US Premiere • HOP Co-Commission

Dada Masilo/The Dance Factory presents

Dada Masilo

Giselle

Post-performance discussion with the artists

Funded in part by the Wetzel Family Fund for the Arts, the Melville 1960 and Leila Straus Fund, and a gift from Judy and Thomas E. Oxman, M.D. ’71 MHS ’80. Supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts, ARTWORKS.

Fri • March 30, 2018 • 8 pm
Sat • March 31, 2018 • 8 pm
The Moore Theater • Dartmouth College
Dada Masilo **Giselle**

There will be a five-minute technical pause following Act 1

**ACT 1**
*A Village*

**ACT 2**
*Land of the Wilis/Spirits*

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## Credits

**Dada Masilo Giselle (2017)**

**Dancers:**
- Giselle ................................................................. Dada Masilo
- Albrecht ............................................................... Xola Willie
- Hilarion ................................................................. Tshepo Zasekhaya
- Myrtha, Queen of the Wilis ..................................... Llewellyn Mnquni
- Bathilde ................................................................. Liyabuya Gongo
- Giselle’s Mother ...................................................... Khaya Ndlovu
- Men/Wilis .............................................................. Thami Tshabalala, Steven Mokone, Tshepo Zasekhaya, Thami Majela
- Women/Wilis ......................................................... Ipeleng Merafe, Khaya Ndlovu, Zandile Constable, Liyabuya Gongo, Nadine Buys

**Music** ............................................................................................................................................ Philip Miller
**Drawings** ....................................................................................................................................... William Kentridge
**Directorial Assistance** .................................................................................................................. David April
**Lighting** ......................................................................................................................................... Suzette le Sueur
**Costumes** ...................................................................................................................................... David Hutt of Donker Nag Helder Dag (Act 1); Songezo Mcilizeli & Nonofo Olekeng of Those Two Lifestyle (Act 2)

**Musicians for Recording**
- **Vocalists** .......................................................... Ann Masina, Vusumuzi Nhlapo, Bham Maxwell Ntabeni, Tumelo Moloi
- **Strings** .............................................................. Electric violin: Waldo Alexander, Violin/Viola: Emile de Roubaix, Cello: Cheryl de Havilland
- **French horn** ........................................................ Shannon Armer
- **Percussion** .......................................................... Tlale Makhene, Riaan van Rensburg
- **Final Mix** ............................................................. Gavan Eckhart
This is Masilo's fourth reinterpretation of a great classic after her Romeo and Juliet (2008, Standard Bank Young Artist for Dance), Carmen (2009) and Swan Lake (2010).

The (traditional) ballet is about a peasant girl named Giselle who dies of a broken heart after discovering that her lover is betrothed to another. The Wilis, a group of supernatural women who dance men to death, summon Giselle from her grave. They target her lover for death but Giselle’s love frees him from their grasp.

In Masilo’s version, Myrtha, Queen of the Wilis, is a Sangoma. The Wilis are spirits/ancestors who literally call Giselle to join them. They are not a group of sweet, sad girls, but rather something more terrifying: they have been had. They are heartbroken. And they want revenge. Their spirits can only be free if they bring about the deaths of those who wronged them. Giselle does not forgive. After her revenge, she is released from the mortal world and too can be free.

Masilo says: “It is a big challenge to revise yet another classic without repeating myself. I aimed to create a work that is not about forgiveness, but about love, deceit, betrayal, anger and heartbreak. I strove to create new movement vocabulary and to push myself in terms of storytelling. In the traditional ballet, there is a clear narrative, but the characters are rather two-dimensional. The emphasis is on the steps, rather than on the unique psychologies of the protagonists: Albrecht and Hilarion seem just there to support the female lead, Giselle’s mad scene relies on messy hair … I wanted to go much deeper and, most importantly, to create Wilis that are really vicious.”

**Translations**

Hamba Nhliziyo Yami traditional funeral hymn

Go to heaven my heart, for there is no peace on this earth.

Myrtha’s Calling of the Wilis/Spirits

I’m calling all of you! Here is a man who is breaking hearts! Catch him!

**Program Notes**

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**About the Artists**

**Dada Masilo (choreographer)** was born and bred in Johannesburg, South Africa. She began formal training at the Dance Factory at the age of 11. At the age of 19, she 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 prestigious Standard Bank Young Artist Award for Dance. Three commissions from the National Arts Festival resulted in her Romeo and Juliet (2008), Carmen (2009) and Swan Lake (2010). Since 2012, her works have toured extensively throughout Europe. In 2016, she staged and performed her Swan Lake in Ottawa, Montreal, Hanover, Amherst and Pittsburgh, finishing with six performances at the Joyce Theater, New York. Subsequently, she was nominated for a Bessie Award.

She returned to New York that September, to stage her Spring at City Center as part of Fall for Dance and again six months later to create a gallery work accompanying Romare Bearden’s Bayou series. This was performed at the DC Moore Gallery.

In May 2017, she premiered her Giselle at Dansenshus, Oslo. It has since played in Kuopio (Finland) at the University of Johannesburg; and at the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown, the Wits 969 Festival in Johannesburg, Impulstanz in Vienna (Austria), followed by seasons in Geneva, Rome, Ferrara and Reggio Emillio. The year 2017 ended with performances of Refuse the Hour in San Francisco and Los Angeles; and performances of Masilo’s Swan Lake in Singapore and across Germany.
About the Artists continued

Masilo has also collaborated with William Kentridge and has been seen in Paris, Amsterdam, Berlin, Athens, Rome, New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Perth, Avignon and Vienna, in his Refuse the Hour.

Masilo performs in her own works, together with some of South Africa’s finest dance artists, selected by audition. She is artist-in-residence at the Dance Factory. She previously appeared at the Hopkins Center in 2015.

**Philip Miller (music)** is a composer and sound artist from South Africa who works in many different media, from live performance to film, video and sound installations. His longtime collaboration with artist William Kentridge includes the recent projects Triumphs and Laments, Rome; Five Themes at the Tate Modern, London; the opera production Refuse the Hour; and the multimedia installation Refusal of Time exhibited at Dokumenta 13, Kassel, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and the Whitechapel Gallery, London. His live performance of the award-winning choral composition Rewind, a cantata for voice, tape and testimony, has been presented internationally, and he has scored numerous award-winning soundtracks including HBO’s The Girl, the Emmy award winner Miners Shot Down, The Book of Negroes and Roots. In 2016 Miller premiered his new video and sound installation, Bikohausen, at Germany’s Darmstadt Summer Music Festival, and in collaboration with composer Thuthuka Sibisi, The African Choir of 1891 Re-imagined, at the Autograph Gallery in London. They are developing this into a live production. www.philipmiller.info.

Connecting Artists to the Community

While at Dartmouth, Dada Masilo visited classes in African and African American Studies and Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; taught a dance master class; presented a public talk titled #NotAPrettyBallet with Professor Ayo Coly; and will participate in post-performance discussions. Dancers from the company met with local high school students. For more information on Hop Outreach & Arts Education, call 603.646.2010 or visit hop.dartmouth.edu/online/outreach.