

Ballet is now Lorna's life and passion



Edward Tsumele

When Lorna Maseko chose to do dance at Orange Grove Primary School in Johannesburg, little did she know that she would do it professionally.

The ballet dancer, who is currently with the South African Ballet Theatre (SABT), plays the lead role in the new *Don Quixote* production, dancing along fellow lead dancer Andile Ndlovu.

We caught up with Lorna at the SABT dance studios in Braamfontein where she was rehearsing. Her instructors introduced us to the intricacies of the role of Kitri, her role in the production.

Maseko at first struggled to master some of the demanding scenes for this role. However, after three attempts she got on top of her game.

This demanding role requires her to spin and stand on one leg. Her dedication has seen her comfortably settled in her role and her confidence is back.

"I matriculated at the National School of the Arts in 2000. I majored in ballet. This has afforded me an opportunity to travel to Holland and other parts of the world where I have rubbed shoulders with some leading ballet dancers.

"I have also competed at leading ballet competitions in the world ever since. I joined Ballet Theatre Afrikan in 2000 until 2003, when I joined the South African Ballet Theatre as a senior corps de ballet. Last year I got promoted to the role of a soloist," she says.

Maseko finds it distressing that though black dancers have made strides in ballet, 90 percent of audiences are still white.

"There are times when one does not understand why the emerging black middle class has not caught onto the idea of watching ballet. They have the money, they have the education," she says.

Maseko has performed various roles with the SABT, including Ophelia in *Hamlet* and the Peasant pas de deux in *Giselle*.

She will appear in Ballet Highlights from July 12 to July 22 at the State Theatre in Pretoria, followed by *Swan Lake* from August 24 to September 16 (Johannesburg Civic Theatre). Bookings for *Swan Lake* are already open through Computicket.

While Maseko will play Kitri, Ndlovu will portray Basilio in *Don Quixote* by Susanne Holbaeck-Bergh.