

JOBURG
BALLET



SCARICITY



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SCAR|CITY

Ukukhanya Kwenyanga: A Moonlight Waltz
Azul

INTERVAL

The Void
Salomé

The Mandela
at Joburg Theatre
15, 22 March at 19h00
16, 17, 23, 24 March at 14h00
20, 21 March at 11h00
2024

Cover:

Nicole Ferreira-Dill and Bruno Miranda |

Ukukhanya Kwenyanga: A Moonlight Waltz

This page:

Monike Cristina and Revil Yon | *The Void*

Programme photographs by Lauge Sorensen





From Elroy Fillis-Bell | CEO

Welcome to Joburg Ballet's first season of 2024, our 30th year of democracy in South Africa – a considerable milestone I felt required artistic engagement. In considering the title, SCARCITY, we wanted to connect the layers of this current moment, politically, socially, and environmentally, through dance. With this title as a brief, this season's programme presents an extraordinary range of artistic responses from prolific choreographers. The variety of choreographic styles and storytelling approaches showcases the diversity and breadth of capabilities and technique of Joburg Ballet.

I am appreciative of our hosts, Joburg Theatre, and the City of Johannesburg for supporting our work, allowing us to make a positive impact in the city. I would like to thank the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in South Africa who have supported production elements from Dutch collaborators, allowing us to bring *Azul* to Joburg Ballet. *Azul*'s presentation has also been supported by the Embassy of Spain in South Africa. The presentation of *The Void* is thanks to our co-production with Hannah Ma Dance, supported by the Ministry of Culture Rhineland-Palatinate in Germany.

To our choreographers, Dada, Hannah, Jorge and Craig, thank you for committing to this programme so fully. Thank you, Dr Lliane Loots, for helping me broaden Joburg Ballet's community of collaborators. Thank you, Andrew Gilder, for answering my call for an opinion piece that engages with this democratic milestone through the lens of ballet. Finally, thank you to our Company of dancers, staff and board for trusting me. As we've navigated a period of transition over my first six months, I am proud to announce the appointment of Kim Vieira as Ballet Mistress.

We are excited to bring SCARCITY to Oudtshoorn as part of the Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees (KKNK) at the end of March and to tour this bill to the Baxter Centre in Cape Town in October. I welcome you to join us for *The Sleeping Beauty* opening on 28 June at Joburg Theatre with bookings now open. Audiences can look forward to a packed 2024 with Veronica Paeper's *La Traviata – The Ballet* opening at Montecasino's Teatro in August and the premiere of Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, choreographed by Mario Galgione, opening in October at Joburg Theatre. So, remember, when in doubt this election year – VOTE JOBURG BALLET!



Reflections on SCARCITY by Andrew Gilder

As Joburg Ballet's SCARCITY takes to the Johannesburg stage, South Africa stands on the cusp of a sixth democratic election cycle that offers a potential escape from perceived political "scarcity" and ferments (and foments) in the aftermath of a Budget Speech that cleverly leverages abundance out of actual financial "scarcity".

This pivotal juncture offers an opportunity to reconsider the role of the ballet company in our post-Apartheid country, and to reflect upon the impact and evolution of ballet across thirty years of democracy and whether the artform has anything useful to say about our current social and political lives.

This reflection on SCARCITY, while heartfelt, is also limited in at least two ways: conceptually, because it is personal and confined to examining the societal and artistic role of the ballet company; and temporally, because it is a small glimpse into a dynamic artform at a particular moment in our national socio-political evolution.

My foundational question, therefore, is whether ballet in South Africa is still emblematic of Eurocentric "high culture" and continuing anathema to an evolving South African dance and artistic aesthetic? Adrienne Sichel, now retired but for decades an eminent performing arts critic and writer, devised the following equations to codify dance genres in the pre-democratic era driven by the nationalist government's perceptions of elitism. I have added my own italicized parentheses:

“Ballet = tutu = beautiful = art”

(potentially engaging and entertaining but saccharine-and-vacuous)

“Contemporary dance = ugly = rolling-on-the floor = alien = not art”

(potentially engaging and entertaining but deep-and-meaningful)

Is it possible, post-democracy, to alter the variables in Sichel’s equations to arrive at a notion of a South African ballet company that engages and entertains with integrity, and which honestly interrogates prevailing societal norms and the authenticity of the human condition? As early as 2012 and after detailed analysis of the inevitably racialized overtones of South Africa’s dance history, Steven van Wyk was able to conclude that to rail against ballet in the post-Apartheid dance landscape would be to deny the multiple ways in which this form is deeply woven into South Africa’s cultural fabric.

An analytical crux of Van Wyk’s thesis is his examination of the training and professional oeuvre of Dada Masilo who debuts her newly created *Salomé* (interpreting Oscar Wilde’s play) as part of SCARCITY. While *Salomé* explores desire, power and passion in Masilo’s uniquely woven and textured movement language, the point is not that Masilo uses a balletic dance vocabulary in *Salomé* or any of her other creations (because she does not), but rather that Masilo herself is a product and brilliant exponent of, but ultimately represents conceptual and artistic reaction to, the classical ballet tradition.

This is not to downplay the broader range of vocational training (beyond classical) to which Masilo and her fellow SCARCITY choreographers have been exposed. Rather, schooling in a wide diversity of dance forms, including classical ballet, is the prerequisite for entry into many (if not most) professional dance companies worldwide, notwithstanding their disparate objectives or various societal and geographic locations. Even genre-specific companies, such as Jazzart Dance Theatre and Flatfoot Dance Company, include classical class as a component of the company dancer’s training and development.

Without exception, the choreographers and dancers who bring their considerable combination of talent to SCARCITY have been comprehensively, but not exclusively, classically trained and while the programme does indeed include tutus, for example in Craig Pedro’s *Ukukhanya Kwenyanga: A Moonlight Waltz*, even that costuming staple is re-envisioned with Xhosa print and bead motifs. By contrast, Jorge Pérez Martínez’s *Azul* seeks to evoke the creator’s Mediterranean and Spanish roots and Hannah Ma’s *The Void* peers into the beauty and connectivity of human existence.

While Masilo can now smile at her younger self’s ambition of being a ballerina, it is not inadvertent that the mature artist has built an international reputation on reinterpreting the classical balletic tradition from an Africanist perspective, teasing-out human essences that are as valid to a (South) African as to a European worldview. For example, in relation to Masilo’s version of *Swan Lake* Van Wyk comments that her balletic expertise extends, rather than diminishes, the critique of that classical staple in a manner that imbues her reinterpretation “with an authentic South Africanness”.

The recent Budget Speech announces an approach to government’s financial woes that depends upon generating abundance from scarcity. In a philosophically similar manner, Joburg Ballet’s SCARCITY is built upon the creative and artistic abundance of a South African ballet company that locates itself firmly within prevailing local contexts and, in the words of the company’s CEO, which seeks to respond artistically to the experiences and lives of its fellow citizens – through dance.

Andrew Gilder is an ex-professional dancer and keen observer of, and commentator on, dance and the performing arts who wrote intensively and voluminously for a range of publications including the Turkish Daily News (out of Istanbul), Dance Europe (out of London), and the Mail and Guardian, the Cape Times, The Star, New Day and the Financial Mail, between 1998 and 2014. Andrew is a guest company teacher for Joburg Ballet, the Co-Chair of the South African International Ballet Competition and a leading South African climate change lawyer.

Darragh Hourrides | Ruan Galdino
Ukukhanya Kwenyanga: A Moonlight Waltz



UKUKHANYA KWENYANGA: A MOONLIGHT WALTZ

In *Ukukhanya Kwenyanga: A Moonlight Waltz* to music by Johann Strauss and Pietro Mascagni, Craig Pedro merges the European style of dance with South Africa's beautiful Xhosa designs by choreographing a waltz highlighting classical ballet technique with dancers in romantic tutus embellished with Xhosa print and bead motifs. "As a nation faced with many social ills and their impacts," he says, "we have proven our resilience and tenacity. Our shortcomings and limited resources have never impeded us from finding that glimmer of hope amid dark times. We continue to make something out of nothing and dance in the moonlight!"

Choreography by Craig Pedro

Music Johann Strauss II: *Voices of Spring*

Pietro Mascagni: Intermezzo from *Cavalleria Rusticana*

Johann Strauss II: *Roses from the South*

Costume design by Craig Pedro and Yolanda Roos

Lighting design by Simon King

The Cast

Nicole Ferreira-Dill / Monike Cristina / Tammy Higgins / Darragh Hourrides

Bruno Miranda / Marlon Sales / Ivan Domiciano / Revil Yon / Ruan Galdino

Tammy Higgins / Darragh Hourrides / Savannah Jacobson

Darragh Hourrides / Savannah Jacobson

Cristina Nakos / Alice Le Roux

Chloé Blair / Savannah Jacobson / Alice Le Roux / Josie Ridgway

Tammy Higgins / Darragh Hourrides / Savannah Jacobson

Darragh Hourrides / Josie Ridgway

Ivan Domiciano / Bruno Miranda / Gabriel Fernandes / Mbongeni Moyake

Mario Gaglione / Luhle Mtati / Marlon Sales / Tumelo Lekana / Mbongeni Moyake

Revil Yon / Ruan Galdino / Luhle Mtati / Miguel Franco-Green

Ruan Galdino / Gabriel Fernandes / Miguel Franco-Green / Thabani Ntuli

Craig Pedro



Craig Pedro matriculated in 2008 and completed his Advance 1 Cecchetti. He joined South African Ballet Theatre as an apprentice and completed his apprenticeship at the end of 2009. He joined Cape Town City Ballet at the end of 2010 and remained there until 2019, working his way up the ranks to senior soloist and performing featured and leading roles in several productions. He joined Joburg Ballet in 2019 as an ad hoc dancer and later became a soloist. He choreographed his first ballet, *I Am Woman*, on the company in 2021. He joined the UK and Ireland tour cast of Disney's *The Lion King* musical as an ensemble member at the end of 2021. He rejoined Joburg Ballet as a soloist in 2024.

Shannon Glover | Marlon Sales
Azul



AZUL

With *Azul*, Netherlands-based Spanish choreographer Jorge Pérez Martínez has created a fresh, spirited piece distinguished by its expressive body language and beautiful pas de deux work. Danced to four classical Spanish guitar compositions, *Azul* captures an evocative Mediterranean and Spanish atmosphere. *Azul*, which is the Spanish word for blue, has a fluid dance language reminiscent of flowing water.

Choreography by Jorge Pérez Martínez

Assistant to the Choreographer Kim van der Put

Music Joaquin Rodrigo: *Concierto de Aranjuez*

Francisco Tárrega: *Recuerdos de la Alhambra*

Antonio Vivaldi: *Andante*

Isaac Albéniz: *Suite Espanola*

Costume design by Sjaak Hullekes

Lighting design by Berry Claassen

The Cast

Neo Moloi / Bruno Miranda / Cristina Nakos / Darragh Hourrides / Savannah Jacobson / Latoya Mokoena / Kitty Phetla / Gabriel Fernandes / Revil Yon / Monike Cristina / Nicole Ferreira-Dill / Ruan Galdino / Marlon Sales / Luhle Mtati / Miguel Franco-Green / Alice Le Roux / Josie Ridgway / Chloé Blair / Tumelo Lekana / Thando Mgobhozi / Thabani Ntuli / Ivan Domiciano / Mbongeni Moyake

Jorge Pérez Martínez



Born in Spain, Jorge Pérez Martínez studied classical and contemporary ballet at the Real Conservatorio Profesional de Danza de Madrid. After graduation he worked in companies in Spain (Santamaria Compañía de Danza, Ballet de Carmen Roche), France (Europa Danse), Switzerland (Stadttheater Ballet Bern) and the Netherlands (Introdans). During his professional career he has performed a diverse repertoire on international stages by such renowned choreographers as Jiří Kylián, Hans Van Manen, Glen Tetley, Lucinda Childs, Nacho Duato, Nils Christie, Mats Ek and Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui. In the last few years he has been active as a choreographer creating pieces for Introdans and Generale Oost (The Netherlands), Landestheater Eisenach, Theater Erfurt (Germany), Valencia Endanza (Spain), Hong Kong International Summer Dance School (ISDS) and teaching workshops in America and Europe. In November 2023 he was awarded a prize in Germany for his choreography of *Zorbas*, as best production of the year. Currently he works at Introdans as rehearsal director and choreographer.

Joburg Ballet gratefully acknowledges the support of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Embassy of Spain for the production of *Azul*



Monike Cristina | Revil Yon
The Void



THE VOID

In a world set on fire, multi-award winning Chinese-German choreographer Hannah Ma takes a dive into the vastness of the human soul with *The Void*, creating a moment of stillness, joy, truth, deep connection and forgiveness. *The Void* is a powerful reminder of the beauty of human existence and the need to preserve humanity and all lives at all times. She describes *The Void* as “a ceremonial celebration of dance as a form of resistance that will tenderly caress the spectator’s heart”.

Choreography by Hannah Ma

Co-creation: Dancers of Joburg Ballet

Music: Raime, Julius Eastman, Khally Dragon Chang, Sebastian M. Purfürst

Sound adaption: David Ma

Costume design by Hannah Ma and Yolanda Roos

Lighting design by Simon King

Special thanks: Ashraf, Alain, Jabu, Elroy, Kabelo, Liane, Thabang

The Cast

Chloé Blair / Monike Cristina / Ivan Domiciano / Gabriel Fernandes / Nicole Ferreira-Dill /

Mario Gaglione / Ruan Galdino / Miguel Franco-Green / Darragh Hourrides /

Savannah Jacobson / Tumi Lekana / Alice Le Roux / Thando Mgobhozi / Bruno Miranda /

Neo Moloi / Luhle Mtati / Mbongeni Moyake / Cristina Nakos / Thabani Ntuli / Craig Pedro /

Kitty Phetla / Josie Ridgway / Marlon Sales / Revil Yon

Einon Doubell / Danielle Fletcher / Thando Mgobhozi /

Kayleigh Smith / Katelyn Van Herk

Hannah Ma



Hannah Ma is a multi-awarded artist who has roots in Hong Kong, China and Berchtesgaden, Germany. She was educated at the Conservatory of Vienna and the John-Cranko School, Stuttgart and had scholarships with Kirov Ballet and Hong Kong Ballet. She works as a performer, choreographer, curator, editor, writer, mentor and producer. Her artistic practice is primarily situated in a de-colonial context and focuses on intersectional storytelling and the representation of multi-perspective narratives. In her sculptural choreographies, Hannah Ma explores structural mechanisms of marginalisation and creates poetic parallel universes whose cosmologies are shaped by diversity mainstreaming, empowerment of feminist action and gender equity. In addition to her work in the performing arts, Hannah Ma works in hospice care and as a coach for somatic transformation and de-colonisation processes. Hannah Ma's work stands for productions in the field of tension between art, activism and cultural politics, oscillating between performance, installation and dance work. Her productions have been shown at festivals and theatres such as Ruhrfestspiele Recklinghausen (Germany), National Arts Festival Makanda (South Africa), Festival Passages (France), Expo Shanghai (China), German Consulate General (New York) and Théâtre National du Luxembourg.

Joburg Ballet gratefully acknowledges the support of the Ministry of Culture of Rhineland Palatinate for the production of *The Void*

Latoya Mokoena | Revil Yon
Salomé



DADA MASILO'S SALOMÉ

For her first commission for Joburg Ballet, internationally acclaimed South African choreographer Dada Masilo has created *Salomé*. Based on Oscar Wilde's play, *Salomé* revolves around desire, power and the destructive nature of unbridled passion. Dada Masilo says she loves to tell a story in works that are universally accessible and she sees *Salomé* as an opportunity to create a movement vocabulary which sits well on Joburg Ballet and that challenges herself and the dancers.

Choreography by Dada Masilo

Music Max Richter (November, Sarajevo)
Steve Reich (Music for 4 Sections)
Ludwig van Beethoven (Symphony #7, 2nd Movement)
Julia Kent (Ground)
Mpho Mothiba (Percussion)

Costume design by Dada Masilo and Yolanda Roos

Lighting design by Simon King

The Cast

Jokanaan, a prophet	Revil Yon / Thando Mgobhozi / Mbongeni Moyake
Salomé	Neo Mloi / Savannah Jacobson / Latoya Mokoena
Queen Herodias	Tammy Higgins / Craig Pedro / Kitty Phetla
King Herod	Thando Mgobhozi / Mbongeni Moyake
Women Courtiers	Savannah Jacobson / Latoya Mokoena / Tammy Higgins
Men Courtiers	Gabriel Fernandes / Miguel Franco-Green / Tumelo Lekana / Neo Mloi / Thando Mgobhozi / Mbongeni Moyake / Luhle Mtati / Thabani Ntuli / Craig Pedro / Revil Yon

Assistants to Ms Masilo: Tshepo Zasekhaya, Steven Mokone

Dada Masilo



Dada Masilo was born in Johannesburg and began training at The Dance Factory at age eleven. On matriculating from the National School of the Arts, she trained for a year at Jazzart in Cape Town and at the age of nineteen was accepted as a student at the Performing Arts Research and Training Studios in Brussels where she remained for two years. She returned to South Africa and in 2008 was awarded the Standard Bank Young Artist Award for Dance. Three commissions from the National Arts Festival resulted in *Romeo and Juliet* (2008), *Carmen* (2009) and *Swan Lake* (2010). In May 2017, she premiered her *Giselle* in Oslo and in 2021 *The Sacrifice* in Vienna. Since 2012, her works have been performed in thirty countries and 176 cities. Awards: 2016 Nominated for a Bessie Award (*Swan Lake*), 2017 Danza&Danza Award for Best Performance (*Giselle*), 2018 Prince Claus Next Generation Award; 2020 UK Critics' Circle National Dance Award for Outstanding Female Modern Performance for the title role in *Giselle*.

Craig Pedro



Jorge Pérez Martínez



Hannah Ma



Dada Masilo



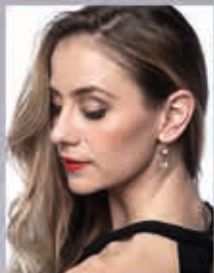
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Nicole Ferreira-Dill



Shannon Glover



Ivan Domiciano



Ruan Galdino



Tammy Higgins

SOLOISTS



Bruno Miranda



Revil Yon



Gabriel Fernandes



Mario Gaglione



Darragh Hourrides

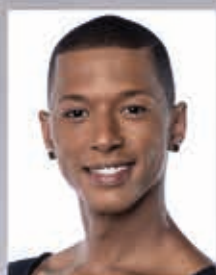


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CORPS DE BALLET



Luhle Mtati



Thabani Ntuli



Miguel Franco-Green



Savannah Jacobson



Latoya Mokoena



Neo Moloi

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Josie Ridgway



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Programme compiled by Jonathan Hurwitz

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