



esplanade

March On



# Chotto Desh

BY AKRAM KHAN  
COMPANY (UK)

21 & 22 Mar 2026

Fri & Sun, 3pm | Sat, 7.30pm

School shows: 24 & 25 Mar 2026, 3pm

Singtel Waterfront Theatre at Esplanade

## About Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay

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Esplanade is Singapore's national performing arts centre. It hosts a year-round line-up of about 4,000 live performances and activities presented by Esplanade, its partners and hirers. As an arts centre for everyone, Esplanade also creates opportunities for seniors, youth, children and underserved communities to experience the arts. More than 70% of the shows that take place each year at the centre are free for all to enjoy.

Esplanade also brings the arts virtually to audiences in Singapore and beyond, through its diverse range of digital programmes on *Esplanade Offstage*, an all-access backstage pass to the performing arts and guide to Singapore and Asian arts and culture, with videos, podcasts, articles, quizzes and resources.

The centre works in close partnership with local, regional and international artists to develop artistic capabilities and content, push artistic boundaries and engage audiences. Esplanade supports the creation of artistic content by commissioning and producing new Singapore and Asian work for the international stage. It also develops technical capabilities for the industry nationally.

Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay is operated by The Esplanade Co Ltd (TECL), which is a not-for-profit organisation, a registered Charity and an Institution of a Public Character. TECL received the Charity Governance Award – Special Commendation for Clarity of Strategy in 2016 and 2022, the Charity Transparency Award from 2016 – 2023, and the Charity Transparency Dedication Award in 2024. Esplanade is Singapore's first Dementia-Friendly Arts Venue and a certified Dementia Go-To Point, as well as a guide/assistance dog friendly centre.

TECL receives funding support from Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth and its Community Programmes are supported by Tote Board Family, comprising Tote Board, Singapore Pools and Singapore Turf Club.

Visit [Esplanade.com](http://Esplanade.com) for more information.

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# FESTIVAL PRODUCER'S MESSAGE

In a world that moves quickly and often loudly, we find ourselves returning to a simple yet enduring question: how do we continue to create spaces where the young can pause, feel deeply, and encounter stories that help them make sense of themselves and the people around them? How might the arts offer young audiences moments of connection to their emotions and loved ones, and engage with gentle reminders that hope, care and humanity still matter?



Each year at Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay, we hold close the hope that young audiences and their caregivers might encounter works at our centre that affirm who they are, spark curiosity about the world, and invite them to remain open to wonder—even as they (we too) grow older.

*March On*, the centre's festival for young audiences will take place from 12 – 25 Mar 2026, bringing together artists and works that speak to these aspirations in different and meaningful ways. We are honoured to present the visually rich and heart-warming *Chotto DESH* by Akram Khan Company (UK). Directed by Dr Sue Buckmaster, Artistic Director of Theatre-Rites, this story explores themes of identity, belonging and intergenerational memory which we hope many can connect with.

We also welcome back Barrowland Ballet (UK) with two works, *Tiger Tale* and *Playful Tiger*. Audiences are invited to come up close to enjoy the captivating and fun performance of *Tiger Tale* which tells the story of how a tiger reignites a family's love for one another. The production *Playful Tiger* marks an important milestone for the festival as the first sensory performance presented by Esplanade for young people with profound autism and/or complex needs. This offering reflects our ongoing commitment to accessibility, care and creating spaces where every child can feel seen, supported and welcomed on their own terms.

Building long-term relationships with artists and companies like Akram Khan Company and Barrowland Ballet has been central to *March On*. Through continued collaboration, we are able to grow alongside artists whose care, rigour and generosity shape meaningful encounters for young audiences.

This year, we are proud to be commissioning and co-producing new works with Singapore-based artists and collectives which include The Lorong Boys, Thomas Lim and Krish Natarajan (*There's a Dinosaur in the Concert Hall!*), A Magical Creation (*The Curious Curator*) and The Wanderlings (*First Rave*). This continues our commitment to nurture and support artistic development and original creation for young audiences locally.

From Australia, *Little Bozu & Kon Kon* by Omusubi Production and Monkey Baa Theatre present an enchanting puppetry performance inspired by Japanese folklore. A tender and adorable reflection on friendship, difference and acceptance, the work serves as reminders that feel especially vital in the world we live in today. Adding to the cute-factor is *Squirrel by The Egg* (UK). This highly interactive performance targeted at young audiences from six months to four years old is a story of new growth and new beginnings.

Expanding the festival's conversations through diverse regional and cultural perspectives, we are also excited to welcome artists from Thailand and Indonesia for the first time. Together with young performers from Singapore, they will be presenting a rich line-up of free performances at the festival's various public venues that can be enjoyed during *March On*. We warmly welcome back Some Club, whose wacky and curious garden of installations, *Itchy Fingers: Makan Angin*, will once again transform the Esplanade Courtyard into a playful space of discovery, movement and shared joy.

Complementing the performances is a line-up of ticketed workshops designed by local creatives SOMAYOKE, ARTFOLD, Forest & Whale and Warble, Warble the Wild's in Trouble!. These offer intimate, arts-based explorations and an opportunity for quality time and bonding between young participants and their caregivers. These workshops help young audiences build loving relationships with themselves and others, nurture curiosity about the world, and provide moments of slowing down.

*March On* continues to be, above all, a space of encounter: between stories and audiences, artists and communities, and the young and the adults who care for them. We invite young audiences to wonder, to question, to feel deeply, and at the same time, for their adults and caregivers a chance to listen, learn and remember what it is to see the world with fresh eyes.

Come wander, wonder and *March On* with us!

**Rachel Lim**  
Senior Producer  
The Esplanade Co Ltd

# PRINCIPAL SPONSOR'S MESSAGE



Naturel continues to be a proud sponsor of Esplanade's *March On 2026*, an annual children's festival that explores relevant issues for the young through multi-disciplinary programs and participatory art experiences. This sponsorship reflects a positive association with the event and emphasizes Naturel's commitment to supporting initiatives that contribute to the community's cultural and educational enrichment for five consecutive years.

With Naturel's long history, brand leadership in the cooking oil and olive oil markets, and organic staples, it is a brand that resonates well with local consumers.

We extend our warmest wishes for an enjoyable and enriching experience at the Festival!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Whang Shang Ying". The signature is fluid and stylized, with a large initial "W" and "S".

**Mr. Whang Shang Ying**  
Executive Chairman  
Lam Soon Singapore Pte Ltd.

# INTERVIEW WITH SUE BUCKMASTER

Sue Buckmaster is the Director of Akram Khan's *Chotto Desh* and *Chotto Xenos* and the Artistic Director of Theatre-Rites.

## 1. When did you begin working with Akram Khan? And how did you work together to create *Chotto Desh*?

I met Akram through my association with Sadler's Wells over 10 years ago. He was doing his initial research on *DESH* and was looking for different influences from different practitioners. Whilst I assisted on a small element of *DESH*, I asked him if he would ever consider making a piece of work for children. At that stage, he was not yet a father and had not had the incredible response to the award-winning *DESH*.

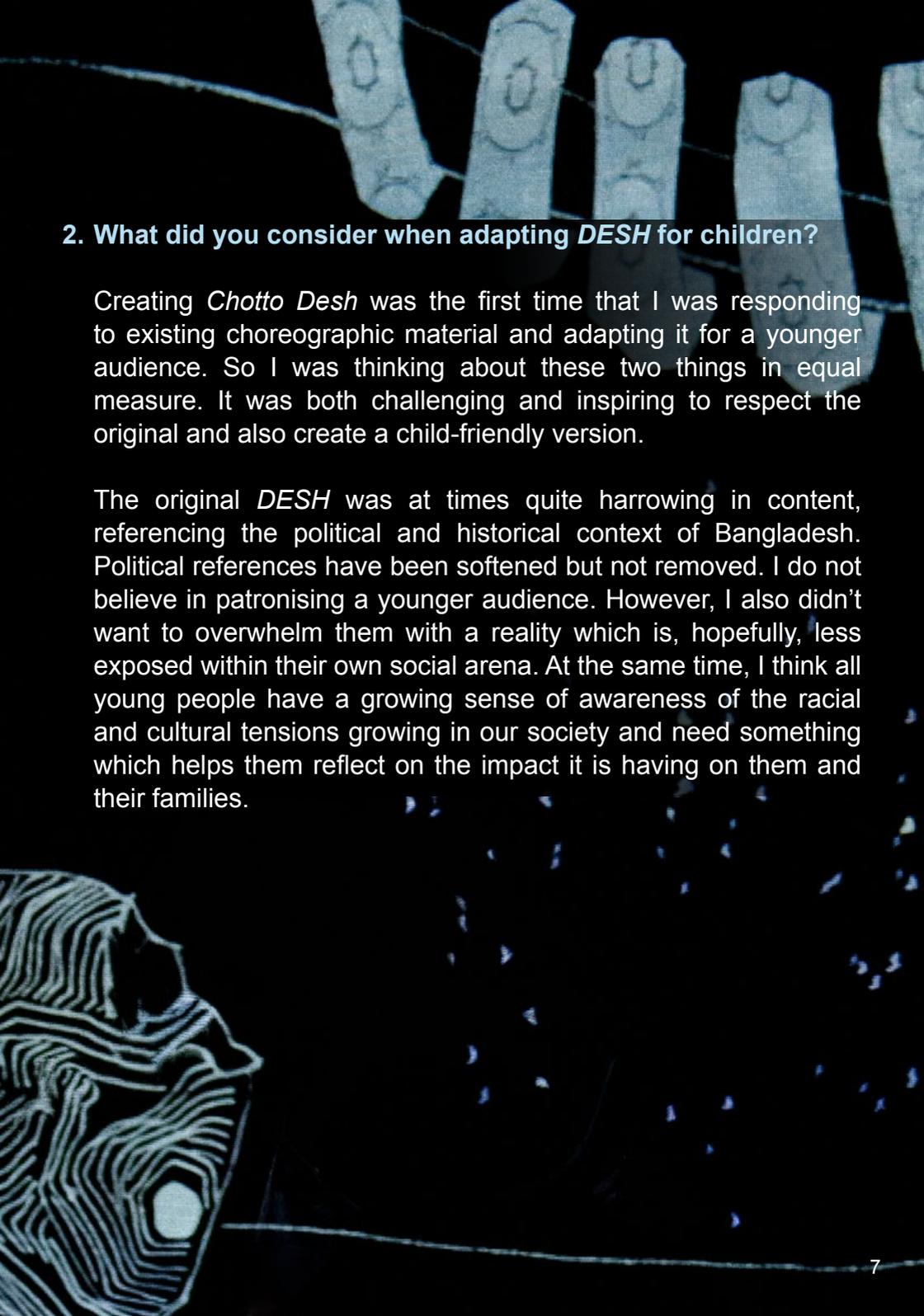
It was a while after the notable success of *DESH* that Claire Cunningham, a dancer whom I previously directed in one of Theatre-Rites Dance shows for children called *Mischief*, asked me to consider whether I thought that *DESH* could be adapted to suit a family audience. Her partner, Jose Agudo, was Akram's assistant choreographer and knew *DESH* intimately and she knew from her experience with me that I would know how to change it to make it child-friendly. Akram then responded warmly to the idea, entrusted us with the project and a two-year process of adaptation commenced.



He trusted me. I talked to him about his younger self. I watched *DESH* live and also repeatedly watched the filmed version. I picked out parts which I felt to be most child-friendly and thought about ways to expand on them. I studied the parts which were not so child-friendly, because of the politics or the amount of concentration or prior knowledge required, and thought about how I could still include them in some way. Over a year I gradually put together a new dramaturgy and we gathered a new team, including auditioning for dancers who would play the character of Akram, rather than Akram perform it himself. Akram approved of all of this. I then asked Akram to play the role of his father in the voice-over work. I believe this shed a whole new light on the story, as Akram stepped out of his own shoes and into his father's perspective. He also then had his own children during the process.

Although it was a huge responsibility developing an original work which was already hugely successful and magical, Akram always had faith that a new creation could be born from it and went on the journey with me. We are now both delighted that it can re-emerge in remembrance of Akram's father who sadly parted from this world in 2022.



A hand with fingers holding up strips of paper with drawings. The background is dark with a pattern of small white dots. In the bottom left corner, there is a stylized drawing of a face with intricate line patterns.

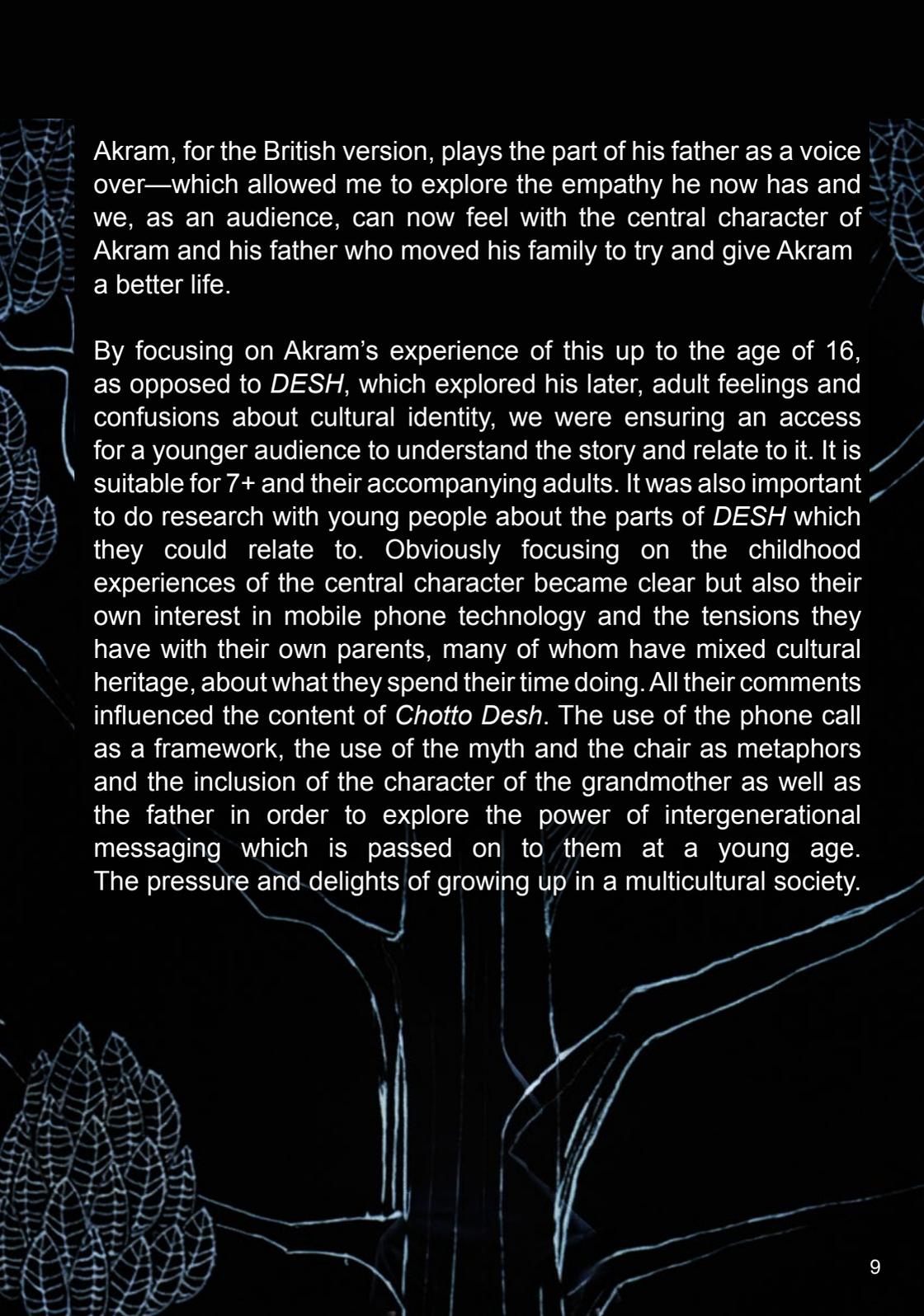
## 2. What did you consider when adapting *DESH* for children?

Creating *Chotto Desh* was the first time that I was responding to existing choreographic material and adapting it for a younger audience. So I was thinking about these two things in equal measure. It was both challenging and inspiring to respect the original and also create a child-friendly version.

The original *DESH* was at times quite harrowing in content, referencing the political and historical context of Bangladesh. Political references have been softened but not removed. I do not believe in patronising a younger audience. However, I also didn't want to overwhelm them with a reality which is, hopefully, less exposed within their own social arena. At the same time, I think all young people have a growing sense of awareness of the racial and cultural tensions growing in our society and need something which helps them reflect on the impact it is having on them and their families.

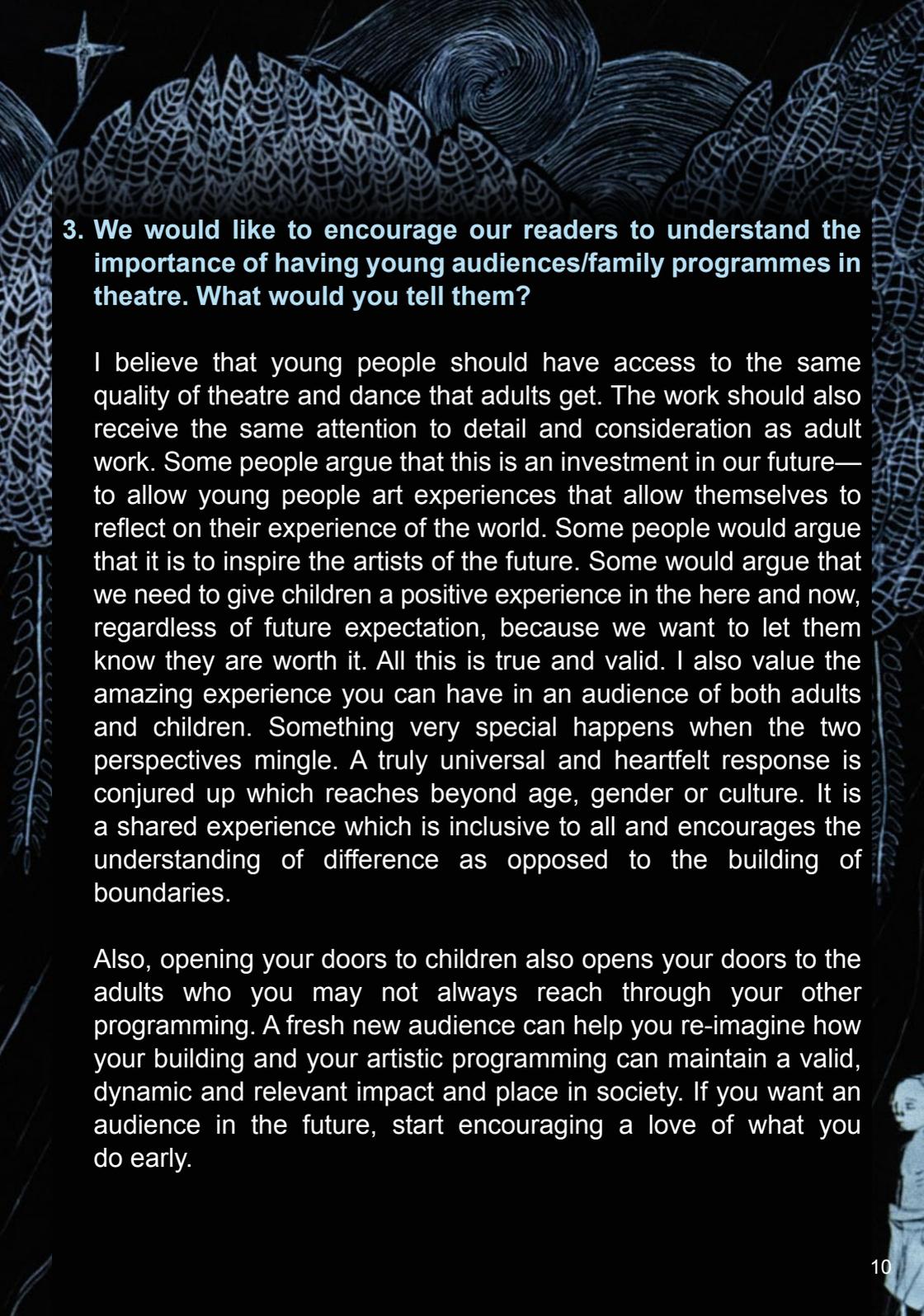
Many people ask me how much of *Chotto Desh* is from the original *DESH* and how much is new material. It took a long while to decide what to keep and what to change. For me, it was important to protect Akram's choreography whilst at the same time give younger viewers, or audience with less knowledge of dance, a way in to enjoy it. *Chotto Desh* is 25 minutes of the original material with small shifts and a change of order of scenes. The other 25 minutes is new content created by myself and the assistant choreographer Jose. The most complex choreography which was at the beginning of *DESH* is now in the last third, once the audience understands where the choreographic language stems from. There are more references to Akram's younger experience included in this show, to help our youngest audience to connect. This involved talking some more to Akram about his younger experiences of growing up within a family with Bangladeshi roots and yet inherently knowing this was not his own homeland and the confusions this aroused in him.





Akram, for the British version, plays the part of his father as a voice over—which allowed me to explore the empathy he now has and we, as an audience, can now feel with the central character of Akram and his father who moved his family to try and give Akram a better life.

By focusing on Akram's experience of this up to the age of 16, as opposed to *DESH*, which explored his later, adult feelings and confusions about cultural identity, we were ensuring an access for a younger audience to understand the story and relate to it. It is suitable for 7+ and their accompanying adults. It was also important to do research with young people about the parts of *DESH* which they could relate to. Obviously focusing on the childhood experiences of the central character became clear but also their own interest in mobile phone technology and the tensions they have with their own parents, many of whom have mixed cultural heritage, about what they spend their time doing. All their comments influenced the content of *Chotto Desh*. The use of the phone call as a framework, the use of the myth and the chair as metaphors and the inclusion of the character of the grandmother as well as the father in order to explore the power of intergenerational messaging which is passed on to them at a young age. The pressure and delights of growing up in a multicultural society.



**3. We would like to encourage our readers to understand the importance of having young audiences/family programmes in theatre. What would you tell them?**

I believe that young people should have access to the same quality of theatre and dance that adults get. The work should also receive the same attention to detail and consideration as adult work. Some people argue that this is an investment in our future—to allow young people art experiences that allow themselves to reflect on their experience of the world. Some people would argue that it is to inspire the artists of the future. Some would argue that we need to give children a positive experience in the here and now, regardless of future expectation, because we want to let them know they are worth it. All this is true and valid. I also value the amazing experience you can have in an audience of both adults and children. Something very special happens when the two perspectives mingle. A truly universal and heartfelt response is conjured up which reaches beyond age, gender or culture. It is a shared experience which is inclusive to all and encourages the understanding of difference as opposed to the building of boundaries.

Also, opening your doors to children also opens your doors to the adults who you may not always reach through your other programming. A fresh new audience can help you re-imagine how your building and your artistic programming can maintain a valid, dynamic and relevant impact and place in society. If you want an audience in the future, start encouraging a love of what you do early.

#### 4. How has creating this work alongside animation benefitted the work?

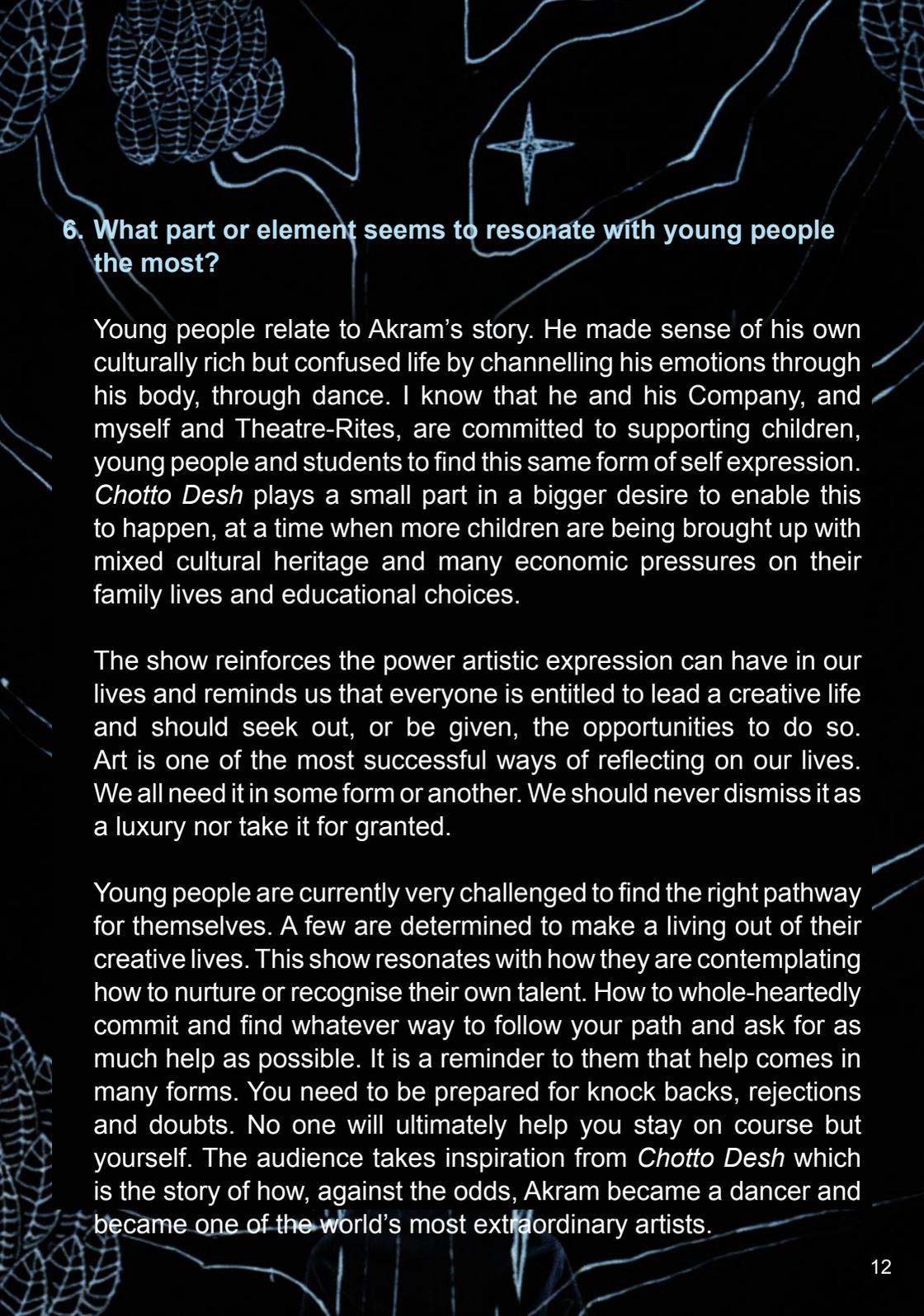
Re-creating *DESH* was an opportunity to re-use some of the resources including the beautiful music of Jocelyn Pook, and of course the animations from YeastCulture. Animation is a timely and expensive addition to any work and *Chotto Desh* benefits from being able to include it. It certainly adds to the magic and accessibility of the piece.

The animation references the Bangladeshi mythical story of *The Honey Hunter* and so adds elements of a world bigger than the domestic story of a young boy's love of dance. It gives an opportunity to develop the use of myth and storytelling, plus the use of objects and dance as a more abstract and poetic way to reflect on the complexities of our current dilemmas regarding cultural tensions and sensitivity and make the work magical and accessible to a much wider public.

#### 5. You created *Chotto Desh* in 2014, does anything feel different?

I have seen many more artists have the courage to tell their own story. I have seen an increase in one-person shows which are economically cheaper but also give rise to the wonderful array of other forms of storytelling like projection, puppetry and evocative lighting. It has been recognised as a leading, influential work of art which needs to be made accessible to more people.

Since Brexit, COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine, it is even harder to produce work of quality and get it out on tour so it is wonderful knowing that this show and company is robust enough to do so. The world deserves it and needs it more than ever. Our children need to see the power of creativity overcoming destruction.

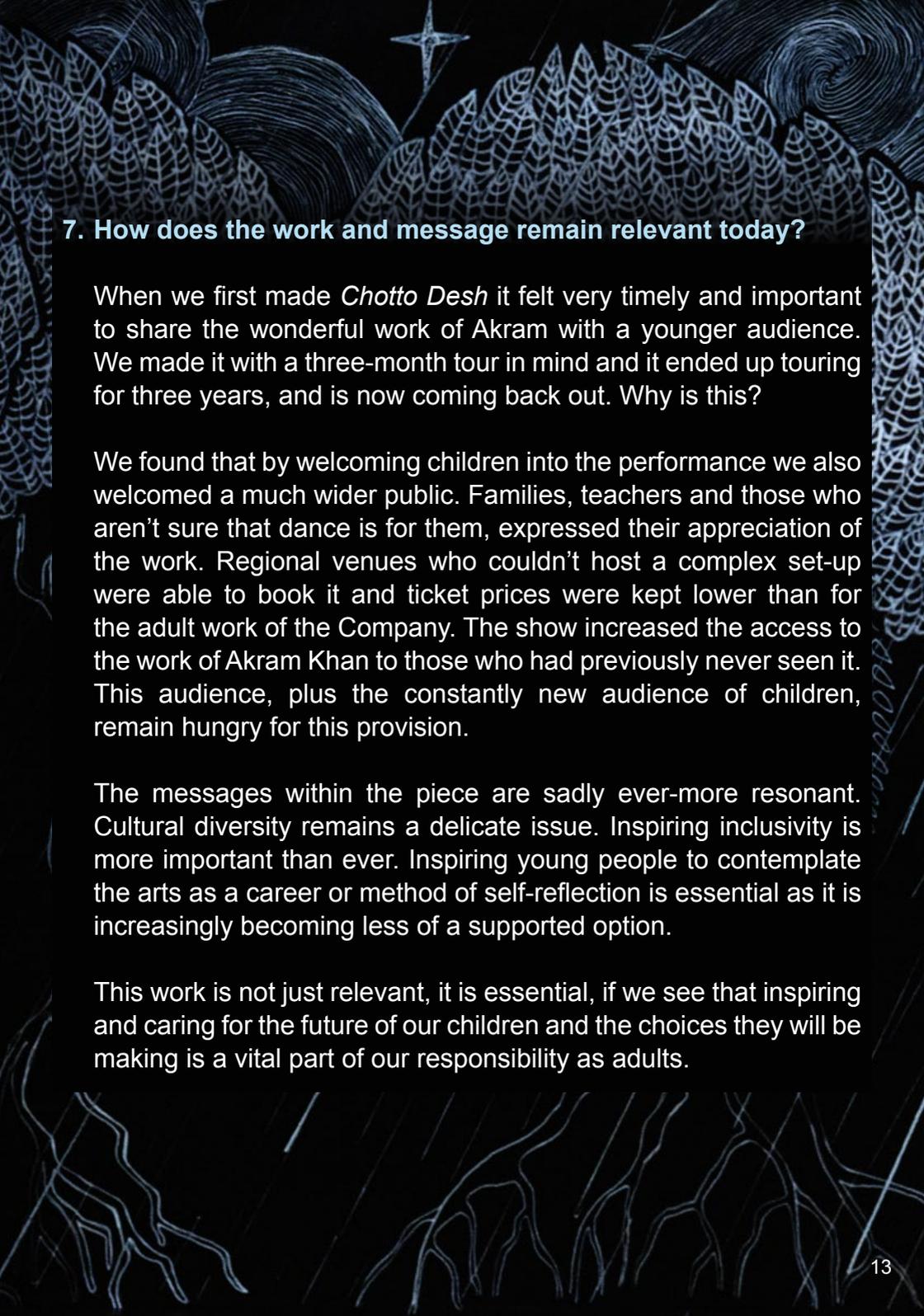


**6. What part or element seems to resonate with young people the most?**

Young people relate to Akram's story. He made sense of his own culturally rich but confused life by channelling his emotions through his body, through dance. I know that he and his Company, and myself and Theatre-Rites, are committed to supporting children, young people and students to find this same form of self expression. *Chotto Desh* plays a small part in a bigger desire to enable this to happen, at a time when more children are being brought up with mixed cultural heritage and many economic pressures on their family lives and educational choices.

The show reinforces the power artistic expression can have in our lives and reminds us that everyone is entitled to lead a creative life and should seek out, or be given, the opportunities to do so. Art is one of the most successful ways of reflecting on our lives. We all need it in some form or another. We should never dismiss it as a luxury nor take it for granted.

Young people are currently very challenged to find the right pathway for themselves. A few are determined to make a living out of their creative lives. This show resonates with how they are contemplating how to nurture or recognise their own talent. How to whole-heartedly commit and find whatever way to follow your path and ask for as much help as possible. It is a reminder to them that help comes in many forms. You need to be prepared for knock backs, rejections and doubts. No one will ultimately help you stay on course but yourself. The audience takes inspiration from *Chotto Desh* which is the story of how, against the odds, Akram became a dancer and became one of the world's most extraordinary artists.



## 7. How does the work and message remain relevant today?

When we first made *Chotto Desh* it felt very timely and important to share the wonderful work of Akram with a younger audience. We made it with a three-month tour in mind and it ended up touring for three years, and is now coming back out. Why is this?

We found that by welcoming children into the performance we also welcomed a much wider public. Families, teachers and those who aren't sure that dance is for them, expressed their appreciation of the work. Regional venues who couldn't host a complex set-up were able to book it and ticket prices were kept lower than for the adult work of the Company. The show increased the access to the work of Akram Khan to those who had previously never seen it. This audience, plus the constantly new audience of children, remain hungry for this provision.

The messages within the piece are sadly ever-more resonant. Cultural diversity remains a delicate issue. Inspiring inclusivity is more important than ever. Inspiring young people to contemplate the arts as a career or method of self-reflection is essential as it is increasingly becoming less of a supported option.

This work is not just relevant, it is essential, if we see that inspiring and caring for the future of our children and the choices they will be making is a vital part of our responsibility as adults.

# SYNOPSIS

Adapted in 2015 by Theatre-Rites director Sue Buckmaster from Akram Khan's Olivier Award-winning and critically acclaimed solo *DESH*, *Chotto Desh* is a heart-warming work that tells the story of a young man searching for his place in the world.

*Chotto Desh*, meaning "small homeland", draws on Khan's unique quality of cross-cultural storytelling, creating a compelling tale of a boy's dreams and memories from Britain to Bangladesh that celebrates the resilience of the human spirit in the modern world. Blending kathak and contemporary dance with an exquisite mix of spoken text, dreamlike animation, visuals and specially composed music, *Chotto Desh* is an enchanting and poignant dance-theatre experience for the young and young-at-heart to enjoy together.

(50mins, no intermission)



# ARTISTIC TEAM & CREDITS

<b>DESH Artistic Direction and Original Choreography</b>	Akram Khan
<b>Chotto Desh Direction and Adaptation</b>	Sue Buckmaster (Theatre-Rites)
<b>Music Composition</b>	Jocelyn Pook
<b>Lighting Design</b>	Guy Hoare
<b>Stories imagined by</b>	Karthika Nair and Akram Khan
The grandmother's fable in <i>Chotto Desh</i> is taken from the book <i>The Honey Hunter</i>	
<b>Written by</b>	Karthika Nair, Sue Buckmaster and Akram Khan
<b>Assistant Choreographer</b>	Jose Agudo
<b>Rehearsal Director</b>	Amy Butler
<b>Dancer</b>	Nico Ricchini
<b>Grandmother's voice</b>	Leesa Gazi
<b>Jui's voice</b>	Sreya Andrishia Gazi
<b>Executive Director</b>	Isabel Tamen
<b>Production Manager</b>	Michael Cunningham
<b>Tour Manager</b>	Svitlana Bil
<b>Stage Manager</b>	Jessica Rice
<b>Lighting Technician</b>	Gerald McDermott
<b>Sound &amp; Video</b>	Matt Armstrong
<b>Original Visual Design</b>	Tim Yip
<b>Original Visual Animation created by</b>	YeastCulture
<b>Original Costume Supervisor</b>	Kimie Nakano
<b>Painted Head Sequence devised by</b>	Damien Jalet with Akram Khan
<b>Bleeding Soles lyrics written by</b>	Leesa Gazi
<b>Singers</b>	Melanie Pappenheim, Sohini Alam, Jocelyn Pook (voice/viola/piano), Tanja Tzarovska, Jeremy Schonfield

We gratefully acknowledge the artists who contributed to the original production of *DESH* by Akram Khan Company.

Co-produced by the MAC, Belfast in 2023.

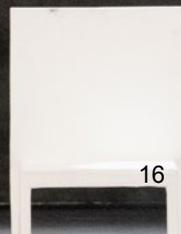
Originally co-commissioned by MOKO Dance, Akram Khan Company, Sadler's Wells London, DanceEast, Théâtre de la Ville Paris, Mercat de les Flors Barcelona, Biennale de la danse de Lyon 2016 and Stratford Circus Arts Centre.

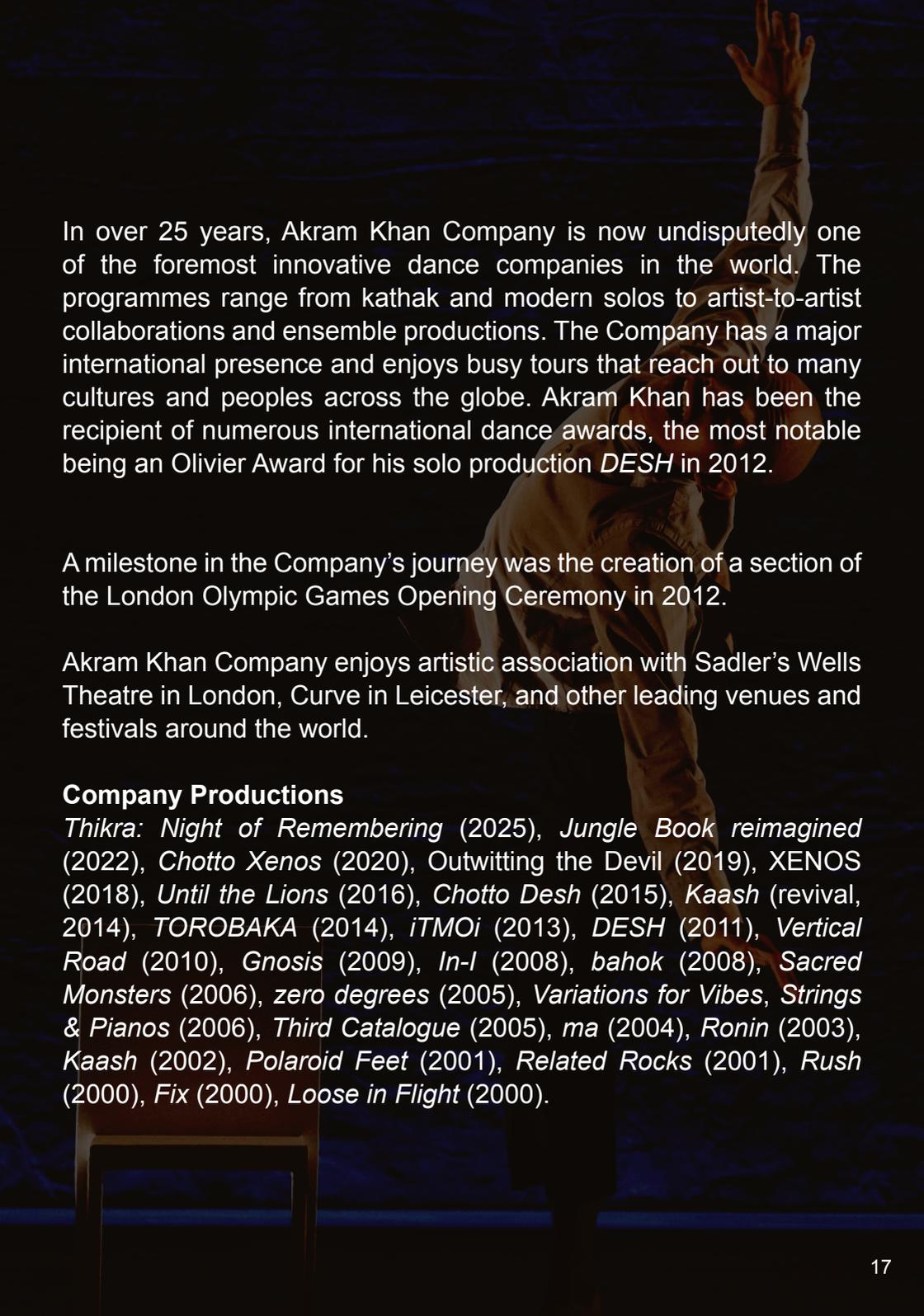
# ABOUT AKRAM KHAN COMPANY

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 over 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.

### **Company Productions**

*Thikra: Night of Remembering* (2025), *Jungle Book reimagined* (2022), *Chotto Xenos* (2020), *Outwitting the Devil* (2019), *XENOS* (2018), *Until the Lions* (2016), *Chotto Desh* (2015), *Kaash* (revival, 2014), *TOROBACA* (2014), *iTMOi* (2013), *DESH* (2011), *Vertical Road* (2010), *Gnosis* (2009), *In-I* (2008), *bahok* (2008), *Sacred Monsters* (2006), *zero degrees* (2005), *Variations for Vibes, Strings & Pianos* (2006), *Third Catalogue* (2005), *ma* (2004), *Ronin* (2003), *Kaash* (2002), *Polaroid Feet* (2001), *Related Rocks* (2001), *Rush* (2000), *Fix* (2000), *Loose in Flight* (2000).

## Akram Khan

Artistic Director / Choreographer of *DESH*

Akram Khan is one of the most celebrated dance artists today, building his reputation on the success of imaginative, highly accessible and profoundly moving productions such as *Thikra: Night of Remembering*, *Gigenis: the generation of the Earth*, *Jungle Book reimaged*, *Outwitting the Devil*, *Until the Lions*, *Kaash*, *iTMOi (in the mind of igor)*, *DESH*, *Vertical Road*, and *zero degrees*. As an instinctive and natural collaborator, Khan has been a magnet to world-class artists from cultures and disciplines such as 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, and composers Steve Reich, Nitin Sawhney, Jocelyn Pook and Ben Frost. 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.



## Sue Buckmaster

Direction and Adaptation of *Chotto Desh*

Sue is the Artistic Director of Theatre-Rites and has many years of experience as a director, dramaturg and puppetry specialist working with a wide variety of companies including the National Theatre, Royal Shakespeare Company and the Young Vic. In 2018, she was awarded an honorary Doctorate for her outstanding contribution to theatre. For Theatre-Rites, Sue has created 32 theatre and site-specific productions whose commissioners include Sadler's Wells, Manchester International Festival and Salzburg Festival as well as Ruhr Triennale Festival and various European Schauspielhaus. In 2015, she directed *Chotto Desh* and in 2020, she collaborated with the AKC again to direct *Chotto Xenos*, an adaptation of Akram Khan's award-winning XENOS, for family audiences. In 2021, Sue co-authored a book about Theatre-Rites with Lecturer Liam Jarvis—*Theatre-Rites, Animating Puppets, Objects and Sites*. In 2026, Theatre-Rites celebrates the company's 30th birthday with a co-creation with South African Choreographer Gregory Maqoma.



## Jocelyn Pook

Composer

Jocelyn is an award-winning British composer and musician known for her unique and versatile voice in contemporary music. Her work spans cultures and genres ranging from orchestral and choral to minimal, frequently inspired by found sound and field recordings and conjuring magical and sometimes haunting Soundscapes. Jocelyn is also known for her highly acclaimed film scores such as *The Wife*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Brick Lane*, and Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut*. In 2018, she won the BAFTA for Best Original Score for the TV film of Mike Bartlett's play *King Charles III*. Her previous collaborations with Akram Khan include scores for DUST (from English National Ballet's *Lest We Forget*) and the much celebrated score for *DESH*, for which she was awarded the British Composer Award in 2012.



## Guy Hoare

Lighting Designer

Guy has been based in London since 1998 and designs lighting internationally for dance, theatre and opera. For Akram Khan Company, Guy has designed *Chotto Desh* and *Chotto Xenos*. He designed the lighting for Arthur Pita's *The Metamorphosis* and Mark Bruce's *Dracula*, which won the South Bank Award for Dance in 2012 and 2014 respectively. His other designs for dance include pieces for Rafael Bonachela, Mayuri Boonham, Christopher Bruce, Dan Daw, Laila Diallo, Shobana Jeyasingh, Henri Oguike, Seeta Patel, Mythili Prakash, Omar Rajeh and Alexander Whitley. Guy's theatre credits include *Sea Wall / A Life on Broadway*, and productions in London at the National Theatre, Kiln, Young Vic, Old Vic, Donmar Warehouse, Royal Court, Almeida and the West End. He has designed opera for the Royal Opera House, English National Opera, Bregenz Festival, and English Touring Opera, including their 2014 Olivier award-winning season of *King Priam* and *Paul Bunyan*. Guy is an Associate Artist at Wilton's Music Hall.



## Karthika Nair

Writer

Karthika is the author of several books, including *The Honey Hunter* (illustrated by Joëlle Jolivet), which later became the grandmother's fable in *Chotto Desh. Until the Lions: Echoes from the Mahabharata*, her reimagining of the *Mahabharata* in multiple voices, won the prestigious 2015 Tata Literature Live! Award for Book of the Year (Fiction) and was highly commended at the 2016 Forward Prizes (UK). She has helmed the scripts of several dance productions, such as Akram Khan's multiple-award-winning *DESH* (2011); Carlos Pons Guerra's *Mariposa* (2021), a queer tragedy inspired by Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*; and *Until the Lions* (2016), Khan's trio adapted from a chapter of her own book. A dance-opera adaptation of *Until the Lions*, composed by Thierry Pécou and directed by Shobana Jeyasingh, premiered at Opéra national du Rhin (Strasbourg) in September 2022.



## Jose Agudo

Assistant Choreographer

Jose's career started in Andalusia where he began performing as a Flamenco dancer. Slowly the world of contemporary dance became more visible as he worked throughout Europe. As a rehearsal director and assistant choreographer, Jose had worked on several creations for Akram Khan Company, including *DESH*, *iTMOi*, *TOROBAKA*, *Until the Lions*, *Chotto Desh*, London 2012 Olympic Games opening ceremony, and Sylvie Guillem's farewell tour *Life in Progress*. Jose's independent choreographic commissions include Phoenix Dance Theatre, ZfinMalta, ACE dance and music, Cape Dance Company, Norrdans, Area Jeune Ballet. His company's productions *Silk Road* and *Carmen* were warmly received by audiences throughout the UK and internationally.



## Amy Butler

Rehearsal Director

Amy is a senior dance artist and rehearsal director for Stopgap Dance Company, rehearsal director and choreographic consultant for Candoco Dance Company and performer and choreographer for Highly Sprung Performance Co.

Her upcoming projects include performing in the film *Never Turn Back* by Ballet Boyz, performing *Accelerate* and *Castaway* by Highly Sprung, bringing *Chotto Desh* back to London for AKC and premiering *Over and Over (and over again)* at Sadler's Wells by Candoco and Dan Daw productions. Quality inclusive practice underpins all the work that Amy does: for two years (2020–2022), she was instrumental in the development of Home Practice, a YouTube channel specifically for dance and designed to be inclusive and available to all and has developed an inclusive yoga practice during her time with Stopgap Dance Company.



## Nico Ricchini

Dancer

Nico Ricchini is a dance artist, performer, and creator working internationally across stage, creation, and education. Throughout his career, he has collaborated with leading artists and companies including Pepe Hevia Danza (Cuba), Fernando Magadan (Nederlands Dans Theater), Tupac Martir (London), Emma Martin Dance, La Taimada, CLOD Ensemble, and Akram Khan Company—notably for the Opening Ceremony of the London 2012 Olympic Games. Between 2015 and 2018, his performances of Akram Khan Company's solo *Chotto Desh* marked a major turning point in his career. During the same period, he appeared in Juanjo Giménez's short film *Timecode*, winner of the Palme d'Or for Best Short Film at Cannes and an Academy Award nominee. After settling in Barcelona, he conceived and co-directed several contemporary dance training and creation platforms, contributing actively to the growth of the local independent dance scene. In 2020, he returned to Akram Khan Company as rehearsal director and performer for *Chotto Xenos*, and in 2023 he came back on stage as the lead performer of *Chotto Desh* for its new international tour.





**Pesta Raya**  
Malay Festival of Arts

**esplanade**

# PUNO: Sewing Memories

by Papermoon Puppet Theatre  
(Indonesia)

17-19 Apr 2026

Fri, 8pm | Sat, 3pm & 8pm | Sun, 3pm

Esplanade Recital Studio

Using non-verbal storytelling, original music, mask theatre and techniques, Papermoon Puppet Theatre tells the story of single father Puno and his daughter, Tala, in this exploration of life, death and legacy.

1hr, no intermission

Advisory: This production explores the topic of love, loss, and death through puppetry.

**\$35**<sup>\*^</sup>

\*Limited concessions available

**^Esplanade&Me specials available**  
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Terms & Conditions apply. Admission age: 4 and above.  
Recommended for 6 and above



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# The ROALD DAHL'S BFG

Adapted by Tom Wells  
With additional material by Jenny Worton



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Stratford Herald



**“JAW-DROPPING”**

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**A Phizz-Whizzing Adventure Awaits  
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“Fase remains a compositional marvel...”

– *The Guardian* ★★★★★

# ANNE TERESA DE KEERSMAEKER / ROSAS (Belgium)

Fase, Four Movements to the Music of Steve Reich

23 – 25 Apr 2026, Thu – Sat | 7.30pm  
Singtel Waterfront Theatre at Esplanade



Experience this hypnotic, minimalist masterpiece that became the blueprint for choreographing movement in dialogue with music.

1hr 10mins, no intermission

**\$55<sup>^</sup>**

Limited concessions available

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**DANCE REFLECTIONS** BY VAN CLEEF & ARPELS



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AN ESPLANADE PRODUCTION

# TOGETHER

CREATED BY ISABELLA CHIAM

**2 – 17 May 2026**  
**Esplanade Theatre Studio**  
 (45 mins, no intermission)

**Weekdays: 9.30am & 11am**  
 (No shows on 4, 5 & 11 May)  
**Weekends: 11am, 2pm, 4pm**

Gor Gor and Mei Mei's boredom sparks imaginative play, turning their home into a gateway to magical adventures.



**\$23<sup>A</sup>**

Advisory: All children must be accompanied by an adult. Tickets required for all patrons including infants in arm. Audience will be seated on the floor.

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SISTIC Hotline: 6348 5555 / School & Group Booking: 6828 8389 or email [boxoffice@esplanade.com](mailto:boxoffice@esplanade.com).  
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**da:ns focus**  
Ballet by the Bay

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# THE ROYAL BALLET GALA (UK)



**26 - 28 Jun 2026**  
Fri, 8pm | Sat, 3pm & 8pm | Sun, 3pm  
Esplanade Theatre

FEATURING



AND MANY MORE

The Royal Ballet, one of the world's greatest ballet companies, returns to Singapore after 21 years. Don't miss this phenomenal showcase featuring over 30 dancers from the company performing a mixed repertoire of 19th century classics and company heritage works.

(Approximately 2hrs 15mins, including 20mins intermission)

**\$80\*, \$100\*, \$140^, \$170^, \$200^**

\*Limited concessions available.

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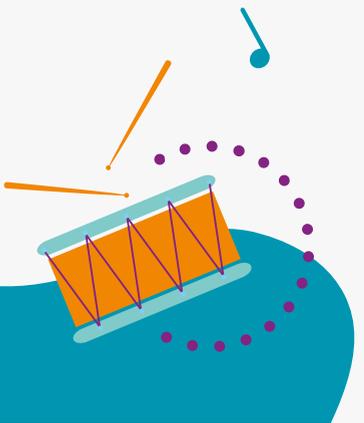
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Help us make your next Esplanade experience even better by taking a moment to share your thoughts with us.

We look forward to creating more wonderful memories with you soon.

Scan and do the survey now!



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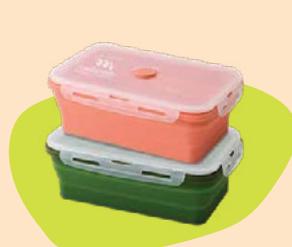
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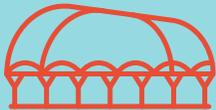


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# Esplanade gives our heartfelt thanks

*to our Esplanade partner, arts benefactor, donors and sponsors for believing in our vision to be a performing arts centre for everyone. They made all these possible!^*



# 4.3K

activities took place at Esplanade.



**70%** Free



**30%** Paid



# 3.75M

people attended our live and online activities.



**93%**

of surveyed audiences were satisfied with their Esplanade experience.



**66%**

reported a positive impact on quality of life and wellbeing.



**670**  
Activities

**17.1K**  
Participants

We believe that everyone should be able to experience the joy of the arts, including children, youth, seniors, migrant workers and individuals with special needs. Our community engagement activities bring the arts to those in need.

\*Figures for Esplanade's activities from Apr 2024 to Mar 2025.



## Your contribution\* will make a difference.

On behalf of the communities we serve, thank you!

Find out how you too can make a difference through the arts at Esplanade.

Donate at [www.esplanade.com/donate](http://www.esplanade.com/donate)

To find out more, email us at [donations@esplanade.com](mailto:donations@esplanade.com) or speak with us at 6828 8321.

Esplanade is a charity and an Institution of a Public Character. Your donation to us is matched dollar-for-dollar by the Cultural Matching Fund. Please note that the prevailing tax exemption scheme for donors and sponsors of Arts-Related Businesses will depend on the qualifying criteria imposed by IRAS.

# With Gratitude

Esplanade –Theatres on the Bay is a charity, a not-for-profit organisation and Singapore's national performing arts centre.

We seek to entertain, engage, educate and inspire through the arts. We thank everyone who has helped us bring positive impact to Singaporeans by supporting the arts and Esplanade.

Our heartfelt appreciation goes especially to our Donors and Sponsors, for their steadfast belief in our mission and for their generous contributions.

---

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## **Join us in sharing the joy of the arts and help us reach more communities in need.**

We believe that an experience with the arts is special and that with your generous support, more people will get a chance to enjoy the arts. Join us in sharing the joy of the arts and help us reach more communities in need.



Esplanade also receives grants from the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth, as well as support for our Community Programmes from the Tote Board Family, comprising Tote Board, Singapore Pools and Singapore Turf Club.



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Imagination, empathy, creativity—the arts both embody and inspire these human qualities that help us make a better society.

Your donation opens up opportunities for the young to experience and be inspired by the arts. It also supports the aspirations of emerging Singapore artists to create and express their vision for the future.

# a



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