

**PRESS RELEASE: JULY 2025**

**SOUTH ASIAN DANCE PRODUCTION BREAKS NEW GROUND WITH A  
RARE AND MOVING PORTRAYAL OF BRITISH-INDIAN GAY MEN**

Jaivant Patel Company is a multi-award winning international arts organisation, creating contemporary productions informed by British-South Asian lived experience and influenced by the myriad of South Asian dance forms. The company's Artistic and Creative Director Jaivant Patel explores themes and narratives rarely seen in British theatre or dance houses.

The South Asian LGBTQIA+ narrative has been central to his work since 2017, with the production of 'Yaatra', an unapologetic exploration of sexuality, faith and spirituality. This followed the 2023 award-winning, 'Waltzing The Blue Gods', which saw Jaivant Patel reimagine the queer symbolism of the Hindu gods, Shiva and Krishna, and the role they played in his sexual awakening to becoming an openly homosexual British born Indian man of Gujarati heritage. In 2025, Jaivant Patel Company tours its' most ambitious and evocative dance theatre production to date with ASTITVA, meaning 'existence'.

"There hasn't been enough exposure of South Asian queer men in creative storytelling, particularly in dance scenarios. ASTITVA explores the existence of being a British-Indian gay man in an unapologetic performance, as it doesn't hide away from love, intimacy or sexuality. Their lives are complex and not linear." says Patel.

ASTITVA is told in four episodes – Seeking, Desire, Acceptance, and Love – which delve into universal emotions we all share. From navigating sexuality under the weight of cultural expectations to the yearning for love and belonging, these personal stories come alive with a gripping intensity and grace that resonate deeply with the human condition.

Jaivant continues to say, "ASTITVA has allowed me to further define my own creative parameters and make honest and unapologetic work within my rules. There is no work like this that I have seen or that currently exists in the UK"

ASTITVA explores the complex realities of balancing tradition, culture, and identity, shedding light on the struggles and triumphs of navigating sexuality, cultural expectations, and love in a world that often doesn't make space for you. Through its intimate exploration of seeking, desire, acceptance, and love, ASTITVA brings queer South Asian stories to the forefront, inviting audiences to connect, reflect, and celebrate the beauty of being human.

The original music by Alap Desai, composed in Raag Darbari, an Indian classical composition once reserved for royal courts, fills the space with a sense of both grandeur and rebellion. In this reimagined court, Patel's message is clear: this is his space now, where queer South Asian stories are visible, empowered and celebrated.

The work invites the audience to view the performers either as distinct individuals or as one soul, at different moments in a journey of queer identity.

"I want to ignite wider conversations around what South Asian queer lives are about. There are still lots of misconceptions, stereotypes and stigma surrounding these identities. I want ASTITVA to celebrate South Asian gay identities. Usually LGBTQIA+ narratives tend to be portrayed as tragic, and centred around a victim mentality. Through ASTITVA, I wanted to reclaim and promote a positive image of what being a South Asian gay man is and means – free from stereotypes and expectations." explains Jaivant.

Whether you're drawn to dance, storytelling, or the exploration of diverse identities, ASTITVA offers something profound and deeply relatable. It holds up a mirror to our own lives, our families, and our shared values, while daring us to imagine new possibilities.

ASTITVA photographs taken by Karol Wyszynski







### Creative Team

Concept, Direction & Choreography - Jaivant Patel  
 Performers - Dominic Coffey, Amar Bains and Mithun Gill  
 Composer - Alap Desai  
 Lighting Designer - K J  
 Outside Eyes – Ben Wright and Eva Martinez  
 Consultant Producer – Spin Arts

Solos are choreographed in collaboration with the performers

### **ASTITVA 2025/ 2026 TOUR DATES**

Venue	Performance Dates
• <a href="#">Bradford Arts Centre (Kala Sangam)</a>	Thursday 9 <sup>th</sup> and Friday 10 <sup>th</sup> October 2025
• <a href="#">Arena Theatre</a>	Thursday 6 <sup>th</sup> November 2025
• <a href="#">Birmingham Rep</a>	Friday 21 <sup>st</sup> and Saturday 22 <sup>nd</sup> November 2025
• <a href="#">The Place</a>	Tuesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> and Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> March 2026

HASHTAG: #JPCoAstitva

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ASTITVA is funded by Arts Council England.

**ENDS**

## **Notes to the Editor**

For enquires, photos and interviews please contact: Hardish Virk [info@hardishvirk.com](mailto:info@hardishvirk.com)

### **Jaivant Patel Company (JPCo)**

Jaivant Patel Company is multi award-winning international arts organisation founded in Wolverhampton, in 2004. Named after the artistic and creative director Jaivant Patel, an unapologetic Queer British-Gujarati dancemaker. JPCo creates contemporary productions informed by British-South Asian lived experience and influenced by the myriad of South Asian dance forms.

Jaivant Patel Company is a National Portfolio Organisation for Arts Council England

Further information: [Jaivant Patel Company](#)

### **Bradford Arts Centre (Kala Sangam)**

Bradford Arts Centre (formally Kala Sangam) is an intercultural arts hub which aims to reflect the diversity of contemporary Britain through the work we present, the artists we support and the communities we engage.

Specialising in South Asian arts and culture, most of our work takes place in our Arts Centre in the heart of Bradford with our outreach activities extending regionally and nationally.

Further information: [Bradford Arts Centre](#) (website goes live on 05/08/25)

### **Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton**

The Arena Theatre is a small-scale theatre with a great informal atmosphere for all visitors. It presents one of the best and most diverse theatre programmes in the West Midlands, and the vast number of performances each year is populated with top-quality professional productions, local and amateur shows alike.

Further information: [Arena Theatre](#)

### **Birmingham Repertory Theatre**

Birmingham Repertory Theatre is a producing theatre and is the longest-established of UK's building-based theatre companies and one of its most consistently innovative.

Today The Rep produces a wide range of drama in its three auditoria – The House with 825 seats, The Studio with 300 seats and The Door with 140 seats – much of which goes on to tour nationally and internationally.

Further information: [Birmingham Rep](#)

### **The Place, London**

One of Europe's most exciting, innovative dance spaces and home to London Contemporary Dance School; where artists from all over the world come to push creative boundaries, to experiment and to perform outstanding new work for audiences who expect to be surprised, inspired and delighted.

Further information: [The Place](#)