



THE DANCE TRUST OF ZIMBABWE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The National Ballet was formed approximately sixty years ago by teachers and lovers of ballet. It was, and still is, run by a committee of volunteers. The name "National Ballet" was chosen because, at that time, it was possible for the company to tour nation wide.

The National Ballet was registered as a Welfare Organization in 1978. The original members of the National Ballet were dancers, teachers or persons, who were interested in furthering the cause and course of ballet in Zimbabwe. Affiliated to the **National Ballet** were "The Friends of the Ballet", who assisted to raise a large proportion of the funds required to buy the land and build the Centre.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE NATIONAL BALLET

- Formation of the Classical Company
- Raising sufficient funds to buy the plot of land on which the Ballet Centre stands
- Raising sufficient funds to build the Ballet Centre, which comprises two studios, two office buildings, staff quarters and two containers, which store costumes, props etc.
- Paying for the building in total
- Extending the present office
- Staging performances of classical and other ballet seasons sometimes with international professional dancers as principal artistes
- Staging productions of "Starlight Dancing" and "Stars of Tomorrow", which provide all dancers with the opportunity to perform on a stage in front of an audience.
- Promoting dance through tours to other cities in Zimbabwe, films, workshops, lectures
- Trying, at all times to obtain scholarships for talented dancers to study at international organisations
- Sourcing funds and starting the **Outreach Programme** in 1984 as "Vano vano tamba" - the children who dance.
- Sourcing funds to start **Dance Foundation Courses** (Training), which gave young underprivileged Zimbabweans the chance to gain employment in the field of Dance
- Gaining international recognition for the Dance Training Courses held at the Ballet Centre in Harare.

al dance company in Zimbabwe - **the Tumbuka**
ny using suitable graduates of the first Dance
providing employment for young Zimbabweans
able the Outreach Programme to be expanded using
graduates of the first Dance Foundation Course

- Collaborating with the Tumbuka Contemporary Dance Company to stage productions
- Collaborating with the Oslo National College of Art Department of Ballet and Dance to the benefit of some of the pupils of the Dance Training Courses
- Collaborating with The Repertory Theatre to their and National Ballet's benefit.

The Dance Trust of Zimbabwe was formed in 2004. It consisted of The Tumbuka Dance Company, The Outreach Project, The National Ballet and the Dance Foundation Course. All the projects now fall under the governance of a Board of Trustees, which is made up as follows:

Acting Chairman - Tim Garrard

Finance - Romeo Kwenda

Chairman

Trustees -

Malcom Bethune

Zanele Chitepo

Jan Clayton

Ellen Marime

Dr. Lynda Stranix-Chibanda

The Patron of The Dance Trust of Zimbabwe is DR. LEONARD TSUMBA

When the Ballet Centre opened the **National Ballet** at first continued to focus on classical ballet. Later it was then realised that it was essential to take dance to the community as a whole, especially to the high-density suburbs. "Vana vano tamba" (children who dance) was soon launched in 1984- a project initially confined to children under twelve in Harare's high density areas who would otherwise have had no exposure to dance other than traditional. The teachers went various schools and a class was given on a Saturday morning to teenagers, who formed **the City Youth Group**. A few dancers, who showed potential, were awarded scholarships to learn ballet at a more advanced level from classical teachers.

This initiative soon led to the first workshop of three months duration. So successful was this course that the training was extended and culminated in a formal three year **Dance Foundation Course** specifically aimed at talented young schools leavers from economically constrained backgrounds. The course was free of charge and all students were provided with daily transport and lunch money.

in 1992. The graduates were then employed either by **Dance Company**, or the community based **Outreach** and exciting move because of its employment opportunities for future expansion.

Since the first **Dance Foundation Course** was completed, six further three year long Courses have been successfully run, which has highlighted the interdependency of all three projects. Unfortunately the present economic situation has not allowed DTZ to start a new Dance Training Course. It is hoped that the situation will change and we will be able to give more young Zimbabweans a chance to make their career in Dance.

Over the years the Outreach Team has identified talented youngsters in the community, who were invited to audition for the Dance Foundation Course. Talented course graduates have been taken into Tumbuka as professional dancers. Tumbuka Company members are an integral part of the training course as they are involved in teaching the students on a regular basis, are disciplined role models, and inspirational leaders.

In 1999 two of the students on the Dance Foundation Course were offered a one- year scholarship with the Oslo National College of Ballet and Dance. The scholarships were extended by a further two years. Both of these dancers gained employment in the field of Dance in Europe. Since then six more students have benefitted from these scholarships.

Many graduates of the Dance Foundation Courses have gone on to gain employment as professional dancers, teachers of Dance or events coordinators (they learn how to set up and run Sound and Lights as part of the Dance Foundation Course). Many graduates now work in Dance/Theatre companies in South Africa, Europe and America which shows that the Dance Trust of Zimbabwe's Dance Foundation Courses are of an international standard.

The Tumbuka Dance Company operated as a project of DTZ, in spite of the adverse economic climate, until the end of July 2016 when finances did not permit. The standard of Dance of this company is very high. Tumbuka has toured to several countries and its performances have received standing ovations . Tumbuka has represented Zimbabwe at several international festivals. It is hoped that DTZ will be able to employ these highly trained dancers again in the not too distant future.

The Outreach Programme, that was initiated as "Vano Vano Tambo", developed into a formal programme with an Administrator and a Co-ordinator. Currently there are six teachers, one of which doubles as the Co-ordinator, who teach approximately 750 physically/mentally challenged and underprivileged children in the Harare area. The classes are given free of charge. Through fund raising activities The City Youth Group, which is aimed at underprivileged teenagers was started up again in a high density suburb. However, funds have now been exhausted and this project is on hold for the present time. If funding is available, an Outreach Dance Festival is staged at a central venue at the end of every year to afford the children an opportunity to dance in public and to showcase what they have learnt.



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is mainly on classical ballet but has introduced other
are not professionals but dance for the love of it. The
advanced dancers and stages productions to give
dancers of all ages opportunities to perform.

Current Situation:

The Dance Trust of Zimbabwe is celebrating its Diamond (60th) Jubilee in 2017.

Several events are planned - some of these will be productions.

Personnel from all the DTZ projects will work together and share their expertise in order that this organisation grows from strength to strength and is able to keep all types of DANCE alive in Zimbabwe.