

Brighton
Festival

NEW DAWN

3-26
May
2025

Guest Director
Anoushka Shankar

Mythili Prakash
Jwala (Rising Flame)

Theatre Royal Brighton | Mon 5 & Tue 6 May, 7.30pm

Supported by



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In Memory: Joan Griffiths, Andrew Polmear

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BRIGHTON FESTIVAL 2025

A very warm welcome to Brighton Festival 2025, guest directed by the wonderful Anoushka Shankar.

The journey this Festival takes you on is a testament to Anoushka's vision, ambition, and artistic inspirations, and it is a privilege to be sharing this programme of work with you all. I welcome the warmth and generosity of her invitation to us all towards a New Dawn.

A festival of this ambition and scale would not be possible without the longstanding support from Brighton & Hove City Council and Arts Council England, and we are also extremely grateful to our Principal Supporter The Pebble Trust, Major Supporter the Bagri Foundation, Major Sponsor Mayo Wynne Baxter and to our partners at the University of Sussex.

There are so many dedicated people who make Brighton Festival happen: our patrons, members, supporters, partner companies and venues, audiences, staff, volunteers, and - most importantly - the artists, emerging and stellar, who bring us the rapture, surprise, provocation and joy that a great Festival line-up should.

I look forward to seeing you across the city through May, and wish everyone a wonderful Festival from the parades to the parties, from the talks to the walks, from symphonies to table tennis, and from dusk to new dawns.



**Lucy Davies, Chief Executive
Brighton Dome & Brighton Festival**



DANCE

Brighton
Festival

Mythili Prakash

Jwala (Rising Flame)

A spellbinding solo
telling a personal story
through the symbol
of the flame.

*'An artist who deeply inhabits
and embodies the ancient
worlds of bharatnatyam, and
yet equally has the sensibility
and curiosity of our
present world'*

Akram Khan on Mythili Prakash

Mon 5 & Tue 6 May, 7.30pm

HIGHLY
VISUAL

From £15

Theatre Royal Brighton

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Supported by



Choreographer's note

First created in 2015 after the passing of my father and the birth of my daughter, Jwala explores fire as a symbol of loss, hope, life and death. As destructive as it is vulnerable and illuminating, the flame embodies the contradictions and complexity of humanity. Today it has become more literal, fire has destroyed our homes and our lives in unimaginable ways; and yet, in every moment of hope or prayer, we light a candle.

We rise and rest in movement around the most undeniable thing in the world - the Sun; And yet, what prompts every moment forward in life, is the flame burning unseen within us.

For the last few years, I have immersed myself in the creation of work that reflects on and challenges contradictions in social values- past and present- through mythology and cultural practices, particularly those centering around femininity. Finding the language to do this through the aesthetics of Bharatanatyam (classical Indian Dance) which are rooted in beauty, harmony, and upliftment, has required a re-imagining and re-framing of form and performance.

But alongside the instinct to embody the rage, violence, marginalization and hypocrisy of our extremely divisive world, sits the desire to reconnect with the things that unite humanity. How easy it is becoming to forget that!

Creating Jwala was one of the first times in my artistic journey that I wasn't negotiating a cultural narrative and how to make it accessible to international audiences; It was an opportunity to dance my personal story and know that love, loss, release, and hope needed no translation.

This new iteration is reimagined for the current moment and our ever present world, leading to interpretations that reimagine the contradictions inherent in our humanity.

Credits

Concept and Choreography: Mythili Prakash

Music Composition: Aditya Prakash

Additional Compositional Contribution: Debur Srivathsa (Surya), Sheejith Krishna (Surya Jathi), Muzzafar Ali (Ji Chahe), Sayee Rakshith, Sumesh Narayanan, B.C. Manjunath

Lyrics: Debur Srivathsa (Surya), Aditya Prakash/Vaidya Misra (Song to Dad), Subramanya Bharati (Chinanchiri Kiliye) Hazrat Zaheen Shah Thaji (Ji Chahe)

Performance

Mythili Prakash - Dance

Susha Rangarajan- Vocal

Ashwath Narayanan - Vocal

Sumesh Narayanan - Mridangam, Vocal

Sayee Rakshith - Violin, Vocal

Guy Hoare - Lighting Design

Mentorship Malavika Sarukkai, Akram Khan

Special thanks to Rehearsal directors: Jyotsna Jagannathan, Soumik Datta

Additional voices on recording: Mahesh Swamy, Rumi Prakash-Gollapudi



Welcome to a New Dawn

What an honour it is to find myself at the helm of an institution that seeks, year on year, to celebrate boldness, diversity, and connection. Brighton has long held a special place in my heart—it's a city where difference holds value, where art forms collide and cross-pollinate freely, where the promise of transformation is made reality. To be curating the programme feels like an extraordinary opportunity to take part in the uplifting creative energy of this city.

For 2025, we look towards a New Dawn. Together with the Brighton Festival team, I've shaped a programme that envisions a hopeful future - an emergence from the dark of night into the glow of early morning.

For years now there have been so many reasons to despair, to worry, to lose hope. But we have the power and insight within us to craft an alternate future, and that only comes about through what we create in the present. We'll not only celebrate art's power to challenge and uplift, but also to explore what lies ahead.

We need this, I think—to come together, to lift each other up into the light, to be beacons for one another as we take stock, take aim, and take action. This isn't just a festival for audiences to experience passively—it's for everyone to participate in, to connect with, to feel part of.

By bringing together artists and modalities from all over the world, with their rich and varied heritages, we reimagine what's possible—through music, through dance, through storytelling.

I'm delighted that so many artists answered the call and will be bringing their unique perspectives and beauty to the Festival.

I can't wait for us all to share in this journey.



Anoushka Shankar

Brighton Festival 2025 Guest Director

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