



Originating from Zimbabwe, but now living in Gippsland Australia, Gilbert Douglas is one of Southern Africa's most respected contemporary dance choreographers and teachers.

Gilbert has trained extensively in a variety of dance techniques including classically (Cecchetti advanced teacher); and in contemporary dance (Cunningham and Graham techniques); modern dance; jazz ballet; tap; afro-fusion and a wide variety of different traditional dances from different parts of the African continent.

Gilbert was one of the founding members of the highly acclaimed *Tumbuka Dance Company* (Zimbabwe's Premier Contemporary Dance Company), and from 2004 – 2011 was the Company's Artistic Director. Gilbert toured extensively performing, leading dance workshops and classes throughout African, American and European Festival Circuits, to wide and popular acclaim. Tours include: Zimbabwe, South Africa, Botswana, Malawi, Angola, Ivory Coast, Reunion Island, France, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, Slovakia, UK, Denmark and Belize. During this time, Gilbert participated in *Professional Choreographic Workshop for Traditional and Contemporary African Dance* in *Toubab Dialaw* (Senegal) at the *Ecole des Sables* which was curated by one of the pioneers of contemporary African dance, Germaine Acogny, this experience paved way for the development of vocabulary and technique that Gilbert uses in many of his works.

In 2010 Gilbert was one of seven artists chosen worldwide to collaborate on a new work for the South African Festival *Infecting the City*. Gilbert devised and choreographed performances for both professional and community dancers in the resulting highly successful ritual performance work *Quiet Emergency*. In late 2011 Gilbert relocated to Australia. He was immediately invited to choreograph the Farewell Ceremony for the Woodford Folk Festival, which was performed to over 15,000 people. In 2012 and 13 Gilbert was invited to co-choreograph with Jacob Boehme, and offer community workshops for Moroopna College Wannick Dance Academy for AFL *Dreamtime at the G*. He was also invited by N'arweet Carolyn Briggs to lead dance workshops for *Boonwurrung Ngargee* Indigenous Youth Camp at Wilson's Prom.

In 2014 Gilbert lead crowd dance workshops at *White Night Festival*, Melbourne, facilitated workshops and created a dance piece for Melbourne elderly performed at *Melbourne Seniors* and *White Night Festivals*, and facilitated *Many Voices Festival* workshops and performance for Victoria College of the Arts at Richmond Primary School. In 2015 Gilbert lead dance workshops and choreography for *Performing Mobilities Conference* for VCA Centre For Cultural Partnerships in conjunction with RMIT and was invited to be Rehearsal Director for *Balit Ngulu* by Ilbijerri Theatre Company for a ceremony involving five Kulin clans from Melbourne region for the opening *White Night Festival 2016*.

Also in 2016 Gilbert was invited to choreograph the spoken word dance film *'Breaking News'*, with *New Change project* a work designed to bring awareness to media's misrepresentation of South Sudanese people Apex gang affiliates. In that year he was also Choreographer for the Geelong *Mountain to Mouth 2016*. Geelong Connected Communities: Gathering of the City and lead dance workshops for people with Intellectual disabilities for Artlife at the Footscray Community Arts Centre

In 2017 Gilbert was invited to give Contemporary and Traditional Dances from Africa Workshops in Japan, these workshops culminated in a collaborative performance with Australian and Japanese Dancers showcased at Okazaki Festival.



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Also in this year Gilbert was invited by Yirramboi Festival and Arts Centre Melbourne to workshop and choreograph a dance for Yirramboi Yan Yan (young men), some of the young men. This work was performed as part of the closing ceremony for the festival.

During 2017 Gilbert was invited to co-coordinate and create the *Bowery Dance Project* for the opening of St. Alban Community Centre which involved more than 60 young people from the Western Melbourne performing Indigenous, contemporary, African and hip-hop dances.

Gilbert graduated from the Victorian College of the Arts in 2016 being awarded a Master of Community Cultural Development. Most recently Gilbert was the Choreographer for the three ceremonies in Geelong's 80km extreme art walk - Mountain to Mouth 2018 ([www.mountaintomouth.com.au](http://www.mountaintomouth.com.au)). Gilbert currently works with Bounczn Dance Company, which consists of youths from different cultures and backgrounds, and continues to work as a freelance Choreographer and dance teacher and is passionate about cross-cultural artistic sharing and collaborations.



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