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For Immediate Release



MUSIC FOR THE EYES

South Africa's Via Katlehong Returns to Peak Performances With U.S. Premiere of 'Via Katlehong Cabaret,' March 16-24

Ready your hands to clap and your feet to stamp (*in rhythm, please*). Via Katlehong, the vibrant and exuberant South African dance company that evolved from an alternative for local youth to the threatening gangs roaming the township into an international phenomenon, returns to Peak Performances with the U.S. premiere of the "Katlehong Cabaret," March 16–24.

Performed by a powerhouse cast of nine singers, dancers, and musicians, the rousing 70-minute show is introduced by a master of ceremonies who guides the audience through some of the typical daily experiences of Katlehong black population. The alternately joyous, tragic and funny work combines the Pantsula, a kind of South African Hip-Hop that blends show-off moves from the local townships with fashion and slang, and gumboot, a response to the horrifying life of the miners translated into rhythmically complex, expressive tap dancing performed in the miners' rubber boots. The dancers create their own intricate music through their exuberant singing and dancing feet, generating an electricity that charges through and ignites the audience.

PERFORMANCE TIMES

Saturday, March 16 @ 8:00pm
Sunday, March 17 @ 3:00pm
Thursday, March 21 @ 7:30pm
Friday, March 22 @ 7:30pm
Saturday, March 23 @ 8:00pm
Sunday, March 24 @ 3:00pm

WHERE TO GO

The Alexander Kasser Theater at Montclair State University is located at 1 Normal Avenue, Montclair, New Jersey 07043. Tickets are \$15, and are available at the box office, www.peakperfs.org, or by calling 973-655-5112.

Charter bus service is provided from New York City's Port Authority Bus Terminal – arcade on 41st Street between 8th and 9th Avenues – to the Alexander Kasser Theater (\$10 per person, roundtrip) for all Saturday and Sunday performances. Bus reservations may be made by calling 973-655-5112 or by visiting www.peakperfs.org. For train service, available only on weekdays, go online to www.njtransit.com or call 973-275-5555.

For restaurants close to the Alexander Kasser Theater, visit www.destinationmontclair.com.

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COMPANY BACKGROUND

When it was initially formed in 1992, Via Katlehong was composed of youths from the township of Katlehong in the East Rand – a notorious war zone during the 1980’s uprisings in South Africa – as a vehicle to persuade young men away from the criminal activity raging in their township.

Founded and directed by Vusi Mdoyi, Steven Faleni and Buru Mohlabane, the organization is comprised of a community school of dance and 18 professional performers. Through its innovative approach to Pantsula, Gumboots, Tap and Steps, Via Katlehong helped to revive the form, making it an important feature in South African contemporary dance today. Its accumulated honors include FNB Vita Dance, Dance Umbrella awards, Gauteng Dance Showcase, KTV Most Brilliant Achievement and Gauteng MEC Development Award, among others.

They recently participated in Step Africa, an international cultural exchange series of dance workshops involving South Africa, the United States and Great Britain, and most recently, CNCDC Châteaувallon (France).

In addition to performances at Théâtre national de Chailiot in Paris, the company has performed in many other French cities and dance festivals such as Les Rencontres de La Villette in Paris, Suresnes Cités Danse, Suresnes, C’est de la Danse Contemporaine ! CDC –Toulouse, and venues such as Le Parvis – Scène Nationale de Tarbes, Dieppe Scène Nationale – Dieppe and L’Odysée, Périgueux.

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Produced by Damien Valette Productions. Co-produced by Via Katlehong Dance, Peak Performances at Montclair State (NJ), Théâtre national de Chailiot, and Scène nationale d’Orléans. Supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

The 2012/13 season is made possible in part by funds from: Association of Performing Arts Presenters; the National Endowment for the Arts; the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts; Discover Jersey Arts; the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation; Alison and James T. Cirenza; and The Honorable Mary Mochary.

Photo by Annley Boucher.