



DANCESCAPE SOUTH AFRICA

Uplifting People Through Dance

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1st Quarter Report for Dancescape South Africa January to March 2024

Daily dance classes continued during school term times throughout January to March of 2024 (2.00pm – 6.00pm Venue Zolani Hope Centre – Mantlane Road Zolani Ashton) engaging children in beginner and senior dance sessions. Dancescape South Africa (DSA) was able, through the kind donations of individuals and organizations to employ 1 full time resident teacher, a director / administrator and a general assistant. Without financial support we would also be unable to deal with the day-to-day running costs. We thank all who have made it possible to preserve the Fiona Sargeant Legacy and to uplift the disadvantaged youth of our country through dance.

January 2024:

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. We were 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."



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

Kristine Elliott brought with her a dedicated ballet syllabus which she has left with us to assist with teaching ballet. We are very grateful. 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. The dance intensive was a huge success which no doubt touched the lives of all the participants.

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.

February 2024:

After the excitement of Kristine Elliott's visit in January everything went back to normal as Nqaba resumed his daily classes. He reserved some of the afternoons for Kristine's syllabus but also included his powerful contemporary classes. The students are coming in good numbers, and they are enjoying the classes.

In late January I approached Lutho Zwedala to see how he was doing. Our founding member, the late Fiona Sargeant had often spoken about Lutho who was one of her students. She truly believed that he was a talented young man who could not only dance but could choreograph as well. I learned that he had been making ends meet by working for the local canning factory in Ashton. He also has a young child from a previous relationship who needs support. I then invited him to come and assist Nqaba in his teaching. We discussed the possibility of creating a new piece which we hoped to include in this year's Montagu Arts Festival. Lutho has shown us a level of commitment which we hope he will continue to develop. He has also spoken of attending various auditions later this year and we hope that he will follow through with them and finally get work in the industry.

The rest of the month of February was a little troublesome. Sometime in the 1st full week of February, The Zolani Hope Centre was burgled. Parts of the alarm system were stolen, making it inoperable and exposing the building to further burglaries. Sometime on the 20th of February the building was once again targeted by thieves who made off with copper piping used to supply water to the building. The result was that they opened these pipes allowing water to gush out in one of our changing rooms. The water then flowed under our new floor and then out of the building only to be discovered the following morning. Fanie was able to close the water off at the mains. Whilst putting the new floor down I made several holes in a peripheral beam which allowed the water to run out. I am glad that I did this, but we are not sure if the water had risen high enough to permeate into the wood floor. We lifted the vinyl floor mats to give the floor vital air to breathe and allow the cement floor below to dry. This exposed the underneath layer of 6mm plywood and it wasn't looking good. More waves have formed, and at that point I realized that we were at a crucial juncture. Do we continue with the current 6mm board, or do we take it up and replace with a thicker 12mm one?



Above: Lutho Zwedala rehearses one of his new works.

After the first burglary I had a chance to meet with Fanie and I spoke about a vision which I had for the Zolani Hope Centre. I also mentioned to him that I found that he and the Care Trust were unable to properly manage the building. Maintenance was lacking and as the building got older this is becoming more and more problematic. In January DSA spent money fixing several things in our studio. This included repairs to the roof, fixing broken windows and parts of the window frames. We also hung clothing hooks in both changing rooms. The Care Trust are unable to conduct these repairs largely due to the fact that they don't have any money to do so. I explained to Fanie that we were in a position to facilitate these repairs but would not be able to continue unless we had more guarantees in place. It would be throwing our money away if we looked after the building and then later forced to find another venue. I then spoke about my vision. There are two organizations which are working well in the township. Firstly, DSA which has been actively involved since 2016. The other one is the Zolani Youth Choir. I know that the choir is looking for a venue to rehearse. I propose that the current workshop area should be cleaned, revamped, and used as a rehearsal venue. Also, the church would use this part of the building which meets mostly on Sundays. The kitchen could be turned into a cafeteria where local arts and crafts could be on display and sold along with snacks and vegetables. I also mentioned Carol at Rescue Among Many (RAM), who may be interested in using the kitchen as a Zolani soup kitchen. Finally the entire project would be linked to local tourism, making the venue a destination. Visitors could see firsthand the talent of local artists and performers and buy refreshments. A township tour, showing tourists what life is like in our township could also be part of the package. Fanie liked what he heard but also mentioned that he had had a similar vision himself. He said that he would discuss these ideas with his board and get back to me.

March 2024:

This month was slightly shorter as school broke up on the 20th of March for the Easter Holidays. Nqaba continued to teach and rehearse this month with growing numbers of students. He is preparing for the Art Deco performance planned for late April.

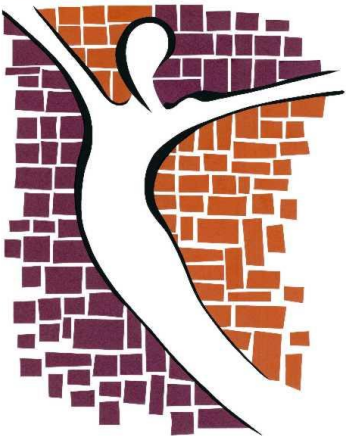
After the break-ins to the Zolani Hope Centre in February we all realized the importance of having a functioning alarm system. We accepted a quote from Secunet but I decided to include an additional feature. Olarm allows for the users to be able to connect with the system via an application on a smart phone. Dancescape paid for the entire installation, which came to over R9000. Fanie, however, has agreed to pay back R4000 sometime in the future. It was also agreed that the Olarm hardware would belong to Dancescape.



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After the theft of pipes and subsequent flooding in February, we had to address the damage that it had done to the floor. I wasn't sure how wet the bottom layer of boards were and if there was still water under them so I made the decision to lift the entire floor and reassemble with a 12 mm board on top of the 18 mm shutterply. We began working on this on the 18th of March. So as not to disrupt classes, I arranged for the students to continue their classes at the Zolani Community Hall before they broke up on the 20th. I also employed Ali and Sylvester to do most of the labour. I am very glad that we lifted the floor because many boards were very damp and by doing so, we could allow them and the cement underneath to dry. We had the reinstallation all done by the 22nd of March.

On the 26th of March, Fanie reported to me that the water pipes had finally been replaced and the water was now on again. This being vitally important for the toilets. I am also glad to report that my vehicle, a Renault Scenic, has now been fixed and was used to move boards in the repair job on the floor. We did, however, have to replace the battery.

Another problem that had to be addressed was the leaking roof situation. We finally settled on using a small company linked to the DIY Depot hardware shop in Ashton. This was only after many larger companies failed to get back to me. Renier from the DIY Depot was quick to start work and followed up after the work was done to make sure there were no more leaks. The work they did was extensive but also expensive. There was once again a large downpour, and I can report that even though there were just a few drops it was a huge improvement. Renier has assured me that he will get back to me after Easter Weekend to fix it. Fanie also suggested that some of the roof insulation be removed to make it easier to find other holes which need to be fixed.

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)