

# SHANGWE\*, le bal

\*joy in Kiswahili



Cie WKcollective  
Wanjiru Kamuyu

With *SHANGWE, le bal*, Wanjiru Kamuyu opens a new space of celebration, hospitality, and joyful resilience. This participatory choreographic project is conceived as a big party, inspired both by East African dances and contemporary community-based festive forms. On stage, the Kenyan American France based choreographer creates a gathering space that dissolves boundaries between artists and audiences, between tradition and creation, between presence and memory. Here, spectators are also dancers!

### **Creation 2025/2026**

Suitable for all audiences ages 8 and upwards

Duration: approx. 160 minutes

### **Cast - 2025 version**

**Choreography & musical research** | Wanjiru Kamuyu in collaboration with Halima Masoud Abdallah, Predictor Lodenyi aka Pretty, Nstinzi Joyeux

**Performers (work-in-progress)** | Wanjiru Kamuyu, Elodie Paul, David Gaulein-Stef

**Assistant director** | David Gaulein-Stef

**Lighting design** | Cyril Mulon

**Executive production** | camin aktion, Montpellier

**Co-production** (in progress) CCN Nantes

**Studio residency** (in progress) CCN Nantes

**Studio support** Ménagerie de verre - StudioLab program

### **Touring team - 2026 version**

- Wanjiru Kamuyu and 2 dancers
- 1 DJ
- 1 tour manager
- Depending on conditions: 1 lighting technician



## A festive, immersive, and participatory atmosphere

The scenography draws inspiration from East African cities: lively, warm, adaptable spaces mixing traditional regional textiles with festive lighting. **The carefully selected music** draws on the driving rhythms that energize today's celebrations—igniting clubs, streets, and stages across the world: **Kinyatrap, Afrobeat, Kwaito, Amapiano, Afro-House, Kwassa Kwassa, Soukous...**

## A collaborative process with local communities

**Before each presentation, WKcollective wishes to meet with local communities - volunteer participants (residents, amateurs, associations, students...)** to build a direct relationship and ensure that **participants become active co-creators of the party.**

In a workshop environment of trust and play, the volunteer participants collectively explore three dances from Eastern Africa. The workshops nourish the project and immerse the participants into the world of the party. Each participant develops a more intimate and deeper connection to the project's artistic and social intentions. Consequentially, during the actual event of the party, they get serve as assistants to the principle creative team.

## A party between tradition and modernity

The project highlights choreographers and artists from **East Africa**, offering **a window into a region rarely represented in France**. The commissioned choreographers honor the legacy of traditional dances while intertwining them with contemporary expressions—revealing bridges between the past and the present.

## A nomadic and universal project

**Designed to take place in theatres, non-art venues, or outdoor spaces**, *SHANGWE, le bal* transcends conventional roles attributed to venues. It redefines dance as a universal, festive, accessible art, rooted at the crossroads of cultures and generations.

Through this big party, we celebrate our shared humanity and invite audiences/participants to imagine a world where joy, resilience, creativity, dreaming, peaceful protest and collective celebration take center stage. **It is a transformative celebration, a living form of research, and an invitation to dance together.**

## An embodied and accessible celebration

*SHANGWE - le bal* is envisioned as an open and welcoming space for everyone. **As a transgenerational dance utopia**, *SHANGWE - le bal* draws as much from the heritage of East African dances as from the gestures and pulses that flow through today's celebrations — in clubs, in the streets, and on stages across the world.

This event explores the subtle links between traditional dances and music and their contemporary evolution. The project is driven by a **feminine and feminist approach: most of its creators, performers, and contributors are women, reinforcing a distinctly woman-centered dynamic.**

## A dance of commitment

Through this work, Wanjiru Kamuyu reaffirms **the political dimension of movement — not as a demonstration, but as a peaceful protest and shared experience.**

*SHANGWE - le bal* does not seek to represent diversity; it seeks to embody it. It does not celebrate otherness; it welcomes it.

And through celebration — through the act of dancing together — it offers a choreographic gesture of joyful collective human connection.



## Genesis and intentions

"*SHANGWE, le bal* is a project rooted in a deep reflection on collective dances as reservoirs of memory, connection, struggle and joy.

**Shaped by my multicultural background, I continue my intrigue around stories imprinted in our bodies and the invisible lineages they carry.**

*SHANGWE, le bal* is both a tribute to dances of resistance and resilience — those within marginalized communities — and an invitation to reclaim the stage as a space of living connection.

With this participatory party, I propose an immersive experience that celebrates dance as a vehicle of joy, resilience, resistance, hope, dreaming and human connection. The project deeply draws from the cultural inspirations of my home region, Eastern Africa. In collaboration with choreographers from Burundi, Tanzania and Kenya, *SHANGWE, le bal* unfolds as a festive and participatory space where participants dance together to a rich and engaged musical repertoire from East Africa, from other cultures across the African continent, and from its diaspora. I wish to offer a collective moment that celebrates joy and the power of movement, as well as the pleasure of gathering in harmony. *SHANGWE – le bal* seeks to remind us of the importance of being fully present, of creating real interactions with one another, and of prioritising community connection over the isolation induced by addictive screen consumption and the continuous flow of global news.

Today, young people's social skills are severely weakened, and loneliness has reached unprecedented levels — direct consequences of screen culture and the lingering effects of the Covid pandemic. Real human interactions have never been so diminished. *SHANGWE, le bal* aims to offer a space where we can start rekindling social and festive bonding.

This approach opens a pathway to reconnect with what is essential – human relationships – a moment of joy, a welcoming space where, despite our differences, we can collectively and harmoniously, celebrate our resilience, our dreams and our hopes.

Wanjiru Kamuyu





## In practice

In collaboration with choreographers from Kenya, Tanzania and Burundi, who contributed choreographic material and musical input; Wanjiru Kamuyu builds a shared ritual: from a joyful "follow the leader" warm up to the live group dance sharings. The performers fuel the party with humor and poetic evoking of our contemporary realities. At its core pulse the voices of women – echoes of a collective dream of joyful living.

## Structure of the party

Adapted to each venue (theatres, museums, galleries, gardens, parks, gymnasiums, school party halls, in the streets, community gathering halls...), each party holds its own unique collective imprint of experiences.

**On the day of the party**, the event unfolds in several stages:

### 1. Welcoming the audience & a collective warm-up

Led by a mistress of ceremony, engaging the participants in a collectively joyful dynamic.

### 2. Formation of three groups

Each group discovers a specific dance, taught by the party's team:

- a dance from **Kenya** (choreographed by Pretty Lodenyi),
- a dance from **Tanzania** (choreographed by Halima Masoud Abdallah),
- a dance from **Burundi** (choreographed by Ntsinzi Joyeux).

These dances, rooted in celebration and tradition but reinvented through current urban styles, celebrate the vitality and creativity of East African cultures on an international scale.

### 3. Sharing of the dances

In a festive atmosphere, the groups reunite to share their respective dances.

### 4. Free dance & collective celebration

In an atmosphere of release and joyful communion, the evening glides into the ambiance of a house party. The participants are encouraged to dance as they feel moved. This portion of the party, pending the version, is punctuated by performative and musical surprises.

- **Playlist version:** recorded soundtrack | duration 2h30
- **DJ version:** DJ | duration 2h30 to 3h
- **Extended version:** musical performance by band Poundo & les Bubus | duration 3h
- **School version (ages 8+):** recorded soundtrack | duration 1h30 to 2h
- **Senior version:** recorded soundtrack or DJ | duration 1h30 to 2h

## Scenographic & artistic elements

- The scenography draws from the spirit of cities in East Africa: lively, warm, and adaptable places. A designed space combining traditional regional textiles and lighting with festive accents.
- The performers' costumes are simple, with a color code that makes them identifiable as the party's leaders.
- The MC role is divided amongst the three performers. Each of them brings a unique energy to the party.
- The DJ or recorded soundtrack (playlist) will bring a rich and committed musical atmosphere, rooted in the music of East Africa, West Africa, other cultures across the African continent, and its diaspora.

## Production agenda

- In the summer and autumn of 2025, with residencies at the National Choreographic Center (Nantes, France), a first version of the party has been developed. This version is danced to a carefully researched music playlist. The residencies culminated in two public events that took place November 21st and 22nd November.
- **In 2026, the second and final stage of creation is desired to take place. This phase will incorporate a DJ and French Sign Language dancer/interpreter (for French speaking communities). The company is actively seeking co-production support as well as presentation and residency dates.**

## Touring agenda

- November 21 and 22, 2025: first phase of the creation was presented at the National Choreographic Center (Nantes, France)

## Technical requirements

- Capacity: 100–115+ depending on space
- Adaptable stage area
- Playlist / DJ / live musicians
- Team: 3 dancers, 1 DJ or playlist, 1 technician, 1 tour manager





Photo © Bastien Capela

# Choreographers' biographies

## Wanjiru Kamuyu

Wanjiru Kamuyu, born in Nairobi (Kenya), holds a Master of Fine Arts from Temple University (Philadelphia, USA). She is an Associate Artist at the CCN Nantes and a Live Feed Artist at New York Live Arts. Kamuyu was also Associate Artist at L'ONDE Théâtre Centre d'Art, Scène Conventionnée Création pour la Danse (Vélizy, 2020/21 to 2023/24) and an artist with the Villa Albertine (2023). Based in Paris since 2007, she began her career in New York within renowned dance companies such as Urban Bush Women and Molissa Fenley and Company. As a performer, she has developed a rich and eclectic career that has deeply nourished her choreographic development and pedagogical approach.

Between New York and Paris, and on international stages, she has collaborated with numerous contemporary choreographers, including **Jawole Willa Jo Zollar / Urban Bush Women**, **Irène Tassembedo**, **Robyn Orlin**, Nathalie Pubellier, **Anne Collod**, Stefanie Batten Bland, **Bartabas**, Dean Moss, and **Emmanuel Eggermont**, among others. She has also worked with **Jérôme Savary** (*À la recherche de Joséphine*), **Bill T. Jones** (*FELA!* on Broadway), film director **Christian Faure** (*Fais danser la poussière*), and visual artist **Jean-Paul Goude**. She was part of the original cast of the Parisian production of *The Lion King* directed by **Julie Taymor**.

**Since 2017, she has created three major works (two solos and one trio), as well as adaptations for non-conventional spaces, young audiences, and for deaf/hearing impaired and blind/low-vision audiences.** These pieces have been presented internationally in the United States, France, Italy, Ireland, Taiwan, Burkina Faso, Mali, Nigeria, Burundi, South Africa, Rwanda, and Mozambique. They were developed during residencies in France, the United States (via a **Villa Albertine residency**), and Ireland. In 2020, Kamuyu also created her first dance film, *La visite*, directed by **Tommy Pascal**. Commissioned by the Établissement public du Palais de la Porte Dorée in partnership with Théâtre de la Ville – Paris, the film was broadcast in France, the Netherlands, Côte d'Ivoire, Burundi, Mali, and the United States.

Kamuyu has also created choreographies for **Jérôme Savary** and has designed projects for refugees with New World Theatre (USA) and Euroculture (a project bringing together 65 young artists and 11 refugees from Sudan, Syria, Libya, and Afghanistan). She has been commissioned by **Hassane Kassi Kouyaté** (Burkina Faso), **Jean-François Auguste** (France), several U.S. universities (Mills College, Stephens College, Wayne State University, University of Michigan), as well as the company InkBoat (USA). She has also served as artistic advisor for *Z.H.*, a creation by choreographer **Bintou Dembélé** (France).

Kamuyu regularly teaches masterclasses and choreographic creation workshops across Europe, North America, Asia, and Africa.

Her company, WKcollective, is associated with the reative agency **camin aktion** (Montpellier).

# Halima Mosoud Abdallah

Halima Mosoud Abdallah is an emerging choreographer and dancer based in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Passionate about dance from a very young age, she finds inspiration in urban and traditional dances as well as contemporary dance. Her dedication and talent led her to join the MuDa Africa Dance School in Dar es Salaam, where she completed a three-year dance diploma.

Under the tutelage of Ian Mwaisunga, Halima's time at MuDa Africa Dance School offered her the opportunity to work with a number of esteemed international choreographers such as Vanessa Tamburi (Italy/USA), Abdul Abdanger (Uganda), Johnny Autin (UK/France), Louis Fortier and Sophie Breach (France), Robert Ngoroma (Tanzania), Yolanda Gutierrez (Germany/Mexico), Nathan Batman and Ciara Baldwin (South Africa).

Upon completing her diploma, Halima successfully created and performed her first three dance works - *Naima*, *Mazingira Yangu (My Environment)* and *Our Voices in Dar es Salaam* (Tanzania). She works as a performer/dancer with organizations such as Humboldt Forum and Asedeva. Additionally, she received a full scholarship to attend the 2025 Artist Exchange 4 week residency program in collaboration with the University of the Arts in Amsterdam and the École des Sables (Senegal).

As a teacher, Halima teaches workshops at MuDa Africa Dance School and Asedeva. Halima is also a certified yoga instructor with Africa Yoga Project and teaches classes at local studios in Dar es Salaam (Tanzania).

# Ntsinzi Joyeux

Ntsinzi Joyeux is a dancer, performer, and interpretive artist based in Burundi. He is the founder of Buja Up Academy and a performer with Iwacu Dance Company.

His cultural identity, marked by authenticity, acts as a driving force: he embodies the idea of a fusion between traditional African dances—particularly those of Burundi—and modern, contemporary, and urban dance forms.

As a performer, Ntsinzi has collaborated with choreographer Wesley Ruzibiza in his creation *The Gift of Time*, presented during the KWIBUKA-30 commemoration (Rwanda). He is a performer in choreographer Audreille Sibomana's recent work *PAR-ICI LA VIE*. A project produced with support from the *Appui sur les opérateurs culturels en Afrique* (AOCA) program of the Institut Français Burundi and toured in East Africa.

Ntsinzi has also worked with choreographer Winnie Ange in her piece NDABAGA, which was presented at the Kigali 2024 Triennial (Rwanda).

Selected as one of twelve, Ntsinzi, completed the *Burundi en Création* project (2023–24), which was the first contemporary dance training intensive offered in the capital city of Bujumbura. A project spearheaded by artist and curator Fatima Ndoye with the support of the Institut Français Burundi. Additionally, in the DRC, Rwanda, Senegal, and at the École des Sables, Ntsinzi continues to take part in various training programs led by international choreographers such as Wanjiru Kamuyu, Alesandra Seutin, Bienvenue Bazié, Wesley Ruzibiza, Samantha Speis (Mame Diarra), Gregory Vuyani Maqoma, and Nick Coutsier, among others, who push him to develop his interpretive and compositional voice.

# Predictor Lodenyi

A career spanning a decade, Predictor Lodenyi aka Pretty is a dancer and choreographer based in Kisumu, Kenya. She has a passion for contemporary dance, and is skilled in traditional Kenyan dances, Hip-Hop, physical theatre movement and improvisatory techniques.

In 2013, Pretty began her dance training with YAWA Dance Company based in Kisumu (Kenya). She has since become an active senior performer and choreographer of Dancing Feet, a collective dance group (Kenya). All while working to help grow the dance industry in Kisumu, with Dancing Feet, Pretty serves as teacher and mentor for the next generation of local dancers.

As a choreographer, Pretty aims to create provoking socially and politically engaged works that have been presented in Kenya and Tanzania. She has created works in collaboration with Kisumu based choreographers Diana Odhiambo, Diana Gaya, Hosea Dan and Brian Oloo. She also has served on the choreographic team of Kiganja Dance Umoja Artists Production (Tanzania). Her dance film *Yengo Kumwoyo (Home at Heart)* has been screened at Ugly Duck Theater and Chisenehale Dance Space (London, UK), Bangalore Theatre (Karnataka, India) and Maitisong Theatre (Gaborone, Botswana). Alongside, Pretty regularly serves as lead choreographer and performs at the annual Kisumu Fashion Week, as well as Kenyan National Holiday events, such as the Madaraka Day Celebrations.

As a performer, Pretty has worked with international choreographers Anna Burse (Canada), Njaara Rasomanana (Madagascar, Finland), Wanjiru Kamuyu (Kenya, France, US) and Lilian Nabagalla Maximillian (Uganda).

As a teacher, Pretty has extensive experience teaching dance to primary school children. She is also a certified African Register of Exercise Professionals adult personal fitness instructor.

## About the company

Founded in 2009, WKcollective aims to create immersive, sensorial and visceral experiences through contemporary dance.

The company's overall eco-system seeks to weave in under heard, ignored and/or rarely told stories, particularly of marginalized communities.

Through the poetic power of movement, text, image and song/sound, WKcollective draws upon a tapestry of cross-disciplinary art forms to broaden the scope of discourse and intrigue. A tapestry that gives rise to art that is fresh, innovative, vulnerable, raw and highly graphic, intended to provoke personal and social reflection through the transformative celebration that dance embodies.

The accomplishment of multiple commissions and collaborations around the world has strengthened a multicultural approach that reflects both the identity of choreographer Wanjiru Kamuyu and that of the creative agency camin aktion, with whom the company has built a close collaboration.

WKcollective has built a loyal core of collaborators from diverse backgrounds, in the fields of dance, musical creation, lighting, costume and scenography design, dramaturgy, production, and administration.

The company has developed strong expertise in accessibility, whether through French Sign Language (LSF) or audio description, with solid collaborations with individuals and structures committed to these fields.



Photo © David Gaulein-Stef

## Contact

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