

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Dakshina/Daniel Phoenix Singh Dance Company celebrates Asian Pacific Islander Heritage

*Highlights include Sokolow's September Sonnets and As I Remember (a suite of 3 solos)
along with the company's signature Bharata Natyam and fusion works.*

Washington, DC —Dakshina will celebrate Asian Pacific Islander Heritage Month with events throughout May, headlined by a weekend of traditional Indian and modern dance at Dance Place on May 10 and 11. The month's events will feature a diverse range of performances, a reflection of Dakshina's mission and commitment to use the arts to build social and cultural awareness. Lorry May from the Sokolow Foundation will be in residency with the company and will reconstruct four Sokolow masterpieces for the company repertoire. Other events include a sitar concert, and a closing performance at the Atlas Theater as part of the Asian Dance Festival.

Dakshina's Dance Place program features Bharata Natyam, and modern dance pieces, with *Bell Song* being the featured work from Singh's choreography. Bharata Natyam is one of the oldest dance forms of India. This form, nurtured in the temples and courts of southern India, is known for its use of symmetry, angular lines, rhythmic footwork and interpretative mime that explores spiritual and philosophical themes. Dakshina is unique with its diverse programming and is one of the few companies that is able to perform several different genres in one showcase.

Following the traditional dance forms, the program shifts to *Bell Song*, a piece that blends the essence of Indian dance with western movement concepts. Singh says, "This is the 'so what?' part of the evening. I had to answer the question, now that I know this traditional form, so what? How can I make it relevant?" Out of this question came the soft and sensuous *Bell Song*. *Bell Song* has been nominated for Dance Metro DC's Emerging Choreographer and Best Costume Design awards. In this piece, Singh synthesizes dance styles from the East and the West to create a unique movement vocabulary of intricate gestures supported by breathy and lush movement phrases.

In an ongoing effort to bring the best of modern dance to the DC area, the company is acquiring three new works by Anna Sokolow: September Sonnet, Lament for the Death of a Bullfighter, and Ballad in a Popular Style. Jennifer Dunning of the New York Times writes that "Ms. Sokolow's gift for summing up loss and loneliness is captured in Kaddish with a searing simplicity and intensity." In contrast, Larry Warren describes Ballad in a Popular Style as "a wistful, lyrical excursion into jazz, at once subtle and exuberant, pure dance with no reason for being other than its rhythm and beauty of motion." Singh has worked hard and long to make these performances possible in the DC area and is excited to continue developing the partnership with the Sokolow Foundation. Lorry May, a former principal dancer with Sokolow will be restaging the works and will also be teaching classes at Dance Place during the residency.

The performances take place on Saturday May 10, 2007 at 8:00 pm and Sunday May 11 2007 at 7:00 pm at Dance Place. Tickets can be purchased at www.danceplace.org or by calling 202-269-1600.

Other Events Include

- On May 4, Dakshina will host the first of three free public events: a **Sitar Concert** featuring Alif Laila.
- On May 17, Dakshina will perform at the Atlas Theater as part of the Asian Dance Festival.

If your media organization would like to attend any of our events, please contact dpsingh@dakshina.org.

Dakshina's Asian Pacific Heritage Month events are made possible by financial support from the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation, Dakshina's founding sponsors, and friends of Dakshina/Daniel Phoenix Singh Dance Company. For more information about Dakshina and upcoming events, visit www.Dakshina.org.

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About Dakshina

Dakshina/Daniel Phoenix Singh Dance Company offers artists and audiences the unique opportunity to experience dance as a movement that links the arts, cultures, and social causes. Dakshina means "offering" in Sanskrit. Our company explores the definition of dance within the United States and connects it to Indian, Latin, Social, and Modern dance forms. We hope to provide participatory opportunities in which audiences can experience dance as a system of communication, one that transcends boundaries, cultures, and time. We are particularly committed to engage in dance not only as a means for aesthetic and artistic growth, but also as a vehicle for social change and community development.

About Daniel Phoenix Singh

Daniel Phoenix Singh is the Artistic Director and President of Dakshina/Daniel Phoenix Singh Dance Company. Singh holds an MFA in Dance and a Graduate Certificate in Women's Studies from the University of Maryland. He also holds a Laban Movement Analyst Certificate from the Laban/Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies in New York City. He received a baccalaureate degree in Dance and Computer Science at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. Singh trained in *Bharata Natyam* with Guru Meena Telikicherla of Nrityanjali, MD for several years.

Singh's most recent explorations in dance include Cuban/Colombian variations of Salsa and Merengue with Javier Varela and Shawn Malone. He is currently on the faculty at Joy of Motion, Maryland Youth Ballet, and Results the Gym. He is also a member of the Board of the Maryland Youth Ballet. Singh is active in KhushDC, a Washington DC organization serving the South Asian LGBT community and its friends. His works have been the critic's pick in *Washington City Paper* and *The Washington Post*, and *Voice of America* profiled his dance company in the fall of 2005. His piece, *Songs of My Life*, was a finalist in the Metro DC Dance Awards, and Singh was a finalist for the Mayor's Emerging Artist award in 2006 and 2007. Most recently, he was recognized by Dance Metro DC with the Founder's Award for Innovation in Dance.