



PAGRAVDANCECOMPANY

Image: Simon Richardson

TRUSTEE RECRUITMENT PACK



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**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



Milton Keynes
City Council



PAGRAVDANCECOMPANY

Pagrav Dance Company (PDC) is seeking several committed new Trustees to join our board to lead and support our ambitious dance company - now a new Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation - working with the executive team to consolidate its structure and widen our impact.



Image: Simon Richardson

About our company

Pagrav Dance Company was founded in 1997 by Artistic Director, Urja Desai Thakore. Originally based in India, the company specialised in promoting Indian Folk Dances and Classical art-forms all over the country. Since 2006, the company has been based in Milton Keynes, UK, and now works with storytelling and human emotions to create an original dance style that originates from Kathak and contemporary dance vocabularies.

Pagrav means 'the sound of feet' in Gujarati, a language spoken in northern India. Through the Indian classical dance form of Kathak – which expresses stories through movement, especially footwork and facial gesture – we celebrate an ancient tradition and its potential to empower people and enhance lives.

This approach both preserves the cultural heritage of Kathak as an art form while at the same time provoking new thinking, understanding and appreciation of the discipline.

Our company celebrates, teaches and showcases innovative approaches that both embraces Kathak's authenticity and history, and reinterprets it for twenty first century audiences.

Our programme strands

We work in various ways across three main areas of activity:



New feet: Our education programme teaches and trains people of all ages in the art of Kathak. Through skills development and performing opportunities, we challenge the negative perceptions of creative careers within South Asian culture.



New paths: Our talent development work supports emerging Kathak practitioners - those who have mastered the art-form - to pursue and thrive in professional dance careers. Mentoring and nurturing a new generation of talent, we help to create pathways for success.



New ground: with our new productions, on stage and site-specific, we create innovative work rooted in Kathak. Exploring contemporary themes, we bring the artform to a broad public in the UK and internationally, challenging the way it is represented and perceived.

Our Vision

PDC's vision is a UK in which cultural careers and creativity are valued by South Asian communities, where Kathak influences and evolves with successive generations of creatives, and the cultural sector is more democratic, accessible and representative of South Asian people.

Our Mission

Pagrav Dance Company is a Person of Colour and woman-led organisation, connecting people through world-class South Asian dance and reflecting contemporary British communities. We teach, promote and tour neo-classical Kathak while challenging traditional artistic boundaries. Our inclusive approach supports the next generation of home-grown dance professionals and enthusiasts, inspiring audiences in the UK and internationally.



Image: Simon Richardson

Our 5 Strategic Aims:

Production: High-quality performance establishing South Asian dance as a force in contemporary British culture, celebrating and telling under-represented stories. We nurture South Asian dance artists of the future, increasing the diversity of the UK Dance sector.

Participation: Dance experiences for performers and audiences. Responding to the needs of communities of people of colour, including British Asian Communities not catered to by the mainstream cultural sector.

Profiling: Stimulate debate & develop sustainable touring and audiences for South Asian Dance.

Organisational development: Become a beacon of diversity practice; develop our dynamic business model.

Resilience & Sustainability: Manage our growth responsibly.

Our Values

Fairness

- Paying professional artists and teachers for their work well, promptly and without difficulty.
- Supporting our artists with timely travel and safe accommodation.

Diversity

- A strong commitment to ethnic diversity and inclusive practices.
- A commitment to enabling older dancers to continue dancing for as long as possible.
- A commitment, through our Oxygen programme, to support emerging South Asian dancers to explore, understand and develop their own practice.

Sustainability

- Ethical contracts and sustainable business and working practices.
- Commitment to environmental sustainability.

Caring

- Care and training when working with participants, including robust training for teachers and dance leaders when working with vulnerable participants of any age.
- Maintaining good ethical practices across all aspects of the company – teaching, creation, research, touring and partnerships.

Artistic integration and excellence

- A vision of company integration, clear artistic demands and supporting learning and development.
- Supporting artists and developing their artistic ambitions to fulfilment as far as possible.

Our commitment to racial justice

As a South Asian, woman-led creative organisation, we aim to bring about change in the cultural sector by:

- Responding to the needs of British Asian Dance communities, which are often overlooked by the mainstream dance sector.
- Challenging the barriers faced by South Asian Dancers in the UK.
- Creating models of working that support South Asian dance artists and address racial imbalances.
- Promoting representation of women of colour in leadership and choreography roles in the UK dance landscape.
- Encouraging the appreciation of South Asian Dance to foster culturally tolerant and diverse communities through our productions.
- Supporting the mental health and well-being of South Asian artists and creatives who face specific challenges that affect their ability to sustain creative careers.

By focusing on these areas, we are actively working to dismantle racial inequalities and create a more inclusive and equitable cultural sector.



Our team and staff

Led by Artistic Director and CEO **Urja Desai Thakore**, we have now built a team of permanent staff that includes Executive Producer, **Lia Prentaki**; Company Manager, **Louise Clohesy**; and Company Coordinator, **Giulia Coti Zelati**; as well as a team of freelance colleagues and consultants supporting on marketing, international touring and fundraising. We also regularly employ a team of dance teachers who deliver the education and outreach programme and Urja's senior students and alumni are a key part of our work at PDC.

Our financial model

PDC is a Not-for-Profit Company Limited by Guarantee. We have a mixed portfolio of public funding and investment from Arts Council England, Local Authorities funding, and a range of co-producers, partners, trusts and foundations. Earned income is currently generated through performing fees and tuition fees for dance classes. We have been successful in becoming a National Portfolio Organisation for the next 3 years and we are actively attracting funding and investment from a variety of sources, with specialist advice to support us.

Current trustees & governance set up

PDC has a committed board of Company Directors, who are also the Company's Members.

The Board is in the process of applying for Charitable status with a trading subsidiary for non-charitable activities.

Led by our Chair, Eva Martinez, former Artistic Programmer at Sadler's Wells, the Directors have clear terms of reference and 3 sub-groups: Artistic & Engagement, Finance & Fundraising, Governance.

Our trustees are currently:

Eva Martinez, Chair of the board

Anthony Spira, Director of MK Gallery

Sanjay Shetty, Accountant and finance controller

Zena Kukreja, Lawyer at an International law firm in London

Find our more on our website pagravdance.com

Current and upcoming productions

PDC has an established background in creating highly regarded works with outstanding production values, building a substantial repertoire of past works. From 2023, our main productions touring and in creation are:



Kattam Katti (2017-present)

Kattam Katti transports you to Uttarayan, the world-famous kite-flying festival where millions of Indians from different cities, religions and social classes flock to Gujarat, India to mark the oncoming of spring. Through neo-classical drama, the cast of four dancers and four musicians tap into the celebration's competitive chaos, creativity and warm hues. After a very successful initial UK tour, more touring is planned in the UK and internationally, with longer term ambitions to upscale this production.

Aunusthan (2018-Present)

Aunusthan is an evening of classical work which takes the audience on a journey of abstracted relationships and powerful storytelling. The production was conceived with the intention of portraying the multi-faceted nature of Kathak. Featuring a cast of emerging dance artists who train with and are mentored by PDC, Aunusthan showcases Kathak's bright future in the UK.



Deva (2022- Present)

Deva challenges myths and expectations of the South Asian body in Indian classical dance, in a collaboration with visual artist Hetain Patel. This group work explores the complexities of British Asian identity through a playful approach to classicism and spoken word, connecting dance grammar to the everyday. This production is designed to be performed outdoors and has been touring to festival audiences and schools across the country.



New creation (2024) Rooh: within her (working title)

This is an exciting return to the solo form, created and performed by our artistic director in collaboration with the acclaimed dramaturge and poet, Karthika Nair (SidiLarbi Cherkaoui, Akram Khan Until the Lions). Urja Desai Thakore explores narratives in quiet, everyday, heroism across two millennia with both Sangam poetry, Gujarati folk tale and autobiographical stories linking generations of women in her family.



Performance Venues

Urja and PDC have performed extensively at a wide range of venues including: Sadler's Wells, Barbican, Southbank Centre, Arts Depot, Royal Opera House, Rich Mix, Trafalgar Square Festival, London; The Lowry – Salford, The Curve – Leicester, Nottingham Playhouse, Watford Palace Theatre, Latitude Festival, Birmingham International Festival, IF Milton Keynes International Festival. International partners include Antwerp, Belgium and Aarhus Festival, Denmark, and in India, Mumbai Millennium Festival, Khajoraha, Unmesh and Modhera Festivals.

Pagrav Dance School & Studios:

Part of our New Feet activity, PDC provides a supportive platform developing passionate, exceptional dancers. We encourage students to think independently, early on in their training, to foster a healthy culture of creativity. We teach in our London studios in Edgware, which we rent out and in Milton Keynes, which we own.

We have 110 students currently and have continuous demand for our classes. Our training presents the opportunity to be coached for the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing (ISTD) Kathak Graded and Vocational examinations, and to also undertake a Rangmanch Pravesh (debut recital presented on completion of a formal training period).



The Trustees of Pagrav Dance Company

PDC is seeking to introduce new voices and additional skills to expand the breadth of experience informing the governance of PDC.

We are seeking candidates with skills in one or more of the following areas to join the Board of Pagrav Dance Company from Autumn 2023:

- Marketing
- Fundraising
- Artistic creative processes
- National Portfolio Organisation experience / leadership
- Education / educational settings

Key Responsibilities of Trustees

The role of the Board of Trustees is to support the strategic vision and leadership of the charity, with ultimate responsibility for the financial sustainability of the organisation. Trustees will ensure that PDC remains true to its values and mission, and that the organisation and its resources are well managed, by:

- Attending all Board meetings, extraordinary meetings, and away days as much as possible, or finding alternative ways to support the decision making processes as needed.
- Contributing their expertise and time to developing the aims and goals of PDC, not only in Board meetings, but through extra tasks as mutually agreed and required.
- Sitting on sub-groups, advisory groups, recruitment panels etc. as required.
- Maintaining confidentiality regarding all PDC business.
- Familiarising themselves with the business of PDC, its Memorandum & Articles of Association and their responsibilities as Company Directors.
- Familiarising themselves with, and complying with, all management policies of PDC.
- Declaring any potential conflicts of interest to PDC as soon as they are recognised.
- Actively contributing to Board recruitment, development, review, and succession planning.
- Advocating for and representing PDC externally as required.

Time commitment

The Board meets four times a year, usually online, with one meeting per year in person as a minimum. Meetings are late afternoon on weekdays. Additional meetings are sometimes held, including away days, to allow time for discussion on direction and vision, and exceptional meetings are also held to support to the team on specific issues.

As a guide, the time commitment involved will be: 10 - 12 days per year for trustees.

Trustees are asked to support the team by attending PDC's live performances in the UK and selected networking events.

Image: Jagdeep Shah



How To Apply

If you are interested in being considered for the role, please provide a copy of your most recent **CV along with a covering letter** outlining your reasons for applying and the skills and expertise that you feel you may be able to bring to the Board and to the organisation.

To discuss your application in advance of submission and please feel free to contact us at **info@pagravdance.com** and we will put you in touch with our chair or a PDC Trustee.

For shortlisted candidates, an interview with PDC's leadership team and selected Trustees will also take place.

Deadline for the receipt of applications is 29th September 2023

Applications should be sent via email to louise@pagravdance.com.

Access: If you need to receive this pack in an alternative format, please contact us.

We welcome applications in alternative formats such as video or audio files. Please ensure video/audio is no more than 5 minutes in length and sent via Wettransfer to louise@pagravdance.com.

What happens next?

Candidates whose expressions of interest trustees wish to take forward will be invited to an interview, and if successful, they will be invited to attend a board meeting as an observer before being appointed onto the Board.

Interviews with shortlisted candidates will be held online during w/c 2nd or 9th October 2023.

Decisions will be made by 13th October 2023

Induction will take place in Autumn with the intended first Board meeting taking place on 7th December 2023

Thank you for your interest in working with us.

For more info go to: **[PAGRAVDANCE.COM](https://www.pagravdance.com)**



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