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HSBC BRINGS RUSSIAN AERIALIST TO MELBOURNE TO NURTURE NEXT GENERATION OF CIRCUS PERFORMERS

HSBC Bank has brought notable Russian circus performer Svetlana Yarosh to teach Australian university students aerialist skills as part of a four-month residency at the National Institute of Circus Arts (NICA), based at Swinburne University of Technology in Melbourne.

The fourth initiative in HSBC's international Cultural Exchange Programme, the residency is one of several taking place across different art forms and geographies during 2009.

The HSBC Australian Circus Residency will see Svetlana Yarosh work with more than sixty NICA students during her four-month stay. As well as instructing students in physical circus and aerialist skills, she will teach them about Russian culture and arts as part of their three-year Bachelor of Circus Arts degree.

NICA is the only training institution of its kind in Australia – a global centre of teaching excellence for professional training, innovation and creativity in cutting-edge, contemporary circus arts.

Hailing from St Petersburg Russia, Svetlana Yarosh's career has already spanned twenty years and eight countries. She embarked on her circus career at the early age of eleven when she joined the Russian State Circus and developed her renowned circus swing, trapeze and aerial performances for circuses in Russia as well as performing in troupes across England, Norway, Germany and Denmark. She is currently Art Director at the Kinoshita circus in Japan.

Darren Friedlander, head of marketing and group communications for HSBC in Australia, said: "HSBC operates in 85 countries and, as the world's local bank, has a special interest in promoting the exchange of cultural knowledge between these different parts of the world.

"Svetlana's residency at NICA gives Australian students a rare opportunity to gain valuable insights from a professional Russian circus performer and to engage with a culture quite different to their own," Friedlander said.

Commenting on the HSBC Australian Circus Residency, Svetlana Yarosh said: "Over the past 30 years I have been fortunate enough to learn from some of the best circus artists in Russia and indeed around the world.

"I am very proud of my culture and Russia's circus heritage and I am grateful to HSBC for providing me with the opportunity to share my culture with students at an institution as prestigious as NICA.

HSBC brings Russian aerialist to Melbourne to nurture next generation of circus performers/2

“I hope that they will learn as much from me as I hope to from them,” Yarosh said.

Circus arts already have deep roots in the cultural history of Australia and Russia. The Russian State Circus dates back to the nineteenth century and is widely applauded for its high level of originality and artistic skill. Australia, meanwhile, has produced some of the greatest stars of international circus, such as Con Colleano and May Wirth.

The HSBC Australian Circus Residency with NICA is the Bank’s second performing arts commitment in Australia. In March 2008, HSBC launched its first performing arts sponsorship in Australia with its global banking service, HSBC Premier, entering the world of *Dralion* as an official sponsor of the Cirque du Soleil 2008/9 tour of Australia.

More information about HSBC’s Cultural Exchange visit programme can be found at:

<http://www.hsbc.com/culturalexchange>

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Notes to editors

1. HSBC’s Cultural Exchange Programme

As the world’s local bank, HSBC aims to encourage and promote the understanding of different cultures across the world through its Cultural Exchange programme. As an international financial services provider, HSBC has to operate across different cultures and knows first hand how important it is to appreciate and understand the different points of view and values of both its employees and clients, in order to build successful working relationships. HSBC therefore believes that Cultural Exchange can generate important business benefits. HSBC embraces Cultural Exchange in its widest sense; from fine art to cuisine, from language and literature to dance, street arts and all forms of music. www.hsbc.com/culturalexchange

2. NICA

NICA is a global centre of teaching excellence for professional training, innovation and creativity in cutting-edge, contemporary circus and is the only training institution of its kind in Australia. NICA is based at Swinburne University of Technology in Melbourne and provides professional training through a three year Bachelor of Circus Arts, preparing students from across Australia and around the world for exciting careers in all facets of the circus industry.

NICA also takes circus to the community through Social Circus workshops and outreach programs in rural and regional Australia. This valuable work impacts on the wellbeing of individuals and communities and includes training for Social Circus Instructors in conjunction with Cirque du Soleil’s social circus arm, Cirque du Monde. Through CircaNICA, producer and agency for circus performers, businesses and corporate sponsors benefit from workshops and gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of the vibrant and dynamic artform.

3. HSBC Bank Australia

In Australia, the HSBC Group offers an extensive range of financial services through a network of 35 branches and offices. These services include personal and commercial financial services, financial planning, trade finance, treasury and financial markets, payments and cash management and securities custody.

Principal HSBC Group members operating in Australia include HSBC Bank Australia Limited (ABN 48 006 434 162) and The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (ABN 65 117 925 970). HSBC is marketed worldwide as ‘the world’s local bank’.

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