



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 17, 2023

Impassioned Movement and Music Tell Forgotten History of The African Native Choir in Canadian Premiere of - Broken Chord -

***South African Choreographer Gregory Maqoma and Composer Thuthuka Sibisi's
Exploration of the 1800's Ensemble Casts Light on Contemporary Issues of Migration and Colonization***

Vancouver, BC – DanceHouse and **Vancouver New Music** present the Canadian premiere of choreographer and performer **Gregory Maqoma** and Musical Director **Thuthuka Sibisi's *Broken Chord*, February 23 to 25, 2023** at the **Vancouver Playhouse**. Four vocal soloists, the **Vancouver Chamber Choir**, and Maqoma himself share the stage in a musical and movement-filled exploration of the life and legacy of The African Native Choir. A South African ensemble that toured the globe in the late 1800s, their history is brought to vibrant life through rhythmic, high-energy contemporary dance intertwined with song, sound, and storytelling.

"Last winter, we introduced our audiences to the visionary work of Maqoma in our Digidance presentation of *Via Kanana*; a work that deftly balanced hope and condemnation as it looked back on the end of apartheid in South Africa," says Jim Smith, Artistic and Executive Director of DanceHouse. "With *Broken Chord*, he sinks these roots deeper - reaching all the way back to the 1890s - to unearth a forgotten chapter of South African history that sheds light on our contemporary world."

The African Native Choir was active from 1891 through 1893, when they travelled by boat to Britain, Canada, and America, performing at such iconic venues as London's Crystal Palace and for dignitaries including Queen Victoria. The 16-member ensemble of missionary-educated men, women, and children were on a mission to raise funds for a technical school in Kimberley, South Africa. Performing in traditional African dress, their repertoire combined English hymns and operatic choruses with traditional African songs.

Maqoma became aware of the choir at a photography exhibition in Johannesburg. Inspired by the images and Sibisi's accompanying music, he spontaneously launched into 40-minutes of improvised dance in the centre of the gallery.

Broken Chord is the end result of this encounter, combining powerful narrative, music, and movement to chart the remarkable voyage and success of the tour - as well as to expose the underlying tensions between South Africa and the colonial power Great Britain. The work provides important critique and commentary on contemporary issues of borders, migration, and the lasting relationship between colonized and colonizer.

Broken Chord features Maqoma himself as a solo dancer and performer, alongside vocal soloists Tshegofatso Khunwane, Lubabalo Velebhayi, Xolisile Bongwana, and Zandile Hlatshwayo, with 16 members from the Vancouver Chamber Choir.

South African choreographer and Soweto-born Maqoma became interested in dance in the late 1980's as a means to escape the political tensions growing in his place of birth. Musical Director Sibisi is an award-winning composer, musician, and multi-disciplinary artist, who started his career at the world-renowned Drakensberg Boys Choir School.

/more...

For tickets and further information, visit: dancehouse.ca

About DanceHouse (dancehouse.ca)

DanceHouse connects Vancouver audiences and the local arts community to the international world of dance by presenting exceptional companies that are recognized for their excellence, innovation, and international reputation. Since 2008, DanceHouse has presented vibrant and inspiring companies from Canada and around the world. In addition to the performances on stage, DanceHouse offers a suite of engagement opportunities and a chance for the general public and local artistic community to engage with the presented artists and their work.

About Vancouver New Music (newmusic.org)

Supporting creativity, innovation, curiosity and a multiplicity of voices and ideas, Vancouver New Music is committed to curating practices, not only works, and embracing the rhizomatic expansion of current modes of sound and music creation. Founded in 1973, Vancouver New Music regularly commissions and premieres new works by Canadian and international composers, presents an annual festival that focuses each year on a theme within the new music landscape and explores the interaction of contemporary music with other disciplines such as theatre, installation, and media arts. Other activities include lectures and workshops with visiting artists, community presentations, and other sound-, art-, and new-music related community events, such as Soundwalks.

LISTING INFORMATION

**DanceHouse and Vancouver New Music present
Gregory Maqoma and Thuthuka Sibisi's *Broken Chord***

Dates:	February 23 - 25, 2023 at 8pm
Ticket Prices:	From \$35
Address:	Vancouver Playhouse 600 Hamilton St, Vancouver
Box Office:	dancehouse.ca or call 604.801.6225
Website:	dancehouse.ca

-30-

For further media information, contact

Laura Murray | 604.418.2998 | lmurray@mpmgarts.com
Deborah Hui | 647.492.9618 | dhui@mpmgarts.com

MURRAY PATERSON
MARKETING GROUP