

Dance Dialogue



Happy New Year!

It seems like just yesterday it was September and we were getting back into the swing of things after the summer... and here it is, January! Time really does fly!

Again, I am so thankful to everyone who helped make our Nutcracker performance a success. Students: thank you for really taking the risk and giving your all. You worked tirelessly to make your dances clean and fun to watch. You were amazing. Parents: thank you for your patience and flexibility in what I know can be a long, tiring, unpredictable weekend. Volunteers: You give so much time and energy to the behind-the-scenes work. It is your support that your child needs to

make a successful show. I know there is a lot of problem solving that happens in the dressing room, back stage, in the lobby... that the experienced volunteers really step up and help out the newer volunteers. There are a lot of people that help with a lot of different, important, aspects of the show. With 250 students, there is no way I could do it with you. I know your student appreciates you too. I can't give enough thanks!



MID-YEAR REMINDERS

January is a great time to refresh, make goals, and plan stepping stones to help you achieve those goals. I assume that every student here has the goal of having fun and improving in their dancing. The following reminders are good guidance for what to think about when setting such goals in ballet.

1. Come to class on time! The first few exercises are foundational and will help train your body for more advanced moves and will also help warm your body up so you can perform your best during class.
2. If you miss a class, come in for a make-up. This is especially the case as dancers get older. Too many absences /too long of breaks really will affect your advancement.



3. Stay focused in class. Please coach your student to ignore distractions (this can be anything from tights that aren't comfortable to another student who is needing constant re-direction). Listen to the teacher, avoid excessive talking.
 4. Still remember to have fun (sometimes older students can become too critical!)
 5. Remember dress code: Ballet I and up needs hair in a secure bun. Solid color leo, pink tights and pink shoes. Younger students: a short chiffon skirt that can be taken off is fine.
 6. Try to use the restroom before class
- These simple steps really will go a long way to your child's dance development!

Class Adjustments

With the New Year comes new faces and possibility of some changes. There very well may be some new faces in your class - either from a different class at ABA, or from a new student just starting the program. Either way, please give everyone the warm ABA welcome they deserve!

There are a few placements that take place at the beginning of the year, though most advancement is done in September. I know when someone is moved it always raises questions in other people's minds, even if they know it is not their turn. There are a lot of things we consider with class placement. Of course, we look at skills - a persons strength, flexibility, control, musicality. We also look at dedication - if a student is consistent with their attendance, if they dance over the summer (especially for older students), and if they are well focused in class. Age, and how long they have been dancing are also considerations. Regardless, placement is done on an individual basis. On average, a student can expect to be in the same level for about 2 years for pre-ballet -Ballet II. Ballet III and up may even be longer. Our goal with placement is to find a class where a student can be challenged, but still has a chance to succeed. If you have questions about your students placement please don't hesitate to shoot me an email!



IDA Awards

With the first performance of the year under our belt it is time to shift our focus to the next endeavor: IDA Awards! In case you don't know, IDA Awards is a program that students work on for individual growth. All students will learn a few different level-appropriate exercises and a dance in class. We will work to perfect and clean their work - both for technique and performance. In March, a judge will come in and watch what they have done evaluate them individually. At the end, everyone will be given a medal of different distinction at an awards ceremony. The medals will have "grades" on the back that only the judge, the student, and myself will know (unless they share that info, which they don't have to!). To everyone else, the medals will look the same. This allows for the students to have a concrete goal, aiming toward a certain "grade", while not feeling too compared to their peers.



A word about comparison: It can be very dangerous! I know it is human nature to be curious as to how everyone else is doing in relation to yourself. Every dancer is different, with different body types, different strengths and areas for improvement, different maturities, different rates of improvement... What everyone

wants to do is try their absolute personal best. With hard work, dedication, and patience the results will come.

We will be sending students home with more specific information in the very near future, including sign-ups and extra practice schedules. For the time being, what you need to know is IDA Awards will be the afternoon

of March 7 (the exact time will be dependent on the number of dancers that sign up). Sign-ups will be due by 2pm on February 14. Extra practices will be starting shortly!

Do look for the schedule. Very frequently the first few practices are a lot smaller than the later practices.

Awards are designed for students age 5 and older, in pre-ballet I and above. They are by no means required, though I do encourage them as I see tremendous improvement in those students who participate! Also, they are an opportunity to watch your child perform in an intimate setting; the awards take place in the audience. We take turns, so the audience size is always small, and everything is performed either in small groups or as a solo.

I know the program can be nerve racking, but I do feel the benefits far out way the short lived discomforts!

Calendar

January 5, 2015

Classes Resume

February 14, 2015

IDA Awards sign-ups are due

February 16, 2015

President's Day! No class!

April 13-18, 2015

Parent Meetings and Costume Sizing

March 7

IDA Awards!

March 23-28

Spring Break! Take time to relax!

May 25

Memorial Day - No class!

May 30

All-cast Rehearsal at ABA

June 6

All-cast Rehearsal at ABA

June 12

Spacing at Elsinore Theatre

June 13

Spring Performance!

CONTACT

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns please feel free to contact us at any of the following:

Phone: (503)364-4738

Email:

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www.americanballetacademy.net

Like us on Facebook!

Store Hours:

Tuesday 4:45-5:45pm

Saturday 10:15-11:45am

By appointment

Spring Performance Tickets

An FYI: I am considering changing how we do tickets for the spring performance. We may be trying reserved seating for the next show. What it would mean for you is 2 things: 1. You will need to get your tickets at the theatre in advance. 2. You won't have to get to the theatre as early the day of the show. More info to follow!