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**TWO ICONS OF THE DANCE WORLD**  
**SYLVIE GUILLEM AND AKRAM KHAN BRING *SACRED MONSTERS***  
**TO CAL PERFORMANCES FRIDAY & SATURDAY, MAY 5 & 6**

**BERKELEY, APRIL 6, 2007**—Two celebrated superstars of the dance world come together in a dazzling, boundary-pushing exploration of their two classical dance forms when **Sylvie Guillem** and **Akram Khan** bring their *Sacred Monsters* to Zellerbach Hall on **Saturday, May 5 at 8:00 p.m.** and **Sunday, May 6 at 7:00 p.m.** Guillem was Rudolf Nureyev's protégé and star of the Paris Opera Ballet. Today, she is principal guest artist at London's Royal Ballet. Akram Khan, Britain's finest exponent of classical Indian *kathak* dance, is among the most gifted choreographers and dancers of his generation. Performing together, these dance icons leave rave reviews in their wake. "*Sacred Monsters* unites two ravishingly beautiful movers from opposing classical disciplines - ballet and *kathak* - and takes them to amazing places neither has gone before. An extraordinary meeting of minds and bodies" states *The Times* of London. The commissioned score is by composer and cellist **Philip Sheppard**, who performs on stage along with percussionist **Coordt Linke**, violinist **Alies Sluiter**, and vocalists **Faheem Mazhar** and **Juliette Van Peteghem**. While the piece was primarily choreographed by Khan, **Lin Hwai-min**, founder and artistic director of Taiwan's Cloud Gate Dance Theatre, and *kathak* dancer and choreographer **Gauri Sharma Tripathi** provide additional choreography for the artists' solos.

***SACRED MONSTERS***

*Sacred Monsters*, premiering in this current American tour, dynamically explores the notion of male and female energies as spiritual forces rooted in creation stories/myths. The production is comprised of solos by both artist and duets. *Sacred Monsters* mixes Guillem's elegance with Khan's skills in the percussive Indian *kathak* dance, which demands exceedingly fast moves with great precision. Throughout the 75-minute performance neither dancer leaves the stage. They trade ideas and exchange dialogue, and occasionally one dancer slips into the background to give the other dancer the lead, but they are working as a unit throughout. The duo's stated intention is to create a new dance form, not a fusion or hybrid, but an entirely new

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form that inspires daring moves that surprise and delight audiences. “A meeting of bodies and minds so sensational it takes the breath away” (London’s *Daily Telegraph*). Both perform dressed in loose trousers and t-shirts with Guillem’s long, red hair hanging in a braid, in contrast to Khan’s bald pate. As reported in *Dance Magazine*, “She is a lean, long-limbed airborne dancer; he is muscular and grounded. ...In one dance Guillem clasped her feet around Khan’s waist and bent backward, their mirror-imaged arms recalling the multi-limbed Hindu god Shiva. ...Guillem’s glorious (feet), taped tightly for support, pointed and flexed beautifully, while Khan’s bare feet drummed the floor like a hummingbird’s wings.”

As to the title, *Sacred Monsters*, according to dramaturge Guy Cools, the term *monstres sacres* was first used in France in the 19th century as a nickname for the big stars of the theater, such as Sarah Bernhardt, given divine status by their audience and the media. *Sacred Monsters* is the meeting and exchange of two such stars of the present, who, despite iconic status, seek to remain authentic in their artistic journey.

Songs by **Iva Bittova**, **Nando Acquaviva** and **Toni Casalonga** have been adapted for use in *Sacred Monsters*. **Lin Hwai Min** created additional choreography for Guillem’s solo as **Gauri Sharma Tripathi** did for Khan’s solo.

### SYLVIE GUILLEM

**Sylvie Guillem** joined the Paris Opera Ballet at 16, racing up the ranks and after only three years was handpicked by Rudolf Nureyev and appointed *Étoile*, star dancer. As the world’s *prima* celebrated ballerina, she has scored memorable triumphs with today’s gifted choreographers and has been invited to perform by some of the world’s most prestigious companies. Today, at 41 she continues to seek new opportunities to learn and discover. In 2003 she danced with the Ballet Boyz; last year it was in the physically challenging contemporary world of Wayne McGregor. She has worked with many of the great choreographers including George Balanchine, Jerome Robbins, Maurice Béjart, William Forsythe, and Mats Ek, performing the major classic works of the ballet repertoire. She reigns as principle guest artist at the Royal Ballet and during her extensive career has received many awards, including the Nijinsky Prize (2000), the Chevalier de Légion d’Honneur (1994), and an honorary CBE (2003).

Audiences and critics alike are continually astonished by her extraordinary physique (her peerless 'six o'clock' leg lift), amazing technique and charisma.

### **AKRAM KHAN**

**Akram Khan** exudes grace, breathtaking energy and charm on stage. Born in Britain to Bangladeshi parents, he seeks to build bridges between the worlds of contemporary dance and *kathak*, the 500-year-old Indian classical dance, to create a new dance territory that transcends simple notions of 'fusion'. Khan began dancing at the age of seven, studying under the great Kathak performer Sri Pratap Pawar. He presented solo performances in the 1990s, gradually developing larger scale works, breaking new ground in his collaborations with other artists – first seen in his first full-length work *Kaash*. His production *Ma* was presented at the Edinburgh Festival in 2004. In 2005 he was made an associate artist of Sadler's Wells (where Guillem is also an associate artist). Khan is known for his dazzling technique, mixing razor-sharp precision, lightning bursts of speed and mesmerizing footwork. In 2005 he received an MBE for his services to the dance arts.

### **THE ARTISTS**

Founder and Artistic Director of Taiwan's Cloud Gate Dance Theatre, **Lin Hwai-min**, was featured as the Choreographer of the 20th Century by *Dance Europe*; one of the Personalities of the Year by *Ballet International*; cited as the Best Choreographer at the 2000 Lyon Biennial Festival; and celebrated by *Time* magazine as one of Asia's Heroes in 2005.

An exponent of the north Indian classical dance form of *kathak*, **Gauri Sharma Tripathi** learned from her guru and mother Smt Padma Sharma. Gauri has performed at dance festivals throughout Europe and India, including a performance at Westminster Abbey in London where she danced for the Queen.

**Philip Sheppard** is Professor of Cello at the Royal Academy of Music, London as well as a guest lecturer at the Royal College of Music in London and directs education projects for the Academy of St Martin in the Fields and the Harlem Center for young musicians in New York. He has been performing as a professional cellist for 30 years, making his debut concert at the age

of three, and touring the US and Europe at the age of nine as a concerto soloist. Sheppard has performed at venues as diverse as the BBC Proms and Glastonbury Festival, and has made many recordings with classical and jazz composers such as Oliver Knussen, Keith Tippett and John Adams. His two solo albums “The Glass Cathedral” and “The Diver in the Crypt” use pioneering electric cello techniques and multitracking technology. Sheppard co-wrote “Devil in My Life” with Grace Jones and has just written and recorded a major solo and orchestral project with Ant Genn, Damien Hirst and John Malkovitch. His music is used in many theater productions; he improvised soundtrack solos for *Harry Potter and The Goblet of Fire*, and is featured soloist in *Hotel Rwanda*.

### TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for ***Sacred Monsters* with Sylvie Guillem and Akram Khan Saturday May 5 at 8 p.m and Sunday May 6 at 7 p.m. in Zellerbach Hall** are priced at **\$32.00, \$48.00, \$68.00 and \$86.00**. Tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at [www.calperfs.berkeley.edu](http://www.calperfs.berkeley.edu); and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens and other students receive a \$2 discount, and UC Alumni Association members receive a \$3 discount (Special Events excluded). For more information, call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988, or visit the Cal Performances web site at [www.calperformances.net](http://www.calperformances.net).

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Cal Performances’ 2006/07 Season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

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**CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:**

**CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS**

**Saturday, May 5 at 8 p.m.**

**Sunday, May 6 at 7 p.m.**

**Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus**

Bancroft Way at Telegraph, Berkeley

*Special Events*

***Sacred Monsters***

**Sylvie Guillem**, dancer

**Akram Khan**, choreographer and dancer

**Philip Sheppard**, cello

**Coordt Linke**, percussion

**Alies Sluiter**, violin

**Faheem Mazhar**, vocals

**Juliette Van Peteghem**, vocals

**Gauri Sharma Tripathi**, additional choreography

**Lin Hwai-min**, additional choreography

**Program:** Dance icons Sylvie Guillem and Akram Khan meld classical Indian dance and ballet in *Sacred Monsters*, a journey to unexplored dance territory that “takes the breath away” (London’s *Daily Telegraph*).

**Tickets:** \$32, \$48, \$68 and \$86 available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at [www.calperfs.berkeley.edu](http://www.calperfs.berkeley.edu); and at the door.

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