



**Teamworks Arts present**

**An Assembly, Riverside Studios and Poorna Jagannathan**

**Production**

**'NIRBHAYA' the award winning play premiering in India**

**"Breaking The Silence"**

15th March, Mumbai: NIRBHAYA (meaning "Fearless"), the award-winning play based on the Delhi rape and the true life experiences of its performers, is beginning its India tour on March 17th, 2014. The play took the Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2013 by storm, garnering unprecedented media attention and sweeping up prestigious awards such as the 2013 Amnesty International Freedom of Expression Award, a prestigious Scotsman Fringe First and a coveted Herald Angel Award.

NIRBHAYA, created by internationally acclaimed playwright and director, Yael Farber, is a blistering evocation of the events that changed countless lives and a nation. The India tour, made possible through crowd funding and some key partners coming together, comes fresh on the heels of its sold-out London run at Southbank Centre, as part of the Women of the World festival.

The tour started in Mumbai at the NCPA (18th-20th March, 7:30 p.m.), moving to Delhi (FICCI auditorium, 22nd-24th March, 7:30 p.m, and 23rd March 4:00pm.) and Bangalore (Ranga Shankara, 26th-28th March 7:30 pm).

Tickets of the shows can be bought online at

<http://www.kyazoonga.com/TheatreAndArts/nirbhaya/909/6>

On the night of December 16 2012 a young woman and her male friend boarded a bus in urban New Delhi heading for home. What followed changed the lives of these two people and countless others forever.

In the wake of her death, people poured onto the streets in grief and rage demanding justice. For the first time in our nation's history, Silences were being shattered: India and the world woke up to the epidemic of sexual violence. An hour of darkness for India, but also a burning light in leading the global protest against sexual violence.

It was in this watershed moment that impassioned Mumbai-based actor Poorna Jagannathan contacted Yael Farber - whose MIES JULIE adaptation was considered one of the Top Five Productions of 2012 by The Guardian. Having seen Farber's testimonial work previously, Jagannathan invited Farber to come to India to create a play that harnessed the momentum on the streets and would Break The Silence on sexual violence. A cast of seven actors collaborated with Farber over a 6 week period in Delhi, to create NIRBHAYA.

Talking about the play, Yael Farber said "Like the rest of the world, I was deeply affected by NIRBHAYA's rape, her courageous fight for her life and subsequent death. This project was initiated by Poorna Jagannathan (a Mumbai based actress) who reached out to me in the wake of NIRBHAYA's death. Poorna, like me, was affected profoundly and felt that silence about sexual violence has been part of a larger fabric of culturally engendered silence which contributed in its own way to what had transpired on that bus. As a playwright, I am attuned to the tides of what affects us as communities and societies. I believe in what I consider to be theatre's true, original intention: To show us to ourselves in our true raw form - in order to be a healthier society. Sexual violence against women and children is a global crisis. NIRBHAYA's death has brought that fact front-center for a while. Making a play about this now is the one way those of us on this project believe that a brutal death like hers does not have to be in vain and can in fact be the catalyst for change."

The India tour of NIRBHAYA is presented by Teamwork Arts . It would not have been possible to bring this show to India if it were not for our Kickstarter donors and our partners: British Council, UN Women, Oxfam, Ford Foundation, South African Airways, GAIL and UNESCO.

Rob Lynes, Director, British Council, India: "Nirbhaya deals in a sensitive way with the very important issue of violence against women. Acclaimed by critics and the public in England and Scotland where this production premiered last August, it was one of the highlights of the Edinburgh Festival 2013, winning a Fringe First Award and the Amnesty International Freedom of Expression Award. The British Council holds that violence against women is unacceptable. We believe in fairness and open societies and the arts and productions such as this are able to raise awareness and promote debate on such topical issues. We are pleased to partner with Assembly and Teamwork in bringing this production to India in March 2014."

Mr. Sajid Khan, Country Manager - India, South African Airways: "Renowned South African director Yael Farber has used a powerful medium to urge people to Break The Silence against gender-based crimes affecting India and the world. South African Airways is proud to associate with NIRBHAYA, a production that powerfully and unflinchingly highlights the need for gender equality, the absence of which leads to crimes against women."

Oxfam India fights against gender violence and fights for gender justice and is supporting the show. Nisha Agrawal, CEO, Oxfam India: "After the brutal gang-rape and subsequent death, there finally seems to be a chipping away at the culture of silence that has existed around the issue of violence against women. Support for the survivors of violence and their struggle for justice, both within the family and in the public, seems to be on the rise. There also seems to be a shift in pinning the blame where it should be – on the actual perpetrators of this violence rather than the women. More and more so-far-silent stakeholders have started championing the cause of eliminating violence against women in different innovative ways. Only when women begin to respect themselves, believe that they occupy an equal status in the household and not submit to being beaten or abused as a norm, will change actually take place. They will then raise their children – boys and girls, in an environment of gender equality."

Triggered by the incident of the December 16th gang rape - five Indian women break their own silence - thereby inspiring us, their witnesses, to do the same. By refusing to remain silent any longer, each testimony challenges the core belief prevalent in so many societies that sexual violence is the fault of the victim. The loss of honor, the resulting shame belongs to the perpetrator. NIRBHAYA urges women to join them in their resolve of "Breaking the Silence"

"Just as women's rights are human rights, women's progress is human progress. For all the achievements made, this is the big unfinished business of the 21st century. UN Women joins the Government and people of India in recognizing that we need to take stronger action together to change the present reality. Every girl and woman has the right to a life free of violence," says Rebecca Reichmann Tavares, Representative, UN Women India Multi Country Office

With an extraordinary cast and creative team from India, Farber brings us a blistering evocation of that terrible night and the ripples of change it set in motion. Tearing away the shame that keeps the survivors silent NIRBHAYA is a voyage into a tapestry of personal testimonies that speaks for both a nation and a world no longer able to hold the tides of change at bay.

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*About NIRBHAYA the Play: Seven actors comprise the extraordinary ensemble cast of NIRBHAYA. Five of these artists share their own true testimonies; the remaining two performers evoke the key people; the events of the night of December 16th and what followed in its wake. At a deeply personal level, each artist steps forward to tell the events of their own experiences of sexual and gender based violence. The private testimonies shared are a profound gesture of breaking the silence that has been culturally engendered as a response to sexual violence around the world. These testimonies include dowry bride burning, child abuse, marital rape, gang rape - as well as the daily iniquities of sexual harassment on public transport and in the streets of urban India. Farber weaves the victim's story within these personal testimonies to create a piece of theatre that is as poetic as it*

*is powerful. The result is transformational political theatre. Nirbhaya, the play is being supported by British Council, UN Women, OXFAM, South African Airways and Ford Foundation.*

*Teamwork Arts- Presenter*

*Yael Farber – Writer and Director*

*Margaret Moll- Producer*

*Poorna Jagannathan: Producer*

*Assembly and Riverside Studios - Producer*

*CAST*

*Sapna Bhavnani*

*Priyanka Bose*

*Poorna Jagannathan-*

*Sneha Jawale*

*Rukshar Kabir*

*Japjit Kaur*

*Ankur Vikal*

*About YAEL FARBER- WRITER AND DIRECTOR: Yael Farber is a multiple award-winning director and playwright of international acclaim. Her productions have toured the world extensively - earning her a reputation for hard-hitting, controversial works of the highest artistic standard. Her recent work MIES JULIE (written and directed by Farber) has won a string of international awards; was named one of the Top Ten Productions of 2012 by The New York Times, and one of the Top Five Productions of 2012 by The Guardian.*

*About POORNA JAGANNATHAN- ORIGINATING PRODUCER: Ms. Jagannathan is an award-winning actress and has worked extensively in theatre, film and TV in India and in the US. She is best known to audiences for her movie with Aamir Khan, DELHI BELLY, for which she won STARDUST and a L'OREAL FEMINA AWARD for best supporting actress in 2012. In 2013, NIRBHAYA, the play she co-produced and acted in, won the AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AWARD, the SCOTSMAN FRINGE FIRST AWARD, and THE ANGEL HERALD AWARD at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Ms. Jagannathan is a series regular on HBO's new show, CRIMINAL JUSTICE. Some film credits include THANKS FOR SHARING by Stuart Blumberg and YEH JAWANI HAI DEEWANI by Ayan Mukerji. TV credits include ROYAL PAINS, LAW & ORDER and RESCUE ME. She is part of The Barrow Group - one of the premier theatre groups in New York City producing award-winning theatre.*

*About Assembly and Riverside Studios: Led by William Burdett-Coutts the team has extensive experience in festivals, theatre and television, and delivers the highest quality entertainment to live audiences of more than 500,000 annually in London and in Edinburgh. They produce, they present, and they work with partners nationally and internationally. Based in London at Riverside Studios, a leading multi-arts centre, they present around 150 shows as Assembly Festival – the longest running of the multi-venues at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Assembly and Riverside Studios produce a number of shows per year and are currently touring with the best of their programmes.*

*About Teamwork Arts: A highly versatile entertainment company, Teamwork Arts has roots in traditional and contemporary performing arts, social action, and the corporate world. For over 24 years, Teamwork has presented the finest of Indian*

*performers, artists and writers to the world and India. Every year, they produce over 21 performing, visual arts and literary festivals in 11 countries, including Australia, Canada, Egypt, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Italy, Israel, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, UK and USA.*