

WRITERS MOSAIC

Why do I write?

Ishy Din

A world that is recognisable and yet new

'Why do I write?' It's a good question, it's one I often ask myself. Usually it's howled at my computer when faced with a blank document that I have to fill with words. It's born out of frustration, doubt and fear. The sense of imposter syndrome raises its sneering head and a debilitating feeling of inadequacy prevails as I wonder what possessed me to embark on such a soul-destroying endeavour.

And yet, despite the angst, I wake every morning and sit in front of my computer and start writing. I write because I have stories to tell, stories that are about me, essentially. About my world, my community, my family. I very rarely, if ever, see my world reflected back at me on stage or screen. And even when it is, it is reflected through a particular prism. It's someone's perception of what my world must be like. So I write to set the record straight.

I write because when I get it right, which is not very often, there is an incredible sense of achievement, a sense that I have somehow opened a window on a world or character that will at the same time be recognisable and yet unfamiliar and new. One of my fondest memories is when my play *Snookered*, a story of four young Pakistani friends on a night out, was being performed. White, middle-aged, middle-class men would comment that they recognised and understood what was unfolding on stage and yet those themes were set in a world that they didn't know. I write because, at its best, storytelling is universal.

I write because I want to see people laugh when I have written something funny and cry when I have written something tragic. I want to see that my words have affected a person, that

I have somehow stirred an emotion in someone. After all, my job as a writer is to incite an emotional reaction and when that is achieved it is a validation of my craft and imagination.

I write because I still have to pinch myself when I tell people I'm a writer.

Ishy Din

Ishy Din's first radio play was *John Barnes Saved My Life* for BBC Radio 5 Live. Other credits include *Life's Like That* for the BBC TV Brief Encounters strand, and *Parking and Pakoras* for local radio. His play *Snookered* was produced by Tamasha/Oldham Coliseum/The Bush and toured in 2012 taking in the Traverse Edinburgh and a four-week run at the Bush Theatre, London.

Ishy was the 2012 Pearson Writer in Residence at the Manchester Royal Exchange and in 2013 *Snookered* won Best New Play at the Manchester Theatre Awards. In the same year, he wrote short film *Perfume* for Eclipse Theatre's '10 x 10' online project. In 2013 Ishy's half hour standalone comedy drama *Doughnuts* was broadcast on C4 as part of the 'Coming Up' season and short film *Our Lad* was selected for multiple international festivals.

In 2014 his monologue for Company TSU played in a double bill called *Beats North* at Edinburgh Fringe Fest and on tour and he took part in the Bush/Kudos new writing scheme. His most recent play, *Approaching Empty*, a co-production between Tamasha, The Kiln and Live Theatre, Newcastle opened at The Kiln in London in January 2019.

This is a version of a talk given by Ishy Din. The recording can be found on the WritersMosaic website at writersmosaic.org.uk

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