

# 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.