

The book launch that bridged the diversity divide

By Emdad Rahman

Against the incredible rhythmic beats of tabla in the noble halls of the Bangladesh Centre, Monsoon Press made a triumphant entrance into the publishing world with its title launch The A-Z Guide to Arranged Marriage by Rekha Waheed.

Luminaries from Penguin, MBA Literary Agency, Bloomsbury, Saqi Books, Rebecca Winfield Agency, East Side Books, Foreign Commonwealth Office, Local Government, and a multitude of community organisations packed out the hall in anticipation of Monsoon Press's book launch.



Speakers: Helen Fraser, Penguin, Gina Antchida (Arts Council), Rekha Waheed, Rabina Khan

Helen Fraser, Managing Director Penguin (UK), commenced the evening with a tribute to Monsoon Press's aim to redress the lack of diversity in publishing. Ms Fraser also commended the production of The A-Z Guide to Arranged Marriage, which she found to be both 'witty and charming.'

Diversity in publishing was the theme for the evening as Gina Antachida and Charles Beckitt took to the stage to raise awareness of The British Arts Council campaign to tackle this long overlooked issue.

Rabina Khan then took to the platform to outline Monsoon Press's commitment to publishing and promoting ethnic and minority literature to redefine mainstream stereotypes by ethnic minority communities.

This was illustrated by Reba Waheed, General Secretary of Hammersmith Bengali Association, who worked closely with Monsoon Press to promote the importance of literature and used the evening to applaud the efforts of her students who debated and wrote about the contentious issues of Arranged Marriage.

The A-Z Guide to Arranged Marriage

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Having raised the importance of diversity in publishing and literature in our communities, Rekha Waheed took to the stage. With a style that mixed the modern with the traditional, 'You've heard of Bridget Jones, Ally McBeal and Carrie Bradshaw, now meet Maya Malik.' Rekha introduced. 'This book merges old world tradition with new world savvy'.



Monsoon Press Team: Reba Parvez, Rabina Khan, Denise Browne, Rekha Waheed

Rekha Waheed stressed the need for literature that caters for diverse urban ethnic communities that exposes the challenges of British-Asian culture. A reading of the sassy A-Z Guide to Arranged Marriage raised brows, caused laughter and great interest when it exposed the humorous reality of the great tradition.

A long Q&A session served to illustrate that the 'plagued by singledom', quirky main character reaches out to a new generation of women through redefined stereotypes and new cultural challenges that cross racial, religious boundaries. In short, all women will relate to Maya's paranoia about singledom.

Rekha Waheed introduces The A-Z Guide to Arranged Marriage to a packed out launch

The A-Z Guide to Arranged Marriage created a buzz of activity and excitement. In true

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Monsoon Press style, the book and evening both reflected the splendid spirit of Asian traditions that had mass appeal.

Attendees congratulated the Monsoon Press team on a great atmosphere, terrific speeches and wonderful food. Diversity in publishing had been put at the centre of the publishing debate and The A-Z Guide to Arranged Marriage has captured the imaginations of an industry still struggling to meet the needs of ethnic and minority population. Supported by Penguin, The Arts Council, East Side Bookstore, and Oh! Arts Theatre, Monsoon Press have taken the first attempt at bridging that gap. On the basis of the inaugural launch and the feedback to the book launch, it appears that by all accounts the launch was a great success.

Reserve a signed copy, place advanced orders to monsoonpress@hotmail.co.uk

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www.Monsoonpress.co.uk

www.authorsonline.co.uk

Eastside Books

By order from Waterstones, Borders, WHSmiths, Ottokars

About Monsoon Press

Monsoon Press is a new publisher, which specialises in Black, Asian and Minority literature. We aim to redress the under representation of ethnic literature and promote diversity in publishing. Future titles includes: Silent Voices- an anthology of Somalian stories, Roots- a novel about clashing identities in multicultural London', and Hijab- the story of 21st century women in veil.

For Media Enquiries, please contact:

Reba Parvez / Denise Browne Monsoon Press, Oh! Arts Centre, Derbyshire Street, London E2

Email: monsoonpress@hotmail.co.uk