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For immediate release

## Press Release

### City of London professionals by day, Kathak dancers by night

City professionals by day, Kathak dancers by night, Kaleel Anwar, Pranav Yajnik and Sanjay Shetty perform in the latest instalment of Akademi's Navodit at Rich Mix on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2013 at 7.30pm. Taking off their suits and donning their angarkha's, lawyers Kaleel and Pranav, and vice president of finance Sanjay escape the stress of the city by getting to business on the dance floor every evening. London audiences now have the chance to see the traditional Indian style of Kathak performed powerfully in a rarely seen all male cast.

The show has been curated by Fasih Ur Rehmann, renowned Kathak artist, who has also been a teacher and mentor to the boys throughout the process.

Inspired by the greats such as Kumudhini Lakhia and Birju Maharaj, the boys bring the discipline and routine of city life into practising their Kathak, so that their presentation is exciting and detailed; Kathak being a style renowned for its intricate rhythms and fluidity.

"The training is rigorous and painstakingly precise, says Kaleel, a family lawyer with Slater and Gordon for the past 5 years and who sees dance as a form of discovery. "No matter how objective I am, by the time my clients approach me, emotions are usually running very high and they need a friendly face to discuss their personal concerns. Kathak is a form of meditation, self reflection and about discovering my spiritual being.

As a male in a female dominated industry the going can be tough, especially as in Indian culture dance is traditionally expected from girls. However these rising contemporary stars have broken moulds by finding balance between the success of their jobs and artistic careers, and come together to create a truly rare for a London stage.

Sanjay Shetty, Vice President of finance and accounts at MCS International Limited says: "Although work has become life, I feel that dance is my soul. Kathak makes me forget everything mundane and gives me a certain peace of mind which helps me be better in every other aspect of life. Its food for the body, mind and soul!

"Dance lets me into a different head-space, where I can leave the minutiae of work behind and where every moment is instead filled with the joy of movement," says Pranav, an employment lawyer with CMS Cameron McKenna LLP.

Selecting these artists, who have been mentored through one of Akademi's artist development programmes, Mira Kaushik OBE, Director of Akademi commented: "These boys have finished their education and have now found their passion, defying the odds in learning and excelling in dance, we are delighted to offer them the chance to showcase their artistic talents in our Navodit development programme.

Akademi South Asian Dance offer platforms like Navodit for talented dancers to showcase themselves on a professional stage.

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**NOTES FOR EDITORS:**

- 1) Navodit takes place at Rich Mix London on November 15<sup>th</sup>, 7.30pm.  
Rich Mix, 35-47 Bethnal Green Rd, London, Greater London E1 6LA
- 2) £10, £8 student or concs / Venue 2  
<http://www.richmix.org.uk/whats-on/event/akademi-presents-navodit/>
- 3) Each dancer is new to the professional stage dancing in a solo capacity.
- 4) **Kaleel Anwar:**  
Family Lawyer at Slater & Gordon Lawyers.

Kaleel trained in Kathak with Aakash Odedra, and later from Kajal Sharma in Manchester. Kaleel started his journey in dance learning the Imperial Society of Dance Ballet syllabus and has partaken in various dance exams. After completing his performance arts studies, his experience has grown, particularly within Kathak. He has participated in masterclasses with the Pandit Birju Maharaj and Kumudini Lakhia.

Kaleel continues to balance his work with his passion for dance in London, and looks forward to developing his experience through Akademi's Navodit programme.

- 5) **Pranav Yajnik:**  
Employment Lawyer at CMS Cameron McKenna LLP

Born and raised in London, Pranav discovered Kathak over ten years ago while studying for his undergraduate degree at Cambridge.

Pranav has been learning Kathak since then, first under Abhay Shankar Mishra and more recently under Urja Thakore. He has regularly attended masterclasses and workshops with and received training from the most senior of Kathak artists, including Kumudini Lakhia and Birju Maharaj.

- 6) **Sanjay Shetty:**  
VP Finance & Accounts at MCS International Limited

Born and Raised in Mumbai, Sanjay started learning Kathak in London over 8years ago after watching a performance by Ms Archita Kumar. He has been learning Kathak since then, first under Abhay Shankar Mishra and continuing

under Urja Thakore. Urja Thakore has moulded Sanjay into the dancer he is today. He has regularly attended masterclasses and workshops with and received training from the most senior of Kathak artists, including Kumudini Lakhia, Birju Maharaj and Geetanjali Lal. He has also performed in many shows and productions choreographed by Urja Thakore, Abhay Shankar Mishra, Shri Pratap Pawar and Akademi.

- 7) Akademi is a cutting-edge organisation that works to encourage excellence in the practice of South Asian dance in Britain. We represent and support emerging art practitioners and facilitators, promote their work, build their portfolio and help them with their professional development. Founded in 1979 Akademi has a long history of innovation in South Asian dance.

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