

A man with long hair and a beard, wearing a dark suit and tie, is shown from the chest up. He has his right hand raised with fingers spread, and his head tilted back, eyes closed, and mouth slightly open as if in a state of awe or performance. The background is dark, and the lighting is dramatic, highlighting his face and hand.

Genius

**"Whatever you can do, or dream you can do, begin it.
Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it. Begin it now."**

Goethe

**A performance and development project by
Anjali Dance Company
Available throughout 2019**

Anjali
dance company



Genius

Genius will bring theatrical and entertaining performance work and specialist dance development opportunities to a range of venues and organisations, sharing Anjali's experience and expertise in working with dance and with people with learning disabilities.

A menu of options is available, including performances, residencies and training.

Anjali has been making high-quality, professional-level dance for over 20 years. Artistic Director Nicole Thomson and the company's dancers have amassed a wealth of experience and knowledge which they will share with others to inspire and motivate.

Genius is a diverse double bill by award-winning choreographers Lea Anderson and Gary Clarke. It first toured in autumn 2017, when 18 performances and 43 workshops reached almost 5000 people. Tour partners included Dance City in Newcastle, the Stanley & Audrey Burton Theatre run by Northern Ballet in Leeds, Lancaster Arts and British Council Mexico/Festival Oxímoron.

"Smart, inventive commissioning."

Judith Mackrell, Guardian Guide

"Bold, ambitious, technically and visually stunning, Anjali was one of the most exciting dance performances I saw in 2017. This is a company I would want to see tour more extensively as they challenge the perceptions and assumptions about quality often expressed about inclusive companies. There is no compromise, simply thrilling, deeply engaging work performed by high calibre and committed dancers who love what they do."

Michaela Butter, Director, Attenborough Arts Centre

"Utterly outstanding! So beautiful and moving and very high quality – I would definitely recommend!"

Audience member, Genius 2017 tour

"Beautiful. The work was professional, heartfelt and well worth the money. I smiled, I cried, I couldn't have asked for a better show! Bravo!"

Audience member, Genius 2017 tour

"Remarkable, inspiring and unconditionally excellent quality. I would certainly recommend to others."

Audience member, Genius 2017 tour

Arzali
dance company

**"One of the brightest
companies in British dance."**

Donald Hutera, The Times



Genius: The Performance

Genius is a diverse double bill which showcases the unique talents of the Anjali dancers.

The performance is suitable for a wide range of audiences, with or without dance experience.

Beethoven

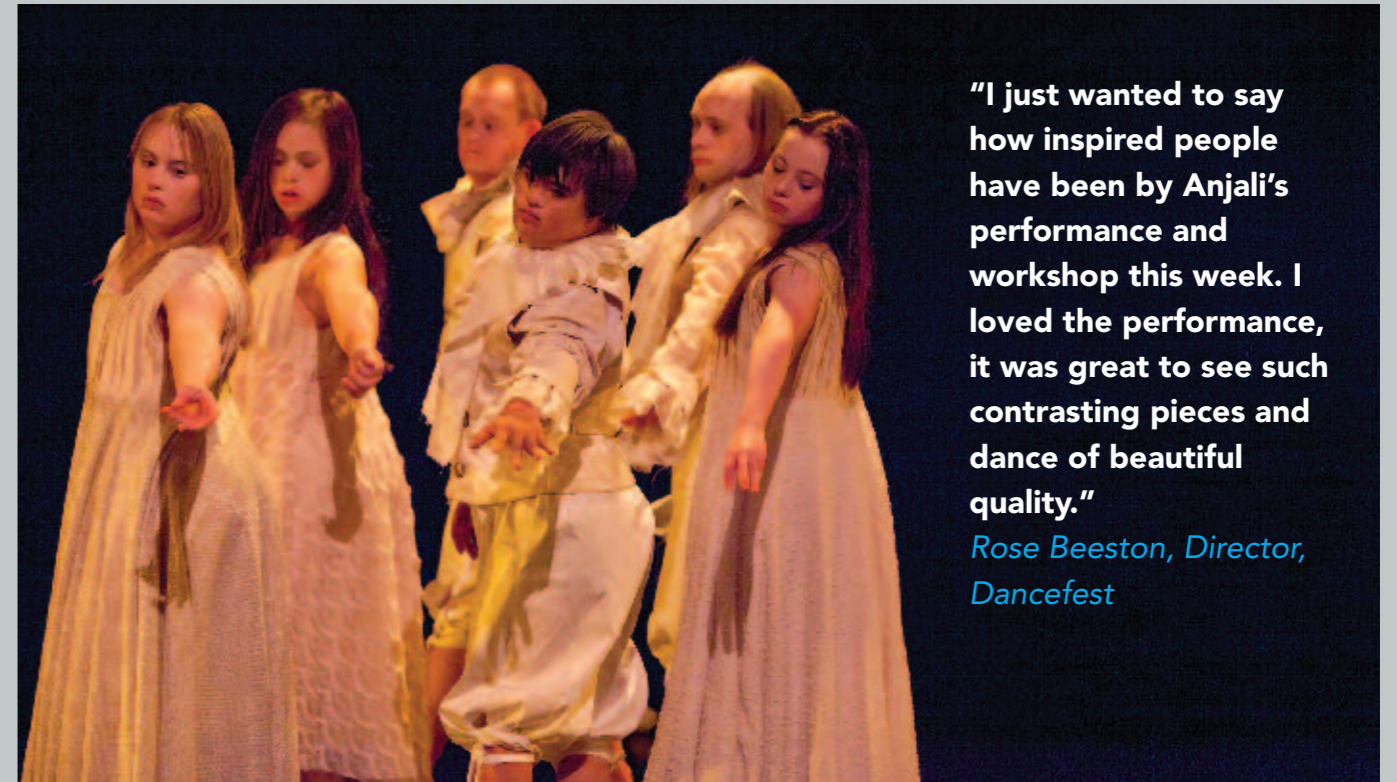
choreographed by Gary Clarke

Through a series of touching and darkly humorous short sketches, Gary's choreography takes a look at the extraordinary personal life and musical works of Ludwig van Beethoven. A Gothic, cinematic and highly theatrical landscape of movement and gesture, danced to excerpts of Beethoven's music.

[Watch the trailer](#)

"Working with Anjali was a rewarding, inspiring and exciting experience. They are an amazing team of talented dance artists who fully invested in the work and its creation. Each company member brought their personality, skill, and above all their hearts and generosity to the process, which resulted in some strong, poignant and beautiful work."

Gary Clarke



"I just wanted to say how inspired people have been by Anjali's performance and workshop this week. I loved the performance, it was great to see such contrasting pieces and dance of beautiful quality."

Rose Beeston, Director, Dancefest

Bloodsucker

choreographed by Lea Anderson

A stylised theatrical work that is highly technical, gently humorous and visually stunning, based on the legend of the vampire Nosferatu and his depiction in film. Three distinct scenes become their own tales of horror, in styles ranging from expressionist, nuanced silent-screen acting to Hammer House of Horror action. *Bloodsucker* is performed in a three-sided box with the feel of a fairground or carnival theatre. The dancers move on and off stage through the sides of the box to create the feel of film edits. A commissioned soundtrack and striking design complement the precise, abstract choreography.

[Watch the trailer](#)

"Making *Bloodsucker* for Anjali was an extremely beneficial experience for me artistically. It is unusual for a company of dancers with learning disabilities to be taking such artistic risks and it is excellent that they lead the field by example."

Lea Anderson

Technical information

Duration: 1 hour plus interval

Number of people on the road: 10 in total (6 dancers, Production Manager, Artistic Director, Rehearsal Director, Production Assistant/Support Worker)

Performance area required: minimum stage size 8m x 8m

Floor: black dance floor required

Get in: ideally the day before to allow the dancers time to familiarise themselves with the space

Other requirements: haze machine

Number of performances: ideally 2 per day, a matinee and evening performance

"The work is inventive and quirky. The performance is high quality. The company has developed its unique style over the years so that audiences see the work and not the disability."

Audience member, Genius 2017 tour

Genius: Development Opportunities

Anjali will deliver performances and bespoke development projects in up to eight locations during 2019.

Each project will be individually planned with partners, taking into account their current work with people with learning disabilities and their future ambitions.

Development work can take place ahead of the performances or during a residency. It can also continue afterwards, ensuring that a legacy is left when the company leaves town, embedding new activity and supporting continuous provision.

Anjali seeks partnerships with performance venues, dance development organisations, learning disability settings, education providers and dance companies/teachers. Below is a list of development activities on offer.

Performance

- Genius double bill
- Pop-up/promotional performances of technically light solos/duets in unusual spaces, festivals, conferences or curated mixed bills
- Curtain-raisers enabling local groups to perform alongside Anjali

Workshops

- CPD for dance practitioners and community session leaders
- Taster sessions for people with learning disabilities
- Training for care sector staff
- Inspirational workshops for existing integrated performance groups, led by Anjali's education team of artists with learning disabilities

Profiling, Partnerships and Advocacy

- Conference/seminar events, debate and discussion
- Partnerships with local service and education providers, facilitating new partnerships or developing existing ones
- Advocacy and profile-raising opportunities with local stakeholders/decision-makers

Development and Legacy

- Teacher-training for people with learning disabilities
- Professional development and/or mentoring for dance artists who lead or wish to establish groups of people with learning disabilities
- Help in establishing new programmes, groups and/or regular dance provision for people with learning disabilities, and subsequent on-going support
- Guidance in recruiting people with learning disabilities as participants, artists and/or audience members
- Toolkits and resources available

"Anjali represents all that is best, not just about disabled people dancing, but about dancing full stop. They are all true professionals."

Louise Katerega, Associate Artist, People Dancing



Genius: Marketing and Audience Development

- Anjali can help partners to develop new audiences and participants by connecting with local care and Learning Disability settings and communities
- Bespoke targeted marketing campaigns will be devised with each partner to maximise audience and participant engagement
- High quality print, photos, film and electronic marketing materials available for distribution
- All workshops, events and talks will be used to build audiences, with those attending being kept informed of performances
- A press consultant will support local profiling and deliver a national campaign; the 2017 campaign reached over 193,000 people
- During the 2017 tour, over 121,000 people viewed the [Anjali feature on BBC online](#)

"The feedback from the audience was spectacular. People were extremely excited, they cried and the atmosphere was so vibrant with what the dancers expressed as much as with their great professionalism... We were amazed at the quality of the show, in both the level of professionalism of the dancers as well as with the staging."

Francia Gajardo & Verónica Ramírez, Artistic Directors, FITI (Festival Internacional Teatre Integratiu), Barcelona

"I was dragged along by my partner and did not know what to expect and absolutely loved the performance. Fantastic and imaginative dance performances and choreography delivering two really contrasting pieces. LOVED IT! And will definitely recommend."

*Audience member,
Genius 2017 tour*



About Anjali

Anjali Dance Company realises and celebrates through dance the extraordinary creative potential of people with learning disabilities. Anjali is committed to challenging preconceptions about who can dance and demonstrating new artistic possibilities. The company creates high-quality dance works which are performed by dancers with learning disabilities. Anjali also provides education and outreach programmes and has a unique education team of teachers with learning disabilities. Through its innovative and pioneering work Anjali engages the professional dance community in a debate on fundamental issues about aesthetics, form, purpose and inclusion.

Genius: Audiences

Who are our audiences?*

The audiences for *Genius* are primarily young and female; 42% aged 16-24, 74% female.

People with disabilities form a significant proportion of our audiences, at 29%. Ethnicity reflects the UK average.

We bring new audiences to our partner venues: 43% of our 2017 audiences were visiting the venue for the first time.

We also attract regular dance attenders, with 42% attending live dance 2-4 times per year. 49% attended with friends and/or family; 33% with classmates, colleagues or a group.

Why do people come to see Anjali?*

Common motivations for attending include:

- General interest in dance/theatre
- A rare opportunity to see performers with a learning disability, and to see what can be achieved
- It looked interesting/different
- Personal/professional link to people with learning disabilities

* Data collated from post-show surveys, responses from 54% of UK theatre audiences on *Genius* 2017 tour.

"Anjali's performance was inspiring. Presented at the Oximoron Festival in Querétaro, Mexico in November 2017, it attracted an intrigued audience who didn't quite know what to expect. What was extraordinary about *Genius* was that it stood alone as an excellent example of contemporary dance. Watching it you forgot almost entirely that it was being performed by a group with learning disabilities. The group themselves, from the performers to the choreographers to the technicians, were without exception delightful and very easy to work with. The whole experience of having Anjali in Mexico was a pleasure, and a particularly memorable one from my point of view and that of many others."

Kevin Mackenzie, Country Director, British Council Mexico



The Team

For Bloodsucker

Choreographer – Lea Anderson MBE

Lea Anderson choreographed over 100 original works for her companies, the all-female The Cholmondeleys and all-male The Featherstonehaughs. Both companies were hugely influential to the development of UK dance, toured substantially nationally and internationally, and are still studied from GCSE to undergraduate level. Lea is now an independent artist, working with Welsh company Ladies & Gentlemen which Lea co-founded with composer Steve Blake.

Lea has won many awards including a number of Time Out & Dance Umbrella Awards and the Bonnie Bird Choreography award. She was made an MBE in 2002 for services to dance and has been artist in residence at The Southbank Centre, Critical Path, Sydney and the University of California amongst others. Lea is currently Regents Professor at UCLA (University of California Los Angeles), and recently worked in partnership with the V&A museum, London and The Place on her *Performed Exhibition of Costume (Hand in Glove)* project.

For Beethoven

Choreographer – Gary Clarke

Gary Clarke is an award-winning dancer and choreographer with a national reputation for creating compelling dance theatre that resonates with both audiences and critics. He has worked with companies which have included The Cholmondeleys and The Featherstonehaughs, Matthew Bourne's Adventures in Motion Pictures, DV8, Candoco Dance Company, Phoenix Dance Theatre, Sadler's Wells and Opera North.

Gary has been making his own work for the past ten years, which has toured both nationally and internationally receiving critical and audience acclaim. COAL is currently touring mid-scale venues across the UK, and his work has also featured in British Dance Edition, the Edinburgh Festival, Spring Loaded, Birmingham International Dance Festival, The Cultural Olympiad and The Royal Opera House. Gary is currently an Associate Artist at Yorkshire Dance and is closely affiliated to Dance4 and Merseyside Dance Initiative (MDI).

For Anjali

Founder and Artistic Director – Nicole Thomson

Nicole founded Anjali Dance Company in 1995 to showcase the creative potential of people with learning disabilities and give them opportunities for contemporary dance training and education. Her ambition to produce

professional-standard dance of the highest quality performed by learning-disabled dancers has led to the company gaining national and international recognition.

Nicole has collaborated with renowned British choreographers, including Claire Russ, Matthew Hawkins, Charlotte Vincent, TC Howard, Pete Shenton, Tom Roden, Gary Clarke and Lea Anderson, to create major touring productions for the company. She is committed to finding new ways of creating performance with learning-disabled dancers and raising the profile of integrated arts practice by participating with Anjali's dancers in arts and disability-related debates. Nicole is passionate about questioning traditional aesthetics, inspiring others and changing perceptions of who can dance. She has a BA (Hons) degree in Performing Arts.

Education Manager – Rachel Liggitt

Rachel is a Dance Artist, Educator and Coach with an impressive record of achievement, working with a wide range of organisations within health, education, community and cultural sectors. Rachel began her career in the 90s as an independent dance artist and performer, collaborating with dance artists and small-scale dance companies in tandem with workshop delivery. She was Dance Fellow at Leeds University 1996-2004, Education and Training Coordinator at Blue Eyed Soul Dance Company 2006-2012 and has held several dance artist in residence positions. Rachel is Co-director of Shropshire Inclusive Dance (SiD), a practising artist and a trustee for Powys Dance, Wales.

Associate Producer – Ceri Brierley

Ceri is an Independent Arts Manager with specialisms in audience development and dance. Her current portfolio includes Anjali Dance Company, ATMA Dance, IOU Theatre Company, Made by Katie Green and Stuff & Nonsense Theatre Company. Before becoming a freelancer in 2014 Ceri worked in senior programming and marketing roles at Northern School of Contemporary Dance/The Riley Theatre, Phoenix Dance Theatre, South East Dance and Wayne McGregor's Random Dance. Ceri is based in Leeds and holds a first class honours degree in Dance and Culture from the University of Surrey.

Hannah Dempsey – Dancer

Hannah joined Anjali in 2007 and made her debut in *Something Wild* in Germany. She performed her acclaimed solo *The Divine Splashette* in *Unexploded Stories* in 2008. Hannah performed in *T4Two* in 2009 at Decibel Festival in Manchester and in Madrid. She performed at the Opening

Ceremony of the Special Olympics in 2009 and in *Fruit for Thought for Resolution!* in 2011 at The Place. Hannah performed in the duet *The Reflection* which has toured widely, including to Wales Millennium Centre, the Flame Lighting Ceremony at the opening of the Paralympics in 2012, WOW 2016 at the Royal Festival Hall, Mexico City and Querétero, Mexico. Hannah performed in *Genius*, which toured the UK, Spain and Mexico in 2017. She has been the subject of two films: *Hannah*, directed by Sergio Cruz and commissioned by South East Dance and *I Love Special Olympics*, which was shown on BBC4.

Daisy Garrett – Dancer

Daisy joined Anjali in 2009 and made her touring debut that year in *T4Two* at Decibel festival in Manchester and in Madrid. She performed in *Unexploded Stories* in 2008 and *Fruit for Thought for Resolution!* at The Place in 2011. Daisy performed with Hannah in *The Reflection* which has toured widely, including to Wales Millennium Centre, the Flame Lighting Ceremony at the opening of the Paralympics in 2012, and WOW 2016 at the Royal Festival Hall; it was also performed in Mexico City and Querétero, Mexico. Daisy performed in *Genius*, which toured in the UK, Spain and Mexico in 2017. She speaks on behalf of Anjali to the media and at conferences.

Alex Hyde – Dancer

Alex has been with Anjali since 2001. He joined Anjali as an apprentice from Open Class and took part in the WYSIWYG tour in 2003-04 in the UK and Portugal. Alex has worked with highly acclaimed choreographers including Claire Russ, Matthew Hawkins and Charlotte Vincent and has performed at Sadler's Wells and the Royal Opera House. He toured in the UK and Germany in *Something Wild* in 2007, danced in *Unexploded Stories* in 2008 at The Burton Taylor Theatre in Oxford and had a major role in *T4Two*, which toured in the UK and Spain in 2009. He performed at the Opening Ceremony of the Special Olympics in 2009 and in *Fruit for Thought for Resolution!* at The Place in 2011. Alex performed in *T4Two* in 2009 at Decibel Festival in Manchester and in Madrid. He performed in *Genius*, which toured in the UK, Spain and Mexico in 2017.

Jason Manito – Dancer

Jason joined Young Anjali in 2009. He took part in Youth Dance England's National U.Dance Festivals at London's Queen Elizabeth Hall in 2012 and at Birmingham Hippodrome in 2013. He performed with Young Anjali at the Opening Ceremony of the Special Olympics in 2009.

Jason graduated to the main company in 2010 and performed in *T4Two* at Decibel Festival and in Madrid and *Fruit for Thought for Resolution!* at The Place in 2011. He performed in *Genius*, which toured in the UK, Spain and Mexico in 2017. Jason has a particular interest in improvised performance.

Nick McKerrow – Dancer

Nick joined Anjali in 2007 after attending Candoco's Foundation Course. He studied dance at Roehampton University. Nick has performed in Germany, Spain and Mexico with Anjali. He has also performed in Russia, and in the semi-final of Sky TV's *Got to Dance* in 2013. He performed with Anjali in *Unexploded Stories* in 2008, *T4Two* which toured the UK and Spain in 2009, and in *Fruit for Thought for Resolution!* at The Place in 2011. Nick performed at the Opening Ceremony of the Special Olympics in 2009. He performed his solo *Second Skin* to great acclaim in the Clore Ballroom at the Royal Festival Hall in 2013 and at the GOlive Festival in London in 2013. He performed in *Genius*, which toured in the UK, Spain and Mexico in 2017. An interview with Nick appeared in *The Stage* in 2017, the first time *The Stage* had featured a learning-disabled artist in their *My First Job* feature.

Lauren Payne – Dancer

Lauren joined Anjali in 2014 as a trainee dancer. She is also a member of Young Anjali and performed at U.Dance National Festival 2015 at Theatre Royal Plymouth and at U.Dance 2016 at The Lowry, Salford Quays. After gaining her GCSE in Dance, Lauren studied at Greenwich Dance Academy and at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, where she was awarded the Young Dance Ambassadors Silver Arts Award. She took part in Sky TV's *Got to Dance* and has performed at Sadler's Wells and Trinity Laban. Lauren performed in *Genius*, which toured in the UK, Spain and Mexico in 2017. She also performed her solo *Unicorn* at Together! 2012 Festival in London and in Mexico.



"I was absolutely delighted with both the workshop and the performance, and having the performance follow the workshop definitely enhanced the learning for the workshop participants."

Dr Ju Gosling FRSA, Artistic Director, Together! 2012

"A great opportunity to work with such an inspiring company. Seeing Hannah team teaching with Rachel was excellent for some of our group...They need others to look up to as role models and this gave them a platform to see professional dance, participate and work together."

Jigsaw inclusive dance company

"The artists have great stage presence and I was mesmerised. There was silence in the second piece and I was in the relaxed performance, which I think showed how captivating it was. Really wonderful and so glad I came, thank you."

Audience member, Genius 2017 tour

"Saw the company on the BBC and it looked unique and imaginative. Being new to dance I didn't know what to expect, but I was impressed and inspired to explore more. Thanks."

Audience member, Genius 2017 tour

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