

## **Dancescape South Africa (DSA) February 2019 Report**

Dancescape South Africa continues to facilitate daily dance classes in February 2019 (3.00pm – 6.00pm Venue Zolani Hope Centre – Mantlane Road Zolani Ashton) engaging children in beginner and senior dance sessions. We also continued our dance classes in Ashbury at the Ashbury Civic Centre in collaboration with the RAD Foundation.

### **The Dancescape South Africa Directors Report:**

This month we continued our back to basics approach. The resident teachers focused on building on the solid foundation that they started in January. They have introduced some syllabus work so that the kids get accustomed to developing on familiar steps and routines. I managed to teach the students some body conditioning exercises using a Pilates Thera band. These Pilates based exercises use the resistance of the band to strengthen our young dancers. We are preparing for Kristine Elliot's visit in March. Technique is all important right now. Working on clean arms and well held bodies. There is also a possibility that 3 of our young male dancers could be going to New York for a Bournonville workshop in May of this year. Once again Kristine Elliot is trying to organize this but many things have to be set up before the trip is finalized. The resident teachers and I auditioned the students and found the three candidates who we thought would most likely cope with the demands of the Bournonville style. Then without any further delay the task was to get their passports. DSA sponsored the applications and have already received 2 of the three passports applied for. We are waiting for Kristine Elliot to finalize all the arrangements before we apply for USA travel visa's.

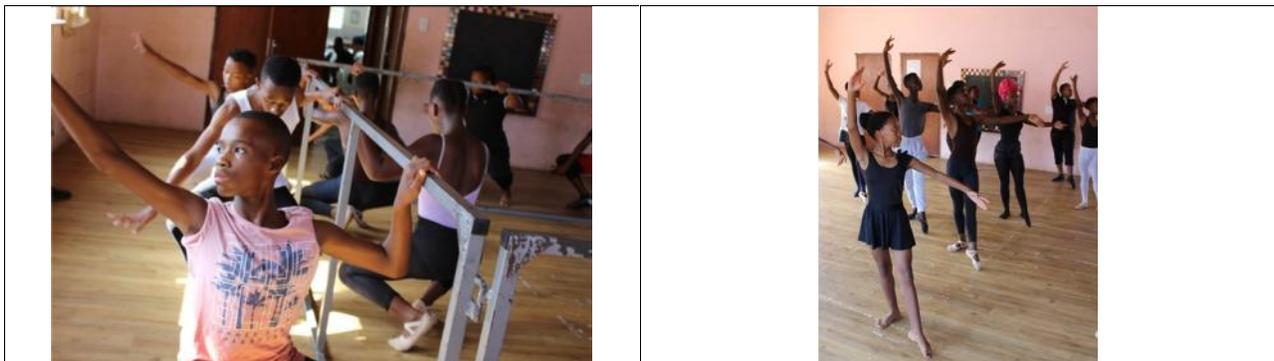


On the 6<sup>th</sup> of February Dancescape South Africa held its annual general meeting. All the trustees attended. The Chairperson gave a positive report on the year gone by. All were happy with the progress of the previous year and hoped that the organization builds upon this. We intend meeting again in May of 2019.



Patricia Chimanga continued her work building bridges in the community of Zolani. This month she spent a lot of time telling the parents about the Open Day which we had on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February. In fact we all tried to get as much interest and hoped to see at least the parent of our students attend the Saturday morning of dance classes. I arranged for a large TV so that those who attended could also watch professional dancers from the Royal Ballet Company in action doing a ballet class. Even after repeated reminders to the parents, the local school headmaster and others such as councilors and pastors the open day unfortunately had a dismal response with only a few of the parents coming to see what we are offering the community. It is sad to see such a lack of support as we are working to help the youth in their community. We strive to uplift through dance as we have done with so many such as Lihle Mfene and Lutho Zwedala who are now full time students at the Cape Academy of Performing Arts in Cape Town. The DSA project has changed their lives and made their dreams a reality. However at least the students enjoyed a morning of training and were inspired by the movies of professionals doing their ballet class. Patricia will be making enquiries as to why the event was not adequately supported by the local community.

***Below: Students attending the Open Day event on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February 2019***





*Above: Patricia waiting for visitors to arrive at the recent open day. Below: Students absorbed by movie clips of the Royal Ballet doing class.*



### **The Resident Teachers Report:**

We continue with solid technical training making the kids work slower. Helping them to understand which muscles are been used to do each exercise and the purpose for doing each exercise. It is important that the students realize why the barre work, for example, helps to prepare the body for bigger jumps and center practice. Both Manie and I are seeing improvements in their technique. Stamina need to be developed to execute the dance routines correctly.



***Above: Osiphayo Peter, one of our trainee teachers in action at the barre***

Aya and Osi, our trainee teachers, are learning to help and correct the others. A positive spin off to this is that they are improving their technique by teaching others. Many of our senior dancers left last year to further their education and many are doing matric this year. These matric students have not been as consistent with attendance due to after school classes. This has left the younger senior dancers to lead the group and fill the gaps. The teachers also feel that that the student must concentrate on their academics and matriculate with good marks.

The senior group has been joined by some enthusiastic newcomers. These kids arrive on time and are ready to do class. One of the older kids has returned after starting dance classes when Fiona Sargeant was still teaching several years ago. Another was introduced to the project through one of the other male students.



***Above: Chuma Mathiso watches whilst stretching***

The baby class, our youngest students between 5 and 11 years old, have once again increased in numbers and some of them are showing lots of natural talent. One of these students has also returned after initial training with Fiona Sargeant. We are seeing more consistent attendance with this group. We encourage these kids to attend regularly and reward those who do by putting them in the front line of the class. Being in the front line is sort after and respected by the others.

***Below: The baby class, growing in numbers and finally Manie gets a big hug.***





We are preparing 3 of the senior boys who may have an opportunity to go to New York to attend a Bournonville workshop with Kristine Elliot in May of this year. Developing their stamina and their technique for this event should it happen as it has not yet been finalized. As they prepare they are beginning to realize how strong their bodies need to be, to be professional dancers.



## **Lutho Zwedala and Lihle Mfene report back from Cape Town:**

Both young men started the month learning a Michelle Reid choreography called “Contraband.” They told me that it was a contemporary jazz piece. They continued into the second week finishing the first part and cleaning it. Lutho said that it was an amazing choreography and he is doing a solo in it, he is of course very excited about that. Lutho then told me, “My third week of this Month was so hard for me we had another lady her name is Anne. Her ballet bar exercises are so hard and she was shouting at me because I didn’t know what I was doing. She stopped the class and she said I must do the exercise alone in the middle I was so scared and I made many mistakes but I pulled myself together and learned the exercise.”

Only later in the month of February did they start their exam schedule, working on subjects that they would be examined on later. Both students mentioned that they were doing body conditioning classes with Dave. He is showing them how to strengthen their bodies especially for dance.

Lihle told me, “I’m really enjoying CAPA more than last year, because the first year is always draining emotionally and mentally, and I’m really grateful for everything, of course without Dancescape SA I wouldn’t have had this opportunity. Thanks to Dancescape SA for their personal investment in me.” Both Lihle and Lutho would like to thank the sponsors and DSA for the opportunity that they have been given.

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)



***Above: Mitya Sargeant is with Sibabalo November at the DSA open day 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2019***