

THE INTERNATIONAL VOICE OF THE IMPERIAL SOCIETY OF TEACHERS OF DANCING

Issue 501 • May – August 2024

# Dance



FEATURING

**Shirley Ballas**  
Our new President

**Lisa Scott-Lee**  
From Steps to students

ISTD celebrating

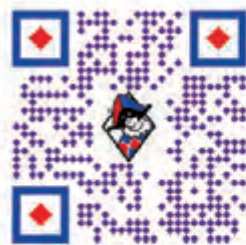
**120** years

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ISTD President Shirley Ballas  
congratulates Wan Alia Binti Wan  
Kamaruddin on her Associate in  
Tap Dance.

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## “We introduce our refreshed Street Dance Syllabus to tie in with breaking becoming an Olympic sport this summer.”

On 13 February it was my privilege to welcome our new President, Shirley Ballas, as guest of honour at our Graduation Ceremony (page 7). Here we celebrated 607 teachers who had achieved a remarkable 842 qualifications between August 2022 and December 2023. We were also delighted to celebrate some very special lifetime achievements with the presentation of our prestigious Imperial Awards to Diane Durant, Helen Green, and Jacqui Norton.

Graduation is one of my favourite events of the year as it is an opportunity to look into the future. The Society has a fine tradition of being led by dance teachers that is upheld today with ISTD qualified teachers within every facet of the organisation. Read more about our new President and recent Director and Trustee appointments on page 4.

It is always inspiring to see members continuing to shape the future of our Society. On page 8 Lisa Scott-Lee explains how she used her ISTD teaching qualification as the foundation for building a leading performing arts school in the UAE. Carole Watson reflects on her experience of making adult dance classes truly inclusive (page 18) and Anna Morgan explains why it is important to nurture a new generation of global majority dance teachers (page 60).

During our 120th anniversary year we will celebrate 100 years since the Cecchetti Society joined the ISTD at Cecchetti Day (page 24) and you can read a report on our Classical Greek Centenary Celebration (page 26). We are also planning for a bright future with the launch of exciting new syllabi at our Residential Summer Programme (page 17), a refreshed Street Dance Syllabus to align with breaking entering the Olympics (page 10) and a new fully inclusive, and sustainable recommended examination uniform (page 14). I hope to see you at some of the many events planned throughout the year.

## Ginny Brown

Chief Executive

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## Step into the dance shoes of Lisa Scott-Lee

We caught up with ISTD member, Lisa Scott-Lee, celebrated member of pop group Steps and Founder Principal of Dubai Performing Arts (DPA)





## ISTD celebrating 120 years

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### ISTD Celebrating 120 years

A look at some key milestones from the past 120 years and an invitation to share your own special ISTD memories

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### Shirley Ballas is our new ISTD President

we are excited to announce Shirley Ballas as our new ISTD President



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### Breaking boundaries

The athleticism and artistic expression that defines Breaking has earned it a spot at the Paris 2024 Olympics



# Society updates

Important news about our senior leadership team and trustees, plus we are excited to announce Shirley Ballas as our new ISTD President.



## Shirley Ballas is our new President

We are delighted to announce the appointment of *Strictly Come Dancing* head judge Shirley Ballas as President of the Society. As an ISTD member, dance school owner and teacher, Shirley has been a lifelong advocate for the value of dance for all.

Shirley commented: "I am beyond honoured to have been appointed President of the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing. Sharing my passion for dance and promoting dance education for all in this new and exciting role is going to be fantastic. Thank you to all at the ISTD, I am looking forward to working with you all."

“

**As an ISTD member, dance school owner and teacher, Shirley has been a lifelong advocate for the value of dance for all.**

Our Chair of Trustees, Mick Elliott, said: "Shirley excels in her commitment to ISTD's key values of passion, excellence, continuing professional development, creativity, diversity, equity, and inclusion. She is an inspiration to our members, their students, and the wider dance community."

Ginny Brown, ISTD Chief Executive, explained: "There are so many positive benefits of dancing and with Shirley's support we hope to spread the word and encourage more people to join our community."

Shirley's first official event with the Society was to attend the ISTD Graduation as guest of honour on 13 February and celebrate the success of recently qualified dance teachers. Look out for more opportunities to meet our new president in the coming months.



## Congratulations and farewell to Liz Dale

Liz Dale is retiring as Director of Dance and left the Society on 31 March 2024, following five successful years leading the Dance Directorate. Liz's retirement marks the end of a remarkable career in dance. Liz started as a competitive Ballroom and Latin dancer before training as a teacher at ISTD's London College of Dance and Drama and Dartford College. She went onto a successful career as a secondary school dance and drama teacher, Chief Examiner for AQA GCSE Dance and Head of Education and Training at the Council for Dance, Drama and Musical Theatre (CDMT).

As Director of Dance at ISTD, Liz and her team have made great strides in improving and standardising examiner training; introducing lead examiner teams; supporting the faculty committees; and introducing online student events, which have proved particularly popular with international students. All this good work will continue, and we thank Liz wholeheartedly for her leadership and contribution to the Society.

**Ginny Brown, Chief Executive**

## Dance Education and Training

Following Liz Dale's announcement to retire we have refocused the departments.

For some time, we have recognised a synergy between events and CPD and therefore have taken this opportunity to combine this area.

We are all under one umbrella called Dance Education and Training with two areas; CPD and Events and Dance Development. As a department this offers greater opportunities to collaborate and ensure clear pathways from development to performance to teacher CPD training.

We want to prioritise qualification development so that we can build our syllabi with a structured review cycle in order to ensure our qualifications are current and continue to inspire our members.

Heads of faculty development in each genre are holding regular online 'drop in' meetings for members so you can meet faculty committees and access support with any element of the syllabus. Regular informal meetings enable us to know what you need as teachers and what engages your students and pupils.

Genre events and CPD are also an important part of our work to enable student competitions, showcasing of ISTD work and for teachers to come together to share good practice and continue to update their skills and knowledge. This team will work closely with heads of faculty development, regional and international

representatives and lead lecturers to ensure that course and events are accessible, inspiring and support members in their day-to-day roles as dance teachers.

We would like to build our regional competitions and events and increase teacher and student participation. Learning more about how we can make this more attractive and practical would be useful to us so that we can build the ISTD dance community.

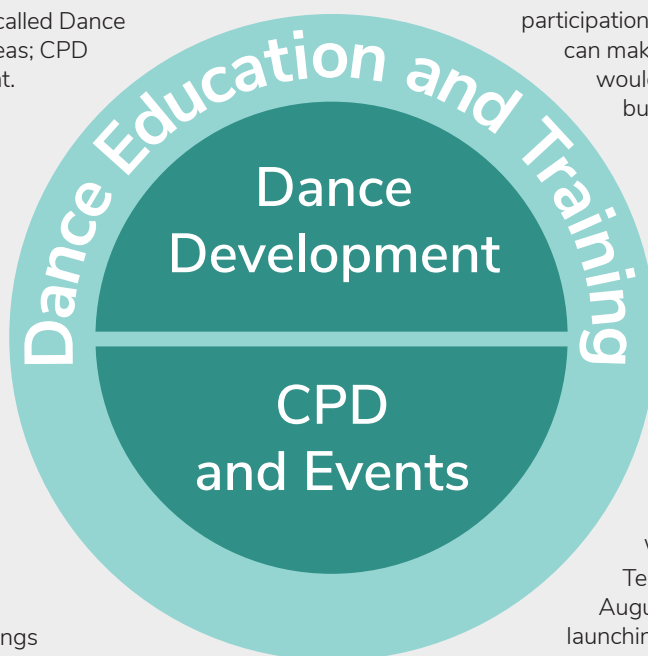
So please keep in touch with us and join these meetings to contribute and share information. Check [www.istd.org/](http://www.istd.org/) **events** for teacher support sessions and regional and international representative network meetings.

Look out for our special events where we will be joining together to celebrate the 120 years of the ISTD and come together as a community of dance teachers.

We will also be holding Residential Teachers Summer Programme in August for the first time since 2019 launching new and revised syllabi and enabling opportunities for networking.

Dance Education and Training are looking forward to the collaborative and exciting work ahead but need member support to ensure we all work together to future proof our qualifications and ensure that we are providing the necessary training and inspiration for children to dance.

**Louise Molton, Director of Dance Education and Training**



## Meet the Senior Leadership Team

Last year we welcomed two new directors, Ali Melville-Cline and Nikki Stewart, to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT):



**Nikki Stewart**

**Director of Finance and Resources**

As Director of Finance and Resources, I am responsible for the Society's financial management and digital transformation. My team also supports our staff by ensuring high quality IT infrastructure, office facilities and HR support.

**About me:** I qualified as a Chartered Accountant and Tax Advisor with PwC

and subsequently spent 10 years in a breadth of finance roles in the hospitality sector. However, in between studies and work, I followed my passion for dance. I completed the ISTD Diploma in Dance Education in Imperial Ballet and Associate in Street Dance, whilst building my own dance school. At the ISTD I aim to combine my expertise in finance and practical understanding of running a dance school, to deliver state of the art digital tools for ISTD members whilst future-proofing the organisation for generations to come.



**Ali Melville-Cline**

**Director of Examinations**

I manage the three teams that look after the examination process. The UK exams team organises and books approximately 90,000 exams that take place annually for UK teachers. The international exams team organised and booked 435 tours in 35 countries in 2023. Both teams organise

any examination whether theatre, dancesport, remote, recorded, or traditional. They liaise directly with the teachers, examiners, and other teams across the organisation. The quality assurance team approves results and certificates learners. They provide report forms and support enquiries and appeals, applications for reasonable adjustments and special considerations, look after examiner information, respond to complaints and queries. They also approve ADCs and run the DDE and DDP assessment processes, working directly with assessors. We look after the regulatory requirements of the awarding body and Quest and Parnassus.

**About me:** I originally qualified as a teacher of maths and taught in secondary schools. I moved over to set the maths SAT tests and then developed qualifications for UK and international schools – GCSEs, A Levels, BTECs and other vocational and work-based learning and functional skills. I then moved to Cambridge to develop IGCSEs, O Levels, and International A Levels for learners across the world. I come from a STEM background (maths, physics and psychology) but I enjoy learning all about the dance world and the different origins and requirements within our faculties.



**Louise Molton**

**Director of Dance Education and Training**

My team explores all areas of teaching and learning. We are responsible for creating dance qualifications, refining syllabi, creating and delivering events and courses. We oversee exemptions and Application of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) for

teaching qualifications, as well as the process of awarding bursaries. We work with stakeholders to gather evidence to develop our work and listen to the needs and aspirations of dance teachers. I am the Designated Safeguarding Officer Lead and work alongside Liam Mills as deputy and Lisa Harrison Jones as safeguarding specialist to ensure we support teachers and identify areas of concern. I also oversee ISTD Academy with the Programme Manager, developing training routes for teachers.



**Gemma Matthews**

**Director of Membership and Communications**

Our team looks after everything to do with your membership – from how you join, renew and access your benefits, to making sure you know about everything that's going on in the organisation. The team not only produce every newsletter, email, magazine, and the content on the

websites but also help shout about the great work of ISTD members to help you win business with campaigns such as Find Your Dance Space and attract new members with Make Dance Teaching Your Career. We're also responsible for overseeing the commercial growth of the organisation and our trading subsidiary looking at affinity partnerships, sponsorship, advertising and sales from merchandise.



**Ginny Brown**

**Chief Executive**

As Chief Executive, I have overall responsibility for the organisation. I lead on strategy, financial planning, and organisational development, and ensure the Society maintains best practice in charitable governance and regulatory compliance. I am responsible for creating and delivering

a vision and mission that builds a sustainable organisation with a shared sense of organisational values. One of the most enjoyable parts of my job is building relationships with members, staff, and the dance education community.



Our aspiration is to get out to more of our events and activities across the UK this year and meet with as many members as possible. If you have any questions for SLT, you can reach out to us via [pa@istd.org](mailto:pa@istd.org)





**Above** The Society held a successful Graduation Ceremony on 13 February at the Royal Geographical Society in London. Congratulations to all 607 teachers who gained a full teaching qualification.

## Introducing our new trustees

On Wednesday 22 November, we held our 78th Annual General Meeting (AGM) where we welcomed two new members to the Board of Trustees, Mary Cooke and Christina Fotinaki.



### Mary Cooke

Mary's teaching career began after gaining her LRAD at the renowned Bush Davies School, which taught her the value of the exchange of knowledge, how this is passed on and how that then builds the young teacher's teaching skills toolbox. Her development continued as Principal of a

large school in Sussex, as well as when initiating and establishing start-up schools, amidst several relocations.

Since 2017, Mary has been a mentor on the DDP for Unit 2 and has been delighted to witness the development of teaching skills and confidence in the mentees. As an Imperial Classical Ballet examiner for 38 years, Mary has witnessed many changes in the genre, giving her a unique insight into the delivery of exams and the ISTD structure.

Mary is committed to supporting the ISTD, dedicated to creating a strong, vibrant Society accessible to all.



### Christina Fotinaki

Christina is an award-winning choreographer, Fellow of the ISTD and Examiner in Modern Theatre, Imperial Classical Ballet, and Contemporary Dance, in addition to her roles as a Tutor and Assessor for DDE.

Christina is a member of the ISTD Modern Theatre Grades, Jazz Awards and Advanced 1 teaching teams.

Enrolled as a full-time student, Christina pursued her studies at the Maya Sofou Professional School of Dance and successfully completed her graduation in 1992.

Following her graduation, Christina embarked on her teaching journey, instructing diverse groups and levels of students, ranging from foundational to Advanced 2, DDE, Licentiate, and Fellowship levels in both Modern Theatre and Imperial Classical Ballet.

As a co-founder and Director of Dance Texture, Christina spearheads a comprehensive, full-time professional training programme designed for both dancers and dance teachers. This initiative was established in Athens, Greece.

From 2003 until the present day, Christina has been involved in choreographing as well as being a part of the production teams in major musical productions, theatre performances, dance group showcases, video clips, television series and music awards ceremonies in Athens.



## Thank you to trustees

Our huge thanks go to Elisabeth Swan and Karen King who stepped down as trustees after years of dedicated service to the Council and ISTD. Karen continues as a Director of ISTD Academy, and Elisabeth as a trustee of the Imperial Benevolent Fund.



From time to time there are vacancies on the board of trustees. Opportunities to apply will be advertised via the member newsletter.



# Step into the dance shoes of Lisa Scott-Lee

We caught up with ISTD member, Lisa Scott-Lee, celebrated member of pop group Steps and Founder Principal of Dubai Performing Arts (DPA).

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**Dance has always been my first love and an integral part of my life.**

Lisa discusses founding DPA, alongside her West End star husband Johnny Shentall-Lee, and the joy of preparing students for successful performing arts careers. Lisa and Johnny are both ISTD Associates and have helped students succeed in ISTD exams, fostering commitment and dedication, bringing a sense of accomplishment to both students and parents.

## **What do you enjoy most about your daily life in dance?**

Dance has always been my first love and an integral part of my life, and also my career with my pop group Steps, as we are known for our famous dance routines. In 2022 Steps celebrated our 25th anniversary in the music industry and I believe that dance has played a big part in our success story around the world, as dance is universal and connects people and their emotions. It is also how I met my husband Johnny, when he auditioned for Steps back in 1999, and we toured the world with the likes of Britney Spears. Johnny was also a Professional Commercial dancer for Music stars such as Robbie Williams, Sophie Ellis-Bextor, and Diana Ross.

We launched our Dubai based dance school due to our shared love of dance and the ISTD. Our children, Jaden aged 15 and Star Lily aged 14, have both just taken their Intermediate Foundation

Tap and Modern exams, during our DPA annual ISTD exams sessions, which makes us very proud. We are a family of dancers and singers.

## **What does a typical day look like for you?**

The best thing about my life and what I do, is that there is no such thing as a typical day, and I am kept on my toes; pardon the dance pun! I feel blessed that dance is still a big part of my daily life, I am passionate about running our dance school and I regularly fly back to the UK for shows with Steps.

## **What excites you most about your daily work?**

Seeing the excitement and passion in our students' faces and giving something back to the dance community. Johnny and I are in a fortunate position where we love what we do, and we love passing on our knowledge and experience to budding dancers and performers.

## **How has DPA evolved since its launch in 2014?**

DPA has enjoyed a wonderful growth since we launched in 2014, and we are proud to be a leading performing arts school in the UAE, where we have branches across Dubai. Johnny teaches daily at DPA and his Dance and Acro classes are very popular with our DPA students. Johnny also choreographs our DPA shows and annual pantos. We also have

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**Here and Now**

Steps is thrilled to be launching their very own Musical, *Here and Now*, in November 2024.





**Above** Lyrical dancers

a strong teaching team that has opportunities to choreograph our annual shows. Myself, I've always loved teaching also and I taught more when we first launched, and I take more of a managerial role now that the business has grown in size. I am the proud Principal of DPA. I know and love all our students, and I am always on hand to nurture and encourage them. I also love that they call me Miss Lisa.

#### **Tell us about your ISTD training?**

Johnny and I are both fully qualified Associate members of the ISTD and gained our teaching qualifications whilst training at prestigious vocational colleges in the UK. Myself at Italia Conti Academy of Theatre Arts in London, and Johnny at Performers College. We are so thankful that we gained our teaching qualifications at vocational college as it enables us to enter our DPA students for their annual exams and means that our students also reap the benefits of the ISTD syllabi and structure.

#### **Do you have a favourite ISTD memory?**

My favourite memory is when I took my Associate examination at Conti's and performing my dance I had choreographed to Patrick Swayze's *She's Like the Wind*. I remember to this day having a lovely talk with my examiner about how I wanted to have my own dance school one day... thankfully, my dream came true.

#### **Has your ISTD training helped you on a daily basis?**

I believe all dancers would benefit from ISTD training, as it teaches you the foundation, techniques and dance skills a dancer needs to have a successful career in the dance and teaching industry.

#### **You teach ISTD Tap and Modern at DPA and 2024 is your tenth year of entering students for their ISTD exams. What are the benefits for your students?**

Johnny and I see year on year, the improvements

our students gain, along with confidence, which is an important life skill regardless of the industry they will go into. We believe following the ISTD syllabi allows dancers to feel that sense of achievement when they enter an exam.

#### **Your BTEC in Performing Arts students all received distinction\* last year, and are all ISTD trained. You have said that you believe this contributed to their outstanding results...**

We really do believe that our DPA students' ISTD training has contributed to our incredible BTEC success rate. Johnny and I are proud to be the first in the UAE to introduce and launch Level 2 and 3 BTEC diplomas and extended diplomas in performing arts to the region, in affiliation with Pearson and Taaleem. I am proud to be the Pearson International Ambassador for BTEC in Performing Arts. Our first and second year cohorts of BTEC students all gained outstanding 100% distinction\* and are now furthering their training at colleges such as Bird, Performers and Mountview. We have a talented teaching team who work on our DPA BTEC Diploma courses, which is led by Johnny and Beth Hawkes, Head of our ISTD Tap and Modern Department. Beth trained at Laine Theatre Arts and achieved her ISTD DDE, she is an exceptional and popular teacher and a valued member of our DPA Team.

#### **What would you like someone who's interested in doing similar work to know?**

Owning your own dance school and business has its challenges at times, but it is extremely rewarding when your students achieve their dreams and discover their love and passion for dance.

#### **Do you have tips for young dancers getting into the industry and teaching?**

Technique is vital! As are performing skills and having the right attitude. Always follow your dreams and don't give up.

“

**I believe all dancers would benefit from ISTD training, as it teaches you the foundation, techniques and dance skills a dancer needs to have a successful career in the dance and teaching industry.**

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### **Musical origins**

DPA Academy's founders, Lisa and Johnny, share an intriguing origin story, uniting their experiences in popular music groups. From Lisa's time in Steps to Johnny's contributions to Hear'say, their shared ambition materialised into DPA, a venture dedicated to nurturing young performers.

# Breaking boundaries

Join ISTD member, Isla Selley, as she delves into the fusion of athleticism and artistic expression that defines breaking (break dance) and learns how it has earned a spot at the Paris 2024 Olympics.



**Isla Selley**  
Director of  
Boom Arts  
Academy, UK

Breaking or break dance is a style we have been teaching the last eight years at Boom Arts Academy, and we feel it encourages younger dancers to explore floor work, top rock and acro skills, which are very popular today.

Break dance is a dynamic and expressive form of movement, which has roots deeply embedded in the urban culture of the late 1970s originating from the Bronx in New York.

The ISTD offers a great qualification of Street Dance Associate training that includes an in-depth learning of these styles including break dance, locking and popping. It allows teachers to learn the techniques and history of the movements and styles.

We find break dance allows the students to express their inner style and give a real feel of community bonding with break dance battles making it a fun element within a class.

**Right** Samuel Morais break dancing in London

“  
**Consider taking the Street Dance Student Teacher or Associate examination to expand your knowledge of street dance and its rich history.**





Break dance evolved as a cultural response to social challenges. Birthed within the diverse tapestry of hip-hop culture, its early practitioners used the dance form as a medium for self-expression, empowerment, and community bonding, which is important for many of us to foster in this time throughout our classes.

Break dance music has a range of beats, funk, hip-hop, and electro genres mixed into one. It's a dance style where every movement syncs with the rhythm, creating a powerful synergy between the body and the music.

Boom Arts Academy has embraced break dance as a catalyst for creativity and self-expression. Break dance has allowed our academy to build an environment where children not only learn the moves but also understand the cultural context and history behind this energetic dance form.

What makes break dance especially appealing to the children at Boom Arts Academy? It's the fusion of athleticism, artistic expression, and the sense of community that comes with the dance style. It encourages individuality within a supportive group setting, allowing each child to explore and showcase their unique style.

Break dancers are commonly known as "B-Boys," "B-Girls," or simply "Breakers," with

the "B" symbolising 'Break.' This reflects the practice of executing dance moves specifically during instrumental breaks in a song.

Break dance empowers children by instilling confidence and a sense of accomplishment. As they navigate the challenging moves and embrace the cultural heritage embedded in each step, they not only develop physical agility but also cultivate a deep appreciation for diversity and inclusivity.

## The ISTD offers a great qualification of Street Dance Associate.

Break dance forms a platform for self-expression allowing students to discover the joy of telling their stories through movement, fostering a connection between their personal experiences and the broader cultural narrative.

Competitions showcasing break dancing have proliferated globally since the 1990s, promoting this dance style from hip-hop circles to broader audiences and still proceeds now. ISTD street dance competitions are held yearly in which students can showcase their moves and routines. This year ISTD street dance competitions will be held on Sunday 7 July 2024 at the Mountbatten Centre, Portsmouth and on Sunday 3 November 2024 at Grays Civic Hall, Essex. Check online for more information.

From its remarkable success, break dancing has been selected to join the Paris 2024 summer Olympic sports programme as a new sport, officially named as 'breaking' by the International Olympic Committee.

Keep your eyes peeled for an amazing performance from 'breakers' around the world competing.



THE WHITGIFT FOUNDATION

### Membership +

Turn to page 53 to find out more about the refreshed **ISTD Street Dance Syllabus**.

We are also excited to bring a street dance CPD course to this year's Residential Summer Programme, 15–18 August. Visit [www.istd.org/events](http://www.istd.org/events) to find out more.







ISTD celebrating

# 120 years timeline

**1904**

200 dance teachers gathered at London's Hotel Cecil, giving rise to the Imperial Society of Dance Teachers, later renamed the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing.



**2017**

The ISTD held the first graduation ceremony on 2 February 2017 at the Barbican, London, celebrating nearly 400 graduates with a full teaching qualification.



**2024**

This year marks the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ISTD, with exciting new syllabi, uniform, and digital developments planned.



**1907**

The ISTD journal, which launched in 1907, recently marked a significant milestone with the celebration of its 500<sup>th</sup> issue in 2024. Few publications have been so steadfast in their mission.



**2000**

We received Government recognition in November 2000 and approval to operate in the Regulated Qualifications Framework in 2010 (by Ofqual). Our recognition also extends to Qualifications Wales and CCEA in Northern Ireland.







**1914**

The onset of the First World War led to a temporary suspension of the Society's activities and membership subscriptions to aid its members.

**1924**

The ISTD's current structure began in 1924 with the establishment of specialised branches (now faculties) for each dance form.

**1956**

The Imperial Award was created in 1956 by Council to recognise outstanding services to dance and the Society.

**1996**

The ISTD moved into its current London headquarters in Paul Street and launched its first website.

**1986**

Council introduced the Imperial International Award to honour individuals for their contributions to the Society's global development.



Imperial Society of  
Teachers of Dancing

Share your favourite ISTD  
memories with our community  
– send your photos and  
stories to: [marketing@istd.org](mailto:marketing@istd.org)





# Dressed for success

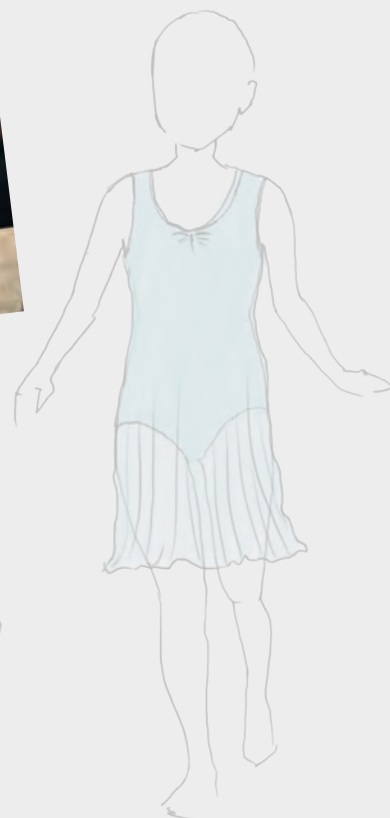
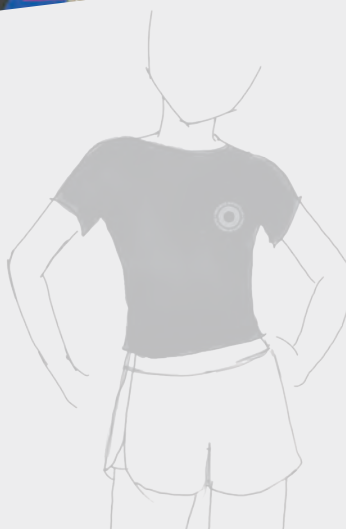
**ISTD launches new, inclusive and sustainable recommended examination uniform.**

Our ambition is to be a truly inclusive Society and to encourage diversity in our dance community. This was our motivation to review and update the recommended ISTD examination uniform. To help us achieve this aim, we appointed the dancewear company Dansez to work with us to create a sustainable, inclusive, and quality uniform range that offers flexibility and good value for both class and examination wear.

The Dansez creative team, led by Managing Director Samantha Carney, has worked closely with members representing our Theatre and Disco, Freestyle and Rock n Roll faculties to review the needs of our students, their parents and our teachers. Looking at the function of each item, how it is worn for class and for examinations, the team have considered the needs of each age group and genre. The designs have also been reviewed by the faculty committees to consider suitability for examination wear – and all this feedback has been crucial to make sure that our designs are not only beautiful but also practical.

We are confident that the launch of the new collection will be well received for its production values, creativity, and overall effectiveness for a dancer. The concept behind the collection is to create a truly capsule kit, with items that can be mixed and matched according to the individuals' tastes and the genres' examination requirements. The collection hasn't forgotten our teachers, and we have been developing a range that our teachers will be proud to wear in class and at events.

Our working group of ISTD members has been testing out the uniforms with students in their dance schools. This is a crucial part of the process to make sure the cut, fit and finish is wearable and desirable across the full range of items.



**“It is always an exciting phase of a new project when we work with focus groups. It's a time when we can all let our creative minds fly! We started by talking about the purpose of a new capsule collection that builds on the ISTD values of inclusivity and accessibility. The ISTD want to move forward with designs that make it possible to use the latest in performance fabrics that are firmly rooted in sustainability.”**

**Samantha Carney, Managing Director of Dansez**





## Eco-friendly clothing

By using ECONYL® regenerated nylon, a cutting-edge sustainable material, ISTD and Dansez join forces to promote eco-friendly practices in clothing production. By repurposing discarded nylon like fishing nets and industrial plastic, we have become part of the 'waste-to-wear' revolution with this beautiful new collection of dance clothes.

"I am excited at the prospect of a collection that will reflect the latest in dancewear design and cater for the wide range of learners that we regularly teach, combined with sustainability and technology in the range and choice of fabrics proposed."

**Alison Jenner, Lead Examiner for Cecchetti Classical Ballet**

"It has been such an interesting experience working on the new ISTD dance uniform with the Dansez team. Right from the beginning they really listened and took on board our ideas and different needs in each genre, while trying to make the items inclusive and comfortable for all."

**Elizabeth Reeves, ISTD Modern and Tap Examiner**

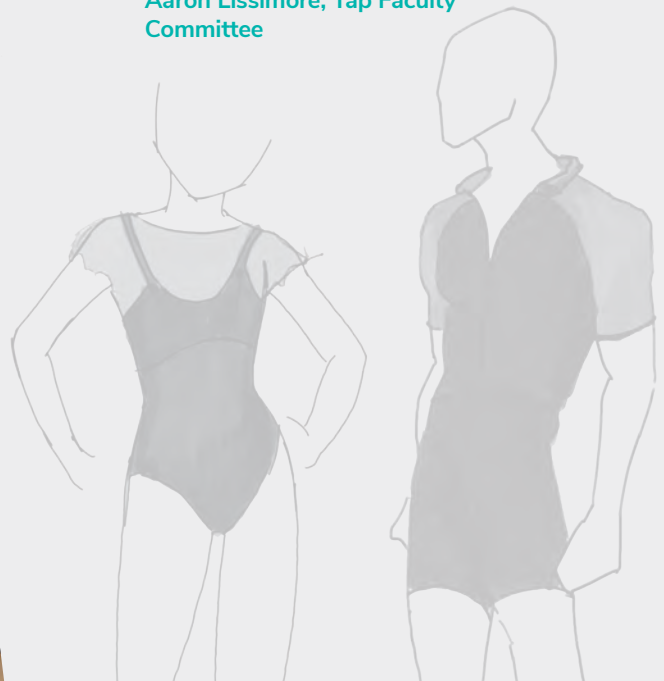


"Working with cross genre ISTD members and the expert team from Dansez, it has been an insightful and collaborative process. I hope our members will see the benefit of the capsule collection that can be used across genres, and I hope the students and parents will appreciate the vast choice of items available."

**Aaron Lissimore, Tap Faculty Committee**

"It has been an interesting experience working on the new designs. I have enjoyed participating and hopefully producing some new current pieces that dancers will enjoy wearing and feeling good in."

**Michelle Arnell, DFR Faculty Committee and Area Organiser**





## Membership matters



Since sign-off, the seamstresses and sewing machines at Dansez's Kent studio have been in non-stop motion producing the items. Using the most sustainable fabrics and processes to create a truly environmentally friendly product. The uniforms use ECONYL®, a regenerated fibre, made from nylon waste, that includes fishing nets, carpet flooring and industrial plastic and supports the Healthy Seas Initiative. Healthy Seas, a charity established in 2013, addresses ghost fishing, which causes unnecessary marine animal deaths. Recovered fishing nets are processed through Aquafil's ECONYL® regeneration system, turning nylon waste into high-quality material. This regenerated nylon is equivalent to virgin nylon, infinitely recyclable, offering endless opportunities for designers and consumers.



We hope students, teachers and parents will love our new recommended examination uniform. The uniform is not mandatory as we know that affordability is an important consideration for parents and teachers alike. Members will receive a discount on all orders – individual or bulk. Each item comes with a full guarantee. To be truly sustainable, we are hoping to establish a preloved initiative, that will enable uniforms to be returned to be passed

on to schools. We will also share information about a uniform bursary in due course.

Our journey to create the new ISTD dance uniform started with a thorough briefing and careful consideration of dancers' preferences. We refined designs for style and functionality, tested samples rigorously, and are now preparing for manufacturing.

**Stay tuned for photoshoot and launch details!**



## Renew today!

Continue to enjoy all the benefits of membership and renew your membership today. The easiest way to renew is online via the My ISTD area on the website, where you can set up a Direct Debit or renew by debit or credit card. Simply visit [www.istd.org/membership/renew](http://www.istd.org/membership/renew) today

ISTD celebrating

**120**  
years

## Share your ISTD memories

In our 120th year, we are enjoying the nostalgia and pride that comes with hearing our members' ISTD memories.

Share the magic of the moment when you clinched that prestigious ISTD award. Take us back to those unforgettable events and congresses. Reflect on those teaching moments that left a lasting impression. Share the growth and transformation you experienced through ISTD qualifications, or stories of the incredible ISTD teachers who have left a mark on your dance journey.

How has being part of the ISTD family enriched your professional life? Share your career highlights with us today!

Share your favourite ISTD memories with our community – send your photos and stories to: [marketing@istd.org](mailto:marketing@istd.org)

Or use our online form to share your memories: [www.istd.org/forms/istd-120-your-memories](http://www.istd.org/forms/istd-120-your-memories)

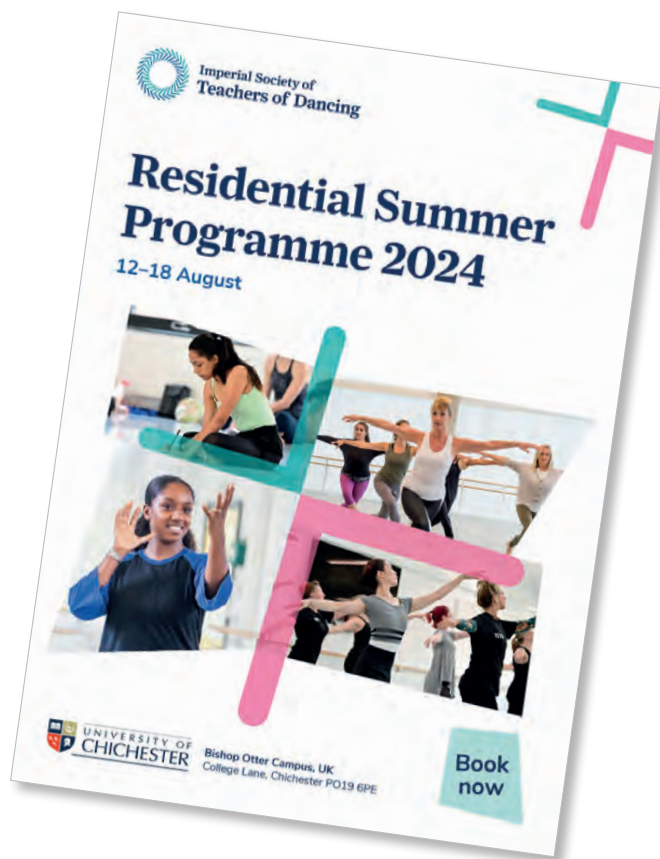


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Chichester is a great venue;  
accommodation good, food excellent.  
It provides a fantastic week of CPD.

# Learn, connect and have fun

Join us and members  
from across the world at  
the residential summer  
programme in Chichester.



Residential teachers summer programme for theatre genres is back. If you have never been before, please try it. It is a great way to connect to other dance teachers and make lifelong friendships. We provide everything so you can focus on developing and upskilling 'you' away from the daily chores and life admin.

Delegates staying residentially will be housed in the Chichester University student accommodation on campus. They will be allocated an ensuite room with access to a communal kitchen area. Lunch and refreshments will be available to all attending the event, with residential delegates provided with breakfast and dinner on top.

This event is ideal for all teachers, from the most experienced through to those still in training. And don't worry if you've never attended before, you will be made welcome and make friends in no time! And for those who have been before we are looking forward to seeing your familiar faces.

## What's new at Summer Programme?

- **Refreshed Street Syllabus** – we launch our refreshed ISTD Street Dance Syllabus in 2024 to tie in with the introduction of breaking in the Paris Olympics. Turn to page 53 to find out more.
- **New Advanced 1 Tap Syllabus** – the creative team (see page 56) has crafted work that is inspiring and yet technically challenging. Specifications for teachers will be published in July with syllabus books available in August. Look out for Advanced 1 Tap training post-September in the UK and international regions, plus online. There is plenty of time for teachers to learn this new work with first examinations commencing 1 October 2025.
- **Contemporary Advanced 1 Syllabus** – delivered in full at Summer Programme for the first time.

- **Modern Theatre Class Awards** – we are getting ready to launch Modern Theatre Class Awards, with first examinations available from 1 October 2024. The content for this work is not new but taken from current syllabus, enabling teachers to offer a shorter alternative examination for the once-a-week child. Look out for the specifications due to be published on the website in June with more guidance and information at summer school.

## Benefits of attending:

- Delegates will have the opportunity to join courses led by our expert teaching teams, connect with other members from around the world and network with lecturers outside the studio.
- Attending CPD courses is the best way to update your teaching practice and take something new back to your dance studio.
- Attendees will have access to new syllabus content and learn this directly from our lead lecturers and teaching teams.
- During this event, residential delegates will have the opportunity to attend additional morning warm-ups, evening activities and guidance sessions for free.

## Membership



## Residential Summer Programme 2024

Come and join the ISTD in a week of training – there will be time to chat, share practice and learn as a community. Make the most of your membership and upskill. Look out for early bird offers (available for members until the end of April) and convenient installment plans. [coursebookings@istd.org](mailto:coursebookings@istd.org)



## Teaching adult dancers in Europe

**Carole Ann Watson looks at how to make adult dance classes truly inclusive.**

Reflecting on my recent studies for my MA has led me to consider inclusivity in the classroom in new light.

The journey into inclusion from a linguistic point of view has moved me to consider inclusivity from all angles: premises, safe spaces, in class, rapport with parents, even ensuring that there are more options of books and videos available in our library. We can always learn from our experiences, as well as from others, and on many occasions, we learn from our students.

Over the last two years, there has been an incredible increase in adults studying classical ballet across all age groups, the majority absolute beginners. This was the first time in my teaching career that I had to manage such a vast range of ages and abilities in an adult class. I found this challenging, but also extremely gratifying – adapting exercises and teaching techniques to suit the students has always been important to me, but now I am faced with many more interesting challenges.

I recently had a class of mature students who were eager to learn and passionate about dance, but there were also many physical difficulties in members of the class, and it was my job to make this learning journey enjoyable and functional for all involved. Throughout these classes, I was finding new ways to make the class inclusive, ensuring that each learner could move and enjoy dance whilst remaining within their comfort and safety zone. We would take an exercise and I would list the options for adapting it, so that each individual could take it as they wished. Adults who had never taken a ballet class before were now moving in time to the music and most of all enjoying this new experience. Some who had trained as children have revived their passion for dance, and are appreciating their ballet classes even more.

For me, adult ballet classes are something special, seeing that twinkle in their eyes while they find the sheer joy of dancing.

**Carole Ann Watson, ISTD International Representative for Europe**

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**Right** Adult learners in Carole's ballet class

**I never imagined that classical ballet could take me on such a beautiful journey.**



“

**I am a professional nurse and I feel that I have more energy, my posture has improved, and my joints are far more mobile.**







## Dance competition culture in the Americas

**Astrid Sherman gives her perspective on navigating the profit-driven trends and ethical considerations.**

Dance competition culture is booming in the USA and Canada, driven by social media and TV shows like *So You Think You Can Dance* and *Dance Mums*. Private dance studios are reaping financial rewards with the extra rehearsals driven from this boom. Many report regular attendance at up to a dozen events annually. Dance competitions have shifted from community-driven festivals to profit-oriented enterprises.

Previously, these events emphasised camaraderie, offering genuine performance opportunities in local venues, with floating trophies and teacher-adjudicators providing feedback. However, today's competitions are held in mainstream theatres, featuring professional lighting and famous judges. Participation now requires substantial expenses, including high solo entry fees, travel, choreography costs, and extravagant costumes.

“

**Dancers who prioritise the joy of the journey tend to be more confident and fulfilled than those solely focused on external victories.**

Dance competitions, run by for-profit entities, are marketed as chances for students, teachers, and parents to connect with industry insiders and potentially get 'discovered'. Consequently, competitions have become mainstream, offering platforms for dancers to showcase skills, gain exposure, and network. Yet, it is crucial to note these events prioritise profit. While judges can be accomplished dancers/choreographers/directors, they may lack expertise in dance training or holistic teaching methods.

Competitions offer studio dancers exposure beyond their usual environment but may compromise the authenticity and safety of their studio bubble. While competitions provide performance practice, similar experiences can be found locally, such as performing at senior homes, teaching valuable life lessons. Although competitions offer master classes and scholarships, these opportunities may not always prioritise the dancer's growth. Some scholarships may merely reflect social media campaigns rather than genuine merit, and thus many students attending summer programmes do so on partial 'scholarships', emphasising the need for informed parental research.

Competitions may encourage students to excel in technical skills, but they often detract from regular technique classes, leading to imbalanced training priorities. The emphasis on winning formulas centered around tricks undermines the development of foundational links crucial for holistic dancer growth. Additionally, competitions, fueled by social media, tend to prioritise extremes over artistry, despite artistry being the essence of dance.

Social media boosts business in the dance industry, with high profile judges influencing young dancers and their parents to follow their accounts. This can lead to a desire to imitate what is seen online. Furthermore, social media shapes children's competitive dance choreography and costuming, sometimes resulting in objectification and sexualization, though there are positive role models and platforms for addressing abuses in the industry, which remains largely unregulated in the Americas.

Dance training instills dedication and resilience, vital skills for success in any career. Competitions can teach dancers to navigate controversy, ethics, teamwork, and criticism, fostering valuable life skills. Setting tangible goals boosts student morale and studio retention rates. While achievement goal theory (AGT) emphasises motivation, psychologists advocate for nurturing intrinsic over extrinsic motivation. Dancers who prioritise the joy of the journey tend to be more confident and fulfilled than those solely focused on external victories.

While dance competition culture is mostly concentrated in the USA and Canada, Mexico is showing increasing interest. Parents and teachers should be aware of their consumer power, making informed choices about which competitions to support based on their values, ethics, and goals. Ultimately, it is important to view dance competitions as a part of the journey rather than the final destination.

**Astrid Sherman, ISTD International Representative for the Americas**

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**If a dance studio doesn't provide opportunities for partner work, it's crucial for aspiring professional dancers to seek out workshops where they can develop this skill before auditioning.**

#### Membership



Catch up with colleagues at your next regional members meeting – dates will be shared in newsletters and on Facebook. And visit [www.istd.org/events](http://www.istd.org/events) for international CPD and competition events.

## Essential partner work in Africa and the Middle East

**Delia Sainsbury spoke to James Bradley and Owen Lonzar about the challenges and potential solutions.**

It is an interesting fact that many dance schools that take their learners to advanced levels in the various genres do not train their dancers in partner work. It appears that this is not by choice but by circumstances – the reason being that in South Africa, it is still difficult to persuade boys to train in classical or contemporary dance, as old ideologies and perceptions persist to a large degree. I spoke to two ISTD-trained leading choreographers about this.

**Owen Lonzar**, a leading South African choreographer and director, explained: “This is a difficult part of training for most schools to fulfil because there are still just not enough boys dancing. If they are, they tend to enroll for hip hop or break dance, which do not require partner work. I believe the various dance societies should run partnering workshops, where they employ experienced male teachers and male dancers to partner with the girls, so that they can be taught the techniques for partnering, lifting and being lifted. I believe the fault also lies with a new breed of choreographers, who lacking the skill themselves, are reluctant to use lifts in their choreography.”

**James Bradley**, Head of Contemporary Dance at Waterfront Theatre School commented: “I feel the situation regarding the training of young male dancers is improving. Boys are starting to train at a younger age, so they do not have to learn ‘on the job’, providing the school offers partner work. It is important to remember that female dancers must be trained too. Almost all dance companies, cruise lines, and corporate companies require dancers to be trained in this skill.

“Injury can be prevented by correct regular training. This requires starting with easier lifts before progressing to overhead and ‘trick lifts’. The female dancer is equally responsible because if she does not hold the body with the correct control and weight distribution, it can result in the unpredictability of the lift.

“The basic technique for classical ballet and commercial partner work remains the same, but the style of lifts or partnering is different. If a studio does not offer partner work, it is essential that the dancer intent on a professional career finds workshops to hone this skill prior to auditioning.”

**Delia Sainsbury, ISTD International Representative for Africa and the Middle East**

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## Competitive dance in Asia

**Chua Zjen Fong reveals how dance competitions are platforms for tradition and innovation in Asia.**

Competitive dancing stands out as a dynamic and exhilarating pursuit that has taken Asia by storm. I am privileged to have witnessed first-hand the positive impact that competitive dancing has on individuals and communities across the continent.

One of the key benefits of competitive dancing is its ability to foster discipline and dedication. Dancers engage in rigorous training regimens that demand physical stamina, mental focus, and emotional resilience. This commitment transcends the dance floor, instilling a strong work ethic that becomes a guiding force in various aspects of their lives. As dancers strive for excellence, they cultivate valuable qualities that contribute to personal growth and success.

**In Asia, dance competitions celebrate diverse cultures and foster understanding.**

In Asia, where traditions are deeply rooted, dance competitions become a platform for the rich tapestry of cultural expressions. Dancers celebrate their heritage through unique choreography, costumes, and music, creating a harmonious blend of tradition and innovation. This cultural exchange not only preserves the authenticity of various dance forms but also fosters understanding and appreciation among diverse communities.

Besides, competitive dancing is a powerful tool for building self-confidence and resilience. The thrill of performing in front of judges and an audience hones a dancer's ability to handle pressure and overcome stage fright. This newfound confidence extends beyond the competition arena, empowering individuals to face challenges with courage and grace in their everyday lives.

The ISTD's presence in Asia has been instrumental in providing a standardised platform for competitive dance, ensuring fairness and professionalism. Through workshops, certifications, and events, ISTD plays a pivotal role in elevating the standards of dance education and performance in the region. This commitment to excellence contributes to the positive image of competitive dancing, attracting more enthusiasts and elevating the art form to new heights.

Competitive dancing in Asia is not merely a display of skill and artistry; it is a transformative journey that enriches the lives of individuals and communities. I am excited to witness the continued growth of competitive dancing, as it leaves an indelible mark on the cultural landscape and inspires a new generation of passionate dancers across Asia.

**Chua Zjen Fong, ISTD International Representative for Asia**

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## Dance competitions in New Zealand

**Kim Scott asked ISTD teacher, Carmen Davidson, to share her experience of how dance competitions in her region are fostering camaraderie and respect.**

As a dance studio owner and teacher, I wanted to share my perspective on the thriving world of dance competitions in New Zealand. Despite being predominantly an examination-based studio, we actively participate in dance competitions to foster the holistic development of our dancers.

Our competition crews, specialising in Contemporary, Modern, and Hip Hop across all age groups, are a testament to the talent cultivated within our studio. This success is underpinned by the dedication of our skilled teachers, choreographers, and the unwavering support of parents.

Participating in dance competitions has proven to be a catalyst for fostering confidence, personal growth, resilience, and teamwork among our dancers. The benefits extend beyond the individual, contributing to the positive promotion of our studio within the dance community. Our focus goes beyond technical proficiency; it emphasises the importance of supporting fellow dancers from our studio and other participating companies, instilling a healthy respect for all competitors as a prerequisite.

From a studio owner's perspective, organising and participating in competitions can be demanding. It requires considerable time, energy, and administrative effort, underscoring the importance of effective communication. However, the benefits for our students far outweigh the challenges:

### **Benefits for students:**

- More performance opportunities
- Additional support from teachers
- Extra practice
- Personal growth in confidence, performance, and technique
- Exposure to diverse talent, dance styles, and choreography

### **Positives as a studio owner:**

- Dancers gain confidence
- Encourages teamwork
- Provides advertising opportunities
- Cultivates a growth mindset and mutual support among teams
- Strengthens relationships with competition parents
- Promotes continuous improvement in technique and performance abilities throughout the year
- Creates choreography opportunities for our dedicated teachers

The tangible and intangible benefits accrued by our dancers while preparing for competitions validate the significant investment of time and resources, and serve as a platform for growth, camaraderie, and artistic expression.

**Kim Scott, ISTD International Representative for Australasia**

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# Cecchetti Classical Ballet



**Above** Cecchetti Malta Awards  
 middle group winners



Alison Jenner



Jacqueline Lewis



Tracey Moss



Shirley-Anne  
Osborne



Caroline Roach

## Cecchetti Classical Ballet Committee

### Alison Jenner

Alison trained at London College of Dance and Drama, then with Cara Drower and Eve Pettinger, while teaching at Tring Park School. Alison is the Cecchetti representative on the Cross Faculty Committee. She is the Lead Examiner for the Portfolio A examinations and has been part of numerous syllabus creation and review sub committees.

### Jacqueline Lewis

Jacqueline trained at the London School of Classical Dance with Molly Lake and Travis Kemp and with Richard Glasstone at the Cecchetti Centre. She has been teaching for 40 years and has run successful dance schools and taught across Europe. She is pleased to be serving her first term on committee.

### Tracey Moss

Tracey has been teaching at KS Dance in Warrington since 1988 where she is the Deputy Principal of the Junior Programme. She teaches ballet and tap

to the Juniors programme and to the vocational students. Tracey is an ISTD Cecchetti examiner and is looking forward to her second term on committee.

### Shirley-Anne Osborne

Shirley-Anne trained with Kathleen Yates before studying at the London College of Dance and Drama. She moved to Ravenna in Italy, teaching in various local schools. She is a Cecchetti examiner, an assessor for the Diploma in Dance Education and is proud to serve on her second term on committee.

### Caroline Roach

Caroline, the Lead Lecturer for Cecchetti Classical Ballet and ISTD Fellow, holds a BA (Hons) from Bristol University and Postgraduate Certificate in Education from Lancaster University and is qualified to teach both dance and in primary schools. She currently instructs Cecchetti ballet at recreational and vocational levels in two ISTD schools.

Connect with your committee  
 via **cecchetti@istd.org**

## Malta Awards

**Theresa Lungaro-Mifsud,**  
 Malta Awards organiser,  
 reflects on the hard work  
 of our young dancers.

The fifth Cecchetti Malta Awards was held on Sunday 3 December at The Dance Workshop, Pieta. The Awards were founded in 2018 on the initiative of Catherine Hutchon (ISTD examiner). Originally only one category was held, The Tanya Bayona Award, which was set up to honour Tanya Bayona's teaching career in Malta. Through the encouragement of Philippa McMeechan (Head of Cecchetti Faculty Development) and Carole Watson (International Representative for Europe) we now have three categories.

This year Lusymay Di Stefano, ex-Principal with La Scala di Milano, was our guest adjudicator. ISTD teacher, Nina Winter, taught the classes and pianist, Maria Elena Farrugia, accompanied the classes.

The day started off with 51 students aged 9 to 12 participating in the Junior awards. Fifteen certificates of excellence in various categories were awarded. The Middle awards consisted of 25 students and in the afternoon the Senior students competed for the coveted Tanya Bayona Award. Lusymay Di Stefano complimented the students for their hard work and for being so focused. She also gave them advice on how to prepare their pointe shoes.

We hope to host next year's competition in a theatre, in front of a live audience, on Sunday 1 December (venue TBC).



## Ballet Brilliance at Elmhurst

Elmhurst Ballet School hosted a standout celebration of ballet excellence at last year's Mabel Ryan Awards.

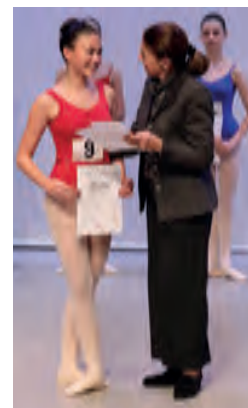
The Mabel Ryan Awards, an historic faculty event, unfolded on 19 November 2023 within the splendid facilities of Elmhurst Ballet School. This was a good choice of venue for the Awards, which are held in tribute to the memory of Mabel Ryan, a beloved and respected teacher of the Cecchetti method.

The dancers rose admirably to the occasion, making their teachers proud. Accompanying them were the highly accomplished Jonnie Gait on the piano, Sarah Wells as the presenter for the Lower Junior, Junior, and Middle categories, and Sarah Bradshaw as the presenter and teacher for the Senior category.

The day was graced by a panel of experienced adjudicators: Christine Axon, Peter Parker and Mary Stassinopoulos. They followed in the footsteps of ballet luminaries such as Dame Ninette De Valois, Pamela May, and Ursula Moreton, who had previously adjudicated these prestigious awards. Christine, Peter and Mary not only delivered the results but also shared their invaluable hints and tips for progression with all the competitors.

Lisa Hunter and a dedicated team of teachers orchestrated a meticulously planned and beautifully staged event, receiving support from members of our committee. Gratitude is extended to the Cecchetti Society Trust for their support in staging the awards, to Dansez for their generous prizes in the form of vouchers, and to Robert Parker, the Artistic Director of Elmhurst Ballet School, for awarding a full scholarship to a young dancer for the 2024 Elmhurst residential summer school. Congratulations to Uzziah Gray, a competitor in the Lower Junior category, who was the recipient of this award.

The results were published online, after the event: [www.istd.org/discover/news/mabel-ryan-awards-2023](http://www.istd.org/discover/news/mabel-ryan-awards-2023)



**Above** Participants in the ISTD's Mabel Ryan Awards, which was held on 19 November 2023 at Elmhurst Ballet School



### Save the date

Reserve Sunday 17 November for the 2024 Mabel Ryan Awards (Venue to be confirmed). Mark your calendars for an unforgettable event!



### Cecchetti grades 1–6 updated syllabus book

Watch out for publication information via member emails and Facebook and join us at Residential Summer School to go over the work!



### Music reminders for teachers

Teachers should ensure they communicate with their examiner in advance of the session whether the candidates will be working with a pianist, recorded music or a combination of both on the day of the exams.

For sessions that include class examinations, the examiner will bring the improvisation music with them as either a CD or on an electronic device. Teachers are responsible for providing either a CD player or Bluetooth speaker as agreed in advance with their examiner.

### Music for graded examinations

If teachers are not using a pianist for graded examinations, then they must ensure the provision of the official recorded music, which is available digitally from the ISTD shop. The examiner does not provide the music for graded examinations.



## Cecchetti Day 2024

**Grab your ticket for Cecchetti Day on Sunday 21 April 2024.**

The Cecchetti Classical Ballet Faculty Committee is looking forward to welcoming fellow teachers and friends to enjoy a day of dance and celebration of the Cecchetti method.

With performances, demonstrations, and guest lectures in the wonderful setting of The Royal Ballet Upper School in Covent Garden, Cecchetti Day promises to be an inspirational occasion for all Cecchetti members and friends. Book your tickets and enjoy a packed programme of dance and lectures as well as an opportunity to catch up and network with friends and colleagues.

Don't miss out! [www.istd.org/events/cecchetti-day-2024](http://www.istd.org/events/cecchetti-day-2024)

## Dancing with depth

Bethany Kinglsey-Garner shares her passion for Cecchetti with our committee member, Jacqueline Lewis.



### What is one of your early experiences with dance training?

It would have been in Cecchetti training with Monica Furneaux, before I went to The Royal Ballet school at the age of 11. The Cecchetti Port De Bras and the feeling of moving my arms in a different way in classical ballet made me feel something I had never felt before; it was quite powerful. The use of *épaulement* from a young age sparked an internal fire in me.

### When working with choreographers, how has your Cecchetti training helped to develop your artistry?

When choreographers ask you to push the boundaries of movement, to delve deeper into positions, one thing that my Cecchetti training has given me is an understanding of the anatomy of the body. It is not just moving into a position, it is a full body experience, so understanding the *épaulement* and how structurally you can keep poise and strength allows you to explore new ways of moving. You cannot really impart this later; it is something that is developed from early on. The demand and physicality of the Cecchetti method prepares dancers for what is to come, which enables them to push themselves further because the structure is in place. Cecchetti combines anatomy with emotion, and that is very rare. With the Cecchetti method, the artistry is already there.

### How has the Cecchetti method enhanced your professional career?

At Scottish Ballet, our classes use a lot of the Cecchetti port de bras. Even though it was taught by Cecchetti many years ago, it is still so relevant now. The use of having the hips square, but the upper body twisting in different ways

is now what new choreographers are trying to do, maybe to greater extremes. The Cecchetti method has helped me train my body, giving me stamina and strength, and the demand of the method was something that gave me resilience.

### What are some of the highlights of your dancing career?

Highlights of my dancing career would be *Swan Lake* and performing Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*. When you see a ballet like that as a young girl, the enormity of the role in the ballet is so huge, that you cannot even comprehend the idea of stepping out onto the stage and performing something like that. However challenging the roles are at the time, they are the most rewarding and fulfilling, when you have to give absolutely everything into the process and the performance.

### What was the best advice you have ever been given?

To know your strengths and weaknesses as a dancer. As dancers, we are very good at knowing our weaknesses, because we are so passionate and dedicated to this art form, but we are not as good as knowing where our strengths lie. But, you need that balance. It is the way that you build your confidence, your artistry and your own journey. The balance of the two is very important and self-reflection from a class, working on your weaknesses while praising yourself for your strengths.

**Right** Bethany Kinglsey-Garner




## New online teacher support sessions

Join us at our regular on-line teacher support sessions. Please send questions in advance – no question is too small!

Go to: [www.istd.org/events/teacher-support-sessions-with-hofd](http://www.istd.org/events/teacher-support-sessions-with-hofd)

Please join our Facebook group. Follow the link from the website: [www.istd.org/discover/our-governance/faculty-committees](http://www.istd.org/discover/our-governance/faculty-committees)



A full-page photograph of a ballerina in a white, floral-patterned tutu performing a ballet move on a stage. She is in a plié position with her arms extended. In the background, other dancers in dark costumes are visible, and the stage is lit with blue and purple lights.

### **How did it feel to retire from Scottish Ballet?**

I have been preparing myself for a long time. I always knew my journey with ballet had to be thought out. I could never make a rash decision, so actually when it happened, and during my final performance, I was just taking it all in – the smell, the sound, the people, the noise. It was very freeing – it was spiritual. It was like a part of me was floating out into the audience, a lovely feeling.

### **What are your plans for the future?**

There is a part of me that will always want to dance, because it is so ingrained. I will always want to have the experience of being on stage but I have realised that I have come to the end of that journey and I am very excited to start a new chapter in my life. I am so excited to be a Dancer's Lecturer at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, because I have had a lovely connection with them over my years with Scottish Ballet. The students are the ones that filter into the company and to have a role model post in the company enables me to develop my teaching skills with the Conservatoire. I also love to broaden out and share my passion with as many dancers as possible.

### **What advice would you give to young dancers who are aiming to make a career in dance?**

Dancers vary in their motivations. Some are driven by emotion, others by technique, and some by passion. Recognising your own style is crucial for support and growth. The feelings of empowerment and strength don't require 24-hour focus, but embracing a unique dance approach can significantly contribute to the progress of young dancers.

### **What will you bring to Cecchetti Classical Ballet in the future?**

Keeping Cecchetti proudly on the map. Keeping it current and bringing the work, the method and the feeling into this new ballet century. It is very important to have dancers go through their careers into retirement and bring forward the Cecchetti method that they started with, passing it on to the next generation of dancers.

**Pippa Cobbing**  
**Head of Faculty Development for**  
**Classical Greek Dance**  
**classicalgreek@istd.org**  
 For all faculty events, please turn to  
 pages 58–59 and visit **istd.org**

# Classical Greek Dance

## Classical Greek Centenary Celebration

Feedback from the event, which took place on 5 November 2023 at the Laban Building to celebrate Ruby Ginner and 100 years of Classical Greek Dance.

"What a super day we had at the Classical Greek Centenary Celebration. Following an early start, a full coach of parents and children arrived at the Laban Centre to participate in morning workshops and afternoon performances.

"Parents went off to enjoy a morning in Greenwich visiting markets, coffee shops and other great landmarks before returning to view the Performance Awards, Centenary Presentation and group performances. For the participants it was a full day, the workshops were fun with a group dance put together in each second class to perform in the afternoon performance. Alongside this there were lighting rehearsals and then back to workshops to ensure all knew their pieces. Well done to all dancers who were quick to learn with a smile on their faces and a determination to ensure they completed each grouping.

"By 2pm it was performance time and the showcase of spectacular Classical Greek dancing was off. We were excited to perform a Bacchic piece with our senior dancers as well as having the intermediate age group dance in a group.

"All too soon the day was over and celebrations complete. On our coach journey home we reflected on how Classical Greek has evolved over the years, showing strong links to Contemporary work; and how our super work enriches students' musicality and their understanding of different emotions and characterisations, as well building strong technique. Congratulations to all Classical Greek teachers and dancers who continue to shine the torch for this beautiful genre."

**Amanda Wilkins, Kilburn School of Dance**

"What an exciting Centenary Celebration we all enjoyed. The Classical Greek Dance Association Faculty celebrated 100 years and paid tribute to their Founder Ruby Ginner, who created this vibrant dance genre inspired by



the rich diversity of ancient Greek civilisation. Holding three events in one day was a fantastic achievement!

"The morning was given to three warm up classes followed by three creative workshops all running simultaneously, expertly taken by our committee members Lucy Pohl, Fiona Sheehan and Amanda Wilkins. These produced three contrasting numbers to be included in the Gala Performance at the end of the day.

"After a celebratory lunch, the Junior and Senior Centenary Award Classes were led by Carol Vasko and adjudicated by Sonia Bond and Kay Ball. An excellent standard was reached in both categories and Centenary Medals were awarded.

"Fiona Sheehan then presented a fascinating retrospective of the life and achievements of Ruby Ginner and The Classical Greek Dance Association to date, with a glimpse into the future of the genre.

"Finally, we enjoyed the celebratory Gala performance. Alongside the morning workshops dances, seven invited schools presented impressive large group numbers which wowed the enthusiastic audience.

"Congratulations to the committee, Pippa Broadway, Lucy Pohl, Alison Seddon, Fiona Sheehan and Amanda Wilkins for organising such a successful and memorable occasion."

**Sonia Bond BEM, FISTD, Retired Examiner, Buckhurst Hill**

"I really loved being part of the Greek centenary day and enjoyed everything from the coach ride there, to the awards at the end of the day. My favourite part was the presentation of our workshop pieces in the gala, having worked together with old and new friends under the guidance of our teacher to create a beautiful group dance.

"I also loved taking part in the centenary awards class as it was challenging but allowed me to dance creatively. It was a surprise and absolute honour to win the Junior award and a lovely memory I will have forever."

**Scout Mullen, Winner – Junior Awards**

Results from the day were published online after the event:  
[www.istd.org/discover/news/classical-greek-centenary-awards-2023](http://www.istd.org/discover/news/classical-greek-centenary-awards-2023)

**Left** Spartan Women Defend the Homestead choreographed by Helen Leek

**Top right** A Moment in Peace choreographed by Amanda Wilkins





Pippa Broadway



Lucy Pohl



Alison Seddon



Fiona Sheehan



Amanda Wilkins

## Classical Greek Dance Committee

### Pippa Broadway

Pippa trained at Sussex Dance Studios and went on to run the school from 2000–2020. She now freelances around Sussex teaching Classical Greek and Imperial Classical Ballet as well as working as an accredited Clinical Coder for the National Health Service.

### Lucy Pohl

Lucy, a Cecchetti and Classical Greek Dance Fellow, trained at West Street School of Dance and danced professionally for two years. She has worked with Cecchetti scholars and associates and choreographed for the National Youth Ballet. Lucy

taught Classical Greek at White Lodge and teaches at the Buckhurst Hill & Woodford School of Dancing in Essex.

### Alison Seddon

Alison, a triple genre ISTD examiner and approved tutor, trained vocationally under Cynthia Carr, igniting her passion for Classical Greek Dance. A contributor to the Classical Greek vocational syllabi, she serves as an adjudicator for BIFF, and promotes Classical Greek Dance as a committee member.

### Fiona Sheehan

Fiona holds a first-class honours degree in the Art and Teaching of Classical Ballet and studied for a master's degree at Laban. Her former pupils have successfully auditioned for vocational

schools including The Royal Ballet School, English National Ballet School, and Elmhurst, and can be found working in all areas of the performing arts worldwide.

### Amanda Wilkins

Since 1989, Amanda, the Principal of Kilburn School, has passionately promoted Classical Greek as a committee member and examiner. She has guided pupils to excel in class, exams, and prestigious programmes including the ISTD Bursary Awards. Amanda finds joy in seeing pupils pursue successful careers in dance as teachers or performers.

Connect with your committee via [classicalgreek@istd.org](mailto:classicalgreek@istd.org)

**Lisa Harrison-Jones**

**Head of Faculty Development for  
Classical Indian Dance**

**classicalindian@istd.org**

For all faculty events, please turn to  
pages 58–59 and visit **istd.org**

# Classical Indian Dance

## Misrana 2024

We look ahead to Sunday  
6 October 2024 at The  
Venue, Milton Keynes.

With the pandemic shifting clearly to our rear view, we celebrate our Classical Indian Faculty by reviving this wonderful festival later this year. Bringing together performers and teachers from across our ISTD schools in the UK and Internationally, sharing our collective passion for dance and performance.

Misrana embraces excellence, inclusivity, and quality, highlighting talented teachers and their schools with a wonderful array of dancers aged 7 to 70! It has always been an opportunity for dancers of all backgrounds and locations to come together to showcase their skills, creativity, and unique talents as well as to learn from other performers and choreographers, and this year will be no different.

Whether you have dancers that are experienced or new to your schools, we encourage all teachers to participate, as it is a must-see faculty event on everyone's calendar and a fantastic occasion to be part of whether performing, choreographing, or supporting dancers and teachers in the audience.

Alongside Misrana we will also be offering teachers and students teachers, a masterclass afternoon before the Misrana performance, with some of our committee members and lead examiners, discussing technique, artistry, and faculty updates.

This session will be the perfect way to reconnect with fellow teachers and faculty members after such a long hiatus due to the pandemic, as well as honing your skills and gaining further insights into our faculty and syllabus. We look forward to seeing you and your dancers at The Venue in October!



HUDSON PHOTOS



Entries for Misrana will be via teacher video submission in early summer for any sized group (four or more dancers), trio, duet or solo of any ages within the Bharatanatyam and Kathak styles, showing exemplary work.

Selected past Bursary winners may be incorporated into the performance and international submissions are encouraged and will be displayed with in the performance digitally.

Watch out for further information later this term in your members' newsletter.



**Above** Chitrleka Bolar and Sharmila Biswas – ISTD Bursary Winner

## Congratulations

Chitrleka Bolar, our Lead Examiner and committee member, was awarded an MBE for services to South Asian dance in the New Year Honours List 2024.

Trained in Kerala, India, Chitrleka Bolar MBE has a professional career spanning over 40 years, delivering courses, classes and performances in theatres, schools, and community venues, as well as working with in the Faculty committee and as Lead Examiner

for our Bharatanatyam Grades.

As Artistic Director she founded the Chitrleka Bolar Academy, Birmingham in 1990 and with her ability to create adaptations of classical art forms, enhanced sharing and understanding of cultural diversity in the South Asian art forms in the West Midlands and across the UK, through a myriad of educational and performance settings.

Chitrleka has carved a special niche as an artist in education alongside an esteemed career as a teacher, performer, examiner, and choreographer, which has led her to being honoured in the King's New Year Honours List, for an MBE for services to South Asian Dance.





## Sujata Banerjee MBE

As of Spring 2024 our previous Chair, Sujata Banerjee is stepping down from our committee.

Our faculty would sincerely like to thank Sujata for all her years of dedication, creativity, commitment, and artistry. She has given endlessly in her capacity as previous Committee Chair, Theatre Faculty Board member, examiner, teacher and most recently with her work as our Lead Kathak Examiner.

From her involvement with the Classical Indian Faculty in the late 1990s, Sujata continued to grow the seeds of the Kathak syllabus from Sushmita Ghosh and worked tirelessly to develop its teachers and students both in the UK and internationally. Alongside the

committee she created live and digital courses and examiner training, Misrana and Bursary performances and used her Sports Science degree to advocate for safe dance practice and develop the teaching methodologies and criteria for our new kathak teaching qualifications.

Sujata's expertise remains with us as Lead Examiner for Kathak as well as focussing on teaching and examining the future generations of artists, and delivering courses and mentoring our DDE, Licentiate and Fellowship teachers.

We will continue to see her productions and tours for SBDC, where students and teachers will be inspired to dance, teach, and perform as a vocation.

We are indebted to Sujata for her passion for dance education, endless tenacity, and sense of humour in our committee meetings and wish her every joy and success in all future projects!

### Committee reflections:

"Sujata's insightfulness has been instrumental in the development of the committee's work and in particular the growth of Kathak both nationally and globally. She will be hugely missed for her command, wisdom and fun-loving nature." **Nina Rajarani MBE**

"Sujata has enriched the committee with her knowledge and vision for the future of the Classical Indian Dance Faculty." **Dr Swati Raut**

"Sujata always had many ideas and would see these come to life. Her time and commitment to the ISTD was remarkable." **Kiran Ratna**

"What comes to mind with Sujata, is a bundle of energy and ideas on how to progress the Classical Indian Dance Faculty. I'm so glad Sujata will remain as our Lead Kathak Examiner, where I am sure she will continue to bring much excitement and interesting discussions." **Chitraleka Bolar MBE**

"Sujata has immense clarity of what she wants to achieve, and her diverse approach has helped the faculty to grow. She has inspired and encouraged numerous new artists, which is invaluable." **Urja Desai Thakore**

"Sujata is a vibrant and visionary leader, known for her joyful nature and adept handling of people and issues. Her contributions to our faculty's growth have been invaluable. As a teacher, she opens pathways for students through workshops, artist visits, and performance tours, fostering individual and collective collaborations. Under Sujata's visionary leadership, the younger generation of homegrown Kathak performers in Britain has unmistakably thrived. With a master's degree in Sports Science, she brings valuable awareness to our committee, particularly in formulating a non-traditional syllabus that emphasizes safe dance practices. Sujata's departure from the faculty will be felt, but her influence as an examiner, teacher, and holistic artist is eagerly anticipated." **Pushkala Gopal MBE**



**Sujata Banerjee MBE is one of the most respected Kathak artists in UK and recognised internationally for her remarkable contribution in developing Kathak, through**

**her mentoring and performance opportunities for dancers and musicians.**

Sujata was trained by teaching legends; Pandit Vijai Shankar, Pandit Birju Maharaj, and Mrs Ruby Bandopadhyaya and in her early twenties set up her own school, Nrityam, in India. After her move to the UK in the early 1980s she founded her dance company – Sujata Banerjee Dance Company (SBDC) where to this day she develops her teaching, choreographic works, collaborations, tours, artistic partnerships (cross-genres), mentorship programmes, and outreach projects.

Sujata advocates for the benefits of analytical and scientific teaching methods to support dancers and is true visionary with a unique pedagogy

producing many Kathak professionals.

In 2019, Sujata received two major awards, the prestigious MBE for outstanding services to dance and a Lifetime Achievement Award from One Dance UK, for education and participation and in 2020 was awarded an Honorary Fellowship from the ISTD.

**The Classical Indian Dance Faculty Committee will remain as a committee with six members until we open our first official committee elections in 2025 where teachers with Licentiate or DDP status can be nominated as a committee member.**



Chitraleka Bolar MBE



Pushkala Gopal MBE



Urja Desai Thakore MA



Nina Rajarani MBE



Kiran Ratna



Dr Swati Raut

## Classical Indian Dance Committee

### Chitraleka Bolar MBE

Chitraleka is an ISTD Fellow and Lead Examiner for our Bharatanatyam Grades. She has a professional career spanning over 40 years, delivering courses, classes and performances in theatres, schools, and community venues, as well as working as Artistic Director for Chitraleka Dance Academy.

### Pushkala Gopal MBE

Pushkala, an ISTD Fellow and Bharatanatyam Examiner, boasts a lifetime of expertise as a choreographer, composer, teacher, and performer. Recognized with accolades such as the British Council Fellowship, Time Out Dance Award, and Digital Dance Award, she has also played a pivotal role in shaping the ISTD Bharatanatyam syllabus.

### Urja Desai Thakore

Urja, a Kathak Examiner and ISTD Fellow with an MA in South Asian Dance and Choreography, is a leading Kathak dancer in the UK. She is Artistic Director of Pagrav Dance Company. She has been a guest choreographer for the BBC's Young

Dancer competition and a selected artist for OneDance UK's Mentor Programme.

### Nina Rajarani MBE

Nina, an ISTD Fellow and Lead Examiner for Bharatanatyam, trained under Prakash Yadagudde and Chitra Visweswaran. Sristi Dance School was founded in 1991, creating acclaimed works and winning the 2006 Place Prize. Nina played a key role in the ISTD Bharatanatyam syllabus inception and remains a dedicated committee member.

### Kiran Ratna

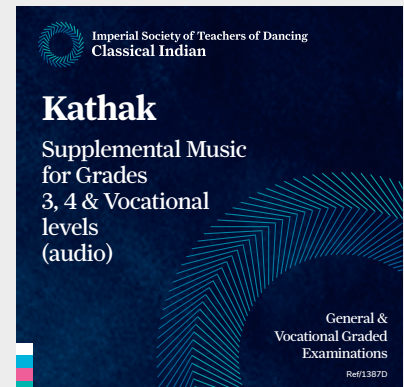
Kiran, an ISTD Fellow and Bharatanatyam Examiner, founded India Dance Wales in 1991. She received the Distinguished Teachers Award in 2020 and the Welsh Asian Women's Achievement Award in 2011. Now based in Berkshire, she continues to train the next generation and supports daughter companies in Wales.

### Dr Swati Raut

Swati, an ISTD Bharatanatyam Examiner and Fellow, is a highly experienced dance artist and teacher with over two decades of expertise. Trained in Mumbai and holding a PhD from the University of St. Andrews, she is the

Principal teacher at Milapfest Arts School. Swati also contributes to Dance Manchester and the ISTD committee.

Connect with your committee via [classicalindian@istd.org](mailto:classicalindian@istd.org)



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# Contemporary Dance

## Competitive dance

Jodie Clark, examiner, adjudicator and ISTD Fellow, shares a helpful focus on contemporary dance solos.

The competitive dance scene has experienced an exponential rise in recent times. This surge can be attributed, in no small part, to the expansive reach of televised dance competitions, which, amplified by social media, have garnered global attention. These platforms have not only entertained audiences but have also ignited a spark in countless young dancers, inspiring them to emulate the performances they witness. For some, this has also moved the recreational activity of dance education from hobby to pre professional focus.

As a consequence of the competitive dance field, contemporary dance, with its blend of tradition and innovation, has found an inevitable place on numerous competitive stages. However, this surge in popularity has also given rise to debates and divergent opinions regarding the essence and aesthetics of competitive contemporary dance.

A vast number of dance schools have astutely recognised this trend, diversifying their offer to bridge the gap between traditional training and the demands of the competitive arena. By doing so, they have not only elevated their status but have also expanded their commercial horizons.

Having been intricately involved in the



**Jodie Clark**

Passionate dance educator Jodie, a Bird College graduate, shares her expertise in technical advancement, artistic development, and industry connections at The BRIT School. Holding an MA in Creative Practice in Education, QTS, and ISTD Fellowship, she's an Adjudicator for BIFF and All England Dance, Certified Adjudicator for Acrobatic Arts, and an examiner for the ISTD contemporary and Dang Musical Theatre syllabi. Jodie has also contributed to the book, *Performance Psychology for Dancers*.

research and development for the ISTD contemporary dance syllabus since 2017 and, having served as an adjudicator for numerous competitions, I frequently find myself immersed in discussions about the evolving identity of contemporary dance within the UK's competitive dance sector.

Contemporary dance, as a genre, is vast and multifaceted. The term serves as a broad canopy under which various styles and techniques coexist, each contributing its unique nuances. While some styles find harmonious integration, others present contrasting visions, reflecting the genre's inherent diversity. In the competitive environment it is imperative that these styles and techniques are not lost and that the genre is embraced as an opportunity to underpin a good

understanding of contemporary roots.

Within the realm of competitive dance, especially that inspired by the scene in the USA, contemporary solos stand out as a testament to individual expression, technical prowess, and artistic innovation. Unlike classical dance forms that adhere to established structures, contemporary dance is fluid, allowing dancers to explore their emotions, movement vocabulary, and personal narratives. Often the fusion of music, movement, and storytelling is chosen to evoke a range of emotions, leaving audiences captivated and inspired. Sadly, these choices are often made in lieu of the contemporary grounding and at the detriment of the dancers' skills and attributes. Often the final result can appear superficial and require





# When working with young dancers it is important to note that the creation process should be collaborative and not solely the choreographer imposing their ideas on a dancer.

a young dancer to express emotion they have not experienced yet.

When working with young dancers it is important to note that the creation process should be collaborative and not solely the choreographer imposing their ideas on a dancer. In Heather Harrington's article *Dancer as collaborator, co-author, co-owner, co-creator: power relations between dancer and choreographer* (20 Apr 2023), she states "A human being navigates the choreographic exchange, not a piece of clay waiting to be moulded." She goes on to say that "One person's vision cannot be dropped into another person. The dancer is inside the movement, navigating how to do the movement with their body, making decisions every moment." This highlights that the dancer should be seen more than a moving body but one who interprets and brings ideas to the process of creation. Choreographing a solo can be both cathartic and challenging, pushing dancers to confront their fears and embrace their authentic selves.



To learn our contemporary dance syllabus you can join our CPD training courses, which are scheduled regularly throughout the year, with options to train in-person or online with our specially trained contemporary teaching team. Check out our events and courses page online for up-to-date information on upcoming courses.

This is especially important to recognise as the feedback and critique received from adjudicators will relate to the very moment of performance and the dancer must fully understand it to translate the concept successfully. Feedback will have a focus on helping dancers refine their craft and evolve as artists; creators have a responsibility to support the performer in this process in the first instance.

It is imperative to acknowledge the myriad of competitive platforms, each with its distinct rules and genre descriptors. Platforms like the All England Dance competition, for instance, provide comprehensive criteria, emphasising the importance of movement initiation, breath utilisation, and a profound understanding of the spine. Such platforms also recognise and integrate established techniques like Graham, Horton, and Release in an attempt to guide the dance teacher and further enrich the competitive dance landscape. It is also important that teachers and choreographers take time to understand what is happening in the vocational training landscape where much fusion of styles and cultural influence is included in the development of professional dancers, makers and creators.

## Some considerations for teachers and choreographers

Amidst all this diversity, questions persist in the creation of a contemporary solo for a competitive platform. It is a journey that demands introspection, innovation, and integrity. What drives the selection of specific movements or techniques? Is it merely their inclusion in a syllabus



Find out what the Contemporary syllabus can offer you and your students – visit [www.istd.org/dance/dance-genres/contemporary](http://www.istd.org/dance/dance-genres/contemporary)

labelled 'contemporary'? And, how does the movement explore theme or narrative? As choreographers embark on the creative process several pivotal considerations emerge, each shaping the essence and impact of the final piece.

**Quality:** At the heart of every exceptional performance lies the pursuit of excellence. Prioritise technical proficiency, emotional depth, and artistic cohesion, ensuring that every movement resonates with purpose and dynamic range.

**Integrity:** Authenticity forms the bedrock of compelling choreography. Stay true to your vision, beliefs, and artistic voice, resisting the temptation to conform to prevailing trends or expectations.

**Contemporary techniques:** Ground your choreography in contemporary techniques while maintaining a commitment to authenticity and truth. Fuse established techniques with innovative approaches, creating a unique and compelling choreographic signature.

**Choreographic devices:** Experiment with a diverse range of choreographic devices. Utilise motifs, repetition, juxtaposition, and abstraction to craft a nuanced and dynamic choreographic language.

**Choreographers and companies:** Drawing inspiration from renowned choreographers and dance companies can enrich your creative palette. Study their works, techniques, and philosophies, integrating insights that align with your artistic vision.

**Stimulus:** Identify the central theme, stimulus, or driving force behind your choreography. Whether exploring



# Teach Contemporary



emotions, societal issues, or abstract concepts, ensure that this core element remains the focal point, guiding the narrative and movement vocabulary.

**Whose voice:** Determine the narrative voice of your piece. Is it autobiographical, abstract, or inspired by external stimuli? Define this voice early in the choreographic process, allowing it to guide and inform your creative decisions. Don't forget to include your dancer.

**Opportunity to explore the world:** Choreography offers a platform to explore and reflect upon the many facets of our world. Embrace this opportunity, weaving narratives that resonate with your young dancers and their contemporary realities.

**Competition platform presentation:** Tailor your presentation to align with the specific requirements and ethos of the competition platform. Consider staging, lighting, costuming, and music selection, ensuring a cohesive and impactful performance.

**UK vs. USA:** Recognise the nuanced differences between UK and USA contemporary dance languages. While drawing inspiration from iconic works strive to cultivate a distinct and authentic voice that resonates with your unique perspective and experiences.

**360-degree dancing:** Embrace a holistic approach to choreography, integrating

physical, musical, spatial, thematic, and narrative elements. Explore a diverse range of emotions and states, recognising that contemporary dance is not limited to negative or sombre expressions but can encompass joy, playfulness, and a range of emotional landscapes.

**Articulating intent:** Clearly articulate the intent and message of your piece. Whether conveying a specific narrative, emotion, or abstract concept, ensure that your choreography communicates with clarity and conviction.

**Defining contemporary dance:** Recognise that contemporary dance is an expansive and evolving genre. Focus not on defining what it is but rather on understanding what it unequivocally is not. Avoid combining elements from various theatrical dance styles and bypass your favourite moves if they are not in keeping with the piece. Embrace the genre's fluidity, diversity, and capacity for innovation.

**In conclusion, while the competitive dance landscape continues to evolve, driven by innovation and inspiration, it is essential to preserve and promote the core principles of contemporary dance. By fostering collaboration, encouraging exploration, and emphasising intent, the dance community can ensure that competitive contemporary dance**

**solos not only captivate but also resonate deeply, contributing to dance education leaving a significant mark on performers and audiences alike.**

## Teacher's corner

### Try this!

**Here's a structured improvisation task idea to try in your classroom.**

- 1 Ask your students to pick a syllabus exercise and divide it into three (or more) parts.
- 2 Re-order the parts to create a new sequence, for example, 3-2-1, or 2-1-3 etc. (This could also be done in pairs where the students pick the order for one another.)
- 3 Students could then teach one another their newly created exercises to make a longer sequence.

Encourage your students to think about going one step further and think about changing dynamics, speed, direction and size of the movements.

# Disco Freestyle and Rock n Roll



## Empowering young dancers

Kim Rogers, Founder of The Butterfly Mind, shares her tips on cultivating mental wellbeing in the dance community.

Having dedicated 43 years to the dance industry in various capacities I have witnessed and experienced myself the many mental health challenges that the dance industry presents. I am now dedicating my time and passion to making the necessary significant

“

## Value effort and improvement over flawless execution.

changes for our young dancers to flourish in a healthier world of dance.

Let me ask you, do you see your dancers struggling with their mental wellbeing? Are they self-conscious and lacking self-esteem? Do they struggle with comparison, fear of judgement and anxiety?

Our younger generation are already navigating the many challenges of life, yet within the dance world we see the struggles they face in a more exposing capacity.

As a dance teacher our role extends beyond teaching choreography and improving their technique, as we also bear the responsibility of fostering a positive and nurturing environment to further support their mental wellbeing.

### But how?

In a short space, these are six simple strategies that will not only contribute to their growth as dancers but will also play a crucial role in nurturing their mental health on their dance journey.

- 1 Create a safe and inclusive space where the environment radiates positivity and acceptance to encourage open communications where dancers feel comfortable to express their thoughts and concerns

without fear of judgement. Building a strong connection is vital. Knowing their strengths and struggles shows a genuine interest in their lives and allows personalised support to be offered when needed.

- 2 Emphasis progress not perfection. Dance is a journey of individual growth and it's essential to cultivate a mindset that values the effort and improvement rather than focusing solely on flawless execution, exam results and competition wins. Encouraging dancers to celebrate their achievements no matter how small will foster a positive attitude towards their own successes.
- 3 Incorporating mindful techniques within teaching methods helps dancers to centre themselves mentally and emotionally allowing teachers to witness the best of their abilities. One favourite is to use self-reflective learning, as this contributes to stress reduction and enhances focus in class.
- 4 Performance pressures and anxiety is a common challenge in the world of dance; therefore, dancers must be equipped with tools to manage their struggles by providing opportunities to learn visualisation techniques, positive self-talk, self-reflection, and learning that mistakes and disappointments are seen as a part of the learning process rather than failures.
- 5 Be attuned by paying close attention to a dancer's behaviour as changes may be a sign of mental health struggles. Stress, anxiety, withdraw, overwhelm, hyper focus and extreme highs and lows are all signs that they may be struggling.
- 6 And lastly keep yourself informed and up to date with topics and the evolving approaches to supporting your young dancers. Be open to adapting your own teaching methods, attend talks and workshops and engage in important conversations to allow you to feel confident and equipped to help support your dancers.

This conversation is so important, and I am looking forward to returning to Dance Exchange with the DFR Faculty in September to continue this important topic and to provide some significant strategies on how to help prepare and support your dancers for exams and competitions.





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years

## Dance Exchange 2024

Join us in celebrating 120 years of the ISTD at Dance Exchange 2024. Make a diary date for 15 September and visit our website for more details.



Michelle Arnell



Joanne Bevan



Gail Henry



Anna Knowles-Hibbert



Laura Rampton

**Top left and right** Students at 2023 DFR Grand Finals Day.

## Disco Freestyle and Rock n Roll Committee

### Michelle Arnell

Michelle, an ISTD member for 24+ years, operates a thriving dance studio in Portsmouth. With extensive teaching, choreography, and adjudication experience, she actively contributes to syllabus development, lectures, and event planning for DFR. Committed to ensuring a enjoyable and successful experience for all members and schools.

### Joanne Bevan

Joanne has been a member of the ISTD for more than two decades,

possessing extensive experience in dance instruction, encompassing roles such as lecturing and choreographing set dances for the DFR faculty.

### Gail Henry

Gail began DFR training as a child, pursued teaching qualifications at 16, and established her dance school. Now in her second term on the DFR committee, she frequently adjudicates competitions and is excited to contribute to its future.

### Anna Knowles-Hibbert

Anna, a dedicated professional with ISTD DDE and Licentiate qualifications, excels in teaching and choreography.

Her expertise extends to Acrobatics, 4D Pro Bungee, and chair-based dance. Passionate about dance, she delights in witnessing her students' growth.

### Laura Rampton

Laura, an ISTD Fellow in Freestyle and Licentiate in Rock and Roll, celebrated her dance school's 20th anniversary last year. From teaching pre-schoolers to adults, she passionately shares the joy of dance, motivating and inspiring others while fostering a close-knit dance community.

Connect with your committee via [dfr@istd.org](mailto:dfr@istd.org)

## National Grand Finals

Our Head of Faculty and committee members share their exhilarating experience of finals day.

"Wow, what another amazing day at the ISTD GFD national finals on 8 October 2023 at Guildford Spectrum. You always think the standard couldn't get any higher and each year I am blown away even more by the talent on the floor – this year most definitely did not fail.

"I was so impressed by the Under-6 and Under-8 categories in all sections, as they showed progressing technique, determination and great resilience throughout.

"It was a real treat to watch Unity UK perform and inspiring to all the competitors on the day. Turn to our Street section on page 52 to read more about that. Thank you to the DFR Faculty for another fantastic national finals and I very much look forward to next year!"

**Amanda Tapp, Head of Faculty Development for DFR**

"In 2023 the DFR Faculty celebrated a truly amazing 35th anniversary. The hall was staged beautifully to mark such a special milestone, with extra sparkle reflecting off the large gold, silver and black trophies, lined up in perfection with matching-coloured sashes.

"It wasn't long before the doors opened and the enthusiasm from teachers, dancers and the army of supporters filled the room. You could feel the anticipation in the air. It wasn't long before two representatives from each school were lined up outside ready for the banner parade.

"An impressive 33 schools participated in this year's Grand Finals Day and the corridor was full of colourful banners, held by representatives who were keen to meet the cheering crowd. Shortly after the parade, the Set Dance and Rock n Roll adjudicators, along with dedicated past and present committee members were warmly welcomed onto the floor.

"Michelle Arnell, Joanna Bevan, Gail Henry, Maria Howse, Nigel Kirk, Anna







**Above** Grand Finals set dance winners

**Right** Grand Finals Rock n Roll winners

**Far right** Winner of the Under 8 Set Dance event at Grand Finals



Knowles, Laura Rampton, Jonathan Reed, Paul Streatfield, Amanda Tapp, Yvonne Taylor-Hill and Julia Westlake all took to the floor for a photo opportunity.

"It was no surprise that the standard of Set Dance was through the roof, as area events held throughout the year leading to Nationals were a showcase of talent. We were quickly through the early rounds and my prediction of 'sky high' talent was apparent to see.

"As the champions of the future took their turn to dance, both the Under-6 and Under-8 categories displayed impressive body isolation, rhythm, clean lines, personality, and a fabulous sense of style within the street routines.

"As the morning progressed and all styles and ages had performed, the standard was exceptional and, in some events, impeccable, which gave the adjudicators an extremely hard task. In the slow routines a harmonious blend of beautiful lines, fluid movement, wonderful extension and both muscle tone and strength were all prevalent throughout the rounds. In the freestyle, competitors performed with precision and poise, whilst taking care of the accuracy of

**“we love coming to Grand Finals as the children have worked so hard to get here! It is a real honour to be able to take part at this event!”**

the choreography. Beautifully placed kicks, spins and arm lines made cutting down on numbers almost impossible. The Rock n Roll style routines required powerful foot and knee work, whilst keeping a controlled upper body, along with excellent use of arms and hands. There was an abundance of lovely footwork, gorgeous smiles, extension, and posture, which accompanied a high standard of technical ability.

"From the Under-6s through to the Over-21s, huge congratulations go to every single dancer who qualified, you were all an absolute credit to your

teachers. As teachers we understand how much this prestigious event means to our pupils (and to us). The hours, dedication, commitment, and time taken to ensure every detail is perfected before our pupils take to the floor is all given because we absolutely love what we do."

**Laura Rampton, DFR Committee**

"Very much like all the events, there was an abundance of colour, sparkle, and excitement in the Rock n Roll event. The technical and intricate footwork, especially in the higher levels, was fantastic to watch. The visible use of strong partner work and engagement from all levels was equally as brilliant to see.

"The solos and pairs events are always full of such speed and accuracy but what was most noticeable for me was the advanced technique, even from some bronze and below levels.

They were pushing themselves to their full potential and in the pairs, lots of fantastic opposition work, as well as patterns were being used throughout. A big well done to all the performers, as well as their trainers."

**Anna Knowles-Hibbert, DFR Committee**

# Imperial Classical Ballet

## Teachers' pop-up surgeries

Answers to the most frequently asked questions on our Facebook group.

It is in the nature of a ballet teacher's job that they can often feel isolated from the wider ICB community, so an important part of every committee's role is to make sure they can help teachers

with questions they may have about the syllabus. Teachers work so hard to prepare their students for examination, and we want to offer them all the support they need to keep the work accurate. It is also in our examiners' interests to know that teachers are receiving this help, as it ensures they see correct demonstration of all the components required in the examination.

The teachers' pop-up surgeries have proved to be one of the most successful ways of doing this and we want to encourage all our members to take advantage of them. We host them on Facebook every few weeks during the academic term, each time covering a different level or aspect of syllabus. Teachers are invited to send questions to the committee, and answers are posted a few days later, accessible to all group members for their benefit.

An important bonus is that all previous Q and As are kept on file, so any time any group member needs a refresher, they can visit the complete FAQ list on our Facebook page 'ISTD: Imperial Classical Ballet Faculty,' check the 'Files' section and find the answer they require.

So, if you are not already a member of the ICB Facebook group, do join our community without delay to receive 24-hour, year-round support and advice from our expert committee, and to connect with your fellow ICB teachers. Visit the ISTD website and scroll down to the ICB genre to join [www.istd.org/dance/dance-genres](http://www.istd.org/dance/dance-genres)

Meanwhile, as a taster here are just a few of the many questions you can find

in the 'Files' section, which committee have answered about class examinations:

### Pre-Primary

**Question:** Can boys do the girls' transfer of weight, rocking the doll instead of the boys' exercise? And can boys do the girls' arm exercise, raindrops and the sun instead of the boys' exercise?

**Answer:** Yes, all exercises are optional now.

**Question:** Can the children use props for the mime and dance in pre-primary class exam?

**Answer:** For the mime the children should not use a prop but use gestures and facial expression to convey the theme. A simple prop could be used in the dance.

### CE 1

**Question:** Please can you explain the music section especially the percussion part?

**Answer:**

A: The teacher claps one bar of 4/4 and then each candidate in turn repeats one bar of 4/4.

B: The teacher claps two bars of 2/4 Polka then each candidate in turn repeats two bars of 2/4 Polka.

C: Candidates perform this all together to the music. Each candidate will have their own four count (one bar) rhythm which they repeat until the end of the music. Candidates should use percussion instruments for this music section. A selection is nice e.g. drums, tambourines, maracas, etc.

### CE 2

**Question:** Are there some examples of occupational gestures in the music section please.

**Answer:** These could be anything that would suit the time signature and perhaps something your students can think of? Examples could be ironing, playing an instrument, baking, sewing, sweeping, chopping wood but there are many others that could be used.

## i

## Junior and Senior Ballet Awards 2024

This year the event includes eight sections for entry, covering class examinations, grades, and vocational levels. The UK and international online heats have now taken place, and we are eagerly anticipating the finals:

**Friday 12 April:** International finals results will be announced with a winners' showreel on the ISTD website.

**Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 April:** Live UK finals will take place at Central School of Ballet, 21–22 Hatfields, Paris Garden, London SE1 8DJ  
For full information visit our website.





### CE 3

**Question:** When it doesn't say in the syllabus book how the exercises are to be performed, ie, solo, duet, group etc, is it therefore the teacher's choice. We are unclear how the Adage or Allegros should be performed.

**Answer:** It is the teacher's choice how the enchaînements are presented. It is suggested that teachers prepare students to dance in 2's or 4's. The teacher can then check with the examiner how they would like to see the enchaînements.

### CE 4

**Question:** Can you confirm if the music section has been taken out?

**Answer:** There is no music section in Class Examination 4 now.

### CE 5

**Question:** When entering a group of 3 can they dance the Polka enchainment choreographed with no partner or

should this be performed in a pair then switch so they all do it in a pair?

**Answer:** The Polka enchaînement is danced altogether, in pairs. As this is a paired enchaînement it should be danced twice with just one pair. One candidate will dance twice.

### CE 6

**Question:** Would my male student do the demi-pointe and posé turns exercise (option A) as well as the females in the exam if he does the option B Adage enchaînement?

**Answer:** The Demi-pointe and Posé turn exercise is now compulsory and to be danced by all candidates. **PLEASE NOTE THIS IS A NEW UPDATE IN THE SYLLABUS OUTLINE.** All candidates have the choice of performing either Adage Option A or Adage Option B.

### CE 7

**Question:** Choreographic dance. Do the students choreograph this (not teacher) individually to one of the pieces of music provided or as a pair?

**Answer:** The student chooses one of the set pieces of music and choreographs a solo to present in their exam.

### General

**Question:** Is the new music compulsory for the class exams? And when will the level 2-4 music be available?

**Answer:** The new Class Examination CDs from Pre-Primary to CE 8 will be compulsory for use in examinations from September 2022. The option remains for teachers to have a pianist for all examinations. The three Class Examination CDs are available from the ISTD shop and also as downloads from <https://istddance.sellfy.store/icb>



Ruth Davies



Sinead Murphy



Irela Strachan



Jackie Styles



Lorraine Swain



Donald Vleugels



Tracey Warner

## Imperial Classical Ballet Faculty Committee

### Ruth Davies

A London College of Dance graduate, Ruth has taught extensively in the public and private sectors, served as Head of Teaching Studies at the Centre PAC and was co-founder of DanceTeachersInc. As an ICB vocational examiner she continues to train teachers and students. Deputy Course Leader at Performers College, Ruth is passionate about learning and teaching and is currently pursuing an MA. She joined the ICB Committee in 2019.

### Sinead Murphy

Sinead is the Principal of Cork School of Dance, the Artistic Director of Cork Youth Ballet Company and Children's Coach for Cork City Ballet. Sinead has over 30 years teaching and choreographic experience. Sinead trained with Joan Denise Moriarty in Cork and under the guidance of Gaynor Owen; she joined the ICB Committee in 2022.

### Irela Strachan

Irela has been an ICB examiner for over 25 years and is Deputy Lead Examiner for the ICB Vocational Examinations. Her quadruple examiner status and extensive experience in the FE/HE sector, coupled with her representation on the ISTD Teaching Qualifications Panel, make her well placed to help guide the development of the faculty in line with the aspirations of the ISTD.

### Jackie Styles

Jackie trained with Penny Meekings and West Street School in London. She is an ICB Examiner working both in the UK and internationally and is Lead Lecturer for the faculty. She runs her own school and teaches freelance at several colleges, most recently Performers College degree programme. She trains teachers for DDE ballet, Licentiate and Fellowship qualifications. She joined the ICB committee in 2020.

### Lorraine Swain

Lorraine trained at Laine Theatre Arts, gaining Advanced 2 in both ISTD and RAD. She has taught at many establishments and was Head of Department at both Performers College and Masters Performing Arts for many years. Lorraine has recently co-choreographed the new Advanced 2 girls' syllabus and joined ICB Committee in 2018.

### Donald Vleugels

Graduating from the Andrew Hardy School in 1980, Donald performed classics like *La Sylphide*, *Napoli* and *Giselle* in Hong Kong before joining Dublin City Ballet as a dancer in *Nutcracker* and *Coppelia* and choreographer for the company. He trained at the RAD teaching college and started ISTD training in 1997. He has been an examiner for 12 years.

### Tracey Warner

Tracey Warner, a Royal Ballet School graduate, taught at Bush Davies and Tring Park for 20 years. Currently freelancing in Germany, she also coaches ICB teaching exams. As an examiner since 1994 and a committee member, she's now a senior examiner, teaching and examining worldwide for the Imperial Classical Ballet faculty.

Connect with your committee via [imperialballet@istd.org](mailto:imperialballet@istd.org)



## Intermediate Music

Please be aware that the updated music for Intermediate is available as a digital download from:

<https://istddance.sellfy.store/p/icb-intermediate-music>

All tracks correspond to the Option A and B pathways and there are no vocal introductions. Some tracks have been extended, at the barre the music for the 2nd side is subtly different, and there is some additional free music, all designed to assist teachers in the delivery of their classes and to encourage students' musicality.





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## Imperial Benevolent Fund

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“

Words cannot express the gratitude and relief  
the contribution by the Imperial Benevolent  
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# Latin American, Modern Ballroom and Sequence

## Unleashing your creativity

Sequence faculty member,  
Kay Fairgrieve, shares  
helpful tips for crafting prize-  
winning sequence dances  
that go beyond the ordinary.

Have you looked at some of the sequence dances available and thought, well I could do better than that? I am aware that a lot of people want sequence dances that are easy for their pupils to dance socially, and there are lots of those available. But at Gold Star 1 and above, you can do any prize-winning dance – I have a pupil who is doing Imperial Award, and every year we struggle to find something at that advanced level, particularly in Latin sequence.

I decided to have a go myself, and eventually won with the Sedgehill Samba. There are lots of dances that didn't win – do not expect to turn up for your first event and win, although it can happen! But the more you turn up, the more chance you have of winning. It is also useful that since the pandemic, they also have competitions you can enter online, either by recording yourself dancing with a partner, or by a professional couple performing your script. This is ideal for when the competition is too far to travel to, or you don't have a regular partner. Some inventive dance competitions have started applying for a special rule saying you can

compete with an amateur partner – which is also great if you teach on your own or need to travel for two hours to meet your inventive dance partner, as I do.

I am not sure what to say about my inspiration – it's such a personal thing, and they do not always land in my head fully formed. For the current inventive dance competition, I looked back at some very old scripts that I had made up years ago. I ended up putting eight bars of one dance with eight bars of another dance, which ended up much better. The Bari CCC came from the first bit of our Fellowship routine. Sometimes I just put some music on and

dance, and I ended up with a really nice waltz routine, but with Jive 17 it took me ages to work out the ending. I have just done a more advanced one for a BDC competition, using spirals for the leader and the follower (I like to challenge my pupils). With Latin sequence, I try to stick to what I like to dance and teach. Sometimes a sequence Jive doesn't feel much like a Jive, or else it looks like it came from the 1970s – we need to keep up to date if we are trying to encourage people to take up sequence dancing. And there are many reasons you should encourage them to do so, but that is probably another article!

To enter, you need to write the scripts for your dance – I always have my theory books close to hand for starting on this task. The scripts are published by Brockbank Lane, and Martin Bird's website has information about inventive dance competitions, the closing dates for them, and an example of how they want the scripts written. If you win, they always go through your script with you, so don't worry if you don't think it's perfect. It would be lovely to see some new people winning inventive dance competitions, though, so I look forward to seeing you there.







Louise Aldred



Robert Aldred



Alexandra Costi



Kay Fairgrieve



Louise Sampson

## Sequence Committee

### Louise Aldred

Louise's lifelong love for dance spans all dancesport genres. As co-principal of The Duesbury Aldred Dance, she mentors dancers of all levels and has earned prestigious awards like the Carl Alan and Classique de Dance with her husband, Robert. She also enjoys adjudicating and serving on the ISTD Sequence Advisory Committee.

### Robert Aldred

Robert is an ISTD Fellow, with over 30 years in dance, from competitor to teacher. Alongside his wife, Louise, they have won nearly 50 titles, including at the British Sequence Championships. Robert is active in promoting dance education

through the ISTD Sequence faculty and as a director at the British Dance Council.

### Alexandra Costi

Alex runs a busy school in East Sussex and is an ISTD Examiner in Ballroom and Latin American. Her enthusiasm for Sequence dancing is infectious; she loves introducing her pupils to old and new dances and is passionate about promoting the unique social and physical benefits of training in Sequence.

### Kay Fairgrieve

Kay started dancing with Peggy Spencer. She then trained to be a teacher, achieving Fellowship qualifications in Latin American, Ballroom and Freestyle dancing, and later took

Licentiate in Classical Sequence with Pat Goode. Kay has trained dancers for professional exams.

### Louise Sampson

Louise is an ISTD Fellow and Principal of her own school, Rhythm & Dance. She promotes a positive atmosphere and encourages participation in examinations and competitions. Louise has successfully trained new professionals, mixed and same sex competitors.

Connect with your committee via [sequence@istd.org](mailto:sequence@istd.org)



Stephen Arnold



Warren Boyce



Teresa Jay



Nicholas Jury



Claire Thompson

## Modern Ballroom Committee

### Stephen Arnold

Stephen started dancing at 5, excelling in a medallist school. By 15, he was the British National Junior Ballroom Champion. As a professional since 2016, he's earned numerous titles, including 5 x British National Professional Ballroom Championship finalist.

### Warren Boyce

Since winning his first medals with the ISTD at age six, dancing has been Warren's lifelong passion. He is unique in having won the British National Championships across all age groups—Juvenile, Junior, Youth, Amateur and Professional. He continues

to devote the same level of enthusiasm to serving the ISTD committee as he did throughout his competitive career.

### Teresa Jay

Teresa started dancing at age four, became an eight-time South African Champion, winning the Phyllis Haylor Scholarship, Pierre Trophy, and the ISTD Basic and Standard Trophy five times. She now enjoys serving on the Ballroom committee and examining in dancesport.

### Nicholas Jury

Nicholas, a seasoned dance professional, holds prestigious roles with the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dance (FISTD) and the British Dance Council (BDC). With over 25 years of experience, he excels as a teacher and coach, earning Top

Teacher and Studio Awards. Nicholas also shares his expertise through charity performances and media appearances.

### Claire Thompson

Claire started dancing at age three, earning ISTD qualifications at 16. She has won awards, lectures at congresses, adjudicates events, and manages studios in Cambridgeshire and Reading. She is committed to advancing Ballroom dance through the Modern Ballroom Faculty Committee.

Connect with your committee via [ballroom@istd.org](mailto:ballroom@istd.org)



Joanne  
Blackshaw



Paul Fennell



Bruce Lait



John Partington



Michelle  
Postlethwaite



Charles Richman

## Latin American Committee

### Joanne Blackshaw

Joanne started dancing at age four and became proficient in Ballroom and Latin. She transitioned to teaching at 16, achieved professional qualifications, and now runs a successful dance school. Passionate about teaching, she aims to become an ISTD Examiner while actively participating in competitions.

### Paul Fennell

Paul is an ISTD Fellow who began dancing aged five, in Australia. Skilled in various styles, his credits include Wizard of Oz and the Sydney 2000 Olympics. With over 25 years of teaching experience, he excels with students of all ages and abilities. He established his own school in Melbourne in 2007 and has competed internationally.

### Bruce Lait

Bruce is a former British National Youth Latin Champion. He is a Fellow of the ISTD and has starred on stage in the West End stage. He trains dancers of all ages and grades at the Lait Dance Club, Ipswich.

### John Partington

John became a member of the ISTD in 1999 and is a Fellow of the Society. This is his third election cycle on the Latin American Faculty. John spends most of his time running the Capital Dance Studio in central London, teaching Ballroom, Latin, Sequence and Alternative Rhythms.

### Michelle Postlethwaite

Michelle began dancing at age nine under Olga Wilmot's guidance in Ipswich. Excelling in ISTD tests, she turned pro at 19, winning the Pierre Trophy twice and becoming a British Latin American Finalist. Appointed as an ISTD Examiner in 2016, she now focuses on her dance academy, Feather Steps, alongside ISTD duties.

### Charles Richman

Charles, ISTD qualified since 1995, has been actively involved in various ISTD faculties and committees for 29 years. He has lectured, provided examiner training, and adjudicated for the ISTD. Currently, he is a senior dancesport teacher at ACS Dance Centre in Romford, and teaches widely in Essex and East London borders.

Connect with your committee  
via [latin@istd.org](mailto:latin@istd.org)

## Unlocking potential

Our International Examinations Officer, Chelsea Fox, shares her experience of the benefits of training to enter the ISTD Higher Awards.



Latin faculty committee member, Joanne Blackshaw, and ISTD International Examinations Officer, Chelsea Fox, work together at Elite Dance in Chelmsford. Joanne's

role at the dance school is Senior Teacher, and Chelsea's is Junior Teacher and Administrator. Joanne was Chelsea's dance teacher for many years and caught up with her to talk about the value of studying to enter the ISTD's higher awards.

Chelsea explained: "I started dancing at the age of five and my teachers quickly started me on the medal test route in taking regular exams twice sometimes three times a year so I always had something to work towards. This went alongside competing in medallist competitions including the ISTD Blackpool Grand Finals in Ballroom, Latin American and Sequence.

"After working my way through the medal series Bronze, Silver, Gold and Gold Stars I was encouraged as a Juvenile and then in Juniors I made a conscious decision that I wanted to train to take the highest-level exam that I could possibly take and complete the whole set of examinations. What a challenge! I managed to do my Supreme Award in both Ballroom and Latin which enabled me to then take the Alex Moore Award dancing all 10 dances, which I am extremely proud of as both a Juvenile and a Junior. I then went on to complete two genres in Sequence: Classical sequence and Latin sequence, along with a few Modern Sequence exams. This then enabled me to study and take my Cecil Ruatt Award as an adult, which again is a 10-dance examination. I can honestly remember taking all three of these examinations and what a memorable experience each one was.

"Taking these higher-level examinations encourages you to work

ISTD celebrating

120 years

## Medallist Weekend and Congress 2024

Be part of history as we celebrate 120 remarkable years of the ISTD! Join us for another Ballroom, Latin, and Sequence Medallist Weekend, 31 August to 1 September 2024 at Chessington Leisure Centre.



harder and harder each time you progress onto the next level. Studying Gold Star and above as a Junior in Ballroom and Latin is fantastic as it enables you to dance open choreography and it feels like a whole new dance world opens up. Different timings, different hold, changing headlines, rhythms, body positions, creating different shapes and lines in the Ballroom, kicks and flicks in the Latin. It took my interest to the next level and brought new, exciting and fresh challenges, particularly in Latin when I then became a bit more involved in creating my own dance routines as well, coming up with ideas for routines by watching clips and videos of high-level competitors and then trying to recreate some of the steps which I had seen. Sometimes I would invent my own take on the step to make it my own, altogether this taught me about how to put choreography together and how to use the music correctly with good timings and phrasing. In the Sequence genres repetitiveness becomes key and is another skill in itself, which was a challenge to really keep focus.

“As well as all the technical learning it also really improves your stamina, if I’m honest when I started I did not have great stamina at all. When you dance a medallist competition you only tend to dance one or two dances each time so to then be dancing more and more dances in a row I had to work on increasing my stamina to be able to dance all the dances in the examination one after the other with no break.



**Studying Gold Star and above as a Junior in Ballroom and Latin is fantastic as it enables you to dance open choreography and it feels like a whole new dance world opens up.**

“My teachers also made sure that when I learned figures, I always learned the names of the figures I was dancing and this has really helped me as I have now progressed into teaching. All the skills that doing these higher-level examinations requires helped me progress quite naturally into the teaching side of things and especially when studying for my professional exams. As a teacher now myself I can also see that from the teaching side it is fabulous for the teacher

as it allows them to also be more creative and brings out the absolute best in themselves as they have more freedom as a dancer to showcase the student. It is also great for the school as it gives other students the opportunity to see what you

can achieve and others then want to do the same. I will try and encourage my own students to do the same and progress through the medal examinations to the highest level they possibly can and would recommend it to everyone.”

## Party dance corner

### Cha Cha Stroll

**Our Ballroom, Latin and Sequence faculties bring you a fun party dance for you to teach and share with your pupils to continue the celebrations of our 120 years!**

**Commence in normal hold or double hand hold, leader facing LOD and follower backing LOD**

Instructions	Counts
Leader LF forward, RF forward, LF forward, point the RF forward without weight Follower RF back, LF back, RF back, point the LF back without weight	1 2 3 4
Leader RF back, LF back, RF back, point the LF back without weight Follower LF forward, RF forward, LF forward, point the RF forward without weight	5 6 7 8
Leader, raising their LH to lead follower under, mark time on LF, RF, LF and tap RF in place without weight Follower, turning right, RF to the side, LF to the side facing DW, RF slightly back, tap LF in place without weight	1 2 3 4
Leader, mark time on RF, LF, RF, and tap LF in place, while releasing hold, leading follower across to right shadow position and taking hold with RH to RH, and LH to LH Follower, LF forward and across, facing LOD, RF to the side, LF back, RF closes to LF	5 6 7 8
Both on same foot, LF forward, RF forward, and a cha cha cha lockstep	1 2 3 and 4
RF forward, LF forward, and a cha cha cha lockste	5 6 7 and 8
Left foot forward, replace weight to RF, chasse in place LRL (or you can do a coaster step, or a twinkle, or a slip chasse, depending on what you are qualified in!)	1 2 3 and 4
Releasing hold of partner, mark time with RF, LF, RF and tap LF in place without weight, taking up normal or double hold at the end Follower, RF forward turning to the right, LF small step to the side, RF to the side to face partner, close LF to RF	5 6 7 8

The follower can change partners at the end by making the steps larger and moving forward to the next leader.

**Thanks to Kay Fairgrieve (Sequence Faculty Committee) for sharing this social dance with members.**

**Lisa Harrison-Jones**  
**Head of Faculty Development for**  
**Modern Theatre**  
**modern@istd.org**  
 For all faculty events, please turn to  
 pages 58–59 and visit **istd.org**

# Modern Theatre

## Sonwa Sakuba Pioneering in the South African performing arts landscape.

ALAN EASON



Sonwa Sakuba is an accomplished South African artist, recognised for his outstanding contributions as a dancer, artist, and choreographer. He returned to East London, South

Africa after finishing his contract in *The Lion King* amid the 2020 pandemic to use his wealth of knowledge and founded the Sonwa Sakuba Institute of the Performing Arts, catering to the Eastern Cape region.

Sonwa envisioned an inclusive environment at his Institute of Performing Arts, offering structured training programmes across genres. His dedication to fostering collaboration ensures high-quality education for students and the community. In 2022, his institute's first Modern Theatre examinations saw students surpass expectations, showcasing Sonwa's commitment to excellence.

Our Head of Faculty Development for Modern Theatre, Lisa Harrison-Jones, asked Sonwa to reflect on his journey.

### Early training and childhood ambitions

I had my first experience of performing at school, in amateur theatrical

productions and from the age of 18 I attended the Waterfront Theatre School. Covering all types of vocal and physical techniques, as well as completing my ISTD teaching qualifications. I also had the opportunity to work with the wonderful Tereza Theodoulou, who at the time was teaching the new Advanced 1 Modern syllabus. The goal was to complete my training to the point where I could train in New York City and this is what helped to push me through my training at Waterfront.

One of my biggest mentors was the late William Jones, who had worked with Tereza and delivered many classes and CPD courses. He was one of my greatest teachers and his passing changed my life. His passion and commitment to dance was so clear and true, but it was also about seeing yourself, and about

inclusion. As a person of colour, it was truly inspirational to be able to connect with him and see him forge a celebrated career in a space that wasn't a black majority. It helped to motivate me and made me understand that this career was possible. But his most important trait was how he understood his students implicitly as individuals. He was the greatest of teachers and then became the greatest of friends and my mentor after graduation.

### Long-term impact of training

After my training at Waterfront, I went on to achieve my goal of training in New York. I experienced many techniques including Graham and Horton which linked back to my Waterfront training, with the vocational modern theatre syllabus showing those connections especially with the use of the floor, contractions, tilts, and transitional movements.

Through my time in New York, it gave me the discipline to achieve, and the confidence to expressive myself as an individual and to understand that building an open and expressive space for students is imperative, which is what I bring with me into my institute daily, producing confident, expressive, and reflective dancers.

### Primary focus for dancers at the Institute

Our student programme is for 18 years old and above and runs full time from Monday to Friday and we have classes on Saturdays for our teen programmes, focusing on developing technique, creativity and having fun. For our full-time students, the aim is to create performers that are 'triple threats' through a creative open space as well as giving them discipline and the tools to thrive in this industry.

It's important for our students to



ALAN EASON

**Left**  
 Students  
 of Sonwa  
 Sakuba  
 Institute



have daily technical classes including ballet, modern, tap, voice, improvisation, acting methodology, singing, and additional subjects like songwriting and microphone technique to create a strong base of all techniques, as well as their performance and creative classes. In their final year they have the choice to major in one discipline; acting/singing/dancing, as versatility is important to work in the industry. I myself, majored in dance, but I'm still working as actor, and performed in a pantomime last Christmas as the Prince in *Snow White*.

### **What was your experience of your students entering for Modern exams and what are the dancers next steps?**

We were lucky enough to have Tereza Theodoulou as our examiner for our first session in 2022 and although I'd entered students in other studios before, this was my first full exam sessions as the main teacher and so a new process for all of

us as at the Institute. Tereza brought such a positive energy that it was a very enriching experience for all, and our next step is for our dancers to train for their vocational levels. We are also looking to bring the new contemporary syllabus into our curriculum which is exciting and maybe some teaching qualifications for the older students at a later date.

### **Outreach programmes**

We have developed strong ties to our community schools, as 90% of the Eastern Cape do not have access to any form of performing arts education, so we work really hard to get out to as many schools as possible in the province with workshops and performances. This year our third years will be visiting province schools on a more regularly basis producing revues for the school pupils.

### **Achievements and aspirations**

As I reflect on the last three years,

there is so much to be proud of, from developing the first programme of its kind in the province, creating our first set of exam and graduates, to producing our outreach work. We also have third year students who are interested in dance administration and dance education and so we want to provide opportunities for them to learn these skills. So, for the future we are looking to solidify all these aspects and take time for reflection.

We take great care and consideration for our students and have a fabulous team who understand the vision of the institute and deliver our programmes. The ambition is to develop further opportunities for our graduates with a dance and theatre company, and maybe in the near future open our own agency. We want to take these aspirations forward in our province to creating professional graduates and a flagship establishment for our province and country.



Ruth Armstrong



Valerie Jones



André Koschyk



Penny Meekings



Sadie Morgan



Elizabeth Reeves



Lyn Richardson

## **Modern Theatre Committee**

### **Ruth Armstrong**

Ruth trained at the Pauline Howard School of Dance and Laine Theatre Arts, graduating with diplomas in Musical Theatre and Professional Dance. She attained ISTD Associates in Modern Theatre, Tap and Imperial Classical Ballet. With her ISTD Fellowship, Ruth became a dual examiner for the modern and tap faculties in 2005.

### **Valerie Jones**

Val trained at the Merseyside Dance Centre and danced professionally before making a career in choreography and teaching. She is a Fellow and Examiner in Modern Theatre, Tap and Imperial Classical Ballet. She was organiser for the ISTD's Northern Janet Cram Awards and is a member of the teaching team for Modern Theatre.

### **André Koschyk**

André trained at Bird College, with inspiring teachers such as Doreen Bird,

Frank Freeman, Karen King, Tracey Lee and Tereza Theodoulou, to name just a few. André is an ISTD Fellow, and a modern theatre and tap examiner, DDE tutor and a member of the Grades and Advanced 1 Modern Theatre and Tap teaching teams.

### **Penny Meekings**

Penny trained at ArtsEd. After six years in theatre and television as lead dancer, choreographer and rehearsal director, she switched to full time teaching founding her own teacher training college, mentoring the next generation of teachers. Penny is a DDE Tutor, ISTD Fellow, Deputy Lead Examiner for Modern theatre and Lead Examiner for Contemporary.

### **Sadie Morgan**

Sadie trained at Bush Davies, where she gained her Associate qualifications. She is an ISTD Modern, Tap and Imperial Classical Ballet examiner and a teaching team member for the Modern and Imperial Classical Ballet faculties. She has delivered classes for the Imperial Classical Ballet and Janet Cram Awards and taught on our Malaysian Cross-Faculty Awards.

### **Elizabeth Reeves**

Elizabeth trained at the Betty Wivell Academy and Italia Conti in London, where she gained her ISTD Associate Modern and Tap, before working professionally as a dancer in the UK and overseas. Elizabeth gained ISTD Fellowship status under the careful creative guidance of Tereza Theodoulou and is a Modern, Tap and Contemporary examiner.

### **Lyn Richardson**

Lyn was trained at Bush Davies Schools and Laine Theatre Arts. She is a senior member of the Modern Theatre creative team responsible for devising many of our current syllabi. Lyn works across the UK and internationally, and since Covid has been our Lead Examiner for our grades and vocational level exams.

Connect with your committee via [modern@istd.org](mailto:modern@istd.org)

**Pippa Cobbing**  
**Head of Faculty Development**  
**for National Dance**  
**national@istd.org**

For all faculty events, please turn to  
 pages 58–59 and visit **istd.org**

# National Dance

## Gathering magic

A reunion of the National Faculty at Scarisbrick Hall School for the Grandison Clark Awards.

The National Faculty was delighted to come together in person for the first time since 2018 on Sunday 26 November 2023 in the beautiful Oak Theatre at Scarisbrick Hall School near Ormskirk in Lancashire. The venue was wonderfully reminiscent of Hogwarts School from J K Rowling's *Harry Potter* books, and the welcome we had from the venue and their team helped create a magical atmosphere from the start of the day.

We welcomed retired National committee members and examiners Jacqueline Ferguson MBE, Hazel Burrows, Heather Rees, Robina Smith and Vivienne



**Above** Retired Chair Jacqueline Ferguson MBE and Lead Examiner Barbara Simons

Saxton. We appreciated the efforts they had made to attend, and their presence added to the atmosphere and prestige of the day. Our sincere congratulations go to retired Chair Jacqueline Ferguson on being awarded a well-deserved MBE in the 2024 New Year's Honours list.

The new hybrid format allowed recorded entries to be screened and adjudicated alongside the live entries performed onstage on the day. Thus, we were able to include our international community and celebrate the truly global nature of our dance genre around the world. The superb quality of the screen gave the impression that the recorded entries were being danced live on the stage, so there was parity throughout the day for adjudication.

For the first time, with great success, we opened the day with Junior, Intermediate and Senior Class Performance Awards. These classes were expertly taught by Charlotte Deakin-Jones who inspired the children with her choreography of Danish, Czech Republic, Russian and Ukrainian styles. Each section introduced the relevant steps and style, then culminated in a short dance for each country in the respective age groups. The buzzing, excited atmosphere backstage was inspiring. Generously sponsored by Freed of London, £50 vouchers for Performance; Response and Demonstration; and Musicality were awarded in each section.

The afternoon focused on our traditional Grandison Clark competition, with a whole range of exquisite, beautifully costumed entries, ranging

from solos through duets, trios and quartets, to spectacular group dances.

Throughout the event we were fortunate to have David Needham as adjudicator, highly respected and experienced in his field and ably assisted for the busy Class Performance Awards by Lead Examiner Barbara Simons.

Many congratulations to all who took part and performed so beautifully, and to their teachers and families for supporting. The day could not have taken place without the dedication of the national committee and the support of the many helpers and experts who volunteered.

### Feedback from the day:

"It was my privilege and honour to adjudicate the 2023 Grandison Clark Awards. As a young teacher and choreographer I had so much support from the teachers and specialists in this genre, including the great Robert Harrold, Margaret Dixon Phillips and June Rycroft. The work on the day was excellent, both live and online. The costumes and props were a thrill to behold and the accomplished performances were a perfect demonstration of the value of national in teaching spatial awareness, patterns, rhythmic awareness and tremendous musicality. With such an array of talent and authentic choreographic content on display, it was at times challenging to select a winner – and on this occasion in my eyes everyone was a winner."

**David Needham, Adjudicator**



IMAGES BY KAYTE



"We were so pleased to see the return of the Grandison Clark Awards and even more delighted that as a school we had the opportunity to enter online. The ISTD ensured the process of entering was easy and they were available to help with any query. We were thrilled that the day was a resounding success. The venue's facilities were wonderful, including the high-quality projection screen. Our thanks and congratulations go to the National Faculty and all those involved in the organisation of this important event." **Teacher, Elizabeth Witt, The Dance Consortium**

"The long-awaited return of the Grandison Clark Awards was met with excitement and the opportunity of a road trip up north for us to Lancashire. On arrival at the dramatic, Hogwarts-like venue, Scarisbrick Hall, we were wowed by the idyllic setting. A really great day – made even more special for us as my daughter was presented with the Deborah Capon Class Award and 1st place in her solo section." **A proud mum**

Participants and winners are listed online: [www.istd.org/discover/news/grandison-clark-awards-2023](http://www.istd.org/discover/news/grandison-clark-awards-2023)

IMAGES BY KAYTE



Tanya Allen



Heather Burns

Cathi  
Conroy-Jones

Anuschka Roes



Barbara Simons



Jayne Wing

**Above** Junior group:  
Springtime in Sweden.  
School: Kilburn  
School of Dance

**Above left** Junior solo:  
Indie May Graham  
dancing French Pie.  
School: Elizabeth Hill

## National Dance Committee

### Tanya Allen

Tanya, an adjudicator for the British Federation, British Arts Awards, and All England Dance, has studied with many folk dance companies worldwide. She's a recipient of the ISTD National Helen Wingrave Scholarship and the Haxell Cup, and has adjudicated the Grandison Clark Awards and Classical Greek events.

### Heather Burns

Heather is dedicated to promoting dance in the state school sector and works closely with the Sport England programme in delivering dance as a way to encourage more pupils into sport and exercise. Heather is a Lead Examiner for the National Dance faculty.

### Cathi Conroy-Jones

A triple ISTD examiner in Modern, National and Tap, Cathi has taught at Northern Ballet School, Hammond School and Merseyside Dance and Drama Centre. She has been delivering the teaching exams in four genres for over 40 years. She is a DDE tutor and coaches Licentiate and Fellowship.

### Anuschka Roes

Originally from San Diego, California, Anuschka Roes recently retired after 25 years as Head of Teacher Training at Canada's National Ballet School. She has been active with the RAD and the ISTD as an examiner, tutor, and committee member.

### Barbara Simons

Barbara was part of the faculty at Merseyside Dance & Drama Centre for many years as Head of National. As well as being a busy member of the committee, she has her own school in Heswall, Wirral and is a Lead Examiner for the National faculty.

### Jayne Wing

Jayne has ISTD Fellowship in National, Modern Theatre and Tap and is dedicated to teaching all forms of dance. A National dance examiner, she is also Regional Representative for the East Midlands and is committed to fostering growth and development within the ISTD membership.

Connect with your committee via [national@istd.org](mailto:national@istd.org)

**Amanda Tapp**  
**Head of Faculty Development for**  
**DFR and Street Dance**  
**streetdance@istd.org**  
 For all faculty events, please turn to  
 pages 58–59 and visit **istd.org**

# Street Dance



## Unity UK dance company shines at DFR Grand Finals Day

In October of last year, Unity UK left an indelible mark on the DFR Grand Finals Day, and we were elated to have them grace our event with their incredible talent and energy.

Unity Dance Company UK, founded in 2006 in East London, boasts an impressive array of achievements. With over 15 UK titles under their belt, they are also four-time IDO Euro Champions and three-time IDO World Champions. Additionally, they have clinched the HHI UK Champions title six times and were finalists with a Golden Buzzer

on Britain's Got Talent in 2015. Their influence extends beyond the stage as they have choreographed and featured in a Bollywood dance film and Street Dancer 3D, available on Amazon Prime.

During a break at the Grand Finals, one of our committee members had the opportunity to catch up with the Unity UK crew and delve into what makes them tick:

### What do you love most about dancing?

"The flips, the community, the people, and the support you get."

### What makes a good dancer?

"Self-discipline, determination, dedication, passion, and never giving up."

### Why do you do it?

"Because of the crew we're in, the people that are in it, and the love we have for each other."

## Street dance competitions

Michelle Arnell, DFR committee member and area organiser explains all.

### What do members need to do to take part?

Please email organiser Michelle Arnell **surrenderdanceacademy@hotmail.com** to be added to the mailing list for full information and to receive the programme when it is available. This is not a medallist competition, so no examination needs to be taken prior to entering. Teachers must have relevant insurance for their dancers and tickets for the event can only be purchased through a teacher.

### What is included in the programme?

A full day of street dance competitions, with a variety of age categories, covering solos, pairs, quads and crews along with a fun parent and child pairs event.

### How do those who take part in the event in November 2024 qualify for the brand-new street dance event at Grand Finals Day in 2025?

From November 2024 our street dance competitions will have a qualifying section for solos. Those placing 1st–3rd in each of the solo age categories will go forward to Grand Finals Day 2025 for the chance to compete again in our street solo grand finals.

### What did you love most about performing at Nationals today?

"Most definitely the buzzing atmosphere and crowd!"

There is a real appreciation from the dancers and their respect for the rich history and culture within street dance/hip hop.

Street dance is an inclusive dance style that appeals to a wide range of people. Its appeal is the influence of the music which resonates with both children and adults, sparking inspiration and creativity. The incorporation of 'cool' moves has been heavily influenced by the media in recent times.

Additionally, street dance is a great way to keep fit and to encourage new customers into your dance schools.

Turn to our DFR section on page 36 to read more about Grand Finals Day.

**Above left** Unity UK dance company



# Teach Street Dance

## Street Dance Syllabus refresh

We are pleased to launch a refreshed ISTD Street Dance Syllabus in 2024 to tie in with the introduction of Breaking in the Paris Olympics.

We hope that the inclusion of Breaking in the biggest sporting event in the world's calendar, will inspire more young people to seek out opportunities to take part in street dance classes, and we invite all ISTD members to utilise our syllabus to maximise on the business growth potential this may present.



**We invite all ISTD members to utilise our street dance syllabus to maximise on the business growth potential this may present.**

We know that many of our members are teaching street dance in their schools and may not be aware of the opportunity to enter their students for street dance exams with the ISTD. Our street dance syllabus is available to all ISTD teachers and aims to provide an opportunity to explore a range of street dance styles through the creation and presentation of routines for examination. This provides space for teachers and students to nurture their skills, explore different street dance styles, old and new, as well as focus on and develop their genre specialisms.

The creative nature of the examination requirements means that our syllabus is accessible for all students, and the progressive medal test framework is designed to support teachers to build street dancing skills with their students and enter them for examinations, either as an individual or as a crew. These short examinations of 5–15 minutes are perfect for tagging onto an examination day to provide more learners with an opportunity to benefit from the positive experience of taking exams.

### Join us for street dance CPD courses this summer!

In summer 2024, we are delighted to include street dance courses in our Residential Summer Programme for the first time. Courses will include opportunities for teachers to learn all the foundation steps and styles of our Street Dance Glossary; Locking, Popping and Breaking, as well as taking part in House and Hip-Hop sessions. All courses will be led by industry experts and will provide teachers with an understanding of the various styles, information on how to structure street dance classes, example routines, and the opportunity to get creative. Giving members the tools they need to teach street dance in their schools.

### Syllabus updates

Members already entering students for street dance examinations will start to see some changes to the syllabus information from April 2024, which we've outlined below:

- Street dance DVD content will be rebranded and be available for members to download
- The Street Dance Glossary will be rebranded and will include Locking, Popping and Breaking steps only
- The Street Dance Syllabus Outline will be replaced with a Specification document, which will provide more detailed information about examinations and requirements, as well as important contextual information about the history of street dance and different street dance styles
- Pre-Bronze exams will become a Medal Test instead of and Introductory Test\*
- From Gold level, dances will need to show different street dance styles and speeds\*
- For Higher Awards:\*
  - The Warm-Up will be re-titled as Preparation for Dance Sequence
  - Pure Style Routine will be re-titled Foundation Style Routine, and so should therefore be a Breaking, Locking or Popping routine
- Pairs will no longer be an option for street dance examinations\*

\*Update active from 1 January 2025

For more detailed information about syllabus updates, please visit our website or contact [streetdance@istd.org](mailto:streetdance@istd.org)

**Look out for further information on the street dance syllabus throughout the year.**



# Tap Dance

## Encouraging light and shade

Teacher and examiner, Jackie Hayward, explains how to teach tap dance as a conversation of the feet.

I have always told my tap students how clever they are, as they are simultaneously dancers and percussionists – the students need to learn the skills for variation in sound, to be interesting and rhythmic not just for themselves, but their audience too. The two metal plates on tap shoes and the shoes themselves can create a range of sound: using them to caress the floor or adding body weight, changing the volume.

The children need to experiment with their shoes, so imaginative teaching and ‘games’ can help them explore and discover. Basic rhythmic response is great to encourage children to listen. Initially getting the rhythm pattern correct is exciting but as they get more accomplished, ask them to copy the loud and softer sounds.

Using the two plates simultaneously (eg **stamps**) make a louder, darker sound. Conversely, the plates separately (eg **steps**) can make a quieter, lighter sound. In the vocabulary, **steps** are made using the metal plate on the ball of the foot, but also require the use of a soft knee, so the weight can go through the foot lowering the heel with no sound. My little ones learn that as a ‘squidge’. A **heel beat** using just one plate also

needs a flexible foot and bent knee, but the body weight goes into the heel immediately creating a deeper sound. The use of knees and weight placement are vital to achieving light and shade.



**The younger students enjoy making their shoes ‘smile’. Rising on their toes creates a crease at the ball joint, which looks like a smiley face.**

The younger students enjoy making their shoes ‘smile’. Rising on their toes creates a crease at the ball joint, which looks like a smiley face. I show them on my shoes first and they all want to make their own. Their focus is on their shoes, but they are learning about being on the balls of their feet and getting flexibility, which is a key skill to develop when incorporating light and shade into our Tap.

As a student, I was taught that: ‘Tap is a conversation of the feet.’ When people chat together, their voices are not at one level – there are variations in tone, volume and accented beats to deliver points. Using known rhymes and poems helps the children understand. They can relate to the rhythm and the different levels of dark and light sounds in the verse.

A useful analogy is singing, and I have found scat singing a valuable teaching strategy for students in developing their light and shade. Above all else tap should be fun, and my scat singing usually gets them giggling. It’s wonderful to hear their laughter, but it also leads to relaxation, a vital requirement for light and shade in tap dance.

As the children develop, tap dancers need a secure technique and physical strength, as in all other dance forms. Strong core, leg muscles and gluteus maximus all have an impact on achieving light and shade, as does relaxation and mobility in the ankles and sensitivity in the feet.

My knowledge has come from many great teachers and mentors. My advice is to attend the courses armed with a notebook and pen and gather the pearls of wisdom so generously given by the lecturers.







**Above** Teachers and students at enjoying classes during Tap Fest 2023 at Bird College.



Andrea Ashton



Antonio Barone



Nicholas French



Andrew Hindley



Jackie Hutt



Aaron Lissimore



Carole Moseley

## Tap Dance Committee

### Andrea Ashton

Andrea trained at Laine Theatre Arts, and is a Modern and Tap examiner, a regular lecturer for the Tap Dance Faculty, and a member of the Modern Theatre teaching team. As well as serving on the Tap Committee, she is part of the creative team for the Tap syllabus.

### Antonio Barone

Antonio is an international ISTD Fellow (ICB, MTH, TAP), Tutor, Assessor and Examiner (CON), and a Performing Arts and Gymnastics licensed adjudicator. He has been a member of the Tap committee and teaching team for the past two years, contributing to the international development of the Faculty and the Society.

### Nicholas French

After his performing career, Nick transitioned to teaching and now serves as Head of Musical Theatre at Bird College. He has extensive

experience with the ISTD, working as a modern and tap examiner, committee member, and past chair for the Tap Faculty. He leads the Lead Examiner Team for the tap vocational syllabi.

### Andrew Hindley

Andrew trained at Preston College Dance, where he gained teaching qualifications in Tap, Ballet, Modern and National. Following a career performing on cruise liners and professional pantomime, he joined the faculty at PCD specialising in Tap. Andrew is now Dance Principal at PCD, where he leads on all dance programmes.

### Jackie Hutt

Jackie holds Fellowship status in Modern Theatre and Tap, became an examiner for both faculties in 2004, and was elected to the Tap Committee in 2018. Current teaching commitments involve preparing and coaching both new and established teachers for all levels of ISTD status qualification. Jackie is also a British Federation adjudicator.

### Aaron Lissimore

Aaron runs his own school and theatrical production company. For the ISTD he has lectured for Star Tap, Theatre Congress, and numerous courses nationally. As a member of the creative and teaching teams, Aaron is proud to have created syllabus content for Grade 6 and the Revised Advanced One syllabus.

### Carole Moseley

Carole trained at the Bush Davies Schools where she gained her associate examinations. After performing in theatre in the UK and overseas Carole returned to her love of teaching. Having gained her Fellowship examinations, Carole became an examiner for the Tap and Modern Theatre faculties in 2000.

Connect with your committee via [tap@istd.org](mailto:tap@istd.org)

## Tapping into the creatives

Part one of a two-part series focusing on the tap creators who have been hard at work over the past year. This issue, Alison Forrester talks to Andrea Ashton, Aaron Lissimore and Tara Yasmin.

We have a great team of creators working hard to bring you the Revised Advanced 1 Tap later in the year. We are proud that these tap specialists are 'home grown' from within the ISTD, and have all followed slightly different pathways into dance.



**Andrea Ashton (Yeates)**

I remember watching Andrea teach at the Star Tap Awards at Cecil Sharp House whilst I was on the tap committee. We were all

impressed by her creativity and ease of teaching style. She was asked to join the teaching team not long after.

**Question:** Who was your initial tap teacher inspiration?

**Answer:** I found my passion for tap from the incredible Kay Shepherd and the legendary Bill Drysdale. Anybody lucky enough to be taught by Bill, would know how he was inspiring and terrifying in equal measures!

**Question:** Who have you enjoyed training with externally?

**Answer:** Following college, I have taken classes with and been inspired by many tap specialists such as Maud Arnold, the D'Angelo Brothers, Derick Grant, Jason Janas, Daniel Leveilli and Aleksandre Ostanin. These incredible tap dancers inspired my creativity when producing the New Advanced 1.

**Question:** In your ISTD tap journey, what standout moments do you recall?

**Answer:** Being asked to take numerous Star Tap classes, becoming an ISTD examiner, serving on the current committee and being part of the creative team to develop the new Advanced 1 Tap Syllabus.



**Aaron Lissimore**

Aaron joined the teaching and creative team from 2016 onwards. He recalled a great story to me from his local Dance School at age 5 when he took

his Primary Tap Exam. He had such a great experience, he announced to his teacher that he was going to take another Tap exam the following week!

**Question:** What's your favourite childhood memory with ISTD?

**Answer:** I absolutely loved the competitions - I loved the class aspect and watching other participants solo dances through the glass doors! I was lucky enough to be awarded the Victor Leopold Cup in both the Junior and Senior sections of Star Tap. In 1996 I was awarded the ISTD Joan Durrant Dancer of the Year award and that was a very special moment for me.

**Question:** What will the new Advanced 1 give our teachers and students?

**Answer:** The new syllabus will continue to develop our students and teachers skills and knowledge. It will make sense after completing Intermediate and provide a wider tap vocabulary. I love the various dance styles within the syllabus that I hope will result in more versatile tap dancers - better equipped to progress into the performance industry.

**Question:** Who inspired you in tap dancing over the years?

**Answer:** I have always been a fan of Hollywood musicals, so obviously Gene Kelly and Fred Astaire were both hugely inspirational to me. Within the ISTD I have been fortunate to have been tutored by Alison Forrester, Helen Green and Heather Rees for my Level 6 and Fellowship qualifications. All were hugely inspirational and knowledgeable about the ISTD syllabus and training programmes.



**Tara Yasmin (Holland)**

Tara has created the Musical Theatre Amalgamation. She is a recent graduate of Laine Theatre Arts and has been tap dancing in Crazy for

You with the Chichester and now London cast. She began her ISTD training in Portsmouth at Timestep Academy, run by Sarah Williams.

**Question:** How did your love for tap develop?

**Answer:** Apart from my tap classes, I have always been a huge fan of classic Hollywood movies such as *Singin' in the Rain*. I have been particularly inspired by the musical theatre world of tap by Sutton Foster. She has played some iconic leading roles, including Reno Sweeney in *Anything Goes*. I have spent many hours watching her on YouTube! I also remember watching the 42nd Street revival at Theatre Royal Drury Lane and being so in awe. I knew that was my dream, to dance in a show like this.

**Question:** What ISTD moment are you proudest of?

**Answer:** This! Choreographing a piece to be part of a syllabus is a very surreal thing for me. I'm so grateful to be working with the ISTD, it's a full-circle moment to now be on the other side. It's very exciting getting to be creative and I hope to inspire the next generation of young dancers. My piece gives a huge opportunity to embrace the classic musical theatre style - the inspiration comes from the music of *Crazy for You*. I hope it encourages young dancers to watch those iconic movies and more live theatre.





**Above** Aaron Lissimore with Carol Ball at Star Tap Awards

**Above right** Andrea Ashton teaching

**Left** Tara Yasmin in Crazy for You



As creators, we have all loved bouncing and sharing ideas for the new syllabus. It is a talented and passionate team. Putting our tap shoes to the test, learning some challenging new vocabulary and creating arrangements has been fun and exciting. We are really looking forward to sharing it with you.

In the next issue, read about our other four creators – Adam, Alison, Hannah and Jess.



## Membership



### CPD opportunities for members

The new Advanced 1 Tap is being taught at our Residential Summer Programme in Chichester, 12–18 August 2024. Visit our website and book now.

# What's on

## Dates for your diary

 Discover more and book our events and courses at [www.istd.org/events](http://www.istd.org/events)



## ISTD Calendar May–Aug 2024

### May



#### Awareness days / months

**25 May** National Tap Dance Day



#### ISTD CPD courses

**14 May** Safeguarding – Best Practice for Dance Teachers | Online

**28 May** Creating Magical Early Years Classes | Online



#### ISTD events and competitions

**05 May** Janet Cram Regional Heat | Southampton, UK

**11 May** Cecchetti Classical Ballet

Scholars Auditions | Tring, UK

**12 May** Classical Greek Festival Finals | Stevenage, UK

**12 May** DFR Area Competition | Hemel Hempstead, UK

**19 May** DFR Area Competition | Horsham, UK



#### ISTD important dates

**24 May** DDE intent to enter deadline

### June



#### ISTD CPD courses

**02 Jun** Modern Theatre Grade 4 and grade 5 floor sequences and progressions | Preston, UK



#### ISTD events and competitions

**09 Jun** DFR Area Competition | Cambridge, UK

**16 Jun** Janet Cram Finals | Essex, UK

**23 Jun** DFR Area Competition | Wiltshire, UK



#### ISTD Important Dates

**13 Jun** Teachers Bursary applications close



### July

#### ISTD Events and Competitions

**07 Jul** Street Dance Competition | Portsmouth, UK



#### ISTD Important Dates

**01 Jul** End of membership grace period | reinstatement charges apply

**25 Jul** Sue Passmore Award / Broadening Access to Dance Award applications open

### August



#### ISTD CPD Courses

**12–18 Aug** Residential Summer Programme | Chichester, UK



#### ISTD Events and Competitions

**31 Aug–1 Sep** Ballroom, Latin and Sequence Medallist Weekend and Congress | Chessington Leisure Centre

### How to book



**Explore awareness days and months** to boost your social media, promotions, and events. Find marketing support at [www.istd.org/findyourdancespace/marketing-toolkit](http://www.istd.org/findyourdancespace/marketing-toolkit)



**Continuous professional development (CPD)** courses are planned throughout the year. For details and how to book visit [www.istd.org/cpd](http://www.istd.org/cpd)



**ISTD events and competitions** for your students to showcase their talent and experience. For details on how to enter visit [www.istd.org/events](http://www.istd.org/events)




**ISTD important dates** to help you plan. For ISTD exam centre dates and tour dates, visit: [www.istd.org/examinations/uk-examinations](http://www.istd.org/examinations/uk-examinations)

Information correct at time of going to press but may be subject to change.





ISTD celebrating  
**120** years



In our 120th year, we are enjoying the nostalgia and pride that comes with hearing our members' ISTD memories. Share your favourite ISTD memories with our community – send your photos and stories to: [marketing@istd.org](mailto:marketing@istd.org) Or use our online form to share your memories: [www.istd.org/forms/istd-120-your-memories](http://www.istd.org/forms/istd-120-your-memories)

## Renew today!

Continue to enjoy all the benefits of membership and renew your membership today. Simply visit: [www.istd.org/membership/renew](http://www.istd.org/membership/renew)



## Residential Summer Programme 2024

**12–18 August** **Book now**



Look out for early bird offers (available for members until the end of April) and convenient installment plans.



**Bishop Otter Campus, UK**  
College Lane, Chichester PO19 6PE

# Enabling diversity among ISTD dance teachers

**Anna Morgan is helping a new generation to qualify with the help of the ISTD's Broadening Access to Dance Award and the TIRED Movement.**



**I have been lucky enough to be on the Advisory Board of the TIRED movement since 2020. They are doing incredible work to accomplish their acronym –**

**Trying to Improve Racial Equality in Dance – and I am continuously inspired by the passion and determination of the co-founders; Stacey Green and Laura Grant. Part of my role on the board has been to examine teacher training in the UK, as I run my own Approved Dance Centre and therefore have experience in this area.**

The ISTD has a clear commitment to developing EDI; however, there is still a huge issue with representation of Global Majority teachers, and most importantly examiners and leaders. If children from the Global Majority, and particularly the Black community, never see themselves represented in positions of power, how can they aspire to these positions themselves? We cannot expect to recruit examiners from the Global Majority if we don't encourage representation in teachers in the first place. This is never about 'ticking boxes'. I believe the reason we should aim for diversity is to ensure everyone feels dance is for them, and because our collective experience of dance is always going to be richer if it's influenced by a more diverse range of people.

Understanding that change occurs incrementally, we decided to create a scholarship opportunity. Our goal was to encourage a dancer from the Global Majority to become a qualified ISTD teacher without financial constraint. We were delighted to receive the ISTD's Broadening Access to Dance award, so in collaboration with TIRED and myself, we established the TIRED Teacher Training Scholarship. TIRED will contribute the exam fees for the recipient,

the award will fund part of their training and the remainder of the training will be delivered by me free of charge.

The response to our scholarship opportunity was fantastic, with applicants of an outstanding calibre. While we were unable to accommodate everyone this time, we are hopeful for future opportunities that will allow this. The selection criteria went beyond dance skills; applicants needed to demonstrate a passion for teaching, leadership, and a commitment to the changes championed by the TIRED Movement. Among the standout applicants was Gesztenye Taiwo, an exceptional classically trained dancer of Hungarian and Bedouin heritage.

Having faced racism and body shaming throughout her training, Gesztenye is passionately committed to creating inclusive spaces for the next generation of dancers. Currently gracing the West End stage in *The Lion King*,



Geszténye perfectly embodies the spirit of the TIRED Movement. Her exceptional technical ability and alignment with our ethos make her the ideal recipient of the scholarship. Having commenced her DDE tuition in September 2023, I am excited to mentor her through the early stages of her teaching career, anticipating the remarkable impact she will have on the dance community.

“

**We cannot expect to recruit examiners from the Global Majority if we don't encourage representation in teachers in the first place.**

We would love to make this scholarship an annual opportunity and TIRED continues to work on many other exciting and important initiatives to strive for inclusivity in dance; however, these efforts are only sustainable with your support. I encourage you to visit their website and explore ways to get involved, ensuring that the dance world becomes a truly inclusive and inspiring space for all. Together, let's break barriers and pave the way for a more diverse and vibrant future in dance.

**For more info go to:**  
[www.tiredmovement.com](http://www.tiredmovement.com)  
[@movementtired](https://twitter.com/movementtired)  
[@annamorgandance](https://twitter.com/annamorgandance)

**Left** Gesztenye Taiwo

## Membership

Do you want to broaden access to dance? Do you have a project idea? Consider applying for up to £2,000 funding now. Applications for the Sue Passmore Award and Broadening Access to Dance Award open 25 July and close 12pm GMT on 30 October 2024. To find out more, visit [www.istd.org/discover/funding-bursaries-and-awards](http://www.istd.org/discover/funding-bursaries-and-awards)





Imperial Society of  
Teachers of Dancing

# Step Up to Success

We are proud to launch our **Step Up to Success** campaign to showcase the benefits of taking ISTD dance examinations and medal tests.

We have created a selection of customisable Step Up to Success marketing resources for ISTD members to access and use to promote the benefits of dance exams to parents and students.



Find out more about the campaign and access our new member resources hub for supporting campaign assets now – scan the QR code.

# Elevate your career with an **ISTD** **Licentiate qualification**

Ready to develop your higher level teaching skills? Join an ISTD Academy Licentiate course and benefit from expert tuition and personalised 1–1 mentoring. Continue exploring your ISTD teaching journey with progression routes to be a tutor, lecturer or examiner.

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