

## **Dancescape South Africa (DSA) March 2021 Report**

Dancescape South Africa (DSA) continues to facilitate daily dance classes in March 2021 (3.00pm – 6.00pm Venue Zolani Hope Centre – Mantlane Road Zolani Ashton) engaging children in beginner and senior dance sessions, however due to the Covid 19 pandemic our classes are restricted in numbers attending. We observe the relevant protocols such as screening the students before class, observing body temperature, sanitizing hands, observing social distancing and making the wearing of cloth masks mandatory. Our top priority is to facilitate classes in a safe environment for both teacher and learners.



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

In early March the large wall mirrors arrived and were installed in the Zolani Studio. We are delighted to have this as it will be a great help to both the teachers and the students to view for themselves their body and arm positions. The curtains also arrived. These are to be used to hide the mirrors when not in use. We once again thank our sponsor, Ulli Bosch and the Germany based organization "Dance for Future". Later in the month of March our Dancescape

South Africa Zolani Studio sign was installed on the outside wall, making it clear to all that DSA uses the building formally known to the community as the Zolani Hope Centre.



Above: The mirrors arrive and are installed. The curtains used to hide the mirrors when not in use. Our sign is also attached to the outside wall and the first students to receive their branded T-shirts proudly show off in front of the new mirrors.

Talking of the building and the home of Dancescape South Africa's Zolani Studio, one of Ulli Bosch's ideas was that the local community, especially the parents of the students should be recruited to help beautify the building and the area around it. I arranged a meeting with Fanie, the chairperson of the Zolani Care Trust and the person most responsible for the Zolani Care Trust building. I mentioned Ulli's idea to him to try and gather some support from him and the local community. Unfortunately, Fanie explained that there is a disruptive element in the community comprising mostly of the youth who often enter the church premises to throw stones on the roof and even break windows. The wire mesh fence that once stood at the boundaries of the property has disappeared, having been stolen. He expressed his frustration at this and told me that he would like to erect another fence, a bigger one and which would be painted, so that it could be easily identified if once again stolen. I then mentioned to him that perhaps they should install CCTV camera's to catch the culprits on camera and then lay charges. We both agreed that once somebody had been prosecuted this unruly behavior would stop. Fanie requested a quote from the security company that installed and monitored the current alarm system. We both realize that any attempts to repair windows and beautify the area should be put on hold until the vandalism has been taken care of because otherwise the work done would be a waste of money, time and effort.



Above: The exterior of the Zolani Hope Centre building looking rather shabby. The rubble has been used by some of the youth to throw stones on the roof and even break windows. Clearly we need to address this issue and try to uplift the premises.

On Friday the 5th of March I drove Nqaba Mafilika, our resident teacher, down to Swellendam where he did his driving test. I am happy to report that he was indeed successful and is now in possession of a valid Code 10 driving license. I thought that this was very thoughtful of Nqaba as there may be opportunities where we would have to transport some of our students in a combi bus and Nqaba's license would be adequate for this.

During the month our branded T-shirts arrived. I had sent out letters to all the parents. They, the parents, were to sign these letters agreeing to take responsibility of the freely given shirts and if they were lost or stolen, they the parents would pay for a new shirt. We would like to have the Dancescape South Africa students looking well-groomed especially at outings or when we perform. Most of the parents agreed and the signed letters were returned before the shirts were issued to the students.

Next month we hope to adopt the same system when we issue the dancers with their dance outfits specially ordered from Ballet World in Cape Town. I am also delighted to say the Director of Ballet World has very kindly offered to provide shoes to our boys at no extra charge. I expect to pick up the order in April.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of March, Ulli and his friend, Louise, who is a fellow colleague on the board of trustees of "Dance For Future", came to visit. We all went out to Zolani and had a very important meeting with Fanie. Many things were discussed but the main topic was how to uplift the building and if it was possible to have community members and parents get involved. I mentioned the fact that the parents are not really interested in what their children are getting up to in the afternoons. We have had experience where we have invited the parents to attend events where we can show the parents what is happening at the studio. Sadly the attendance is usually very poor if any. Fanie explained that there was a different mindset in the Township and people would not be doing anything for nothing. He too has had experiences similar to ours. Regarding the vandalism on the building due to children misbehaving. Fanie suggested that a small Wendy House be erected and that a family could live on the premises permanently. They in turn would watch over the building. Another suggestion was that the kitchen be partitioned to make space for two changing rooms with wash basins. In doing so the kitchen area could be kept clear of students and used as a proper kitchen. I intend putting together another proposal regarding these suggestions to present to "Dance for Future". The CCTV cameras were discussed but rejected with all agreeing that it would be better to have a family living on site.

Many of the months Saturdays were taken up this month by students attending Zoom Classes arranged by Kristine Elliott and taught by international teachers, however DSA has experienced

a few problems. The biggest one has been the unstable data coverage. Often time our zoom connection would freeze for several minutes leaving our teacher and students stranded whilst the other attendees attending from various other sites around South Africa could continue with no problem. DSA has been suspended from attending the zoom classes for the time being until we can sort out our data problem. I have approached several companies which offer wireless connection who over the last week of March reported to me that there was just no clear line of site with their towers, so sadly we can't continue with the Zoom classes at the moment.



Above: DSA dancers involved in the Saturday Zoom Classes.

I am glad to report that both Chuma Mathiso and Aphiwe November have been given a full-tuition scholarship to attend the Lines ballet| Summer Program to be held from July 26 to August 7<sup>th</sup> this year. It will once again be an online program. Furthermore these two have also been accepted into the American Ballet Theatres summer intensive program. The audition video's that we made earlier in the year paid off. I do not know the dates of the program just yet. This too will be an online program.

**The Resident Teachers Report:**

I can report back that I have been seeing the students developing and gaining strength. They have been working hard and there are some new faces that have arrived to join up. As its still level one we keep sanitizing and limit to just 8 kids in the class. The kids are taking form and we have also been choreographing with Phelo, my assistant trainee teacher who is a great help. The Saturday classes have been amazing and a great help for the students in developing their communication skills and learning from other work.



Above: Nqaba Mafilika teaching every afternoon of the week during school term times.

### **Milisa Mathiso reports back from Cape Town:**

Milisa reports that all is good in Cape Town. She says that they are rehearsing every day and have a performance on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May. The piece is called “Locked doors behind doors”. The students went to the Iziko museum to learn about slavery and apartheid because the dance

piece is about that and the experiences of Lockdown. She adds that she is still getting used to the Indoni Academy and the way in which they work, so far so good.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ulli Bosch and his organization “Dance for Future” for making most of the projects mentioned in this report possible. Thank you for your ongoing support of our project.

Thank you for taking the time to read our monthly report. Please visit our website at: <http://dancescapesouthafrica.org.za/> and follow us on social media.

Right: Ulli Bosch sporting one of our branded T-shirts on his most recent visit.



Mitya Sargeant (CEO, and Director – Dancescape South Africa)

