



DANCESCAPE SOUTH AFRICA

Uplifting People Through Dance

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4th Quarter Report for Dancescape South Africa October to December 2023

Daily dance classes continued during school term times throughout October to December of 2023 (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. We were also able to pay for the services of a director / administrator and a general assistant. Without financial support we wouldn't be able to tend to 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.

October 2023:

On the 7th of October 19 of our students, Nqaba, Patricia and I travelled to Cape Town to watch a performance by the Jazzart Dance Theatre at the Artscape Theatre. Lihle Mfene, one of their dancers and a former DSA student, organized tickets for this very special production to celebrate Jazzart's 50th years of existence in Cape Town. The performance was part of a two-week celebratory festival. All the students, which ranged from some of the youngest to the most senior, were very excited to see, some for the first time, the huge Artscape Theatre and the show. What made the outing even more exciting was the fact that four of our former students were performing. All those on stage were amazing, but what struck me the most was

how our former students had developed over the year of their training. Even Dane Hurst, the artistic director of Jazzart, mentioned to me how impressed he was with their progress when we spoke after the show. We congratulate Chuma and Milisa Mathiso, Phelo Ngxukuma and Thimna Ndwe for a beautiful performance. Well done and keep up the hard work.



Above: Students taking daily class and then on an outing to the Artscape Theatre Complex to watch a performance by Jazzart Dance Theatre.



Above: Our students performed at the screening of the *Beyond Moving* movie. They were also treated to a lovely dinner made possible by RAM, many thanks to Carol.

On Thursday the 19th of October we had another rather special event which had been in the planning stages for several months. The 19th is World Ballet Day and encouraged by Mareletta Munday we collaborated with the Montagu-Ashton Tourism Association to perform and then to screen the very special movie called "Beyond Moving" at the Odeon Cinema here in Montagu to a paying audience which gave us an opportunity to fund raise. However, first, over fifty students and some parents and friends were bussed in earlier that afternoon to watch the movie. Most of them hadn't seen it before and I could see that they were very impressed, and no doubt inspired by this true story of Siphe November. Siphe was one of the Late Fiona Sargeant's pupils who was fortunate enough to study at the Canadian National Ballet School in Toronto where he graduated several years later. The movie also highlighted some of his subsequent success as a performer. It truly is a beautiful story. Today, Siphe is a principal dancer with the National Ballet of Canada.

Our dancers were then treated to a delicious dinner provided by Carol from Rescue Among Many (RAM) before they performed two pieces in front of a large crowd at Brandy Hall which is just next to the KWV building. After the performance the paying audience watched the movie back at the Odeon. We would like to thank Carol and RAM for providing such a wonderful dinner for our students. Many of those in the audience approached me after the screening with only praise for the movie and for what Dancescape South Africa is doing in the community.

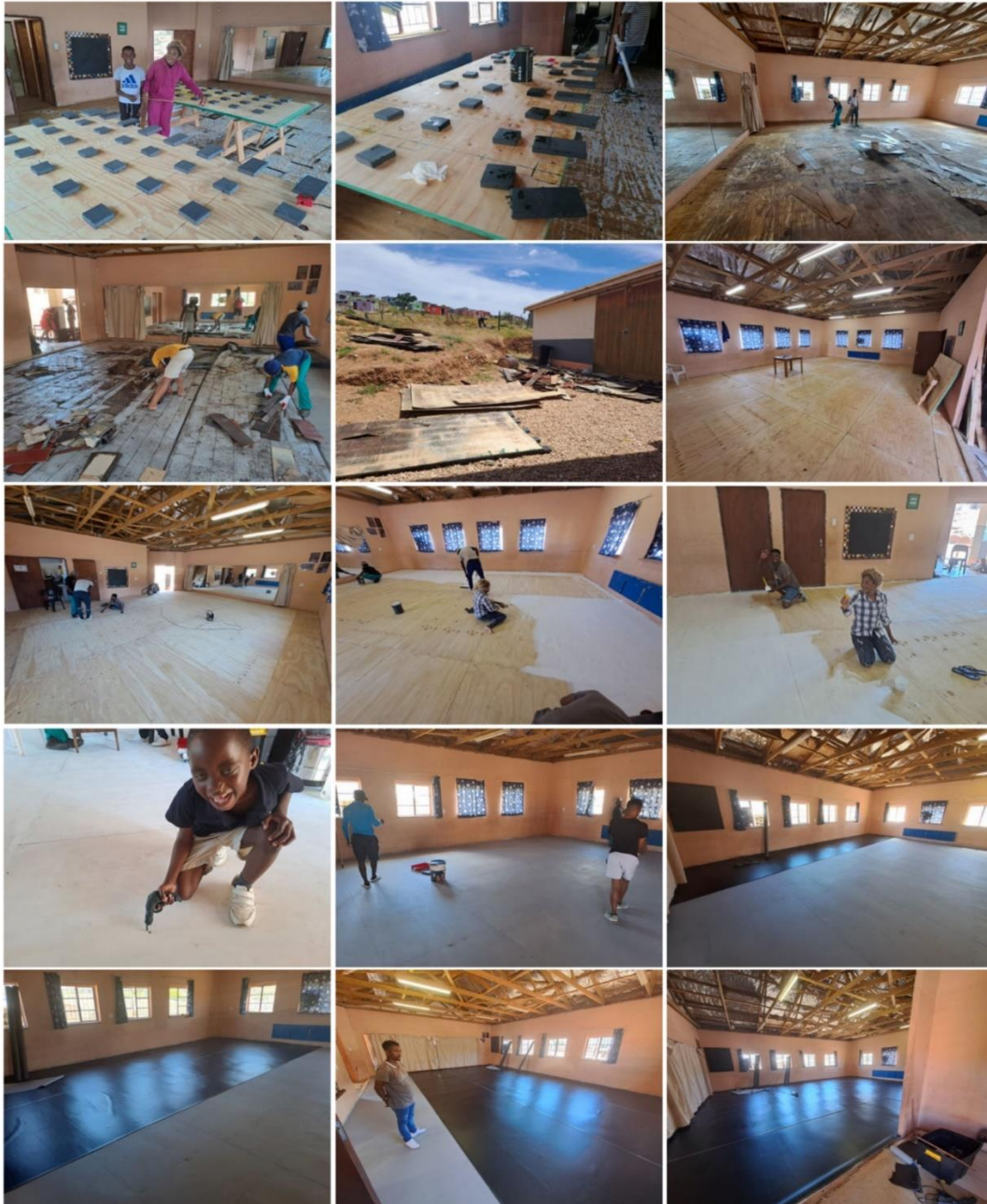
On the 21st of October eleven of our students once again travelled to McGregor to attend a collaborative workshop with the First Step Ballet. The repairs to the road and bridge which had been affected by the recent floods have now been completed.

November 2023:

The month of November was a busy month for us. On the 8th of November many of our dancers performed at the annual Samie Marathon hosted by Rescue Among Many (RAM). DSA has been a part of this special day for several years. Once again RAM managed to feed thousands of people, mostly children in the Ashbury area. We thank Carol from RAM for inviting us again this year. We performed two pieces both choreographed by Nqaba Mafilika. The first was his version of Bolero and the second was created to music from the Lion King called, "Just can't wait to be king."

After weeks of preparation, we were finally able to begin working on the new floor. As mentioned in previous reports the existing floor was in a horrible condition and clearly needed to be replaced. After episodes of flooding due to taps being left open the wooden boards were no doubt rotting. We would not know how bad the situation was until later in the month when we began to peel the old vinyl off and expose the floor beneath. We would like to thank Kristine Elliott from the Gugulethu Ballet Project for providing the funds required to replace the floor.

All the necessary boards had to be ordered and new plans drawn up. Even though this was the second time that I was doing this job special attention had to be made to not make any mistakes.



Above: The building of a new floor captured at various important stages.

Our work on the floor began in earnest on the Monday the 13th of November. Nqaba, Patricia and I began by working in the mornings before the daily classes began. We had to cut the high-density pads which would lie underneath the first layer of 18 mm board, and which would provide the vital shock absorption required in making a sprung dance floor. Hundreds of these pads were cut from large sheets and then glued on to the shutterply in preparation for laying down. Not all the boards were the same. Some were different in size and required different patterns of pads to be glued depending on where they would eventually be placed.

On Monday the 20th of November we began the process of lifting the old floor. Starting with ripping the old vinyl floor up and then lifting two layers of old boards of which most were rotten. On that day, to my surprise, several local people arrived to help and took most of the wood and vinyl away with them hoping to salvage what they could. Our team was now joined by two laborers, Ali, and Wilson, who were employed for the week. I am most grateful for them as now the workload required some serious lifting. Before long everything was out of the room exposing only the cement floor. The jigsaw puzzle of boards was then laid and once that was done the top layer of thinner board followed. The idea with this kind of floor is that the seams of the bottom layer must not be exposed. By Wednesday of that week both layers were down and after securing that top layer down with screws we even managed to get a layer of paint on. The idea behind the paint was to provide a level of protection in anticipation of all the abuse which the floor is going to deal with in months and years to come. By Saturday after a few more layers of paint we were almost finished. However, I wanted time to allow the paint to settle, so we decided to resume the following week when we eventually rolled out our new dance mats.

I must thank Ann Hall for initiating the project of getting these special mats from England. They are very expensive and her fundraising campaign to help us was awesome. We even managed to make two notice boards out of left over rubber pads, which were hung in the studio. At the end of the two weeks, I must add that I was exhausted. It was a tough job and I really thank our team and the workers for all their effort in making it possible.

This month, Patricia brought some leotards, skirts, and pants through to the studio to be given out to some of the new young students. We have noticed how students, when issued with dance wear begin to take more pride in their dancing and dance classes. I have also placed an order with a local supplier in Robertson to make Dancescape South Africa tracksuits for our more senior dancers. These will be worn at outings and performances to show off the DSA project.

December 2023:

The month of December 2023 was a short month for DSA as we broke up after our last performance of the year on the 10th of December. We were hoping to have a workshop from the 11th to the 16th in collaboration with the Jazzart Dance Theatre, but this fell through due to various reasons on the Jazzart side. Lihle Mfene, one of our former students, had tried to arrange for this but has now been postponed to sometime next year. We will resume classes on the 8th of January when we have a special dance intensive with Kristine Elliott scheduled.

We had to suspend classes in the final week of November, of this year, due to construction work being done on our new floor. On Friday the 1st of December I arranged for a party to celebrate the new floor and to introduce our growing number of students to what we had done. As reported in November, I couldn't believe what our students had been dancing on during the year. A new and wonderful floor is now waiting for them, and they were all excited to see it. Several of the students had over the construction period made visits to see its progress and now finally they could see the finished product. We had a wonderful afternoon, eating delicious cake and sipping on cool drinks. Many new children also arrived.

The week that followed was spent rehearsing the three dance pieces which we performed on Sunday the 10th of December. In collaboration with the Langeberg Municipality, a special event had been planned to celebrate the turning of the Christmas lights in Ashton. The venue was the Ashton Sports Grounds. The organizers had not only invited DSA but also the Ashton School of Dance, the Zolani Youth Choir, the Boland Chamber Choir, and a few other local bands. Ward councilors and church pastors were also in attendance, delivering speeches and prayers. A large crowd of mostly locals arrived and enjoyed the festive atmosphere sitting and standing on the grass of the stadium whilst they watched.

Even though our students had to perform on the grass, once again they gave a spirited performance. Nqaba Mafilika choreographed all three pieces. We began the program with his, "I can't wait to be king" danced to music from The Lion King soundtrack. Then his version of "Bolero" and that was followed by "Hamba Wena" which had previously been performed at the

Montagu Youth Arts Festival. I was very pleased with the quality of the performance and several people, including some of the ward councilors congratulated me on the high standard of the dancers. I trust that our students enjoyed their performance and hope that they are proud of their achievements after all the hard work put in.



Above: Students enjoying our new floor celebration party.



Above: Students in class and rehearsals preparing for the Christmas lights performance.



Above: DSA performs at the turning on of the Christmas lights at Ashton Stadium.

I wish to thank our resident teacher, Nqaba Mafilika, for another wonderful year of teaching and mentoring. Patricia Chamanga Sargeant for all her hard work and then the students for working hard, especially in preparation for all the performances which we had this year. My wish is that all enjoy a blessed Christmas and that our students and staff stay safe and return next year to continue where they left off this year. Many thanks to all of you.

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)

