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## **EXCLUSIVE U.S. PERFORMANCE OF *ZERO DEGREES* AT WEXNER CENTER**

***CHARGED DUET FEATURES CHOREOGRAPHERS/DANCERS AKRAM KHAN AND SIDI LARBI CHERKAOUI***

**"A stylishly realized and endlessly fascinating piece of dance theatre."—*The Times* (London)**

***Zero Degrees***—one of the most acclaimed works on the international dance circuit—will be performed only once in the U.S.: at the Wexner Center on **Tuesday, October 10 at 8 pm** in Mershon Auditorium. Coproduced by the Wexner Center, this charged duet by dancers/choreographers **Akram Khan** and **Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui** is a collaborative poetic investigation into the common ground of their personal identities as young Muslims living in Europe (Khan is Bangladeshi-British and based in London, and Cherkaoui is Flemish-Moroccan and based in Ghent). The show, which incorporates movement and spoken word passages, highlights the contrasts of their dance styles. Khan moves with grace and strength, intertwining classical Indian and modern dance forms, while Cherkaoui's stylish distillation of loose, kinetic street movement informs his contemporary approach. **A string**

**and vocal quartet, performing live onstage**, propels the action with rhythms and singing that combine Eastern and Western styles in a score composed by Nitin Sawhney. Eerie full-body casts of Khan and Cherkaoui created by sculptor Antony Gormley preside onstage like alter egos echoing the dancers' exchanges and serving as silent sentinels. Together the musicians, sculptures, and dancers conjure memories of a past journey that triggers reflections on borders, cultures, nations, and the stark truths of life and death.

Each artist has already captivated audiences here—Khan with his riveting U.S. debut in 2001 and his first full-length work *Kaash* (also coproduced by the Wexner Center) in 2003, and Cherkaoui with *Foi*, which he choreographed for dance-theater ensemble Les Ballets C. de la B. and which had its exclusive U.S. show at the Wexner Center in 2003.

Notes Charles Helm, Wexner Center's director of performing arts, "Building deeper relationships with important artists like Akram and Larbi as well as with the audiences here who eagerly follow their development is crucial to the Wexner Center. It is gratifying that our early commitment to both of these dance innovators made it possible to participate as a coproducer of this special collaboration and bring it to Ohio State."



**Akram Khan and Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui**  
Photo by Tristram Kenton

Nina Berman, a professor in Ohio State's Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures, will give a **preperformance talk** in Mershon Auditorium at 7 pm on issues facing Muslims.

## **RESIDENCY ACTIVITIES**

While at the Wexner Center, Akram Khan and Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui will offer a master class for students in Ohio State's Department of Dance. During this session, the artists will share their respective approaches to technique and discuss how their perspectives on generating movement ideas informed the making of their collaboration *Zero Degrees*. This opportunity is part of the Wexner Center's ongoing commitment to serve the university community and to foster an exchange of ideas among visiting artists and students.

## **ABOUT THE ARTISTS**

Born in London to Bangladeshi parents, **Akram Khan** is a leading British dancer and choreographer known for his blending of Western contemporary dance and Kathak, the Indian classical genre. Khan has been the recipient of many international awards, including Outstanding Newcomer to Dance (2000) from both Dance Critics' Circle and *Time Out*. Khan studied at Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker's Brussels-based school (as did Cherkaoui), among other places, and launched his own company in 2000; he performs internationally, including at the Wexner Center twice before. He is currently an associated artist at Sadler's Wells dance center in London.

**Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui** is best known for his work in Belgian company Les Ballets C. de la B., which made its U.S. debut at the Wexner Center in 1996. Born in Antwerp, Cherkaoui has worked with hip-hop, modern jazz, and contemporary dance companies in Belgium. Cherkaoui has received many awards for his choreography and collaborated with visual, performance, and musical artists throughout Europe, and is currently working as an independent choreographer creating new work for ballet and modern companies in Europe.

A producer, songwriter, DJ, multi-instrumentalist, and orchestral composer, **Nitin Sawhney** has become a latter-day Renaissance man in the worlds of music, dance, theater, and film. Sawhney has scored more than 25 films, as well as TV ads for the likes of Nike and Sephora. An acclaimed flamenco guitarist and classical/jazz pianist, Sawhney has released seven studio albums, each garnering critical acclaim. Sawhney has also provided music for several past productions by Akram Khan.

Over the last 20 years, **Antony Gormley** has revitalized the human image in sculpture through a radical investigation of the body as a place of memory and transformation. Gormley's work has been exhibited extensively in the UK at the British Museum, the Tate and Hayward Galleries, and internationally at museums from the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. to the Irish Museum of Modern Art in Dublin.

## **EVENT SUPPORT**

*Zero Degrees* was produced by Akram Khan Company & Les Ballets C. de la B.

It was coproduced by the Wexner Center for the Arts at The Ohio State University; Sadler's Wells, London; Théâtre de la Ville, Paris; deSingel, Antwerp; Kunstencentrum Vooruit, Ghent; Hebbel Theater, Berlin; Tanzhaus, Düsseldorf; Schouwburg, Rotterdam; Teatro Comunale di Ferrara; TorinaDanza; National Arts Centre, Ottawa; Les Grandes Traverses, Bordéaux.

Akram Khan Company is supported by the Arts Council England. Les Ballets C. de la B. is supported by the Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap Stad Gent Provincie Oost-Vlaanderen Nationale Loterij.

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Major support for the Wexner Center's 2006–07 performing arts season is generously provided by Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and The Columbus Foundation. Significant contributions are also made by Altria Group, Inc., Morgan Stanley, and Nationwide Foundation. Additional funding is provided by the Ohio Arts Council, the Corporate Annual Fund of the Wexner Center Foundation, and Wexner Center members.

Preferred accommodations: The Blackwell Inn.

## **CALENDAR INFORMATION:**

**Description:** Exclusive U.S. premiere of acclaimed European dance work *Zero Degrees* by Akram Khan and Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui comes to Wexner Center for one night only; includes live music.

**Date and time:** Tuesday, October 10 at 8 pm. Preperformance talk by OSU professor Nina Berman about issues facing Muslims (7 pm).

**Running time:** Approx. one hour.

**Location:** Wexner Center's Mershon Auditorium, 1871 North High Street.

**Tickets:** \$26 general public, \$22 Wexner Center members, \$10 students. \$5 High 5 tickets are available for middle and high-school students in advance of the show at the Wexner Center.

**Ticket outlets:** Wexner Center Ticket Office (614 292-3535) and Ticketmaster (614 431-3600) or Ticketmaster.com.

**Public information:** 614 292-3535 and wexarts.org