

Sun Journal

Encore

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LEWISTON — In its first-ever concert held during the academic year, the internationally acclaimed Bates Dance Festival will present "Beautiful Me," by renowned South African company Vuyani Dance Theatre.

The performance will be at 8 p.m. Friday, Oct. 16, in Schaeffer Theatre, 305 College St.

A global fusion of rousing live music sets the pace for this solo tour by dancer and choreographer Gregory Maqoma, a rising star on South Africa's dance and theater scene. "Beautiful Me" speaks honestly about the profound task of finding one's authentic voice and redefining our notion of postmodern African choreography.

Maqoma invited three of the world's most refreshing and articulate choreographers to contribute their voices to "Beautiful Me": Akram Khan of the United Kingdom, Faustin Linyekula of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Vincent Mantsoe of South Africa.

The result is a performance that layers influences of contemporary Kathak (classical dance from India), Afro-Fusion and visual dance theater with precision and lyrical warmth. Against a score for violin, cello, sitar and percussion, Maqoma traces the personal journey — and larger social history — that led to his own rich theatrical form.

Incorporating movement, music and text, the production plays out as a series of conversations culminating in a heartfelt, kinetic reflection on African identity.

Maqoma's works include "Layers of Time;" "Rhythm 1, 2, 3;" "Rhythm Blues;" "... and denial, and silence and ignorance ...," commissioned by the Pretoria Technikon Dance Department; "Autumn Harvest," commissioned by the International School Company in Amsterdam; "Revolution," for the Dunhill Symphony of Fire in Lagos, Nigeria; "Miss Thandi," a tribute to Raymond Matinyane commissioned by the 2002 FNB Vita Dance Umbrella festival; and the recent "Beautiful Trilogy," of which "Beautiful Me" is the final part.

Under Maqoma's direction, the Vuyani Dance Theatre Project has grown to include the Vuyani Ensemble, a project-based experimental jazz ensemble.

In 2002, Maqoma co-produced "New Directions," a dance program for the Standard Bank National Arts Festival. In 2003, he served as artistic leader for the Afro-Vibes Festival in Holland. Today, Maqoma is associate artistic director for the Moving Into Dance Company.

Tickets are \$20 for the general public, \$12 for students and seniors. They may be purchased online at www.batesdancefestival.org. For more information, call 786-6135.