and is highly respected as a moderate, liberal Muslim voice.

She received the prestigious Crystal Award at the World Economic Forum – Davos 2006 for achieving outstanding excellence in the field of culture and having used art to reach out to other cultures. She has also been conferred with the Padmashri by the President of India in 1988.

**“KAIFI AUR MAIN” IN CHICAGO
ADD ELEVEN**

Having worked in over 140 films as well as in theatre, Shabana Azmi believes Art should be used as an instrument for social change.

She is married to Javed Akhtar, Urdu poet, film lyricist and the one of the finest script writers in Hindi cinema.

“KAIFI AUR MAIN” IN CHICAGO ADD TWELVE

About Javed Akhtar

Lyricist, screenplay writer and poet – Javed Akhtar has scripted many memorable films. As a lyricist, Javed Akhtar has achieved unparalleled success and at present he is the most respected songwriter in India.

Javed Akhtar belongs to a family whose lineage can be traced back to seven generations of writers. Son of the famous progressive poet Jan Nisar Akhtar and Safia Akhtar, teacher and writer and nephew of renowned Urdu poet Majaz, Javed Akhtar has himself carved out a niche among the modern Urdu poets. His collection of Urdu poetry is titled *Tarkash* and has been translated into Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada and English.

Javed Akhtar has won the coveted Filmfare Award fourteen times for Best Lyrics and Best Script. He has also received the National Award five times including the Best Lyricist award for three years in succession for the films *Saaz* [1997], *Border* [1998], and *Godmother* [1999].

He has been honoured with innumerable awards including the Awadh Ratna by the Government of Uttar Pradesh and the Padmashri by the President of India.

“KAIFI AUR MAIN” IN CHICAGO ADD THIRTEEN

Recently he addressed a seminar on 'Challenges of Islamophobia' at Dublin, organized by Amnesty International. He has also addressed many seminars at reputed international universities such as Harvard, Columbia, Cambridge, Berkeley and Chicago among others. He has also spoken at Indian universities such as Jawaharlal Nehru University and Vishwa Bharati University.

The Government of India has declared his song as the National Anthem for Youth.

“KAIFI AUR MAIN” IN CHICAGO ADD FOURTEEN

About Jaswinder Singh

Jaswinder Singh is the young Ghazal Nawaaz and without doubt the most promising and sensational ghazal singer of this generation. Gifted with a soft and silky voice, he has proven himself as an artist who is here to stay. Born to the famous music director Kuldip Singh, Jaswinder has already started creating ripples in the music industry that are being felt by one and all.

He primarily learned music under the watchful and selfless guidance of his father and obtained training in classical vocals from Dr. Sushila Pohankar.

His albums include “Jazba-e-Dil”, solo Ghazal albums “Yours Truly” “Dilkash” in India and abroad. Jaswinder has his own unique style of performing and has mesmerized the audience in his international concerts in the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, Malaysia, Singapore, Dubai, Muscat, and others.

He has also performed in theatrical productions like *Sheeshon Ka Masiha* based on the life and poetry of Faiz Ahmed Faiz and *Ghalibnaama* based on the letters and poetry of Mirza Ghalib.

“KAIFI AUR MAIN” IN CHICAGO ADD FIFTEEN

About Ramesh Talwar

A veteran of the Indian Peoples Theatre Association (IPTA), Ramesh Talwar is a senior stage actor and director. As a director, his mastery over theatre and films is more than evident. He continues to be a beacon of inspiration for young theatre aspirants since the days he started IPTA's ever-popular Inter Collegiate Drama Competition in 1972.

He has directed several IPTA plays including the very successful and evergreen *Shatranj Ke Mohre*, *Tanhai* starring Shaukat Kaifi, Sagar Sarhadi's *Doosra Aadmi*, *Aakhri Sawaal*, *Apan To Bhai Aise Hain*, Ratnakar Matkari's *Lok Katha* and *Kashmakash*. In the early phase of his career, he acted in several popular IPTA plays and even now the acting bug has not left him entirely!

The irrepressible director has taken Indian theatre to foreign shores in a way and on a scale never attempted before. He has created quite a niche for himself, directing generations of filmstars on stage from Jaya Bachan in *Ma Retire Hoti Hai* and *Dr Mukta*, Shatrughan Sinha in *Pati, Patni Aur Main*, Zeenat Aman in *Chupke Chupke* to Pooja Bhatt in *Khubsoorat*.

He was Chief Assistant Director to Yash Chopra in the major blockbusters, such as *Daag*, *Deewar*, *Kabhie Kabhie*, *Kaala Pathar* and *Trishul*. Later he became a director in his own right, with films like *Doosra Aadmi*, *Basera*, *Duniya*, *Tera Naam Mera Naam* and *Saahibaan* among others.

**“KAIFI AUR MAIN” IN CHICAGO
ADD SIXTEEN**

About Vachikam

Vachikam, Inc. of Downers Grove, Ill., is the national promoter for “Kaifi Aur Main” in North America. Vachikam is committed to bringing greater awareness and appreciation of the Indian performing arts and culture to audiences in the United States and Canada. Established by Ketki Parikh in 1995, Vachikam has developed the reputation of a premier promoter of Indian theatre among audiences and artists alike. For more information, please visit www.vachikam.org.

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