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# English National Ballet: Akram Khan's ***Giselle***

2025.5.16 Fri. 19:30

2025.5.17 Sat. 14:30

2025.5.18 Sun. 14:30

WeiWuying Opera House

Duration is 115 minutes with a 20-minute intermission.



National Kaohsiung  
CENTER FOR THE ARTS

WEI WUYING

衛武營 國家藝術文化中心  
國家表演藝術中心 National Performing Arts Center

## **Programs**

As the curtain rises, dancers in shadow push against a forbidding wall. From that moment on, Akram KHAN's *Giselle* stuns with powerful images.

Mesmerising choreography, atmospheric lighting by Mark HENDERSON and a towering set by Academy Award winner Tim YIP conjure up a condemned factory and the vengeful ghosts that appear in its shadows.

The ominous score by Vincenzo LAMAGNA - adapted from the original by Adolphe ADAM and recorded by English National Ballet Philharmonic – intensifies the story's emotional impact.

See the greatest romantic ballet and its story of love, betrayal, and redemption, boldly reimagined.

## **Synopsis of *Giselle***

### **Act I**

Giselle is one of a community of migrant garment factory workers (the Outcasts). Dispossessed of their jobs by the factory's closure, and separated by a high wall from their hopes of livelihood and security, the Outcasts function as little more than exotic entertainment for the factory Landlords. In Act I, the wealthy Albrecht disguises himself as an Outcast in order to visit his lover Giselle. But his presence is noted by Hilarion – Giselle's would-be lover – a shapechanging 'fixer' who trades with and mimics the Landlords for his own and his community's profit.

Albrecht's wooing of Giselle is interrupted by the unexpected arrival of the Landlords. Seeing his fiancée Bathilde among them, Albrecht tries to hide. Giselle recognizes the fine dress worn by Bathilde as the product of her own factory labour. The Outcasts dance for the Landlords until Albrecht and Hilarion disturb the Ceremony with their conflict. Bathilde's father confronts Albrecht, forcing him to return to Bathilde and to their world. When he submits and returns to Bathilde, Giselle is driven mad with grief. The Landlord gives a command, and the Outcasts encircle Giselle. When the crowd disperses, her lifeless body is revealed. Denying any responsibility, the Landlords retreat beneath the Wall.

### **Act II**

A wrecked, abandoned "ghost" factory is revealed – a place where Giselle and her female co-workers have laboured, and many have died. Here Albrecht, grieving for Giselle, confronts and condemns the Landlords.

Myrtha, Queen of the Wilis (ghosts of factory workers who seek revenge for the wrongs done to them in life), enters, driving Albrecht away. She summons Giselle from her lifeless body into the realm of death, to join the company of the remorseless Wilis.

Hilarion enters to mourn at Giselle's grave. The Wilis surround him, demanding retribution for Giselle's death, and Hilarion is brutally killed.

Albrecht returns and becomes aware of Giselle's presence. The lovers are reunited on the threshold between life and death. Breaking the cycle of violence – and defying Myrtha's

command – Giselle forgives Albrecht and releases him into life.

The Wilis depart with Giselle, and Albrecht, now an outcast from his own community, is left alone by the Wall.

## **About English National Ballet**

### **English National Ballet**

English National Ballet has a long and distinguished history. Founded in 1950 as London Festival Ballet by the great English dancers Alicia MARKOVA and Anton DOLIN, it has been at the forefront of ballet's growth and evolution ever since.

English National Ballet brings world class ballet to the widest possible audience through performances across the UK and on eminent international stages; its distinguished orchestra, English National Ballet Philharmonic; its digital platforms Ballet on Demand and BalletActive; being a UK leader in creative learning and engagement practice, building innovative partnerships to deliver flagship programmes such as Dance for Parkinson's; and through talent development initiatives including Ballet Futures which looks to create a more diverse and inclusive future for the artform.

English National Ballet continues to add ground-breaking new works to its repertoire whilst celebrating the tradition of great classical ballet, gaining acclaim for artistic excellence and creativity. 2019 saw the Company enter a new chapter in its history with a move to a purpose-built state-of-the-art home in East London, allowing a renewed commitment to creativity, ambition, and connection to more people, near and far, than ever before.



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Artistic Director

**Aaron S. WATKIN**

Born in the Cowichan Valley in British Columbia, Canada, Aaron S. WATKIN graduated from the National Ballet School of Canada in 1988. WATKIN enjoyed a full career in dance beginning with leading classical companies including National Ballet of Canada, English National Ballet and Dutch National Ballet. After 7 years of the classical repertoire, he was invited by world renowned choreographer William FORSYTHE to become a Principal Dancer with Ballett Frankfurt. During this time, he learned a completely new vocabulary of dance and had numerous opportunities to create new works with Mr FORSYTHE. WATKIN always admired the works of Nacho DUATO and in 2000 joined his company, the National Dance Company of Spain.

In 2002 WATKIN was appointed Associate Artistic Director to Victor Ullate Ballet in Madrid, Spain where he gained experience in many different areas of directing a company, from studio to administration. WATKIN was a Choreographic Assistant to William FORSYTHE, in charge of staging his ballets on dance companies throughout the world. WATKIN was a guest teacher to many of Europe's leading dance companies and Artistic Associate Director of The Loft Dance Studio in Brussels, Belgium. WATKIN was the Artistic Associate Director of the annual Dance For Life AIDS Benefit Galas at the Cirque Royal Theatre in Brussels, Belgium.

WATKIN was appointed Artistic Director of the Semperoper Ballett in August 2006. During his 17-year tenure with the company, he created numerous classical full-length productions.

In August 2023, Aaron S. WATKIN assumed the role of Artistic Director of English National Ballet.



©Camilla Greenwell

Direction and Choreography

**Akram KHAN**

Akram KHAN is one of the most celebrated and respected dance artists of today. 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.

As an instinctive and natural collaborator, KHAN has been a magnet to world-class artists from other cultures and disciplines. His collaborators include the National Ballet of China, actress Juliette BINOCHE, ballerina Sylvie GUILLEM, choreographers/dancers Sidi Larbi CHERKAoui and Israel GALVÁN, singer Kylie MINOGUE, indie rock band Florence and the Machine, 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 recognised 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. He created the short piece *Dust*, part of the Lest We Forget programme, which led to an invitation to create his own critically acclaimed version of the iconic romantic ballet *Giselle*. *Creature* is KHAN's latest work for English National Ballet.

KHAN has been the recipient of numerous awards throughout his career. KHAN is an Associate Artist of Sadler's Wells and Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts, London and Curve, Leicester.

# **Creative and Production Team**

## **CREATIVE TEAM**

Direction and Choreography | Akram KHAN

Visual and Costume Designer | Tim YIP

Composition and Sound Designer | Vincenzo LAMAGNA (after the original score by Adolphe ADAM)

Orchestration | Gavin SUTHERLAND

Lighting Designer | Mark HENDERSON

Dramaturgy | Ruth LITTLE

Assistant Choreographer | Andrej PETROVIC

Repetiteur | Mavin KHOO

Sound Designer | Yvonne GILBERT

## **PRODUCTION CREDITS**

Creative Producer | Farooq CHAUDHRY

Stage Manager | Alix NICHOLSON

Deputy Stage Manager | Pippa McLAUCHLAN

Set Construction | Bay Productions Ltd

Automation | TAIT

Painted by | Coolflight

Original Costume Supervisors | Helen JOHNSON 、 Gerry TIERNAN

Costume Supervisor – Refurbishment | Lola STOTT

Dyeing | Symone FROST 、 Nicola KILEEN 、 Stacy LIDDALL 、  
Schulz and Wiremu Fabric Effects Ltd 、 Amy TOWLE

Makers | Robert ALLSOPP 、 Amanda BARROW 、 Sarah COOKE 、 Gill CRAWFORD 、  
Roxy CRESSY 、 Serena FUSAI 、 Jane GILL 、 Robbie GORDON 、 Jackie HALLATT 、  
Lynn HAMILTON 、 Tomoko HONDA 、 James KELLY 、 Carmella MARESSE 、  
Suzanne PARKINSON 、 Federica ROMANO 、 Claire RAMSELL 、 Sally SPRATLEY 、  
Emma WRIGHT

Costume Refurbishment | Samantha GILSENAN 、 James KELLY 、 Emma WRIGHT

Cutter/Maker | Orla CONVERY

Hats | Debbie BOYD

Shoes by | Julie HEGGIE

Make-up products supplied by | CHANEL

Cover Touring Wardrobe Manager | Sam GILSENAN

Senior Wardrobe Assistant | Emma WRIGHT



Wardrobe Assistants | James KELLY 、 Hanna GYORGY

Chief Electrician | David RICHARDSON

Electricians | Patrick ACHEGANI 、 Pip WALSH 、 Ian COMER

Chief Mechanist | Dave BAXTER

Deputy Chief Mechanist | Ted KITTLE

Stage Technicians | Harry BAXTER 、 Sean KENNEDY 、 Nick MANNING 、 Gus MARTINEZ

## **ENGLISH NATIONAL BALLET**

Patron | Her Majesty The Queen

Artistic Director | Aaron S. WATKIN

Executive Director | Anu GIRI

Chief Operating Officer | Grace CHAN

Music Director | Maria SELETSKAJA

Associate Artistic Director | Loipa ARAÚJO

Artistic Manager | Yohei SASAKI

Head of Performance Coaching and Development | Adrian VAN WINKELHOF

Artistic Scheduling Manager | Jennie HARRINGTON

Repetiteurs | Laurent GUILBAUD 、 Renato PARONI DE CASTRO 、 Carmen PIQUERAS 、  
Erina TAKAHASHI

Executive Producer | Louise SHAND-BROWN

Operations Manager | Caroline GANE

Company Manager | Amy SHARKEY

Executive Assistant | Lia BUDDLE

Technical Director | Todd BAXTER

Technical Administrator | Frankie MARSHALL

Deputy Head of Stage | Edward KITTLE

Chief Electrician | David RICHARDSON

Chief Mechanist | David BAXTER

Marden Warehouse Manager | Colin HUCKER

Marden Warehouse Coordinator | Brian CHAPMAN

Production Costume Manager | Gerry TIERNAN

Dyer/Painter | Symone FROST

Cutter/Maker | Rachel KIDD

Wardrobe Manager | Lola STOTT

Deputy Touring Wardrobe Manager | Samantha GILSENAN

Wardrobe Assistants | James KELLY 、 Emma WRIGHT

Shoe Supervisor | Julie HEGGIE  
Wig Supervisor | Amelia CARRINGTON-LEE  
Medical Director | Andy REYNOLDS  
Head of HR | Ingrid FIRMINGER  
Head of Finance | John SMITH  
Head of Building Operations | Barbara AVERN  
Director of Marketing and Communications | Lisa LEIGH  
Development Director | Crûs WHITEWOODS  
Head of Commercial Events and Hires (Maternity Cover) | Sophie QUINAN  
Director of Engagement | Fleur DERBYSHIRE-FOX

### **DANCERS (by rank)**

Lead Principals | Aitor ARRIETA、Francesco Gabriele FROLA、Emma HAWES、Shiori KASE、  
Sangeun LEE、Fernanda OLIVEIRA、Erina TAKAHASHI

Principals | Gareth HAW

First Soloists | Precious ADAMS、Ivana BUENO、Julia CONWAY、Katja KHANIUKOVA、  
Daniel McCORMICK、Fabian REIMAIR、Ken SARUHASHI、Junor SOUZA、  
James STREETER、Lorenzo TROSSELLO、Erik WOOLHOUSE

Soloists | Alice BELLINI、Georgia BOULD、Henry DOWDEN、Noam DURAND、Minju KANG、  
Vsevolod MAIEVSKYI、Skyler MARTIN、Rentaro NAKAAKI、Anna NEVZOROVA、  
Haruhi OTANI、Eric SNYDER、Emily SUZUKI、Francesca VELICU、Angela WOOD、  
Rhys Antoni YEOMANS

First Artists | Mathew ASTLEY、Claire BARRETT、Isabelle BROUWERS、Emilia CADORIN、  
Jung ah CHOI、Eireen EVRARD、Breanna FOAD、Shunhei FUCHIYAMA、  
Giorgio GARRETT、Chloe KENEALLY、Adriana LIZARDI、Swanice LUONG、  
Miguel Angel MAIDANA、Madison WHITELEY

Artists | Thalina CHAPIN、Anna CIRIANO、Ashley COUPAL、Carolyn GALVAO、  
Paulo GONZALEZ、Jose Maria LORCA MENCHON、Marta MONESI、Vincent PHILP、  
Nathaniel RITTER-MAGOT、Martinho SANTOS、Thiago SILVA、William SIMMONS、  
Lucinda STRACHAN、Anri SUGIURA、Alexandra TERRY、Anna-Babette WINKLER

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