

Clean Break and Brixton House announce the cast for the world premiere of
BABY

A new play by Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti

Directed by Milli Bhatia

At Brixton House from 8 – 31 October 2026

Press night: Wednesday 14 October 2026

Clean Break and Brixton House announce **PEARL MACKIE** as the cast of their co-production **BABY**, a new play by **Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti** (*Behzti, A Kind of People, Marriage Material*), directed by **Milli Bhatia** (*Blue Mist, SPEED, seven methods of killing kylie jenner*).

Pearl Mackie is best known for her ground-breaking role as Bill Potts, the Doctor's companion in *Doctor Who* (BBC) opposite Peter Capaldi, with television credits also including *The Diplomat* (Netflix), *The Long Call* (ITV), and *Tom Jones* (ITV). Her recent theatre includes Sylvia Samuels in Lucy Kirkwood's *The Human Body* (Donmar Warehouse), Natasha Elcock in the acclaimed *Grenfell: In the Words of Survivors* (National Theatre) and *Ballet Shoes* (National Theatre).

Led by two-time Olivier Award-nominated director Milli Bhatia, *Baby's* creative team is announced as Set and Costume Designer Khadija Raza, Lighting Designer Bethany Gupwell, Sound Designer Elena Peña, Casting Director Nadine Rennie CDG, Assistant Director River, Assistant Stage Manager Hester Blindell, and Design Associate and Costume Supervisor Maariyah Sharjil.

Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti's other recent work with Clean Break was the company's collaboration with Lost Mothers, a University of Hertfordshire research project on maternal separation and imprisonment. The collaboration culminated in *Scenes from Lost Mothers*, a play which toured to students and professionals working in criminal justice settings in 2025. *Baby* now shifts perspectives on motherhood within the constraints of the criminal justice system and illuminates the resilience, survival and strength of a mother navigating impossible circumstances.

'They name me Baby. Means you'll never seem old, even when you are. You'll always bring hope, even when there is none. And you can always pretend you're wanted, even when you're not... '

Baby's bright and beautiful. Baby's trouble. Baby can do things nobody else can and why not? Britain's got talent, hasn't it?

Baby's had it tough and she wants to keep Bliss. That's all she wants. But something terrible stands in her way. Now Baby has to solve a problem....and you're part of her solution. Because you're proper people. You must be, to be reading this. Plus, there's nobody else she can ask...

Baby is a provocative play about one woman's desire to survive even though she hasn't got a chance in hell! Baby's coming...

Pearl Mackie said: "I have admired Clean Break and the amazing work they do for a long time, so being cast as Baby means a great deal to me. I am incredibly excited to get stuck into this powerful

and pertinent story, which comes at such a vital time when the injustice that mothers face in our prison system is finally getting the attention it deserves. Coming home to Brixton to play this fiercely unique character feels right and makes the experience all the more special.”

Anna Herrmann, Clean Break Artistic Director and Joint CEO, said: "I am thrilled that the phenomenal Pearl Mackie has been cast as Baby, for Clean Break's return to Brixton House. Brixton House is the perfect partner for this urgent new play by Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti, building on *Scenes from Lost Mothers*, a groundbreaking play used as a creative tool in the campaign to end the imprisonment of pregnant women. Now, *Baby* draws the curtain back further on the life of a mother in prison, exposing the experiences that led to her entanglement with the criminal justice system and the impossible challenges she faces on release”.

Ruth Hawkins, Brixton House Executive Creative Producer said: "I am thrilled to welcome back the pioneering Clean Break to Brixton House, growing our partnership for a second co-production *Baby*, a beautifully crafted new play shining a light on motherhood in the judicial system. Our shared commitment to staging new work enables us to expand the reach of where art and social justice collide. We are excited to see how Pearl Mackie brings Gurpreet's brilliant work to life.”

ENDS

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

Listing Information:

Venue: Brixton House, 385 Coldharbour Lane, Brixton, London SW9 8G

Dates: 8 – 31 October 2026

Press night: 14 October 2026

Ticket: £15.40 - £23.40

Box office: <https://brixtonhouse.co.uk/shows/baby/>

Production Credits:

Cast - Pearl Mackie

Writer - Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti

Director - Milli Bhatia

Assistant Director - River

Set and Costume Designer - Khadija Raza

Lighting Designer - Bethany Gupwell

Sound Designer - Elena Peña

Design Associate and Costume Supervisor - Maariyah Sharjil

Assistant Stage Manager - Hester Blindell

Casting Director - Nadine Rennie CDG

About Clean Break

Clean Break changes lives and changes minds through theatre – on stage, in prisons and in the community. It produces ground-breaking plays with women's voices at the heart of its work. Founded in 1979 by two women in prison who believed that theatre could bring the hidden stories of women who are criminalised to a wider audience, Clean Break remains true to these roots.

The company has been inspiring playwrights and captivating audiences with award-winning plays on the complex theme of women and criminalisation for over four decades. Current productions include *Blis-ta* (an audio drama by the late Sonya Hale, BBC Audio Drama Award winner), *Sweatbox* (a film of Chloë Moss's acclaimed play set in a prison van) and *Hope* (a film by Nicole Hall, Michelle Hamilton, Kirsty Housley, Carina Murray, Natasha Jean Sparkes, and River) - all available on Clean Break's Knowledge Hub. Recent productions include *Scenes from Lost Mothers* by Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti (national tour), *The Trials and Passions of Unfamous Women* (co-created by Janaina Leite, Lara Duarte & Athena Maria, Yvonne Wickham, Sarah-Jane Dent, Dominique Lavine Wood-Whyte, Kim Teresa (KT) Marsh and Rachel Valentine Smith, LIFT Festival 2024), *Dixon and Daughters* (by Deborah Bruce at National Theatre, now available on NT at Home), *Catch* (a small-scale touring play by Sonia Jalaly), *Favour* (by Ambreen Razia, Bush Theatre) and *Typical Girls* (by Morgan Lloyd Malcolm, Sheffield Crucible).

About Brixton House

Brixton House is more than just a cultural space; it is a vibrant community hub where creativity thrives, voices are heard, and everyone is welcomed and celebrated. Our vision is to empower the undervalued, unheard, and excluded communities through our creative and cultural spaces. We believe in creating a haven where every voice matters, where stories from all walks of life can be shared and celebrated. Our mission is rooted in the rich and influential history of Ovalhouse Theatre, from which Brixton House has emerged as a dynamic new cultural hub. We are dedicated to presenting and collaborating with voices and perspectives that are often marginalised in mainstream funded culture.

Pearl Mackie - cast

Pearl Mackie is a British actress trained at Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. On screen she stars in seasons 1 and 2 of Netflix's *The Diplomat*, created by Debora Cahn. DS Jen Rafferty in ITV's *The Long Call*, a major role in Tom Jones for Masterpiece PBS/ITV, Channel 4's *Friday Night Dinner*, and the films *Greed* and *Horizon Line*. Most recently she shot indie TV series, *Locker Room Talk*.

Recent stage work includes Sylvia Samuels in Lucy Kirkwood's *The Human Body* at the Donmar Warehouse, and Natasha Elcock in the acclaimed *Grenfell: In the Words of Survivors* at the National Theatre, directed by Phyllida Lloyd and Anthony Simpson-Pike. She also appeared in Kendall Feaver's new adaptation of *Ballet Shoes* at the National.

Pearl is widely known for her ground-breaking role as Bill Potts, the Doctor's companion in BBC's *Doctor Who* opposite Peter Capaldi — a performance that quickly became a fan favourite.

Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti writes for stage, screen and radio. Her first play *Behsharam* broke box office records at Soho/Birmingham Rep. Her second play *Behzti* was sensationally closed after protests at

the Rep. It won the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize. Other credits include *A Kind of People*, Royal Court Downstairs; *Choir*, Chichester Festival Theatre; *Marriage Material*, Lyric Hammersmith/Birmingham Rep; *Khandan*, Royal Court/Birmingham Rep; *Behud*, Soho/Belgrade; *Silence*, Donmar Warehouse; *846*, Stratford East; *Elephant*, Birmingham Rep; *Dishoom*, Rifco/Watford Palace Theatre, *Fourteen*, Watford Palace; the feature film *Everywhere And Nowhere*; *DCI Stone*, Radio 4; *Londonee*, Rich Mix; *Dead Meat*, Channel 4 and *An Enemy Of The People*, BBC.

Gurpreet wrote for *The Archers* for seven years and was part of the team that conceived the ground-breaking 'Helen and Rob' domestic violence story.

She is developing original series *Masala* for Hometeam/Universal, adapting *Black & Blue* by Parm Sandhu for Cuba Pictures as well as *Brando's Bride* by Sarah Broughton as a feature for Ffilm Cymru Wales and writing her hit play *Scenes for Lost Mothers* as a film for Clean Break. She is also developing plays for NT Connections and the Royal Court.

She is a voting member of BAFTA, a trustee of the Peggy Ramsay Foundation and an ambassador for Birth Companions, a charity working to improve the lives of babies and women who experience inequality and disadvantage. Her plays are published by Methuen.

Milli Bhatia (Director)

Milli is an award winning stage and screen director, and dramaturg from East London.

She is an Associate Artist at Synergy and Creative Advisor at Brixton House. She was Associate Director at The Royal Court Theatre.

She is a two time Olivier Award nominee, for her productions of seven methods of *killing kylie jenner* and *Blue Mist*, both premiered at The Royal Court Theatre. Her work has been nominated for Visionary Arts Awards, Broadway World West End Awards, Off West End Awards, EE Actas and Asian Media Awards, and has both received West End and international transfers to The USA and Europe. Her film AUNTY JI is currently screening at several BIFA and BAFTA qualifying festivals and won an award at International Film Festival Bangalore. Other work in theatre includes *Second Trimester* (BAC), *SPEED* (Bush Theatre), *King Troll The Fawn* (NDT), *Maryland* (Royal Court), *Chasing Hares* (Young Vic).

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