

Theatre joy for Bob, 68

JON TAYLOR

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AN ACTOR who waited more than four decades for his big theatre break is singing and dancing in a Bollywood-inspired musical comedy.

Bob Young, 68, from Swinton, is taking a leading role in the six-day run of the Bollywood Girls of Blackburn at a Manchester theatre.

Having performed as a cabaret singer for more than 40 years, Bob (*pictured*) had always dreamed of acting. He got his first big break three years ago at the age of 65 when he starred in the play Love Shy Neighbour which ran at Salford Arts Theatre.

"I'd always wanted to be an actor but I thought at my age that I'd missed the boat," said Bob, a dad-of-three who is engaged to Brenda Walker.

"I thought I should have gone on to acting school.

"I spent a while doing background work and gaining experience, and eventually got myself on an acting database and got an agent. Everything is different now, thanks to the internet. I became aware of more opportunities."

Bob says his singing experience also helped him with his TV and film work, which has seen him star in a film called the Rochdale Pioneers and a play called Onions Cry Too, alongside 'Allo 'Allo star Arthur Brostrum.

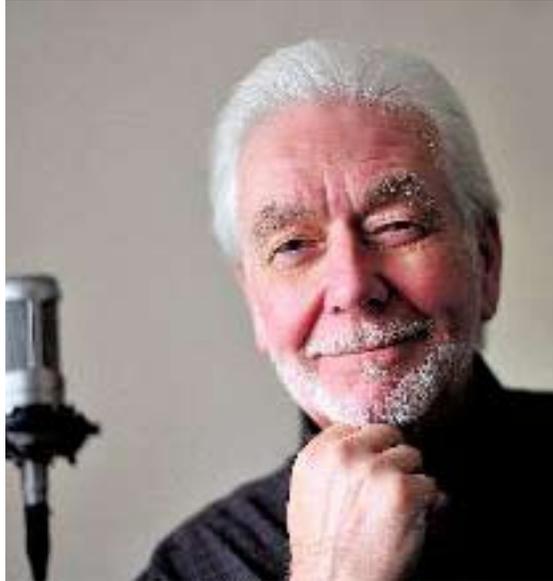
"I was used to facing audiences on my own, but it's a big change now working with other people and a crew," he said.

This latest role sees Bob star in a musical highlighting the common ground between Asian and white people in notoriously racially divided towns.

"I went down to read lines for it and more or less got offered it on the spot," he said.

"I was delighted. My character, Jack Atkinson, is great. He's an opinionated, funny, typical Blackburn lad - a bit of a wind up merchant."

The show runs at the Three Minute Theatre on Oldham Road from June 9. Tickets are available from threeminutetheatre.co.uk.



● Val Ridings with her daughter Mags, who is taking on the theatre role she played 25 years ago

Actress follows in mum's footsteps

A BUDDING thespian will be taking on the role her mother played 25 years ago as a production is given a comeback.

Mags Ridings, 24, will play cocktail waitress Mel in Barton Theatre Company's latest production - the same part played by her mum Val, 62, in the play, Shakers.

Salford Arts Theatre will play host to a re-styled version of the group's

original show, called Shakers Re-stirred. Mags has followed a family tradition in joining the group. The pressure's on, especially as a number of family members are also involved in the production, which centres around the realities behind the bar at a trendy cocktail bar in the late eighties.

She said: "I just want to do justice to this role in the eyes of my mum."

"My mother, dad, auntie and uncle are all involved with the production doing things like lighting and sound, so it's a family hobby as well, really."

Shakers Restirred runs at Salford Arts Theatre on Kemsing Walk, from next Wednesday to Saturday, May 7 to 10.

For tickets, priced £7.50, call the box office on 0161 925 0111 or book online at salfordartstheatre.com.

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in brief

MOVING TALK

A HOLOCAUST survivor gave a talk to pupils as part of events to mark the genocide's remembrance day.

Steven Frank talked to pupils at Broughton Jewish Primary about how he and his family survived the horrors of the Theresienstadt concentration camp in the Czech Republic. His talk was timed to coincide with Holocaust Remembrance Day.