

## ARTS &amp; ENTERTAINMENT

# Arts Project is forging ahead

By Rose Korber

IN the four years since the dynamic Community Arts Project first opened its doors in the old Starke-Ayres Building in Main Road, Mowbray — offering a much-needed venue to people from different communities to meet and interact creatively — it has gained over 2500 members and has remarkable achievements to its credit.

Derek Joubert, CAP's enthusiastic and dedicated organiser, speaks glowingly of the many facilities that this community forum

continues to provide. Tuition is offered by some 30 part-time teachers who run nearly 20 workshops in the visual and performing arts, music,

creative writing, various crafts and karate.

Many of these teachers are specialists in their own particular fields, so that their assistance has been

invaluable. Master artist Cecil Skotnes, for example, has been a catalyst in putting black art on the map in this country. In the 18 months that he has taught, he has stimulated and encouraged a number of talented but as yet unknown artists, several of whom recently showed vital pieces of sculpture in a group exhibition at a leading gallery.

Two of Skotnes's students were recently awarded a one-year scholarship by the Italian Foreign Ministry for study at an Italian university.

'What makes this organisation unique', says Derek, 'is that our fees are so nominal — R1 a year for membership, and R2 a month for tuition. For those who cannot afford that amount, or who struggle to find the busfare to get here, we have a bursary scheme available — nobody is ever turned away.'

Highlight of this term's activities has been a three-month course on the use of community drama as a tool for social action, a course designed specifically for community and social workers and youth leaders

who, in turn, will later utilise these concepts and skills in their own communities and groups.

As a result of these highly successful sessions, led by experts in the field of drama, four new community-based projects are to be launched, using community-drama techniques. These are a sex education programme for teenagers in Mitchell's Plain; a project involving alcoholics in institutional care; a programme involving a group of deaf people; and a Manenberg project for a youth group interested in exploring social themes.

Two major problems, however, beset CAP. One is the urgent need for larger premises, as fire and building regulations have severely restricted many activities at the Mowbray base. The result is that the popular children's Saturday afternoon classes have had to be cut down. 'More than a 100 children used to attend', says Derek, 'but now we're not supposed to have more than 25 people here at any one time'.

The other problem, is, paradoxically, frustration at

not being able to properly utilise two extremely generous grants received this year — R70000 from the Evangelical Church in Germany, and a further R10000 from Anglo-American for purchasing equipment — on account of lack of space!

The City Council offered CAP the use of a vacant school building in Observatory some two years ago. Such a spacious venue would, of course, enable CAP to put its full programme back into operation and would allow for expansion into new areas.

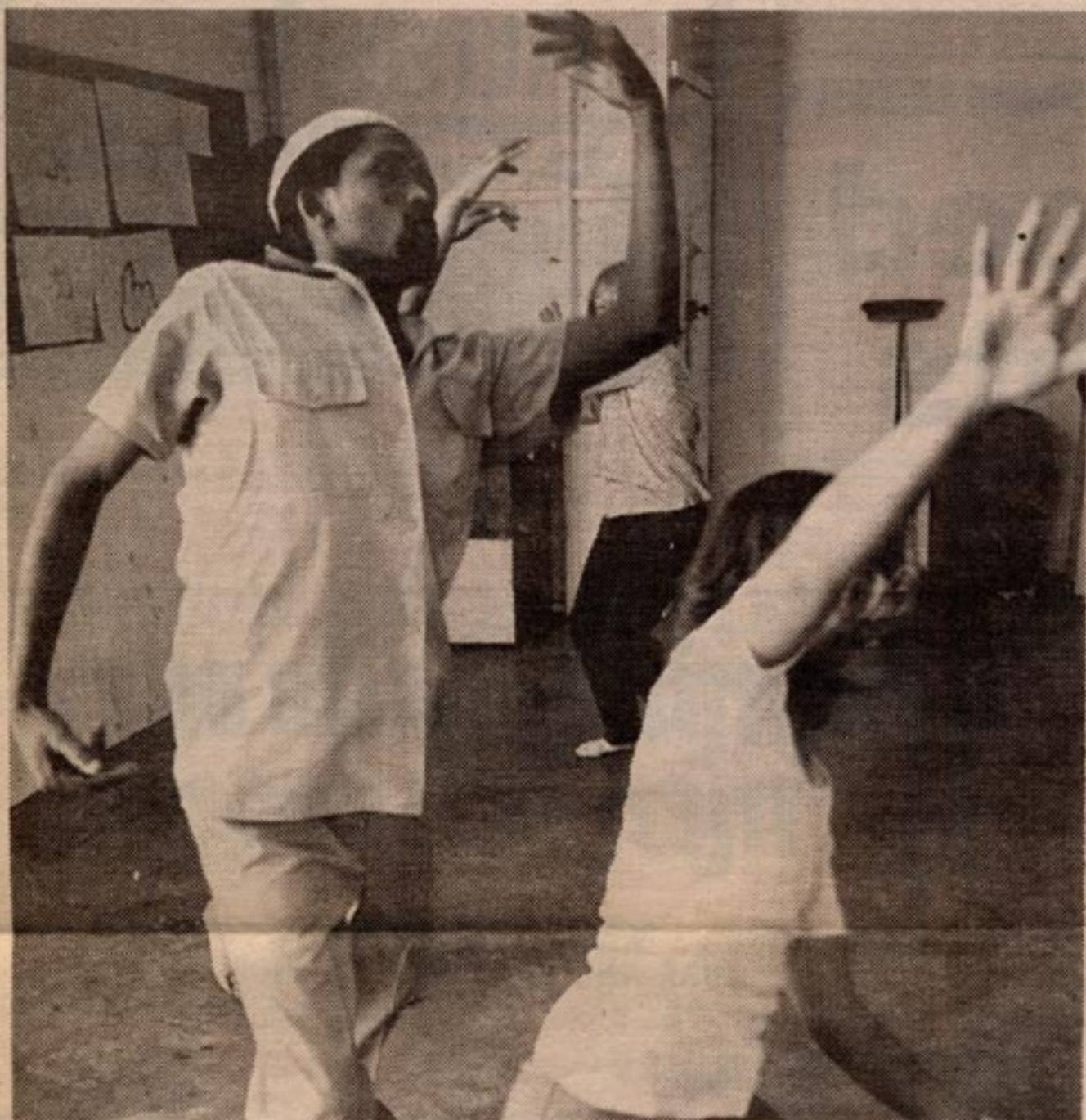
Although a lease is apparently being drawn up, there seems to be some concern as to whether negotiations will be finalised by the beginning of 1982, when CAP has to vacate the present building.

'We simply cannot be in this situation in January,' says a worried Derek.

'The problem is that the German grant is awarded in three annual instalments, and you have to show them what you are doing with the money each year, in order to justify another instalment. So it's quite ironical, because we're not spending enough. Last year we had all this space, but no money.'

CAP intends being largely self-supporting within three years. 'We want to start producing pottery and weaving for sale. This is another reason why we are anxious to get permanent premises very soon.'

It's a Catch 22 situation, although it certainly seems as if the ball is now in the City Council's court. It is to be hoped that the council's highly commendable offer will materialise in time for CAP to continue its valuable work without hindrance.



MEMBERS of a free movement dance class.