

Sampradaya Dance Creations Granted \$30,000 for *Dispelling Darkness* - A Project Aimed at Tackling Sexual Violence and Harassment

Mississauga, ON – Sampradaya Dance Creations (a professional South Asian dance company) is pleased to share that the Company has been granted \$30,000 in funding from the Ontario Arts Council (OAC) through the Creative Engagement Fund for *Dispelling Darkness* - a project aimed at tackling sexual violence and harassment within the South Asian community. What started as a desire to make a difference, will now become a reality thanks to the support of the Government of Ontario through their Creative Engagement Fund which is part a larger action plan namely - *It's Never Okay: An Action Plan To Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment (SVHAP)*. In 2015, the SVHAP initiative was launched as a three-year \$41 million action plan and is now leading the way to an Ontario where everyone lives in safety, free from the threat, fear or experience of sexual violence and harassment.

Administered by the OAC, the Creative Engagement Fund supports partnerships between arts organizations, artists and sexual violence prevention advocates as they create projects that inspire dialogue on consent, rape culture and gender equality to help raise awareness, prevent sexual violence and harassment and promote healing. This fund is supporting a total of 20 projects across the province with a total investment of \$2.25 million over three years, including Sampradaya Dance Creations' – *Dispelling Darkness* in Mississauga as announced earlier in May.

The concept behind *Dispelling Darkness* is to pair artists and survivors in South Asian communities. Participants will engage in meaningful movement and dialogue about eliminating sexual violence and harassment in homes, workplaces and their community. Sampradaya will be partnering and working with a tremendous team of community collaborators including: Sawitri Theatre, Sharada Eswar and the Punjabi Community Health Services (PCHS).

“We are extremely grateful to have received support for this important initiative not only for the South Asian community but, to tackle an issue that crosses all ethnic boundaries with care and sensitivity” said Artistic Director, Lata Pada. “As an organization that has been a professional dance company for over twenty-five years, this project allows us further explore how art forms such as dance, theatre and spoken word can be used as a tool and vehicle for expression and change within the context of sexual violence and harassment to bring about a brighter and healthier future” expresses Pada.

The Company has begun work through artistic workshops, facilitated by playwright Sharada Eswar with participants who are survivors of sexual violence. These workshops are taking place in Mississauga and Brampton and will culminate in an artistic presentation in June 2018.

For more information about the Creative Engagement fund, please visit the Ontario Arts Council. For more information about Sampradaya Dance Creations, please visit sampradaya.ca

SAMPRADAYA Dance Creations is a Canadian, Mississauga-based professional dance company specializing in the creation and production of classical and contemporary dance works rooted in the tradition of *bharatanatyam*, a dance form originating from India. Founded in 1990 by Lata Pada, CM an accomplished dancer and choreographer, the Company continues to inspire audiences with annual productions produced locally and internationally while nurturing the talents of emerging young dancers. The Company proudly celebrated their 25th anniversary in May 2015.

The Company receives on-going operational support from the Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council, and the City of Mississauga. Additional program specific support received from Canadian Heritage and Scotiabank. Funding for the *Dispelling Darkness* project is provided by the Government of Ontario (It's Never Okay: Ontario's Action Plan to Stop Violence and Harassment), and administered by the Ontario Arts Council.