

Dancescape South Africa (DSA) January 2020 Report

Dancescape South Africa continues to facilitate daily dance classes in January 2020 (3.00pm – 6.00pm Venue Zolani Hope Centre – Mantlane Road Zolani Ashton) engaging children in beginner and senior dance sessions.

The Dancescape South Africa Directors Report:

The studio at the Zolani Hope Centre in Zolani, Ashton, reopened its doors on the 15th of January 2020 at the start of the 1st school term. Nqaba Mafilika our resident teacher was back at work teaching throughout the afternoons both the junior and senior groups. We continue to preserve the Fiona Sargeant Legacy and give the youth of our townships something constructive to do, something which is good for both mind and body. We also continue to provide those kids attending our classed with a sandwich.



Above: *The group of DSA dancers who will be attending the Biennale to be held in Hamburg, Germany in February 2020*

I started my work much earlier in the year with the applications for the Schengen visa's required to allow us to travel to Germany in February. We are as mentioned in previous reports going to attend the 7th Biennale Tanzausbildung in Hamburg, Germany. Our group of five dancers and I will travel on the 16th of February and return home about a week later. This month, much of my time was spent collecting all the correct documents, such as birth certificates for the two minors in the group and certified ID documents to mention just a few. On the 10th of January, We all travelled down to Cape Town to have our interviews as part of the visa application process. I also had to plan several rehearsals from the 8th of January and

then on every weekend of the month. This meant travelling down to Cape Town every weekend with the two junior dancers, Phelo and Aphiwe, to join the seniors so that we could all rehearse together. I needed to organize costumes and dance togs for the trip. We even managed to order tracksuits, tops and bags, all with our Dancescape South Africa logo attached.



Above: *Lihle Mfene, the choreographer of “Ubizo” the piece which we will be performing in Hamburg.*



Above: *Left, Aphiwe November and right, Lutho Zwedala caught in action during rehearsal of “Ubizo”*

Dancescape South Africa will be performing a piece choreographed by Lihle Mfene at the biennale. Lihle, Lutho and Milisa are the three senior members of the group. They are currently full time students with the Cape Academy of Performing Arts (CAPA) which is based in Tokai, Cape Town. The piece itself has a wonderful African flavor and I must say that Lihle has done himself proud. We are very excited to be given this opportunity to perform alongside other prestigious dance groups from all around the world. The week will consist of intense training sessions, performing and watching performances. I really believe that our dancers are in for an exceptional week. This experience will truly enrich their lives. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the organizers of the biennale and all those who contributed to making this possible. We are truly most thankful.



Above: *Milisa Mathiso, who recently started her training with the Cape Academy of Performing Arts, dancing the central figure of "Ubizo".*

Nqaba Mafilika, our resident teacher has been given the opportunity to visit the USA in February. In January, he too attended an interview at the American Embassy in Cape Town and has been granted a visa to travel to the US. Nqaba, will be attending an accredited Dance Teachers Training Course hosted by the American Ballet Theatre during the same week of our Biennale in Hamburg. We would like to thank Kristine Elliott and the Gugulethu Ballet Project for making this possible.

On the 28th of January the board of trustees of Dancescape South Africa met for its final meeting of the 2020 financial year. Many issues were discussed but high on the agenda was the upcoming trip to Hamburg, Germany. It was a successful meeting where we also planned some of the events for the year ahead. I thank the board for their consistent and loyal support of the project. We will meet again in May 2020 for our Annual General Meeting.



Above: Phelo Prince Ngxukuma leaps into the air with Lihle Mfene in the background.

The Resident Teachers Report:

Through the recent months I have been working with the Dancescape South Africa dancers and I have gained a lot of respect from the community and the students. They are disciplined during their classes and have given the attitude of wanting to learn more.

The dancers have applied themselves by showing their skills and knowledge even though it exposes a room for improvement. Technically, they are taking corrections in their dance forms (ballet, traditional, afro fusion, contemporary, etc.). The energy they put out is exciting and shows off their commitment towards their work. The students have rhythm which is very important for a dancer, this helps to develop their musicality. I am helping them to gain a strong chore so that when they dance they don't get tired easily and this also helps them to manage moving from high, middle and low position.

Another part of the training I have been very much concentrating on is their mental and physical strength where a dancer is required to remember exercises and choreography.

Physically, not all of them have the same body structure so training them every day enables them to be strong, flexible and healthy.

Lutho Zwedala, Lihle Mfene & Milisa Mathiso report back from Cape Town:

Milisa Mathiso:

First week was amazing but obviously I was nervous but we started very slowly, different experience but love it. Love ballet barre but I struggle a bit with centre but I used everyday to improve. I am still learning a new ballet number and a contemporary for a show in may. I still have to practice pointe because the ballet number is in pointe shoes and will hopefully get there by taking extra classes. Love the teachers and the other dancers, they all are very nice.

Lutho Zwedala:

My first week of this month (January) was very awesome I really enjoyed it because it's my second year. I want to learn more this year. My second week of this month we had Mitchell Reid creating a new choreography and we still working on that piece.



Above: Milisa Mathiso, Aphiwe November and Lutho Zwedala rehearse "Ubizo"

Lihle Mfene:

This month started really positive, you could see the smile on everyone's face, and you could see that everyone wanted to be there. This month was about getting our bodies ready for this term, and in this last week we're working on our poems and the ballet we did last year which is really good, and Michelle Reid is choreographing a piece in this whole idea of insomnia, in which people struggle to fall asleep at night, and already it's looking really amazing, and I cannot wait to see when it is finished. Of course without Dancescape SA I wouldn't have had these amazing opportunities, thanks to Dancescape SA for their personal investment in me.

Once again we thank you for taking the time to read this report. Please visit our website at: <http://dancescapesouthafrica.org.za/> and follow us on social media.

Mitya Sargeant (CEO, and Director – Dancescape South Africa)

