

The Kennedy Center

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STAGEBILL

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

JAMES A. JOHNSON, *Chairman*
LAWRENCE J. WILKER, *President*

THEATER LAB

January 17–23, 2000

The Kennedy Center Youth and Family Programs

presents

Step Afrika!

Directed and Produced by
Brian Williams

featuring

The Soweto Dance Theatre, LeeAnet Noble, Cornelius Bates,
and the Step Afrika! Dance Exchange

Live Music by
Mbuyiselwa Semela, Thembinkosi Hlatshwayo, and Paul Woodruff

Step Afrika! Dance Exchange

C. Brian Williams, *Director*; Kirsten Smith, *Assistant Director*;
Darrius Gourdine, Jamel Hodges, Stacey Montgomery,
Genia Morgan, Lion Shaw, Paul Woodruff

and

The Soweto Dance Theatre

Mbuyiselwa Semela, *Founder and Artistic Director*;
Thembinkosi Hlatshwayo, *Managing Director*;
Penelope Gubudela, Corlet Memela, Matshidiso Mokoka,
Jabulani Ngcobo, Mojalefa Njase, Julia Radebe, Motsamai Ramanamane,
Stephen Sebatlelo, Winnie Tshabalala, Thobeka Yakophu

Design and Production

Asha S. Mines, *Lighting Designer*
Lauretta Noble and Katherine Kane, *Stage Managers*

Patrons are requested to turn off pagers, cellular phones, and signal watches during performances.

The taking of photographs and the use of recording equipment are not allowed in this auditorium.

Baldwin is the official piano and electronic organ of the Kennedy Center.

The Kennedy Center is a member of the League of American Theaters and Producers, Inc.

Party Walk

Americans and South Africans in step.

Choreography by Kirsten Smith

For the Soul/Isabelo (Ancestral Gift)

The initiation of a church-going person into an *Umgoma* (a traditional healer).

Choreography by Thembinkosi Hlatshwayo

For the Brothers

The male tradition of stepping as preserved by brothers of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

Arranged by Jeff Johnson and Paul Woodruff

Gumboot Dance

A creation of South African mine workers for physical and social release.

Choreography by Mbuyiselwa Semela

High Steppin' Sorors

The female tradition of stepping as expressed by sisters of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

Arranged by Stacey Montgomery, Genia Morgan, and Kirsten Smith

Who I Am

A rhythmic tribute to the origins of tap.

Choreography by LeeAnet Noble

Still My Friend

Friendship, jealousy, neglect, acceptance, and celebration

Choreography by Mbuyiselwa Semela

Wade in the Water

The gumboot dance meets stepping, tap, and the African-American spiritual.

Choreography by LeeAnet Noble, Kirsten Smith, and Paul Woodruff
Voices by Cornelius Bates, Stacey Montgomery, and Laurreta Noble

Shhhh!

We leave the stress of nine-to-five for childhood games and collegiate stepping.

Arranged by Jeff Johnson and Kirsten Smith

The Zulu Dance—Finale

United in the tradition

Choreography by Mbuyiselwa Semela

Who's Who

C. Brian Williams (*Director*), founding director of Step Afrika! USA and co-founder of the annual Step Afrika! International Cultural Festival, is a native of Houston, Texas. A graduate of Howard University with a B.S. in marketing, Mr. Williams first began stepping as a prospective member for Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. in 1989. During the winter of 1994, he traveled to southern Africa, where he met the community-based Soweto Dance Theatre. His extensive credits as a teacher include master classes and lecture/demonstrations on stepping in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, South Africa, Japan, Australia, Fiji, Mexico, Ecuador, and cities throughout the United States. Mr. Williams also serves as a residency artist for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the first "stepper" to be included in this arts education program. He appeared in the 1999 Extso commercial.

The Soweto Dance Theatre (SDT) is a South African dance company based in the township of Soweto, South Africa. Founded in 1989 by Artistic Director Mbuyiselwa Jackie Semela, the company's mission is to promote and teach dance as an educational, creative, and cultural art form. The company operates an extensive after-school dance development program for South African youth and an internationally acclaimed performance troupe. SDT is the co-founder and annual host for the Step Afrika! International Cultural Festival.

Kirsten Smith (*Choreographer/Dancer*) began ballet and tap lessons at the age of five at the Gloria Baker School of Dance in Washington, D.C. By the age of six she was tapping in hotels around the Washington, D.C. area, launching a life-long training in the arts, including theater and dance. She now serves as the assistant director for Step Afrika!. She has taught aerobic dance, ballet, jazz, hip-hop, stepping, double dutch, and drilling throughout the U.S., as well as in England, the Netherlands, Canada, and South Africa.

Stacey Antoinette Montgomery (*Dancer*) is a library media specialist and the director of the Green Valley Elementary Honor Guard of Temple Hills, Maryland. A dedicated educator, Ms. Montgomery has shared the art of stepping with hundreds of children. She gives God the glory for blessing her with family, friends, and good health.

Genia Morgan (*Dancer*) has run the gamut from entertainment PR and radio/advertising to technical writing. A former principal dancer on BET's *Planet Groove*, Ms. Morgan was recently featured in *The Contender* with Christian Slater and portrayed Nessa Jackson on NBC's *Homicide*.

LeeAnet Noble (*Choreographer/Dancer*) began tapping at the age of two. She has choreographed dances for Tappers With Attitude, Duke Ellington School of the Arts, Filmore Arts Academy, as well as Step Afrika!. She is a freshman at Marymount Manhattan College in New York City, where she has a scholarship for theater.

Paul Woodruff (*Dancer*) has been stepping for more than ten years and is a charter member of Step Afrika! USA. He was a featured performer in the 1999 Extso commercial. Mr. Woodruff has stepped on stages throughout the world. His contribution to the art of stepping is documented in Jaqui Malone's *Steppin' on the Blues*. He is a graphic designer and co-owner of Designs Dot Com.

Darius Gourdine (*Dancer*) is a new addition to Step Afrika! USA but a long-time contributor to stepping. Mr. Gourdine has been stepping since 1990 and specializes in teaching the art form to young audiences everywhere. He is the co-owner of Designs Dot Com, a full-service web and graphic design company.

Lion Shaw (*Dancer*) is a 1998 graduate of Howard University in Washington, D.C. Mr. Lion first participated in the Step Afrika! International Cultural Festival in 1996 and has performed with Step Afrika! USA since 1997. He resides in Washington, D.C.

Jamel Hodges (*Dancer*) is an accomplished actor/dancer who has performed since the age of five. A featured dancer on BET's popular *Planet Groove*, Mr. Hodges is a former step master for the Beta Gamma Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., traditionally known to have one of the best step programs in the country. He works at Morgan State University.

Cornelius Bates (*Dancer*) is an actor/singer who resides in New York City. Last November he was seen as rock-n-roll icon Chuck Berry in the CBS miniseries *Shake, Rattle & Roll*. His stage credits include such classic plays as *Othello* and *Antigone*. He also appeared in music from *The Princess and the Black-Eyed Pea* with Stephanie Mills, Abysinnia, and the Gondoliers.

Asha Mines (*Lighting Designer*) is a choreographer, lighting consultant, dancer, and costume designer. She is a graduate of Duke Ellington Performing Arts High School as a dance major. Ms. Mines is a choreography major at the California Institute of the Arts.

Lauretta Noble (*Stage Manager*) has been in the arts her entire life. Along with being a singer she is also a dancer and works on the business end of the arts for her daughter, LeeAnet Noble. She now works out of New York City for Young Talent Incorporated.