

Dancescape South Africa (DSA) July 2023 Report

Dancescape South Africa (DSA) continues to facilitate daily dance classes in July of 2023 (3.00pm – 6.00pm Venue Zolani Hope Centre – Mantlane Road Zolani Ashton) engaging children in beginner and senior dance sessions during school term time. 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:

This month the students returned only on the 18th of July, in line with the reopening of government schools. We basically had to hit the ground running, so to speak. With only less than three weeks available to us before we perform at this year's Montagu Youth Arts Festival. Unfortunately, many of the students don't share the same sentiment as every afternoon, we didn't have a full cast leaving us with many empty spaces. We can't force the students to pitch up and to even arrive on time. Nqaba and I did, however, give several motivational talks. We have both found that there is a core group of very loyal dancers and then those who are not taking it seriously enough and it is those students who really need the pep talk but are not in attendance.



Above and below: Those students who did attend rehearsals are having a great time.



Another one of our challenges this year is the fact that our senior dancers who were part of last year's team have left to study further. Most of our current students are now expected to fill the shoes of those who have left, and we expect them to show the same commitment and dedication. Some of them have risen to the challenge and are beginning to shine but many others are lagging.



Above: Some of the juniors working together with our senior dancers.

For me as DSA director, this time of year is always very exciting. It's a time when I connect with our young dancers during our rehearsals. My task and mission is to get these youngsters to not only execute the dance steps and moves but also to become performers. I often explain to them that we are not engaging in a sport where the competition is to perhaps run faster or to jump higher. They are now required to convey an emotion, to tell a story or even just to display joy and happiness, which should be part of all our children's lives. When I see these young dancers doing this on stage in performance, I feel as if we have achieved something wonderful.

The Resident Teachers Report (Nqaba Mafilika):

The students have come back from a nice long June Holiday. We have new faces, and some have come back to try to focus on dancing again, which is wonderful to see. I have been giving them classes to strengthen their technique and adding few tips to help them manage on how to dance for an audience. Few challenges have occurred of which some of the students not pitching up for classes has been a bit of a worry and I think it's because either some of them didn't do well at school with their studies, it's also winter and gets dark very soon or it's rainy and cold.

On my own side, I try to keep motivating those who come for their classes, encouraging them to work very hard as they have performance on the way. The McGregor Collaboration is also going well though at times I feel the students need to really commit themselves so that the standard of work expected is achieved and to stay positive and never lose hope.

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)