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Vertical Road

Office of Arts + Cultural Programming

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PROGRAM NOTES

Vertical Road draws inspiration from the Sufi tradition and the Persian poet and philosopher Rumi. Exploring man’s earthly nature, his rituals, and the consequences of human actions, *Vertical Road* becomes a meditation on the journey from gravity to grace.

I died from minerality and became vegetable;
And from vegetativeness I died and
became animal.

I died from animality and became man.
Then why fear disappearance through death?
Next time I shall die
Bringing forth wings and feathers like angels;
After that, soaring higher than angels—
What you cannot imagine,
I shall be that.

—Rumi

I met Akram Khan before I had ever actually seen his work. We both spoke of the paths we had taken, of our lives, and of the meaning, the value of the social link created by roads. He explained to me the role of the human body as he sees it—a vector of communication, cultural memory, and personal history. And, then, both of us began to see that our two worlds obviously shared the idea of forming links between people and peoples.

From the confrontation of our ideas on diversity emerged a common image: the Vertical Road. That is also how this partnership came to be.

—Hervé Le Bouc
Chairman and CEO, COLAS

More and more, I am pulled reluctantly toward a strong horizontal current, which is a place where time is moving at such high velocity that even our breath is forced to accelerate just in order for us humans to survive. And I have always believed that the sense of this deep spiritual energy resides in our slow exhalation. In a world moving so fast, with the growth of technology and information, I am somehow inclined to move against this current, in search of what it might mean to be connected not just spiritually, but also vertically.

—Akram Khan

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Akram Khan (Artistic Director/Choreographer) is one of the most acclaimed choreographers of his generation in Britain. Born in London into a family of Bangladeshi origin, he began dancing at seven and studied with the renowned *kathak* dancer and teacher Sri Pratap Pawar. After studying contemporary dance and working with Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker in Brussels, he presented his first solo works in the late 1990s. He was choreographer-in-residence and later associate artist at the Southbank Centre. Khan is currently an associate artist of MC2: Grenoble and Sadler’s Wells, London in a special international cooperation.

Vertical Road continues Khan’s exploration of the interfaces between different cultures and creative disciplines, bringing together performers and artists from East and West. In his recent work *Gnosis*, he combined his classical Indian and contemporary dance roots. His previous work *In-I*, a duet with actress Juliette Binoche, toured internationally last year. His company piece *bahok*, originally produced in collaboration with National Ballet of China, completed its international tour in May 2010. Earlier notable works include *Kaash, ma, Sacred Monsters, zero degrees*, and *Variations*, a production with London Sinfonietta in celebration of Steve Reich’s 70th birthday. Khan has received numerous awards throughout his career, including an MBE for services to dance in 2005 and an honorary doctorate of arts from Roehampton and De Montfort Universities.

Nitin Sawhney (Composer) is one of today’s busiest, most versatile, and most sought after composers. He has made eight studio albums, for which he has been nominated for a Mercury Music prize and won a MOBO, two BBC Radio 3 awards, and a South Bank Show award. He has scored over 40 films; has performed around the world with leading orchestras and his band; composed extensively for dancer Akram Khan, winning a New York Performance and Dance Award for best score for *zero degrees*; and composed for many theatrical productions. He has worked with Sting, Cirque du Soleil, Shakira, Paul McCartney, Jeff Beck, Tao Cruz, Imogen Heap, and many others. Recently he has written scores for videogames and is currently scoring a major TV series for the BBC, *Human Planet*. The recipient of four honorary doctorates plus fellowships from the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts and South Bank University, Sawhney is a judge for The Ivor Novello Awards, the British Academy of Film and

Television Arts, and the British Independent Film Awards and sits on the board of trustees for London’s Whitechapel Gallery and Somerset House. Recently he was made an associate artist at Sadler’s Wells.

Jesper Kongshaug (Lighting Designer) has worked on numerous theater, opera, and ballet performances, art exhibitions, and television shows. He has created unique lighting designs for the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen, most recently for Wagner’s *Der Ring des Nibelungen* at Den Jyske Opera. His international works include Hotel Pro Forma’s *Operation: Orfeo, The Magic Flute* for Boston Lyric Opera, *Hair* at the Theatre Mogador in Paris, *Der Rosenkavalier* at Opéra de Lyon, *Le Grand Macabre* at San Francisco Opera, and *L’École des Femmes* in Dramaten, Stockholm. He was lighting designer for Jesper Just Opera for Performa05 in New York City, *La Traviata* (2007) at Stockholm Opera, *Goya* with Plácido Domingo (2004) and *Le nozze di Figaro* (2008) at Theater an der Wien, *Don Carlos* (2009) at Royal Danish Opera, and *The Nutcracker* (2009) at The Royal Ballet. Kongshaug has done architectural lighting design as well as several high-profile large-scale light installations. His awards include the Danish Lighting Prize (2008) for his design for the new Royal Playhouse and the Nordic Lighting Prize, Helsinki (2008). Kongshaug teaches at the Danish School for Design and the National Danish Theatre School and acts as consultant for museums, the Tivoli Gardens, and private firms.

Kimie Nakano (Costume Designer) studied literature in Tokyo, theater costume at L’École National Supérieure des Arts et Techniques du Théâtre in Paris, and theater design at Wimbledon School of Art in London. She was an assistant designer at Opéra de Paris and the Saito Kinen Festival. She assisted in designing costume for films, including *8 1/2 Women* by Peter Greenaway, and designed for the short film *Basho*. She designed for the award-winning play *Yabu no Naka*, directed by Mansai Nomura at the Japan Art Festival 1999. Her collaboration on Megumi Nakamura’s *Sandflower* received the gold award in the Maastricht Festival 2000 in Holland. Nakano’s international design work includes the *Ali to Karim USA* tour (2008); *Pas, pas moi, va et vien* at Théâtre National Populaire, Lyon (2006); *The Oslo Experiment* at Stratos Oslo (2007); and *2 Graves* at Arts Theatre and the Edinburgh Festival in the UK (2006). Directorial credits in the UK include *Snow* for the ENO studio and *8:15* for the Rambert Dance Company. Nakano is currently based in London and Burgundy, France.

Farooq Chaudhry (Producer), born in Pakistan, graduated from the London Contemporary Dance School in 1986. He worked in a variety of dance mediums around Europe, including as a company member of the Belgian modern dance company Rosas in the mid-1990s. In 1988 he received an Asian Achievement Award for his work as a dancer. After retiring from dancing in 1999, he completed an MA in Arts Management from City University in London. As a freelance dance manager, he teamed up with Akram Khan in 1999. A year later they co-founded the Akram Khan Company. As the company producer, Chaudhry plays a key role in forming innovative business models for Khan’s artistic ambitions and offers creative support during the development of Khan’s projects. He is a “project champion” for Arts Council England’s Cultural Leadership program, chair of Dance UK’s board, and a member of the Strategic Advisory Committee for the Clore Leadership Programme. In February 2011, Chaudhry became an honorary artistic advisor to Guangzhou Opera House in China. The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs acknowledged him in a list of the world’s top 100 cultural actors and entrepreneurs in 2008.

Fabiana Piccioli (Technical Director) studied philosophy at University La Sapienza di Roma. From 1999 to 2002 she worked as a dancer in Rome and Brussels. She then became technical coordinator and production manager at the Romaeuropa Festival before joining Akram Khan Company as technical manager in 2005. She was lighting designer for the company’s productions *Variations, bahok*, and *Gnosis* and for the Svapnagata Festival at Sadler’s Wells. She also co-designed the set for *bahok*.

Eulalia Ayguade Farro (Dancer), from Barcelona, Spain, studied at the Institut del Teatre before moving to Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker’s Performing Arts Research and Training Studio in Brussels. From 2001 she worked with Publik Eye Company, Denmark, and then joined Akram Khan Company in 2003. She has also made her own work with Anton Lachky and worked with Enclave Dance Company (Brussels) and Hofesh Shechter, performing in *Uprising* and *In Your Rooms*.

Konstandina Efthymiadou (Dancer) trained in rhythmic gymnastics for 10 years before entering the State School of Dance in Athens. She worked with Choreftes, the Hellenic Dance Company, Haris Mandafounis Contemporary Dance Company, and the National Opera of Greece. In 2007 she moved to Brussels to join Ultima Vez for the creation

of *Menske* and toured *Spiegel* in 2008. In 2009 she joined Enclave Dance Company under the direction of Roberto Olivan.

Salah El Brogy (Dancer) was born in Ismailia, Egypt. He began dancing professionally with the Ismailia Folkloric Dance Troupe and worked with Reda Folkloric Dance Troupe, the biggest dance troupe in the Middle East, before moving to Cairo to pursue a diploma in dance. After graduating from the Contemporary Dance Theatre School in the Cairo Opera House, he became a member of its troupe as a soloist and has since started developing his own technique.

Ahmed Khemis (Dancer) was born in Algeria and has lived in Tunisia since he was eight years old. At age nine he joined the Sybel Ballet Theatre under the direction of Syhem Belkhodja. In 2002 he joined the National Centre for Contemporary Dance in Angers and in 2005 danced at the Suresnes Cités Dance Festival. He created a solo piece for the Spring of Dance Festival in Tunis, was invited to the Montpellier Dance Festival to perform a solo created by Odile Duboc, and has worked with the Montalvo-Hervieu and Georges Momboye companies.

Yen-Ching Lin (Dancer), born in Taiwan, studied at the Taipei National University of the Arts and the London Contemporary Dance School (LCDS), where she completed the postgraduate diploma program and obtained an MA in Contemporary Dance. At LCDS, Lin worked with choreographers such as Maresa von Stockert, Charles Lawrence, Jonathan Lunn, and Jan de Schynkel. She was a member of Edge 05, joined the Bern Ballet in 2006, and danced for Hofesh Shechter Company from 2007 to 2010.

Andrej Petrovic (Dancer/Rehearsal Director) was born in Bojnice, Slovak Republic, and graduated from the Dance Conservatory in Banská Bystrica before joining Štúdio Tanca Professional Dance Theatre. He is one of the co-founders of the professional dance company Dajv. He has collaborated with Editta Braun Company (Salzburg), Fatou Traore (Brussels), and Giorgio Barberio Corsetti and Fatore Kappa Physical Theatre (Rome). He graduated in Dance Teaching from the University of Music and Dramatic Arts in Bratislava and worked with Jean Abreu Dance Company in London and Jaroslav Vinarsky in Prague before joining Akram Khan Company in 2007.

Elias Lazaridis (Dancer) was born in Kavala, Greece. He started dancing at the age of eight in classical ballet. After high

school he studied dance in Athens, where he performed with the Greek National Opera and the Adlib Dances (Kat Valastur). After his graduation in 2004, he continued his research with Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker’s Performing Arts Research and Training Studio in Brussels. He is currently based in London and has performed with the Hofesh Shechter and Eastman companies.

Sung Hoon Kim (Dancer) was born in Seoul, Korea. He graduated from the Korean National University of Art with an MA in Dance Performance. Since 2004 he has been a member of the Laboratory Dance Company in Seoul. He teaches extensively and has performed and choreographed for numerous venues and festivals around Korea and internationally. He joined Akram Khan Company in 2009.

ABOUT THE COMPANY

Akram Khan Company, founded in August 2000 by choreographer Akram Khan and producer Farooq Chaudhry, journeys across boundaries to create uncompromising artistic narratives. One of the foremost innovative dance companies in the world, the company is renowned for its intercultural, interdisciplinary collaborations and for challenging conventional ideas of traditional dance forms. The dance language in each production is rooted in Khan’s classical *kathak* and modern dance training and continually evolves to communicate ideas that are intelligent, courageous, and new.

Akram Khan Company tours extensively, performing a diverse range of programs including classical *kathak* solos, ensemble productions, and artist-to-artist collaborations. The company has been awarded several prestigious honors, including the South Bank Sky Arts Award for Dance (2010, *Gnosis*), The Age Critics Award for Best New Work (2010, *Vertical Road*) at the Melbourne Festival, and the Helpmann Award for Best Choreography in Dance Work (2007, *zero degrees*) at the Sydney Festival. www.akramkhancompany.net

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Dance

Dance

Dance

Dr. Susan A. Cole, President
 Dr. Geoffrey W. Newman, Dean, College of the Arts
 Jedediah Wheeler, Executive Director, Arts & Cultural Programming

Peak Performances presents:

American Premiere!
Akram Khan Company
Vertical Road

Artistic Director/Choreographer **Akram Khan**
 Composer **Nitin Sawhney**
 Lighting Designer **Jesper Kongshaug**
 Costume Designer **Kimie Nakano**
 Producer **Farooq Chaudhry**
 Technical Director **Fabiana Piccioli**
 Set conceived by **Akram Khan, Kimie Nakano,**
Jesper Kongshaug

Material devised and performed by **Eulalia Ayguade Farro,**
Konstandina Efthymiadou, Salah El Brogy,
Ahmed Khemis, Yen-Ching Lin, Andrej Petrovic,
Elias Lazaridis, Sung Hoon Kim

Dramaturg **Ruth Little**
 Researcher **Jess Gormley**
 Rehearsal Director **Andrej Petrovic**
 Technical Coordinator **Richard Fagan**
 Sound Engineer **Marcus Hyde**
 Stage Manager **Lucy Record**
 Tour Manager **Arthur Laurent**

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Co-produced by ADACH (Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage), Curve Leicester, Sadler's Wells London, Théâtre de la Ville Paris, National Arts Centre Ottawa, and Mercat de les Flors Barcelona.



Produced during residencies at Curve, Leicester, and DanceEast, Ipswich.

Supported by Arts Council England.

Please note: This performance includes strobe lighting, smoke, and loud sound.

Duration: 75 minutes, no intermission

In consideration of both audience and performers, please turn off all electronic devices. The taking of photographs or videos and the use of recording equipment are not permitted. No food or drink is permitted inside the theater.

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Peak Performances



Credit: Laurent Ziegler

American Premiere!
Akram Khan Company

Vertical Road

February 8-12, 2012

Alexander Kasser Theater

Montclair State University