

Payal Ahuja – dancer/choreographer

June 2008

Mumbai-born, Payal started dancing when she was three, giving her debut solo performance (Arangetram) when she was seven under Guru (Smt) Lata Surendran. She pursued a five-year degree programme in Bharata Natyam at Nalanda Dance Research Centre founded by Padmashri Dr (Smt) Kanak Rele – a pioneering dance educationist and world-renowned Mohini Attam exponent and creative choreographer. Payal is a recipient of the Nageshwar Rao scholarship in the Bachelor of Fine-Arts programme at Mumbai University. She has also completed 8 Grades with distinction in Speech and Drama from Trinity College of London.

Payal has presented many papers at dance conferences including *Local and Global Histories of Bharatanatyam* which was very well received at the Dance Matters International Conference, Kolkatta, 2006 and *Peace in the 21st CenturyAn Artiste's Perspective* at the International Peace Conference, Mumbai 2006.

She has also performed at the prestigious *Nrityotsav* as part of the Mumbai Festival in 2007 and recently won an award at a UK National Dance Competition in February 2008. Dance pieces choreographed by her include “Life – A Celebration...or is it?” – based on the Mumbai train blasts in 2007.

Payal initially collaborated with SB Dance in 2006 in the first showing of “asmâkam –the quest”, and now rejoins the company as dancer/choreographer for the shows in Cranleigh and Edinburgh Festival 2008.

Payal, who was awarded a postgraduate scholarship to read for an MA in South Asian Dance Studies at Roehampton University London, convened by internationally acclaimed performer-scholar Dr Avanthi Meduri, is hoping to make use of her academic grounding and practical training to fulfil her artistic vision.

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