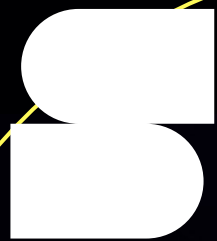


# KATMA



Sydney  
Festival  
2025



# KATMA

Azzam Mohamed & PYT Fairfield  
WORLD PREMIERE SEASON

Bell Shakespeare, The Neilson Nutshell  
15-19 January  
1 hour (no interval)

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## CAST AND CREDITS

**Concept, Lead Artist & Choreographer** Azzam Mohamed

**Composer** Jack Prest

**Lighting Designer** Andre Vanderwert

**Mentor** Charemaine Seet

**Dramaturg** Matt Prest

**Designer** Adelash Parsons

**Design Mentor** Gary Deirmendjian

**Production Manager** Elyse Drenth

**Stage Manager** Cindy Cavero

**Assistant Stage Manager** Olivia Xegas

**Technical Crew** Jeremy Ainsworth

**Collaborator & Dancer** Isabella Solisa

**Collaborator & Dancer** Genifer Navuzi

**Collaborator & Dancer** Angelica Osuji

**Collaborator & Dancer** Naethiel Lumbera

**Collaborator & Dancer** Molonai Makalio

**Collaborator & Dancer** Robin Chen

**Creative Producer** PYT Fairfield, Gabriela Green Olea

**Collaborators** Lydia Kivela, Jackson Garcia, Jamie Kha, El Moro, Jackie L Barros, Laura White, Adam Warburton, Doug Elkins

**Special thanks to** the Art Gallery of NSW, Intimate Spectacle (Harley Stumm), Katy Green Loughrey, Claire Hicks, Neda Taha, Cynthia Florek, Critical Path, ReadyMade Works and Dance Makers Collective for their support and contribution

## ABOUT THE SHOW

*Katma* is an immersive and soulful exploration of dance, blending street, club and Afro dance forms. It delves into social dance elements like “stalking”, a house dance tradition, and the cypher, a space for exchanging, releasing, sharing, connecting, expressing, celebrating and innovating. Drawing from the raw energy of underground parties, *Katma* captures the intensity and freedom of movement, where music and community come together in unrepeatably moments. In Sudanese slang, “katma” means “suffocation” or “no room for breathing”, reflecting the overwhelming, electrifying feeling of being fully immersed in the experience. Directed by Azzam Mohamed, performed and co-created with Robin Chen, Isabella Solisa, Genifer Navuzi, Angelica Osuji, Naethiel Lumbera and Molonai Makalio, *Katma* invites the audience to simply be in the moment, without expectation.

## A NOTE FROM THE CREATOR

I learned how to dance in the best school I could imagine: the parties. I never studied dance formally, but those times on crowded dance floors were where I discovered rhythm, movement and connection. The music, the people and the energy in those spaces taught me about culture, expression and community. It wasn't just about the moves but about what the music made you feel and how it brought people together.

This work is deeply personal. It's incredible to bring something that grew in underground spaces into the spotlight of one of the world's biggest stages. Collaborating with friends and community members to co-create this piece is a celebration of everything and everyone who shaped us: the DJs who fed our souls, the promoters who curated unforgettable nights, the venues that gave us a home and every dancer who taught us a move, made us smile or shared a moment in a cypher.



As Archie Burnett said, “To ‘check your body at the door’ means to leave all baggage at the door and to enjoy one’s self to the fullest.” I hope *Katma* invites you to do just that – immerse yourself in the music, the energy, the people and the dance. Let’s celebrate together.

– Azzam Mohamed

## THANK YOU

First and foremost, Alhamdulillah for his blessings and guidance throughout the creation of *Katma*. We are deeply grateful to everyone who contributed to this work, whether directly or indirectly. Our heartfelt thanks go to the entire *Katma* team for their unwavering dedication and support. Special thanks to the Choreographic Lab Class 2021 (Critical Path and PYT Fairfield) – Katy Green Loughrey, Louisa Minutillo, Claire Hicks, Neda Taha, Cynthia Florek, and Charemaine Seet – for giving birth to this project. We also extend our gratitude to Nick Power for his insights and support, as well as the Pitch Lab Class 2021: Dance Makers Collectives, Moving Ideas Residency 2022: ReadyMade Works, and Intimate Spectacle (Harley Stumm) for their expertise and support. Our appreciation also goes to Jackson Garcia and Lydia Kivela for their collaboration, as well as to Jamie Kha, El Moro, Jackie L Barros, Laura White, Adam Warburton, and Doug Elkins for sharing their stories and inspiration. Finally, we extend our deepest appreciation to all those who have supported us behind the scenes – your commitment has been essential in bringing *Katma* to life.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Katma* would not have come to life without the support of Sydney Festival and Brisbane Festival, who commissioned the work through the Major Festivals Initiative Seed Funding. We are also grateful to Sydney Festival, Adelaide Festival, and Luminato Festival (Toronto) for their Pre-Production funding. Our sincere thanks go to Creative Australia and the NSW Government through Create NSW for their continuous support of the project. And a special thanks to the Art Gallery of New South Wales for their generous in kind support of *Katma*.

The *Katma* team extends heartfelt acknowledgment to the diverse street, club, and African dance forms featured in the show, including Breaking, Party Rocking, Locking, House, Waacking, and Krumping, and their associated communities. We honour the contributions of Black and Latino people from various regions, as well as the LGBTQIA+ communities in underground clubs across cities like Chicago and New York. We also celebrate the rich cultural diversity of Africa, recognising that *Katma* represents only a small part of this heritage. Finally, we pay tribute to the pioneers and dancers whose dedication has inspired these powerful art forms worldwide.

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