



# DASTAK: I WISH YOU ME

## ANANYA DANCE THEATRE

FEBRUARY 11, 2022

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## ANANYA DANCE THEATRE

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FEBRUARY 11, 2022

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strictly prohibited.



**DASTAK: I WISH YOU ME**  
ANANYA DANCE THEATRE

**Performers**

Noelle Awadallah  
Lizzette Chapa  
Ananya Chatterjea  
Alexis Araminta Reneé  
Alexandra Eady  
Kealoha Ferreira  
Spirit McIntyre  
Parisha Rajbhandari  
Laichee Yang

Artistic Director, Concept, Choreography . . . . . Ananya Chatterjea  
Stage Director . . . . . Marcus Young  
Dramaturg . . . . . Sharon Bridgforth  
Composer/Sound Designer/Instrumentalist/Vocalist . . . . . Spirit McIntyre  
Costume Design . . . . . Annie Cady  
Lighting Design . . . . . Kevin A. Jones  
Scenic & Prop Design and Construction . . . . . Chelsea Warren  
Media Design . . . . . Darren Johnson, Northern Dawn Media  
Artistic Associate . . . . . Kealoha Ferreira  
Rehearsal Assistant . . . . . Alexandra Eady  
Production Manager . . . . . Emma Marlar

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DASTAK: I Wish You Me

UtahPresents is based in Salt Lake City, on land which is named for the Ute Tribe and is the traditional and ancestral homeland of the Shoshone, Paiute, Goshute, and Ute Tribes. We recognize and respect the enduring relationship that exists between many Indigenous peoples and their traditional homelands.

We also must acknowledge that the prosperity of what we call the United States has depended on the labor of enslaved peoples. Rather than simply speak these words, we encourage all of us to consider donating to organizations like the ACLU, Black Lives Matter, Campaign Zero, and the NAACP.



**Dastak** is a meditation on borders, loss, belonging, home, and liberation. Structured through four elemental journeys, *Earth, Water, Fire, and Air*, the work traces the knockings (*dastak*, in Farsi) of global injustices on our hearts, and echoes the subtitle created by writer Sharon Bridgforth – *I Wish You Me* – indicating the cross-generational love that has carried communities through difficult migrations.

**Dastak** invites viewers to imagine what freedom is possible as it expands the realms of intention and trans-dimensional connection through spells that invoke rest, forgiveness, love, and freedom.



### **Ananya Dance Theatre**

Ananya Dance Theatre is a company of cultural activists and BIPOC women, womxn, and femme artists who believe in the transformative power of dance and create original, contemporary dance theatre at the intersection of artistic excellence and social justice.

Dancing stories, where the lives and dreams of women and femmes in a global context occupy the center, shifts the landscape of mainstream culture, builds understanding about arts and social justice, and empowers artistic voices.

The company has created one original work with commissioned score annually since 2005. The dancers have performed in nine states and the District of Columbia, and internationally in Harare, Zimbabwe; Port of Spain, Trinidad; Bethlehem, Palestinian Territories; Delhi and Pragiyoti, India; Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The ensemble's work unfolds through Yorchha™, a unique movement aesthetic that draws on traditional Odissi, the martial art Chhau, and Vinyasa Yoga, to create a feminine energy and celebrate a feminist aesthetic. Since June 2018, its convening, teaching, and rehearsal home has been the Shawngram Institute for Performance & Social Justice located on University Avenue in St. Paul.



Two years in the making, **Dastak** is the accumulation of many stories, many struggles for justices, and many losses. In the end, Sharon Bridgforth's iconic line – *I wish you me* – articulated in *Air* and sung over and over by our beloved Spirit McIntyre, came to be the lifeline of the work, reminding us to imbue our dancing with the love and light of generations, to see each other, and hold each other and those around us with care.

It is in the spirit of that prayer that I offer **Dastak**, and especially my solo in *Fire*. During our first residency at the Maggie Allesee National Center for Choreography in Tallahassee, we had a wonderful opportunity to be in conversation with advocates from the Southern Poverty Law Center who reminded me of the importance of considering solitary confinement, which is the terrible experience of people deemed to be “without papers.” Ultimately, my solo is dedicated to so many women and femmes from marginalized communities, especially those who have suffered so much torture in state custody. Lal salaam in particular to Soni Sori, Safoora Zargar, Gulfisha Fatima, Nodeep Kaur, and many unnamed others: I dedicate my fire to you.

- Ananya Chatterjea  
Artistic Director and Choreographer

Composing the soundscape of **Dastak** has been a physical, emotional, spiritual, energetic, and Ancestral undertaking. This work is a collection of many layers, histories, and influences: Oya, an Orisha or deity whose element is air, she governs the marketplace (abundance) and the cemetery (life/death) and symbol-izes the 'winds of change'; Oshun, an Orisha or deity whose element is freshwater, she reminds of the ne-cessity of beauty, balance, sweetness, and forgiveness; Bols, derived from the Hindi word bolna 'to speak,' a mnemonic syllable used in Indian music to define the tala or rhythmic pattern and voiced by various dancers; Whispers and prayers, representing the omnipresent nature of Ancestors, guides, and our inner voice; and, finally, the natural sound elements of New Orleans, Louisiana, a place where nature speaks so boldly.

I have worked with dancers for the past 20 years and the majority of that work has been live composition through performance. **Dastak** is my first opportunity to create a score that combines live and pre-recorded composition as well as recorded found sounds.

The brilliant choreography and storytelling of **Dastak** compelled me to build a sonically tactile world, one that supports and amplifies the ritual the dancers are engaging in while allowing the audience to join us as witnesses. My job was a clear one: "Honor the excellence and diligence of Ananya Chatterjea and her company with your own." The relationship between a composer/musician and dancers is a sacred one; it requires curiosity, bravery, honesty, planning, communication, humbleness and intuition. I percussed, I cried, I sang, I embodied, I prayed, I released, and more. My Ancestors, Orisha and I thank Ananya Dance Theatre for the deep trust that was required to foster this new/Ancient connection.

- Spirit McIntyre

Composer, Sound Designer, Instrumentalist, and Vocalist



**Ananya Chatterjea/ অনন্যা চট্টোপাধ্যায়** 's work as choreographer, dancer, and thinker brings together Contemporary Dance, social justice choreography, and a commitment to healing justice. She is the creator of Yorchhā, ADT's signature movement vocabulary, and is the primary architect of Shawngrām, the company's justice and community-oriented choreographic methodology. She is a 2011 Guggenheim Choreography Fellow, a 2012 and 2021 McKnight Choreography Fellow, a 2016 Joyce Award recipient, a 2018 UBW Choreographic Center Fellow, a 2019 Dance/USA Artist Fellow, and recipient of the 2021 A. P. Andersen Award. Her work has toured to international venues such as the Bethlehem International Performing Arts Festival, Palestine (2018), Crossing Boundaries Festival, Ethiopia, (2015), Harare International Dance Festival, Zimbabwe (2013), New Waves Institute of Dance and Performance, Trinidad (2012), and Aavejak Avaaz Festival, India (2018), and to prestigious domestic venues such as Kelly Strayhorn Theater (Pittsburgh), John Michael Kohler Arts Center (Sheboygan), Dance Place (Washington), Maui Arts & Cultural Center (Maui), The Skirball Cultural Center (Los Angeles), Painted Bride Theater (Philadelphia), among others. In response to the Twin Cities Uprising (2020), she created the *Kutumkāri* (Relationship-making) Healing Movement series with a particular invitation to BIPOC women and femme healers. Ananya is Professor of Dance at the University of Minnesota where she teaches courses in Dance Studies and contemporary practice. Her second book, *Heat and Alterity in Contemporary Dance: South-South Choreographies*, re-framing understandings of Contemporary Dance from the perspective of dance-makers from global south locations, was published by Palgrave MacMillan in November 2020. Ananya is grateful to all the artists and collaborators she works with for their light and practice of excellence, and is thankful to her family for their support.

**Marcus Young 楊墨 (Stage Director)** is a behavioral and social practice artist making work for the stage, museums, and the public realm. He is a recipient of awards from the McKnight, Bush, and Jerome Foundations. He is founding artistic director for *Don't You Feel It Too?* – an ongoing participatory street dance practice of social healing and inner-life liberation. From 2006 to 2015, he was City Artist in St. Paul, where he helped redefine the role of the artist in government as daily collaborator. His project *Everyday Poems for City Sidewalk* transformed the city's sidewalk maintenance program into a publishing entity for poetry. Marcus is currently artist in residence with the Minnesota Department of Transportation and Lead Faculty and Program Director for HECUA's off-campus study Art for Social Change. *Dastak* is his ninth show with Ananya Dance Theatre.

**Sharon Bridgforth (Dramaturg)**, a Doris Duke Performing Artist, is a writer who creates ritual/jazz theatre. A 2020-2023 Playwrights' Center Core Member and New Dramatists alumnae, Sharon has received support from Creative Capital, MAP Fund and the National Performance Network. As dramaturg for the Urban Bush Women Choreographic Center Initiative's Choreographic Fellowship program, Sharon proudly served as a collaborator for Ananya Dance Theatre. Widely published, she is author of *love conjure/blues* and the Lambda Literary Award-winning *the bull-jean stories*. Her *dat Black Mermaid Man Lady/The Show*, which premiered at Pillsbury House Theatre, is streaming on the Twin Cities PBS Platform. More at: <http://sharonbridgforth.com>.

**Spirit McIntyre (spirit/they/them)** is a Cellist, Vocalist, Lyricist, Reiki Practitioner, Compassionate Facilitator, and Visual Artist who promotes empowerment and healing by any medium necessary. They believe in: the importance of breath, the power of deep listening, holding space for complex emotions, healing intergenerational trauma, honoring lovability, and growing compassionately through tight places to find authentic connection. Spirit incorporates these beliefs in their work which focuses on: Black folks, Trans-gender, Gender-Non-Conforming and Non-Binary identities, Health & Wellness, Self-Expression, Ancestral Worship, and Grief Practices. They use their voice and cello to seamlessly blend: Blues, Soul, Folk, Classical, Reggae and Middle Eastern sounds into an unforgettable musical landscape. Spirit created SpiritWerks, their multi-disciplinary healing arts practice in 2014, and is the Compassionate Community Architect for Trans\*Visible, a network that challenges Binarism and Cis-Sexism in social justice movements.



**Alexis Araminta Reneé (Dancer)**, affectionately referred to as Aloka, is a multiethnic Black and Brown identified visual artist, scholar, performer, choreographer and conjure woman bridging the divides between community healer, concert dance, theater and film. Alexis creates interdisciplinary work that centers ritual, healing and social justice as transformative liberation practices. She has studied, performed and presented work throughout the Caribbean, Europe and the United States and is the artistic director of Masala Soul Project, a multicultural dance and theater company dedicated to telling the untold stories of marginalized communities. In response to the 2020 Global Uprising, she co-founded Get Dis War Dance, a collaborative project and call to action that frames Black Diaspora dancing traditions as resistance strategies. Alexis is a 2014 American College Dance Association Choreography Award winner, a 2017 Ruby Artist Grant Recipient, a Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation Observership Fellow, a Street Dance Activism facilitator, and founding member of Chesapeake Conjure Society. This is Alexis' first season with ADT, and she is humbled to be a student of Yorhhā and deeply honored to hold these complex ancestral stories with love.

**Noelle Awadallah نوال (Dancer)** is a Palestinian-American improviser, performer, and dance maker. She graduated from Columbia College Chicago in 2018 with a BFA in dance. She joined Ananya Dance Theatre in 2019 and has been fueled by the company's unwavering dedication to social justice issues and story-telling. Her personal work circles the themes of transcendence of time, ancestor imaginings, listening, metaphor, falling into stereotypes, mysticism, and story-telling. Constantly curious, she is currently investigating future-ness through acknowledgement of the past. She is honored to share the stage with ADT and its collaborators.

**Lizzette Chapa (Dancer)** is a Mexican-American dancer and dance maker originally from The Rio Grande Valley, Texas. She graduated from the University of Texas at Austin with a BFA in Dance in 2017. She is deeply drawn to ADT's commitment to social justice issues, radical healing, and ancestral guidance. She is a movement instructor in the Twin Cities, utilizing the principles of Yorhhā and Pilates to deepen one's connection to self and mind body engagement. In 2020, she was a collaborator in residence led by Ananya Chatterjea at the Maggie Allesee National Center for Choreography. She is incredibly grateful for her mentors, teachers, students, ancestors, family and, most importantly, her parents and brother for their endless support and love.

**Alexandra Eady (Dancer)** entered into the space of Ananya Dance Theatre at age 16. ADT's commitment to social justice and intentional choreographic creations fuel her onstage performances. Alexandra teaches Yorchhā workshops and master classes in schools across the Twin Cities metro area as well as nationally and internationally while on tour. In 2020, she was a collaborator in residence led by Ananya Chatterjea at the Maggie Allesee National Center for Choreography, and is a 2021 McKnight Dancer Fellow. Alexandra is committed to performing works that are grounded in narrative and story that do not leave behind ancestral guidance. She works to bring her communities with her and performs in honor of those who have come before, the ones that are witnessing, and for future generations. She is incredibly thankful for her wonderful mentors, teachers, students, friends, family and, most significantly, her parents and sister who give her endless energy and light.

**Kealoha Ferreira (Artistic Associate, Dancer)** is a Native Hawaiian, Filipino, and Chinese dance artist from O'ahu, Hawaii. Interweaving the transnational feminist practice of Yorchhā and embodied practices of Aloha 'Āina, she creates work that explores relationality, reclamation and continuum through an intersectionally expansive lens while remaining rooted in cultural and kinesthetic specificity. She has been a performing and teaching artist with ADT since 2013, and Artistic Associate and Co-Leader of the Shawngram Institute for Performance & Social Justice since 2018. This season she restaged ADT repertoire at Rutgers University-New Brunswick, the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, and assisted Ananya Chatterjea in staging new work at the University of Minnesota and at the Maggie Allesee Choreographic Center. In June, Kealoha premiered a dance film in Red Eye Theater's New Works 4 Weeks Festival as a 2020 Works in Progress Artist. She is completing her third term with Hālau 'Ōhi'a, a land and water stewardship program for the Hawaii Universe, and is participating in the second national BIPOC Leadership Circle curated by Art Equity. Kū au i ka lōkahi me nā 'Ōiwi o kēia 'āina Dakota nei a me nā 'Ōiwi o ka honua a pau.

**Parisha Rajbhandari (Dancer - she/her)** is a Newari-Nepali dance artist. She explores movement through her Newa identity interconnected with multiple folk dance traditions of Nepal. She grew up immersed in social dances and continues to participate and learn through the Twin Cities' social dance community. Parisha received her BA in dance from Minnesota State University, Mankato in 2020, and is furthering her academic career through an MFA in Dance at Mankato. She joined ADT in 2019. Parisha continues to deepen her study in Yorchhā and is ever inspired by ADT leaders, collaborators, and the ensemble work.

**Laichee Yang (Dancer, Graphic Design)** is a Hmong-American, multi-disciplinary designer and artist who makes drawings, graphics, interactive installations, and photographs for digital and physical spaces. She is honored to have worked with organizations that include Ananya Dance Theatre, Indigenous Roots, Brownbody, and Fendika Cultural Center. Laichee is currently a master of architecture student at the University of Minnesota. Supported by the Wigington Architectural Scholarship, her research is focused on the intersections of equity, social justice, and professional excellence in the field of architecture. She holds endless gratitude for her partner, Ethan, and chosen village of mentors, healers, family, and members of ADT.

**Annie Cady (Costume Design)** holds an MFA degree in Theatre Design and Technology from the University of Minnesota, and a BA in Theatre Arts from Simpson College. Her professional design credits include productions for Children's Theatre Company, Normandale Community College, Commonweal Theatre, Ten Thousand Things, Jungle Theatre, Black Label Movement, Minnesota Jewish Theatre Company, AMP, and Threads Dance Company. <http://www.anniecady.com/>

**Darren Johnson (Media Design)** is a multi-media artist working primarily with audio, film, and poetry. Recent film collaborations with Ananya Chatterjea and Ananya Dance Theatre have been screened at festivals worldwide including the London International Screen Dance Festival, Sans Souci Festival of Dance Cinema, Film at Lincoln Center's Dance on Camera Festival, and The Harlem Film Festival. *Dastak: Fire* was awarded Best Social Justice Film at the Silk Road Film Festival of Cannes. His spoken word poetry has manifested into two recent audio releases, the audiobook, *Conundrums of Indignant Bliss*, based on the poetry collection of the same name, and a live jazz album *Poetic Explorations with the Whitewashed Conundrums*.

**Kevin A. Jones (Lighting Design)** has worked in the professional dance and theater community for 40 years. He was resident lighting designer and production manager for James Sewell Ballet for 20 years. His designs have illuminated internationally acclaimed ballets such as *Moving Works*, *Barrage*, *Appalachia Waltz*, *Your Move*, and *Guy Noir: The Ballet*. Kevin designed for Minnesota Dance Theatre, CAAM Dance Theatre, SOLO, The McKnight Dance Fellows, and many others. He lit Sharon Eyal / Gai Behar's *Killer Pig* for Gauthier Dance at the Colours International Dance Festival in Stuttgart, Germany, in 2017, and for Rambert2 in London and other venues in the UK in 2018-2019. Kevin is the Production Manager for The O'Shaughnessy at St. Catherine University, where Dr. Maya Angelou declared him "one of the best stage managers in America." He designed and implemented the lighting and sound systems for the TEK Box at the Cowles Center for Dance & the Performing Arts. He also designed and implemented the dance floors and audio/visual systems for ADT's Shawngram Institute for Performance & Social Justice.

**Chelsea M. Warren (Scenic Design)** is a multidisciplinary theater artist with a focus on scenic and puppet design with an equal interest in both traditional and devised creation processes. This is her third project with Ananya Dance Theatre; previous works include *Shaatranga*, *Sutrajal* and now *Dastak*. Having grown up in the Adirondack Mountains, she is drawn to robust, elemental stage pictures and is passionate about the natural world. She has done scenic design work for many companies, including Steppenwolf Theatre, Jungle Theater, Penumbra Theatre, Victory Gardens Theatre, Studio Theatre, Cleveland Play House, Philadelphia Theatre Company and Steep Theatre. Chelsea is a founding member of Yellow House, a devised theater company working in both site specific and theatrical environments with the goal of placing design and performance in direct dialogue. Chelsea received an MFA in Stage Design from Northwestern University, and is Assistant Professor of Scenic Design at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities. She is a member of United Scenic Artists Local 829.  
<https://www.chelseamwarren.com>

**Emma Marlar (Production Manager)**, originally from Kenosha, WI, balances a career in the performance, creation, and technical aspects of dance. Since graduating from the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities with a BFA in Dance in 2016, she has made space and taken on work that allows her to support others, spark conversation, create collaboratively, and pursue endless explorations in movement. Ananya Dance Theatre continues to fulfill all of this and so much more. Emma has been working with the company since 2014. She feels incredibly thankful for the opportunity to continually witness how this work transforms the dancers, audience, community, and herself.



This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through grants from the Metro Regional Arts Council and the Minnesota State Arts Board, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.

*Dastak* is a National Performance Network (NPN) Creation & Development Fund Project co-commissioned by the Skirball Cultural Center, Los Angeles, CA, in partnership with the Bates Dance Festival, Lewiston, ME, UtahPresents, Salt Lake City, UT, and NPN. The Creation & Development Fund is supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts (a federal agency). For more information: [www.npnweb.org](http://www.npnweb.org)

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*Dastak* is supported by a grant from the Marbrook Foundation.

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