

Akram Khan Company

# Chotto Desh

Visual Story



This visual story is for anyone who would like to know more about Chotto Dosh before the performance.

We will tell you more about what to expect from the show, with an introduction to the themes and story.

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# The Show

Chotto Desh is by Akram Khan Company.

The show is based on a performance that Akram Khan Company made called **DESH**. Chotto Desh is the version of this show that was created for family audiences.

In Chotto Desh, Akram Khan tells us the story of his childhood. He thinks about how his parents were from Bangladesh, but he grew up in London. This leads to him asking questions about where he feels at home, where he feels he **belongs**.

**Chotto** means **small** in Bengali, the language spoken in Bangladesh.

Desh means **homeland** in Bengali.

The show helps us to think about how it can be confusing to grow up around different **cultures**.

**Culture** is the way that people live. This changes from place to place. Language, clothing, food, art, traditions and celebrations are all a part of culture. In the show, Akram does not always feel that he belongs to the same culture as his father. This can cause arguments between them.

Chotto Desh helps us to think about our own **identity** and celebrate who we are.

**Identity** is our own personal sense of who we are. It's how you choose to describe yourself and it's what makes you, you.

The story is told through movement, words and projections. The dancer plays the character of Akram. Sometimes we hear the voices of Akram's father and grandmother. The dancer on stage does not speak, but their voice is part of the soundtrack.

# Before the show starts

These are some things to know about the show and your visit to the theatre.

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**The show is around 55 minutes long.**

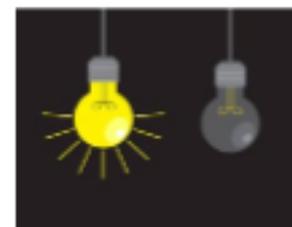
**There is no break.**



As you come into the theatre it might be noisy with people talking and finding their seats.



You can bring headphones or ear defenders with you if you like.



When the show is about to start the lights in the theatre will go a bit darker. This is meant to happen.

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At **Relaxed performances** you can:

- Make noise if you want to
- Go in and out of the theatre
- You can go to the quiet space if you want to

# What to expect

Going to the theatre can be really exciting but we also know it can be overwhelming at times.

This show can be loud, bright and fast-paced, some of the effects we use or the themes we explore can be surprising or upsetting.

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## Projections

There is a screen at the back of the stage and a thin see-through screen at the front of the stage.

Images and videos are projected onto these screens.

The projections help to create the scene and show different places.



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## Mentions of danger, violence and war

There are some moments in the show which mention war, or show characters running away from something frightening

## Moments of family arguments

There are some moments in the show where characters argue in raised voices at each other.

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## Music and sound effects that will be loud at times

Sudden and loud noises include:

- Traffic, car horns, bells
  - Mechanical noises in the music
  - A roar of a tiger
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In the section called 'The Plot' it will tell you more information about these specific moments that might be loud or scary.

# The Plot

This section includes details about the plot. You can skip over this section if you do not want to know what happens.

Things that might be surprising or scary are outlined in a box.

## 1. Tech Support

Akram is on his phone, speaking to someone in Bangladesh in a call centre. He can't remember his password and is very frustrated.



## 2. Traffic

Akram remembers being in Bangladesh as a child. We see him dodge the people and traffic and he feels lost and confused. He is bothered by being in such a busy place and says that Bangladesh is his father's homeland, not his.



A car horn beeps, sounds of traffic and crowds

## 3. The Father

The dancer transforms into Akram's father who tells us of his life in Bangladesh, where he cooked for the whole village.



The dancer becomes the character of Akram's Father by painting a face on top of his own head

## 4. Small Chair

Akram's father tries to get Akram to sit still, but Akram feels fidgety. He doesn't want to sit still. He doesn't listen to his father and dances around the chair.

His grandmother sits him down and tells him the story of the honeybee.



Changes in music as the story starts

The lighting gets darker and there are big shadows on the back wall.

A little boy, Shonu, appears. This is a projection.

There is mention of the fearful tiger Dakkhin Rai



## 5. The Honeybee Story

Projections fill the stage. Akram dances alongside the projections as his grandmother tells the Honey Bee story. Akram explores this world finding a little boy called Shonu, a boat, a forest, animals and a bees' nest full of honey.

Akram hears the tiger and runs away frightened.



The stage goes dark, projected images appear including a large elephant

Music gets louder throughout the scene

Sounds of a tiger growling loudly and of thunder

## 7. Anger

Akram's anger and frustration builds into a rage as he dances.

Sudden, loud mechanical sounds

Traffic noises return, sudden and loud horns and bells

Lighting gets darker and starts to flash

Shonu reappears and runs with Akram



## 8. The Riot

A tank appears and Akram drops to his knees. He is frightened.

The tank disappears and projections of angry figures of protesters appear. Akram crouches down, overwhelmed.

A large army tank is projected

Themes of violence and war



## 9. Large Chair

Akram sits back on his small chair. A much larger chair suddenly appears. Akram climbs, plays and explores what he can do on the large chair.

The voices of Akram's father and grandmother return. They are arguing about Akram.



Akram sits down underneath the chair, pulls down a curtain and creates shadows. He remembers the Honeybee story as his grandmother finishes telling the tale. His grandmother tells Akram that he will find his own way.



Lighting changes - darkness and shadows

## 10. Reparation

Akram spins the large chair and pushes it off the stage. He feels free and enjoys dancing.

He returns to the phone call with the call centre in Bangladesh. He realises that he can remember his password after all.



Lighting changes - a bright stage to a dark stage

## This is the end of the show.

At the end of the show the dancers will line up and take a bow.

People will clap. Some people might even 'whoop' and make other noises to show they enjoyed it.

You can join in if you want to, but you don't have to.



# Find out more

If you would like to find out more about *Chotto Desh*, there are videos and interviews on our website:



[www.akramkhancompany.net/productions/chotto-desh-2023/](http://www.akramkhancompany.net/productions/chotto-desh-2023/)

Find out more about Akram Khan Company



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