



Sunday, November 12, 2017, 7pm
Zellerbach Hall

Direct from Johannesburg, South Africa

Festival of South African Dance

featuring the

Gumboots and Real Actions Pantsula Dance Companies

Gumboots Dance Company

Floor Dancers

Thanduxolo Mhlongo, Thulani Meyiwa, Katlego Makgopela, Owen Mabuza

Bassist/Vocalist

Mtshantsha Sabata

Drummer

Philani Maphumulo

Vocalists

Nkosinathi Malinga, Sizwe Nkosi, Thabang Maremela

Djembe/Lead Vocalist

Siyabonga Hlatswayo

Director

Thapelo Gordon Motloung

Real Actions Pantsula Dance Company

Floor Dancers

Sibusiso Mthembu (*choreographer*), Pule Ngcaba,
David Mokale, Nkosana Mlauzi, Patrick Dhlamini

DJ/Sound Engineer

Vouks Nojokes

Artistic Director

Sello Rueben Modiga

Cal Performances' 2017–18 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

Gumboots Dance Company
Stimela “The Gumboot” Musical

Gwa – Gwa – Gwa

A vibrant and energetic song that mine workers created with their gumboots. They sing it to get into a working mood.

Black & Hansa

A song that talks about two brands of beer that mine workers enjoy after work and during their off days.

We Mama

A song that tells of how difficult the first day underground can be for new mine workers. It makes them miss their mothers' love.

Midodo

A song that describes how working in the mine can be blissful and fun once you get used to it.

Imali

A song that explains why these men came to Johannesburg in the first place.
Money and more money.

Veleminah

A song that describes how men working in the mine cook and eat together at the hostels.

Namhlangifayo

A song that tells of how mine workers' families would cry and suffer if they were to die underground.

Mhlangifayo

A song that tells of how these men wish to be buried next to their fathers' *kraals* when they die. They sing this song whenever they miss home.

Dilika

A happy song that celebrates the approaching month's end—the day the men will be paid.

Month's End

A song that describes how happy these men will be after being paid, and the parties and fun they will enjoy once payday has arrived.

Yelele

A celebratory song that means fun, fun, and more fun!

Mamiya

A song about a woman who brews traditional beer called *Umqombothi* for the men. They normally sing this song to her when they want her beer.

Izintabeni

A song that recounts how these men miss their women,
who are miles and miles away.

Kwelizayo

“Kwelizayo” means “till we meet again.”

This is a song that men sing when they are going home to their families during the Christmas holidays. They sing it as if they are not sure they will see each other again.

Stimela

A song that describes how these men experience heartache and pain
aboard a train—the same train that took them away
from their families and the same train that takes them away from the bond
and the brotherhood they have formed with all the other mine workers.

INTERMISSION

Real Actions Pantsula Dance Company

Platform Scene

Early morning in South Africa, when people get ready for their different “hustles” in life

Construction Scene

A work hustle that many uneducated South African men do to earn a living

Car Wash Scene

A township car wash, where young boys make pocket money
for themselves since there are no jobs

Shebeen Scene

A social club (called a “shebeen”), where people gather
to watch soccer and have drinks

Hunters/Tradition Scene

Pantsula is inspired by South Africa’s culture and traditional dances.
We have always been hunters, in order to put food on our tables.

Stunt/Tycoon Scene

The dancers show off their individuality with different stunts and choreography
as a way to showcase their expensive clothing and celebrate their success in life.

Gumboots and Real Actions Pantsula Dance Companies

Gumtsula – Finale

A combination of the gumboots and pantsula dance styles, celebrating the
unique dance cultures from the mines and the townships of South Africa



Stimela "The Gumboot" Musical

Stimela "The Gumboot Musical" was written and directed by the acclaimed South African playwright Thapelo Gordon Motlounge. It is a vibrant musical piece told through narration, music, and gumboot dance, and tells a tale of rural African men who come by train from all walks of life in search of greener pastures in the City of Gold, Johannesburg. As time passes, life proves to be more challenging than they had expected. They endure the difficult working conditions in the gold mines simply to make ends meet so that they can send money back home. The journey unfolds through a series of flashbacks as we learn about each man's story from the eyes of Zakhele Ndlovu, a young Zulu man who leaves behind his mother and the love of his life, Buhle Zwane.

The story covers the history of gumboot dancing, weaving gumboot choreography throughout the production. Gumboot dancing, also known as "Isicathulo," was created by South African workers in the 1880s, men who were transported to Witwatersrand, South Africa, by European settlers to mine for gold. Because the mines were often flooded, the miners were provided with gumboots to protect their feet. They were forbidden to speak while they worked, so they would often jangle their ankle chains in order to communicate with one another.

As an art form, gumboot dancing uses the same methods of body articulation in a poly-rhythmic pattern while wearing Wellington gumboots, reminiscent of the way the miners would move their chains to communicate. Today, the dance serves as a potent symbol of South African history and culture and is often seen in routines on the streets and plazas of tourist areas in Johannesburg and Cape Town.

Thapelo Gordon Motlounge and the Gumboot Dance Company have toured their production throughout South Africa as well as in parts of New Zealand, receiving great critical acclaim. Motlounge's mission as a playwright is to preserve and restore South African traditions while sharing art forms like gumboot dancing with the world.

Thapelo Gordon Motlounge is the award-winning director of the Gumboot Dance Company and playwright of *Stimela "The Gumboot" Musical*. A specialist in traditional/indigenous African, tap, pantsula, and gumboot dancing, Motlounge's mission is to preserve and restore local traditions and to shed light on topics deemed controversial in certain South African communities.

Motlounge's work is produced predominantly throughout South Africa and New Zealand, and he has earned acclaim with such productions as *Like Cain and Abel* (2005), a story of love and tolerance regarding the global LGBTQ community, and *Spirit and Bones* (2010), a story of African traditional healers that was commissioned for several festivals in South Africa. *Stimela "The Gumboot" Musical* is now being seen for the first time in the United States, and recounts the rich history of gumboot dancing through the stories and struggles of South African gold miners in the late 19th century.

Real Actions Pantsula was established in 1992 by Sello Reuben Modiga, who created the group after recognizing the talent of young dancers in Orange Farm, a small town in South Africa outside of Johannesburg. The group consists of 30 young, talented teenagers from throughout the community. One of Modiga's missions as a director and choreographer is to help take South Africa's youth off the streets, employing the power of dance as a means of protecting them from the harmful influences found in their communities.

Real Actions Pantsula has traveled locally, nationally, and internationally since its founding and is renowned for its unique interpretations of pantsula dance. The performers believe that their passion for dance will have a positive impact on their community, and will revive a spirit of "ubuntu," the Zulu word for "humanity."

The group's choreography, as with many pantsula dance companies in South Africa, consists of quick, syncopated steps that usually are set to modern pop, electronic, techno, or House music.



Historically, pantsula dancing has been used as a form of political speech, criticizing the Apartheid government, for instance, or socio-economic injustice, or even the government's response to the AIDS epidemic. This freedom of expression dates back to the early 1980s, and has created an art form that is a proud expression of South African culture.

Sello Rueben Modiga, *director*

Since 1998, Sello Rueben Modiga has been the owner and director of Real Actions Pantsula. Modiga's mission is to use his choreography and his company as a vehicle to empower the people of South Africa and give them opportunities to thrive, despite their sometimes challenging surroundings. Modiga has said, "Pantsula dance is a gift given to man by nature... so we must nurture this dance form by teaching more kids, so that they can get off the street, not commit crime and/or do drugs."

Modiga established Real Actions Pantsula after discovering the wealth of young and talented dancers in Orange Farm, South Africa. Currently, Real Actions Pantsula consists of 30 teenagers from throughout the community. Modiga has taken the group on tours to China, the Republic of Congo, and Los Angeles, teaching and empowering young people in those locations, just as he has in South Africa.

Modiga received the 2009 Pick of the Stepping Stones Award at the FNB Dance Umbrella Awards in South Africa. One year later, he performed at the pre-opening ceremony for the FIFA World Cup in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Columbia Artists
5 Columbus Circle @ 1790 Broadway
New York, NY 10019
www.columbia-artists.com