

AFRICAN-CANADIAN SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

One of the first things you notice upon entering the Compagnie Danse Nyata Nyata studio on rue Saint-Laurent in Montreal is a picture of Nelson Mandela surrounded by dignitaries, hugging a small, beaming woman. The woman is Zab Maboungou, founder and artistic director of Nyata Nyata, and the picture is a cherished reminder of her performance of *Hommage*, a piece she choreographed to help Canada honour Mandela during his historic visit in 1990.

Zab Maboungou has the distinction of being the first African choreographer to receive funding from the Canada Council for the Arts and the Conseil des Arts et des Lettres du Québec. While continuing to study the traditional dances and music of Africa, Ms. Maboungou has developed a unique and contemporary approach. Based on a philosophy that seeks to explore the source of movement, to identify its generic structures and, from that knowledge, to create, Zab Maboungou's art and ideas are sought after throughout Canada, the United States and Africa.

Zab Maboungou is one of the many talented African artists who have come to Canada in search of a new life and made outstanding contributions to Canadian culture. In Vancouver, the Masabo Culture Company is another example. Led by Fana Soro, a balafon master from Côte d'Ivoire, the Masabo Culture Company is a multidisciplinary

ensemble that features top-notch artists from Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Nigeria. The result is a feast of traditional song, story, dance, acrobatics and music that brings thousands of years of African history to Canadian stages.

of African and Creole cinema, is an ever-growing festival of films from Africa and the diaspora—the only one of its kind in North America.

But Vues d'Afrique is more than a film festival. Its programs touch on all aspects of African culture.

Within the scope of the upcoming G8 Summit, for example, the Vues d'Afrique team made the most of the unique gathering of African writers, filmmakers and journalists in attendance from around the world. Through meetings and informal networking, organizers galvanized the African intelligentsia and coordinated concrete, proactive proposals to offer to G8 leaders.



The Masabo Culture Company, Vancouver, British Columbia

Just as Nyata Nyata and the Masabo Culture Company are signs of a thriving community of African-Canadian performing artists, so Vues d'Afrique attests to a burgeoning African film industry. Held each April in Montreal (2002 marked its 18th year), Vues d'Afrique, which is officially a festival

The film festival itself provides a wealth of engaging and provocative perspectives on Africa, both cultural and political. Over 80 films were screened this year, and the work of some of Canada's brightest lights was showcased, including Vincent Glès's *Le Bucheron de Zietrou* and