



**For Immediate Release**

**Shared History: Celebrating a Decade**

**Johannesburg: 22 August 2016:** The Shared History Festival is proud to celebrate its milestone 10<sup>th</sup> year of the Indian Experience in South Africa and to continue the centuries old narrative of historical and cultural ties between South Africa and India.

Shared History, a festival of the pioneering entertainment company Teamwork Arts, in collaboration with the High Commission of India in South Africa, runs from 30 August – 10 September. 2016.

Annually ushering in spring, the Shared History festival, begun in 2007, and a popular event on Johannesburg's cultural calendar has encompassed the cultural arena with its kaleidoscope of visual and performing arts events including music, dance, theatre, comedy, wellness, food from India and collaborations with local South African artistes.

In this special 10th edition the Festival is honoured to bring Pandit Ajoy Chakrabarty, a doyen of Hindustani Classical Music and a composer, lyricist and vocalist par excellence, to the audience in South Africa. Also included in this year's festival is a grand Classical Indian show which will be presented as the festival's finale.

First up on the Music programme is **Sonam Kalra and the Sufi Gospel Project** with two performances - Wednesday 31 August and Thursday 1 September at 7:00pm at The Fringe at Joburg Theatre.

The Sufi Gospel Project, Kalra's brainchild, blends the many voices of faith, through poetry, prayer and music to create one universal voice of faith; traditional western gospel melds with Indian classical sounds and Indian spiritual texts are enriched by elements of western poetry to create a sound that touches every soul. The multiple award-winning singer and composer is that rare musician who has been trained in both Indian and Western music traditions and is equally adept at both. She has been recognised and appreciated for her all-inclusive definition of Sufism and her message of Peace and Oneness has made her a popular voice at prestigious festivals and venues around the world. *"My hope is that through the music of the Sufi Gospel Project I can spread the message of equality and help build bridges of peace"*, she says.

On Friday 2 September at 7:00pm at The Fringe at Joburg Theatre, get ready to be mesmerised by **Confluence - a Musical** where diverse music from Africa to Europe to India will be presented in a fusion format. Created by the group AAFRIND, a South African fusion band that plays melodies of Indo-western fusion, Confluence is a coalition between Indian and African artistes.

Indian cuisine reflects an 8,000 year old history of various groups and cultures interacting with the subcontinent, leading to diversity of flavours and regional cuisines found in modern-day India. At this year's **Food Festival**, curated by The Classic India Restaurant in Boksburg, Awadhi cuisine will be celebrated.

Awadhi cuisine, native to the city of Lucknow, capital of the state of Uttar Pradesh in Northern India, uses cooking patterns similar to those of Central Asia, the Middle East and Northern India and comprises vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes. The Awadh region has been greatly influenced by Mughal cooking techniques and is known for its Nawabi (Royal) styles and from Saturday 3 September to Thursday 8 September you too can experience the delectable delights of the cuisine of the Mughal era and its Nawabi styles.

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For theatre-lovers, well-known playwright Mahesh Dattani's **Dance like a Man** will be presented at The Fringe at Joburg Theatre on Sunday 4 September at 7:00pm, for one performance only.

The story of Jairaj and Ratna, two Bharatnatyam dancers past their prime, is contrasted with that of their daughter Lata, who is on the brink of establishing herself as a brilliant dancer. Her imminent success creates tension and jealousy and the audience is drawn into the dark secrets of family relationships and conflicts between generations. The play probes beneath the surface of the characters to question their deeper motivations, in a comic rather than tragic mode and even though the concerns are serious, you are never sure whether to laugh or cry. It is produced and directed by Lillete Dubey, artistic director of the Primetime Theatre Company.

The celebratory 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary Shared History festival culminates in a grand finale with the music of **Pandit Ajoy Chakrabarty** on Friday 9 September presented in the Mandela Theatre at Joburg Theatre at 7:00pm.

Chakrabarty, an Indian Hindustani classical vocalist, composer, lyricist and Guru, has performed in innumerable concerts and is perhaps the busiest classical vocalist of his generation today and has reached an almost cult figure status among legendary Indian classical musicians.

He regularly participates in major prestigious music conferences and festivals all over India and abroad; he has performed in some of the most prestigious venues around the world; he is the first Indian classical vocalist to be invited by Pakistan, China and by the BBC for their Golden Jubilee Celebration of India's Independence and he has more than 100 albums (featuring pure classical and light classical numbers including thumris, dadras, bhajans and other types of devotional songs), and numerous recordings of Shyamasangeet, Rabindra Sangeet, Nazrulgeeti, Raagpradhan and even Bengali Modern Songs, to his credit.

He is the recipient of many prestigious awards: the Padma Shri (2011); National Tansen Samman 2015; Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (Delhi, 1999-2000); the Kumar Gandharva Samman (National Award, 1993) and the National Film Award for Best Male Playback Singer (1989) - *"for bringing the rare depth of emotion, adorned by his command on the classical idiom"* in the Bengali film, Chhandaneer.

Shared History festival extends thanks to its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary partners and sponsors - Festival partners: The Joburg Theatre and Arts Alive 2016; Main sponsors: New National and Sanlam; Associate sponsors: AMKA (Satiskin); Supported by: India Club and ICCR; the Food Festival partner: The Classic India Restaurant, Boksburg and its Print partner: Shereno Printers.

Shared History – the Indian Experience in South Africa - is a festival that perfectly blends with the festivity and spirit of the rainbow country and its uniqueness lies in the success it has enjoyed in highlighting the shared bonds between the two countries through the performing arts.

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### **Bookings:**

The Fringe & The Mandela at the Joburg Theatre - [www.joburgtheatre.com](http://www.joburgtheatre.com)

The Classic India Restaurant – [www.classicindia.com](http://www.classicindia.com)

Trichardts Rd, Johannesburg, Boksburg, 1459, South Africa / 011 894 7323

For more information please visit [www.sharedhistory.co.in](http://www.sharedhistory.co.in)

Twitter handle: @SharedHistorySA

Hashtag: #SharedHistory Festival 2015

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SharedHistorySA>

Also check out the Arts Alive website: [www.artsalive.co.za](http://www.artsalive.co.za) / Facebook: Johannesburg Arts Alive International Festival / Twitter: @Arts\_Alive

### **Note for Editors:**

#### **Her Excellency the High Commissioner, Ms Ruchi Ghanyashyam:**

*“This year we welcome you to celebrate the beautiful season of spring with the 10<sup>th</sup> Shared History Festival, a cultural extravaganza jointly hosted by the High Commission of India and Teamwork Arts, New Delhi. Over the past decade, Shared History has told you the story of India and South Africa - the festival brings out our shared heritage and accomplishments and all that binds our two countries together. The Festival now has completed 10 glorious years, and will be bringing a rich repertoire of music, theatre and Indian cuisine to its audiences in South Africa. From the traditional to the contemporary, from the blissful to the comical, the festival has a delightful mix of performance, emotions, experiment and art. The fresh whiff of the spring air, the comforting cloak of greenery and colour around, with the magic of Classical and Gospel music, we cannot ask for more! The festival in its special 10<sup>th</sup> year edition will have a grand finale with none other than Pandit Ajoy Chakrabarty, the doyen of Patiala style gayaki (Classical Vocal Music from North India). He represents the singing style of Bade Ghulam Ali Khan and will regale the South African audiences with his inimitable rendition. Join us with friends and families to celebrate and soak in the best of India-South Africa shared sensibilities and perspectives.”*

#### **Teamwork Arts**

For over 25 years, Teamwork Arts has taken India to the world and brought the world to India. In countries such as Australia, Canada, Egypt, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Italy, Israel, Korea, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, UK and USA, Teamwork produces over 25 highly acclaimed performing arts, visual arts and literary festivals across more than 40 cities. Teamwork Arts produces one of the world’s largest free literary gatherings, the annual Jaipur Literature Festival, the Ishara International Puppet Festival in New Delhi, the annual Mahindra Excellence in Theatre Awards (META) and Festival, international festivals Shared History in South Africa, Eye on India in the United States of America, India by the Bay in Hong Kong, and many more.

Website: [www.teamworkarts.com](http://www.teamworkarts.com)

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**Shared History 2016 schedule:**

**Tuesday 30 August** at 6:30pm: Pretoria -Opening Reception - performance by Sonam Kalra, Embassy of India (invited guests only)

**Wednesday 31 August & Thursday 1 September** at 7:00pm: at The Fringe – Joburg Theatre

Music – Sonam Kalra & the Sufi Gospel Project

**Friday 2 September** at 7:00pm: at The Fringe, Joburg Theatre

Musical – Confluence – one performance only

**Saturday 3 September** (Opening) – Thursday 8 September (from 7:00pm) at The Classic India Restaurant, Boksburg - Food Festival featuring Awadhi cuisine

**Sunday 4 September** at 7:00pm: at The Fringe, Joburg Theatre

Theatre - Dance like a Man – one performance only

**Friday 9 September** at 7:00pm: at The Mandela Theatre, Joburg Theatre

Grand Finale: Music Concert featuring Pt. Ajoy Chakrabarty

***For media queries - interviews, images and accreditation please contact:***

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