



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DanceHouse presents North American premiere of Dada Masilo's *The Sacrifice*

South Africa's award-winning choreographer examines universal cry of sacrifice in her intoxicating vision of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*

Vancouver, BC – DanceHouse presents the exhilarating North American premiere of **Dada Masilo's *The Sacrifice***, on stage **May 5 and 6, 2023 at 8pm** at the Vancouver Playhouse. Inspired by Igor Stravinsky's *The Rite Of Spring*, South Africa's award-winning choreographer Masilo roots her powerful rendition in the rituals, rhythms, and sounds of Botswana. Together, the cast of ten dancers and four musicians interacts to explore the intricate symbiosis of community, sacrifice, and renewal in a riveting fusion of traditional Tswana, the traditional dance of Botswana, and contemporary dance performed to a live original score.

"We're thrilled to introduce Vancouver audiences to Dada Masilo's innovative and intoxicating vision in *The Sacrifice*," says Jim Smith, Artistic and Executive Director of DanceHouse. "Masilo combines the European heritage of *The Rite of Spring* with the uniquely rhythmic and expressive movements of Tswana to examine the universal cry of sacrifice for the greater good, and the need to give back to help something grow. It is a timely call to all of us."

As a choreographer, Masilo has steadily pushed against the Eurocentric storytelling and representation common in renowned ballet classics, instead infusing her works with contemporary and southern African dances and fearless, culturally relevant narratives of her choosing. She is known internationally for reinterpreting classics such as *Giselle* and *Swan Lake* to speak to black identity and feminism. In *The Sacrifice* Masilo pushes further into firsts by centering and naming the African dance style Tswana as the main dance form of inspiration, giving it equal billing to ballet. Tswana is the traditional dance of Botswana.

While closely studying Tswana dance and rituals, Masilo and the company explored what sacrifice meant and still means to the Tswana people. This preparation and understanding have resulted in a "deeply moving and astonishingly fresh" (The Observer) narrative rich in culture, tradition, and meaning as we follow the chosen maiden and her surrounding community through "a journey of celebration to sacrifice, joy to sorrow, humour to fear and defiance to acceptance" (Lost in Theatreland).

Masilo became intrigued with the complex rhythms and discordance of Stravinsky's score after dancing an extract from Pina Bausch's *Rite* while a student at the P.A.R.T.S. school for contemporary dance in Brussels. She asked *The Sacrifice* musicians to listen to the Stravinsky for inspiration, then collaborate with the cast to create a new composition rooted in southern African rhythms, music, rich vocals, and even bird songs.

In performance, the dancers interact throughout, "teasing the musicians as they clap and stamp in time, the call and response between players and dancers setting up a vibration of movement and sound that seems to ripple through every muscle of their bodies" (The Guardian).

Vancouver is the first North American stop in the highly acclaimed international tour of *The Sacrifice*. Following its DanceHouse performances, the production continues to Ottawa, Toronto, and the United States.

Masilo is Artist-in-Residence at The Dance Factory in Johannesburg. Her awards include a nomination for a Bessie Award (*Swan Lake*) in 2016, Danza&Danza Award for 'Best Performance in 2017' (*Giselle*), and a Prince Claus 'Next Generation' Award in 2018. In May 2017, she premiered her *Giselle* in Oslo, and in 2021 *The Sacrifice* in Vienna. Since 2012, her works have been performed in 25 countries and 150 cities around the world.

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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.

LISTING INFORMATION

DanceHouse presents Dada Masilo's *The Sacrifice*

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| Dates: | May 5 and 6, 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 |

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