

# Akram Khan Company

THIKRA : NIGHT OF REMEMBERING

With 11 performers



CYCLE {mémoire  
& héritage}



**Friday 19 & Saturday 20 September 2025 • 7.30pm**

**Sunday 21st September 2025 • 5pm**

**At the Grand Théâtre**

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Running time **1h05 (no intermission)**

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**Q&A** after the performance on 20.09

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Director & Choreographer **Akram Khan**

Visual Director / Costume & Scenography **Manal**

**AIDowayan**

Narrative Concept **Manal AIDowayan & Akram Khan**

Music Composer & Soundscape Designer **Aditya Prakash**

Sound Designer **Gareth Fry**

Lighting Designer **Zeynep Kepekli**

Creative Associate & Coach **Mavin Khoo**

Dramaturge **Blue Pieta**

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Rehearsal Directors **Angela Towler & Chris Tudor**

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Dancers **Pallavi Anand, Kavya Ganesh, Jyotsna**

**Jagannathan, Mythili Prakash, Aishwarya Raut, Divya**

**Ravi, Mei Fei Soo, Shreema Upadhyaya, Jin Young Won,**

**Hsin-Hsuan Yu, and Kimberly Yap**

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Producing Director **Farooq Chaudhry**

Executive Director **Isabel Tamen**

Technical Manager **Michael Cunningham**

Production of Visual Direction **Carla Giachello**

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Company Manager **Emma Cameron**

Touring Production Manager **Anthony Forrester**

Technical Stage Manager **Harry Abbott**

Sound Engineer **Enrico Aurigemma**

Lighting Supervisor **Stephane Dejours**

Wardrobe Supervisors **Anne Marie Bigby, Peggy Housset**

Set Builder **Tin Shed Scenery**

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Musicians (in recorded composition):

Singers **Aditya Prakash, Ananya Ashok, Loulwa Al Sharif, Melanie Pappenheim, Sohini Alam, Sushma Soma**

Percussion **Aditya Prakash, Zafer Tawil, Praveen Sparsh, Sumesh Narayanan, N. Deepan, N. Vijay, M. Rajendran, M. Vijay**

Strings **Aditya Prakash, Layth Sidiq, Megan Shung, Jay Julio, Naseem Alatrash, Amal Waqar, Guhan Venkataraman, Doyeon Kim**

Wind **Isaac Alderson, V. Prakash Ilayaraja**

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Featured music in score ***Gyura Beli Belo Platno*** by London **Bulgarian Choir**

Commissioned by **Wadi AlFann, Valley of the Arts, AlUla**



Primary Co-producing Partner **Bagri Foundation**  
**Indoor adaptation co-produced by Berliner Festspiele; Brown Arts Institute at Brown University; Montpellier Danse Festival; Pina Bausch Zentrum; Sadler's Wells; Les Théâtres de la Ville de Luxembourg; Théâtre de la Ville Paris**

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Supported by **Arts Council England**

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## SYNOPSIS

The Matriarch, the elder and leader of the gathering returns for one night of exchange. She understands the power of all its elements. Alongside two sisters – one who evokes and one who serves as a ritualistic vessel – they lead the tribe to summon their ancestor spirit from the Knowledge Rock.

She symbolises the past, the ruins and the memory of generations that have lived through the cyclic flaws of humankind. She returns to her tribe for one night of exchange.

This night is a moment to reflect on their collective past. Through the memory of their history and a colonised past, the tribe finds space to heal, to transcend as they surrender to the ritual of life and death.

In this reconnection, there is release. And only then does the ancestral spirit return to rest, until another year.

## THIKRA: NIGHT OF REMEMBERING

**EN** *Thikra: Night of Remembering* is Akram Khan Company's latest production created in collaboration with award-winning visual artist Manal AlDowayan.

*Thikra* draws inspiration from AlUla's ancient landscapes, mythology and cultural heritage to evoke the idea that "without a past, there is no future."

Blending Bharatanatyam with contemporary, the piece is performed by a collective of all-female voices, accompanied by an original score from Aditya Prakash, sound design by Gareth Fry, lighting by Zeynep Kepekli and dramaturgy by Blue Pieta.

**FR** Avec *Thikra: Night of Remembering*, Akram Khan fait se converger passé et présent dans un voyage profondément enraciné dans le pouvoir des rituels et des pratiques sacrées de diverses cultures. Pour cette nouvelle création, qui a eu sa première mondiale dans l'oasis d'AlUla, Akram Khan s'est associé à l'artiste visuelle saoudienne Manal AlDowayan pour la scénographie et les costumes, et à Aditya Prakash pour la composition musicale. Avec une distribution internationale entièrement féminine, qui mêle mouvements contemporains et danse classique indienne Bharatanatyam, dont les voix tissent ensemble un récit universel, la pièce interroge nos identités tout en honorant nos esprits ancestraux et notre héritage humain commun.

**DE** In *Thikra: Night of Remembering* treffen Vergangenheit und Gegenwart in einer Reise durch die Tradition aufeinander. Ausnahmechoreograf Akram Khan ließ sich dafür von unterschiedlichen Kulturen inspirieren, die heilige Rituale praktizieren, um ihre Vorfahren zu ehren. *Thikra* setzt sich mit unserer heutigen Existenz und Identität auseinander und bekräftigt die Präsenz der Geister unserer Ahnen. Ein internationales Ensemble aus vierzehn Tänzerinnen, die zeitgenössischen westlichen Tanz mit klassischem indischen Bharatanatyam mischen, erschafft eine universelle und doch zutiefst persönliche Geschichte, die das Publikum dazu einlädt, über sein eigenes Erbe und die Rituale nachzudenken, die unsere gemeinsame Menschlichkeit geprägt haben.

# BIOGRAPHIES

## Akram Khan Company

In July 1999 in the foyer of the Queen Elizabeth Hall in London, an animated and curiosity-filled conversation took place between the young, gifted dancer/choreographer Akram Khan and an ambitious former dancer and just recently graduated arts manager Farooq Chaudhry. That conversation laid the foundation stone for a dynamic collaboration, culminating in the creation of Akram Khan Company one year later.

Inspired by Akram Khan's early training in the Indian classical dance form Kathak, and the hybrid language that organically emerged when Akram's kathak training encountered contemporary dance in his teens, a vision began to form, fuelled by a desire to learn and create through collaboration with the very best people across all the disciplines in the arts.

The rules were simple: take risks, think big and daring, explore the unfamiliar, avoid compromise and tell stories through dance that are compelling and relevant, with artistic integrity.

In almost 25 years, Akram Khan Company is now undisputedly one of the foremost innovative dance companies in the world. The programmes range from kathak and modern solos to artist-to-artist collaborations and ensemble productions. The Company has a major international presence and enjoys busy tours that reach out to many cultures and peoples across the globe. Akram Khan has been the recipient of numerous international dance awards, the most notable being an Olivier Award for his solo production *DESH* in 2012.

A milestone in the Company's journey was the creation of a section of the London Olympic Games Opening Ceremony in 2012.

Akram Khan Company enjoys artistic association with Sadler's Wells Theatre in London, Curve in Leicester, and other leading venues and festivals around the world.

## Akram Khan

### CHOREOGRAPHER

Akram Khan (he/him) is one of the most celebrated and respected dance artists of today. In just over 24 years he has created a body of work that has contributed significantly to the arts in the UK and abroad. His reputation has been built on the success of imaginative, highly accessible and relevant productions such as *Jungle Book reimagined*, *Outwitting the Devil*, *XENOS*, *Until the Lions*, *Kaash*, *iTMOi* (in the mind of igor), *DESH*, *Vertical Road*, *Gnosis* and *zero degrees*.

As an instinctive and natural collaborator, Khan has been a magnet to world-class artists from other cultures and disciplines. His previous collaborators include the National Ballet of China, actress Juliette Binoche, ballerina Sylvie Guillem, choreographers/dancers Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui and Israel Galván, singer Kylie Minogue, indie rock band Florence and the Machine, visual artists Anish Kapoor, Antony Gormley and Tim Yip, writer Hanif Kureishi and composers Steve Reich, Nitin Sawhney, Jocelyn Pook and Ben Frost.

Khan's work is recognised as being profoundly moving, in which his intelligently crafted storytelling is effortlessly intimate and epic. Described by the Financial Times as an artist "who speaks tremendously of tremendous things", a highlight of his career was the creation of a section of the London 2012 Olympic Games Opening Ceremony that was received with unanimous acclaim.



As a choreographer, Khan has developed a close collaboration with English National Ballet. He created the short piece *Dust*, part of the *Lest We Forget* programme, which led to an invitation to create his own critically acclaimed version of the iconic romantic ballet *Giselle*. *Creature* is Khan's latest work for English National Ballet.

Khan has been the recipient of numerous awards throughout his career including two Laurence Olivier Awards, the Bessie Award (New York Dance and Performance Award), the prestigious ISPA (International Society for the Performing Arts) Distinguished Artist Award, the Fred and Adele Astaire Award, the Herald Archangel Award at the Edinburgh International Festival, the South Bank Sky Arts Award, and ten Critics' Circle National Dance Awards for his company, AKC. He was awarded an MBE for services to dance in 2005. In 2022, Khan was announced as the new Chancellor of De Montfort University, and he is also an Honorary Graduate of Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, University of London as well as Roehampton and De Montfort Universities, and an Honorary Fellow of Trinity Laban and The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. Khan is an Associate Artist of Sadler's Wells and Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts, London as well as Curve.

## Manal AlDowayan

### VISUAL DIRECTOR

Embracing diverse media, Manal AlDowayan's work encompasses black and white photography, sculpture, video, sound, neon and large-scale participatory installations. Her artistic practice revolves around themes of invisibility, active forgetting, archives, and collective memory, with a large focus on the status of women and their representation. In the past 20 years of her career she has been awarded several commissions that produced engaging work that both question the status of society and at the same time it tells its stories.

Manal holds a Master's Degree in Contemporary Art Practice in Public Spheres from the Royal College of Art, London and her works can be found in the collections of the British Museum, London; Centre Pompidou collection in Paris, Guggenheim Collection in New York and Abu Dhabi, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, Denmark and Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha. In 2024, AlDowayan represented Saudi Arabia in the 60th Venice Biennale.

## Aditya Prakash

### COMPOSER AND SOUNDSCAPE DESIGNER

Aditya Prakash, an award-winning singer and composer known for his powerful and expressive voice, is one of the foremost young practitioners of Karnatik music. His work is recognized for his innovative approach to composition, production, and performance.

At sixteen, Aditya became one of the youngest musicians ever to tour and perform with sitar maestro Ravi Shankar, accompanying him to such prestigious stages as Carnegie Hall, the Hollywood Bowl, and Disney Concert Hall.

Aditya has collaborated with a diverse range of innovative artists, including sitarist Anoushka Shankar, Jazz pianist Tigran Hamasyan, electronic experimental artist Karsh Kale, and the acclaimed dancer and choreographer Akram Khan.

Aditya founded the eclectic music group Aditya Prakash Ensemble, which creates a space for dialogue between Karnatik and jazz.

Aditya is mentored by two prolific Karnatik artists: musician, activist, author T.M. Krishna, and musician and scholar R.K. Shriramkumar. Aditya received his B.A. in Arts from UCLA's prestigious Ethnomusicology program.

Aditya's current focus in composition is pushing boundaries within the "classical" tradition. In his latest solo album,

*ISOLASHUN*, Aditya explores the weight of privilege and the boundaries of tradition in an entirely new creative form. Currently, Aditya is composing the music for three evening-length dance productions by the internationally renowned choreographer Akram Khan as well as touring his own solo gig-theatre production titled *ROOM-i-Nation*, which explores themes of identity, migration and tradition.







Grand Théâtre • 27.09 – 02.10.2025

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# Elisabeth Schilling

Sensorial Symphonies

**CREATION**



©boshua



## Impressum

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