

Dancescape South Africa (DSA) August 2019 Report

Dancescape South Africa continues to facilitate daily dance classes in August 2019 (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 month of August has over the last few years been closely associated with the Montagu Youth Arts Festival. This year was no exception. We were all very busy preparing the entries which were performed at the NG Kerk Hall on Thursday the 15th of August. The choreography for some of the pieces needed to be finished and then all had to be well rehearsed. Costumes were required and we were fortunate enough to have Sylvia November make several shirts and pants. Music needed editing and dress rehearsals scheduled, and then our big day arrived. Most of the students were picked up from the local Ashton CP School and transported to the venue. Our guest teachers, Africa Mtikitiki and Aviwe November was joined by Patricia Chimanga and all worked together back stage making sure that all had the right costumes and everybody was ready to perform. I coordinated from the front of house with music and the filming of each dance piece.



This year we managed to enter 8 entries ranging in style from African Traditional to Ballet and Modern. Both Africa Mtikitiki and Aviwe November choreographed a tradition dance piece each accompanied by their own live drum beats. These pieces were full of energy and vibrancy. Aviwe added to our repertoire with a dynamic and unique contemporary dance called “Selfless”. Included in the lineup was the “Trish Trash polka” and our version of the “Peasant Pas De Duex.” Both had been performed recently at the Youth Day Celebrations in June. “Exile” a piece modified and adapted for the festival was also included. This ballet was more of a story ballet and depicted the pain and anxiety of a man in exile. The rest of the cast danced around this man like haunted spirits. I felt that the piece worked well. A big thank you to, one of our trainee teachers, Phelo Ngxukuma for stepping up and choreographing a lovely entry for our juniors. Five junior dancers performed in his piece called, “I wanna make a change.” It was fabulous to see these youngsters performing with such maturity. Finally and a big highlight of the afternoon was “Sinfonnieta” taught to our students by Kristine Elliott during her visit earlier in the year. This challenging and technical piece was well performed. This entry clearly showed a well-oiled group of dancers which had spent many months rehearsing. Well done.



The DSA dancers hard at work preparing for the Montagu Youth Arts Festival 2019

The preparation for the festival was however not all plain sailing. We had many challenges along the way. One of the biggest challenges had to be dealing with absent dancers. This made it difficult to rehearse properly with so many gaps where the missing student should have been. It also made it very difficult to get everybody doing the same steps and movements. Finally we did manage to get full casts and things started to take shape. On the weekend before the festival Chuma Mathiso, who is one of our starring dancers, had a mishap. Only on the Monday when asking why Chuma was not in class did I discover that his ankle had swollen and he could not walk. I immediately drove to his home to find the poor lad lying on his bed and clearly in much pain. He had sustained his injury whilst kicking a soccer ball around over that weekend. We had no choice but to recast many of the dance pieces except for one. He was cast as the lead character in the ballet "Exile." After some quick thinking we decided to bring his character on using crutches. He was now the pained war veteran who had aged in exile nursing a war injury. It seemed to work and a fine example of turning a bad situation into good. Chuma travelled to Worcester the following day to discover that he had actually broken a small bone in his ankle. He returned with a plaster cast and will be out of action for 6 weeks. Next time he might think twice about kicking that soccer ball.



Chuma Mathiso before his injury rehearses with Milisa, his older sister.

Dancescape South Africa received awards for:

Trish Trash Polka: Best Ballet duet/trio Trophy (Double Gold).

Uthando Nuvuyo: (Gold).

I wanna make a change: (Gold).

Exile: (Double Gold).

Peasant pas de deux: (Gold).

Sinfonietta: Best Contemporary Group High School Trophy (Double Gold).

Selfless: (Double Gold)

Ithemba: Best Junior Dance entry Trophy (Gold).

Aphiwe November: Most Promising Dancer Trophy.

Congratulations to all the dancers! Let's keep up the good work.



Above: Phelo Ngxukuma and Aphiwe November dancing in the Trish Trash Polka



Above: The DSA dancers alongside fellow performers and judges at the festival.

Below: Aphiwe November and Phelo Ngxukuma receive the trophies for DSA



A few days after the festival I arranged for the students to watch video clips of their performance. This proved to be a great success as they could then see for themselves what we as teachers had been pestering them about over the last few months. I believe that they all learnt a lot as we discussed each of the 8 entries, pointing out possible improvements and mistakes. There was also a lot of laughter and it was a fun afternoon for all.

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)

