

SOUTHBANK CENTRE

Chotto Desh

Friday 9 & Saturday 10 February 2024
Queen Elizabeth Hall

Akram Khan Company is delighted to bring back its much-loved family-friendly production of *Chotto Desh*. Adapted by Theatre-Rites' director, Sue Buckmaster, in 2015 from Akram Khan's Olivier Award-winning solo and critically acclaimed *DESH*, this heart-warming story follows a young man trying to find his place in the world. In September 2023, it returned to capture the attention and imagination of a new generation of younger audiences.

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.

Artistic Team & Credits

DESH Artistic Direction and Original Choreography | Akram Khan

Chotto Desh Direction and Adaptation | Sue Buckmaster (Theatre-Rites)

Music Composition | Jocelyn Pook

Lighting Design | Guy Hoare

Stories imagined by | Karthika Naïr and Akram Khan

The grandmother's fable in *Chotto Desh* is taken from the book *The Honey Hunter*

Written by | Karthika Naïr, Sue Buckmaster and Akram Khan

Assistant Choreographer | Jose Agudo

Rehearsal Directors | Dennis Alamanos, Amy Butler, Nico Monaco

Grandmother's voice | Leesa Gazi

Jui's voice | Sreya Andrishia Gazi

Dancer | Nico Ricchini

Original Visual Design | Tim Yip

Original Visual Animation created by | YeastCulture

Original Costume Supervisor | Kimie Nakano

Music Engineer | Steve Parr

Painted Head Sequence devised by | Damien Jalet with Akram Khan

'Bleeding Soles' lyrics written by | Leesa Gazi

Singers | 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.

Coproduced by the MAC, Belfast

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.

Akram Khan Company

In July 1999, in the foyer of the Queen Elizabeth Hall at the Southbank Centre, London, an animated and curiosity-filled conversation took place between Akram Khan and recently graduated arts manager Farooq Chaudhry. That conversation laid the foundation stone for a dynamic collaboration, culminating in the creation of Akram Khan Company (AKC) one year later.

Akram Khan is one of the most celebrated and respected dance artists today. In the last 23 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*. The company also continues to build a meaningful footprint in the UK and beyond with its curated engagement programmes.

Sue Buckmaster / Director

Sue is the Artistic Director of Theatre-Rites and has many years of experience as a director 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 29 theatre and site-specific productions whose commissioners include Sadler's Wells, Manchester International Festival and Salzburg Festival. In 2015, she directed *Chotto Desh* and in 2020, she collaborated with the company 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 Board Member and Lecturer at University of Essex, Liam Jarvis. Theatre-Rites, *Animating Puppets, Objects and Sites* celebrates the company's 25th birthday and explores their unique approach to visual storytelling.

Nico Ricchini / Dancer

Born in the Philippines, Nico has worked with Pepe Hevia Danza, Fernando Madagan (Netherlands Dance Theatre) in London, Emma Martin Dance, CLOD Ensemble and Lali Ayguadé Company, among others. Nico was also an actor in the Oscar-nominated short movie *Timecode* by Juanjo Giménez. In 2014, he co-founded Dansart BCN to encourage dance education in Barcelona, and Big Story Performing Arts Services in 2017 to produce and support artists in their career development. Recently, he founded creative venue FREE-ZONE. Nico joined Akram Khan Company in 2012 for the Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games in London, and, in 2015, as a performer for the international touring of *Chotto Desh* and *Chotto Xenos*. He is now also a rehearsal director for the company, and is regularly called upon to teach AKC workshops worldwide.