



NEWSLETTER APRIL 2014

New Classes



For the public:

DFA is now offering of Hip Hop classes for the public. Teacher Lawrence Passens is well known in the Hip Hop dance industry and has received many accolades as a dancer and choreographer.

Classes take place at DFA's Athlone studios on Saturdays: Juniors: 12h00-13h00 and Seniors: 13h00-14h00.

Call 021 697 5509 for more information.



For schools:

DFA has started dance classes at Rosemead Primary in Claremont and at Forres School in Rondebosch taught by Nceba Ngubombini. In addition, DFA has started classes in Delft, taught by DFA staff members Hope Nongqongqo and Lorraine Ndindwa.

Staff Spotlight on Nceba Ngubombini

Nceba recently joined the DFA teaching staff. He is a former DFA student and was a founder member of the DFA Youth Company in 2005. He studied at the Cinevox Junior Company in Switzerland for two years. From there, he joined a musical theatre production "Space Dream" for a year, performing in Europe. Nceba returned to SA in 2012 and worked with the Ikapa Dance Theatre Company until 2013 as a freelance professional. Since then he has freelanced in various dance productions and has just returned from performing in "Land van Skedels" at the KKNK Arts Festival. What a pleasure it is to have him join our DFA teaching staff where he is passing on his knowledge and experience, as well as choreographing. He is a great role model to so many other DFA students.



Former DFA student wins scholarship to Alvin Ailey School in New York

Mthuthuzeli November, a former DFA Rural Outreach student from Zolani township, has been awarded a year's scholarship to the School of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in New York. Initially trained by DFA Montagu teacher Fiona Sargeant, Mthuthuzeli was offered a bursary to train at the Cape Academy of Performing Arts (CAPA) under the direction of Debbie Turner and her staff. He was awarded the scholarship to Alvin Ailey after winning the Senior Contemporary Section of the SA International Ballet Competition in Cape Town in February.



LEAP Programme visitors

The year started off with a visit by six international former professional dancers who conducted a Dance Intensive in Cape Town. The teachers were on the LEAP Programme (Liberal Education for Arts Professionals), the Bachelor of Arts degree programme for professional dancers offered by St Mary's College of California.

From 3 to 15 February, they worked with various groups from DFA's Outreach Programme, as well Specialised Ballet Programme students and our Bridging Programme. They also worked at the Cape Academy of performing Arts (CAPA), with Zama Dance School in Gugulethu and with the SEAO Project (South African Education and Environment Project – USA) in Philippi.

This is the third time DFA has collaborated with the LEAP Programme to present a Dance Intensive. This year's teachers, Lola Cooper, Oscar Gonzalez, Rachel Speidel Little, Cristóbal Márquez, Laura Blatterman and Avichai Scher, have performed with some of America's top dance companies. Cooper even danced in the film Black Swan. A group of DFA's Outreach students performed an African dance at Zama Dance School for the LEAP teachers' presentation performance.

Progress Report – DFA Classes



Ballet Programme

Teacher: Margie Sim

For 10 days in February, Kristine Elliott and the LEAP teachers worked with the Ballet Programme Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced pupils, as well as the Outreach students. They were impressed with the standard and found it amazing that the students come from difficult backgrounds, often dance hungry, and yet are so determined and passionate about their ballet.

Nadia Krylova, a former Bolshoi soloist also took the same students for some classes and was just as impressed!

They are now preparing for the Cape Town Eisteddfod, in which they will dance 'Gymnopedies Fantaisie'. Male student Zwelixelile Banisa is also entering the 'Repertoire Section' and has to perform two solos from the classical ballets in one night.



Contemporary Ballet Programme

Teacher: Louise Cetzler

At the start of the year, auditions were held for existing dance students from Wynberg High School, Likhwezi Arts Project, Zonnebloem Girls and Boys Schools, and SAEP. The new students have shown great enthusiasm and dedication, and are making good progress.

Classes are being taught by a variety of teachers – Louise Coetzler, Allison Hendricks Bruno Wani, Anderson Carvalho and Nceba Ngubombini – which exposes the students to different styles of contemporary dance, technique and choreography.

The Senior students joined in some of the LEAP quest teachers' classes, which they thoroughly enjoyed. Both the Junior and Senior Contemporary groups are rehearsing new works for the upcoming DFA performances.



Rural Outreach Montagu

Teacher: Fiona Sargeant

The first term's work has been focused in Ashbury, Baden, Freshair and Zolani. To beat the intense summer heat, Fiona has been teaching between 07h20 and 10h00 as classes have to be taught in the quadrangle at Ashbury school. (The classrooms are inadequate and there's no school hall.) Afternoon classes in Zolani have been well supported, despite the heat.

Eight Montagu Scholarship students have successfully auditioned for the Next Step Dance Company. The director, Mary Corpe, has been teaching as a volunteer for two years and understands that, unless money is raised, children from these areas will not be able to take the 'next step' to professional training. It is hoped through fundraising performances many of the students will receive financial help, enabling them to attend DFA's Bridging Programme once they have matriculated. Mary's expertise, passion and commitment is such an encouragement.



Rural Outreach Barrydale

Teacher: Pauline van Buitenen

We were pleased that one of our senior students returned in January after a year off. However, a female student who has been on our senior programme for six years has given in to peer pressure and decided not to dance. We hope she will return.

On 25 February, the students took part in a talent evening at Barrydale High School. The seniors, who did a piece from CATS, excelled and are finally starting to act like cats when they dance – a great achievement.

We are working hard on technique this year. Two adults who have backgrounds in ballet are dancing with the students, demonstrating that dance has no age restrictions. DFA has started classes for Grade 7s at Barrydale High School. Introducing all the students to dance makes it easier for DFA's farm school students who transfer to the High School in Grade 7. To some extent, it prevents them from being mocked (especially the boys) and giving up dancing.

Donations

Our heartfelt thanks to Saint Cyprians School for the clothes they donated.

The Weetbix was also received with much gratitude at the schools. As they do not have milk, the schools mix the Weetbix with water. A local dairy farmer is now donating milk to Vleiplaas Primary School, which is much appreciated.