

dance



# 5th Annual Step Afrika! International Dance Festival STEPPING OUT!

Soweto Dance Theatre steps out this summer when it hosts the Step Afrika! 1998 International Dance Festival which returns to South Africa in December for its 5th year.

**The Festival**, which has emerged as an important platform for cultural exchange and development, invites participants from all over the world to come and experience a wide range of South African dance and cultural traditions while also gaining exposure to international dance forms.

Inaugurated in 1994 as a collaboration between Soweto Dance Theatre and Alpha Phi Alpha (an American theatre organisation) to

examine the cultural links between South African and American communities, *Step Afrika!* has grown to include artists from the UK, the Caribbean and the Netherlands.

This year's festival will run from 7 - 19 December at the Ipelegeng Centre in White City, Soweto.

Soweto Dance Theatre has put together an exciting programme of events, the focus of which will be a two week





Soweto Dance Theatre.

Workshop Programme headed by a contingency of top local and international artists and traditional exponents.

Workshops offered will include Gumboot, Pantsula, Hip-hop, Caribbean, Swazi, Pedi, Venda, Sotho, Zulu, Xhosa, Tsonga, Tswana, Ndebele.

Also on offer will be UK Jungle (a mix of contemporary African street, jazz and physical theatre), and Stepping, a dance form which originated from the African-American college fraternity dating back to 1906. A combination of percussive body movements, singing, chanting and verbal play, Stepping has been likened to South African gumboot dancing.

Workshops will culminate in a final presentation on 19 December when Step Afrika! 1998 takes to the streets of Soweto with a colourful and vibrant carnival procession.

Registration fees for the Workshop Programme are R20,00 per person. Groups consisting of 10 or more individuals (not more than 30) will be charged a net fee of R100,00.

To book your place for the *Step Afrika! 1998 International Dance Festival* and/or for further information, contact the Soweto Dance Theatre office.

Tel: (011) 487 2212

Fax: (011) 487 3554

#### 'Watch Out' Season and Family Day

#### "WATCH OUT" FOR SDT

Soweto Dance Theatre's "Watch Out" season performed recently at Uncle Tom's Hall in Orlando West, Soweto.

Young dance students of SDT were given the opportunity of performing for their peers, teachers, families, sponsors and the general public in a charged atmosphere that dealt with social issues

such as street violence, rape, abuse and AIDS awareness.

The theme "Watch Out" urged people to watch out for, and take the challenge of dealing with, the changes that are happening in society and issues which have arisen out of the new South Africa.

Performances targeted three groups - primary schools, high schools and the public.

On 28 November, SDT hosted a Family Day where the public were invited to join the company for an outdoor braai, live music and a performance of "Watch Out".

Family Day was specifically geared towards the development of a family of supporters in Soweto and the Greater Johannesburg area, and also provided SDT with an opportunity to thank its supporters and donors, as well as to recognise its dance students. ▲

