

*International Dance Day 2020*  
**International Dance Day**

**2020**

Message Author

**Gregory Vuyani**

**MAQOMA**

Dancer, choreographer

South Africa



Under the patronage of  
**UNESCO**

United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



Online Celebration  
[www.international-dance-day.org](http://www.international-dance-day.org)

# International D

## Editorial – Let’s Celebrate International Dance Day 2020



In times of in Covid-19 virus-related “confinement”, health and well-being are of utmost importance, even if we have to change our habits and routines. Through this lockdown culture, the performances in front of an audience and similar activities are being hit hard. Cultural activities are diametral to measures of such kind of confinement because especially the performing arts, including dance, always intend to bringing people from all walks of life closer, in communication and into dialogue. For all the members and friends of the International Theatre Institute (ITI) this aspect of bringing people together is most valuable and essential. But they cannot happen at the moment.



This situation hits all the envisioned celebrations of International Dance Day 2020 that members and friends of ITI organized all over the world since the Day was launched in 1982 through the initiative of the dance professionals and experts of the Dance Committee of the International Theatre Institute (ITI).



The intention of the creators of International Dance Day (IDD) was to inspire professionals, amateurs and aficionados of dance all over the world. It was and is a call for celebrating dance in all its possible forms – ballet, classical dance, modern dance, ethnic dance, improvised dance, experimental dance and any kind of dance.

# Dance Day 2020



And this intention is even more important during the time of social distancing. We need to encourage. We need to keep our passion alive. That is the reason the members and friends of dance are continuing to celebrate International Dance Day in 2020 online: [www.iti-worldwide.org](http://www.iti-worldwide.org) is showing initiatives of encouragement and support and [www.international-dance-day.org](http://www.international-dance-day.org) is presenting actions concerning the celebration of the Day and translations of the message.

For 2020 the Executive Council of ITI in alignment with the Dance Committee of ITI and World Dance Alliance selected Gregory Vuyani Maqoma, the eminent dancer, choreographer and dance educator from South Africa, to share his inspiring thoughts about dance, peace and mutual understanding.



Please celebrate dance on 29 April 2020. Let's be thankful to those who take care of individuals who are ill. Let's be thankful to those who help to soothe the pains of those who are old and need special care. And let's be grateful of those who are guiding us with encouragement and makes us aware of what is important for now and for the future of mankind.

Please read the message of Gregory Vuyani Maqoma, distribute it to your friends and colleagues. Please stay safe and in good health.

Happy International Dance Day to you!



Tobias BIANCONE  
Director General ITI

Mohamed Saif AL-AFKHAM  
President ITI

CHEN Zhongwen  
Deputy Director General ITI

Alberto GARCIA  
President International Dance  
Committee of ITI

## **International Dance Day – 29 April**

In 1982 the Dance Committee of ITI founded International Dance Day to be celebrated every year on the 29th April, the birthday of Jean-Georges Noverre (1727-1810), creator of modern ballet. The intention of the International Dance Day Message is to celebrate dance, revel in the universality of this art form, cross all political, cultural and ethnic barriers, and bring people together with a common language - dance.

Every year a message from an outstanding choreographer or dancer is circulated throughout the world. The author of the message is selected by the International Dance Committee of ITI and the Executive Council of ITI. The message is translated into numerous languages and circulated globally.

## **International Theatre Institute ITI**

Founded in 1948 on a UNESCO initiative, the International Theatre Institute's mission is to promote peace, cooperation and mutual understanding through the arts, to encourage the practice of performing arts around the world and to strengthen international exchanges between artists. The ITI has become the world's largest organization for the performing arts with about 100 centres and cooperating members around the world.

Since its inception, one of the major features of the ITI has been to break down barriers that seemed insurmountable, by promoting the rapprochement of cultures and encounters between artists.

International Dance Day (29 April) and World Theatre Day (27 March) have both been created to celebrate the richness and diversity of theatre and dance.

## World Dance Alliance

The World Dance Alliance (WDA) is an independent, non-profit cultural organization. Its mission is to serve as a global voice for dance and dance professionals. It encourages the exchange of ideas and hopes to raise the awareness of dance in all its forms. WDA has an overarching global executive that operates through its regional centres. WDA is the main dance partner organization for the International Theatre Institute ITI, and as such closely collaborates with ITI and its Dance Committee (for instance in the selection of the message authors for International Dance Day).

## International Dance Committee IDC of ITI

The International Dance Committee seeks to develop the study and practice of dance, through activities such as the patronage of international festivals, the organization of workshops for young professionals, and events in connection with International Dance Day – particularly the release of the International Message. The International Theatre Institute and the International Dance Committee collaborate with the World Dance Alliance and other dance organizations, both on national and international levels.

# International D

## Message for International Dance Day 2020

by Gregory Vuyani MAQOMA



It was during an interview I had recently that I had to think deeply about dance, what does it mean to me? In my response, I had to look into my journey, and I realized that it was all about purpose and each day presents a new challenge that needs to be confronted, and it is through dance that I try to make sense of the world.

We are leaving through unimaginable tragedies, in a time that I could best describe as the post-human era. More than ever, we need to dance with purpose, to remind the world that humanity still exists. Purpose and empathy need to prevail over years and years of undeniable virtual landscape of dissolution that has given rise to a catharsis of universal grief conquering the sadness, the hard reality that continues to permeate

the living confronted by death, rejection and poverty.

Our dance must more than ever give a strong signal to the world leaders and those entrusted with safeguarding and improving human conditions that we are an army of furious thinkers, and our purpose is one that strives to change the world one step at a time. Dance is freedom, and through our found freedom, we must free others from the entrapments they face in different corners of the world. Dance is not political but becomes political because it carries in its fibre a human connection and therefore responds to circumstances in its attempt to restore human dignity.

# *Dance Day 2020*



As we dance with our bodies, tumbling in space and tangling together, we become a force of movement weaving hearts, touching souls and providing healing that is so desperately needed. And purpose becomes a single hydra-headed, invincible and indivisible dance. All we need now is to dance some more!!!!



# International D

## Gregory Vuyani MAQOMA Dancer, Choreographer, Actor Biography

Gregory Vuyani Maqoma became interested in dance in the late 1980's as a means to escape the political tensions growing in his place of birth. He started his formal dance training in 1990 at Moving Into Dance where in 2002 he became the Associate Artistic Director. Maqoma has established himself as an internationally renowned dancer, choreographer, teacher and director. He founded Vuyani Dance Theatre (VDT) in 1999 when he was undertaking a scholarship at the Performing Arts Research and Training School (PARTS) in Belgium under the direction of Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker.

Maqoma is respected for his collaborations with artists of his generation like Akram Khan, Vincent Mantsoe, Faustin Linyekula, Dada Masilo, Shanell Winlock, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, Nhlanhla Mahlangu and Theatre Director James Ngcobo.

Several works in his repertoire have won him accolades and international acclaim. This includes FNB Vita Choreographer of the Year in 1999, 2001 and 2002 for Rhythm 1.2.3, Rhythm Blues and Southern Comfort respectively. He received the Standard Bank Young Artist Award for Dance in 2002. Maqoma was a finalist in the Daimler Chrysler Choreography Award in 2002 and in the Rolex Mentorship Programme in 2003. He is the recipient of the 2012 Tunkie Award for Leadership in Dance. In 2014 he received a "Bessie", New York City's premier dance award for Exit/Exist for original music composition. He served as a nominator in the 2016–2017 Rolex Arts Initiative as well as curating the 2017 Main Dance Program for The National Arts Festival. His current works 'Via Kanana' and 'Cion: Requiem of Ravel's Bolero' are currently touring in Africa and Europe.

In 2017 Maqoma was honoured by the French Government with the Chevalier de l'Ordre

des Arts et des Lettres (Knight of the Arts & Literature) Award. In 2018 was honoured by the South African Department of Arts & Culture with the inaugural Usiba Award for dedication to dance teaching. In 2018 Maqoma is one of the selected visiting artists at the Virginia Commonwealth University Dance Department as well as a visiting teacher at Ecole De Sables - Toubab Dialaw - Senegal. Maqoma is part of the selection committee for Dance Biennale Afrique Festival to take place in Marrakech in 2020.

In 2018 Maqoma collaborated with William Kentridge as a choreographer and performing in Kentridge's opera 'The Head And The Load' which premiered at The Tate Modern Gallery in London in July and toured to Germany, Austria, Holland and New York.

In 2019 Maqoma Collaborated with Idris Elba and Kwame Kwei-Armah in the production "Tree" produced by Manchester International Festival and the Young Vic.





# Dance Day 2020

## Words of Previous International Dance Day Message Authors



« The spirit of dance has no colour, no selected shape or size, but Embraces the power of unity, strength, and beauty found within us. (...) Dance is therefore the healing force for all to access. »

*Gladys AGULHAS, South Africa, International Dance Day message author 2008*



« Yes, I express it loudly: dance can invent and reinvent itself, here, now, and elsewhere! Yes, the movement sometimes has its flashes, its harmonies in unusual places as in a refugee camp, a whole story that can, gestures against gestures, body against body, spectres against spectres start to dance. Dance to deceive loneliness, waiting, pain, dance to give light to a look, dance to ward off fear, dance and dance again. »

*Salia SANOU, Burkina Faso, International Dance Day message author 2018*



« I earnestly hope that the coming millennium will see the flourishing of all arts and in particular ... Dance. »

*Mahmoud REDA, Egypt, International Dance Day message author 1999*



« I invite everybody to dance to their heartbeat, to their inner truth because it is from these internal movements, that lead to internal revolutions, where real change happens. »

*Karima MANSOUR, Egypt, International Dance Day message author 2019*



« By its specific character, African Dance reminds us that as well as being technical and beautiful, dance must also be a means of conveying the universality of human feelings and emotions. »

*Germaine ACOGNY, Benin & Senegal, International Dance Day message author 1992*

# International D

## Strong voices for dance from all continents for 58 years

### Message authors from 2020 to 1982

2020	Gregory Vuyani MAQOMA, South Africa	2007	Sasha WALTZ, Germany
2019	Karima MANSOUR, Egypt	2006	King Norodom SIHAMONI, Cambodia
2018	Salia SANOU, Burkina Faso	2005	Miyako YOSHIDA, Japan
	Georgette GEBARA, Lebanon	2004	Stephen PAGE, Australia
	Willy TSAO, Hong Kong, China	2003	Mats EK, Sweden
	Ohad NAHARIN, Israel	2002	Katherine DUNHAM, USA
	Marianela BOAN, Cuba	2001	William FORSYTHE, USA
2017	Trisha BROWN, USA	2000	Alicia ALONSO, Cuba; Jirí KYLIÁN, Czech Republic;
2016	Lemi PONIFASIO, Samoa and New Zealand		Cyrielle LESUEUR, France
2015	Israel GALVAN, Spain	1999	Mahmoud REDA, Egypt
2014	Mourad MERZOUKI, France	1998	Kazuo OHNO, Japan
2013	LIN Hwai-min, Chinese Taipei	1997	Maurice BEJART, France
2012	Sidi Larbi CHERKAOUI, Belgium	1996	Maya PLISSETSKAYA, Russia
2011	Anne Teresa DE KEERSMAEKER, Belgium	1995	Murray LOUIS, USA
2010	Julio BOCCA, Argentina	1994	Dai AILIAN, China and Trinidad
2009	Akram KHAN, United Kingdom	1993	Maguy MARIN, France
2008	Gladys AGULHAS, South Africa	1992	Germaine ACOGNY, Benin and Senegal
		1991	Hans VAN MANEN, The Netherlands
		1990	Merce CUNNINGHAM, USA



# Dance Day 2020

1989 Doris LAINE, Finland  
1988 Robin HOWARD, United Kingdom  
1987 Dance Committee Board  
1986 Chetna JALAN, India  
1985 Robert JOFFREY, USA

1984 Yuri GRIGOROVITCH, Russia  
1983 No message issued  
1982 Henrik NEUBAUER, Slovenia



# International D

## Alicia Alonso 2020



In 2020 the legendary Prima Ballerina Assoluta would celebrate her 100th birthday. And it will be celebrated in 2020 even if the extraordinary dance personality left us in 2019.

The Ministry of Culture of Cuba, the International Theatre Institute ITI, the Dance Committee of ITI, World Dance Alliance, UNESCO and many, many dance institutions of the are taking the occasion of International Dance Day to remind all dance aficionados about the live and achievements of the extraordinary personality Alicia Alonso, that was admired, adored, respected and loved by people from all over the world.

Alicia Alonso, born in Havana on 21 December 1920, was an outstanding ballet dancer, choreographer and pedagogue, whose unique imprint identifies the Cuban School of Ballet. The gifted ballerina performed in more than 65 countries, was granted 266 international and 225 national awards.

She created nearly 70 choreographies and convened in the Cuban capital 26 editions of the International Ballet Festival. Approximately 50 countries in the Americas, Europe, Asia and Africa were benefitted by her teachings through the collaboration she promoted.

The legendary Prima Ballerina Assoluta, designated UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador in 2002 and ITI World Dance Ambassador in 2017, maintained close ties and lent prestige to both organizations – the United Nations Cultural, Educational and Scientific Organization and to the International Theatre Institute. Under her guidance the Alicia Alonso Foundation and the Alicia Alonso University Dance Institute, based at the Rey Juan Carlos University in Madrid was created. In her honour and on initiative of her Alicia Alonso University Dance Institute in Madrid & UNESCO created the Alicia Alonso Ibero-American Dance Chair in September 2018.

# *Dance Day 2020*



# International D

The 100th Anniversary celebration was planned for July in Madrid. Due to the outbreak of Covid-19, the event is now planned for 21 December 2020, her birthday. If possible, with an live event.

More information about the planned event can be found in the ITI Newsletter at a later point this year. Newsletter subscription is available on [www.iti-worldwide.org](http://www.iti-worldwide.org) or [www.international-dance-day.org](http://www.international-dance-day.org)



# Dance Day 2020

## Happy International Dance Day – Online



### International Dance Day

This is the official website for International Dance Day. International Dance Day was created by the Dance Committee of the International Theatre Institute ITI, the main partner for the performing arts of UNESCO. Since its creation in 1982, the International Dance Committee and the International Theatre Institute ITI select an outstanding dance personality to write a message for International Dance Day each year. This day is a celebration day for those who can see the value and importance of the art form "dance", and acts as a wake-up-call for governments, politicians and institutions which have not yet recognised its value to the people and to the individual and their not yet realised its potential for economic growth.

“ People reflect each other constantly, but when they dance, perhaps what they reflect most is that moment of honesty.”

Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, dancer and choreographer, message author for international Dance Day 2012

Due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 virus almost all over the world, practically all International Dance Day events were cancelled to stop the spreading of the virus - for the safety and health of each and everyone on a global scale.

We strongly recommend to you to celebrate international Dance Day, the message author and his message in a strong way as usual - but in a different way - safe.

The International Theatre Institute, all the members and friends of ITI, all the members of the Centres, the Executive Council, the General Secretariat and Partner Organizations of ITI are called to share their love and support for theatre, for the artists, and their performances and actions online.

[www.international-dance-day.org](http://www.international-dance-day.org)

[www.iti-worldwide.org](http://www.iti-worldwide.org)

[www.iti-worldwide.org/encouragementpage.html](http://www.iti-worldwide.org/encouragementpage.html)

# Happy International Dance Day to you!

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Gregory Vuyani MAQOMA, International Dance Day Message Author 2020



International Theatre Institute ITI, UNESCO, 1 Rue Miollis, 75015 Paris, France. Headquarters: 1332 Xinzha Road, Jing'an, Shanghai, China 200040.

[www.international-dance-day.org](http://www.international-dance-day.org)

[www.iti-worldwide.org](http://www.iti-worldwide.org)

[info@iti-worldwide.org](mailto:info@iti-worldwide.org)