

Dancescape South Africa (DSA) November 2020 Report

Dancescape South Africa continues to facilitate daily dance classes in November 2020 (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 we have limited the classes to just 4 students per class. 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:

The month of November 2020 has been a month dominated by highs and lows. I have some bad news and some good to report. On Sunday afternoon on the 1st of November I received a disturbing email from Debbie Turner, the director of the Cape Academy of Performing Arts (CAPA). The email informed both Lutho Zwedala who is one of our students at CAPA and I that their school would be closing down permanently at the end of this year. I was indeed shocked to receive this news as we have both Lutho and Milisa Mathiso in their 2nd and 1st year respectively, who are now unable to complete their courses. Debbie Turner explained that the apparent reasons for closing the school was for the most part due to the Covid 19 pandemic. Covid 19 has put severe pressure on the performing arts and it has affected the running of the school. My personal opinion however is that learning institutions should not disband during these times. I can understand organizations which can't afford to pay their staff and other financial problems but schools should not fall apart due to a pandemic. We need to keep the hopes, aspirations and dreams of our youth alive.

I made plans to travel to Cape Town to meet with our three students to discuss a path ahead. Fortunately, Lihle Mfene has completed his third year with CAPA and the good news is that he has graduated. I attended the graduation event on the 29th of November at the CAPA studios. It has been a tough three years for this young man from Zolani and Dancescape South Africa has provided the support he needed to attend the school and to finally graduate. We are very proud of Lihle Mfene and hope that he will be an ambassador for Dancescape South Africa where ever his career should take him. Both Lutho Zwedala and Milisa Mathiso received certificates for completing their respective years. However, we needed to formulate a plan of action as to what they will be doing next year. I can report that Milisa will be staying on in Cape Town and attending classes at the Indoni Dance Arts and Leadership Academy. This vibrant school provides post-schooling professional training in dance and integrated arts. We are very excited about this new development and hope Milisa will enjoy her training next year at Indoni. Lutho will be attending auditions in early December at Cape Town City Ballet. There may be a possibility that he could work with the company next year, as an apprentice, and in doing so

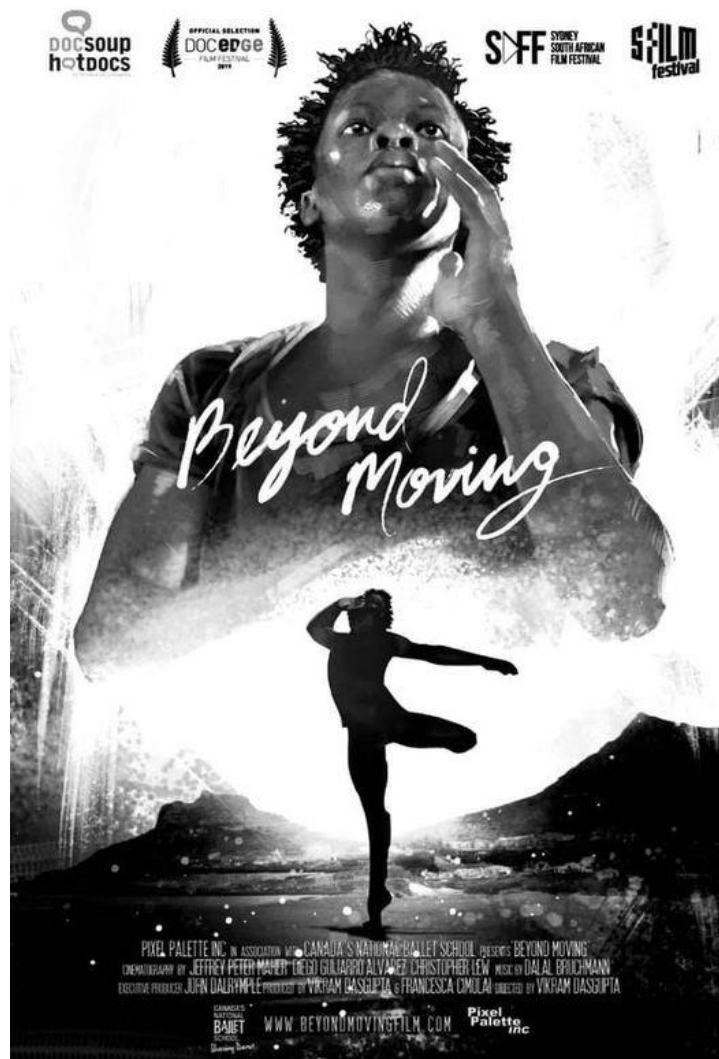
receive his diploma in dance at the end of 2021. I will report back on his progress in the next report.



Above: Lihle Mfene shows off his graduation certificate joined by his mother. Below: Lihle with fellow students who also graduated and left, Lutho Zwedala and Milisa Mathiso joint Lihle



Nqaba Mafilika, our resident teacher, has been busy preparing the young students for a performance in December. I am very excited to announce that we will be having a special day on the 12th of December. In the afternoon we plan to have a performance of the work Nqaba has been doing. We then hope to screen the movie “Beyond Moving” which has been appreciated by audiences all around the world, except for South Africa where it has yet to be premiered, however, the film maker Vikram Dasgupta and his executive producer has agreed to allow us a special onetime screening of the movie at a fundraising event. Beyond Moving is the remarkable story of Siphe November, a local boy from the Zolani Township, who attended the National Ballet School of Canada. He graduated just a few years ago and the movie explores the journey and the relationship with his first teacher and our founding member, the Late Fiona Sargeant. We will be screening the movie in the evening of the 12th and I will report back in the next report.



Above: A “Beyond Moving” poster of the moving to be screened

The Resident Teachers, Nqaba Mafilika's Report:

As from the month of November I have been working with the students at Dancescape South Africa, they have been coming out in numbers to have their lessons. I proudly say there are about 80 students coming each week to dance.



Above: Students doing class and rehearsal with teacher Nqaba Mafilika

On Saturdays, we have a special chosen group that works with Adji and Kristine via zoom. There are at least 18 of the students who are taking part every Saturday and this is a good initiative for the students as it helps them in honing their skills and nurturing their talent.



Above: Dancers hard at work in Nqaba's class.

During the week we have been trying hard to keep the level of fitness and trying to work with our repertoire and allowing at the same time the beginners, juniors and seniors work separately because of the norm. The students are improving physically and mentally.

Lihle Mfene sums up his feelings after graduating from the Cape Academy of Performing arts:

Finally it's all over. When I use to struggle at CAPA, and I struggled a lot, I would always say to myself, "Everything has a start and an end". My final year has been very rough but it has been

an amazing experience and I am really grateful for it. I hope to work on all my skills, not just on dancing or acting but on being creative so that I can work and do something out of this world. It's time to take the next step and I am really excited about it. Thank you so much.

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)

