

Sampradaya Dance Creations presents

Alchemy

A triple bill of international contemporary work that redefines Indian dance

3 Shows Only - November 22-24, 2012!

– a **world premiere** from **Natasha Bakht** and choreographies by

Akram Khan, Russell Maliphant, Aakash Odedra, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui and Santosh Nair –

Toronto, November 2, 2012 - **Sampradaya Dance Creations**, renowned for its innovative productions under award-winning artistic director **Lata Pada**, proudly presents *Alchemy*, an imaginative triple bill of international contemporary work that promises to redefine Indian dance. *Alchemy* runs **November 22-24** at 8pm nightly at the **Enwave Theatre**, as part of Harbourfront Centre's Next Steps national dance series.

Alchemy features dance works by Canada's **Natasha Bakht** (with the **world premiere** of *Bridges*); the UK's **Akram Khan, Russell Maliphant** and **Aakash Odedra**; Belgium's **Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui** and India's **Santosh Nair**.

Showcasing the diversity of Indian dance through groundbreaking *bharatanatyam*, *kathak* and *chau*-based choreographies, *Alchemy* is performed by Sampradaya and guest artists including Odedra and dancers from Sadhya, one of the leading contemporary dance companies of India.

Alchemy reflects a paradigm shift highlighting creative transformation and an adventurous exploration of the 'here and now' in contemporary Indian dance. In programming this eclectic evening, Pada notes, "Indian classical dance forms are often seen as fixed and archaic, discounting their ability to be fluid and modern expressions of contemporary thought and design. Indian dance, like all world traditions, constantly expresses itself in new ways. That newness is **not** fusion; it is a way each form speaks to its own journey of re-discovery."

The evening features:

***Bridges* - World premiere choreographed by acclaimed Canadian choreographer Natasha Bakht**

Commissioned by Sampradaya Dance Creations, and dedicated to her father, Natasha Bakht says of *Bridges*: "Steel-free bridges defy corrosion. Choreography is architecture, a structure supporting movement and shaping space. Dance is a vehicle – we enter, surrender and experience the journey. *Bridges* balances an underlying continuity with a vast diversity of movement, unfolding in waves of action, stillness and integration." This *bharatanatyam*-based piece features five female dancers.

***Stealth* - Toronto premiere choreographed by celebrated martial dance form artist Santosh Nair of Sadhya (India)**

The stage ignites with a dynamic and provocative physicality in this new spin on Indian dance. Stillness and rapid-fire rhythms colour this kinetic work for five dancers (including Nair), charging it with oppositional energies - female and male, soft and powerful, grounded and aerial. Created in the distinctive movement vocabulary of the martial art form of *mayurbhanj chau* from Eastern India, this edgy contemporary work speaks of harmony and dissonance. *Stealth* is a remount of Sampradaya's 2010 Canada Dance Festival commission, created by Santosh Nair for two female, three male dancers. www.sadhya.com

***Rising* – Toronto premiere - 4 international choreographers create works for Aakash Odedra, a rising star of British South Asian dance**

Showcasing four pieces created by renowned international choreographers **Akram Khan, Russell Maliphant, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui** (all associate artists at London's Sadler's Wells) as well as a piece of Odedra's own creation, *Rising* explores different processes and aesthetics to create new flavours of contemporary dance. Each of these individual works calls on Odedra's background in the classical Indian dance disciplines of *kathak* and *bharatanatyam*

www.aakashodedra.com

"It's the dance equivalent of a red-carpet event to get [Akram Khan](#), Russell Maliphant and Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui as choreographers on the same programme. And it says much for talent of the south Asian dancer Aakash Odedra that all three have created solos for his new show." – *The Guardian*, U.K.

Sampradaya Dance Creations is a Mississauga-based professional dance company specializing in the creation and production of classical and contemporary dance works rooted in the tradition of *bharatanatyam*, a dance form from South India. Founded in 1990 by renowned dancer and choreographer Lata Pada, the company continues to inspire audiences with annual productions produced locally and internationally, while nurturing the talent of emerging dancers. Originally from India, Lata has made Canada her home for the past 48 years. She is a recipient of the Order of Canada, the first South Asian artist to receive this prestigious honour, and the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman, bestowed by the President of India, and the highest civilian honour for non-resident Indians. Lata received the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal in 2012. She has had an extensive career as a *bharatanatyam* soloist and holds a Master's degree in dance from York University. Recently, Lata was awarded the Chalmers Foundation Senior Fellowship to research the Ramayana performance traditions in South East Asia. "A dance company of rare vitality" – *The New York Times*
www.sampradaya.ca

Natasha Bakht trained in *bharatanatyam* under Menaka Thakkar for 20 years, touring internationally with her company. As a member of the *Shobana Jeyasingh Dance Company* in London, England, Natasha performed in celebrated venues around the world. Her *Obiter Dictum* and *Dafeena* were nominated for Toronto's Dora Awards for Outstanding Choreography. In 2008, she received the K.M. Hunter Award, presented to artists in Ontario who have made a significant mark in their field. She is a founding member of The Ottawa Dance Directive, a professional contemporary dance centre. Natasha has been described as "a brilliant diamond" (*Dance Current*), a "powerhouse" (*Hindustan Times*)... "all honed to the bone elegance and precision" (*Vancouver Sun*). She is also a law professor at the University of Ottawa.

Santosh Nair is a celebrated dancer and choreographer trained in traditional *mayurbhanj chhau* and contemporary dance. He is the Artistic Director of Sadhya, a leading contemporary dance company based in Delhi, India. Under his leadership and vision, Sadhya develops performances, workshops and collaborative projects that bridge the gap between traditional and modern art forms. He and his company dancers have performed throughout India, the U.S. and Europe to much acclaim. In 2010, he was commissioned to create *Stealth*, which premiered at Ottawa's Canada Dance Festival. In 2011, his work *The Game of Dice* was featured in the Kalanidhi Fine Arts Festival in Toronto. Most recently, in 2012, he was appointed by Sampad (UK) as Artistic Director for the *Moving Earth Project* which involved over 240 dance artists for the 2012 Cultural Olympiad, UK. Nair continues to be a sought-after performer and master instructor across India and abroad.

Training initially in *kathak*, **Aakash Odedra** later studied other dance styles including *bharatanatyam*, Indo-Jazz and Contemporary. He trained with acclaimed dancers such as Chitrleka Bolar and Nilima Devi in the UK and Asha Joglekar and Chhaya Kanvateh in India. Aakash was commissioned by Curve (Leicester) to choreograph a piece for the opening of Curve's new theatre in November 2008. This piece, called *Flight*, was the only one invited to perform for HM The Queen on her visit to the theatre in December 2008. In November 2009, Aakash was invited by Akram Khan to perform the solo *Maati Re*, choreographed by Kumudini Lakhia, at Sadler's Wells, commissioned by Akram Khan Charitable Trust and Sadler's Wells. Aakash joined Akram Khan Company for 5 weeks on the R&D phase of Akram's project Vertical Road. Aakash spent 2011 working with acclaimed choreographers Akram Khan, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui and Russell Maliphant. They all created solos on Aakash, giving him an opportunity to observe the choreographic processes of three very distinct choreographers. *Rising* was the result, and is on tour through 2012.

ABOUT NEXTSTEPS - Harbourfront Centre is passionate about dance. NextSteps, Harbourfront Centre's national dance series, brings the very best in Canadian dance to Toronto audiences, showcasing the depth, energy and diversity of established and emerging choreographers and companies. The 2012/13 season, running September to May, offers an incredible spectrum of dance. Harbourfront Centre supports Canada's I Love Dance manifesto.

ABOUT HARBOURFRONT CENTRE - Harbourfront Centre is a Canadian charity operating the 10 prime acres of Toronto's central waterfront as a free and open public site. We celebrate the multiplicities of cultures that comprise Canada and enliven the city through the creative imaginations of artists from across the country and around the globe.

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Choreographed by **Natasha Bakht, Akram Khan, Russell Maliphant,**
Aakash Odedra, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui and Santosh Nair.

November 22 - 24, 2012 at 8pm

part of Harbourfront Centre's NextSteps series at **Enwave Theatre**, 231 Queens Quay W., Toronto ON
Tickets: \$25-\$35 - **TICKETS ON SALE NOW at Harbourfront Centre Box Office: 416.973.4000** OR online at

<http://www.harbourfrontcentre.com/nextsteps/performances/>