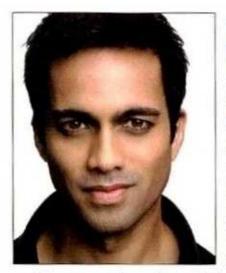
Opportunity knocks

The success of Gujarati schoolboy, Dev Patel, in Oscar-winner *Slumdog Millionaire* has opened up the field for young British Asian actors. **Aria Khan** previews six of the most promising up-and-comers, for whom the word "independent" has more career kudos than all the glam and glitz of Bollywood



VALMIKE RAMPERSAD Age on screen: from 24-30 years. Showreel: this dreamy eyed fellow – known as Val to friends – hit the big league while still at London's Central School of Speech

and Drama, with a role in Right Hand Drive (nominated for Best UK Feature at the British Film Festival 2009 in Los Angeles). The Trinidad-born Londoner's potential was undisputed when he went on to undergo a physical and mental transformation to play a suicidal manic-depressive in Open Secrets. The hard work paid off with the film bagging a top prize at the Buffalo San Black and Asian Film Festival in 2009.

Lined up: an impressive turn as an assassin in Hotel alongside Danny Webb and Art Malik, and a role as a surgeon in The Cost of Love. He is currently shooting for indie director Teja Hudson's Grasshopping, playing a computer-game programmer in an open marriage.

Style: the brooding quality of Edward Norton combined with the versatility of Matt Damon. He says: "I think ultimately you don't really learn how to act, you learn how to get in touch with your emotions. I enjoy playing characters that challenge and push me, characters not like me at all."

Zee says: Val has been clever at keeping a safe distance from Bollywood. His mime act to a recent music video by The Professional Brothers proves

there could be a niche for him in the Bolly world, too, but he is best off sticking with some of the

more meaty roles coming his way.