

# Sampradaya Dance Creations Launches 7-city tour of *TAJ*

## Starring Bollywood star Kabir Bedi and acclaimed international actress Lisa Ray

TORONTO, September 30, 2013 – **Sampradaya Dance Creations**, renowned for its innovative dance productions under the artistic direction of **Lata Pada**, originally created the spectacular dance-theatre production *TAJ*, written by the Governor General Award-winning playwright **John Murrell**, as a commission for Toronto's 2011 **Luminato Festival**.

**Sampradaya Dance Creations** and **Lata Pada** are now pleased to announce that, after four sold-out nights at the 2011 Luminato Festival, *TAJ* is heading out on a 7-city tour of Canada in October and November 2013, again featuring the renowned Bollywood film, television and theatre star **Kabir Bedi** (*Octopussy*, *Sandokan*, *The Bold and the Beautiful*, *Taj Mahal: An Eternal Love Story*) and the acclaimed Canadian actress **Lisa Ray** (Food Network Canada's *Top Chef Canada* host, *Water*, *Bollywood/Hollywood*, *Cooking With Stella*), supported by an international creative team of award-winning artists.

The original creative team returns including director **Tom Diamond**, projection designer **Jacques Collin**, set and lighting designer **Phillip Silver** and costume designer **Rashmi Varma** to deliver this stunning and evocative work that chronicles the human drama behind the magnificent architectural wonder that is the Taj Mahal.

Built around exquisite *kathak* dance choreographed by 82-year-old South Asian legend Padmabhusan **Kumudini Lakhia**, ten dancers from India along with Toronto's **Sashar Zarif**, who performs as a Sufi mystic, round out the international ensemble.

The tour is as follows:

October 19	Mississauga, ON	Living Arts Centre	Hammerson Hall
October 23	Kingston, ON	Grand Theatre	Regina Rosen Auditorium
October 26	Sault Ste. Marie, ON	Kiwanis Theatre	
October 30	Gatineau, PQ (Ottawa, ON)	Museum of Civilization	
November 1	Markham, ON	Flato Markham Theatre	
November 6	Sherwood Park, AB (Edmonton)	Festival Place Theatre	
November 9	Banff, AB	The Banff Centre	Eric Harvie Theatre

Imprisoned by his son, former emperor Shah Jahan (Bedi) gazes upon the Taj - his wife Mumtaz's final resting place and whose memory inspired the construction of this spectacular edifice - and engages in an impassioned dialogue with his devoted daughter Jahanara (Ray), taking the audience on an emotional journey that explores the emperor's life, the 17<sup>th</sup> century Mughal Empire and the universal themes of ambition, revenge, rivalry and love in this story about human tragedies and human triumphs.

Says **Lata Pada**, whose concept *TAJ* is, "I am so pleased to tour this unique Canada-India collaboration to audiences across Canada and transport them to 17<sup>th</sup> century India. Through theatre, dance, multi-media and original music, they will glimpse some of the passionate history and court intrigues behind one of the wonders of the world. Stories are important repositories of human truth and the story of the Taj Mahal is one of the world's celebrated epics. As well, I am extremely excited that our acclaimed stars – Lisa Ray and Kabir Bedi – are able to join us once again for this dream project."

**"Visually and aurally, the piece is spectacular"** – *The Globe and Mail*

**"Captures the dazzling virtuosity that remains the Taj Mahal's enduring legacy... Taj succeeds in being as luminous and poignant as the building that inspired it"** – *criticsatlarge.ca*

**Sampradaya Dance Creations** is an award-winning company recognized for innovation and excellence that breaks new ground in choreography and performance with a synthesis of traditional and contemporary dance. Founder and Artistic Director Lata Pada has been conferred the Order of Canada in 2009, and holds the distinction of being the first South Asian artist to receive this award. She was the recipient of the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman by the President of India in 2011. Her previous works for the company include *Revealed by Fire*, *Shunya* and *SARUPYAM - Visions of the Divine*. *Sampradaya's Alchemy*, presented in 2012, was nominated for a Dora Award for Outstanding Performance, Male (Aakash Odedra) and Outstanding Lighting Design (Arun Srinivasan). **Info:** [www.sampradaya.ca](http://www.sampradaya.ca)

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Media Refer: Dianne Weinrib - DW Communications 416-703-5479 [dw@dwcommunications.net](mailto:dw@dwcommunications.net)  
Interviews and high resolution photos on request.