

The award-winning author of *The Vagina Monologues*, Eve Ensler presents her latest book, *The Apology* for the first time in Mumbai at The Royal Opera House

For Immediate Release

Akshara Centre, One Billion Rising, Royal Opera House, Mumbai and **Avid Learning** present an evening of book readings and conversation around the global launch of *Bestselling Author and Award-Winning Playwright Eve Ensler's* latest book ***The Apology***.

The evening will feature *Actor Rahul Bose* who will read excerpts from the book. This will be followed by a discussion on the book, its main themes and the larger issue of abuse, atonement and freedom between the author and *Journalist Faye D'Souza*. The book has been launched internationally earlier this year, and will be presented by the author herself for the first time here in Mumbai at the Opera House. Additionally, in keeping with the overarching theme of the event of supporting gender rights and women empowerment, the evening will commence with a musical performance by two talented young women singers.

The description of the book is as below:

The Apology is a bold, brutal and ultimately healing narrative told from the perspective of a father who committed countless wrongs against his child. Written by Ensler from her father's point of view in the words she longed to hear, this book attempts to transform the abuse she faced with unflinching truthfulness, compassion and an expansive vision for the future.

The book also exposes the origin story of Ensler's ground-breaking and award-winning play *The Vagina Monologues* through searing reflections on incest and abuse. Through *The Apology*, Ensler has set out to provide a new way for herself and a possible road for others, so that survivors of abuse may finally envision how to be free. Remarkable and original, the book is an acutely transformational look at how, from the wounds of sexual abuse, we can begin to re-emerge and heal.

At the Royal Opera House, Mumbai, we believe that the arts play an integral role in advocating social change and we feel privileged to leverage our stage to support a wide range of social causes. Gender rights, diversity, parity and inclusivity are key in fuelling empowerment for women and the Opera House seeks to be a change-maker in this respect by providing a platform for fearless and inspiring women to tell their stories, recount their trials and tribulations and instigate change. We are proud to partner with Akshara Centre, a not-for-profit working through multiple interventions for gender justice to present this thought-provoking event.

Along with supporting annual international remembrance days such as International Day of the Girl Child we have also presented events showcasing influential women who are playing a role in bringing about a paradigm shift in the country. Earlier this year, we premiered *Filmmaker Vibha Bakshi's* powerful gender-rights documentary, ***Son Rise*** at this very venue and have also supported, highlighted and championed influential female voices from the arts and culture from across the country and beyond. Avid Learning has also supported International Women's Day and important government campaigns such as Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao.

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

WHEN: Wednesday, 13th November 2019 | 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM – Book Readings and Discussion

RSVP: www.insider.in ; prior registration required

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An Intimate Conversation with Author of The Vagina Monologues, Eve Ensler

Join us for an evening of book readings and conversation around the global launch of Bestselling Author and Award-Winning Playwright **Eve Ensler's** latest book, *The Apology*. The evening will commence with readings from the book by Actor **Rahul Bose**, followed by a discussion on the book, its main themes and the larger issue of abuse, atonement and freedom between the author and Journalist **Faye D'Souza**. The book has been launched internationally earlier this year, and will be presented by the author herself for the first time here in Mumbai at this event. *The Apology*, written by Ensler from her father's point of view in the words she longed to hear, attempts to transform the abuse with unflinching truthfulness, compassion, and an expansive vision for the future.

DATE: Wednesday, 13th November 2019
TIME: 6:00 PM - 6:30 PM - Registrations
 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM - Book Readings and Discussion
VENUE: Royal Opera House, Mama Parmanand Marg, Mumbai - 400 004
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About the Speakers

Eve Ensler, Tony Award winning playwright, performer, and activist, is the author of *The Vagina Monologues*, translated into over 48 languages, performed in over 140 countries, including sold-out runs at both Off-Broadway's Westside Theater and on London's West End. The play ran for over 10 years in the U.K., Mexico and France. In 2004, Ensler performed her play *The Good Body* on Broadway, followed by a 20-city national tour. *Emotional Creature* ran in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Paris, Berkeley and New York throughout 2011. In 2015, *O.P.C.* had its world premiere at the American Repertory Theater and in 2016, *Avocado* debuted at the West Yorkshire Playhouse and became part of *The Fruit Trilogy*, which had a run at the West Yorkshire Playhouse. In 2016, Eve adapted and premiered her memoir *In the Body of the World*, which she performed at the American Repertory Theater directed by Diane Paulus. In January 2018, Eve will perform the play at the Manhattan Theatre Club in New York City. Eve's other plays include *The Treatment*, *Necessary Targets*, *Ladies*, *Lemonade*, *Extraordinary Measures*, *Mango*, and *Here* which was filmed live by Sky Television in London, UK in the summer of 2010. Ensler released *Insecure at Last*, a political memoir in 2006 and co-edited *A Memory, a Monologue, a Rant, and a Prayer*, an anthology of writings about violence against women published in 2007. In 2010, *I Am an Emotional Creature: The Secret Life of Girls Around the World* was released by Random House and made *The New York Times* Best Seller list. Her critically acclaimed memoir *In the Body of the World* a visionary memoir of separation and connection – to the body, the self, and the world was published by Metropolitan Books in 2013. Ensler's film credits include an HBO film version of her performance of *The Vagina Monologues* (2002). She also produced the film *What I Want My Words to Do to You*, a documentary about the writing group she led at the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility for Women which won the Freedom of Expression Award at the Sundance Film Festival and premiered nationally on PBS's "P.O.V." in December 2003. Ensler has written numerous articles for *The Guardian*, *Huffington Post*,

International Herald Tribune, Elle France, La Repubblica and Time Magazine. She was awarded the 2011 Isabelle Stevenson Tony Award. Other awards include a Guggenheim Fellowship in Playwriting, an Obie, and *Glamour's* Woman of the Year in addition to many honorary degrees. In November 2009, Ensler was named one of *US News & World Report's* "Best Leaders" in association with the Center for Public Leadership (CPL) at Harvard Kennedy School. In 2010 she was named one of "125 Women Who Changed Our World" by *Good Housekeeping Magazine*. In 2011 she was named one of *Newsweek's* "150 Women Who Changed the World" and *The Guardian's* "100 Most Influential Women." Ms. Ensler is the recent recipient of the Lucille Lortel 2018 Lifetime Achievement Award and a 2018 Lily Award. Ensler's experience performing *The Vagina Monologues* inspired her to create V-Day, a global activist movement to stop violence against women and girls. She has devoted her life to stopping violence, envisioning a planet in which women and girls will be free to thrive, rather than merely survive. Today, V-Day raises funds and awareness through benefit productions of Ensler's award-winning play *The Vagina Monologues* and other artistic works. To date, the V-Day movement has raised over \$100 million; educated millions about the issue of violence against women and the efforts to end it; crafted international educational, media, and PSA campaigns; reopened shelters; and funded over 13,000 community-based anti-violence programs and safe houses in Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Indian Country, and Iraq. In 2012, Eve initiated ONE BILLION RISING which has run now for five years and is the largest mass action campaign against violence against women and girls. Annually, activists rise in 200 countries through dance and creative expression. V-Day has received numerous acknowledgements and awards and is one of the top-rated organizations on both Charity Navigator and Guidestar.

Faye D'Souza is a prominent journalist and a television news anchor. She studied journalism at the Mount Carmel College, Bengaluru, and holds a bachelor's degree in journalism and English literature and a master's degree in Mass Communication. D'Souza started her journalism career with All India Radio, while she was a student. She then worked as a post graduate journalist at CNBC TV 18 in 2003 and later moved on to reporting about mutual funds, insurance and personal finance. She has worked as an anchor and editorial lead on *Investor's Guide* on ET Now a member of the CNBC TV18 newsroom. She ran three weekly shows on ET Now – *Investor's Guide*, *All About Stocks* and *The Property Guide*. till most recently she worked as the executive editor of Mirror Now and rose to fame with the show *The Urban Debate*, where she anchored on subjects of corruption, communal violence and independent press. She received The RedInk Award for 'Journalist of the Year' in 2018.

Called the 'Indian art house icon', by TIME magazine, **Rahul Bose** won the Best Actor award at the Singapore Film Festival in 2000, the John Schlesinger award for Runner Up - Best Debut Director in 2002 and the Excellence in Direction award from the Indian Federation of Directors in 2017. His awards in the field of activism include: Indian Youth Icon of the Year - Social Justice, 2008, the Green Globe award for Climate Change, 2010, the Lt. Governor's Commendation Award for Services to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, 2012, the Hakim Khan Sur award for National Integration, 2013, GQ's Man of the Year, 2015 for Philanthropy and GQ's Man of the Year 2017, Social Justice through Cinema. Rahul has lectured on gender justice, leadership and cinema at Harvard, Yale, Oxford, Cambridge, MIT and Columbia University amongst others. Perhaps most significantly, Rahul played rugby for India for eleven years, in 17 internationals. Rahul is the founder of two NGOs: The Foundation, dedicated to the equalisation of opportunity through education of children and HEAL, devoted to the prevention of child sexual abuse.

About Partners

Akshara Centre is a Mumbai based, not for profit organisation working for gender justice. Over the past two decades Akshara has provided financial support to 5000 underprivileged girls who have been able to access higher education and life skills. It has trained over 25000 Gender Champions in low resource colleges in the prevention of sexual harassment. Besides ground level community work, Akshara takes empowerment to the level of the neighbourhood and the city with the goal of making Mumbai safe for women. This has involved collaborative partnerships with policy makers, the Mumbai Police, BEST transport, the Railways and the Municipal Corporation of Mumbai. Akshara's latest intervention is in the sphere of Urban Development to ensure planned gender inclusion and safe spaces for women in city planning and design. Started by Dr. Nandita Gandhi and Dr. Nandita Shah in 1995, Akshara has been on the Civil Society Advisory Group of UN

Women since 2013 and is an active organizer for World Social Forum and the global One Billion Rising campaigns.

One Billion Rising is one of the biggest mass actions to end violence against women (cisgender, transgender, and those who hold fluid identities that are subject to gender-based violence) and across class, caste, religion and other identities of women. The campaign launched on Valentine's Day 2012 had begun as a call to action based on the staggering statistic that 1 in 3 women in the world will be beaten or raped during her lifetime. With the world population at 7 billion, this adds up to more than **One Billion Women and Girls**. One Billion Rising has focussed on the issue of justice for all survivors of gender violence. Millions of activists in over 200 countries and more than 114 organizations in 24 states of India have been part of the Rise for Revolution, to change the paradigm, demand accountability, justice and systematic change. Mumbai has been organising the One Billion Rising events.

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

Avid Learning, a public programming platform and cultural arm of the Essar Group, has conducted over 1150 programs and connected with more than 140,000 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.

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