

Dancescape South Africa April 2018 Report

Daily dance classes continued throughout April 2018 (3.00pm – 6.00pm Venue Zolani Hope Centre –Mantlane Road Zolani Ashton) engaging children in beginner and senior dance sessions. We continue to facilitating dance classes in Ashbury at the Ashbury Civic Centre initiated and in collaboration with the RAD Foundation. This month we were only able to facilitate classes for just over 2 weeks due to the school holidays and several public holidays.

More about Dancescape South Africa teaching:



Our resident teachers Farouk and Manie Irving continue their teaching at both the Hope Centre in Zolani and at the Ashbury Civic Centre. In Zolani we have a core group of what we call our junior and senior dancers. This group of about 30 range in age from 12 to 18 years old. Many of them have been with the project since Dancescape South Africa was founded in early 2016. Their technique and strength has steadily been improving over this time. We have been very fortunate to have had many guest teachers over this time building on the solid foundation that Fiona had put into place. Over the later part of 2017 several new comers joined the junior and senior group and I

have observed, thanks to the consistent training of our resident teachers, their improvement in both ballet and contemporary technique. Our junior and senior group are privileged to have training and rehearsal time every day of the week in school term times. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays we facilitate classes for our baby dancers. They are a group of between 20 and 30 ranging in age from 4 to 11 years old. Once again Farouk and Manie are building a solid base as we prepare these youngsters for entering the junior and senior class.



A typical afternoon for our junior and senior students would be to do either a classical ballet or contemporary style class. They would then have time to rehearse dance pieces for upcoming performances such as the Montagu Youth Arts Festival. An exciting part of rehearsal would also be to allow some of the senior dancers time to choreograph their own pieces. This would then be rehearsed under the watchful eye of the resident teachers. We try as best we can to incorporate the baby dancers into the choreography. About a week or so before performances I would visit the projects on a daily bases, in collaboration with the resident teachers, and direct the dance repertoire. The objective at this time would be to work on their performance

skills and to prepare the most exciting pieces for the upcoming performances. Furthermore costumes and music need to be planned for.

It is important to also mention in this report that our resident teachers are assisted by the trainee teachers. We have 4 trainee teachers who are paid a stipend each month for their contribution to helping the project. The resident teachers are in a process of training these teachers with the intention that they would be able to teach class and take rehearsal themselves. The trainee teachers are often asked by either Farouk or Manie to teach a movement or a sequence of steps. Their help is also invaluable in keeping the large group of students quiet and focused on what is being taught during each class. We at Dancescape South Africa realize that for the project to expand we are going to need to teach teachers to teach.

Once a week on a Thursday afternoon, either Manie or Farouk teach in Ashbury at the civic centre. This project is in collaboration with the RAD Foundation of which Helen Goodeson is the director. They teach two classes. The first a basic class for the younger kid and the second for the older student which is more advanced. The kids range in age from 6 to 15 years old and an average of 35 dancers arrive for class. We only started this project in February of this year and we hope that as the interest increases we will be able to add another afternoon in the week.



Above: Manie giving class to the Ashbury Kids.

The Irving brothers sent me this short report for April 2018:

The kids are working well but we are having a bit of a problem with getting to start on time because of changing room that is locked and some of the seniors having to do assignments for school. We are working on the problem and will have things running smoothly soon. We have a performance coming up on the 16th of June and have a lot of hard work ahead of us and the children are excited and are willing to work hard so together we will make it a success, the classes in Ashbury is going slowly but is picking up now and the kids are excited to learn dance.

We continue to provide a sandwich for our students in Zolani:

Many of our readers may not know that we provide a sandwich to each of our dance students each and every day that we facilitate classes in Zolani. This behind the scenes and often forgotten part of the project has been a part of what we do for many years. Initially funded by the generous donations from the Montagu Community Church, however we now seek funding from the general public. A project call "The Zolani Bread Basket" founded by our former chairperson Bo Gordon has been put into place and details of this project can be found on our website at:
<http://dancescapesouthafrica.org.za/index.php/needs-and-wish-list/zolani-bread-basket>

Dancescape South Africa would like to thank Sandra Reichert who is our current DSA chairperson, and in particular our sandwich maker Patricia Chimanga for all their hard work making these sandwiches each and every day of the week.



Above and below: The dancers receiving their sandwiches.



An amazing donation of Dance Togs:

In early April 14 large boxes arrived at the Dancescape SA residence. Manie and I were exhausted after lugging the boxes up to the DSA Wardrobe. Soon after the Easter weekend I decided to open each and every box and sort all the new items out in the wardrobe. We would like to thank Louise Kent and Ballet World for an amazing donation of mostly new dance togs. An amazing selection of shoes, leotards, skirts, tights, all in ones, it's a list too long to mention every item. Dancescape South Africa really appreciates all that has been provided for our budding dancers. Once again a big thank you to all who contributed to filling these boxes.

Below: Some of the amazing donated dance wears for our budding dancers.



Above: Vikram and Siphe talk during a rehearsal of his homage dance to Fiona Sargeant.

Vikram's visit to South Africa and to Zolani from the 15th to the 18th of April was for the intention of filming this homage dance on the streets of Zolani. On Sunday the 15th of April Siphe rehearsed his dance at our studio in Zolani. Several of our students came to watch this world class performer in action. I then assisted Vikram in finding a perfect street location in Zolani and the homage dance was filmed at sunset at this location on the 16th of April. Most of our students were involved as they watched and danced alongside Siphe as he danced his tribute dance in memory of the late Fiona Sargeant. It was an awesome evening and Vikram was well pleased with the footage which he intends to use to finish his documentary. We were happy to be a part of this project as it pays tribute to Fiona Sargeant and will ultimately provide exposure for Dancescape South Africa.



Above: Siphe with some of the students who watched his rehearsal.



Above: Vikram Dasgupta



Above: Vikram with his crew and Siphe November



Above: Vikram with Fiona and dancers on a previous visit in 2015

Below: Siphe with members of his family at the Zolani rehearsal.



Lihle Mfene reports back from Cape Town and CAPA:

This month has been an embodiment of intensity in every regard. The second term has been demanding due to closeness to the Grahamstown Festival (NAF) 2018. From having to remember a load of choreographies to extensive drama work. Above everything, though I am only motivated to do more and be more. My ballet performance and skill improvement are inarguably improving gradually as my resident teacher; Miss Di Lorenzo has verbalized that instant which feels incredibly great. Contemporary classes with Miss Coetzee have never been greater. Her powerful approach in utilizing the ballet skills in correlation with a loose free body to tell a story really excites and inspire me as this is something I look forward in being able to strongly do when I am a qualified and experienced dancer one day. Miss Turner has sessions each week that are called vocational studies; this is where she does a bit of catch up and conversation about the future of dance in our country, the world and most importantly us. What is next from here kind of conversations. With her compelling presence, she really reminds me how privileged I am to have had Fiona in my life, you, the school and opportunities such as going to America and expanding my knowledge about the world even further. My dreams are beyond South Africa, though a part of it is to save it of course. Miss Turner said something very profound in our last session which is food for thought that carries with me, she that we are of service to art and not vice versa. Having that in my mind every time I dance really makes narrow my duty as a future artist. IT IS CONTRIBUTING TO ART and use ART to SAVE MY HOME, South Africa. My highlight this month or rather this term thus far is learning one of CAPA's most magnificent and remarkable pieces of all time, "ENEMY BEHIND THE GATE". What a repertoire of note!!!! As Carmen Lotz slowly take us through this superb piece, my spirit is firing up and wants more of it. Dance is LIFE, THE ESSENCE OF LIVING.

I do not know how to extend my gratitude to Dancescape SA as they have opened up a whole century for me. The closest to gratitude is assuring the funds they use for me are used efficiently and meaningfully. I will dance my heart out, and promise to be a living example like Mthuthuzeli November who exemplifies the honorable service to the Ashton community. I will be successful and a star this is for me and to inspire those at home that there is a place for them to be great. You just have to put in the work. Thank you so

much Mitya, I am so blessed to have you as a leader, teacher and mentor in my life.

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)