



Jean-Louis Fernandez

Saturday, March 2, 2019, 8pm

Sunday, March 3, 2019, 5pm

Zellerbach Hall

## Akram Khan Company

### *XENOS*

— World Premiere: Onassis Cultural Centre, Athens, February 21, 2018 —

Directed, choreographed, and performed by Akram Khan

<i>Dramaturg</i>	Ruth Little
<i>Lighting Designer</i>	Michael Hulls
<i>Original Music Score and Sound Design</i>	Vincenzo Lamagna
<i>Set Designer</i>	Mirella Weingarten
<i>Costume Designer</i>	Kimie Nakano
<i>Written by</i>	Jordan Tannahill
<i>Rehearsal Directors</i>	Mavin Khoo and Nicola Monaco
<i>Musicians</i>	Nina Harries ( <i>double bass and vocals</i> ), BC Manjunath ( <i>percussion and konnakol</i> ), Tamar Osborn ( <i>baritone saxophone</i> ), Aditya Prakash ( <i>vocals</i> ), Clarice Rarity ( <i>violin</i> )

*This performance will be performed without an intermission  
and will last approximately 65 minutes.*

*Cal Performances' 2018–19 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.*



<i>Producer</i>	Farooq Chaudhry
<i>Technical Director</i>	Richard Fagan
<i>Production Manager</i>	John Valente
<i>Stage Manager</i>	Marek Pomocki
<i>Lighting Engineer</i>	Stéphane Déjours
<i>Sound Engineer</i>	Julien Deloison
<i>Technician</i>	Russell Parker
<i>Project/Tour Manager</i>	Mashitah Omar
<i>Props</i>	Louise Edge from LFX Props & Special FX

*The original music score for XENOS was devised in collaboration with Nina Harries, Andrew Maddick, BC Manjunath, Tamar Osborn, and Aditya Prakash, and contains extracts from: Requiem in D minor K. 626 (Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart); Hanging on the Old Barbed Wire (traditional composition); Tu Karim (traditional composition); Chhap Tilak (Amir Khusro); Babul Mora (Nawab Wajid Ali Shah); and Naihwarwa (Kabir).*

*Commissioned by 14-18 NOW: WW1 Centenary Art Commissions, supported by the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund and Arts Council England, and by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport.*

*Akram Khan's XENOS marks his last performances as a dancer in a full-length solo piece.*

*Co-produced by Onassis Cultural Centre – Athens, The Grange Festival Hampshire, Sadler's Wells London, New Vision Arts Festival Hong Kong, Théâtre de la Ville Paris, Les Théâtres de la Ville de Luxembourg, National Arts Centre Ottawa, the Center for China Shanghai International Arts Festival (CSIAF), Centro Cultural de Belém, Festspielhaus St. Pölten, Grec 2018 Festival de Barcelona, HELLERAU – European Center for the Arts Dresden, Tanz Köln, Edinburgh International Festival, Adelaide Festival, Festival Montpellier Danse 2018, Julidans Amsterdam, Canadian Stage Toronto, Romaeuropa Festival, Torinodanza festival/Teatro Stabile di Torino – Teatro Nazionale, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts New York, Cal Performances – University of California, Berkeley, Danse Danse Montreal, Curve Leicester.*

*Sponsored by COLAS.*

*Supported by Arts Council England.*

*Akram Khan is an Associate Artist of Sadler's Wells London and Curve Leicester.*

*Produced during residency at the Grange Festival, Hampshire and Onassis Cultural Centre – Athens (OCC).*

**Special thanks to** Katia Arfara and the OCC team, Michael Chance, Michael Moody, Nigel Hinds, Jenny Waldman, Sarah Goodfellow, Hervé Le Bouc, Delphine Lombard, Béatrice Abeille-Robin, Mr. and Mrs. Khan, Yuko Khan, Sayuri and Kenzo Khan, Dannii Evans, Zia Ali, Es Devlin, Zena Edwards, Tim Freke, Ronan Harrington, Daniel Hernandez, Amit Lahav, Jerome Lewis, Confucius MC, Vahakn Matossian, Camilla Power, Ella Saltmarsh, Murray Shanahan, Zahed Sultan, Temujen Gunawandera, Jess Balla, Chris Timpson, Paul Evans, Robin Leonard, Florian Stagliano.

### Creator's Note

A story is always a rescuing operation...  
If I'm a storyteller it's because I listen.  
For me, a storyteller is like a smuggler who  
gets contraband across a frontier.

—John Berger

Out of all the creations I have been blessed to be involved in, *XENOS* is the one that I find to be the closest in line with my personal journey as an artist.

The themes of reflection, death, rebirth, time, alienation, identity, memory, are all part of this creative process, and together with some incredible collaborators, I have embarked on this challenging journey to give birth to *XENOS*.

Essentially, this work is a reflection of how I feel about our world today. It is about our loss of humanity, and how, through past and present wars, we are yet again confronted by the burning question of what it is to be human. How can we, as humans, have such ability to create extraordinary and beautiful things from our imagination, and equally, our immense ability to create and commit violence and horrors beyond our imagination.

Prometheus saw this in mankind before we, as a species, ever recognized it.

—Akram Khan

### Title and Theme

The title *XENOS* means “stranger” or “foreigner” in Greek. Akram Khan and his world-class team of collaborators draw this new solo work from the archives of the 20th century, unearthing the experience of colonial soldiers in the First World War.

Over 4 million non-white men were mobilized by the European and American armies during the conflict. Around 1.5 million of them were from India, mostly peasant-warriors from North and North-Western India, who fought and died in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. In service to the myths of Empire, dislocated from their homelands and cultures, their stories have until recently remained in shadow.

As Khan himself writes: “I will investigate specific questions that confront me more and

more every day, like a shadow constantly following me, haunting me, whispering to me... Do we need to tell other people's stories in case they vanish? Who are the ‘other’ people? Are stories of human journeys told, retold, and told again, so we can eventually learn from our mistakes? Who are ‘we,’ a collective or many individuals? What makes us human? Are we still human?”

### Dramaturg's Note

Akram Khan's *XENOS* asks a question that first arose 100 years ago during the global cataclysm of the First World War, and has continued to haunt our civilization ever since: what is it to be human when man is as a god on earth?

Drawing on the archival traces left by some of more than a million Indian soldiers who fought for the British Empire and experienced slaughter on an industrial scale on its many fronts, *XENOS* is a lament for the body in war, and a *memento mori* for our own times of violent entanglement from one another and our world.

The Great War was fought between nations, but its acts and outcomes were centered in the individual human body. For all its infamous battles, it was a war of exhaustion, labor, discomfort, and boredom, punctuated by indescribable periods of carnage. It was a war of the hands, from the endless work of entrenchment to the digging of graves and tending of wounds, from the bayonet charge to the laying of barbed wire and communications lines, the lugging of provisions, the manufacture of artillery, and its relentless dispatch over hundreds of miles of incrementally shifting front lines.

The text for *XENOS*, by acclaimed Canadian playwright Jordan Tannahill, gives voice to the shell-shocked dream of a colonial Indian soldier in no-man's land. Many of the sepoys who died in conflict were buried abroad, while for those who returned home, often mutilated and traumatized, another form of erasure followed, as their stories were interred in archives following the rise of Indian nationalism and the rejection of colonial rule. Separated from their own histories, homelands, and countrymen, they became *xenoi*.

*XENOS* reveals the beauty and horror of the human condition in its portrait of an Indian dancer whose skilled body becomes an instrument of war. 'X' is no man and everyman, the unknown and the eternal soldier, alone in a foreign land, a stranger to himself and to an enemy he does not know. *XENOS* is a portrait of *Homo deus* brought back to his human origins in clay and fire. In the end we surrender not to gods, tradition, or empire, but to the earth itself.

Akram Khan's movement language shifts between classical *kathak* and contemporary dance on Mirella Weingarten's precipitous and symbolic set. His sepoy is a warrior-child, victim-perpetrator, maker and destroyer of myth, defying categories of duty, loyalty, and gender. *XENOS* takes place on the border between East and West, past and present, mythology and technology, where humanity still stands in wonder and disarray.

Direct experience of conflict in the First World War is no longer known on earth. With the death in 2011 of the last surviving combat veteran, our own connection with the felt experience of the war is now possible only through indirect accounts: archival film, photographs, interviews, museum collections, and inherited story fragments. But humankind has another archive in art and culture: the deep and shared reservoir of memory, beauty, and the hope that we may together find our way home.

—Ruth Little, dramaturg

### Message from Colas

Who decides to put a rifle in the hands of a dancer? Who takes hold of a single destiny and decides to break it? For his last solo work, Akram Khan embodies the voice of Indian soldiers engaged in WWI, anonymous soldiers killed in the trenches, confronted with the absurdity and randomness of a fight that was not theirs.

Dedicated to the forgotten soldiers of all wars, *XENOS* reflects Khan's characteristic style. From the story of an individual slowly emerges the question of the role that history plays in the development of humanity. What do we learn from our tragedies? Even more than in his other works, Khan's body is a vector of thought, pointing us to a perpetual question: the two facets of the human condition, one noble and one black.

Colas and Akram Khan Company have been paving a path together for almost 10 years now. I met Akram in London before I had ever seen his work. That evening, we talked about our respective journeys, our lives, as well as the meaning and value of the social link that roads provide. From each of our individual viewpoints, the link between populations and people seemed obvious to us. So, over the years, we have shared our worlds, thus forging a close personal relationship.

—Hervé Le Bouc  
Chairman and CEO of Colas

### ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**Akram Khan** (*artistic director, choreographer, dancer*) is one of the most celebrated and respected dance artists today. In just over 18 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 *Until the Lions*, *Kaash*, *iTMOi* (in the mind of igor), *DESH*, *Vertical Road*, *Gnosis*, and *zero degrees*.

An instinctive and natural collaborator, Khan has been a magnet to world-class artists from other cultures and disciplines. His previ-

ous collaborators include the National Ballet of China, actress Juliette Binoche, ballerina Sylvie Guillem, choreographers/dancers Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui and Israel Galván, singer Kylie Minogue, visual artists Anish Kapoor, Antony Gormley and Tim Yip, writer Hanif Kureishi, and composers Steve Reich, Nitin Sawhney, Jocelyn Pook, and Ben Frost.

Khan's work is recognized as being profoundly moving, in which his intelligently crafted storytelling is effortlessly intimate and epic. 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.

As a choreographer, Khan has developed a close collaboration with English National Ballet and its artistic director, Tamara Rojo. He created the short piece *Dust*, part of the *Lest We Forget* program, which led to an invitation to create his own critically acclaimed version of the iconic romantic ballet *Giselle*.

Khan has been the recipient of numerous awards throughout his career including the Laurence Olivier Award, the Bessie Award (New York Dance and Performance Award), the prestigious ISPA (International Society for the Performing Arts) Distinguished Artist Award, the Fred and Adele Astaire Award, the Herald Archangel Award at the Edinburgh International Festival, the South Bank Sky Arts Award, and six Critics’ Circle National Dance Awards. Khan was awarded an MBE for services to dance in 2005. He is also an honorary graduate of the University of London as well as Roehampton and De Montfort Universities, and an honorary fellow of Trinity Laban.

Akram Khan is an associate artist of Sadler’s Wells, London and Curve, Leicester.

**Ruth Little** (*dramaturg*) is a dance and theater dramaturg, teacher, and writer. Her work has encompassed national arts organizations, remote rural communities, site-specific productions, and large- and small-scale exhibitions and expeditions. She lectured in English literature at the University of Sydney, and was the literary manager at Out of Joint, Soho Theatre, the Young Vic, and the Royal Court. Little was the associate director at Cape Farewell from 2010–16. She is dramaturg with Akram Khan Company (*Gnosis*, *Vertical Road*, *DESH*, *iTMOI*, *Dust*, *technè*, *Until the Lions*, *Giselle*) and has worked with the Banff Arts Centre, Sadler’s Wells, the Barbican, and many others. Winner of the 2012 Kenneth Tynan Award for drama-turgy, Little has a number of publications, including *Art*, *Place*, *Climate: Situated Ethics*, *War in the Body*, and *The Meteorological Body*.

**Michael Hulls** (*lighting designer*) has worked exclusively in dance for the past 20 years, particularly with choreographers Russell Maliphant and Akram Khan, and established a reputation as a “choreographer of light.” His collaborations with Russell Maliphant have won international critical acclaim and many awards. Hulls has worked with Akram Khan over many years on productions including *In-I*, *DESH*, *TOROBACA*, and *Until the Lions*. In 2009 he became an associate artist of Sadler’s Wells. In 2010 Hulls’ contribution to dance was recognized with his entry into the Oxford Dictionary of Dance, as only the fourth lighting designer to be included. In 2014 Hulls received the Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in Dance.

**Vincenzo Lamagna** (*composer*) is a musician, composer, and producer based in London. His music is known for its visceral, emotive, and edgy language, which utilizes an unconventional hybrid of electro-orchestral sounds. Lamagna has carved a niche in the alternative contemporary dance world, where he has established himself as a major collaborator with two of the most acclaimed choreographers of this generation, Hofesh Shechter and Akram Khan. His most recent collaborations include *Until the Lions* and Akram Khan’s award-winning 21st-century adaptation of *Giselle* for English National Ballet. Lamagna’s scores are a mercurial combination of acoustic and electronic music, recognized for their ferocious industrial undertones, haunted melodies, and cinematic soundscapes.

**Mirella Weingarten** (*set designer*), after completing her studies in dramatic arts in London, studied fine arts in Hamburg and Edinburgh, with teachers including Marina Abramovic. Since 1996 she has worked as a professional theatre designer and as a director for opera and dance theater. Weingarten’s recent work has been seen throughout Europe and includes an extensive collaboration with the Berlin Contemporary Opera, designing many of their award-winning productions. Working with kinetic sculpture and moving objects on stage has characterized her work throughout the past





years. Since 2011, Weingarten has been the artistic director of the arts and music festival Schlossmediale Werdenberg in Switzerland, an arts festival for contemporary and early music and audio-visual art.

**Kimie Nakano** (*costume designer*) has designed costumes for Northern Ballet, Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet, Royal Danish Ballet, Companhia Nacional de Bailado, English National Ballet, Van Huynh Company, the Royal Ballet of Flanders, Rambert Dance Company, David Nixon, Didy Veldman, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, José Agudo, and Yabin Studio. Her opera production credits include *The Return of Ulysses* by John Fulljames for Royal Opera and *Tristan und Isolde* by Carmen Jakobi for Longborough Festival Opera. Nakano's designs for Akram Khan Company include *Vertical Road*, *Dust* (English National Ballet's *Lest We Forget*), *iTMOi*, *TOROKAKA*, *Gnosis*, *Kaash*, *The Rashomon Effect* (National Youth Dance Company), and *technê* (choreographed for Sylvie Guillem, *Life in Progress*).

**Jordan Tannahill** (*writer*) has been "widely celebrated as one of Canada's most accomplished young playwrights, filmmakers and all-round multidisciplinary artists" (*Toronto Star*). His plays have been produced on major stages internationally and translated into eight languages, while his films and multimedia performances have been presented at festivals including the Toronto International Film Festival, the Tribeca Film Festival, and the Venice Biennial. In 2017 his play *Late Company* transferred to London's West End. Current projects include his virtual reality performance *Draw Me Close*, produced by the National Theatre (UK) and the National Film Board of Canada, which opened at the Young Vic in January 2019.

**Mavin Khoo** (*rehearsal director*) is internationally recognized as a dance artist, teacher, choreographer, and artist scholar. His initial training was in Malaysia. He then pursued his training in Bharatanatyam intensively under the legendary dance maestro Padma Shri Adyar K. Lakshman in India. As a contemporary dance

artist, he has worked with Wayne McGregor, Akram Khan, Shobana Jeyasingh, and many others. Khoo founded mavinkhooDance in 2003. He was artistic director of ŻfinMalta Dance Ensemble between 2014–17, and he currently maintains his touring work as a mature artist with a focus on solo Bharatanatyam performances and specifically commissioned contemporary duet works. Khoo also worked as rehearsal director for the Akram Khan Company production of *iTMOi* and worked alongside Khan on *Giselle* (English National Ballet).

**Nicola Monaco** (*rehearsal director*) studied contemporary dance and ballet in Italy from the age of 19, and had the opportunity to work with the award-winning Dutch dance company Emio Greco/PC from 2003 until 2008. In 2009 he moved to London, where he has worked with choreographers such as Akram Khan, Gregory Maquoma, Tom Dale, The Featherstonehaughs, and Shobana Jeyasingh Dance Company. In 2013 Monaco toured worldwide with Akram Khan Company, performing in *iTMOi* and *Kaash*. He collaborated as a rehearsal director with the mavinkhooDance and ŻfinMalta Dance Ensemble directed by Mavin Khoo until 2016 and Paolo Mangiola in 2017. Monaco also teaches workshops internationally and in 2017 received the qualification to teach the Double Skin/Double Mind methodology of ICK/Amsterdam.

**Nina Harries** (*double bass and vocals*) studied classical double bass at the Royal College of Music under Enno Senft of the London Sinfonietta, graduating in 2016 and specializing in contemporary classical music. Alongside performing with orchestras, punk bands, folk ensembles, and contemporary experimental ensembles, she is also a soloist and songwriter. Harries is celebrated for her rare skill at singing and playing simultaneously and has commissioned several works for bass and voice while at the RCM. Her own composition work incorporates theater, cabaret, and comedy, captivating audiences with original songs and poetry exploring the relationship between the bass and the female voice.

THE ARTISTS AND CREW

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Akram Khan



Ruth Little



Michael Hulls



Vincenzo Lamagna



Mirella Weingarten



Kimie Nakano



Jordan Tannahill



Mavin Khoo



Nicola Monaco



Nina Harries



BC Manjunath



Tamar Osborn



Aditya Prakash



Clarice Rarity



Farooq Chaudhry



Richard Fagan



John Valente



Marek Pomocki



Stéphane Déjours



Julien Deloison



Russell Parker



Mashitah Omar

**BC Manjunath** (*percussions and konnakol*) revealed an innate musical talent as a young boy and he imbibed the best in Carnatic Talavadya from his parents. Manjunath has acquired awards and honors throughout his career including the Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar, the highest recognition for youth in the field of fine arts. He has since expanded his vocabulary and is well-versed in the Indian classical, modern jazz, and contemporary classical music that he mastered by collaborating with world-renowned artists of these genres at prestigious platforms in India and overseas. Manjunath toured with the Akram Khan Company's productions *ma*, *Gnosis*, and *TOROKAKA*.

**Tamar Osborn** (*baritone saxophone*), a saxophonist and multi-wind player, graduated from the Guildhall School of Music & Drama in 2000. A strong classical background complemented by jazz studies has enabled her to perform in many different genres throughout her professional career. She currently works regularly with the Dele Sosimi Afrobeat Orchestra and jazz artists Sarathy Korwar, the Hackney Colliery Band, Emanative, and Jessica Lauren. Past projects span the worlds of pop, theater, and world music, including *Kelis*, *Van Morrison*, *Tanmoy Bose*, *Fela!* at the National Theatre and Sadler's Wells, and *Africa Express* (a series of collaborative concerts between African and western musicians including Tony Allen and Fatoumata Diawara). Osborn runs her own project Collocutor as bandleader, composer, and performer. Collocutor has three releases: *Instead* (2014), *The Search* (2017), and *Black Satin* (2018).

**Aditya Prakash** (*vocals*) is an award-winning Indian classical vocalist and composer, best known for his powerful and emotive voice. He has been performing classical Carnatic vocal concerts since the age of 13 and had the rare fortune of performing, touring, and working with sitar maestro Pandit Ravi Shankar, from the age of 16. Prakash studied composition and performance under several award-winning musicians during his ethnomusicology studies at UCLA. Although firmly rooted in South Indian classical (Carnatic) music, which he studied

under venerated gurus in Chennai, his style is heavily inspired by North Indian classical music, Sufi music, jazz, and hip hop, which he brings out in the Aditya Prakash Ensemble, his collaborative group that creates original compositions inspired from these styles.

**Clarice Rarity** (*violin*) studied at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama and the Royal College of Music. She realized that challenging performance conventions inspired her the most and in the early stages of her career focused on performing the works of contemporary classical composers such as John Cage, Pierre Boulez, Michael Finnissey, Hans Abrahamsen, and Master of the Queen's Music Judith Weir. Rarity's interest in this repertoire led her to work with some of the most exciting young composers in the UK, including Oliver Leith and Lisa Illean. Her performance highlights include collaborating with the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group at Wigmore Hall and at the Birmingham Festival Hall and working at the Viitasaari new-music festival with Ensemble Modern/IEMA in 2017, as part of a conducting master class week with Susanna Maliki.

#### **Akram Khan Company**

In July 1999 in the foyer of the Queen Elizabeth Hall in London, an animated and curiosity-filled conversation took place between the young and gifted dancer/choreographer Akram Khan and an ambitious former dancer 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 one year later.

Inspired by Khan's early training in the Indian classical *kathak* dance form, and the hybrid language that organically emerged when Khan's *kathak* training encountered contemporary dance in his teens, a vision began to form, fuelled by a desire to learn and create through collaboration with the very best people across all the disciplines in the arts.

The rules were simple: take risks, think big and daring, explore the unfamiliar, avoid compromise, and tell stories through dance that are compelling and relevant, with artistic integrity.

After just over 18 years Akram Khan Company is now undisputedly one of the foremost innovative dance companies in the world. The programs range from *kathak* and modern solos to artist-to-artist collaborations and ensemble productions. The company has a major international presence and enjoys busy tours that reach out to many cultures and peoples across the globe. Khan has received numerous international dance awards, the most notable being an Olivier Award for his solo production *DESH* in 2012.

A milestone in the company's history was the creation of a section of the London Olympic Games Opening Ceremony in 2012.

Akram Khan Company enjoys artistic association with Sadler's Wells Theatre in London, Curve in Leicester, and other leading venues and festivals around the world.

**Company productions:** *XENOS* (2018), *Until the Lions* (2016), *Chotto Desh* (2015), *Kaash* (revival, 2014), *TOROBAKA* (2014), *iTMOi* (2013), *DESH* (2011), *Vertical Road* (2010), *Gnosis* (2009), *In-I* (2008), *bahok* (2008), *Sacred Monsters* (2006), *zero degrees* (2005), *Variations for Vibes, Strings & Pianos* (2006), *Third Catalogue* (2005), *ma* (2004), *Ronin* (2003), *Kaash* (2002), *Polaroid Feet* (2001), *Related Rocks* (2001), *Rush* (2000), *Fix* (2000), and *Loose in Flight* (2000).

### **Akram Khan Company**

Akram Khan, *artistic director*

Farooq Chaudhry, *producer*

Jan Hart, *finance director*

Tina Fagan, *technical manager*

Clare Cody-Richardson, *head of operations*

Mashitah Omar, *head of touring and production*

Céline Gaubert, *head of external relations*

Christine Maupetit, *head of legacy projects*

Mai Tassinari, *touring assistant*

Hannah Patel, *legacy and communications assistant*

Nathan White, *administrator*

Amy Sharkey, *executive assistant to Akram Khan*

### **Board of Directors**

Gurnek Bains (*chair*), Anaïs Aguerre, Michael Cohen, Paul de Quincey, Ian Finlay, Dipali Sahni, Denis Shafranik, Jeremy Sharkeley, Rick Wentworth

Website: [akramkhancompany.net](http://akramkhancompany.net)

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### **Exclusive North American Representation**

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