



A TWO EVENING MINI-FESTIVAL OF
CONTEMPORARY DANCE & THEATER BY WOMEN FROM AFRICA

VOICES *of* STRENGTH

CURATED BY
MAPP INTERNATIONAL PRODUCTIONS
& PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
THE AFRICA CONTEMPORARY ARTS CONSORTIUM

VOICES *of* STRENGTH

CONTEMPORARY DANCE & THEATER BY WOMEN FROM AFRICA

Voices of Strength is a two-evening "mini-festival" that offers U.S. audiences a special chance to see the stylistic diversity of contemporary dance across the African continent.

From dance rooted in and showing connections to tradition, to cutting edge performance that makes satirical use of classical conventions, the choreographers employ humor, irony, poignancy and power to reference personal obstacles as well as political and social themes, as they articulate women's struggles toward empowerment.



Kettly Noël (Haiti/Mali) &
Nelisiwe Xaba (South Africa)
Correspondances

They met through a friend in Johannesburg. A year later, they decided to create a piece together. They met again briefly in Port Elisabeth (South Africa) and got to know each other better. Another meeting in Bamako, then in Bern. After that started a series of correspondences...

Correspondances is a lively and sophisticated duet that is part theater, part dance and part storytelling. Noël and Xaba come together for a raucous conversation on diverse subjects - ranging from the superficial to the profound - that address the intimate fabric of friendship while exploring themes of race, culture and gender.

"...nothing less than mesmerizing."
- NYTheatre.com

Program 1



Maria Helena Pinto
(Mozambique)
Sombra

Sombra (Shadow) is a stark and poignant solo which gives voice and light to the hidden women of our societies.

In a harrowing landscape of overturned buckets, and with a bucket on top of her head both obscuring her vision and keeping the viewer from seeing her face, Pinto imagines women who are central to life - those who idealize, imagine, create, construct, plan, organize and execute - but exist in shadow.

U.S. Premiere!

Program 2



Bouchra Ouizguen (Morocco) *Madame Plaza*

Madame Plaza, created by Moroccan choreographer Bouchra Ouizguen and performed with three traditional “Aïta” vocalists whose custom includes guttural wailing and incantation, is a powerful merging of bodies with song.

In Morocco, the Aïta are paradoxically the object of admiration, fantasy, and also contemptuous rejection. Their artistry is often classified as folklore, but their presence is immediately and profoundly contemporary.

With touching directness and surprising humor, *Madame Plaza* brings forth an essential freedom of the body.

“Whatever the country, whatever the circumstance, the complex mixture of longing, regrets, hopes and frustrations played out on stage speaks to an understanding of friendship and female solidarity which will be immediately recognizable to everyone” - *Deutsche Welle*, Germany



Nadia Beugré (Côte d’Ivoire) *un espace vide: moi*

With *un espace vide: moi*, Nadia Beugré draws from her heritage and daily experiences to express, in an emphatic and intangible way, a woman’s journey to reclaim power and purpose.

Hers is a commanding onstage presence, and in this work she is joined by a live musician performing an original score. A former member of the stunning all-female Compagnie Tchétché, founded by the legendary Béatrice Kombé, Beugré leads the way for a new generation of contemporary choreographers from Côte d’Ivoire.

Each program will run approximately 2 hours including intermission. Engagements will also offer residency activities that create access points to the work and opportunities to engage with the artists.

For more information, contact:
Michelle Coe, Booking Manager
MAPP International Productions
michelle@mappinternational.org
646-602-9390

BIOGRAPHIES



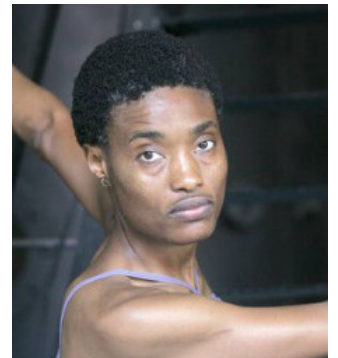
Kettly Noël

Originally from Port au Prince, Haiti, choreographer and dancer Kettly Noël has created a body of dance work over the past 15 years, seen widely in Africa and Europe, that deals with identity, and the fight for position of African artists and women, and includes *Ti'chelbé*, *Errance*, *L'Autre*, *Zones Humides Imaginaires* and *Bonjour Madame Noël*. She began dancing at the age of 17 with the Haitian-American Dance Theatre (now World Dance Theatre), and relocated to Paris in the early 1990's, where she trained as a dancer and actress and founded her first company. In 1996, she moved to Benin, where she continued to develop her choreographic technique while starting a program to train youngsters in

contemporary dance. Ms. Noël relocated to Mali in 1999, and founded Donko Seko, an organization where she built a space for dance workshops and choreographic research (with the first dance floor in Bamako); established the Bamako Dance Festival (the first international festival of contemporary dance in Mali); and expanded her dance training program for youth and adults. In 2010, Donko Seko hosted the biennial *Danse L'Afrique* dance festival.

Nelisiwe Xaba

Nelisiwe Xaba was born and raised in Soweto (South Africa), and received a scholarship to study at the Johannesburg Dance Foundation. After studying dance in London (with a 1996 Ballet Rambert Scholarship), she returned home to join Pact Dance Company, where she was company member for several years, and with whom she toured to Europe and the Mideast. She worked with a variety of choreographers, visual and theater artists, particularly Robyn Orlin, with whom she created works such as *Keep the Home Fires Burning*, *Down Scaling down*, *Life after the credits roll*, and *Daddy I've seen this piece six times before and I still don't know why they're hurting each other*, which toured for several years in Europe and Asia, winning the Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in Dance. In 2001, Ms. Xaba began to focus on her own choreographic voice, creating solo and group dance works that have been performed in Africa and Europe, including *Dazed and confused*, *No Strings Attached 1*, *No Strings Attached 2*, *Be My Wife (BMW)* (commissioned by the Soweto Dance Project), *Black!.. White* and *Plasticization*. Ms. Xaba has also collaborated as choreographer and dancer with fashion designers, opera productions, music videos, television productions, and multimedia performance projects.



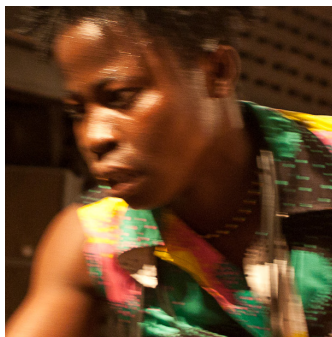
Bouchra Ouizguen

Born in Ouarzazate, Morocco, and educated in France, Bouchra Ouizguen was a soloist in oriental dance in Morocco from 1995 to 2000. From 1998 to 2001, she studied and performed in Marrakech and in France, with Bernado Montet, Mathilde Monnier, and Boris Charmatz. In 2002, with Taoufiq Izzeddiou and Saïd Ait El Moumen, Ms. Ouizguen founded ANANIA, a contemporary dance company in Marrakech that created the dance festival *On Marche*; she also collaborated that year in forming the *Al Mokhtabar* contemporary dance company. Ms. Ouizguen's choreographic works include: *Ana Ounta* (2002); *Fina ken'ti* (2002); *Mort et moi* (2005); *Déserts, desires* with Taoufiq Izzeddiou (2006); *Aïta* with Naïma Sahmoud (2007); and *Madame Plaza* (2008-

2009). They have been presented throughout Morocco and in France, including the prestigious Montpellier Dance Festival. *Madame Plaza* was presented as part of the 2010 FIAF Crossing the Line Festival in NYC. Since 2007, Ms. Ouizguen has been a co-organizer of the annual festival Rencontres Choreographiques of Marrakech.

Maria Helena Pinto

Maria Helena Pinto is a choreographer, dancer, and teacher in Maputo, Mozambique. Her choreographic works have been selected for presentation at festivals such as Afrique en Création (Madagascar, 2003), Festival Interculturel de Mayotte (2007), Danse l'Afrique danse (Tunisia, 2008), Rencontre de Danse Métisses (French Guyana, 2009), and Kaay Fecc (Senegal, 2009), and include *Sombra*, *Tempestade*, *O olho e a Percepção* (which toured to France and Finland), *Noticias* (which toured to Italy), and *Mar Vermelho* (performed in France and South Africa). Her current projects—the group piece, *CALA-TE* and the solo, *The Run of Africa*, will premiere in 2012-13. She has taught and choreographed at the National Dance School of Mozambique and Centro de Pesquisa Coreográfica, and has led her own dance school since 2003. In 2006, she co-organized the first International Contemporary Dance Festival in Maputo. She is currently building DANS'ARTES—a new center to host national, pan-African, and international meetings, festivals, performances and exhibitions. For her role in creating DANS'ARTS, and her efforts to develop contemporary arts and culture in Mozambique, Ms. Pinto was elected the "2010 Personality of Arts and Culture" by National Radio of Mozambique.



Nadia Beugré

Born in Zikisso in Côte d'Ivoire, Nadia Beugré made her first appearances with Dante Theatre in 1995. In 1997, she became a member of the groundbreaking, all-female dance ensemble, Compagnie TchétTché, founded by Béatrice Kombé. She performed with the company for eight years, touring in Africa, Europe and North America. Following Ms. Kombé's untimely death in 2007, Ms. Beugré began to create her own works. These include *un espace vide: moi*, performed in Tunis, Burkina Faso, England and France; *120 M/h*, a collaboration with choreographers (and childhood friends) Michel Kouakou and Daudet Grazaï Fabrice, which was developed in the U.S. at Bates Dance

Festival and VSA New Mexico/North Fourth Art Center, and premiered in Germany at Dansart Bielefeld 2010 Biennale; and *Quartier Libre*, which premiered at the 2010 Danse L'Afrique danse festival in Mali. She trained at the Centre Choréographiques in Montpellier, France with Mathilde Monnier; at l'Ecole des Sables in Senegal with Germaine Acogny; and at the Center for Choreographic Development in Burkina Faso with Carolyn Carlson and Burkinabé Bourou Amadou.

Voices of Strength

Critical response



Correspondances pushes the boundaries of theatre and dance, mixing elements of both forms until it shatters the very idea of form itself. A startling meditation on gender, power, and personal experience, its ultimate meaning is difficult to fathom—but *Correspondances* is never less than mesmerizing. ...a genre-pushing work.”

– Heather Violanti, NYTheatre.com



...powerfully sassy and rebellious...

– Les Inrocks, France (*Correspondances*)

This “singular” duo will, happily, shatter the misconception that in the personality or in the work of an African artist, it’s the adjective “African” that is most important. *Correspondances* is unbounded by territories.

– Mouvement.net, France



Whatever the country, whatever the circumstance, the complex mixture of longing, regrets, hopes and frustrations played out on stage speaks to an understanding of friendship and female solidarity which will be immediately recognizable to everyone.

–Deutsche Welle, Germany (*Madame Plaza*)

We get familiar with the heavy characters in this floating world. (Choreographer Bouchra) Ouizguen invites us to meet them on their ground. Magically, we are taken in. Their tome of love, futility, sisterhood, corporeality, and spirituality does transcend the language barrier.

– Lori Ortiz, Reading Dance



Contemporary dance is hugely popular around the world and yet extremely rare in Morocco. (*Madame Plaza*) is a brave piece.

– The View from Fez, Morocco

From the grand salutations to the African specific imagery that starts the show, we are far from the traditional dances that are so often mentioned and just as often commandeered. (T)he performers master their discipline and demand the emancipation of women in Africa today.

– L’Humanite, France (*Correspondances*)

**"THE WORK OF ART
AND THE WORK OF CULTURE
IS TO PAVE THE WAY FOR A
QUALITATIVE PRACTICE
OF THE IMAGINATION -
A PRACTICE WITHOUT
WHICH WE WILL HAVE
NO NAME,
NO FACE,
AND NO VOICE
IN HISTORY."**

-ACHILLE MBEMBE