

# EXIT / EXIST



GREGORY MAQOMA /  
VUYANI DANCE THEATRE

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GREGORY  
MAQOMA /  
VUYANI  
DANCE  
THEATRE

U.S. TOUR  
SPRING / SUMMER  
2013

PRODUCED BY  
MAPP INTERNATIONAL  
PRODUCTIONS

“ THIS IS THE  
KIND OF PERFOR-  
MANCE THAT IS  
ESSENTIAL IN  
HELPING TO  
DEVELOP GLOBAL  
UNDERSTANDING.  
WITH HIS BODY,  
MAQOMA IS ABLE  
TO TAKE US TO  
THESE PLACES  
THAT WE COULD  
NEVER VISIT ON  
OUR OWN. ”

- SEATTLE EXAMINER



In *Exit/Exist*, South African choreographer Gregory Maqoma reinvigorates tradition and animates ancestral memories to understand the complexities of our contemporary world. He is joined on stage by four exceptional South African singers (whose performance credentials include touring with Hugh Masekela) and Italian guitarist Giuliano Modarelli in songs by Simphiwe Dana, a wildly popular singer and composer from Maqoma's native province of the Eastern Cape. The entire cast is interwoven into Maqoma's vibrantly kinetic world.

In his warm and generous way, Maqoma uses his ancestral lineage as a lens through which we see the connections between past and present, even as we move forward into the future. His inspirations: Chief Maqoma, a 19th century leader who struggled to maintain Xhosa cultural traditions of the Eastern Cape in the face of colonial dispossession; and his grandmother who, as she ages and begins to exit her life, leaves behind her memories and her adult worldview and returns to a childlike innocence. Though these ancestors are gone from or leaving this world, they live on in Maqoma. He becomes a figure of historical transformation, fusing traditional movement with his own unparalleled contemporary dance vocabulary, spirited live music and lyrical text, all against a rich visual landscape by celebrated Johannesburg artist Nicholas Hlobo.

*Exit/Exist* is co-produced by Vuyani Dance Theatre, Dance Umbrella (Johannesburg, South Africa), Theatre de la Ville (Paris, France) and Koninklijke Vlaamse Schouwburg KVS/Royal Flemish Theatre (Brussels, Belgium).



# GREGORY VUYANI MAQOMA

**Gregory Vuyani Maqoma**, internationally renowned dancer, choreographer, director, and scriptwriter, started his dance training in 1990 at Moving into Dance. While studying under the direction of Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker at Performing Arts Research and Training School (PARTS) in Belgium in 1999, Maqoma founded **Vuyani Dance Theatre** (VDT). Vuyani Dance Theatre is marked by a fusion of African contemporary urban styles, music and culture with those produced by contemporary European counterparts. VDT creates work that questions and challenges social values while, simultaneously, exploiting history as a launch pad for (material) research and development. The Vuyani Dance Theatre approach embraces - in a dynamic and theatrical way - the many tastes, motivations, and cultures that shape the uniqueness of the South African society.

Maqoma's work has garnered him several awards including 1994 FNB Vita Pick of the Fringe Award; 1995 FNB Vita Pick of the Stepping Stones Award; 1998 FNB Vita Young Choreographers Grant; 1999 and 2000 FNB Vita Choreographer of the Year; 2001 FNB Vita Best Choreography Award; and 2002 Standard Bank Young Artist of the Year for Dance. In 2002, he was nominated for the prestigious DaimlerChrysler Award, and in 2004 was among the finalists for the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative. In 2006 and 2007 Maqoma won the Gauteng MEC Award for his work *Beautiful US* and *Beautiful Me* respectively. He collaborated with the British based Choreographer Akram Khan with the London Symphonietta to the music of Steve Reich. He also created *Neon Flight* for South African Ballet Theatre, which premiered in Moscow in 2006.

Maqoma's work has been seen in Africa, Europe, USA and South America. He was Associate Artistic Director for FNB Dance Umbrella Festival 2010 and The Artistic Director of the Afro-Vibes Festival based in Holland. In 2009, Maqoma was selected as the head choreographer for the Fourth World Summit of Arts & Culture, held in South Africa, and presented *3 Colours* with Brett Bailey. He also acted as head choreographer for the FIFA World Cup Kick-Off Concert held in Johannesburg, Soweto, his birth place, in June 2010. His ongoing collaboration with theatre director James Ngcobo began in 2008 with *The Lion and the Jewel*; *The Hill* by Zakes Mda; *Crazy for Jazz*; and *Thirst*. This collaboration grew with the adaptation of *Master Harold and the Boys* produced by Theatre on the Square and *Sunjata* produced by the Market Theatre in 2011. In 2010 he was choreographer for a Hugh Masekela project *Songs of Migration* also produced by the Market Theatre. Maqoma is currently touring *Southern Bound Comfort* a double bill choreographed by Maqoma and Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui. In addition to his own choreography, Maqoma has taught and created repertoire for Moving into Dance, Jazzart Company, South African Ballet Theatre, and Cape Performing Arts, among others.

# EXIT / EXIST COLLABORATORS & PERFORMERS

## JAMES NGCOBO

(DIRECTOR)

James Ngcobo is stage, television and film actor best known for his roles as editor Joe Dlamini on the South African drama series *Hard Copy* (2005), and as Mojo Khumalo on the South African sitcom *Stokvel*, from 2003-2008 and 2010. Ngcobo has appeared at London's Young Vic in *The Revolution*, toured the United States in *The Horn of Sorrow*, toured Britain in *The Cherry Orchard*, and performed in *Sizwe Banzi is Dead* at Britain's Festival Hall. He trained with Kwa-Zulu Natal's Loft Theatre Company appearing in such productions as *La Ronde*, *Mujaji*, *Horn of Sorrow* and *Jesus Christ Superstar*. As a director he has become known for adaptations: Es'kia Mphahlele's *The Suitcase*; Fred Khumalo's autobiography, *Touch My Blood*; Wole Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel*; and *Thirst*, which saw Pelen Baldini's *The Water Carriers* transposed into an African setting. In 2007, Ngcobo won Best Director for *The Suitcase* at the Naledi Theatre Awards. In 2011, he turned his attention to the myth of the warrior king, Sunjata, who, legend has it, founded the Malian empire in the 13th century — the land of Timbuktu, the spiritual and intellectual capital of Africa.

## SIMPHIWE DANA

(SONGWRITER)

Simphiwe Dana is one of South Africa's most soulful singers, renowned around the world and adored for her impressive vocal prowess. As an award-winning singer whose albums have ascended to the top of international charts, and her music captures the hearts of those listening to it. Her third album, *Kulture Noir* (2010), has received two METRO FM Music Awards 2010 for Best Female and Best Contemporary Jazz Album, and also claimed the No. 1 spot on the German World Music Charts and the number 3 spot on the European Music Charts.

## GIULIANO MODARELLI

(COMPOSER/MUSICIAN)

Originally from Italy, Giuliano Modarelli is stylistically unique guitarist. During his musical training he explored many different genres of music from Western Classical to Trip Hop, Klezmer to Heavy Rock. After studying Jazz at University, he went on study under UK renowned sitarist Dharambir Singh and Indian classical maestro Buddhadev Dasgupta. His style is a subtle blend of World Folk, Arabic, Flamenco, Latin and Eastern European. His breadth of knowledge and soulful improvisation have led to awards and scholarships from the Arts Council England, SAA-UK, Sampad, Milapfest and others, enabling him to work with and learn from some of the world's most respected Indian Classical musicians such as L. Subramanian, J. Bose and Pt Ajoy Chakraborty. In addition to being a solo artist, Giuliano is also a core member of UK based band Samay, which combines traditional forms with a range of contemporary influences to reinvent the sound of Indian Classical Music, blending Jazz, Flamenco, Samba, Funk and Chill Out to create both powerful and dynamic arrangements. As part of the international project Sunev featuring Grammy Award winning tabla star Bikram Ghosh (Rhythm Scape), Giuliano collaborated with Bikram to write and perform for the soundtrack of the Mira

Nair film, *Little Zizou* (2008). He is also featured on the soundtrack of the latest Sangeeta Datta Film *Life Goes On*. Giuliano writes for theatre and dance, touring nationally and internationally with companies such as: Balbir Singh Dance Company, Motion Manual, Diversity Dance, Red Ladder Theatre and Phoenix Dance Theatre. He has also developed various music projects in the UK (such as Klezmer Trip with Bill Laurence, My Journey with Manvir Singh, Nshwa, Raga Nova) and performs regularly in prestigious venues throughout the country (Queen Elizabeth Hall, The Barbican, The Purcell Room, Bridgewater Hall, CBSO, BBC Venue/Radio) as well as at Darbar Festival, Music Port, Bestival, Womex, and Jazz and World Music festivals throughout the UK and abroad. Giuliano regularly works and trains in India where he tours with many outstanding artists such as Bickram Ghosh, Paban Das Baul, Pete Lockett, Purbayann Chatterjee, Sandip Chatterjee. These collaborations have allowed him to explore many different styles of South-Asian music including Bengali Folk, Rajastany Folk, Gazals, Thumri, Kayal, deepening his awareness of world music and continuing his journey into innovative and eclectic excellence.

## COMPLETE

(MUSICIAN/SINGERS)

Formed by brothers Happy and Bongikosi Motha in 2001 and later joined by Linda Thobela and Bubele Mgele, Complete is a vocal indulgence of harmonic voices. The quartet found its wings in the Assembly of God Church in Boksburg, Vosloorus, where they have built a fan base with regular performances. They were then recruited by Benjamin Dube to be part of the critically-acclaimed Praise Explosion 2004 and went on to perform at the T.D Jakes Mega Fest concert in Johannesburg, South Africa. Complete has a vision to touch and change the hearts of music lover's worldwide through singing gospel, RnB, and Scathamiya, a popular South African genre. Complete's music is spiritual, mature and extravagant and crosses cultural, racial and class barriers. Upon winning three awards in the Ekurhuleni local gospel competition (2003-2005) they were awarded an opportunity to perform at the 2004 KORA All Africa Music Awards. They have also worked with the legendary Hugh Masekela on 100 years of South African music, and on *Songs of Migration*, featuring Sibongile Khumalo. The group recently toured Germany and has worked with the legendary pianist Themba Mkhize and SWR big band. In South Africa, Complete was featured on Hip-Hop group Deep Level's song called *Thula mama* and recorded a hit song—*I'm complete*—on house group Revolution's album *tribal journey*. They are currently working on a new album.

## NICHOLAS HLOBO

(VISUAL DESIGNER)

Nicholas Hlobo was born in Cape Town in 1975, and received his Fine Art degree from Johannesburg's Wits Technikon (2002); he lives in Johannesburg. In 2008 he had a solo exhibition, *Uhambo*, in the Level 2 Gallery at Tate Modern, London, and showed at the ICA Boston as part of the *Momentum* series. Recent group exhibitions include: *ILLUMInations*, the 54th International Art Exhibition of the Venice Biennale, Venice (2011); *Touched*, the Liverpool Biennial (2010); *Dada South?* at the South African National Gallery, Cape Town (2009); *Beauty and Pleasure in South African Contemporary Art* at the Stenersen Museum, Oslo (2009); *Gender, (Trans) Gender and (De) Gendered*, a special project of the Havana Biennale, Cuba (2009); *Mythologies* at Haunch of Venison, London (2009); the third Guangzhou Triennial, China (2008); *Flow* at the Studio Museum in Harlem (2008); *Home Lands/Land Marks* at Haunch of Venison, London (2008). He was the winner of the Tollman Award for the Visual Arts 2006, and the Standard Bank Young Artist for Visual Art 2009. In 2010 he was one of 21 artists shortlisted for the Future Generation Art Prize and he is the Rolex Visual Arts Protégé for 2010/11, working with Anish Kapoor as his Mentor.



## PRESS & TOUR HISTORY

“Maqoma is a **truly global** dancer thinker. He brings to his work the multiple influences from his early street dance and traditional African dance experiences, a highly **stylized** sense of theatrical space, and the theatrical **savvy** of someone who has seen a lot and absorbed more.”  
- Danceviewtimes

“Maqoma has proved to **transcend generations** when it comes to **captivating audiences**.” - City Press

“Through layering these **distinct and diverse** styles with his own unique **lightness and humor**, *Beautiful Me* becomes a living self portrait and a provocative exploration of kinetic African identity.”  
- Lake Stevens Journal, Washington

“Besides being culturally meaningful and lovely, this dance piece is simply a stunning work of **athleticism and talent**. Maqoma moves effortlessly with the **grace** associated with modern dance, using abstract styles from contemporary artists. Even if it were devoid of meaning, this piece is **exciting and interesting** to watch. But what makes it truly special is that you leave the performance feeling not only impressed and jazzed over this amazing dancer, but **touched** by what you have just witnessed.” - Seattle Theatre Examiner

“From within a whirlwind of cultural resources and history, Maqoma and his musicians create an **intimate and heartfelt** performance that educates and all but **embraces its audience**.” - CultureSpotLA

What distinguishes Maqoma... is his **intelligently provocative** exploration of kinetic African identity where the rural impinges on the urban, where the hallowed intersects with the popular.  
- The Starr, Johannesburg

### DEBUT U.S. TOUR OCT – NOV, 2009 *BEAUTIFUL ME*

BATES COLLEGE  
LEWISTON, ME

REDCAT  
LOS ANGELES, CA

VSA/NORTH FOURTH ART  
CENTER  
ALBUQUERQUE, NM

YERBA BUENA CENTER FOR  
THE ARTS  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA

SEATTLE THEATRE GROUP  
/ACT THEATER  
SEATTLE, WA

MIAMI DADE COLLEGE  
MIAMI, FL

"MAQOMA IS A TRULY GLOBAL DANCER THINKER. HE BRINGS TO HIS WORK THE MULTIPLE INFLUENCES FROM HIS EARLY STREET DANCE AND TRADITIONAL AFRICAN DANCE EXPERIENCES, A HIGHLY STYLIZED SENSE OF THEATRICAL SPACE, AND THE THEATRICAL SAVVY OF SOMEONE WHO HAS SEEN A LOT AND ABSORBED MORE."

- DANCEVIEWTIMES