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29 March 2017

Re: ‘Too colonial’ Cape Town City Ballet finds new home

Good day,

Your article titled “‘Too colonial’ Cape Town City Ballet finds new home” refers.

The article claims that Cape Town City Ballet (CTCB) was “kicked out of its base at the University of Cape Town for being “too colonial”” and reports this as a fact. This is, in fact, the second time this claim has been reported as a fact by Times Media.

Despite this claim, UCT was not offered the right to reply in an article that turned out to be unbalanced and unfair.

In November 2016, a different journalist claimed that CTCB was “booted out of its University of Cape Town premises because ballet is “Eurocentric and colonial””. UCT provided a detailed response to this claim, which we are again providing.

There is certainly no truth to the claim that “#FeesMustFall protesters demanded that the ballet company be removed from UCT last year” as reported in this latest article.

UCT’s lease agreement with CTCB for studio space expired on 31 December 2016. The lease had been under discussion for almost two years, as UCT had already been taking in larger numbers in our dance courses – which include classical ballet, as well as choreographic studies and dance teaching methods. The space constraints for UCT dance courses had already reached a tipping point as early as 2014.

At the beginning of 2016, UCT took the proactive step of approaching the Cape Town municipality about the possible use of an alternate venue for CTCB. Discussions around the lease agreement, and UCT’s steps to proactively arrive at a possible solution, began long before the spate of protests on campus last year.

Ballet, like opera, continues to attract a growing number of talented students to UCT, where they receive teaching of the highest standard. UCT’s School of Dance enjoys a mutually supportive relationship with CTCB. We consider our institutions as complementary.

CTCB has nourished the UCT School of Dance by offering opportunities for students to perform, and for our graduates to be engaged as dancers and choreographers. The proximity of CTCB has also provided us with direct experiences of successes, failures and missed opportunities which in turn stirs an ever-evolving curriculum for UCT's School of Dance. We look forward to seeing this relationship continue.

We would like to kindly request that our response be reflected on both the online platform and the print publications that ran with the story (The Times and Daily Dispatch).

Regards,

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