

Dancescape South Africa (DSA) January 2024 Report

Dancescape South Africa (DSA) continues to facilitate daily dance classes in January of 2024 (2.00pm – 6.00pm Venue Zolani Hope Centre – Mantlane Road Zolani Ashton) engaging children in beginner and senior dance sessions. We currently employ the services of a resident teacher, a general assistant, and a director. Thanks to the support of all those who have donated to our project we are able to preserve the Fiona Sargeant legacy. Our top priority is to facilitate classes in a safe environment for both teacher and learners.

The Dancescape South Africa Directors Report:

After a break over the festive season DSA resumed classes on the 8th of January 2024 with a two-week dance intensive. This was a holiday program and it involved 25 selected students. Our guest teachers were Kristine Elliott, Ciara Baldwin and Nathan Bartman. Our resident teacher, Nqaba Mafilika was on hand to assist, demonstrate and teach. All of the Dancescape South Africa (DSA) staff were hard at work assisting our guest teachers and making sure that the intensive went on as planned.

The dance intensive cumulated with two performances on the 20th of January 2024. One at the Zolani Community Hall where several of the parents attended the showcase. Later that afternoon another performance was held at the McGregor Church Hall in McGregor. Both performances were a collaboration with the Zolani Youth Choir and the First Step Ballet based in McGregor. It was a huge success with large audiences who fully appreciated what was happening in the various communities. It was also wonderful to have 4 of our former students performing at both shows. These dancers are currently training with Jazzart Dance Theatre. I was amazed to see how they all had matured as dancers since leaving us in January last year. Chuma Mathiso, his sister Milisa Mathiso, Phelo Ngxukuma and Thimna Ndwe we accompanied by the Zolani Youth Choir as they performed a piece called "Bare."

Kristine Elliott brought with her a dedicated ballet syllabus which she has left with us to assist with teaching ballet. We are very grateful. I purchased a tablet so that Nqaba can reference the syllabus. DSA also bought a JCL speaker which was used at the first performance in Zolani and at all the rehearsals. It has excellent sound output and can run off an internal battery. I hope to buy another of the same type so that the two can be paired at performances. The students also thrived on the much looser contemporary and traditional styles that Nathan and Ciara imparted. Nathan and Ciara gave a lot of energy and were a huge influence and inspiration for all the dancers. This wasn't the first time that we have had the privilege of having these teachers, they conducted a similar intensive last

year and the year before that. The dance intensive was a huge success which no doubt touched the lives of all the participants.



Above: Kristine Elliott teaches ballet to the DSA students during the January 2024 intensive.

On the 17th of January 2024 all the students returned for their daily classes that we facilitate every weekday afternoon of the government school term times from 2 – 6 PM. Nqaba continued his classes of ballet, contemporary, traditional and even street dancing.

During the dance intensive the area experienced some rain and on one afternoon during rehearsal, there was a heavy downpour. The studio roof began to leak and soon enough there were several puddles of water on the studio floor. We had known about the leaks but didn't realize how bad it was. I immediately contacted Fanie from the Zolani Care Trust who is supposed to manage the building. Over the years of using the building we have noticed that there is little, or no maintenance done. I then understood that the roof wasn't going to be repaired any time soon if ever and after discussion with Fanie I decided to take the initiative and find professionals who could repair the roof. The following day the rain had cleared, and repairs were done by a small repairs company who are affordable and yet reliable. Furthermore, I decided to ask them to fix broken windows and install clothing hooks in the change rooms as well. I hope to bring them back in months to come to do other small jobs. Many thanks to VWP Repairs PTY (LTD).

Nqaba Mafilika, our resident teachers, report:

We came into work early than expected this year because we had a visit from Kristine Elliott, Nathan and Ciara but learnt that after renovating the studio the studio floor had been damaged because of events that took place while our students were on holiday. The studio floor had waves and Mitya and I had to come to rescue, which we did.

Our visitors arrived and the concept was to welcome Kristine's syllabus to Dancescape on how to teach our students the foundation of ballet and make it work for us to the point that it doesn't chase the students away, because some kids are there for enjoyment rather than to take dance as a career. We then had Nathan and Ciara teach contemporary as the second class on those two weeks where they brought their positive energy and wonderful choreography as they always do. The students really came through for these workshops with no fallouts and I'm sure that they feel good about themselves. It was also very much an educational process for them. They performed at the end of the two weeks, and they impressed our audience as they were given a standing ovation.

Our studio is open for this year. We are continuing with our daily classes and have a big turn-up of new students which is amazing to see. There was maintenance work done on the roof, windows and clothes racks which was put up in the studio and that makes a beautiful space to work, we so much appreciate.



Above: Ciara and Nathan bring wonderful energy to their classes with DSA.



Above: Pictures taken at the collaboration performance in McGregor

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)