

Dancescape South Africa (DSA) July 2019 Report

Dancescape South Africa continues to facilitate daily dance classes in July 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:

Our 3rd term started after the students returned from the school winter holidays. However DSA attempted to host holiday classes and rehearsals in the final week of the holidays. We needed time to prepare for the Montagu Youth Arts Festival scheduled for August 2019. Unfortunately we had to cancel the week as very few of the students arrived and it seemed pointless to continue with so few. Dance classes resumed on the 9th of July however without our resident teachers, Farouk and Manie Irving. This was an unwanted surprise to all at Dancescape South Africa. I was only informed of their intentions to leave DSA and to relocate back to Cape Town after sending out the June report. We were relying on both teachers to help the student prepare for the Montagu Youth Arts Festival which is a big event in the DSA calendar. Farouk and Manie were also supposed to have choreographed a dance piece each for this very festival. We do wish both Farouk and Manie all the very best in their new ventures away from Montagu. Thank you for all that you have done for our NPO over the year and a half that you have been teaching with us.



Having Farouk and Manie not available to teach our Zolani Students in July left me with a problem. Who was to teach the kids of Zolani in July? Who was going to choreograph and rehearse pieces for the upcoming arts festival? Fortunately for DSA, one of the late Fiona Sargeant's previous pupils was back in town and was to be our knight in shining armor. Aviwe November graciously stepped in to teach the kids for 4 afternoons of each week.



Aviwe told me more about his upbringing and how he got involved with dance and the late Fiona Sargeant who at that time taught for Dance for All. He recalled how he used to enjoy dancing the Pantsula and other typically African township street dances with his cousins, Siphe and Tutu November. Both Siphe and Tutu had at that time joined the Dance For All initiative being taught by the Late Fiona Sargeant but Aviwe did not want to get involved. He told me that one afternoon he went to watch what his cousins were doing. He took one look and left deciding that this was really not for him. In September 2009 he felt bored and found himself back at the studio. On that day the translators that Fiona had been using were absent. He was asked to step in as an interpreter. Fiona then asked Aviwe to demonstrate some of the step whilst he was translating her instruction into Xhosa. This he did and he discovered that he was actually good at doing the steps. Fiona complemented him on his efforts. He then started to attend classes and on one day one of the other dancers had not arrived for rehearsals. Aviwe stepped in to take his place. His face lit up as he told me how much he started to enjoy his dancing. In 2010 Aviwe

was in his Matric year at school. He was not sure what he was going to do after school but really liked dancing. Fiona suggested that they make a video and send it out to see if he could find help to continue his studies. We also made him a dedicated web page. Fiona looked for possible schools where he could study further. She approached the Cape Academy of Performing Arts (CAPA) in Cape Town and developed a relationship with Debbie Turner who was the director. In 2011 both Aviwe and Tutu received scholarships to study at CAPA and started an intensive three year course. During this time, Fiona made every effort to cover their living, transport and accommodation expenses. She planned various fund raising events to raise money for the two young men to complete the three year course. In the first year of his training they both were featured in a TV program called Hectic 99. Here they were spotted and sponsored to attend dance intensive summer schools in the USA. Over the three years of their training at CAPA both Aviwe and Tutu November had travelled to Washington, New York and San Francisco to attend various summer schools. Soon after Aviwe started his professional career. He told me that he worked with Jazz Art, Underground Theatre and the Figure of Eight. In 2015 he was invited to perform in Amsterdam with a company call DOX. This was a collaboration with the South African company Figure of Eight and DOX. Aviwe remained in Amsterdam working with the DOX Company. He did a lot of touring even dancing in England and Japan. However it was all to come to an end when Aviwe discovered that his mother had cancer and this brought him back home to Zolani in 2018. Aviwe spent most of his saving on his mother's treatment. He is happy to tell me that the cancer has gone after operations and other therapies.



On the 16th of July I drove Thimna Ndwe down to the Cape Town International Airport. Once again due to the kindness of Kristine Elliott, Thimna has been given the opportunity to attend dance classes in the San Francisco under the watchful eye of Kristine Elliot. She will be staying in the USA for nearly six months and will be returning to South Africa in late December 2019. We would like to thank Kristine and the Gugulethu Ballet Project for making this possible and helping to uplift people through dance.



Whilst the Late Fiona Sargeant was still alive she had worked with Dance For All and with Africa Mtitiki. Whilst accompanying Aviwe at his teaching sessions I bumped into Africa and invited him to teach. I am thrilled to tell you that we have taken Africa on as a part time teacher. He is highly skilled at teaching traditional dance and was impressed with how he took a ballet barre and taught African traditional dance at the barre. It was the first time that I had seen anything like it, a wonderful experience. I must say that having both Africa and Aviwe on board and teaching the students in their home language is most advantageous. They are clearly more equipped to teach these kids and further more they bring in a new energy that I have not seen for some time. They say that every cloud has a silver lining, this cloud has brought us the benefits of both Aviwe and Africa.



Later in the month Lihle Mfene and Lutho Zwedala came to visit. Both CAPA students returning from Cape Town in their holiday time. It was great to see them both. They taught classes and Lihle assisted in rehearsing one of our dance pieces to be danced at the upcoming Youth Arts Festival. We have also had the fortune of employing Sylvia November, who is assisting us to make costumes for the above mentioned festival. Sylvia November is the mother to Siphe and Tutu November. Both were the former pupils of the Late Fiona Sargeant and are now dancing all over the world.



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)

