

SOUTHBANK CENTRE

Aditya Prakash: ROOM-i-Nation

Sat 17 May

Purcell Room at Queen Elizabeth Hall

Artist statement, Aditya Prakash

ROOM-i-Nation is based on my 2023 album *ISOLASHUN* (New Amsterdam Records), which explores the tension in dual identity and questions the notions of beauty tied to the 'classical' aesthetic.

The starting point of the album was the pandemic and the solitude it brought me as an artist. Cancelled engagements and long periods of isolation prompted a period of deep reflection on my music, its history, and the politics of the two countries I consider home: India and America.

Conversations around race in America forced me to reflect on my participation in power structures and the tension of being both marginalised and complicit: on the one hand, I am a person of colour trying to assimilate in a predominantly white world, and on the other, I am a person of caste-privilege in the Karnatik world that is tied to a history of casteism and erasure.

ROOM-i-Nation explores internal struggles to fit in and gain validation in both worlds, juxtaposed with stories of migration and assimilation inspired by conversations I wish I could have had with my late father.

ROOM-i-Nation is commissioned by The Center for the Art of Performance, UCLA

Made possible by Jazz Road, a Program of South Arts, Los Angeles County Arts & Culture, BrittenPears Arts (UK), Kalapriya Center for the Indian Performing Arts (Chicago).

Aditya Prakash | Composer, writer, performer (Los Angeles)

Award-winning vocalist Aditya Prakash is a leading young virtuoso of Karnatik music, known for his powerful voice and boundary-pushing compositions. At 16, he toured with Ravi Shankar, performing at Carnegie Hall and Disney Hall. He leads the genre-bending Aditya

Prakash Ensemble and has collaborated with Anoushka Shankar, Tigran Hamasyan, Karsh Kale and Akram Khan. A UCLA Ethnomusicology graduate, Prakash is mentored by T.M. Krishna and R.K. Shriramkumar. His recent works include scores for *She's Auspicious* and *HOME*. His current focus explores new sonic forms within classical tradition through his multimedia project *ISOLASHUN*.

Mythili Prakash | Director, writer, dramaturg (Los Angeles)

A second-generation Indian-American artist, Mythili Prakash trained under her mother Viji Prakash and mentors Malavika Sarukkai and Akram Khan. Her solo works have toured globally to venues like Sadler's Wells, Jacob's Pillow and Esplanade Theatres. Named a 'choreographer of the future' by Khan, she premiered *Here and Now* at Dance Umbrella and co-created *One|All* in Doha. Her acclaimed production *She's Auspicious* premiered at Reflektor Festival and was supported by multiple grants.

Julian-Quán Việt Lê | Sound design and engineer (Fresno)

Grammy-winning producer Julian Lê is a sound designer, engineer, and performer who has toured and recorded with artists like Jhene Aiko and Ai. A classically trained pianist, he earned a jazz scholarship at UCLA, studying under James Newton and Kenny Burrell. He brings award-winning musicianship to genre-spanning collaborations in live performance and recording.

Seah Johnson | Lighting and scenic design (Seattle)

Seah Johnson is a seasoned lighting designer and production manager with over 20 years of experience in global dance, theatre and opera. She spent 14 seasons with Aspen Santa Fe Ballet and now serves as Director of Production and resident Lighting Designer at Alonzo King LINES Ballet. Her credits include premieres by Nicolo Fonte, Jorma Elo and Alejandro Cerrudo.

Akram Khan | Artistic advisor (London)

Akram Khan is one of the world's most acclaimed choreographers, celebrated for imaginative, cross-cultural productions like *XENOS*, *Until the Lions*, and *Jungle Book Reimagined*. Known for interdisciplinary collaborations with artists across music, theatre, and visual art – including Anish Kapoor, Sylvie Guillem, and Florence and the Machine – Khan has reshaped contemporary dance over a 23-year career.

Sushma Soma | Rehearsal director (Singapore)

Sushma Soma is an award-winning Karnatik vocalist recognized among Singapore's top women leaders in music and youth changemakers. She received the Young Artist Award, Singapore's highest honor for young arts practitioners. Her recent work centers on sustainability and the environment, voiced through Karnatik music. Her album *HOME*, created with Aditya Prakash, was hailed as 'one of the finest albums about environment and wildlife.'

YeastCulture | Video projection (London)

YeastCulture is a multidisciplinary studio blending animation, projection mapping and video design across theatre, dance and music. Recent works include *Jungle Book Reimagined*

with Akram Khan, *Bluebeard's Castle* with Esa-Pekka Salonen, and projects with Cirque du Soleil, Dickson Mbi, Shobana Jeyasingh, and the San Francisco Symphony. Their designs have opened international festivals and toured globally.

Tim Wilson | Creative producer (Portland)

After a long career as the Executive Director of Western Arts Alliance, a US regional touring network, Wilson founded Starlet Farm in 2022 to further his passion for artist development. He manages Karnatik singer and composer Aditya Prakash, Navajo jazz trumpeter Delbert Anderson, Moroccan-Andalusian ensemble Seffarine, and genre-defying The Third Orchestra (London).

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