

Delighting in dynamic dance

Goodlife Reporter

SHE HAS performed and choreographed throughout the world and now she'll be sharing her dynamic skills with Durban dancers and audiences.

Liz Lea, artistic director of the Canberra Dance Theatre and associate director at QL2 Centre for Youth Dance in Canberra, Australia, is in Durban for five weeks to choreograph a new cross-cultural dance work and teach a two-week residency and several community outreach dance workshops.

She will be working under the banner of Sidalokusha, an ambitious, three-pronged programme conceived by KZN DanceLink as its first upliftment and performance project for the year.

"KZN DanceLink is committed to the development of dance, and by bringing Liz to Durban we hope to stimulate fresh energy and excitement, not only for professional and amateur dancers but also for those people who love the art form," said director Lynn Maree.

"Arts funding is always challenging, but thanks to support from the National Arts Council, the Australian High Commission and the National Lotteries Distribution Trust Fund we are hugely encouraged to be kicking the year off on a positive note."

Lea's Durban visit will culminate in a production at the Elizabeth Sneddon Theatre from March 28 to April 1, where her work will share the stage with another new work by the prolific, award-winning Flatfoot Dance Company.

The season is called *South-South* in celebration of the meeting of two formidable women choreographers from the southern hemisphere. Lea and Flatfoot Dance Company's provocative choreographer, Lliane Loots, will premiere new works created for the six resident Flatfoot

dancers – Jabu Siphika, Julia Wilson, Lerato Lipere, Magesh Ngcobo, Sifiso Khumalo and Tshediso Kabullu and, for Lea's work, the addition of another four guest Durban dancers.

The four – Jarryd Watson, Pravika Nandkishore, Zinhle Nzama and Leagan Pffifer – were selected from open auditions held by KZN DanceLink in December.

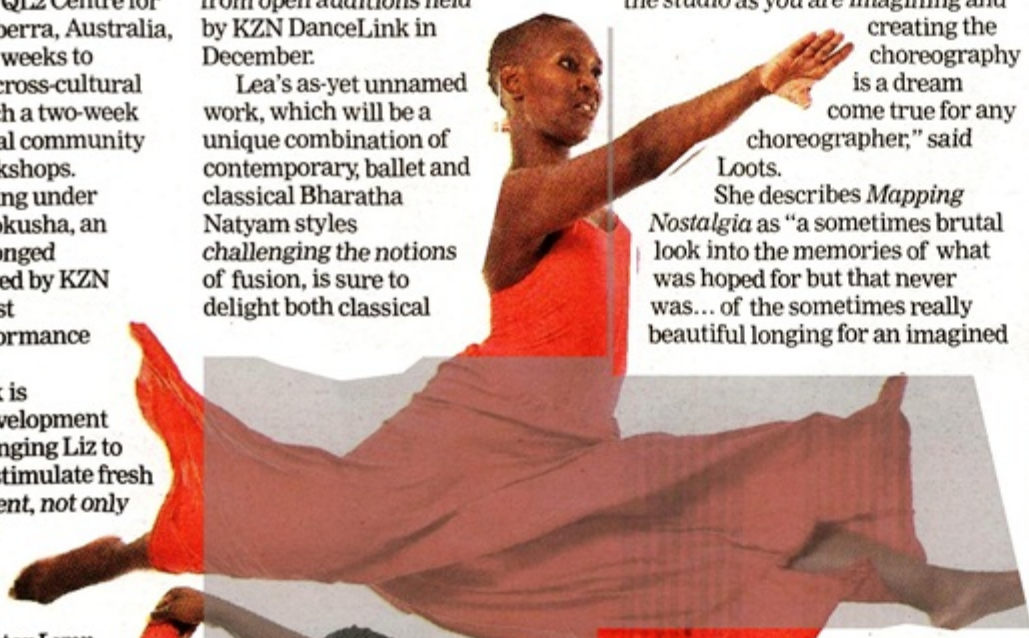
Lea's as-yet unnamed work, which will be a unique combination of contemporary, ballet and classical Bharatha Natyam styles challenging the notions of fusion, is sure to delight both classical

and contemporary audiences.

Loots's new work, *Mapping Nostalgia*, is her second collaboration with veteran maskanda musician Madala Kunene. They will be joined by long-time Flatfoot collaborator Mandla Matsha. "Working with live musicians who create and score in the studio as you are imagining and

creating the choreography is a dream come true for any choreographer," said Loots.

She describes *Mapping Nostalgia* as "a sometimes brutal look into the memories of what was hoped for but that never was... of the sometimes really beautiful longing for an imagined



PICTURES (AND COVER): VAL ADAMSON

home, all told through the bodies of the six Flatfoot dancers whose own lives and stories have become part of the dance work".

Born in Malawi and trained at London Contemporary Dance School, London's Akademi and Darpana Academy in India, Lea is fast developing an international reputation for her

groundbreaking cross-cultural explorations of the meeting of classical Indian dance and martial arts, within the



Above is Liz Lea, artistic director of the Canberra Dance Theatre and associate director at QL2 Centre for Youth Dance in Canberra, Australia. On the left are Flatfoot Dance Company dancers Lerato Lipere, Jabu Siphika and Julia Wilson in *South-South*.

framework of contemporary dance making.

"Lea's passionate approach to combining contemporary European and African styles with classical Indian dance is particularly pertinent in Durban with its large Indian population which has been rooted here for over 150 years," said Maree.

Lea has been putting the Flatfoot dancers through their paces and is delighted by what she calls "an openness and a sense of strength and precision in their technique".

While in Durban, Lea will also conduct workshops with Flatfoot outreach group Siyakhula, God's Golden Acre, Durban Children's Home,

Ubuhle Bezintu, DUT students, Musa Hlatshwayo's Movement Laboratory, Jarryd Watson's Dance Movement and the Minette de Klerk Dance Academy.

South-South is at the Elizabeth Sneddon Theatre from March 28 to 31 at 7.30pm and on April 1 at 3pm. Tickets cost R65 for adults and R45 for students, with all tickets on March 28 only R45.

South-South specifically has been made possible by support from the National Arts Council of SA, the Australian High Commission, the National Lotteries Distribution Trust Fund and KZN DanceLink.

Flatfoot Dance Company's work is also supported by the National Arts Council of South Africa, Hivos, Basa and NCP alcohols.