

John Linden

Linden started his dance training in O'okiep, Namaqualand in 1976 with Alfred Hinkel at the *Namakwalandse Dans Geselskap*. After this Linden did a stint in Windhoek, Namibia with the *Dial Dance Company* followed by a few years in Cape Town, Johannesburg and the Wild Coast as a freelance performer before returning to *Jazzart Dance Theatre*.

In 1986 he became a founder member of the *Jazzart Dance Theatre*. It was here that he established himself as a performer, teacher and choreographer. In 1996 Linden became the director of *Jazzart's Dance Joint* program which offers open dance classes to members of the general public regardless of their levels of experience.

From the late 1990's to 2010 Linden was employed as a resident choreographer and teacher with the *Jazzart Dance Theatre*. During this time, he garnered five FNB Vita Choreographic awards and has contributed artistically to the creation of the stellar *Jazzart* productions:

- Junction
- Gatherings
- I am Cinnamon
- Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints, and
- Cargo

One of Linden's definitive works 'Water from an Ancient Well' was created to music by Abdullah Ibrahim for the FNB Vita Dance Indaba (2000). This work has frequently been remounted on other dance practitioners and invokes fond nostalgia amongst more than 3 generations of dancers.

During his thirty-six-year career Linden has collaborated as a performer and choreographer with a number of heavyweight South African dance and theatre practitioners notably, Sibonakaliso Ndaba, Dawn Langdown, Mark Fleischman, Alfred Hinkel and Lara Foot.

Since returning to O'okiep from Cape Town in 2010, after establishing Jazzart Dance Theatre as South Africa's flagship contemporary dance company, Linden and his partner Alfred Hinkel have birthed a new professional organisation, Garage Dance Ensemble, specifically aimed at developing and employing the artistic, technical and administrative skills of individuals from the area.

In March 2019 Linden received a lifetime achievement award from the Western Cape Department of Sport Art and Culture.

Directed Garage's award-winning 'Die Dans van My Heenkoms, The Bolero Stories' documentary in 2020.

He currently works as a dance educationalist, arts practitioner and artistic director at Garage; and continues to co-create exciting dance theatre with Hinkel and the ensemble.