



AKRAM KHAN COMPANY

Outwitting the Devil

World Première Stuttgart, 13 July 2019

"As I arrive at the end of my dancing career, I have awakened to a new way of dancing. And that is to dance my ideas through the bodies of others, including older dancers, who carry their histories and complex emotional experiences within them. But what remains unchanged is my passion for exploring old and new myths in the context of our times."

One of the seeds of inspiration for *Outwitting the Devil* is Leonardo Da Vinci's iconic mural of *The Last Supper*. This image has haunted me since I first laid eyes on it as a child.

As a young British Bangladeshi boy growing up in South London, I remember seeing *The Last Supper* on a printed A4 page in my art class. I was told it was one of the most famous paintings in the world, and was asked to draw my own version of it. I now realise that at the time I was uncomfortable and confused by the depiction. I could not see anything of myself in it, or of the culture and religion I grew up in. It was foreign to me. Or perhaps, I was foreign to it. It did not reflect me, or the people in my street – who came from many different cultures – in any way I could relate to.

Many years later, I stumbled across another version of *The Last Supper*, by Australian artist Susan Dorothea White. White's work was titled *The First Supper*. The painting portrays 13 women from all regions of the world. The figure in the position of Leonardo's Christ is an Aboriginal woman, and the only white woman in the painting sits in the same position as Judas, the betrayer.

This radical interpretation astonished me, and gave me permission to free myself from the classical version. And in this new, anti-colonial depiction, I recognised an artist's journey and challenge to convention which was parallel to my own. Ever since I entered the classical Indian dance world, I have been searching for a way out.... or perhaps more truly, I was searching for a new way in.

- Akram Khan, August 2018

Artistic team & credits

Artistic Director/Choreographer Akram Khan

Dramaturg Ruth Little

Lighting Designer Aideen Malone

Visual Designer Tom Scutt

Original Music Score and Sound Design Vincenzo Lamagna

Costume Designer Kimie Nakano

Writer Jordan Tannahill

Rehearsal Director Mavin Khoo

Dancers Ching-Ying Chien, Andrew Pan, Dominique Petit, James Pham, Mythili Prakash, Sam Pratt

Producer Farooq Chaudhry

Technical Manager Tina Fagan

Production Manager Florian Stagliano

Project/Tour Manager Mashitah Omar

Supported by Arts Council England

Akram Khan is an Associate Artist of Sadler's Wells London and Curve Leicester.

Technical Requirements

Playing Area 12m x 12m

Trim Height 8m

Dimmers 120 minimum

NO RAKE

Akram Khan

Artistic Director/Choreographer

Akram Khan is one of the most celebrated and respected dance artists today. In just over 18 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 *Until the Lions*, *Kaash*, *iTMOi* (in the mind of igor), *DESH*, *Vertical Road*, *Gnosis* and *zero degrees*.

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, 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 and its Artistic Director Tamara Rojo. 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*.

Khan has been the recipient of numerous awards throughout his career including the Laurence Olivier Award, 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 six Critics' Circle National Dance Awards. Khan was awarded an MBE for services to dance in 2005. He is also an Honorary Graduate of University of London as well as Roehampton and De Montfort Universities, and an Honorary Fellow of Trinity Laban.

Khan is an Associate Artist of Sadler's Wells, London and Curve, Leicester.

Ruth Little

Dramaturg

Ruth Little is a dance and theatre dramaturg, a teacher and writer. Her work has encompassed national arts organisations, remote rural communities, site-specific production and large and small-scale exhibitions and expeditions. She lectured in English Literature at the University of Sydney, and was Literary Manager at Out of Joint, Soho Theatre, the Young Vic and the Royal Court. Ruth was Associate Director at Cape Farewell from 2010-2016. She is dramaturg with Akram Khan Company (*Gnosis*, *Vertical Road*, *DESH*, *iTMOi*, *Dust*, *technê*, *Until the Lions*, *Giselle*) and has worked with Banff Arts Centre, Sadler's Wells, Barbican, and many others. Winner of 2012 Kenneth Tynan Award for dramaturgy, Ruth has a number of publications including *Art*, *Place*, *Climate: Situated Ethics*, *War in the Body*, and *The Meteorological Body*.

Aideen Malone

Lighting Designer

Aideen studied Drama and Theatre at Trinity College Dublin and Goldsmiths College, University of London. She works on a rich variety of projects in theatre, dance, opera, site specific and installation. She has previously worked with Akram Khan on *Polaroid Feet* and *Kaash* in 2002. In theatre, she has collaborated with National Theatre, Bristol Old Vic, Lyric Hammersmith, Manchester Theatre Royal, Clod Ensemble, Young Vic, amongst many others. Aideen also enjoys working with young people in education, and is currently a tutor at ALRA and St Marys, Twickenham. She is a director of Junction designing lighting sculptures and installations.

Tom Scutt

Visual Designer

Tom is a London-based Designer for the stage and live events. A graduate from the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama in 2006, he regularly works at most of London's major theatres including The National Theatre, The Royal Court, Almeida and Donmar Warehouse. On Broadway, Tom has provided set & costume designs for *Constellations*, *King Charles III* and *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*. His work reaches across live music (Sam Smith/Apple, MTV VMAs), dance (Hofesh Shechter - *Grand Finale*) and exhibition design (*Frida Kahlo: Making Her Self Up* at London's V&A Museum). Tom is an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, an Associate Artist of the Donmar Warehouse and a resident at Somerset House Studios.

Vincenzo Lamagna

Composer

Vincenzo Lamagna is a musician, composer and producer based in London. His music is known for its visceral, emotive and edgy language that utilises an unconventional hybrid of electro-orchestral sounds. Vincenzo has carved a niche in the alternative contemporary dance world, where he has established himself as a major collaborator with some of the most acclaimed choreographers of this generation, Hofesh Shechter and Akram Khan. His most recent collaborations include *Until the Lions* and Akram Khan's award winning 21st-century adaptation of *Giselle* for English National Ballet. His scores are a mercurial combination of acoustic and electronic music, recognised for their ferocious industrial undertones, haunted melodies and cinematic soundscapes.

Kimie Nakano

Costume Designer

Kimie Nakano has designed costumes for Northern Ballet, Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet, Royal Danish Ballet, Companhia Nacional de Bailado, English National Ballet, Van Huynh Company, The Royal Ballet of Flanders, Rambert Dance Company, David Nixon, Didy Veldman, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, José Agudo and Yabin Studio. Kimie's opera production credits include: *The Return of Ulysses* by John Fulljames for Royal Opera and *Tristan und Isolde* by Carmen Jakobi for Longborough Festival Opera. Her designs for Akram Khan Company include: *Vertical Road*, *Dust* (English National Ballet's *Lest We Forget*), *iTMOi*, *TOROBACA*, *Gnosis*, *Kaash*, *The Rashomon Effect* (National Youth Dance Company), *technê* (choreographed for Sylvie Guillem, *Life in Progress*).

Jordan Tannahill

Writer

Jordan Tannahill has been 'widely celebrated as one of Canada's most accomplished young playwrights, film-makers and all-round multidisciplinary artists' (Toronto Star). His plays have been produced on major stages internationally and translated into eight languages, while his films and multimedia performances have been presented at festivals including the Toronto Int. Film Festival, the Tribeca Film Festival, and the Venice Biennial. In 2017, his play *Late Company* transferred to London's West End. Upcoming: his virtual reality performance *Draw Me Close*, produced by the National Theatre (UK) and the National Film Board of Canada, will open at the Young Vic in January 2019.

Mavin Khoo

Rehearsal Director

Mavin Khoo is internationally recognised as a dance artist, teacher, choreographer and artist scholar. His initial training was in Malaysia. He then pursued his training in Bharatanatyam intensively under the legendary dance maestro Padma Shri Adyar K.Lakshman in India. As a contemporary dance artist, he has worked with Wayne McGregor, Akram Khan, Shobana Jeyasingh and many others. Khoo founded mavinkhooDance in 2003. He was Artistic Director of ŻfinMalta Dance Ensemble between 2014 - 2017. He currently maintains his touring work as a mature artist with a focus on solo Bharatanatyam performances and specifically commissioned contemporary duet works. He also worked as rehearsal director for Akram Khan Company production *iTMOi* and worked alongside Akram on *Giselle* (English National Ballet).

Ching-Ying Chien

Dancer

Ching-Ying Chien was born in Taiwan and graduated from the National Taiwan University of Arts. As well as collaborating and creating work with a number of Taiwanese choreographers including Fang-Yi Sheu, Ching-Ying also worked as a physical model for Chinese artist Cai Guo-Qiang for his large-scale gunpowder on paper piece *Day and Night*. She has worked with Akram Khan Company since 2013 and achieved the 'Outstanding Female Performance (Modern)' award at the UK National Dance Awards in 2016. In addition to performing on stage, Ching-Ying worked with director Adam Smith to shoot music videos for the likes of Plan B and The Chemical Brothers earlier this year. Most recently she has presented her solo *Vulture* in London and Taiwan.

Andrew Pan

Dancer

Andrew was born in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Studying at the Federal Academy of Ballet in Malaysia, he was offered a scholarship to study at the Central School of Ballet in London. During his second year at Central, Andrew guested at Dublin City Ballet, in *Giselle* dancing the part of 'Peasant Pas De Deux'. After touring with *Notre Dame de Paris* for 3 years, he spent 5 years in the Celine Dion's show *A New Day* in Las Vegas. Throughout his career Andrew has worked with different choreographers and directors, including: Jiri Kylian, Rui Horta, Itzik Galili, Richard Wherlock, Roberto Galvan, Mia Michaels, Karl Schreiner, Christian Spuck, Carlus Pardrissa, Johann Kresnik, Jean Renshaw, Philipp Stölzl.

Dominique Petit

Dancer

Dominique Petit's career started in New York with Paul Sanasardo. Returning to France to join the Paris Opera Theater Research Group under the direction of Carolyn Carlson for four years, he went on to present his first solo at Avignon Festival. His choreographic pieces have toured to major dance festivals in Europe, Asia and South America, including his most prolific works, *Jade* and *Les tournesols*. Before teaching full-time in the Conservatory of La Roche sur Yon, he spent seven years as a pedagogical coordinator of the CNDC of Angers. Dominique has developed an innovative improvisation technique and is regularly invited to facilitate masterclasses in major French institutions.

James Pham

Dancer

James has been working extensively with Chunky Move - Anouk Van Dijk since 2012. Beside his collaborations with Eastman, Royal Ballet of Flanders, GöteborgsOperans Danskompani, Bayerische Staatsoper and Theater Basel, he has performed in *Triumphs and Other Alternatives* with Muscle Mouth and World of Wearable Art (2015). He was the lead role in Christophe Coppens' *Le Mandarin Merveilleux* at La Monnaie. James received the 'Best Male Dancer in a Dance or Physical Theatre Work' 2014 Helpmann Award for his performance in *247 Days*, and the Outstanding Performance by a Male Dancer 2014 Australian Dance Award for *AORTA*. He has been studying Countertechnique intensively since 2012, and became a certified teacher in 2014.

Mythili Prakash

Dancer

Classically trained in the Indian dance form Bharatanatyam, Mythili Prakash was born in Los Angeles and grew up training with her mother/dancer Viji Prakash. Performing her solo debut at just eight years old, she has since presented her work world-wide. Mythili's full length solos include: *Stree Katha*, *Yamuna*, *Seasons of Love*, *Chandalika*, *AIKYA - through the voice of Akka Mahadevi* and *JWALA-Rising Flame*. In 2009, she collaborated with musician Anoushka Shankar in *Svatantrya*, with writer/director Gowri Ramnarayan in *Yashodhara* in 2012 and her brother/musician Aditya Prakash in *MARA* in 2013. Mythili worked with Director Ang Lee in the film *Life of Pi* and was featured on NBC's *Superstars of Dance*.

Sam Pratt

Dancer

Sam Asa Pratt was born and raised in New York City and graduated from Bard College with degrees in Dance and Philosophy. Sam has performed with Kate Weare Company, David Dorfman Dance, Abraham in Motion, The Francesca Harper Project, and for the past two years has been a full-time company member in Punchdrunk's New York production of *Sleep No More*. Sam is co-founder/director of movement art company Baye & Asa (@bayeandasa) presenting live performance and film work in NYC.