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Dance

UPCOMING



Photograph by John Hogg

Mantsoe: From moonwalk to mysticism**DANCE THEATER WORKSHOP**

219 West 19th Street
212-924-0077, dtw.org
February 10 through 12

Soweto's Vincent Sekwati Koto Mantsoe once moonwalked for Johannesburg crowds as a member of the Joy Dancers, a Michael Jackson-inspired troupe he formed with friends as a teen. Today, he incorporates ritual movements into his choreography, borrowing from the mystical tradition his mother, a *sangoma* (traditional healer), exposed him to. "It's not something I do because I like this move," he says. "[I] dance four or five, six, seven hours before [I] can be taken to a different state. . . . In a year, I have to perform two ceremonies to [ask the ancestors to] borrow and modify certain moves."

Choreographer Reggie Wilson, who will moderate a post-show discussion of Mantsoe's *Ndaa* ("greeting") and *Motswa Hole* ("person from far") on opening night, sees a "natural connection" between "heritage dance" and the choreographer. "You're dealing with an issue of translating or transliterating . . . not different from what a medium, priest, [or] priestess might do."

Mantsoe says his works are "rooted in the African philosophy," and ultimately about culture preservation. "Obviously, we cannot understand [every aspect] of culture, but we can acknowledge [and] accept it." NANA EKUA BREW-HAMMOND