

FREE at last

Australian choreographer Liz Lea is bringing the joy of movement to KZN communities that are usually overlooked by the world of dance



PHOTO: VAL ADAMSON

ABOVE: Australian choreographer Liz Lea puts dancers through their paces for 'South-South', which premieres in Durban next week.



RIGHT: Flatfoot's Lerato Lipere, Julia Wilson and Tshediso Kabulu will be performing in 'South-South' at the Elizabeth Sneddon Theatre from March 28 to April 1.
PHOTO: VAL ADAMSON

ESTELLE SINKINS

AS a dancer, Liz Lea has performed and choreographed throughout the world and now she's sharing her dynamic skills with Durban dancers and audiences.

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

For the workshops she has worked with the Flatfoot Dance Company's outreach group Siyakhula, God's Golden Acre, Durban Children's Home, uBuhle Bezintu, Durban University of Technology students, Musa Hlatshwayo's Movement Laboratory, Jarryd Watson's Dance Movement and the Minette de Klerk Dance Academy.

"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.

Maree said Lea would be working under the banner of "Sidalokusha", an ambitious three-pronged programme conceived by KZN DanceLink as its first project for 2012.

Having lived some of her younger life in Malawi, Lea says it felt a little like she was "coming home" when she stepped off the plane.

Her visit to Durban will culminate in the production *South-South* at the Elizabeth Sneddon Theatre at the University of Kwa-Zulu-Natal Durban campus, from March 28 to April 1.

The performances will also celebrate the meeting of two formidable female choreographers from the southern hemisphere. Lea and the Flatfoot Dance Company's provocative choreographer, Liane 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.

Four guest Durban dancers, Jarryd Watson, Pravika Nandkishore, Zihle Nzama and Leagan Pffifer, who were selected from open auditions held by KZN DanceLink in December, will perform in Lea's work.

Speaking about the new work, *a free mind*, Lea — who was trained at London Contemporary Dance School, London's Akademi and Darpana Academy in India — said it was inspired by the life and writings of anti-apartheid activist Ahmed Kathrada, who was jailed for 26 years.

"It is a sometimes witty, sometimes painful, but always a surprisingly beautiful danced celebration of triumph."

Loots's new work, *mapping nostalgia*, is her second collaboration with veteran maskandi 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 sometime brutal look into the memories of what was hoped for but that never was, of the sometimes really beautiful longing for an imagined home all told through the bodies of the six Flatfoot dancers whose own lives and stories have become part of the dance work".

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