

(Additional Information by WDA Secretary General)

Message for International Dance Day 2020 by Gregory Vuyani

MAQOMA

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Gregory Vuyani MAQOMA, South Africa

Dancer, actor, choreographer and dance educator



Gregory Maqoma – Founder and Creative Director of Vuyani Dance Theatre (VDT)

Gregory Vuyani Maqoma became interested in dance in the late 1980's as a means to escape the political tensions growing in his place of birth. He started his formal dance training in 1990 at Moving Into Dance where in 2002 he became the Associate Artistic Director. Maqoma has established himself as an internationally renowned dancer,

choreographer, teacher and director. He founded Vuyani Dance Theatre (VDT) in 1999 when he was undertaking a scholarship at the Performing Arts Research and Training School (PARTS) in Belgium under the direction of Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker. Maqoma is respected for his collaborations with artists of his generation like Akram Khan, Vincent Mantsoe, Faustin Linyekula, Dada Masilo, Shanell Winlock, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, Nhlanhla Mahlangu and Theatre Director James Ngcobo.

Several works in his repertoire have won him accolades and international acclaim. This includes FNB Vita Choreographer of the Year in 1999, 2001 and 2002 for Rhythm 1.2.3, Rhythm Blues and Southern Comfort respectively. He received the Standard Bank Young Artist Award for Dance in 2002. Maqoma was a finalist in the Daimler Chrysler Choreography Award in 2002 and in the Rolex Mentorship Programme in 2003. He is the recipient of the 2012 Tunkie Award for Leadership in Dance. In 2014 he received a “Bessie”, New York City’s premier dance award for Exit/Exist for original music composition. He served as a nominator in the 2016–2017 Rolex Arts Initiative as well as curating the 2017 Main Dance Program for The National Arts Festival. His current works ‘Via Kanana’ and ‘Cion: Requiem of Ravel’s Bolero’ are currently touring in Africa and Europe.

In 2017 Maqoma was honoured by the French Government with the Chevalier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres (Knight of the Arts & Literature) Award. In 2018 was honoured by the South African Department of Arts & Culture with the inaugural Usiba Award for dedication to dance teaching. In 2018 Maqoma is one of the selected visiting artists at the Virginia Commonwealth University Dance Department as well as a visiting teacher at Ecole De Sables – Toubab Dialaw – Senegal. Maqoma is part of the selection committee for Dance Biennale Afrique Festival to take place in Marrakech in 2020.

In 2018 Maqoma is choreographing and performing in William Kentridge’s new opera ‘The Head and The Load’ which premiered at

The Tate Modern Gallery in London in July, the world tour includes Germany, Holland, Austria and New York.

An inspirational leader and teacher as well as a creative force, Maqoma has served as associate artistic director of Moving Into Dance Mophatong, the Dance Umbrella festival and the Afro-Vibes Festival in the Netherlands and the UK. He is currently serving on the dance committee of the National Arts Festival.

Maqoma teaches at various universities in Africa, America and Europe, including the University of California. He has created repertoire for Moving Into Dance Mophatong, Jazzart Contemporary Dance Theatre, the South African Ballet Theatre and the Cape Academy of Performing Arts, among others.

Vuyani Dance Theatre

The Vuyani Dance Theatre (VDT) is a contemporary African dance company founded in 1999 by Creative Director Gregory Maqoma. After years of gracing international and local stages, VDT is positioned as one of the most cutting-edge, thought provoking and successful dance and theatrical organisations to have emerged in Africa. VDT is spot-on regarding its artistic objective of producing work that questions and challenges social values while, simultaneously, exploiting history as a launch pad for (material) research and development.

Various themes of concern to young people are also addressed through collaborative methods and forms that involve music and dance styles that are in keeping with the performers' own lives. Vuyani Dance Theatre approach embraces – in a dynamic and theatrical way – the many tastes, the different motivations, and the diverse cultures that shape the uniqueness of the South African society. Such is achievable courtesy of a pool of diligent creators and dancers who invariably express themselves with artistic excellence.

The company has performed in Europe, the USA, Africa, Mexico and New Zealand. It has scooped top awards in South Africa for dance and choreography and has received international recognition and continues to do so.

VDT constantly finds co-creators and performers from all over the world. Hitherto, the interaction that includes ideas and empirical artistic participation has led VDT in the direction of efficacy. It can be stated without doubt, at the moment, that all who have been aligned (in turns) with VDT since inception have in one way or another gained from the organization.