



## ***Memoria Saltationis: The Memory of Dance - 5 June 2020***

### **Archiving a Major Dance Organisation and the Stories That It Reveals**

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While genres of dance such as contemporary dance and ballet are prolific enough in the UK to flourish without much regard to the conditions of the dance industry, the artistic development of Indian dance in the UK is still closely linked to the socio-political environment that it sits in. Dance forms such as Bharatanatyam and Kathak have entered mainstream venues and platforms, but it seems that they continue to occupy cultural niches and cater to specific audiences. The creation and curation of Akademi's archives offers rare insights into the state of Indian dance in the UK since the 1980s, enabling more informed perspectives on the trajectory of its development over the last 30 years. Akademi is the leading producer of South Asian dance in the UK and has played a pivotal role in the establishment of South Asian dance forms from the classical, to the folk, to the commercial. The organisation has supported a vast array of artists, from those that have become household names to those that are emerging now. Its archive comprises an array of media including documents, photographs, objects, costume, audio and video material. It draws upon personal stories of artists from diverse genres and tracks the wider dance landscape over this period; written reports directly confront questions of race and culture, newspaper cuttings speak about the changing funding climate, and Akademi's own publications speak of future visions for the dance landscape. By illustrating historical trajectories, this archiving process sheds light on the infrastructure and frameworks that artists such as myself will be navigating into the future.