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[Press Room](#)



Images of Akram Khan in *XENOS* are available for download from the Cal Performances [press room](#).

**CAL PERFORMANCES AT UC BERKELEY PRESENTS  
AKRAM KHAN IN *XENOS*  
DANCER/CHOREOGRAPHER'S FINAL FULL-LENGTH WORK  
AS A SOLO PERFORMER  
WEST COAST PREMIERE • EXCLUSIVE WEST COAST ENGAGEMENT  
WITH LIVE MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT  
SATURDAY–SUNDAY, MARCH 2–3**

**Related events include Akram Khan in discussion with Cal Performances' interim artistic director Rob Bailis, a lecture/demonstration exploring the movement in *XENOS*, a *kathak* community dance class, and pre- and post-performance discussions.**

**Berkeley, February 1, 2019** — Cal Performances at UC Berkeley presents dancer/choreographer **Akram Khan** in the West Coast premiere of *XENOS*, his final full-length piece as a solo performer. The work, a Cal Performances co-commission, will be staged in Zellerbach Hall in its exclusive West Coast engagement. Akram Khan is celebrated for physically demanding, visually arresting solo productions that combine Indian *kathak* with contemporary dance to tell stories through movement. *XENOS* conjures the despair and alienation suffered by an Indian soldier recruited to fight for the

British Crown in the trenches of World War I. The performances take place Saturday, March 2 at 8pm, and Sunday, March 3 at 5pm in Zellerbach Hall.

The word “xenos” means “stranger” or “alien” in Greek, and in this emotionally visceral work, Khan explores the beauty and horrors of the human condition from the perspective of an Indian soldier trapped between two cultures in the colonial system. An estimated 1.5 million Indians fought and died for European and American Armies during World War I. Khan, who is British and of Bangladeshi descent, has said that he was profoundly affected by his discovery of this dark chapter of British-Indian history, which inspired his tale of an Indian dancer forced to transform his skilled body into an instrument of war. The acclaimed production, with an elaborate set that shifts from the courts of an Indian kingdom to a barren battlefield trench, is designed by **Mirella Weingarten**. Canadian playwright **Jordan Tannahill** wrote the recorded text that gives voice to the shell-shocked colonial Indian soldier in a no-man’s land. The original score for *XENOS*, composed by Khan’s frequent collaborator **Vincenzo Lamagna**, will be performed live by vocalist **Aditya Prakash**; baritone saxophonist **Tamar Osborn**; violinist **Clarice Rarity**; vocalist and double bassist **Nina Harries**; and percussionist **BC Manjunath**.

As an instinctive and natural collaborator, Khan has been a magnet for world-class artists from other cultures and disciplines. His previous collaborators include the National Ballet of China, actress Juliette Binoche, ballerina Sylvie Guillem, singer Kylie Minogue, writer Hanif Kureishi, and composer Steve Reich. He appeared at Cal Performances in 2007 with Sylvie Guillem in their performances of *Sacred Monsters*, an exploration of male and female energies as spiritual forces rooted in creation stories/myths, which they performed in solos, duets and spoken dialog.

Khan has, in just over 18 years, 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 *Until the Lions*, *Kaash*, *iTMOi (in the mind of igor)*, *DESH*, *Vertical Road*, *Gnosis*, and *zero degrees*.

Described by the *Financial Times* as an artist “who speaks tremendously of tremendous things,” 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.

## Related Events

Cal Performances offers a wealth of related events in conjunction with the performances of *XENOS*.

- Akram Khan will speak with Cal Performances interim artistic director **Rob Bailis** at the weekly open session of the UC Berkeley course *Creativity, Migration, Transformation* taught by Associate Professor of Performance Studies **Peter Glazer** and playwright **Stan Lai** in the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive's Osher Auditorium on Thursday, February 28 at noon. It is free and open to the public.
- The Graduate Theological Union hosts an interactive lecture/demonstration exploring spiritual and movement ideas raised in *XENOS*, with liturgical dance artists **Carla DeSola** and **David McCauley**; *kathak* dancer, educator, and choreographer **Charlotte Moraga**; and **Michelle Summers** of UC Berkeley's Dept. of Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies. The event takes place on Saturday, March 2 at 10:30am at the Doug Adams Gallery. It is free and open to the public. Contact [care@gtu.org](mailto:care@gtu.org) or (510) 649-2472 for registration information.
- Charlotte Moraga will teach a *kathak* community dance class in Zellerbach Hall's studio 170 on Saturday, March 2 at 1pm. For registration, please see the Cal Performances website.
- A post-performance Catharsis Café event offering audience members an opportunity to reflect on the performance over light refreshments will take place on Saturday, March 2 on the Zellerbach Hall Lobby Mezzanine and is free to all ticket holders that evening.
- A pre-performance discussion is planned for Sunday, March 3 at 3pm in the Tilden Room of the ASUC Student Union. It will explore the many ways of viewing *XENOS*, including through the lenses of contemporary dance, South Asian dance in Britain, spiritual dance, Indian history, and mythological drama. The discussion is co-presented with the Graduate Theological Union and is free and open to the public.

## Ticket Information

Tickets for *Akram Khan, XENOS* on Saturday, March 2 at 8pm, and Sunday, March 3 at 5pm in Zellerbach Hall range from \$30–\$78 (prices subject to change). Half-price tickets are available for UC Berkeley students. Tickets are available through the Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall,

at (510) 642-9988, at [calperformances.org](http://calperformances.org), and at the door. For more information about discounts, go to [calperformances.org/discounts](http://calperformances.org/discounts).

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**CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:**

**CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS**

**Saturday, March 2, 8pm**

**Sunday, March 3, 5pm**

**Zellerbach Hall**  
Bancroft Way at Dana Street  
UC Berkeley campus

***Dance***

**Akram Khan**

***XENOS*** (West Coast Premiere, Exclusive West Coast Engagement, Cal Performances Co-commission)

**Program:** Revered dancer/choreographer Akram Khan is known for physically demanding, visually spellbinding solo productions that combine Indian *kathak* with contemporary dance, and mine personal and cultural histories in works of sublime storytelling. *XENOS* is Khan's final creation before his planned retirement from solo performance, and reveals the beauty and horrors of the human condition as seen from the perspective of an Indian soldier recruited to fight for the British Crown in the trenches of WWI. The word "xenos" means "stranger" or "alien" in Greek, and the work explores the soldier's alienation as he is trapped between two cultures in the colonial system. *XENOS* is performed with live musical accompaniment.

**Tickets:** \$30–\$78 (prices subject to change)

**Related Events:**

**Public Session of the Arts + Design course *Creativity, Migration, Transformation*  
*Performing the Unimaginable: Theater of War***

**Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, Osher Auditorium, 2155 Center Street, Berkeley**

**Thu, Feb 28, 12pm**

Akram Khan speaks with Cal Performances' interim artistic director Rob Bailis about *XENOS* in the weekly open session of this Cal Performances-supported academic course taught by Peter Glazer. Free and open to the public. More information can be found [here](#).

**Lecture/Demonstration: *Exploration of Spirituality and Storytelling in Dance***

**Doug Adams Gallery, 2465 LeConte Avenue, Berkeley**

**Sat, Mar 2, 10:30am**

*Making Personal Meaning in Dance.* The Graduate Theological Union hosts an interactive session exploring spiritual and movement ideas raised in *XENOS* with liturgical dance artists Carla DeSola and David McCauley; *kathak* dancer, educator, and choreographer Charlotte

Moraga; and Dr. Michelle T. Summers of UC Berkeley's Dept. of Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies. Free and open to the public. Contact [care@gtu.org](mailto:care@gtu.org) or (510) 649-2472 for registration information.

**Community Dance Class**

**Zellerbach Hall, Studio 170 (Access via Stage Door Entrance)**

**Sat, Mar 2, 1pm**

Dancer, educator, and choreographer Charlotte Moraga, principal dancer with the Chitresh Das Dance Company from 1996–2016, leads a *kathak* community dance class. Open to all ages and abilities. Participation is \$10, with pre-registration required (available online at [calperformances.org](http://calperformances.org)).

**Catharsis Café**

**Zellerbach Hall Lobby Mezzanine**

**Sat, Mar 2**

Post-performance reception and discussion. Free to ticket holders.

**Pre-performance Discussion**

**Tilden Room, 5th Floor, ASUC Student Union: Martin Luther King Jr. Building**

**Sun, Mar 3, 3pm**

A pre-performance discussion suggesting various ways of viewing Akram Khan's *XENOS*, including through the lenses of contemporary dance, South Asian dance in Britain, spiritual dance, Indian history, and mythological drama. Co-presented by the Graduate Theological Union. Free and open to the public.