

September, 16-17, 2023

Step Afrika!

Company: Step Afrika!
Venue: NYU Skirball
Location: New York, NY

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Step Afrika!

NYU Skirball Presents STEP AFRIKA!

The First Professional Company Dedicated to the Tradition of Stepping

September 16 & 17, 2023

Step Afrika! will make its NYU Skirball debut on September 16 & 17, with a program of five dances that blend percussive dance styles practiced by historically African American fraternities and sororities; traditional African dances; and an array of contemporary dance and art forms into a cohesive, compelling artistic experience.

Audience participation has been a part of the step tradition since its inception in the 1900s. Members of the audience will be invited to clap, stomp, cheer, and participate in call and response with the Artists.

The program includes:

TRIBUTE - Choreographed by Jakari Sherman

Tribute pays homage to the African American step show. The work combines the distinct stepping styles from different fraternities and sororities and blends them to showcase the incredible variety of stepping. Tribute includes all the exciting elements of the step show--the use of props, ripples and floor work, creative formations, and audience participation.

NDLAMU - Choreographed by Jackie Semela

Ndlamu is a traditional dance of the Zulu people and for more than 25 years, Step Afrika! has studied the dance form through the Company's long-standing partnership with the Soweto Dance Theater. Step Afrika! makes this Ndlamu uniquely its own, featuring solos created by each dancer as well as the addition of contemporary movement.

ISICATHULO - Choreographed by Jackie Semela

Isicathulo or "the gumboot dance" is a tradition created by South African workers who labored in the oppressive mining industry of then-apartheid South Africa. Isolated from their families for long periods, the miners transformed their rubber boots into percussive instruments to not only entertain but to share secret messages with each other. Isicathulo has become one of the most popular dance forms in South Africa and has striking similarities to the African-American tradition of stepping.

SOLO

Traditionally, stepping is performed by groups, big and small. In this *Solo*, Step Afrika! investigates the form at its most intimate level.

CHICAGO - Choreographed by Jakari Sherman

Chicago finds the rhythm in everyday situations. It is a percussive symphony using body percussion and up to 5 complex polyrhythms performed simultaneously in order to narrate a percussive dance "story." Inspired by a summer spent in the Windy City, this ground-breaking work transforms the 100-year-old, folkloric tradition of stepping into contemporary performance art.

Founded in 1994 by C. Brian Williams, Step Afrika! is the first professional company dedicated to the tradition of stepping. Under Mr. Williams' leadership, stepping has evolved into one of America's cultural exports, touring more than 60 countries across the globe, and now ranks as one of the top ten African American dance companies in the United States. Performances are much more than dance shows; they integrate songs, storytelling, humor, and audience participation. The blend of technique, agility, and pure energy makes each performance unique and leaves the audience with their hearts pounding. The Company reaches tens of thousands each year through a 50-city tour of American colleges and theaters and performs globally as an official U.S. Cultural Ambassador.

This project is made possible in part with generous support from the Harkness Foundation for Dance and NYU Africa House.

NYU Skirball is located in the heart of Greenwich Village, historically a center of resistance, dissent and free thinking. NYU Skirball's programming reflects this history and embraces today's renegade artists and companies, presenting works that aim to engage, provoke and inspire audiences. NYU Skirball is NYC's home for cutting-edge performance, artistic research, and discourse, holding close to James Baldwin's dictum that "artists are here to disturb the peace." The 800-seat theater provides a home for internationally renowned artists, innovators, and thinkers and presents ground-breaking events ranging from re-inventions of the classics to cutting-edge premieres, in genres ranging from dance, theater and performance arts to comedy, music and film.

TICKETS

Step Afrika! will play Saturday, September 16 at 7:30 pm and Sunday, September 17 at 3:00 pm. Tickets are \$46 and can be purchased online, by visiting the box office in person, Tuesday – Saturday from 12:00 pm – 6:00 pm, or by calling 212.998.4941. NYU Skirball is located at 566 LaGuardia Place at Washington Square, New York, New York 10012.

Step Afrika!
566 LaGuardia Place
New York, NY, 10012
212-998-4941
<https://www.nyuskirball.org>

Schedule
September 16, 2023: 7:30pm
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