

Over 100 artists at relaunched Dance Umbrella Africa Fest

Dance Umbrella Africa (DUA) will make its return at the South African State Theatre in Pretoria from 31 March to 7 April 2018. In celebration of its relaunch, the lineup will showcase South Africa and the world's most prolific dancers and choreographers including Lulu Mlangeni, Sonia Radebe and Julia Burnham, Phumlani Nyanga, Dirk Badenhorst, German-Austrian Helge Letonja, Madagascar's Gaby Saranouffi as well as works from dance companies such as Vuyani Dance Theatre and Moving Into Dance Mophatong.

For the first time, Mlangeni, Radebe and Burnham will collaborate to put together a brand-new work that will premiere at Africa's dance festival. The details of the new piece are yet to be established. The formidable female trio will perform at the launch of the festival that is billed to take place on 31 March. Their performance forms part of a "double bill" that will feature authentic *pantsula* dance performance titled "My Foot, My Journey" by Eddie Ndou. The piece highlights young people who are faced with challenges of unemployment and poverty in the country.



Another figure who is bound to drop jaws and set tongues wagging is the free installation, "The Dish", by Wits University lecturer, performing and visual artist Oupa Sibeko. "The Dish" is a dance and photographic exhibition, in which Sibeko plays with a DStv dish portraying effects of media on the black body.

The internationally renowned dancer and choreographer Gregory Maqoma and the German-Austrian choreographer Helge Letonja will present their critically acclaimed European-South African co-production "Out of Joint", which responds to the experiences of human indignity all over the world. While "In-Between" by Phumlani Nyanga will focus on the feeling of being driven by external constraints and trapped in material needs amidst excessive economic growth.

On Tuesday 2 April, the revered Malagasy dancer Gaby Saranouffi wages a fight against the violence on women and children in a solo piece titled “#MOI”. “When the body has been abused, raped, destroyed, devastated, what’s left?” asks Saranouffi. Ballet choreographer Dirk Badenhorst fuses two distinct dance disciplines, *pantsula* and ballet to bring us a love story “Bengingazi” (I Didn’t Know) – the work is an innovative fairytale of how a Sowetan *pantsula* guy and a ballerina managed to fall in love amid their differences on.

Moving Into Dance Mophatong will showcase “Still Marching”, which is a magnificent work aiming at celebrating the lives and commitments of women on 4 April. Vuyani Dance Theatre Company will present “Gister Maobe” – choreographed by their senior dancer Otto Nhlapo – on Friday 5 April. The work reflects on oppression tied to the hands of time, the books of laws, the boundaries of land and the ruthless division of colour.

The revamped DUA is curated by the acclaimed award-winning dancer and choreographer and South African State Theatre’s deputy artistic director Mamela Nyamza; entrusting Nelisiwe Xaba and Sello Pesa with dramaturgy. The 2019 instalment will showcase 50 works by over hundred artists from various provinces in South Africa, extending to parts of Africa and continents Europe and North America, under the theme “Figure-ring the State of Dance in Africa!”

DUA 2019 tickets will cost from R80 to R100. There are day passes specials available at Webtickets online at www.webtickets.co.za or at Pick n Pay stores nationwide.

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