

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
January 18, 2022

## **South Africa's Entrenched Corruption and Hope for Redemption** **Explored in Vibrant Virtual Presentation, *Via Kanana***

***Founded during Apartheid and amidst a notorious war zone, dancers of Via Katlehong Dance re-envision South African dances into a high-energy exploration of society***

**Toronto, ON – Harbourfront Centre**, in partnership with **Digidance**, announces the North American premiere of the digital broadcast of South African dance company **Via Katlehong Dance** and contemporary choreographer **Gregory Maqoma's *Via Kanana*, streaming February 16 – March 6, 2022**. Pulsing with rhythmic vibrancy, eight performers combine the traditional, high-energy dance form of Pantsula (born out of South African protest) with tap, step and gumboot – a miners' dance based on hand strokes on the thighs and calves – into an exhilarating exploration of the problems and promise of their homeland.

The Canadian digital broadcast of *Via Kanana* is due to the coordinated effort of Digidance, a national initiative formed in response to COVID-19 between four of Canada's leading dance presenters: DanceHouse (Vancouver), Harbourfront Centre (Toronto), the National Arts Centre (Ottawa) and Danse Danse (Montreal).

"We're proud to present this impressive dance production from Via Katlehong Dance, which examines the corruption and the unfulfilled promises and powers of South Africa, made in the transition to democracy," says Nathalie Bonjour, Director, Performing Arts, Harbourfront Centre. "Choreographer Gregory Maqoma has combined dance and film sequences, singing and political texts into an emotionally charged fusion. With undiminished optimism, passion and exuberance, the work's message of hope and light, and the dream of a better world, promise to stay with audiences long after the performance ends."

As a highlight of Kuumba, Harbourfront Centre's longest running Black Futures Month Festival, *Via Kanana* is a non-stop torrent of energy. The hour-long work condemns the corrosive effects of corruption in South Africa and expresses frustration at how little has changed for the better for Black people since the end of Apartheid.

Hailed as "inspiring" and "electrifying," the work draws on a South African expression meaning "the promised land that never arrives." Careening from the mundane to the symbolic and played out via a series of scenes and vignettes, *Via Kanana* opens with one word: corrupt, projected onto an angled screen and repeated on a loop as part of the electronic soundtrack. Throughout the work, the dancers balance technical precision with wild abandon - dominated by the fast, frantic footwork of Pantsula that has drawn influences from everything from tribal dances to hip hop - while exploring themes of coercion, intimidation and seduction.

Founded in 1992, Via Katlehong Dance is well-known for combining Pantsula, tap dance, step and gumboot into a distinctly South African choreographic language that celebrates the calls for positive change. The award-winning company takes its name from the township of Katlehong in the East Rand (Johannesburg), one of the deprived neighbourhoods where the Protestant Pantsula culture was born and also home to a notorious war zone during the 1980s uprising.

The vision of the Pantsula rebellion arrives on the stage courtesy of Soweto-born Maqoma, one of the most talented artists of South Africa's new generation. As a dancer, teacher and choreographer, Maqoma's work is vibrant and elegant, earning him numerous awards for his choreography and for highlighting South African culture.

The digital broadcast of *Via Kanana* will include a short pre-show documentary about the development of *Via Kanana* and the Pantsula culture, produced by Filigrane Archives.

**For tickets and information on *Via Kanana* and Digidance, visit: [harbourfrontcentre.com](https://harbourfrontcentre.com)**

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## **About Harbourfront Centre**

Harbourfront Centre is a leading international centre for contemporary arts, culture and ideas, and a registered, charitable not-for-profit cultural organization operating a 10-acre campus on Toronto's central waterfront. Harbourfront Centre provides year-round programming 52 weeks a year, seven days a week, supporting a wide range of artists and communities. We inspire audiences and visitors with a breadth of bold, ambitious and engaging experiences. We champion contemporary Canadian artists throughout their careers, presenting them alongside international artists, and fostering national and international artistic exchange between disciplines and cultures.

## **LISTING INFORMATION**

***Via Kanana***

**Performed by Via Katlehong Dance and Choreographed by Gregory Maqoma**

Dates:

February 16–March 6, 2022

Video on Demand streaming in Canada only.

Available from midnight EDT on February 16, 2022

Price:

From \$15 + applicable taxes

Event Link:

[harbourfrontcentre.com](http://harbourfrontcentre.com)

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**For further media information, contact:**

Laura Murray C. 604.418.2998

[lmurray@mpmgarts.com](mailto:lmurray@mpmgarts.com)

MURRAY PATERSON  
MARKETING GROUP