

Amina Khayyam Dance Co

On the making of YERMA

by Amina Khayyam from the play by Federico Garcia Lorca

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I found myself again on a cross road when entering the studio, in the same way when I created *Laal Shaari*, not knowing, not having a clue as to how to proceed with this very poignant story which is so relevant today - the story of Yerma. Having recently given birth to my own child how could I possibly empathise with Yerma's yearning for a child...

So began the journey: a decision was taken to take the approach of contemporary dance, where a dancer is not required to use their face to express but instead use the entire body for expression ...how hard can that be in Kathak! Little did I know the challenges that would follow...but this approach made me dance Kathak in a new way, gaining a new relevance. Music played a major part in this approach as it does in all my work...Tarun was just so perfect and sensitive to what I really wanted and every musician poured out all their to make the sound fit in with the pieces' visual atmosphere. The dancers and the actors further added their own flavor to cement the piece together, while the costume by Keith kept a flavour of Kathak costumes, yet was bold to suggest the world of Yerma. As for make-up, I wanted to get away from the 'prettiness' of Kathak dance and took a bold decision to draw form the character of Yerma's inner state of mind. Lastly, the support and the vision of zeroculture has been invaluable – from producing to artistic input. - **Amina Khayyam**

Bios of Artists and collaborators

Amina Khayyam was born in Bangladesh but moved to UK where she started learning Kathak in 1992 with Alpana Sengupta. In 1996 she began her training with one of Kathak's finest exponent Sushmita Ghosh. Amina has been dancing professionally since 2001 when she debuted at the Southbank Centre. Her performance ranges from classical Kathak, in which, she has received high accolades for her Abhinaya, to multi-media performances such as the principle performer in the Akademi/South Bank's outdoor spectacle "Escapade" (2003), and in International Arts' and Forum for Laboratory Theatres of Manipuri's production of "Macbeth-Stage of Blood" on the River Thames (1997). She has toured extensively both nationally and internationally with several companies including Sonia Sabri, and has worked with reputable dance choreographers such as Kumudini Lakhia, Darshan Singh Bhuller, Filip Van Huffel, Jonathan Lunn.

Amina's own creations are fast gaining critical stature; her last piece was selected for ROH2's Firsts. She makes new work using kathak as the main core of a piece, but uses cross-form mediums in her narrative.

Her most recent work Laal Shaari, used live art approaches to controversially subvert the Kathak form. That creative approach was also evident and used in her last pure form piece – ONE, commissioned by the Musee du quai Branly, Paris, touring nationally from March 2011. She is currently in development with a number of new commissions – ‘Slut’ and ‘Amad’.

Amina is also the Associate Lecturer at the University of Surrey, teaching a dance degree (hons) course.

Iris Chan has been training and performing with Amina Khayyam since 2008. She began Kathak training during her BA degree in Dance & Culture at University of Surrey with Alpana Sengupta, though her early dance education was in classical ballet and contemporary dance. She currently works at Independent Dance where she participates in ongoing professional development, and has been influenced by a range of somatic approaches and improvisation in contemporary dance. She teaches Kathak to first year dance students at University of Surrey and also performs in other contemporary dance performance projects.

Most recently Iris has been selected to perform in Akademi's long running production 'Bells'.

Lucy Teed graduated from the University of Surrey in 2008 with a degree in Dance and Culture. This included a year on professional placement working with Phoenix Dance Education. She then went on to complete a post graduate diploma in Performance at the University of Chichester. This involved an extensive national tour with Mapdance 09, working with choreographers Shobana Jeyasingh, Charles Linehan, Liz Aggiss, Ben Wright and Laila Diallo. Lucy trained in Kathak for three years at university with Alpana Sengupta and Amina Khayyam. She resumed training with Amina Khayyam after her year with Mapdance and takes part in various performance projects with Amina Khayyam Dance Company. Lucy has also been involved in various contemporary dance performances as well as developing her role as a freelance teacher. She is currently based in Plymouth and has recently taken on the role of Community Support Practitioner with Attik Dance.

Divneet Peach graduated from the University of Surrey in 2007 with a BA (Hons) in Dance and Culture, part of which she trained in Kathak with Alpana Sengupta. Divneet started her Kathak training in 2004 at the University of Surrey and has trained with Alpana Sengupta, Amina Khayyam. Since graduating Divneet has performed with T21 Dance Company at Breakin Convention 2007 and with Iris Chan performing EshtiAgh; a piece choreographed by Amina Khayyam, at Greenwich Maritime Museum. She has also performed Kathak at Tara Arts, The Carriageworks Leeds and Elveden Hall. Divneet is a Reading based teacher and performer.

Debasish Mukherjee is one of the few tabla players who is known for his versatility. Hailing from a family of tabla and music traditions, he started receiving his training from his father, the renowned tabla exponent Pandit Kanai Mukherjee of Benares gharana. He was also privileged to be trained under the able guidance of his grand Guru, the great tabla maestro Late

Pandit Nanku Maharaj as well as under the tutelage of his other grandguru, Pandit Kishen Maharaj, the doyen of tabla. Debasish has performed at many prestigious festivals throughout India and abroad. He has developed his own style, which is unique and highly praised everywhere by accompanying musicians as well as listeners.

Debasish believes that tabla is not just a percussion instrument but it is a musical instrument, which has melody as well as rhythm. Debasish has performed with great artists like legendary Pandit Birju Maharaj, Pandit V.G.Jog, Ustad Bahadur Khan, Pandit Rajan Mishra and Shajan Mishra, Ustad Rashid Khan, Pandit Budhaditya Mukherjee, Smt. Saswati Sen, Ustad Aashish Khan, Daneal Hope, Pandit Shyamal Chatterjee, Pandit Om Prakash Maharaj, Smt. Haimanti Shukla to mention a few. Debasish regularly performs with Amina Khayyam, having done ***Laal Shaari*** and ***One***, which toured in Paris and Various venues in UK in 2010.

James Barralet was winner of the 2007 Landor Records competition and his debut recording of virtuosic solo cello pieces of the twentieth century was released in 2009 to excellent critical acclaim in the Strad, the Gramophone and the Classical Music magazines, the first in his ongoing partnership with the Landor label.

During his studies, first with Hannah Roberts at the Royal Northern College of Music and then with Thomas Demenga at Basel Hochschule für Musik, James received innumerable prestigious awards including the Royal Philharmonic Society Julius Isserlis Scholarship, the Muriel Taylor Cello Scholarship and the Hattori Scholarship, and graduated from Basel in 2006 with the renowned 'Soloists Diploma'. He has enjoyed associations with the Park Lane Group and 'Making Music', and has also received awards from the MBF, the Myra Hess Trust, Countess of Munster, Martin/Philharmonia, the English Speaking Union, Swiss Government Scholarship, Tillett Trust, Bromsgrove Competition, Sir John Barbirolli Competition, Denne Trust, and the Haverhill Competition.

Lucy Rahman is a vocalist of international repute. She is a British singer of Bangladeshi origin. She was trained in semi-classical Indian music in Bangladesh and was awarded "Sursaki" from her music college as the most promising vocalist of her generation. She now lives in Britain and works with various music projects. She is one of the lead singers of Grand Union Orchestra, a very well-known jazz music group in Britain. Lucy was born in a family of famous musicians, artists and poets and from her very early age she trained in Indian classical and semi-classical music from her renowned father, Sheikh Lutfur Rahman. For his contribution to the music, her father was awarded the highest national accolade award from Bangladesh government. In his lifetime, he also received award from India and Russia. Lucy has performed in countless stage, television and radio shows both in Bangladesh and in the U.K. She is a "grade A" artist of Bangladesh television. In Britain, she has performed with Grand Union Orchestra at various famous venues throughout the country including, Saddlers Wells Theatre, Queen Elizabeth Hall Barbican Centre. She has also performed as a semi-classical singer on her own at various venues in Britain and internationally at a number of well known venues notably in New York, Berlin, Brussels and Paris.

Tarun Jasani is a Sarod player belonging to the Shahjahanpur Gharana. He was trained by Pandit Buddhadev Dasgupta in India and makes a living from performing and teaching the Sarod. Tarun has performed in various prestigious events and festivals in the UK and abroad, including the largest Indian Classical music festival outside of India, the Darbar festival. Aside from his Classical recitals, he has also performed in various cross-cultural collaborations including a tour of Spain with the legendary Flamenco dancer Manuela Carrasco, performances with Kora players from Mali, Latin Jazz musicians from Cuba and Sufi musicians from Iran. His recitals have been broadcasted on Sky TV, Zee TV and numerous radio stations.
