

AKRAM KHAN COMPANY

# Portraits in Otherness

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Sadler's Wells London, 5 - 8 June 2018

Creation





Curated by Akram Khan and Company producer Farooq Chaudhry, *Portraits in Otherness* initiates a new chapter in Akram Khan Company's history as it seeks to transfer the intangible value of its legacy to a new generation of dance artists.

This innovative platform consists of a series of solo works created by four highly charismatic and distinctive early-career artists: Dickson Mbi, Maya Jilan Dong, Joy Alpuerto Ritter and Ching-Ying Chien.

None of them can be identified by any particular genre or form. They carry echoes and primal beauty of many dance languages both learned and inherited. They breathe new life into the spaces that have kept these expressions apart and expand into the boundaries beyond them. They create their own relevance by inhabiting and haunting these in-between territories.

This project also marks the first and international collaboration between Akram Khan Company and Peacock Contemporary Dance Company in China. As they share similar aspirations and ambitions within the international dance community, both companies join forces to nurture talents from their respective geographies, and reflect the prism of otherness.

*Portraits in Otherness* will premiere at Sadler's Wells Theatre in London from 5 to 8 June 2018.

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**Tue 5 & Wed 6 June 2018: Programme I**  
Dickson Mbi & Maya Jilan Dong



**Thu 7 & Fri 8 June 2018: Programme II**  
Joy Alpuerto Ritter & Ching-Ying Chien

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## General credits

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**Artistic Director** Akram Khan  
**Producer** Farooq Chaudhry

**Choreographers/Dancers**

Dickson Mbi  
Maya Jilan Dong  
Joy Alpuerto Ritter  
Ching-Ying Chien

**Lighting Designer** Fabiana Piccioli  
**Technical Director** Richard Fagan  
**Portraits in Otherness Technical Manager** Sander Loonen  
**Project Manager** Christine Maupetit

**Co-produced by** Akram Khan Company, Sadler's Wells London,  
Peacock Contemporary Dance Company China

Supported by Arts Council England

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

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## **Programme I**

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A black and white photograph of a man with a beard and a woman in a dance studio. The man is in the foreground, looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The woman is in the background, looking to the side. The text 'Dickson Mbi' is written in a large, bold, sans-serif font in the upper right corner, with a horizontal line extending from the end of the text. Below it, the word 'Duende' is written in a smaller, bold, sans-serif font.

**Dickson Mbi**

**Duende**

## **Duende**

*Duende* is a complex artistic and psychical concept that could perhaps be thought of as the manifestation of the spirit of the artist who reaches an authentic point of self-disclosure, conquering the habit of concealment to reveal something of the soul's living history. The invitation to connect with another human being in this way, to see a live spirit coming in and out of its vessel can be overwhelming. We are all visitors in the object world, stepping in and out of the light of reality.

Through the ritual of dance, *Duende* reveals a fairy tale, animating a certain emotion from these moments of light.

**Choreographer/Dancer** Dickson Mbi

**Composer** Roger Goula

**Lighting Designer** Fabiana Piccioli





## **Dickson Mbi**

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Choreographer/Dancer

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Dickson is a world-renowned dancer in the Hip Hop dance community. He is known for his remarkable popping skills, strong personality, powerful movement and positive attitude. He has won many major Popping competitions including: Juste Debout UK, BattleISM, KOD and the UK B-Boy Championships. Together with his partner Brooke Milliner, he is committed to fostering new generations of dancers both within their battling crew Prototype - which won the major World Hip Hop Dance Championships - and with Fiya House a Popping crew. Together they have won countless competitions and are still winning. With a background in jazz, ballet and contemporary dance he trained at Lewisham College & London Contemporary Dance School, mentored by Stuart Thomas and Bim Malcomson.

Dickson won several choreographic awards and commissions: REVERB Award for Best Choreography 2015, MASDANZA Audience Award for Best Choreography 2016, National Theatre of Korea commission solo, Leave A Trace - CHVRCHES (Music Video) 2016 and OLMECA Commercial. He has featured in major TV commercial campaigns: BALLMAIN X H&M 2016, AUDI E TRON 2014, and was the face for LUCOZADE REVIVE 2012.

He has danced with world leading artists including: Basement Jaxx, Shallama, Robbie Williams, Corrine Bailey-Rae, Black Eyed Peas, Russell Maliphant and Boy Blue Entertainment. His work has been recognised nationally as he was nominated for three major dance awards: "Best Achievement in Dance" at the UK Theatre Award 2017, "Emerging Artist" and "Outstanding Male Performer (Modern)" at the National Dance Awards Critic Circle 2017.

## **Roger Goula**

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Composer

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Roger Goula is a London based composer and multi-instrumentalist whose range of original works spans across albums, film scores, music for dance, TV, theatre and art installation. Coming from a contemporary classical background, Roger's work has developed into an experimental approach of classical chamber and orchestral music blent with electronics.

Inspired by renaissance and baroque music, as well as by minimalism, and looking at the language of electronic music and sampling, his compositions perform complexity through repetition of minimal elements and emotional transporting textures.

Roger's solo debut album Overview Effect was released in 2016 by Cognitive Shift in partnership with One Little Indian. His solo work was acclaimed as 'mind blowing' by Mary Anne Hobbs on BBC 6 Music and much-celebrated nationally and internationally.

His collaborations include The Experimental Funktion quartet, at the CCCB Barcelona, ballet director Karl Alfred Schreiner at the Gärtnerplatz Theater, Munich, Frauke Requardt at The Place, as well as musicians like Thomas Gould, Peter Gregson, Lucy Railton and Stephen Upshaw and the 12 Ensemble. He has been Associate Composer at the LSO Soundhub from 2012 to 2015.

# Maya Jilan Dong

Whip





## **Whip**

*Whip* takes its inspiration from the “Whip Dance”, one of the most popular folk dances of the Bai - an ethnic minority living in the Yunnan province in southwest of China. Amongst seventy-four other folk dances, the “Whip Dance” is charged and knitted with Bai’s history and customs. It represents their humor, primitive simplicity, elegance and energy.

Only a few Bai people know the most primitive version and *Whip* is a modern and personal interpretation instilling a new breath into a secular dance tradition. It represents Maya Dong’s homeland and conveys the aspirations of many people. *Whip* is an international collaboration with the talented London based Hong Kong composer Joanne Clara.

**Choreographer/Dancer** Maya Dong  
**Composer/Musician** Joanne Clara  
**Lighting Designer** Fabiana Piccioli  
**Costume Designer** Marie Cantenys



## **Maya Jilan Dong**

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Choreographer/Dancer

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Maya Jilan Dong is a Bai. The Bai are an ethnic minority living in the Yunnan Province in southwest of China. Raised in a rural village she grew up with nature - earth, trees, water, fire, heaven, humans and animals. In 2004 - when Maya was twelve - China's iconic choreographer Yang Liping recognised her talents and invited Maya to join Yunnan Yang Liping Arts & Culture Company. Maya has danced in Yang's most important works such as *Dynamic Yunnan*, *Peacock*, *Under Siege*, and *Peacock Winter*. She is one of the Company's longest serving members.

## **Joanne Clara**

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Composer/Musician

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Joanne Clara is a composer, performer and recording artist currently based in London. Her commissioned work includes writing for the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Singers, New Perspectives Sinfonietta, Fidelio Trio, and Dulcinea Quartet.

Last summer, she worked alongside American film composers Mark Snow and Michael Levine at the ASCAP Filmmaking Program in New York, and is now working on a new short film 'Daughter' directed by Christian Kinde. Her work has so far been shown in cities such as Hong Kong, Nanjing, London, Manchester, Vienna, Udine, and Boston.

Since moving to the UK in 2005, Clara has received various commissions in both Asia and Europe to produce multimedia work for exhibitions and events such as the Sensing Spaces Architectural Installation at the Royal Academy of Arts, the Belle Shenkman Series for Michelangelo's 'The Entombment' at the National Portrait Gallery.

As a multi-instrumentalist, she has supported and played with artists such as Emeli Sandés, Bobby McFerrin, Matt Corby, The Staves etc. She has also recorded for Mercury-prize winner Michael Kiwanuka, and Roo Panes, a UK band whom she performs and tours with regularly.

This year, Clara has been recording various instrumental EPs that have been released via all major online platforms throughout the year. She has also been touring in the major cities of Asia, Europe and the Middle East to promote her latest releases since end of April.



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## **Programme II**

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# Joy Alpuerto Ritter

BABAE



## **BABAE**

Inspired by Mary Wigman's *Witch Dance* - the "masterpiece of strangeness" - *BABAE* examines inherited vocabularies and reconfigures the meaning of summoning the power and mystical practices of woman as witch. Combining roots in Philippine folk dance, classical training and vocabulary of hip hop & voguing, *BABAE* is a one-woman interplay between the animalistic and sensual qualities of ritual and mightiness.

**Choreographer/Dancer** Joy Alpuerto Ritter  
**Composer** Vincenzo Lamagna  
**Lighting Designer** Arne Schmitt / Joy Alpuerto Ritter  
**Costume Designer** Lan Behrendt DYAO





## **Joy Alpuerto Ritter**

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Choreographer/Dancer

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Joy Alpuerto Ritter was born in 1982 in Los Angeles. She moved to Germany when she was 4-years old and grew up in Freiburg im Breisgau where she took her first ballet classes at the Ballettstudio Krain. During 10 years she was trained in ballet and jazz, took part in dance competitions, ballet performances and shows with the Philippine and Polynesian Culture Dance group - led by her mother. In 2004 she graduated from Palucca Dance School (Dresden, GERMANY) and has been working mostly in Berlin ever since as a freelance dancer with choreographers like Christoph Winkler, Ozymoron Dance Company by Anja Kozik, Heike Hennig and Constanza Macras.

Since 2005 she has dedicated her passion into the Hip Hop scene, practicing different styles like hip hop, breakdance and voguing. She has participated in many dance battle events throughout Europe like Juste Debout, Defipayette, Voguing out, Funkin stylz and won several prizes. In 2011 she was proudly invited as a dancer to be part of the Michael Jackson Immortal World Tour, an arena show by the Cirque du Soleil, which toured through USA, Canada and Europe. Since 2012 she has been working and touring internationally with Wangramirez and the Akram Khan Company (*iTMOi* & *Until the Lions*). She was nominated as "Outstanding Female Dancer (contemporary)" at the UK National Dance Awards in 2017 for her performance in *Until the Lions*.

## **Vincenzo Lamagna**

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Composer

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Vincenzo Lamagna is an Italian musician, composer and producer based in London. His music is known for its visceral, emotive and edgy language that utilises an unconventional hybrid of electro-orchestral sounds.

As well as his solo work, Vincenzo has carved a niche in the alternative contemporary dance world, where he has established himself as a major collaborator with some of the most acclaimed choreographers of this generation, Hofesh Shechter and Akram Khan.

His most recent collaborations include Akram Khan's award winning 21st-century adaptation of *Giselle* for the English National Ballet and Khan's *Until the Lions*, which was premiered at the Roundhouse, London in 2016.

His scores are a mercurial combination of acoustic and electronic music, recognised for their ferocious industrial undertones, haunted melodies and cinematic soundscapes.

# Ching-Ying Chien

Vulture



## **Vulture**

Initial inspiration for this piece came from an old myth about vultures. It is said that nobody ever sees the body of a deceased vulture. When a vulture knows its life is close to ending it will fly high up towards the sun and melt away into nothing. True or not, the thought of hiding weakness and controlling your end ties in with the Greek myth of Icarus and Daedalus. Man imitating nature and failing. As human beings, we feel a need to understand our surroundings and question our existence in a way that other creatures simply don't/can't. *Vulture* explores the life cycle, flaws and triumphs of the human, but from the eyes of an animal.

**Choreographer/Dancer** Ching-Ying Chien  
**Composer/Musician** Joseph Ashwin  
**Lighting Designer** Fabiana Piccioli  
**Costume Designer** Marie Cantenys





## **Ching-Ying Chien**

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Choreographer/Dancer

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Ching-Ying Chien was born in Taiwan and graduated from the National Taiwan University of Arts. She has collaborated with choreographer Fang-Yi Sheu and has created work with numerous Taiwanese choreographers. For Chinese artist Cai Guo-Qiang, she worked as a physical model during the production of his *Day and Night* - a large-scale gunpowder drawing. Since 2013 she has been working with Akram Khan Company, devising material and performing in *iTMOi* (2013) and *Until the Lions* (2016). In 2017, she won the "Outstanding Female Performance (Modern)" award for her performance in *Until the Lions* at the UK National Dance Awards.

## **Joseph Ashwin**

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Composer/Musician

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Joseph Ashwin was raised in Gloucestershire England. He fell in love with guitar in his early teens, and is mostly self-taught. In 2006 he attended the Brighton Institute of Modern Music to complete a diploma specialising in guitar. Apart from being part of various bands, Joseph has toured extensively with well-known contemporary dance choreographer Hofesh Schechter, mostly as a musician in the highly popular piece 'Political Mother', in which he was also a musical collaborator. In 2016 he joined Akram Khan Company to perform and tour as a musician with the production "Until the Lions".



## **Fabiana Piccioli**

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Lighting Designer

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Born in Rome, Fabiana trains as a dancer and graduates in Philosophy. In 2005 she joins the Akram Khan Company as Technical Director and Lighting Designer, touring the company works worldwide until 2013, when she starts her freelance career. Since then she has collaborated with international artists and institutions, such as Romeo Castellucci, Katie Mitchell, Guy Cassiers, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, English National Ballet, Ballets of Montecarlo, Teatro alla Scala. Fabiana is still busy designing for dance, theatre and opera. She was the winner of two Knight of Illumination awards for Dance (2013, 2017).

## **Marie Cantenys**

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Costume Designer

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Central Saint Martins graduate, Marie is a London based fashion designer and visual artist. Her approach is to develop an expertise across multiple disciplines using as a main tool the body and its shapes. Two years into her schooling, she had the opportunity to join Louis Vuitton's design studio in Paris, where she perfected her skills and was trained to the highest industry standards. Having then worked for renowned houses and up and coming companies such as Penhaligons and ASAI, Marie is now developing a personal practice through compelling artistic collaborations.

## **Akram Khan Company**

Co-founded in 2000 by award-winning choreographer Akram Khan and producer Farooq Chaudhry, Akram Khan Company has established itself as one of the foremost innovative dance companies, performing to sell-out audiences in leading festivals and venues around the world.

Embracing Khan's artistic vision that both respects and challenges tradition and modernity, the Company has become renowned for its intercultural, interdisciplinary collaborations, and has developed a significant range of works from classical kathak and modern solos to artist-to-artist duets and ensemble productions. A milestone in the Company's journey was the creation of a section of the London Olympic Games Opening Ceremony in 2012.

The Company has been showered with prestigious honours including an Olivier Award for *DESH* and a record-breaking six Critics' Circle National Dance Awards. 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.