AAKASH ODEDRA COMPANY

Chair of the Board Recruitment Pack

2026

Photo Credit: Angela Grabowska

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"Dance is a language without words. We spread this language with love, to improve everybody's quality of life and bring greater harmony between individuals & within communities." – **Aakash Odedra, Artistic Director**

About Us

Legal

Legal Status
The trade name for Aakash Odedra Company is Leicester Dance Theatre which is a company limited by guarantee governed by a Memorandum and Articles of Association. We are planning to apply for charitable status.

Address:
Aakash Odedra Company, First Floor, 32 Belgrave Road, Leicester LE4 5AS
Company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales no. 09486100

Staff
AOC's programmes and operations are managed by a small, busy team of full and part-time staff, who work primarily from our office at the Leicester Dance Theatre studios, Leicester.

https://aakashodedra.com/about-us/team/

About Us

Aakash Odedra Company (AOC) was founded in Leicester in 2011 by Anand Bhatt and Aakash Odedra. Named after our Artistic Director Aakash Odedra, a choreographer and one of the most talented British South Asian dancers. Born in Birmingham, Aakash trained in Bharatanatyam and kathak, then moved to India as a student of the renowned Bollywood choreographer Shiamak Davar. Aakash is a globally recognised and award-winning artist, he has performed over 300 full length performances in 40 countries.

From our home studios in Leicester, we use the voice of British-Asian experience to tell new stories about modern life. We create boundary pushing and award-winning dance works that we tour worldwide, proudly demonstrating evolving British and Asian cultures. We are committed to removing barriers to ensure dance opportunities are available more widely and we work to make our studios a beacon of hope in our community. We invite everyone through our doors to experience the joy and freedom of dance. We bring world-class talents to the Midlands to offer training programmes and masterclasses to the next generation of professional dancers. Through our artistic and civic leadership, and with a spirit of generosity and hope, we advocate for and influence attitudes to our people and our community

In 2018 we became part of Arts Council England's National Portfolio. As a not-for-profit organisation we are governed by a voluntary board of trustees and any surplus funds from our work are invested directly back into our mission of creating a happier and healthier society through dance and the arts.

About Us

Our Home

Operating from our studio and office base in Belgrave Road, Leicester, one of the 15% most deprived wards in England, we believe in working globally in order to impact locally and bring the best dance experiences to Leicester and the Midlands. We are committed to removing barriers to ensure dance education opportunities are available more widely. We have two dance studios alongside our offices; we are a hub for South Asian dance artists and local participants.

Our Art

Aakash Odedra is a globally recognised and award-winning dancer and choreographer.

We use the voice of British-Asian experience to tell new stories about modern life. We create boundary pushing and award-winning dance works, partnering with organisations such as the Royal Ballet and Sadler's Wells. We have commissioned and collaborated with world-class artists including choreographers Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui (Belgium), Damien Jalet (France), Akram Khan (UK), Aditi Mangaldas (India), Russell Maliphant (UK), and lighting designers Michael Hulls (UK), Fabiana Piccioli (Italy) and media art institution Ars Electronica Futurelab (Australia). Our work tours internationally, with our live audiences exceeding 250, 000 and over 1 million views online.

About Us

Our Three Pillars

1. Artistic productions

We create and tour the best dance works to all corners of the earth.

https://aakashodedra.com/productions/

Photo Credit: Angela Grabowska

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2. Participation and community engagement

We engage the widest range of society we can with exciting participatory and educational activities.

https://aakashodedra.com/education-participation/

3. Training the next generation of cultural practitioners

We champion and elevate the next generation of dance practitioners, through our innovative training programmes

https://aakashodedra.com/training/

Photo Credit: Angela Grabowska

About Us

Awards and Recogition

Songs of the Bulbul

The Guardian

★★★★★

“Songs of the Bulbul has the confidence of a performer who has found his place. It is a song of beauty and light and life.”

The Scotsman

★★★★★

“A work of exquisite beauty and sadness, Aakash Odedra’s brand new solo, Songs of the Bulbul, is the kind of theatrical moment that stays with you forever.”

The List

★★★★★

“Odedra has said that the story speaks to the life of an artist, and that with each performance he gives part of his soul to the audience. It’s a rare gift to watch him.”

Mehek

Eastern Eye

★★★★★

"Aakash demonstrated why he is one of the finest British Asian dancers of all time"

The Times

★★★★

"Both are whirlwinds, spinning across the stage like tops ... intoxicating ... exhilarating ... immediately captivating."

Samsara

The Scotsman

★★★★★

"Billed as a contemporary dance duet, Samsara is so much more than that... the stage is also alive with music, an art installation and lighting design so beautiful, it is almost a show in itself"

The Guardian

★★★★

“In this heady world of symbolism, under the weight of history and identity, Odedra and Hu are electric.”

Little Murmur

Fringe Review

“The marriage of incredible dance with stunning visual effects will blow everyone away, regardless of age.”

About Us

Awards and Recognition

NATIONAL DANCE AWARDS- CRITICS CIRCLE
Outstanding Male Classical Performance
winner

NATIONAL DANCE AWARDS- CRITICS CIRCLE
BEST MALE DANCER
winner

BESSIE AWARD
Best Male Dancer (New York)
Winner

BEST SHOW
Edinburgh International Festival

BEST INTERPRETATION IN DANCE
(Serbia)
Winner

AUDIENCE AWARD FOR DANCE
(Croatia)
Winner

DORA AWARD
Best Male Performer (Canada)
Winner

EASTERN EYE ART, CULTURE AND THEATRE AWARDS (ACTA)
For Dance
Winner

#2 SHOW OF THE YEAR
(Songs of the Bulbul)
The Guardian

BEST NEWCOMER IN DANCE
Danza e Danza (Italy)
Winner

UK THEATRE AWARD
Achievement in Dance (Mehek)
Winner

NATIONAL DANCE
Critics Circle Award (UK)
Three time nominee

TOP FIVE SHOWS OF THE YEAR
(Mehek)
The Stage

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AWARD
Winner

Board Chair Recruitment Pack

Chair and Board Leadership
We are open to conversations with individuals who align with the following responsibilities, experience and values, and who feel they can make a meaningful contribution to Aakash Odedra Company at this pivotal moment.

We welcome interest in a sole Chair position as well as from those who may prefer to contribute as a Co-Chair or Vice-Chair, and we are happy to explore flexible models where responsibilities are shared to ensure sustainable leadership.

This means we are not binding ourselves to a fixed Chair/Vice-Chair structure from the outset and can shape the role around the right candidate or combination of candidates.

"During my childhood, imagination was my only means to get away from home. I then decided to go to India on my own at the age of 15 and life became my university. I brought part of this world home, became a professional dancer and created my own company. Over the years we've built a hub where dreams come to life.

We welcome through our doors and nurture anyone who experienced any kind of barriers and help them see anything is possible."

Aakash Odedra, AOC Artistic Director

Invitation to Apply

Role of the Chair

- Guide the Board in setting and reviewing AOC's strategic direction, ensuring alignment with its artistic vision, community mission, and international touring ambitions.
- Support the Artistic Director and Executive Team in long-term planning, including line management, financial sustainability, and sector positioning.
- Ensure strong governance and that the Board functions effectively, with meetings led inclusively and trustees carrying out their duties.
- Support the organisation in achieving charitable status in the next two years.
- Lead board meetings, annual reviews and executive appraisals, and ensure trustees and sub-committees fulfil their responsibilities effectively.
- Act as a high-profile advocate for AOC within the UK arts ecology and internationally, championing our work and securing greater visibility and opportunities.
- Strengthen AOC's relationships with stakeholders, funders, media, venues, festivals and partners across cultural, social impact and education sectors.
- Raise the profile of British-South Asian dance and cross-cultural artistic practice.
- Act as a sounding board to the Artistic Director and Executive Director, offering constructive challenge, mentoring and strategic insight.
- Provide guidance during major organisational developments, fundraising campaigns and strategic partnerships.
- Champion AOC's commitment to social justice, accessibility and community engagement, ensuring representation and diversity remain central to decision-making.

Invitation to Apply

Person Specs

ESSENTIAL

- Prominence in the arts or creative industries, such as senior leadership. experience in dance, theatre, film, festivals, cultural institutions, major NGOs or related fields.
- A strong track record of advocacy, influence and relationship-building at senior levels across the arts ecosystem.
- Experience of chairing boards, committees or executive groups, or demonstrable leadership that is clearly transferable to the role.
- Deep commitment to diversity, community engagement and widening access, which are core principles embedded in AOC's work and identity.
- Understanding of governance, charity responsibilities and organisational oversight, including finance, risk management and compliance.

DESIRABLE

- Experience of international touring contexts, cross-cultural projects or global arts networks, reflecting AOC's international footprint.
- Ability to assist with major donor engagement, sector partnerships and philanthropic or sponsorship relationships.
- Familiarity with British-Asian arts, South Asian classical dance or intercultural performance practice.

PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Inspirational leadership with the integrity to represent AOC's values.
- Confidence, diplomacy and strong interpersonal skills.
- Strategic thinker, able to see artistic, organisational and community impact holistically.
- Passion for artistic innovation and culturally diverse storytelling.
- Commitment to nurturing the next generation of artists and cultural leaders.

Invitation to Apply
Board Commitment

Remuneration: These are voluntary roles and no financial remuneration is offered to any board member.

Time Commitment:

- Quarterly Board meetings, plus sub-committees as required (hosted in Leicester / hybrid via Zoom).
- Annual Away day.
- Attendance at major performances, premieres and events where feasible.
- Regular meetings with the Artistic Director and Executive Director.
- Ambassadorial activity according to opportunity and personal networks.

Length of Service: 3-year term with a review with the Chair after six months and potential to be reappointed for an additional 3-year term. One third of Directors must retire at the Annual General Meeting (based on the longest in office) and can be re-appointed at the same meeting.

Responsible to: AOC board.

Expenses: AOC will reimburse reasonable UK travel costs and expenses incurred during the course of business.

The Board is required to adhere to the Charity Commission Charity Governance Code www.governancecode.org.
While it is preferable for the Board to meet in person this is not always possible, in which case we welcome Board members to attend by Zoom.

Invitation to Apply
Current Board Members

The current board of Trustees is a small, committed group of individuals and we are actively recruiting for dynamic, influential individuals with a passion for dance, to help us to champion our vision and realise our ambitions

The Board

- Sabra Khan – Co Chair
- Bhuvan Sharma – Co Chair
- Vishesh Mehta - Treasurer
- Graham Callister
- Ambika Kucheria
- Rutu Rajani
- Pepita Hana
- Nisha Popat

Biographies for board members can be found on the AOC website.
https://aakashodedra.com/about-us/board/

Invitation to Apply

We believe that diversity in organisations leads to better decision making, and we want our board to be representative of the communities we serve.

Aakash Odedra Company strives to be an inclusive organisation and welcomes Board members from a wide variety of backgrounds in order to attract a broad range of opinions and experience.

To strengthen our skill set, we are looking for new Board members with knowledge and expertise in the following areas; you will not be expected to take on sole responsibility for these areas as the board is collectively responsible for its actions and decisions.

We hope board members will contribute to a range of matters drawing on their individual interests and skills.

- Communications specialist with experience of marketing
- Legal professional
- Experience of education & participation with a knowledge of safeguarding
- Knowledge of Production and Touring for an Arts organisation

We particularly welcome applicants living and/or working in the Midlands and applications from people who define as D/deaf, disabled and/or neurodivergent.

We hope you will consider joining us.

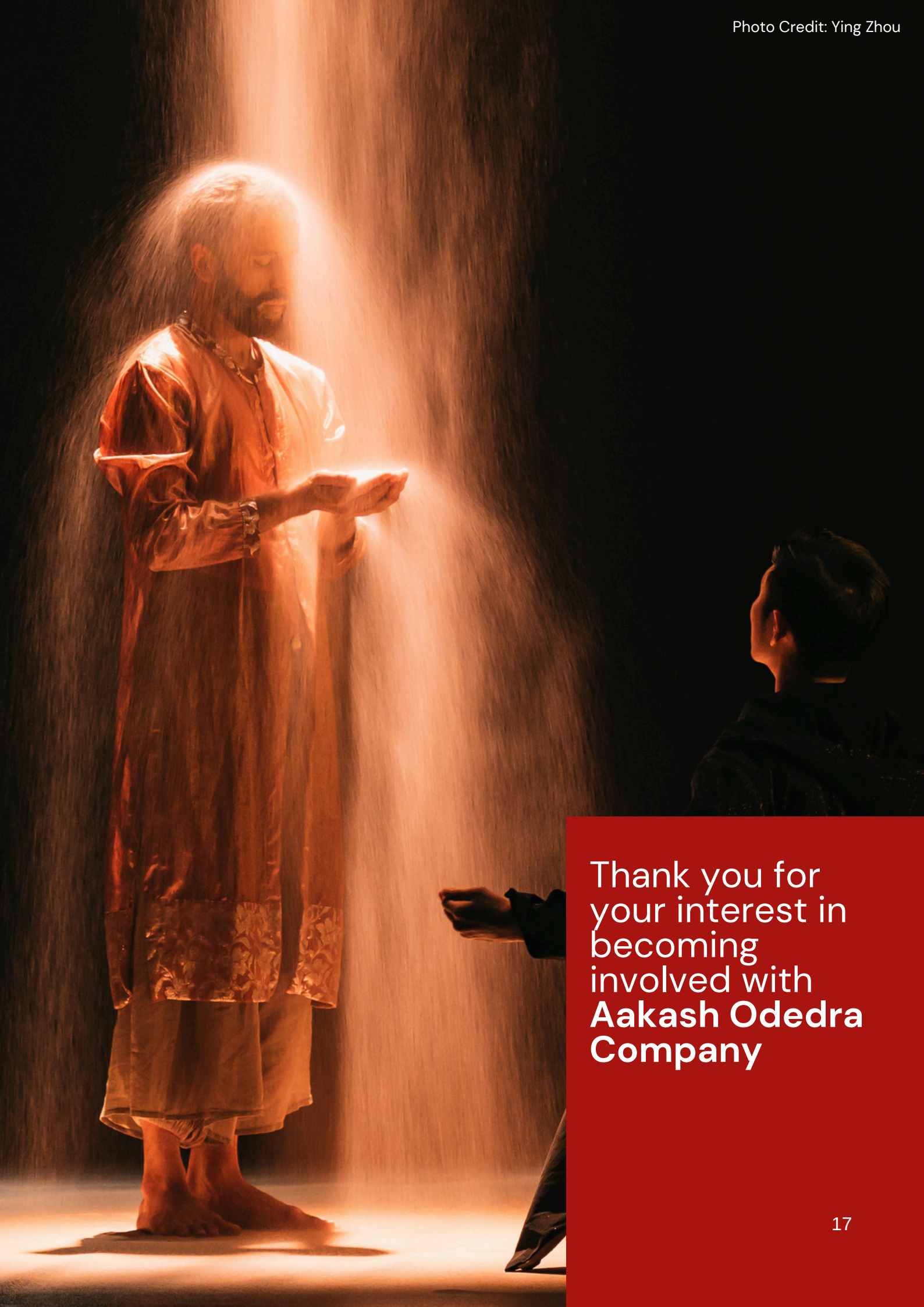

Photo Credit: Ying Zhou

Thank you for your interest in becoming involved with **Aakash Odedra Company**