

Akram Khan Company
Jungle Book reimagined

Oct 26-27

7:30 p.m.

Oct 28

4:00 p.m.

Main Stage

This program will run approximately 2 hours and 10 minutes, including one intermission.

Theatre Sponsor:
Laurie and Bill Benenson

This performance is presented with support from Center Dance Arts at The Los Angeles Music Center.



Photo Credit: Camilla Greenwell

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Synopsis

Act I

Sea levels are rising; waters dominate land; and humans scramble for their survival in search for higher ground. A young child finds herself separated from her family and ends up in a flooded city, deserted by its human inhabitants. Monuments have been uprooted and rearranged, and animals of all shapes and sizes have congregated here and formed an uneasy alliance as they try to live with this new unreliable climate. They have claimed this cityscape as their own – marking their territories in libraries, supermarkets, governmental buildings, and even places of worship.

The child is discovered by the wolf pack led by Raksha and Rama. Raksha wants to keep the child, but Rama insists that humans bring danger, and they must destroy it. Raksha protects Mowgli and presents her to an animal council, led by Akela, a dog, and with the watchful eyes in the sky of Chil, the kite. The animals speak of a mysterious hunter, a human who has been cast out by his own kind. The hunter has returned to these lands and keeps the animals in constant fear. After much deliberation, the child is accepted by the council and the naming process begins: Mowgli. Mowgli is set to work straight away; she must prove her worth and help the animals in their search for food. Maybe human instincts are just what they need.

Mowgli finds herself in the company of Bagheera, a kidnapped albino panther who grew up in a palace, and Baloo, an escaped dancing bear. However, on their quest for food, Mowgli is taken by the Bandar-log; lab monkeys who have had all kinds of experiments done on them. Through cunning, the Bandar-log outwit Baloo and Bagheera and steal Mowgli. Bagheera and Baloo must now find an animal capable of striking fear into the Bandar-log. After all, they are not animals of the tree world. They seek out Kaa, a rock python, who has escaped from captivity but still lives with the traumas of a lifetime stuck behind a glass viewing screen.

Act II

Mowgli is taken to the Bandar-log's lair, a ransacked governmental building. The Bandar-log are no strangers to humankind; they come from testing laboratories and regurgitate commercial jingles and political rants they heard from their cages. They listened, copied, and aped the humans, but now they want to become them. Mowgli is the missing piece of the puzzle. A human child to teach them how to fully become human.

With the help of Kaa, Baloo and Bagheera rescue Mowgli from the hands of the Bandar-log just at the moment she is about to help them create fire: the most feared possession of mankind. Animals can't control this. Mankind can.

When Mowgli is saved, the trio return to the council where Hathi, the leader of the elephants, tells them of their ancient tale, back to the time when the jungles they once knew were created.

But when the hunter finally breaches their territory, and shoots down Chil, the animals know that this spells the beginning of the end of the peace they have forged together. Mowgli, remembering her mother's words throughout her journey, decides to stand up and fight for her newfound friends and seeks out the hunter and end his savagery.

About the Artists

Akram Khan

Akram Khan is one of the most celebrated and respected dance artists today. In the last 23 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 *Jungle Book reimagined*, *Outwitting the Devil*, *XENOS*, *Until the Lions*, *Kaash*, *iTMOi* (in the mind of igor), *DESH*, *Vertical Road*, *Gnosis* and *zero degrees*. Khan's work is recognised as being profoundly moving, in which his intelligently crafted storytelling is effortlessly intimate and epic. 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. Khan is also an Associate Artist of Sadler's Wells and Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts, London as well as Curve.

Maya Balam Meyong

Native from Belgium with Cameroonian origins, Maya graduated from a BFA in dance at the PSPBB/Paris 8 University as well as from Rick Odum's professional training and teaching programs under scholarship award. Alumnus of the Springboard Dance Montreal and of the Jacob's Pillow Contemporary Program, she is also an awardee of the Vocatio Foundation as well as Phil Collins' Little Dreams Foundation. Upon graduating, Maya moved to Brussels where she danced for different choreographers and since moving to New York, has danced with CR Dance Company.

Tom Davis-Dunn

Tom graduated from the Northern School of Contemporary dance (NSCD) in 2017 and has since had the privilege of working with the likes of Lloyd Newson DV8/Rambert for the revival and world tour of *Enter Achilles*, Gary Clarke - *Wasteland*, Theo Lowe, Jamaal Burkmar, amongst many others. Tom has a keen eye for detail and strives himself on delivering the best quality of work at all times with enthusiasm and rigour. Tom constantly explores his movement practice with curiosity and generosity, immersing himself into the depths of his thinking body to find new paths, questioning his artistry with consideration and dexterity.

Harry Theadora Foster

Harry was born in Los Angeles and moved to the UK as a young child. His experiences of living and travelling around the globe have given him a longstanding interest in the ways art investigates how we are shaped as human beings by our social surroundings. He sees the human body as a vessel that holds stories and histories which dance can unlock. Now a London-based dance artist and choreographer, he trained at CAT at The Place, English National Ballet Youth Company, and Rambert School. He has had the privilege of working with and performing works by Christopher Bruce, Richard Alston, Richard Chappell, Tim Casson (Casson and Friends Dance) and Fabula Collective (research process) among others. He has created a number of dance films and stage works, and was co-founder in 2021 of Elbow Dance Collective.

Filippo Franzese

Filippo was born in Naples, Italy, where he started his modern dance studies. In 2016 he moved to Agora Coaching Project Junior Company, Italy, and in 2017 he began his studies at Codarts, University of the Arts in Rotterdam, Netherlands where he graduated in 2021. In 2020 he became a member of Skånes Dansteater in Malmö, Sweden, as an intern-dancer. From 2021, onwards he worked as freelance dancer for Marcel Leemann Physical Dance Theater, Bern, ARK Connor Schumacher, Rotterdam, WDTanztheater, Düsseldorf, and GrossDanceCompany, Amsterdam. In 2022, he was also the répétiteur at Codarts, University of the Arts, for the re-staging of the dance piece *Façade* by Andonis Foniadakis.

Bianca Mikahil

Born and raised in São Paulo, Brazil, Bianca moved to London in 2019 to study at Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance, from where she graduated with a First Class BA (Hons). Throughout her career Bianca has performed works by Alleyne Dance, Joy Alpuerto Ritter, Ivri&Greben, Richard Alston, and toured with National Dance Company Wales performing works by Marcos Morau and SAY (Sarah Golding and Yukiko Masui). Bianca was one of the National Youth Ballet's Beyond Ballet Artists in 2021/2022 and co-created Elbow Dance Collective in 2021.

About the Artists

Max Revell

Growing up in Cornwall, Max began training in Plymouth, taking breaking and popping classes with Street Factory from age nine, later returning there to teach. As a teenager he travelled across the UK competing in battles, and worked with several theatre companies before joining Northern School of Contemporary Dance in Leeds. In 2019 he won the BBC Young Dancer competition, graduating NSCD in 2020 he joined postgraduate company Verve. He has enjoyed working with The Hiccup Project, Frantic Assembly, Patricia Okenwa, Gary Clarke, Eleanor Sikorski, Susanne Thomas, Dickson Mbi, Tony Adigun, Barnaby Booth, Botis Seva, Caroline Finn, and Matthew Robinson.

Matthew Sandiford

Born and raised in Luton, Matthew discovered a passion for dance at the age of 17 whilst studying performing arts at college. He went on to train at Trinity Laban gaining a First Class BA Honours Degree in Dance Theatre. Upon graduating, Matthew joined BalletBoyz where he continued to work as a company dancer for eight years, performing and touring both nationally and internationally in works by choreographers including Russell Maliphant, Ivan Perez, Christopher Wheeldon, Pontus Lidberg, Alexander Whitley, Maxine Doyle, Xie Xin, Javier de Frutos and Craig Revel Horwood. Matthew went on to work with National Dance Company Wales and James Cousins Company before joining Akram Khan Company in August 2021. He is also a Board Member for BalletBoyz.

Pui Yung Shum

Pui Yung Shum is a contemporary dance artist with an all-around dance training background. With interests in object-movement relationship, she explores object-oriented ontology through creative movements. She started her ballet training in Christine Liao School of Ballet (Hong Kong) at the age of five. She was awarded distinction from the Royal Academy of Dance in Ballet examinations (Advanced 2 and Grade 8) and was invited to participate in The Genee International Ballet Competition in Antwerp, Belgium. In 2019, she completed her MA in Contemporary Dance at the London Contemporary Dance School.

Holly Vallis

All their life, Holly has been questioning and challenging the ways we, as a society, grow, move and live and as they've entered the profession, how this can exist within art and movement expression. Over the past couple of years, Holly has been trying to integrate what they continue to learn about their own identity, community, and imperatively, the experiences of those belonging to different communities into their day-to-day life as well as their work. Holly trained at Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance and after graduating worked with TanzTheater Münster, Ballet Cymru, and Matsena Productions before joining Akram Khan Company in 2021.

Jan Mikaela Villanueva

Jan Mikaela was born and raised in the Philippines. She was a full government scholar of the Philippine High School for the Arts and recipient of the Outstanding Student Artist Award. At the age of 15, she joined Ballet Philippines where she performed and toured the company's repertoire for three seasons. She has performed and worked with renowned choreographers such as Paxton Ricketts, Anh Ngoc Nguyen, Zoltan Fodor, Eve Chan, Carlo Pacis and Alice Reyes. A Full Academy Scholar and recipient of the HKSAR Government Scholarship Fund (ROA), Mika obtained a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Honours) degree with First Class Honours at The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts before joining the Akram Khan Company in July 2022. Aside from performing arts, Mika is also passionate about dance science, writing, outreach programmes and giving back to the arts community by mentoring students.

Luke Watson

Luke was born in South Africa and later grew up in Scotland where he started his dance training at the Dance School of Scotland. He then graduated from English National Ballet School in 2017 and began his professional career in Barcelona with ITDansa under the direction of Catherine Allard. Since returning to the UK, Luke has worked on a number of projects including the opening ceremony of the Davis Cup and Carmen both choreographed by Jose Agudo. He was also involved in the creative research for Akram Khan's *Creature* with English National Ballet.

Artistic Credits

Director/Choreographer Akram Khan

Creative Associate/Coach Mavin Khoo

Writer Tariq Jordan

Dramaturgical Advisor Sharon Clark

Composer Jocelyn Pook

Sound Designer Gareth Fry

Lighting Designer Michael Hulls

Visual Stage Designer Miriam Buether

Art Direction and Director of Animation Adam Smith
(YeastCulture)

Producer/Director of Video Design Nick Hillel
(YeastCulture)

Rotoscope Artists/Animators Naaman Azhari,
Natasza Cetner, Edson R Bazzarin

Rehearsal Directors Nicky Henshall, Andrew Pan,
Angela Towler (Tour)

Dancers Tom Davis-Dunn, Harry Theadora Foster,
Filippo Franzese, Maya Balam Meyong, Bianca Mikahil,
Max Revell, Matthew Sandiford, Pui Yung Shum, Holly
Vallis, Jan Mikaela Villanueva, Luke Watson

Assistant Animators Nisha Alberti, Geo Barnett, Miguel
Mealla Black, Michelle Cramer, Jack Hale, Zuzanna
Odolczyk, Sofja Umarik

Voice Actors Tian-Lan Chaudhry, Joy Elias-Rilwan,
Pushkala Gopal, Dana Haqjoo, Nicky Henshall, Su-Man
Hsu, Kathryn Hunter, Emmanuel Imani, Divya Kasturi,
Jeffery Kissoon, Mavin Khoo, Yasmin Paige, Max Revell,
Christopher Simpson, Pui Yung Shum, Holly Vallis, Jan
Mikaela Villanueva, Luke Watson, 3rd year students of
Rambert School.

Producing Director Farooq Chaudhry

Executive Director Isabel Tamen

Project Manager Mashitah Omar

Technical Director Zeynep Kepekli

Technical Manager Michael Cunningham

Touring Production Manager and Prop Maker
Marek Pomocki

Lighting Engineer Stephane Dejours

Sound Engineer Philip Wood

Video Technician and Projectionist Matthew
Armstrong

Technical Stage Manager Samuel Collier

Co-produced by Curve Leicester, Attiki Cultural
Society – Greece, Birmingham Hippodrome, Edinburgh
International Festival, Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay
Singapore, Festspielhaus St. Pölten, Internationaal
Theater Amsterdam, Joan W. and Irving B. Harris
Theater for Music and Dance – Chicago, Lincoln Center
for the Performing Arts – New York, Maison de la Danse
/ Pôle européen de création – Lyon, National Arts
Centre – Canada, New Vision Arts Festival – Hong
Kong, Orsolina28, Pfalzbau Bühnen – Theater im
Pfalzbad Ludwigshafen, Romaeuropa Festival, Stanford
Live / Stanford University, Teatros del Canal – Madrid,
théâtre de Caen, Théâtre de la Ville – Paris.

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Academy of Performing Arts that took part in creation
rehearsals, and all the 3rd year students of Northern
School of Contemporary Dance (2021-2022) and 3rd
year students of Rambert School (2021-2022) who
worked on the R&D residency with Akram.

Jocelyn Pook's music © Copyright 2022 Chester
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Music recorded by

Singers Tanja Tzarovska, Melanie Pappenheim, Sushma
Soma, Sohini Alam, Voya Zivkovic

Musicians Jocelyn Pook (piano, viola, voice,
keyboards), Mulele Matondo (guitar and sanza), Belinda
Sykes (shawm and gralla)

Recording and mixing Steve Parr

“How Dare You?”, Greta Thunberg, recording property
of United Nations

“Blah, blah, blah”, speech by Greta Thunberg