

A unique, cross-cultural contemporary dance performance involving dancers and choreographers from Poland and India at the Royal Opera House, Mumbai

“Dance is the hidden language of the soul of the body” – Martha Graham

For Immediate Release

Royal Opera House, Mumbai in collaboration with **The Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Mumbai**, and **Avid Learning** presents ‘**The Crossing**’, a contemporary dance performance involving dancers and choreographers from Poland and India, working together and sharing the stage, their knowledge, expertise and cultural experiences to create a cross-cultural artistic experience.

The description of the performance is as below:

The Crossing is a collaborative contemporary dance production between **Zawirowania Dance Theatre**, based in Warsaw, Poland and **Navdhara India Dance Theatre**, based in Mumbai, India. The title refers to the cultural exchange that has taken place between the performers while working on this production. It represents the similarities and differences that arise during the coming together of two cultures - in this case Central European and South Asian, the spiritual East and the rational West.

In this production, Indian and Polish artists, through the mystical world of dance, celebrate their diversity and common experiences on stage. The performance comprises of 5 separate pieces choreographed by Indian-Australian choreographer **Ashley Lobo** and Polish choreographers, **Karolina Krocak** and **Elwira Piorun**. Many of the dance pieces use Lobo's notable technique technique, *Prana Paint™* which is a unique sensitizing approach developed by him that explores movement through yoga, breath, connectivity, and touch to help the dancer go deep within.

The project consists of five choreographies:

- A section choreographed by Ashley Lobo with Indian dancers
- A section choreographed by Ashley Lobo with Polish dancers
- A section choreographed by the Polish choreographer with Polish dancers
- A section choreographed by the Polish choreographer with Indian dancers
- A section choreographed by Ashley on Indian and Polish dancers.

This is a continuation of Navdhara India Dance Theatre's collaboration with the Zawirowania Dance Theatre in Warsaw, with whom they have been working on a project with the aim to enrich the cultural exchange between these two nations. The first half of the project was presented at the **Zawirowania Dance Festival** earlier this year.

This is our first collaboration with the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Mumbai and we believe that in the realm of culture, excellent links and growing mutual artistic inspirations are our best assets in the strengthening of bilateral relations.

The Royal Opera House, Mumbai provides a unique platform in the city for people to encounter the breadth of the performing and visual Arts. In keeping with the legacy of this institution, where even in our early days we've showcased theatre, dance, cinema and music, we are keen to support and showcase unique events that defy easy categorization and blend the traditional with the contemporary, and find synergies between the arts in fascinating ways.

Mr. Asad Lalljee, Curator of the Royal Opera House, Mumbai says “ We have sought to redefine The Royal Opera House in the past two years since reopening as an inclusive and

exciting cultural hub for our much loved city.

We are excited to present a cross-cultural dance collaboration at the Royal Opera House, Mumbai. We are known for supporting events that defy easy categorisation and have showcased most genres of the Arts from music, literature, theatre and now dance. We are delighted to partner on this piece by Ashley Lobo's Navdhara India Dance Theatre and Zawirowania Dance Theatre with the support of Consulate General of the Republic of Poland.

We always seek to include more people in the conversation and now known as the City's Cultural Crown Jewel and we feel so privileged”.

Ashley Lobo, Founder & Artistic Director, The Danceworx Performing Arts Academy (TDX) and Navdhara India Dance Theatre (NIDT) says, “It’s an honour and a pleasure to perform the crossing at the Royal Opera House. It is great to see this kind of promotion of alternate dance and art. The collaboration between Navdhara and Zawirowania has been both a learning and fruitful experience for all, and after presenting this performance in Warsaw, I am excited to see how the Mumbai audience responds to the works by all the dancers and choreographers involved. My deepest gratitude to the Royal Opera House and the Polish Consulate for supporting this venture”.

Consul General Damian Irzyk, Consulate of the Republic of Poland says, “*One of my mission’s main goals is to promote and foster an understanding of Poland’s culture throughout Western and Southern India in a spirit of mutual cooperation. There is probably no better way to do it, rather than encouraging musical, cultural and every-day life exchanges between orient and occident. The Crossing, as a collaborative contemporary dance production between Warsaw based Zawirowania Dance Theatre and Mumbai Navdhara India Dance Theatre, is a prime example of the diversity and uniqueness of the historic and recent expressions of dance and musical creativity of Poland and India*”.

Where: Royal Opera House, Mama Parmanand Marg, Mumbai - 400 004

When: Saturday, 17th November 2018 | 6:30 PM – 7:00 PM - Registration | 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM - Performance

Tickets: Insider: www.insider.in | Box-Office: rsvp@royaloperahouse.in / 022 23668888

Press Email / Call: Ayesha Dadachanji on ayeshah.avid@gmail.com / +91 9820155297

THE CROSSING

- an Indo-Polish contemporary dance collaboration



Royal Opera House, Mumbai in collaboration with The Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Mumbai, and Avid Learning presents 'THE CROSSING', a collaborative contemporary dance production between Mumbai based, Navdhara India Dance Theatre and Warsaw based, Zawirowania Dance Theatre, involving dancers and choreographers from Poland and India, working together and sharing the stage, their knowledge, expertise and cultural experiences to create a cross-cultural artistic experience. In this production, Indian and Polish artists, through the mystical world of dance, celebrate their diversity and common experiences on stage. The performance comprises of 5 separate pieces choreographed by Indian-Australian choreographer Ashley Lobo and Polish choreographers, Karolina Krocak and Elwira Piorun. Many of the dance pieces use Lobo's notable technique of Prana Paint™ - a unique sensitizing approach developed by him that explores movement through yoga, breath, connectivity, and touch and helps the dancer go deep within.

DATE: Saturday, 17th November 2018
TIME: 6:30 PM - 7:00 PM - Registration | 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM - Performance
VENUE: Royal Opera House, Mama Parmanand Marg, Mumbai - 400 004
TICKETS: Insider: www.insider.in | Box-Office: 022 23668888



@avidlearning



/avidlearning



@avidlearning



/avidlearning

About the Choreographers

ASHLEY LOBO Ashley Lobo is considered to be a spearhead of international dance in India. He is the Founder & Artistic Director of both *The Danceworx Performing Arts Academy* and *Navdhara India Dance Theatre*.

His career in performing arts comprises of over 35 years of performing, choreographing, and teaching - in India and overseas. He trained in Australia at the Bodenweiser Dance Centre and at Sydney Dance Company.

Ashley has developed *Prana Paint™*, a unique sensitizing approach that explores movement through yoga, breath, connectivity, and touch. This notable technique has put him on the international map and has led to him being invited to teach and choreograph overseas. In 2017, he was invited to create a full-length contemporary dance production "*Das Dschungelbuch*" for *The Ballet Chemnitz* in Germany. In 2019, he is doing the same for a ballet company in Austria, *Landestheater Linz*.

Ashley has choreographed extensively for stage and cinema, with over 30 feature films and as many stage productions to his credit. He has also been a judge on *India's Dancing Superstar*, a competitive dance reality programme on Star Plus, a premium Indian TV channel.

Karolina Kroczak - Karolina has worked as a dancer and choreographer in Zawirowania Dance Theatre. She has worked with the group since 2006 – she has taken part in the following performances: Nic Tylko Błękit, Chopin Ambiente, Innocent When You Dream, Fuera de Campo by Daniel Abreu). In 2005–2007, she participated in an educational project of the Silesian Dance Theatre. She collaborated with such artists as Jaro Vinarsky, Hilke Diemer, Georg Blaschke, Juan de Torres, Daniel Abreu. She was also a choreographer of the 5th Edition of TV show “You Can Dance – po prostu tańcz”. In 2010 she created, as a choreographer and second director, a performance with dancers of “Dancing with the Stars” Lady Fosse in Capitol Theatre, Warsaw. She’s also a dancer and teacher of many dance techniques and physical methods, i.e. contemporary dance, physical modern, release modern, Pilates.

Elwira Piorun – Elwira graduated from the Ballet School, Warsaw and in Ballet Pedagogy from the Fryderyk Chopin Academy of Music, Warsaw. For many years she was a soloist with the Teatr Wielki, the Polish National Opera in Warsaw. For eight years (1990–1997) she worked in Germany (Hagen and Dortmund). In 2005, she founded *Zawirowania Dance Theatre* together with Włodzimierz Kaczkowski. Here she has regularly co-produced group choreographies in which she has performed and featured performances of other artists such as Juan de Torres and Daniela Merlo. Elwira is an active promoter of contemporary dance in Warsaw. She also organizes Zawirowania Dance Theatre Festival, taking place each year in June.

About Partners

The Royal Opera House, Mumbai is widely touted as Mumbai’s Cultural Crown Jewel and India’s only surviving Opera House. The original idea for the space was conceived of in 1908, inaugurated in 1911 by King George V, and eventually completed in 1916. The design incorporated a blend of European and Indian detailing. The space became a cinema in later years before falling into disrepair and shutting by the 1990s. Fittingly, the space has been owned by the Royal Family of Gondal since 1952 and was eventually restored by conservation architect, Abha Narain Lambah under the leadership of His Highness, Maharaja Shri Jyotendrasinhji of Gondal. The Royal Opera House Mumbai, now one of the last remaining Baroque structures in the city, reopened after 23 years in October 2016. The building was included on the 2012 World Monuments Watch to raise awareness about its history and significance, and support preservation efforts. The building has since been recognized with an Award of Merit in the 2017 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation. The restored facilities feature a 575-seater 3-level auditorium with an orchestra pit and state of the art technological upgradations, including acoustics, stagecraft, lighting and air-conditioning, alongside retaining the old world charm of the proscenium stage, the royal boxes and the magnificent regal chandeliers. Some more enhancements to the venue include a motorized screen, co-axial ceiling speaker system, Four-zone volume control and all round wifi access. Today, it stands as a key performance and creative hub in the city’s cultural landscape, while being a premier heritage landmark. *Facebook:* MumbaiOpera *Twitter:* @MumbaiOpera *Instagram:* @mumbaiopera

The Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Mumbai

The Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Mumbai was opened in 1933. The first Consul Dr. Eugeniusz Banasiński held the post till 1944. During the World War 2 the Consulate was strongly involved in the logistics arrangements for 5000+ Polish citizens, rescued and

taken out from the places of persecution in the Soviet Union and found shelter in India, in purpose-built settlements in Valivade (in the suburbs of Kolhapur) and in Balachadi (near Jamnagar).

Since India's independence and establishment of bilateral diplomatic relations, the Consulate has played an important role in promoting Poland through conducting commercial, information, education projects, working with the media and public and encouraging academic, scientific and artistic exchanges. Consulate also provides passports, birth registration and many others services for visiting or resident Polish citizens in southern India as well as issues visas for Indians willing to travel to Poland.

NAVDHARA INDIA DANCE THEATRE (NIDT) is one of India's premier contemporary dance companies based out of Mumbai, India, founded by Indian-Australian choreographer Ashley Lobo. It was set up with the aim of helping young dancers in India channelize their creative energies, to give them a platform to reach out and communicate with an international audience.

Combining the physical methodologies of western dance and the spiritual philosophies of India and Indian dance, including thoughts from the ancient Indian *gurukul* system, NIDT seeks to allow newer methodologies and works of theatre and dance to come through. The dancers' training process also includes a unique sensitizing approach developed by Ashley Lobo called *Prana Paint*[™]. This technique explores creative movement through yoga, breath, connectivity, and touch and helps each dancer develop a movement style that is completely individual yet universal, with the only allegiance being to the truth of breath and *prana* (life energy). NIDT's entire repertoire is created on the basis of this technique, making their work a seamless personal experience for any viewer. The focus is simplicity and communication, so all boundaries disappear and *Nav-dhara* or 'new flow' is achieved.

NIDT has toured extensively with their work, performing in USA, Canada, South Africa, Germany, Israel, Turkey, China, Bahrain, Taiwan and Mexico.

Zawirowania Dance Theatre

Zawirowania Dance Theatre was founded in 2005. Its Artistic Director and main choreographer, Elwira Piorun has been a former soloist of the Teatr Wielki, the Polish National Opera in Warsaw, and has performed extensively in German ballet and dance theatres. The company consists of dancers with various technical backgrounds, from classical dance, through contemporary and jazz dance, to pantomime. The combination of various backgrounds results in an interesting stage effect, widening the group's creative potential. Włodzimierz Kaczkowski, director, often responsible for narration in the performances, collaborates with Zawirowania. The group's main principle is to use contemporary dance techniques to create dance theatre performances. The company has performed overseas many times, including performances in India, Zimbabwe, Spain, Germany, France, and others. The company also runs the Zawirowania Dance Theatre Festival, which takes place yearly in Warsaw. This event has performances and dance workshop from dance companies in Poland and overseas, including Cullberg Ballet, Kibbutz, Norrdans, Leesaar, Zapalla Dance Company, Granhoj Dans, Tchekpo Dance Company, China Wave and others

Avid Learning, a public programming platform and cultural arm of the Essar Group, has conducted over 950 programs and connected with more than 100,000 individuals since its inception in 2009. Driven by the belief that Learning Never Stops, AVID's multiple formats like Workshops, Panel Discussions, Gallery Walkthroughs, and Festival Platforms create a

dynamic and interactive atmosphere that stimulates intellectual and creative growth across the fields of Culture & Heritage, Literature, Art and Innovation.

Facebook : www.facebook.com/Avidlearning; Twitter : www.twitter.com/Avidlearning;

Instagram: @avidlearning
