

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
January 11, 2022

## **South Africa's Entrenched Corruption & Hope for Redemption** **Explored in Vibrant Digidance Presentation** **- *Via Kanana* -**

***Founded During Apartheid & Amidst a Notorious War Zone, Dancers of Via Katlehong Channel & Re-envision South African Dances into High Energy Exploration of Society***

**Vancouver, BC – DanceHouse**, in partnership with **Digidance**, announces the North American premiere of the digital broadcast of South African dance company **Via Katlehong** and contemporary choreographer **Gregory Maqoma's *Via Kanana***, streaming **February 16 to March 6, 2022**. Pulsing with rhythmic vibrancy, eight warrior-like dancers 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 handstrokes 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).

"Digidance exists not only to share dance from around the world, but to bring audiences to the world through dance. With *Via Katlehong* - a company founded in the dying days of apartheid - we present a history and a vision connected to one of the modern world's most challenging chapters," says Jim Smith, Artistic and Executive Director of DanceHouse. "And while *Via Kanana* examines the unfulfilled promises and powers of South Africa, made in the transition to democracy 30 years ago, it does so with exuberance, passion, and above all - hope."

Arriving just in time for Black History Month, *Via Kanana* is a non-stop torrent of energy with a powerful and urgent message. 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 production draws on a South African expression meaning "the promised land that never arrives" (Kanana in the Sotho language). Careening from the mundane to the metaphorical, and played out via a series of scenes and vignettes, *Via Kanana* opens with one word: *corrupt*, projected onto an angled white screen, and is 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* 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 neighborhoods where the protestant Pantsula culture was born - and a notorious war zone during the 1980's uprising.

The vision of the Pantsula rebellion arrives on the stage courtesy of Soweto-born choreographer Gregory 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 elevating South African culture.

The digital broadcast of *Via Kanana* will include a 20-minute pre-show documentary.

/more...

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

### **About Digidance**

Digidance is a joint initiative of Canadian dance presenters to deliver exceptional, full length Canadian and international dance content online to patrons across the country. Created in July 2020 as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Digidance consists of the following leading dance presenters: [DanceHouse](#) (Vancouver), [Harbourfront Centre](#) (Toronto), the [National Arts Centre](#) (Ottawa), and [Danse Danse](#) (Montreal).

By joining expertise, experience, and international networks, the partner organizations are better equipped to pivot to presenting work online - a first for all four organizations. Beyond the short term response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions placed on presenting live work in theatres, Digidance will ensure a rich legacy of dance in Canada for future years through continued presentations and access to Canadian and international dance works without the barriers of transportation, physical mobility, and affordability.

### **LISTING INFORMATION**

#### ***Via Kanana***

**Performed by Via Katlehong & Choreographed by Gregory Maqoma**

Dates:

Feb. 16 to March 6, 2022  
Video on Demand Streaming in Canada only.  
Available from midnight PDT on Feb. 16.

Price:

From \$15 + applicable taxes

Event Link:

[dancehouse.ca](https://dancehouse.ca)

-30-

---

**For further media information, contact:**

Angela Vannatter C. 604.992.2489  
[avannatter@mpmgarts.com](mailto:avannatter@mpmgarts.com)

MURRAY PATERSON  
MARKETING GROUP