

Alfred Hinkel

In 1976, Alfred Hinkel founded his first dance company, the Namakwalandse Dans Geselskap, in Nababeep and O'okiep in the Northern Cape, marking the beginning of his longstanding collaboration with John Linden and Dawn Langdown. Shortly after, he spent a brief period in Windhoek, Namibia, where he co-founded the Dial Dance Company with local dance teacher Dianne Sparks. In 1981, Hinkel relocated to Cape Town, embarking on a transformative chapter in his career.

In 1986, he acquired the Jazzart Dance Studios from Val Stein. Over the next two decades, Hinkel revolutionized the studio, turning it into one of South Africa's leading performing arts institutions, the renowned Jazzart Dance Theatre.

In the early 1990s, Hinkel played a pivotal role in establishing two Durban-based dance companies: Phenduka Dance Theatre, later revitalized by Sibonakaliso Ndaba and Sifiso Kweyama, and Siwela Sonke, later directed by Jay Pather.

As artistic director of Jazzart Dance Theatre from June 1986 to February 2010, Hinkel's leadership left an indelible mark on the South African dance industry, advancing both training and performance. His tenure is celebrated as one of the most significant creative, educational, and socio-political contributions in the history of South African dance.

Hinkel's work is characterized by his unwavering creativity and commitment to pushing the boundaries of the art form. Over his career, he has garnered ten choreographic awards and seven accolades for his contributions to the dance community, including:

- **1997:** Standard Bank Special Award for Vision, Commitment, and Contribution to Dance in South Africa
- **1998:** Gordon Reid Fellowship for Dance
- **2004:** Tunkie Memorial Award for Outstanding Dedication and Leadership
- **2006:** Western Cape Cultural Commission Award for Service to the Dance Community
- **2008:** Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport Annual Cultural Award
- **2015:** Arts and Culture Trust Lifetime Achievement Award
- **2019:** Western Cape Department of Sport, Art, and Culture Lifetime Achievement Award (shared with John Linden)
- **2024:** Khula Cape Foundation: The Motleno Gold Medal for Outstanding Services to the Arts and Theatre

In 2010, Hinkel returned to his hometown of O'okiep in the Northern Cape, where he continues to work as a dance educator and artist. He remains deeply engaged in creating new work and training high-caliber dance professionals.

Hinkel is widely recognized as a masterful dance educator, celebrated for his ability to develop talent, achieve remarkable results in a short time, and push the creative boundaries of dance.