

THE INTERNATIONAL VOICE OF THE IMPERIAL SOCIETY OF TEACHERS OF DANCING

Issue 503 • January – April 2025

Dance



FEATURING

Let's Dance!
Angela Rippon tells
us more

**Professional
pathways**
ISTD qualifications
explained

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“Transforming a passion for dance into a fulfilling career begins with the right qualifications – a professional pathway that leads to exciting opportunities and personal growth.”

Welcome to Issue 503, where we explore the theme of professional pathways. This theme celebrates the remarkable journeys of our members who have successfully transformed their passion for dance into thriving careers, supported by ISTD qualifications. Their stories not only reflect the dedication and skill it takes to pursue this path but also demonstrate the rewarding opportunities that a career in dance can offer.

In alignment with our Make Dance Teaching Your Career campaign and the resources available through the Society, this edition offers insights and inspiration for aspiring and current dance teachers alike. Through real-life success stories and practical advice, we aim to provide a roadmap for transforming a love of dance into a sustainable and fulfilling profession. Our goal is to empower our members to see dance teaching as a rewarding career choice, supported by the ISTD's qualifications, and to help them flourish within this vibrant and evolving industry.

In showcasing these professional pathways, we also reaffirm our commitment to elevating teaching standards and supporting equity, diversity, and inclusion across dance education. Whether you're just beginning or are well along the way in your teaching journey, I hope you find inspiration, practical guidance, and a renewed sense of purpose within these pages.

Ginny Brown

Chief Executive

Regulars



Business

- 10 Transforming dance classes**
Sharon Allen shares techniques to support deaf learners



Membership matters

- 16 Shaping the future of dance**
Dance Consortium's mission and how ISTD members can get involved
- 18 Renew your ISTD membership**
Invest in your growth and inspire the next generation



International update

- 20 News and updates from across the globe**
South African dance journeys, staging a ballet and in-person exams in India, pathways for our theatre members to teach Ballroom and Latin in the Americas, and Australian dance dreams from Cairns



What's on

- 58 Highlights**
Updates on our events, CPD and more for members
- 60 Last word**
Recipient of our Broadening Access to Dance Award talks about a tailored dance programme for young adults with Down's Syndrome



Focus on

- 24 Cecchetti Classical Ballet**
Charlie Mellor interview, an international Cecchetti ballet competition in the USA, teacher's corner and Cecchetti scholars
- 28 Classical Greek Dance**
Overcoming learning challenges to excel in dance, plus voices from the next generation of teachers
- 30 Classical Indian Dance**
The synergy of dance and yoga, and Manushi Dance Company
- 32 Contemporary Dance**
How to embed the theme of Walks and the connection to Falls, plus teacher's corner
- 34 Disco Freestyle, Rock n Roll**
Grand Finals Day 2025, and the vital role of the dance teacher
- 36 Imperial Classical Ballet**
The benefits of dancing in adulthood, the Imperial Classical Ballet Awards 2025, and your Facebook pop-up surgery questions answered
- 40 Latin American, Modern Ballroom and Sequence**
Interview with Justin Patel of International Dance Shoes Ltd, plus faculty updates and party dance corner
- 44 Modern Theatre**
Barbara Evan's interview, plus other voices of experience
- 48 National Dance**
Grandison Clark Awards and the value of teaching National Dance
- 50 Street Dance**
Interview with Patrick Alan, plus faculty updates
- 54 Tap Dance**
Optimise your tap exam day with ISTD examiner Elizabeth Reeves

Features

PAGE 12



Join the movement – Let's Dance!

We highlight the impact of our dance community and speak to Shirley Ballas and Angela Rippon





PAGE 4

From our guest editor

This issue, we focus on professional pathways in dance

PAGE 8



From students to educators

How ISTD training shaped two inspiring dance teachers

PAGE 6

Shaping the future

Our qualifications progression routes explained



From our guest editor

➤ This issue, we focus on professional pathways in dance with our guest editor, Louise Molton.



Louise Molton
Director of Dance Education and Training

I am incredibly grateful to have grown up, working and experiencing dance throughout a changing career. Sometimes we may take for granted what dance really has to offer and what it can bring to our lives and those around us.

As dance teachers we play so many roles within the lives of the pupils we teach. In so many of the articles in this magazine the words nurture, passing on knowledge, responsibility, mentoring, leading, supporting, inspiring, are written again and again. You are not just a 'dance teacher' as you may describe yourself in social circles. You are so much more. You are people that lead and guide the next generation of dancers, teachers and practitioners through careful steps, passing on knowledge and skills, engaging with the class in front of you.

As a child learning to dance you are taught small levels of responsibility. Leading an exercise from the corner, leading your partner, teaching a peer a new step, taking responsibility for your own learning by applying feedback, practising your work. As teachers we offer encouragement and praise to these tasks as well as focusing on steps and artistry. We watch confidence grow as children take part in competitions, assist in our classes or simply that they stand tall becoming assured human beings who value the importance of dance. The Cecchetti students taking part in the CICB competition in America (page 26) so aptly demonstrate this confidence and desire to progress. As do those performing at the Bursary Awards, DFR Grand

Finals and within many of your own shows and festivals.

Dance equips us with excellent transferable skills and opens a wealth of differing careers, paths and doorways. It not only teaches us about technique and performance, but it allows us to experience the joy of moving in space, exploring movement, solving problems, working with others, sharing and interacting with others. It brings confidence, exploration and freedom to be what you want to be. As teachers you become role models and leaders and find that your leadership develops over time through training and development and by learning with those you teach.

At the ISTD we offer clear pathways for teachers to assist these journeys and are here to support you as part of your membership. We have opened up routes to progress as examiners, lecturers, committee members, creatives and tutors. Read about Barbara Evans' career (page 44) and be inspired by her progression within the ISTD. Our new Qualification Development strategy also offers you opportunities as members to give feedback about our syllabi, support redevelopment and maybe be part of that creative team. Your reflections and professional knowledge are really important to the development of our work and help us shape syllabi of the future.

As teachers we are both mentor and mentee. We should embrace learning in both directions as 'every day is a learning day'. Our route as a dancer or teacher on a professional pathway is a continuous road. One that may take you on several diversions





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Seek opportunities and new experiences, new connections to enrich your personal development along the way.

to get where you want to go. Professional dancer with Orlando Ballet, Charlie Mellor, writes about working with an acting coach for a new role in *A Streetcar Named Desire* (page 24) and being prepared to embrace new artistic challenges to get out of the comfort zone. Vina Ladwa (page 31) talks about the impact mentors have had on her Classical Indian dance career and how incredibly grateful she is for their influence. Now as Artistic Director of Manushi Dance Company she is leading the way and mentoring others. How quickly our dance journey leads us to the next level, stepping through our careers.

One person who knows that only too well is Patrick Alan, CEO and founder of Musicbox Live (page 50) starting out in music competitions, organising auditions for Michael Jackson in Hollywood and then going on to lead his own business and company. He firmly believes in mentoring and aptly expresses this by saying: “My idols passed their knowledge to me, and now it's my responsibility to do the same.”

We may never feel ready for the next step of responsibility but our passion for our subject knowledge carries us through. This is the same with next steps in our careers. We need to have courage to take next steps with higher teaching qualifications and drive ourselves to seek that next level, in the certainty that through our learning and development, we will come through. Taking on leadership roles such as a new business, artistic director, choreographer, or head of department can be daunting

but offers you new opportunities and learning experiences.

Seek opportunities and new experiences, new connections to enrich your personal development along the way. Chief Executive at Dance Consortium Joe Bates (page 16) tells us more about his role supporting large scale venues with dance programming, facilitating community connections and dance projects. Dance Consortium also offers a successful leadership programme each year to broaden experiences for young people. Maybe something for members to connect with or mirror in your business.

Take time reading this issue to reflect on your own professional pathway and career journey. We can learn so much from what others do, both to be inspired but also to recognise how much we have personally achieved and how perhaps we have inspired others. We rarely have time to praise ourselves so take time out and consider your journey and what might be next on the horizon. Consider what keeps you inspired, learning new areas of syllabi, mentoring, teaching qualifications or simply consider what dance brings to you and others and connect with bringing ‘Dance to All’ (page 12). Whatever your pathway we are here to support you, our members, and we thank you for your contribution to dance and to the next generation of dancers.

Let's continue that journey together.

Shaping the future

Streamlining our qualification portfolio and expanding opportunities for dance educators.



Reviewing our qualification portfolio

As part of our qualification audit, we have been looking at how to streamline our portfolio to ensure that the exams we offer are fit for purpose and meet market demand. This has led to a number of qualifications being reviewed and to some being withdrawn and further information about this can be found on the website www.istd.org/examinations/review-of-qualifications

This process frees up some space in our portfolio to make way for new qualifications that will be very much informed by the thoughts and ideas of members, committees and examiners.

Our vision for ISTD qualifications

We have now designed a strategy for developing our qualifications. In this strategy we have outlined the key areas that we need to address over the coming years, and we have made a commitment to making sure that member feedback is at the heart of all syllabus developments.

To ensure that we are meeting the needs of teachers we will be holding focus groups about all new syllabus developments so

please look out for information on these in our newsletters and Facebook groups. We very much value the input of members and if you would like to share your thoughts on any aspect of qualification development, please join one of our focus groups or email the relevant genre inbox with your ideas.

The strategy

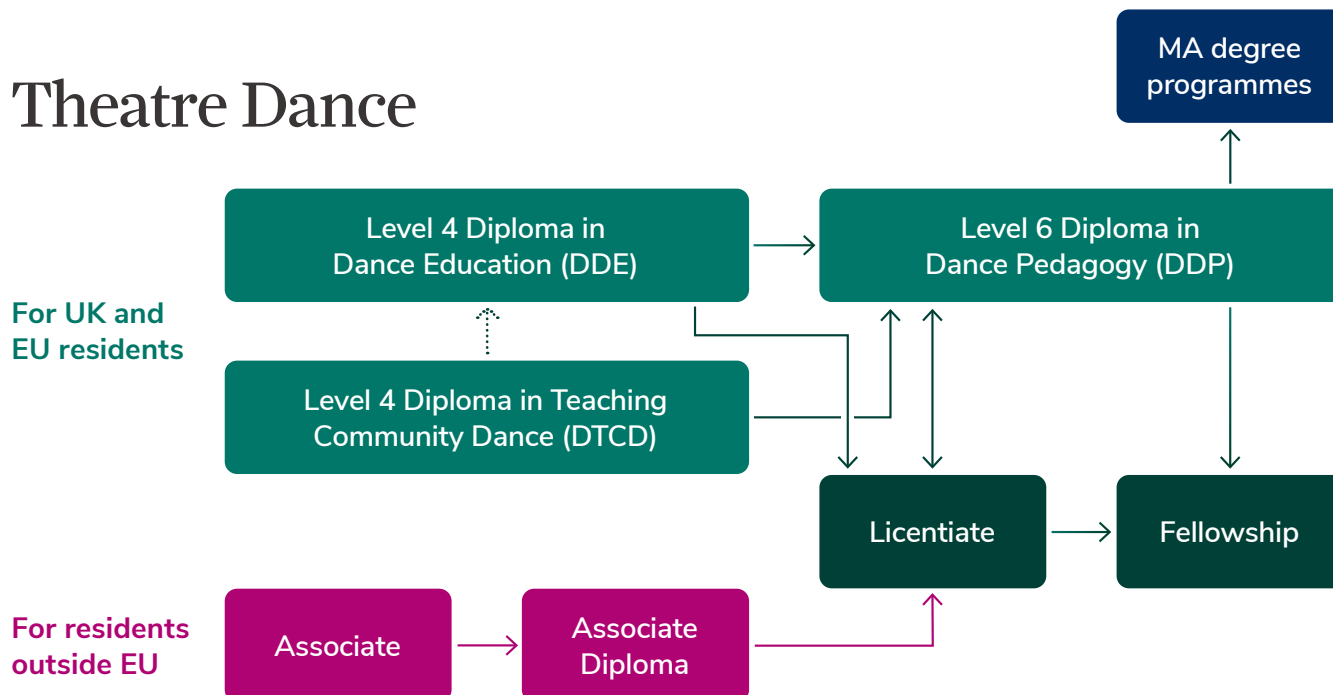
The ISTD has multiple remits, and we need to make sure we are supporting all aspects of dance teaching and training by:

1. Maintaining industry relevance
2. Supporting teachers in all dance settings
3. Underpinning all qualifications with Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) principles
4. Make sure that syllabi and resources are current
5. Enabling opportunities to grow ISTD membership and attract new students into classes

These areas will be our main areas of focus when developing our syllabus exams and when creating new qualifications.

Teaching qualifications progression routes

Theatre Dance



Dancesport



“

Your feedback is shaping the future of dance education – help us create qualifications that empower and inspire!

As part of this strategy, we have recently launched the Diploma in Teaching Community Dance (DTCD), which is designed to provide a qualification for dance teachers who are from a range of backgrounds. This new qualification enables graduates to gain confidence in teaching in community dance settings and recognises community teaching practice as a distinct area of specialisation. Teachers who already hold the DTCD can receive exemptions from Units 1, 2 and 5 from the ISTD's Diploma in Dance Education (DDE) and can thereby upgrade to the DDE to study Units 3 and 4 if they wish to gain Full Teaching Membership status with the ISTD and enter pupils for ISTD examinations. The DTCD and DDE provide a pathway onto the Level 6 Diploma in Dance Pedagogy (DDP). The DTCD is currently being piloted through the ISTD Academy.

Progressing your career

The ISTD is continually striving to develop teaching qualifications that give teachers opportunities to develop their teaching practice and to expand their career opportunities.

The recent changes that allow Licentiate holders to apply for examiner training and to be members of faculty committees are a great step forward in supporting members in developing their careers. The Licentiate in theatre dance genres also allows holders to become DDE tutors within approved dance centres and so a range of opportunities are now open to teachers who invest in their own professional development.

As we develop our teaching qualifications, we are continually embedding the ISTD's values and seeking to support teachers across the world and in all settings.



If you'd like more information about progressing your career visit: www.istd.org/teach/teaching-qualifications

From students to educators

How ISTD training shaped two inspiring dance teachers.

Celena Gayle and Rachel Saunders have each embarked on unique paths through ISTD teaching qualifications, driven by a shared passion for dance education. Celena, a ballet teacher at Ballet Black Junior School, and Rachel, a seasoned course leader at Stage Right College, share insights from their journeys, from rediscovering dance to championing vocational education. Their stories reveal the impact of dedicated mentors, the challenges of returning to training, and the rewards of becoming lifelong learners and educators.



Celena Gayle studied with Betty Wivell to gain her DDE and in September 2024 started work as a ballet teacher at Ballet Black Junior School in Stratford.

What inspired you to pursue ISTD teaching qualifications?

Dance was a big part of my life growing up. At the age of 16 I went to The Brit School of Performing Arts and then

went to Central School of Ballet. Unfortunately I never finished the course and gave up dancing. Life changed when I was 18, I had my daughter and I started working as an Early Years Practitioner. I loved working with children and always taught dance to the children as part of their physical development within the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. When my daughter turned nine I decided to go back to dancing and finish the exams I never completed. So I prepared and took my Intermediate Modern Theatre Dance exam at The Betty Wivell Academy of Performing Arts. Elizabeth Reeves was my teacher and because the school is an Approved Dance Centre and Elizabeth teaches the DDE qualification, she was able to give me a lot of information about the course.



“

With the help and support of my tutors, I managed to get through the units, and make lessons where all the children have equal access to learning.

What did you learn through this process?

The course wasn't easy. After having so many years out of dancing, I had to relearn a lot and get up to date with things that had changed. I also have dyspraxia so it can take time for me to process information, but with the help and support of my tutors I managed to get through the units. Teddy Van Der Ham was brilliant I had many Zoom meetings with her where she really went through my lesson plans and guided me how to make my lessons more interesting and how to differentiate exercises so that all the children have equal access to learning and can achieve something at the end of each lesson.

What advice would you offer to other teachers starting on this journey?

I think that it is important to understand that with this qualification, it is the beginning, and you can become a great teacher by continuing to develop throughout the years whilst you are teaching. Do not compare yourself to anyone else because everyone is coming from different experiences and backgrounds. I was also lucky to be given a bursary in my last year of studying this helped me a lot, so if you're struggling financially you should apply for a bursary. I've also learnt that it's ok to take a break if needed, but don't give up – I wanted to many times, especially during Covid and I'm grateful to Elizabeth Reeves who encouraged me to carry on.

How have your qualifications supported your career?

I currently teach dance in schools as part of their PE lessons and after school clubs. The qualification has helped me to create fun and interactive lessons, which include partner work and the students creating their own choreography from tools that I give to them, which I learnt on the course. Within my lessons I include technique and exercises from the syllabus, which is great for the students who perhaps wouldn't get the opportunity to attend classes outside of school. I think it's important that the students can learn parts of the syllabus and some students do ask me where they can take classes outside of school. I have even had teachers, teaching assistants and kitchen staff from the schools tell me that they have been inspired by my classes and have taken up dance classes outside of work which is always lovely to hear.

What are your next steps for study?

I am currently studying for a Certificate in Ballet Teaching Studies, after this I would like to start teaching in private dance schools and get stronger in teaching so that I can enter children for exams. As part of my study, I still do take classes and I will be preparing to take more dance exams in the future.

What made you decide to become a member and what are the best member benefits from your perspective?

The reason why I became a member of the ISTD is because it helps me to promote myself as a fully qualified dance teacher by allowing me to show that I have a DDE and I can use the Registered Member logo. It also allows me to enter students for exams and offers discounts on CPD courses and on syllabus material bought from the shop. As a member I also receive three Dance magazines each year, which always has interesting articles and good tips for teaching.

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Membership +

Introducing the ISTD Early Careers Group

We are excited to announce the creation of our new Early Careers Group, designed to support, develop, and amplify the voices of early career dance teachers within the ISTD. This initiative is an important step towards strengthening our community and ensuring the needs and aspirations of the next generation of dance educators are at the heart of what we do.

Through the Early Careers Group, we are empowering the next generation of dance teachers to take an active role in shaping the future of dance teaching. This initiative will ensure the ISTD continues to evolve and thrive, driven by the passion, energy, and creativity of our members.

“

The DDP course content is interesting and relevant with up-to-date teaching theories.



Rachel Saunders is a DDP graduate. She is BTEC Course Leader at Stage Right College, and Teacher at ISTD school Dance Steps Academy. She teaches a variety of styles but she'd say tap and street are her favourite genres.

What inspired you to pursue a higher teaching qualification?

Having gained my associates over 20 years ago I have always

been passionate about the ISTD and the content of its syllabi. The structure of the DDP qualification was really appealing as I knew it would be a huge benefit to not only my ISTD classes but also my career teaching dance in Further and Higher Education. Having a higher teaching qualification specific to dance made everything more tangible in my everyday teaching.

What did you learn from the experience?

I completed the DDP through lockdown so the transition to online learning came at a time when we all learnt to be more flexible. I was concerned that I would struggle with the lack of face-to-face contact but I made some incredible friends, some of whom I still have not met in person, and our support network was amazing. Unit 5B Social, Emotional and Cognitive Development delivered by Dr Siobhan Mitchell really was my favourite part of the study programme, I learnt so much about childhood and adolescence and really developed a love for childhood psychology.

What is your current ambition?

In the future I would like to pursue Fellowship with the ISTD, but I also wish to continue the work I deliver at FE level and further support other teachers and colleagues. I believe that vocational FE qualifications are incredibly important to young people as they teach so much more than dance. They teach resilience, confidence growth, a love of learning and so many other lifelong skills.

What advice would you give to others who are at the start of their journey or considering higher teaching qualifications?

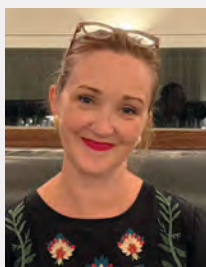
I would really recommend anyone considering this course to take the leap. My initial concerns about time management were dissipated quickly as so much of the structure of the course can be related to what you may already be delivering. The course content is interesting and relevant with up-to-date teaching theories. I was given an incredible mentor, James MacGillivray, who was nothing but supportive and encouraging. The course allows for so many opportunities within different teaching establishments.

What made you decide to become a member and what are the best member benefits from your perspective?

Growing up training through the ISTD syllabi I always knew of the value the mastering the grade work and the impact that had on solidifying strong technique. This is why I chose to study my ISTD associates with Penny Meekings back in 2000. I enjoy being part of a strong and helpful community of like-minded teachers.

Transforming dance classes

Sharon Allen shares techniques to support deaf learners.



Sharon Allen
FISTD, Dip,
Cert. Ed

Sharon teaches Tap, Modern, Jazz, and Musical Theatre to Minis, Juniors, and

Intermediates at Katie Cox Dance Studio and serves as a Higher Level Teaching Assistant specialising in Speech and Language at Griffins Primary Deaf Base. Though hearing, she is inspired by her profoundly deaf mother and has achieved British Sign Language (BSL) Level One, currently studying for Level Two.

Sharon trained at The Christine O'Brien School of Dancing, Italia Conti, and Arts Educational London, earning Diplomas in Musical Theatre and Professional Dance, an A-Level in Drama, and ABRSM Piano Grade 7. After 10 years as a professional performer and freelance teacher, she received ISTD FDI and CDE qualifications in Modern and Tap at Penny Meekings Teacher Training College. In 2008, she joined the Dance Faculty at Italia Conti Barbican and D&B Academy of Performing Arts, where she created the D&B ISTD Teacher Training Programme. She also obtained ISTD Licentiate in Tap and Fellowship in Modern. Inspired by Esther Brooks, she trained with Elklan in 'Training to Support Children's Language and Learning,' leading to a role as Speech and Language Lead at a local primary school.

In 2022 I began teaching Skye at Katie Cox Dance Studio (KCDS). She was part of my tap, jazz and musical theatre classes. Co-incidentally I had also just started working at Griffins Primary Deaf Base. I felt confident to welcome her with some Sign Supported English (SSE) and British Sign Language (BSL) and build a secure method of communication. Skye's 'magic ears' are supported by a radio aid, a device worn around the teacher's neck to send the sound via Bluetooth directly into the hearing aids.

I remember one lesson in particular, we were learning *Part of Your World* from Disney's *The Little Mermaid* and the whole class chose to use BSL signs throughout the choreography. It was moving that a whole class chose to communicate in Skye's style.

When I asked Skye what she loves about KCDS, she replied: "I like it because, it's like the movement and the music makes me feel calm."

Skye's Mum, Adele, says: "There is a general misunderstanding of what deafness is. The greatest hurdle is not accessibility. It is ignorance. Deaf people can and do much the same things as any other person including activities that involve sound."

"Not all deaf people are born deaf, some come to it later, some only mildly, some profound and variations in between. Some deaf people feel sound in the air moving, some feel it in the bass and their feet. Skye grew up in a musical home with constant exposure to a variety of music and instruments. She plays drums, piano and sings. Her deafness comes from

her inner ear, which can affect her balance. Ballet in her early years helped with her balance and strengthened her body.

"Tap classes can pose a challenge because of the cacophony of sound, which can conflict with the music or the teacher's direction. A deaf child relies heavily on visual cues in these circumstances and may even need to remove their hearing aids because it is too loud and chaotic. Turn taking until the group can be in synch resolves potential pitfalls, offers one-to-one time and boosts confidence.

"Tall dancers are often placed at the back but a deaf child needs to be at the front to access the



Above Skye with Sharon

visual and sound cues from their teacher.

"A radio aid is a crucial bit of tech. It is worn by the teacher and links with Skye's hearing aids via Bluetooth to filter background noise and 'talk straight into her ears'. Skye's hearing aids are called 'magic ears' named by one of her early speech and language therapists who wanted to show her children that hearing aids are fun.

"Repetition is key for learning and for a deaf child repetition is so important.

"Deaf children need advocates, and they need an advocate at their dance school, to show 'this is normal. You're normal'. We aim to get people around them to normalise this too. To help navigate the socially complex situations that can be tricky.

“

Deaf children need advocates at their dance school.

"Skye is deaf proud. She uses tools like her radio aid and self-determines when she needs it and when she doesn't. It has taken a village of similarly minded people, two parent advocates and a crew of amazing professionals and teachers, to encourage her to have the confidence to 'never give in, never surrender' – a moto we now use in our own family to promote resilience and tenacity."

My friend, Kaitlyn Hilson, who is a deaf actress says: "Listening to the music through cochlear implants is tricky, but dance helps to connect the words and music to the moves. I can feel the music without my implants on. A good bass is fab!"

Kaitlyn attended various dance schools, and her experiences were very different. Some were very inclusive, gave extra time for exams and broke the dances down into smaller chunks, making them easier to learn. Teachers would speak clearly and stand in

front of Kaitlyn so she could copy the moves. Others would teach very quickly and speak while playing loud music or teach a new dance every lesson making it hard for Kaitlyn to keep up.

Kaitlyn said: "It's important to understand the communication preferences of the deaf student and accommodate them."

Kaitlyn attended a dance class with deaf dancer Chris Fonseca, who taught in a visual style. He counted using his fingers and tapped his head for "from the top." Instead of focusing on the lyrics, he taught in counts of eight that the dancers had to keep track of mentally. Kaitlyn found these methods very helpful. Things like this can easily be incorporated into dance lessons to make them inclusive.

Dance for deaf children has been eye opening for me, their internal sense of rhythm, the way they feel the bass through the air, reverberations through the floor. They are strong visual learners.

I think my final word is confidence. Our deaf learners need lots of it. And when the space is welcoming and safe for learning, with passionate teachers who foster strong friendships and embrace all communication styles, then their confidence will soar. All children deserve that.



Above Kaitlyn Hilson



Above Chris Fonseca

Deaf awareness dance studio tips

- **Know about their hearing technology** such as indicator lights, batteries and how to change them.
- **Create a good listening environment.** Try to minimise distracting noise.
- **Attract their attention before speaking** by trying visual cues. Ensure they can see your face clearly. Position yourself at their level and speak at your normal pace.
- **For tap classes, consider removing hearing aids** so they can feel the rhythm through vibrations.
- **They won't overhear comments.** Always be direct and explicit, don't assume they've heard what you said to others.
- **Rhythm can be challenging.** Extra support with turn-taking and working in small groups helps build confidence.
- **They might need listening breaks.** You could say: "You've had your 5 minutes, now come back in."
- **It's a communication barrier.** Find ways to communicate effectively and adapt your style as needed.
- **Tap dance noise can be overwhelming.** This, combined with listening fatigue and social challenges, can affect focus and motivation.
- **Wooden floors are ideal** for sound vibrations.
- **A deaf child should always be at the front**, regardless of height.
- **If it's too noisy, it may become inaccessible.** Class needs to be quietly driven.
- **Acknowledge important events** like British Sign Language (BSL) Week and Deaf Awareness Week within your studio.
- **For information and support**, contact a Teacher of the Deaf (TOD) from your local authority.
- **Promote Theatre Performance Access Events** such as Relaxed, BSL Interpreted, Audio Described, and Captioned shows.
- **Ballet might be an ideal genre to start with**, because of its calm, measured and balance based properties.
- **Helpful organisations:** British Deaf Association, Deaf Men Dancing, National Deaf Children's Society, National Institute on Deafness, RNID.

Join the movement – Let's Dance!

Our Editor, Tamsin Moore, highlights the impact of our dance community and speaks to Shirley Ballas and Angela Rippon.



We all believe in securing a bright future for dance. In 2024, we published *Dance for All – Extending Our Ambition for Dance in the UK*, outlining our commitment to collaborating across the sector to promote the value of dance and speak with one voice.

As our members, you are already changing lives, promoting health and wellbeing, and enriching our vibrant culture. As our President, Shirley Ballas, states in her foreword to the *Dance for All* report: “Dance does so much for us all – it builds confidence, inspires creativity and friendships, and makes us feel good about ourselves.”

Lets Dance! is a new national campaign spearheaded by ISTD Grand Council member, Angela Rippon.

Let's Dance!

You bring the vision of Dance for All to life every day through your teaching and dedication. With Let's Dance! you now have a new opportunity to showcase the incredible work you're already doing.

This national campaign celebrates your passion for dance and invites even more people to experience its benefits. Together, we can spread the joy of dance and demonstrate how it strengthens bodies, minds, and communities across the UK.

Let's Dance! is founded by ISTD Grand Council member Angela Rippon and features our President, Shirley Ballas, as one of its ambassadors.

On 2 March 2025, Let's Dance! will get the whole nation moving, and we invite you to join the movement! Here are some ways to participate:

- Open your existing dance classes to new participants.
- Host an open studio event.
- Partner with a local school to offer a taster class.
- Organise a 'bring a friend to dance' session.
- Create exciting taster classes and collect contact details for future follow-up.
- Promote the event through local media or on your social media platforms.
- Use the Let's Dance! logo in your marketing materials to show your support.
- Share health benefits and statistics about dance to highlight its positive impact.

How you choose to get involved is up to you – you know best! What if 2 March doesn't work for you? No problem – other dates are also fine! Find out more about how to get involved and download marketing assets here: www.istd.org/discover/lets-dance



LET'S ! DANCE

Resources to help you

1. **Promote your ISTD credentials:** Showcase your qualifications and association with the ISTD to highlight your expertise and attract potential students. Visit: www.istd.org/dance/the-mark-of-quality-teaching
2. **Update your details on Find a Dance Teacher:** Ensure your contact information, class offerings, and other details are up-to-date on the ISTD's Find a Dance Teacher directory to help people easily find you. Visit: istd.org/find-a-teacher
3. **Use resources from the Find Your Dance Space campaign:** Leverage materials from this campaign to reach out to local schools, health professionals, and communities to introduce your dance school. These resources also help demonstrate the physical and mental health benefits of dance. Visit: www.istd.org/findyourdancespace
4. **Take part in Let's Dance! on 2 March 2025 (or other dates that suit):** Join the biggest dance event the UK has ever hosted. It's an open invitation for everyone to celebrate dance in a fun and inclusive way. Visit: www.istd.org/discover/lets-dance

If you believe that you have the makings of a good media moment you can share it with the Let's Dance! team via the form on our website: www.istd.org/discover/lets-dance



Angela Rippon

We asked our ISTD Grand Council member about her hopes for her Let's Dance! project.



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We last interviewed Angela in issue 476 of *Dance* magazine in 2016, after more than five million viewers watched the BBC's *How to Stay Young*, which she hosted alongside Dr Chris van Tulleken. At the time, Angela was 71 and revealed scientific evidence suggesting that dance is one of the best ways to stay fit in later years. Since then, at 79, she participated in the BBC's *Strictly Come Dancing* in 2023, which sparked her idea for Let's Dance!. Now, at 80, she's once again inspiring the nation to dance through Let's Dance!

Dance teachers are brilliant role models for all students – regardless of age.

What are your hopes for the Let's Dance! campaign, both now and in the future?

My ambition is to get the nation dacing. Most people love watching dance as an entertainment, either in the theatre or on television. But dance has proved to be one of the finest forms of exercise for mind and body regardless of age or experience. Because it exercises every part of your body from head to toe, and you also have to use your brain to remember the steps. Also, unlike other forms of exercise – it's fun. You laugh, you smile, you release endorphins that make you feel good. And you make friends in a way you might never do just running or going to the gym. You will never be lonely or isolated if you go to a dance class. So however you look at it, dance ticks every box to get you fit, strong, well balanced and healthy, throughout your life.

Do you have a message for our ISTD members who are sharing their passion for dance with their students daily?

Dance teachers are brilliant role models for all students – again regardless of age. You can share and pass on your expertise and knowledge. Help your students to grow and express themselves. Become mentors and friends. And most importantly share your passion and joy for dance.

How has your personal experience of the benefits of dance motivated you to spearhead the Let's Dance! campaign?

I have been involved with dance in one way or another since I was about five years old and was sent to a dance class to sort out my knock knees. I learnt tap, modern and ballet at a dance school in Plymouth. Going to class every Saturday morning until I was 17. I still go to a Silver Swans ballet class whenever I can to keep my core strength, balance, and flexibility. It's my way of investing in my wellness pension pot. So that as I pass my 80th birthday I'm still flexible, strong, balanced and loving to dance. I just wish that everyone can experience the way that dance can change your life. Keep you fit and well, and ensure that as you grow older, you maintain that core strength, and most importantly, the balance that will save you from having a serious fall. Broken bones from falls put more people over 60 into hospital than any accident or illness. And sadly, the risk or anxiety of having another fall can rob many older people of their independence. So, dance for fun, for good balance and a healthy old age.

Do you have a favourite dance teacher who really inspired and helped you?

My very first teacher was Miss Valerie Lamb at the Geraldine Lamb School of Dance in Plymouth. She gave me the confidence to be myself, and love to dance. More recently my dear friend Sue Hadley of the Suella School in Torquay, Devon has been a true inspiration. In spite of a serious stroke some years ago, that has left her mostly confined to a wheelchair, she still teaches from the chair. She has grace, body tone, and a lifelong passion for dance that she passes on to and shares with her students. Finally, my *Strictly* partner Kai Widdrington is a great dancer and terrific teacher. He challenged me, coaxed and coached me. He helped me discover that I could do things I had no idea I could do (who knew I could do the double splits that we did in the rumba – I certainly didn't) and made my *Strictly* experience one of the most enjoyable things I have ever done on television.

What is your opinion of the motivational benefits of taking dance examinations?

As a tap and ballet student I took all my exams up to Intermediate level. I found the challenge and discipline of taking exams, at times a bit stressful, but always rewarding. I think it made me realise, even as a young person, that you gain in confidence, and self-awareness, as you feel yourself grow and get better at

Dance is one of the best all-round exercises for mind and body, for any age and any level of experience and fitness.

something that is important to you. I knew I was never going to be good enough to become a professional dancer. But the experience of preparing for exams, learning new skills and working to perfect them, combined with the discipline of hard work and commitment, was a good life lesson that prepared me for the challenges of working and surviving in my career.

Can you tell us more about the scientific evidence that clearly demonstrates the physical and mental health benefits of dance?

During the making of the television series I did with Chris van Tulleken, *How to Stay Young*, I went to Germany where one of the universities did an evaluated test pitting dancers over 60 against people over 60 exercising in a gym. And the dancers came out on top after six months as being stronger, fitter and more supple, in every scientific and medical test they were put through.

When I began researching material to back up my Let's Dance! project, I found so many reports from medical and scientific researchers, all concluding that dance is one of the best all round exercises for mind and body, for any age and any level of experience and fitness. It ticks all the boxes. I have some 15 reports on my desk all outlining the incredible benefits of dance in maintaining and improving health and fitness.

So yes, there is a ton of evidence-based material to back up our goal to help people take control of their health and wellness by dancing. Talk to the people who run Parkinson's UK and they will tell you that dance has a "miraculous" effect on people with Parkinson's as it helps them to control their uncontrollable movements. Classes held for people with dementia, produce remarkable results in those who have become withdrawn, or silent. They react to the music with genuine joy and self-expression. The Chelsea and Westminster hospital take dance into ICU wards to encourage movement in those who are seriously ill and provide dance classes for outpatients to help with recovery.



Angela Rippon explains more here: www.istd.org/discover/lets-dance



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Dance does so much for us all – it builds confidence, inspires creativity and friendships, and makes us feel good about ourselves.

Shirley Ballas

Our ISTD President and ambassador for Let's Dance! shares her perspective.

What made you want to be an ambassador for Let's Dance?

Well, dance has been a part of my life since the age of three when I started ballet classes, so I know first-hand the benefits on both physical and mental health. When I heard about Let's Dance! and its aim to bring people together through dance and encourage those that don't usually dance to give it a go I just knew I had to become an ambassador.

Why is Let's Dance! a great opportunity for ISTD members?

I feel any opportunity to dance is a great one for ISTD members, and this event in particular will get people dancing. You'll get the chance to do what you love, meet ISTD members and I'm sure even enrol a few new students along the way too. It's going to be a fabulous event.

What role do you see dance teachers playing in this initiative, and how can they contribute to its success?

Dance teachers are going to be at the heart of Let's Dance! Hosting a class, spreading the word, encouraging signups will contribute to the success as the more people dancing the better. They are going to inspire thousands of participants through their events, and I can't wait to see what everyone gets up to.

What advice would you give to those who are hesitant to try dance for the first time? How can we make it more approachable?

If you can move to music, stay in time and enjoy yourself then really that's all that matters. Don't be frightened of making mistakes, it's how we learn. Everybody has to start somewhere.

What strategies do you recommend for dance teachers to engage their local communities and encourage more people to participate in dance activities?

Social media now plays a huge role in events like this. So, to all the dance schools and dancers out there I'm sure a few Instagram stories will help make a difference. You'd be surprised by how many people you can reach. It'd also be great to see some posters in as many dance schools as possible, perhaps some leaflets on reception desks would work well.

Shaping the future of dance



Dance Consortium is inspiring the dancers and dance leaders of the future. We caught up with Chief Executive Joe Bates, who took the helm in 2022, to discuss his journey into dance, the consortium's mission, and how ISTD members can get involved.

What is Dance Consortium all about?

Founded in 2000, Dance Consortium supports large-scale venues with their dance programming, giving audiences nationwide access to high-quality international dance. It has grown into a leading consortium of 19 theatres and arts centres across the UK and Ireland, offering more than just performances. Besides programming diverse global works, Dance Consortium supports the dance and touring sectors through peer networks, student placements, community workshops, and its annual Future Leaders programme, which nurtures the

next generation of cultural leaders and provides career pathways in the arts.

How did you get into dance and how did you find yourself running Dance Consortium?

I began dancing aged seven and later trained at Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts and London Contemporary Dance School. After an injury shifted my focus, I moved into arts production, co-founding Morton Bates Arts Services with Claire Morton and gaining experience in touring and international work. Later, I joined Arts

Council England, working amongst other things as Director of Touring. In May 2022, I became Chief Executive at Dance Consortium. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, Brexit, and the cost-of-living crisis, I strongly believe that dance inspires and enriches communities nationwide and beyond.

Beyond touring international companies, what does Dance Consortium do?

Dance Consortium works nationally to help its members and stakeholders engage audiences with all forms of dance. When hosting international companies, we facilitate their connection with local communities through workshops, masterclasses with choreographers, open rehearsals, and post-show discussions.

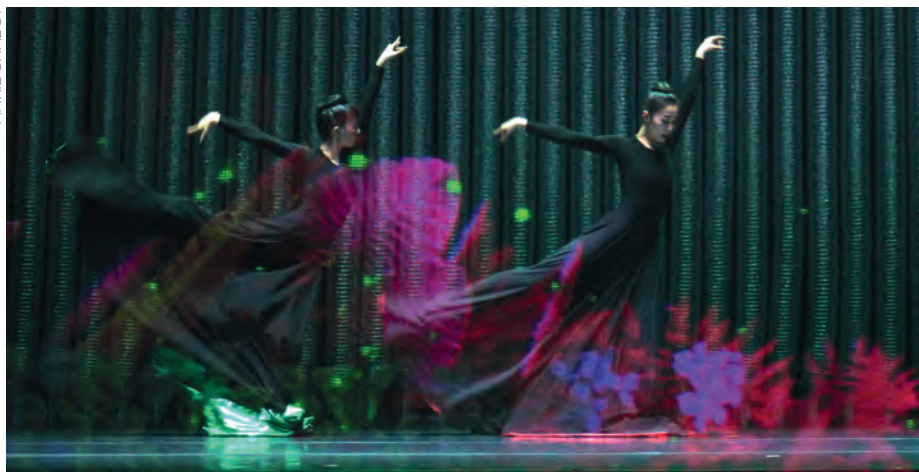
Our bespoke and collaborative approach aims to connect more young artists to international companies, and we want our member venues and their local partners to continue developing their relationships with international artists. An example of this is through Dance Consortium's Ailey Project UK, which supported two Ailey Intensive Summer Schools at Milton Keynes Theatre and Newcastle Theatre Royal. This was open

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Join us for *Dragons* by Eun-Me Ahn, a celebration of Asian dance and Gen-Z energy, touring across the UK in 2025. ISTD members can enjoy discounted tickets with code ISTD10.



SUKMU YUN



Above and below left Dance Consortium's upcoming show, *Dragons*, by Eun-Me Ahn

for all but specifically targeted young black and global majority dancers and enabled them to connect with this world-renowned company. Following this, some of the dancers were then invited to train directly with the company in New York.

How can ISTD members get involved?

Our list of current member venues is available on the Dance Consortium website, and I know that they would all be really interested to hear from their local dance organisations, teachers and dancers. Many of the opportunities I have outlined above are offered for free or with subsidy to make them accessible to all. There is a limit to how much each company can do whilst they are in the UK touring so we are also looking at ways to work with those communities all year round to help build stronger, more connected local dance communities. If you're unsure who to speak to at your local venue then you can also contact the Dance Consortium team directly and we will help put you in touch: admin@danceconsortium.com

We are also working with our member venues to offer discounted tickets specifically for ISTD members to join us at future Dance Consortium shows. The next tour is *Dragons* by the iconic South Korean artist Eun-Me Ahn. It kicks off on 24 February 2025 in Southampton and then heads to Canterbury, Brighton, Milton Keynes, Newcastle, Inverness, Bradford, finishing in Birmingham on 26 March 2025, so there are plenty of opportunities to see this fantastic company. The work brings together both modern and traditional dance styles from across Asia and embraces the vitality of hyper-connected 'Gen-Z', celebrating their ability to adapt to a rapidly changing world. It really is a unique and stunning show! For discounted tickets use the

code **ISTD10** when booking through any of our member venue website.

And what about Future Leaders?

Our Future Leaders are a growing community of changemakers and dance sector advocates and future influencers. In the past 8 years over 120 people have been supported through the programme. It connects young leaders with national venues and international artists through a flexible leadership initiative designed to fit around existing work or study commitments. Eight future leaders are selected in December each year and they get the opportunity to visit some of our member venues as part of a tour. During these visits they get to meet with chief executives and staff from across the theatres and we then work with them to devise a bespoke personal development plan which Dance Consortium supports through mentoring and training. As part of this programme we specifically target those who have historically not had opportunities in the past or are under-represented in the arts and cultural sector. This includes people with lived experience of disability, people of global majority heritage and people whose parents/carers did not attend university.

What are the plans for the future?

We have lots of exciting companies from across the world touring with Dance Consortium over the next few years and we are building our extended programme of activities with these companies in mind. We would love to get ISTD regional representatives involved and support both them and the wider membership with skills development and information about the global dance sector. We will continue to share opportunities and look forward to meeting with ISTD members in the future.



Opportunities for ISTD members with Dance Consortium

Opportunities for involvement:

- Connect with local dance organisations, teachers, and dancers through Dance Consortium's member venues.
- Access many opportunities, such as workshops and masterclasses, often for free or with subsidies.

Discounted tickets:

- Discounted tickets are available for ISTD members for Dance Consortium shows.
- Upcoming show: *Dragons* by Eun-Me Ahn, touring from 24 February 2025 to 26 March 2025.
- **Use our special code ISTD10** for discounted tickets through member venue websites.

Future Leaders programme:

- Explore the Future Leaders programme, which supports young leaders in the dance sector with mentoring and personal development.
- Targets under-represented groups and provides connections with venues and artists.

Contact information:

- For details or assistance, contact the Dance Consortium team at admin@danceconsortium.com

Engagement with ISTD regional representatives:

- Dance Consortium aims to involve ISTD regional representatives and support them with skills development and global dance sector information.

10 ways to get the most out of your membership

Invest in your growth and inspire the next generation.

1 Boost your professional recognition and credibility

Membership with the ISTD is a commitment to high teaching standards. Recognised worldwide, ISTD qualifications showcase your dedication to quality.

Having ISTD credentials elevates your professional status, helping you stand out in a competitive industry.

Ensure your details are up-to-date on our Find a dance teacher directory: www.istd.org/my-istd/my-dt

2 Gain access to comprehensive training and qualifications

ISTD membership provides access to comprehensive training programmes, from diplomas to advanced certifications. Stay updated on teaching methods, qualify in new genres, and expand your teaching repertoire.

From the Diploma in Dance Education (DDE) to advanced teaching levels like Licentiate and Fellowship, ISTD qualifications are designed to enhance your teaching skills and expand your knowledge of dance education.

3 Stay ahead with Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

As part of our commitment to maintaining high standards in dance education, the ISTD offers numerous CPD opportunities to help you keep your skills sharp. These include workshops, masterclasses, and seminars on topics such as dance technique, teaching methodologies, and injury prevention.

Learning from industry experts will not only boost your teaching but also ensure that your students receive top-quality, up-to-date instruction. Through CPD, you'll continuously improve as a teacher and discover new strategies for inspiring and engaging your students.

4 Connect with a global community of dance professionals

Engage with a supportive network of dance professionals through ISTD events and forums, creating valuable relationships.

These connections can open doors to mentorship opportunities, collaborations, or even new career prospects. The support doesn't end at events – you can also engage with other members through online forums, social media groups, and local branches, where you can share resources, discuss common challenges, and celebrate achievements together.

5 Enhance your teaching with exclusive resources

ISTD members access regularly updated syllabi, teaching notes, and other resources across dance genres, helping you deliver engaging and relevant lessons.

The syllabi are regularly updated to reflect current trends and advancements in dance education, allowing you to deliver relevant and engaging classes that help students achieve their best. There are online courses and digital libraries filled with teaching tools and materials that can support your lesson planning and development.

6 Offer students pathways to achievement through examinations and competitions – Step up to Success!

The ISTD's internationally recognised examination system sets a high benchmark for dance excellence. These qualifications can be valuable for students who wish to pursue dance as a career or simply achieve personal goals.

You can also prepare your students for various competitions, such as the Janet Cram Awards or DFR Grand Finals, where they can showcase their talents, gain performance experience, and reach higher standards.

Find out more about our Step up to Success exam benefits campaign and access member exclusive resources to highlight the benefit of exams to parents and students www.istd.org/examinations/step-up-to-success-the-benefit-of-dance-exams

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I became a member of the ISTD because it helps me to promote myself as a fully qualified dance teacher.

Celena Gail, Full Member (interview on page 8)



Unlock new career opportunities

With recognised qualifications, members can explore diverse roles, open dance schools, or even work abroad, backed by the ISTD's international reputation.

The ISTD can help you chart a clear path for career advancement. With recognised qualifications, you'll be well-positioned to explore different teaching roles, open a dance school, or even become an examiner



Enjoy discounts and special offers

ISTD members benefit from exclusive discounts on examination fees, course registrations, and events. You can also take advantage of partner discounts on dancewear, insurance, and other dance-related products, helping you save on essential items while staying active in the dance community.



Specialise in dance genres you're passionate about

The ISTD offers opportunities to specialise in various dance genres, from classical styles like ballet and tap to contemporary options like street dance. This flexibility allows you to follow your passion and diversify your teaching offerings. For instance, if you typically teach ballet, why not introduce modern theatre or street dance to attract new students and keep your classes dynamic? Did you know that from 2025 theatre members can enter students to street dance medal tests?



Contribute to the future of dance education

ISTD members play a role in advocating for dance education worldwide, contributing to the evolution of the industry.

You have a vital role in shaping the future of dance education. The ISTD is actively involved in advocating for dance as a cultural and educational activity, you contribute to initiatives that influence dance teaching standards worldwide.

Renew your membership

Renewing your ISTD membership isn't just about maintaining a professional status; it's about accessing an evolving, supportive, and resource-rich community dedicated to excellence in dance education.

By continuing, or even commencing your journey with the ISTD, you ensure that both you and your students have access to the highest standards of training, the latest industry insights, and a network of passionate educators who share your commitment. Don't miss out on the opportunity to elevate your teaching, connect with fellow professionals, and play an active role in shaping the future of dance.



Membership

Members get even more

Want to learn from the best? ISTD members receive discounts on CPD events year-round. Picture yourself perfecting your choreography skills with West End performers or learning ballroom techniques from world-renowned instructors. Our events are designed to help you grow at every stage of your teaching career. Find out more at: www.istd.org/events



Ariel Fernandes and Pavishen Paideya's dance journeys

Delia Sainsbury spoke to two South African graduates who attended our 13 February 2024 Graduation Ceremony in London, UK.

Ariel Fernandes graduated with her Associate Modern Theatre

I started ballet training at the age of six. Dance has always been a passion of mine. Initially I took the academic route, graduating from Wits University with a degree in Biological Sciences but soon after graduating the creative fire inside of me pushed me to make dance my career, almost like a calling. Performing is fun but there's something extremely unique about sharing what you love with the world and especially children, with their effervescing creative minds – this is what led me to teaching.

Having graduated formally on a stage in England symbolised my dedication to dance and how serious I am about it.

I came across the ISTD unintentionally, wanting to get back into dance in my early 20s, I went to the Paula Lopes School of Dance in my area and here I was introduced to the ISTD by the wonderful Paula Lopes and daughter Chanel Stevens. I soon realised that the standard of dancing was top tier and was encouraged by my talented coaches to take my training through to the end leading me to gain my Associate qualification in Modern Theatre, which I couldn't be prouder of or more ecstatic that I can share this level of dance with South African students.

I don't have a studio as yet, I travel from school to school. However, I am building towards opening my own space

soon. Challenges I face when teaching are limited space and equipment for all the children I coach at these schools. Nevertheless, I am highly grateful for the opportunities that these schools and one of my mentors Anke Bothma have given me to enlighten their students with the gift of dance.

I see myself slowly mastering most if not all aspects of teaching and choreographing that will guide me in whichever direction I need to go. Once I establish a stable and successful studio I'd like to teach for free. I'd also like to touch untouched areas of dance such as competitive dancing for adults past a certain age along with any other area I feel I could contribute to.

I mostly teach in Midrand, Gauteng as well as Pretoria, Randburg, Sandton and Bedfordview, Primary, Grade 1 and 2 Modern Theatre have been my focus in 2024 making sure my students have a very strong foundation for their future in dance. I have a "slow and steady wins the race" type of mindset when it comes to teaching. I also teach ballet and contemporary styles to all ages however this would be on a more recreational level.

I think my niche is teaching children, I have a special bond with them and their untainted spirits. As much as I teach them, they teach me immensely. The Modern Theatre genre is my anchor in the ISTD but as my students grow, I'd like to expose them to Contemporary Dance which I would say is another niche of mine.

My greatest challenge has been juggling teaching different

genres of dance, running a business and continuously studying to make sure that my students get the best quality that I can deliver. My greatest success has been believing in myself to take a path not many would take as well as starting my own dance business from the ground up using all the knowledge I have gained

through the years from all my brilliant teachers and mentors.

I'd also like to add that the ISTD was extremely professional in the way that they handled the graduation ceremony that I attended. Everything ran smoothly and according to plan. It was a beautiful experience.

Flying to England to graduate was quite symbolic for me for a few reasons. I didn't get the opportunity to formally graduate when I completed my first degree at Wits because it was the Covid era, therefore getting that opportunity through the ISTD was incredible. It also took a substantial amount of courage from my part to leave a life of science behind to pursue dancing as a career where no one really took me seriously nor understood what that looked like. Having graduated formally on a stage in England symbolised my dedication to dance and how serious I am about it. It was truly a humbling experience to have graduated abroad in an art form that I am deeply passionate about. Having my parents there to witness it all was the icing on the cake!

Pavishen Paideya graduated with his Licentiate in Tap Dance

I began my formal dance training at the age of five in ISTD Modern. I was working at becoming a professional dancer and had the inevitable thoughts about would happen if I wasn't able to dance anymore. I always knew I would still want to be in dance in some way. And becoming a dance teacher seemed like a very sensible, logical plan. I really enjoyed and became quite interested in developing young dancers and learning about how the body works, how technique is developed, and it helped me to understand my body better to become a better dancer.



Above Ariel Fernandes teaching



Above Pavishen Paideya

The studio I was enrolled at, at the age of five was Minette de Klerk Dance Academy. Having trained in the ISTD method as a student, it was a natural progression to do my Associate in the same method.

Sometimes dance is not seen as a full-time career and therefore not taken as seriously as other extracurricular activities offered to children, like the various sports. But as teachers it's our job to capture their imagination, make them fall in love with the art form and nurture their talents and develop their skills.

The most rewarding part of teaching is seeing students blossom and succeed. A common challenge today is social media, where children often misinterpret instant fame but can also gain insight into global dance standards.

Having recently completed my ISTD Tap Licentiate. I'm currently working on my Modern Licentiate. In the future I would like to complete my Fellowships in Tap, Modern and Cecchetti Classical Ballet.

I currently teach for Minette de Klerk Dance Academy in Durban, and I teach ISTD Tap, Modern, and Cecchetti Classical Ballet from Pre-Primary to Advanced 1. I also run my own Bollywood company that performs regularly.

I have never received any opposition or problems being an Indian male and choosing dance as a career. In

**The most rewarding
part of teaching
is seeing students
blossom and succeed.**

fact, most often it does come as a surprise to most people and usually followed by words of encouragement.

Attending the ISTD graduation ceremony in London was amazing. It's so incredible to see so many fellow dancers and teachers that are just as passionate about dance and education of dance.

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

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The journey of a ballet from concept to stage

Dyumna Chhabra, Arts Coordinator at The Lewis Foundation of Classical Ballet in Bangalore, India shares the production journey.

Ideas and beliefs are everywhere, but when transformed into art, they spark creativity. Working with Yana Lewis, Artistic Director of The Lewis Foundation of Classical Ballet in Bangalore, on *Alice* showcased a clear vision: to create a ballet that captures Lewis Carroll's whimsical essence while being engaging for all.

The production embodies evolution, bringing *Alice*'s playful spirit to life from the first page to the final curtsy. Music, the heartbeat of choreography, immerses the audience in her fantastical world. Lighting enhances the atmosphere, with a floral ambiance for the garden scenes and a mysterious glow for *Alice*'s encounter with the Cheshire Cat. Props and backdrops, like the teapots at the March Hare's tea party, enrich the experience, making every detail count in this enchanting ballet.

Right The Lewis Foundation of Classical Ballet's production of '*Alice*'

Below Mandy Petty with the School Director, teachers, senior students and staff members at The School of Classical Ballet and Western Dance, Mumbai



ISTD in-person exams return to Mumbai, India

Khushcheher Dallas, Director of The School of Classical Ballet and Western Dance, expressed gratitude to the ISTD for bringing the Modern Exams back to Mumbai after six years. "The children thoroughly enjoyed their ISTD exams," she shared.

Chua Zjen Fong, ISTD International Representative for Asia
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Pathways for ISTD theatre members to teach dancesport

Astrid Sherman looks at professional pathways for ISTD theatre dance members in the Americas to become Modern Ballroom or Latin American teachers with the ISTD.

Do you know that all ISTD teachers in the Americas who hold an Associate, Associate Diploma, Licentiate or Fellowship in the Theatre Faculty are able to enter students in Modern Ballroom or Latin American examinations without taking

an additional associate in the Dancesport Faculty?

If you are an ISTD Theatre Dance studio or school owner looking to include more adult classes, perhaps this is for you? Modern Ballroom and Latin American offer easy accessibility and very achievable goals of accomplishment for both children and adults. As a result, they are becoming an increasingly popular choice for adults in the Americas looking for both physical and mental health benefits.

The physical benefits include improved cardiovascular fitness, co-ordination, muscle strength and tone. In the mental health realm, besides stress relief and boosted cognitive function, these syllabi are designed for smart progression so new learners can quickly master new skills and gain self-confidence and self-esteem. They also offer an opportunity

for mindfulness which teaches dancers, young and old, how to be present in the moment. Social benefits include the opportunity for connection and a sense of community.

For theatre dance members to learn the syllabi, it is advised to attend an introductory course (watch the events page), and/or to find a tutor/mentor in your area or online for further development of your Ballroom and Latin knowledge and experience. There are also recommended syllabi books to purchase and some DVD/music suggestions.

If theatre dance members would also like to add a dancesport Associate for their own professional growth, it is easily done, as all Modern Ballroom and Latin American professional examinations (Associate, Licentiate and Fellowship) are modular in format and can be taken unit by unit. If you decide to teach these syllabi, it's always more wonderful if you take this learning journey. To find a mentor/tutor contact education@istd.org and your International Representative.

Remember too, theatre dance studio owners can also hire non-ISTD teachers who already teach Ballroom or Latin with other accreditations. These teachers who already have the required knowledge, experience and/or comparable qualifications from other dance organisations, can then apply to the ISTD Dancesport Faculty for accreditation. Contact mhill@istd.org with your full resume showing your dancing history in Ballroom, Latin and your teaching career.

Astrid Sherman, ISTD International Representative for the Americas

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[f facebook.com/groups/istdamericas](https://www.facebook.com/groups/istdamericas)

Dancing dreams

Maya Coulthard shares her pathway as a dance student in Cairns, Australia.

To all those aspiring dancers who dream of performing professionally on the stage, never give up on your dream. My dancing dream began as a three-year-old, despite never initially being keen to be in the spotlight. I avidly watched *The Next Step* on television every afternoon with my grandfather and my family will attest that I frequently sang and danced in the lounge.

My parents were involved in local stage productions, and I went along to their shows, enjoying every minute. In one production, when I was only nine months old, my grandmother thought that I wouldn't recognise my mother in her *Cats* musical costume, but I am told that I didn't hesitate in picking her out.

When it was suggested that I start taking dance lessons around the age of five, my dancing dream was officially born at Julia Macalpine Dance Studio (JMDS). I reluctantly went along, feeling quite self-conscious. Julia, Principal and owner of JMDS, was also my mother's dance teacher, and it was under her expert guidance and training, along with instruction from Shannon Treanor and Pauline Dawson, that I truly developed my passion for dance.

Julia and Francis Macalpine's beautiful costuming creations aided in persuading me to take to the stage in local eisteddfods and concerts as a troupe performer, before I finally agreed (following significant coercion and encouragement) to dance as a soloist and take on lead acting roles. Since then, I have lived and breathed dance, not being motivated by



Above Maya Coulthard

winning, but more by my passion to dance and the support of the people around me, whom I now think of as family.

I have now completed all my ISTD Modern Theatre and Tap Dance examinations through to Advanced 2 level, and it is also these experiences that have shaped me as a dancer, refining my technique and giving me confidence to pursue my dream of one day performing on stage as a professional dancer.

Next year, I embark on a two-year journey at Brent Street, Sydney, to achieve a Diploma in Performing Arts Elite Dance. I will miss my dance family back home, but I am ready to take the "next step" in my dancing journey to pursue my passion and live my dream.

Kim Scott, ISTD International Representative for Australasia
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Focus on

Philippa McMeechan

**Head of Faculty Development for
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For all faculty events, please turn to
pages 58–59 and visit **istd.org**

f **ISTD: Cecchetti Classical Ballet Faculty**

Cecchetti Classical Ballet



ZAVESCO PHOTOGRAPHY

Charlie Mellor

Ballet dancer Charlie Mellor discusses his journey with committee member Jacqueline Lewis FISTD.

Charlie Mellor began his dance journey aged just three years old, with Lisa Hunter FISTD. A graduate of the Orlando Ballet School in 2022, Charlie is now in his second season with the Orlando Ballet.

What sparked your interest in ballet, particularly Cecchetti?

I started ballet at the age of three after watching ballet on television and then asking my parents if they could take me. I enjoyed the discipline of ballet as I got older and I particularly enjoyed being able to see how the hard work I was putting in was being rewarded with small improvements, such as flexibility and turns.

What sets the Cecchetti method apart for you?

I believe the Cecchetti method produces dancers with fast and strong footwork due to all the batterie exercises. There is also a big emphasis on port de bras, and how positions flow together to make transitions seamless.

How does Cecchetti training impact your ballet technique and performances?

Training in the Cecchetti method has always made me focus on clean lines and made me approach working without strain or stress. It made me correctly work my muscles and as a

result helped me try to achieve the look of dancing effortlessly, even though there was a lot of work going on.

How do you envision your future growth as a ballet dancer?

I believe that a big part of connecting to a character you are portraying on stage comes from pulling from experiences from your own life and emotions that you have experienced. You can use this to relate to the character or role you are performing. As I think ahead to the next few years of my career, I hope that through age and more life experience, I'll be able to improve my artistry and delve deeper into bigger roles to realistically play characters with more complex stories.

What advice do you have for aspiring dancers?

Some advice that I would give an aspiring dancer is to take inspiration from some of your favourite dancers. Whether it's how they perform, movement quality or technical abilities, I believe a great way to learn is through imitation and picking up ideas or ways of moving from others. We are lucky nowadays that there is a lot of ballet content online to watch, as well as going to a theatre or even a cinema, it is available to watch more than ever before.

Please describe a standout moment or performance with Orlando Ballet.

One of my favourite performances so far was performing the character Alan, in Annabelle Lopez Ochoa's *A Streetcar Named Desire*. The Ballet contains very dark and heavy content, and my character went through a whole journey of emotions from love and marriage all the way to heartbreak and betrayal, which ultimately leads to a tragic ending. This performance stands out to me as a memorable moment because it allowed me to equally combine my ballet technique with a contemporary style that I also really enjoy. It was also a character that pushed me to grow artistically. An acting coach came into rehearsals, which was an experience that pushed me outside of my comfort zone.

All photos Charlie Mellor

“

Training in the Cecchetti method has always made me focus on clean lines and made me approach working without strain or stress.



MICHAEL CAIRNS

ISTD students shine at 2024 Cecchetti International Classical Ballet Competition

After a seven-year hiatus due to Covid, UK ballet students showcased their talent at the 2024 competition in Michigan, with four reaching the finals.

The Cecchetti International Classical Ballet (CICB) Competition is usually held every three years in various countries around the world. From 21–27 July 2024, the competition was hosted by the Cecchetti Council of America in Holland, Michigan, USA. Four Junior and six Senior dancers, travelled to the USA to represent the ISTD Cecchetti Classical Ballet Faculty, taking part in classes and performance opportunities.

ISTD delegates Gillian Hurst and Kate Simmons accompanied the 10 talented students from ballet schools across the UK. The event featured daily ballet and contemporary classes, as well as scheduled coaching sessions with Gillian Hurst and Kate Simmons. All the students felt this was a very valuable experience.

The Cecchetti Society Trust generously sponsored 6 of the 10 students chosen to represent the UK at the competition.

Gillian Hurst, ISTD Fellow and Senior Examiner, commented: "This was a very worthwhile experience for all the students. They had the opportunity to make new friends, take classes with experienced and inspiring teachers, and perform on a global platform in front of an illustrious panel of adjudicators. The professionalism and dedication shown by all the competitors were outstanding, and we are proud of the wonderful ambassadors they proved to be for the UK and the ISTD."

Gillian's full report can be found online: www.istd.org/discover/news/cecchetti-international-classical-ballet-competition-2024-august

Top right The 10 dancers (4 Junior and 6 Senior) who travelled to Michigan, USA to take part in the competition wearing personalised ISTD uniform by Dansez

Centre right The dancers with Gillian Hurst (L) and Kate Simmons (R)



Next Teacher Support Meeting

Monday 13 January 2025, 10–11am

Revisions for grades 1–6

Reminder that these take effect in all exams from 1 January 2025

Teacher's corner

When preparing candidates for exams it is a good idea to see them dancing exercises on their own in the lead up to the exam day. Of course, for many of our exams, candidates go in with a partner or in a group and can dance many elements together. But it is always good to prepare candidates for the eventuality that, for whatever reason, one of the group or a partner may at the last minute be unable to take part in the exam on the day.

Cecchetti Classical Ballet Scholars

A unique scholarship scheme for aspiring young dancers, providing exceptional, free weekly training* to refine technique, build strength, and deepen artistry under the guidance of expert Cecchetti teachers.

This exceptional training scheme includes weekly classes in Body Conditioning, Limbering, Pointe Work, Repertoire, and more. It is designed to complement the student's regular classes and is free of charge.

Scholarship places are available, subject to successful audition, for talented young dancers currently studying around Grade 4 or Standard 5 level with a registered ISTD Cecchetti Classical Ballet teacher. Auditions take place annually in early Summer – look out for more information to follow for the 2025 intake.

"I'm hugely grateful for my five years as a Cecchetti Scholar, which not only added to my physical training in ballet but gave

me the opportunity to train with other students of a similar level and mindset, with classes from a wide range of teachers. I loved the opportunities to perform at The Royal Ballet School and I'm so grateful that it set me up with a serious approach to my career as a professional dancer. Scholars definitely bridged the gap between my hobby and professional training."

Rosy Nevard



The Scholars scheme is generously supported by the Cecchetti Society Trust

*Uniform and contemporary lessons incur additional costs not covered by the scheme. These are confirmed before audition date is advertised and payable before term starts.



For more information email: cecchetti@istd.org

Imperial Benevolent Fund

Supporting ISTD Members in their time of need

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Words cannot express the gratitude and relief the contribution by the Imperial Benevolent Fund has brought to us. Please express our sincere thanks to the Trustees for this help.

The Fund offers support to deserving members and their dependents worldwide, whatever their age, who need help at certain times in their lives. If you need our help, or know of anyone who does, please get in touch.

To make an application, make a donation or leave a bequest please contact www.ibfund.org



Classical Greek Dance

Classical Greek Dance is accessible for all

ISTD committee member, Pippa Broadway, shares how 19-year-old Robyn Winter has overcome learning and health challenges to excel in Classical Greek dance, building coordination, confidence, and achievement.



Classical Greek dance really is for everyone, and this has been proven by 19-year-old Robyn Winter, who has been awarded all her Medal Test examinations with Merit.

Robyn faces many challenges every day including mild learning difficulties, hemiplegic migraines and chromosomal abnormalities; and has found dance, particularly Classical Greek, a vital part in developing co-ordination and recall. As the genre is primarily based on natural movement it allows Robyn a platform to achieve along with her friends while presenting enough of a challenge for all.

Additionally, Robyn has been a member of winning festival groups, duets and solos with her teacher Pippa Broadway, and she plans to carry on dancing as long as she can.

Ruby Ginner's original goal in the 1920s was for Classical Greek to be a dance form for everyone, uniting mind and body. It was years ahead of its time and it has never been more relevant than today and within the

vision statement of the ISTD Strategic Plan 2022–27, 'to make teaching and learning dance accessible to all'.



Classical Greek dance provides Robyn a platform to achieve alongside her friends while presenting enough of a challenge for all.



Give remote exams a try!

Entering exams can help to keep your students focused on their learning and interested in achieving the next grade. Remote exams are handy if you have a small number of candidates but not enough to book a live session.

It's easy to apply, just visit Quest, our online examination system and the Exams team will help with any queries – good luck!



The genre's greatest value is encouraging self-expression. It's rewarding to see my students explore and be adventurous, whether pretending to be frogs or mastering ball work.

Hannah Connor



Voices from the next generation

Insights from new teachers embracing the timeless art of Classical Greek Dance.

Classical Greece is always in the spotlight! Whether you're watching *Kaos* on Netflix, where turmoil reigns on Mount Olympus with Jeff Goldblum as the mighty Zeus, or your dance students are captivated by *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* on Disney+ or in book form, the influence of Greek mythology is everywhere, and it never gets old.

We encourage the next generation of dance teachers to explore Classical Greek dance training – it has so much to offer. Below, Hannah Connor, Anna Mair and Harriet Quinn share their training journeys, future goals, and why they are passionate about Classical Greek dance.



Hannah Connor

At four, I began dance classes, inspired by a family immersed in music, dance, and art. Little did I know these weekly lessons would shape my life and

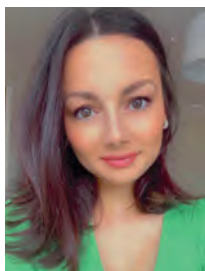
career. At Dupont Dance Stage School, I trained in various techniques through the ISTD syllabi and quickly fell in love with Classical Greek, captivated by its diverse styles, technical challenge, and creative freedom.

My favourite memories from Alison Seddon's classes were improvising and adding my own creative ideas to sequences. Looking back, studying Classical Greek was pivotal in shaping my path to earning a degree and Master's in Contemporary Dance.

When I chose to pursue teaching, I knew I wanted to complete my DDE in Classical Greek, which I achieved last year with Alison's guidance. My goals are to become an examiner and, most importantly, to pass on my passion for Classical Greek to the next generation.

The syllabi provide diverse learning opportunities, but I believe the genre's greatest value is encouraging self-expression. It's rewarding to see my students explore and be adventurous, whether pretending to be frogs or mastering ball work. I was definitely the student always chasing my ball around the room!

Each class offers a chance to discover something new, and I constantly seek fresh ways to share and develop the technique. My goal is for everyone to experience its positive impact on both their dance training and artistic growth.



Harriet Quinn

My dance journey began aged three at the Kilburn School of Dance, where my grandma took me to my first ballet class. Since then, I haven't looked back. Now, I have

the privilege of sharing my love for dance with both children and adults.

Classical Greek was introduced to me by Amanda Wilkins, I attended weekly classes, participating in many exams, festivals and faculty events. My favourite part of the lessons were the nature rhythms and improvisation, that was until the introduction of Bacchic work; a chance to release the cheekiness, slight wildness and frenzy from within! This deepened my enjoyment for the genre and led me to begin my DDI training. Teaching was always a passion of mine and beginning my teacher training helped solidify my career path. Following several coaching sessions, musical mishaps and huge support from Kay Ball and Roz Jennings, I passed my DDI and DDE three years later, with a 2025 Licentiate pending and Fellowship to follow, in the hope of becoming an examiner.

People often ask what Classical Greek dance is, sometimes mentioning plate smashing. For me, it's a genre that captures and inspires all personalities, encouraging freedom of movement and the development of qualities such as creativity, musicality, and self-expression. It gives students a fascinating insight into the rituals and cultures of Ancient Greece through natural movement. It enhances every style of dance, evolving a dancer's training by giving them the tools to adapt, develop and progress their skills. As a teacher and advocate, I would hugely encourage school owners to introduce this genre, whether through workshops or regular classes. The Classical Greek community is eager to grow, welcoming teachers and schools with a wealth of support and knowledge.




Anna Neate

My Classical Greek journey began aged 12 at the Kilburn School of Dance under Amanda Wilkins. Most recently I have been mentored by Kay Ball, who has

coached me through my DDI, DDE and now Licentiate qualifications. I trained professionally at Trinity Laban, earning a Diploma of Higher Education in Dance Theatre. I then completed a BA (Hons) in Dance and Theatre Performance at Bird College. I then trained at the Broadway Dance Center in New York, earning a Certificate of Excellence from their International Student Visa Programme.

All of my dance experience has solidified my love and passion for Classical Greek. I get great satisfaction as the students blossom through the diversity of the style and as the Greek technique develops their performance quality, musicality and ultimately love of dance. Based on natural body movements, the genre's variety of styles offers unique challenges and development opportunities, while its deep roots in ancient Greek history add fun and storytelling. I love how creativity is encouraged throughout the entire syllabus, paralleled with the solid base in technique, meaning each dancer has the opportunity to thrive physically and artistically.

On completing my Licentiate, I plan to continue to work towards my Fellowship and gain examiner status. I feel passionately about the continuation of Classical Greek and ensuring it is enjoyed by each generation still to come. I would love nothing more than to continue to teach students and to help to train the teachers of the future, perpetuating the joy of Classical Greek and its relevance today.

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**
 **ISTD: Classical Indian Dance Faculty**

Classical Indian Dance

The synergy of yoga and dance

Nikita Thakrar highlights the importance of ISTD Safe Dance Practice and the connection to yoga practices within our syllabus.

Nikita is multi-faceted teacher, mentor and coach of Indian classical dance and yoga. She is the founder of the award-winning DNC Dance and Yoga studio in Berkshire.

From my first yoga class as a teenager to now running my own yoga studio, I recognise the positive effects that yoga has contributed towards my dance development. Learning both dance and yoga simultaneously is one of the best things I have done, as I believe that they both support each other. Particularly during my decade of intensive training in India, yoga became a companion to my dance, complimenting my overall health and wellbeing.

Since I began teaching, I have incorporated yoga into my classes, to enhance my students' performance, reduce their risk of injuries, and to encourage them to cultivate a deeper connection with their body and mind. I was therefore pleased to see when yoga was introduced as core elements in the ISTD Safe Dance Practice syllabus.

Bringing yoga postures into the warm up and cool down, has had profound benefits for my students of all ages, including:

Body conditioning

- **Improved posture:** Yoga helps correct postural imbalances, ensuring proper alignment and preventing injuries.
- **Increased core strength:** Core engagement is crucial for dancers. Yoga poses like plank, boat pose, and twists strengthen the core muscles, providing stability and power.
- **Enhanced flexibility:** Yoga's focus on stretching and range of motion can improve flexibility, allowing for greater ease of movement and preventing injuries.



Strength and power

- **Muscle development:** Yoga poses that require strength, such as warrior II and downward-facing dog, can help build and tone muscles, improving overall strength and power.
- **Power generation:** Yoga can help dancers generate more power and explosiveness in their movements by improving muscle coordination and core strength.

Balance and coordination

- **Enhanced balance:** Balancing poses like tree pose and warrior III challenge your balance and coordination, essential for dancers to execute complex movements with precision.
- **Proprioception:** Yoga can improve proprioception, the body's sense of where it is in space, leading to better control and coordination on stage.

Injury prevention

- **Mind-body connection:** Yoga fosters a strong mind-body connection, helping dancers become more aware of their bodies and prevent injuries.
- **Flexibility and strength:** By improving flexibility and strength, yoga can reduce the risk of overuse injuries and strains.

Incorporating yoga into your dance training

I strongly encourage dance teachers to introduce yoga into their curriculum, not only to support the ISTD Safe Dance Practice requirements, but also as a holistic element to their student's training.

I believe that being a proficient dance and yoga teacher sets us apart from others, and provides you with the following:

- **Enhanced teaching skills:** Understanding yoga principles can help dance teachers provide more effective instruction and corrections.
- **Personal growth:** Yoga can foster self-awareness, mindfulness, and personal growth.
- **Professional development:** Adding yoga to your skillset can make you a more versatile and sought-after dance teacher.
- **Increased credibility:** Demonstrating a commitment to holistic well-being can enhance your reputation as a dance instructor.

If you are considering training in yoga in order to experience the benefits, do consider these tips:

- **Find a yoga teacher who understands dance:** Look for a teacher who is

familiar with the specific needs of dancers and can provide modifications or adjustments as needed.

- **Practice regularly:** Consistency is key. Aim to practice yoga at least a few times a week under an experienced instructor, to see significant improvements.
- **Listen to your body:** Pay attention to your body's signals and avoid overexertion.
- **Experiment with different styles:** Explore various yoga styles, such as vinyasa, hatha, or restorative, to find what works best for you.

I recently completed my DDE in Kathak, and with my background in yoga it greatly contributed to my understanding of anatomy and physiology in dance, which is embedded into one of the units. It also supported my understanding of the cognitive side as I am able to approach dance with a holistic approach taking each student's physical, cognitive and emotional needs into account when planning my lessons and preparing my content.

Warming up with yoga

- **Gradual progression:** Yoga poses can be gradually intensified to prepare the body for more demanding dance movements.
- **Increased blood flow:** Yoga helps to increase blood flow to the muscles, improving flexibility and reducing the risk of injury.
- **Mind-body connection:** Yoga fosters a greater mind-body connection, allowing dancers to become more aware of their bodies and avoid overexertion.

Cooling down with yoga

- **Flexibility and range of motion:** Post-dance yoga poses can help maintain flexibility and range of motion, reducing muscle soreness and stiffness.
- **Stress reduction:** Yoga can help calm the mind and reduce stress, promoting relaxation and recovery after a physically demanding dance session.
- **Improved circulation:** Gentle yoga poses can aid in circulation, helping to flush out lactic acid and reduce muscle soreness.

“

I recently completed my DDE in Kathak, and with my background in yoga it greatly contributed to my understanding of anatomy and physiology in dance.

Specific yoga poses for warm-ups and cool-downs

- **Warm-up:** Sun salutations, cat-cow pose, downward-facing dog, warrior poses, triangle pose
- **Cool-down:** Child's pose, seated forward fold, pigeon pose, happy baby pose, savasana

By incorporating yoga into your warm-up and cool-down routines, you can significantly reduce your risk of injuries and enhance your overall dance experience.

We would love to hear from members about your experience and how you use yoga within your teaching and how this benefits you and your students?

Manushi Dance Company

Nurturing Kathak excellence for over 25 years.

Manushi Dance Company, founded in 1996 by Vina Ladwa, is a cherished Nottingham institution offering high-quality Kathak training. Mentored by esteemed dancers, Bisakha Sarkar, and Sujata Banerjee, Vina brings expertise and cultural appreciation to her teaching.

Community engagement is central to Manushi's mission, sharing Kathak's beauty through local performances and educational programmes. Vina's dedication to outreach reflects her belief in dance's power to inspire and connect.

Manushi fosters a supportive environment where students of all ages and backgrounds grow artistically, forming lasting friendships. Vina's home studio serves as a nurturing second home.

By incorporating the ISTD Kathak syllabus, Manushi ensures students receive top-quality training. Each year, they confidently undertake exams, progressing with skill and dedication.

Through Vina's commitment to excellence, accessibility, and continuous improvement, Manushi empowers students to reach their fullest potential. As a community hub, the school celebrates dance as a source of joy and connection, preserving Kathak's legacy for future generations.

Right Manushi Dance Company students proudly holding their ISTD certificates (exam taken in April 2024)



Above Manushi Dance Company students





Contemporary Dance

Intermediate

Sian Hopkins, Contemporary
Lead Lecturer, considers how
to embed the theme of Walks
and the connection to Falls.

“Extending a fall forward, taking a step”

Walks take us across the space with power and grace, offering exploration of flow through grounding, cyclical energy and momentum. Each walk solidifies our connection to the earth, establishing sensations of rooting for balance, together with physical expression of elongation. With each walk, we “combine a small fall off the standing leg, and a push to transfer the weight” utilising embodied knowledge of transitional falls. There is an essential pressing into the earth present through our sense of opposition pull, and “activating this cycle of energy elongates the muscular and skeletal systems in both

directions... you press into the earth and sky while your body is vertical but also continuously when the pelvis is falling forward, off the vertical.” Experimentation with straight or bent legs throughout the walking series offers different sensations of grounding and energy from the earth.

“A step forward... can be further extended into taking the whole body into the air. To do that, further energy is added and sustained.”

Elevation requires pressure down to generate upward and travelling momentum. Muscular processes take place throughout the body for this, and yet, the feet are the point of contact where we gather momentum and return with control for landing. Pushing off the earth right to the ends of the toes maximises momentum gained, really using the ground as an extension of energy from the body. Our connection to the ground, our sense of opposition pull found through the Falls, and emphasis on full articulation of the feet, are all essential elements for elevated travelling. Leaps are an extension of walks, and therefore, an extension of falls.

“The Walks class cultivates the awareness of, sensitivity to, and power available through the application of continuity within this process of fall-and-press.”

Sliding the feet on landing from a tilt, while continuing to fall, opens avenues for depth and breadth of movement. Avoiding stepping underneath yourself suspends moments of weight transference, cultivating deeper positions and smoother transitions. If you have lines or markings on your dancefloor (eg, edges of flooring, sports hall markings, tape for spacing) you can start Stride on the Spot on one line and aim to reach the one in front walking forwards, returning to the place you started when walking backwards. This encourages stepping away from, not under, and gives a visual marker for whether you are travelling back as much as forward in the space. It creates a fun task playing with sliding, pressing and travelling, bringing awareness to the more challenging backwards fall.

Our feet are active and alive throughout all movement – yet at times, focus gets lost on simply whether they are correctly pointed or flexed to match a desired aesthetic. Placing importance on the physical experience draws attention to an extremity often forgotten or not fully incorporated. Dancing barefoot can feel disconcerting, particularly if most of one’s dancing has involved the use of foot coverings. Learning to slide across the floor and not get that stuck, staccato motion, requires falling with suspension, opposition pull, and having a degree of control around where and when the pelvis is in space. Getting stuck while sliding barefoot, is often from transferring the weight too soon. Try keeping the heel of the supporting leg down as long as possible, pressing into the earth while feeling the energy reach up and through the body in the opposite direction of where your slide is travelling.

To encourage exploration of barefoot dancing, I have always loved referring to Clarissa Pinkola Estés’ description of La Que Sabe – The One Who Knows, in her book *Women Who Run With The Wolves* (1992). Estes speaks of a myth grounded in the archetypal expression of the wild woman, revealing that women were created “from a wrinkle on the sole of [La Que Sabe’s] divine foot... the skin of the sole, which feels everything”. Representing the experience of wearing shoes as “walking with blindfolds on [your] feet” (Estés, 1992, p.25). This imagery opens a world of sensory exploration through our feet on the ground as we dance, working with and against resistance felt on different



Find out what the Contemporary syllabus can offer you and your students – visit www.istd.org/contemporary

surfaces. Personally, I find dancing with and without foot coverings very distinctive experiences. Different physical processes are involved with balance and shifting of weight when you have a more solid grip on the earth without sliding in socks for example. Whether some or none of the foot is covered, using active imagination to experience the power we have within ourselves, to shift, slide, glide and push off the earth is worth exploration.

“Power and pressure inform the look and experience of the whole of the energetic and muscular systems of the body.”

At first, some elements of the walks may leave one feeling stilted and restricted when grasping the physicality required. Once pressure down into the earth has been established, a freedom of the upper body is necessary to seek. Aim for breathing to be unrestricted, not held, and make use of the natural

spiral within walks to establish freedom and expansiveness from the heart centre.

It is evident that building upon prior knowledge aids our future progress. Continuing to develop how to physicalise the principles of movement by exploring them in your own body, will aid discovery and ownership of individual movement style and presence. Keep revisiting and incorporating material from the falls series as you move through walks, continuing the journey towards deeper physicalisation and expression of self.

All quotes come from the Contemporary Intermediate Syllabus Introduction, written by Dr Ross McKim, unless otherwise stated.

Teacher's corner

Try this!

Use improvisation to warm up at the beginning of class.

Start by getting students to walk around the space, making choices about different shaped pathways, trying to fill any empty spaces they see, not forgetting about the corners of the room! Then instruct students to pick a person in space, their task is to maintain the same distance from them as everyone continues to move. Play with speed, instructing students to speed up and slow down, perhaps using percentages as a guide, eg speed at 80%, speed at 20% and so on. At the end of the task, can anyone guess who was following them?



Disco Freestyle and Rock n Roll

Grand Finals Day 2025

A weekend dance extravaganza!

The ISTD is thrilled to announce that our next Grand Finals Day will be a two-day event, taking place on 11 and 12 October 2025. This exciting expansion will allow for even more dancers to showcase their talents and celebrate the pinnacle of dance achievement.

In addition to the traditional DFR Grades, Street Dance Solos, Teams, and Crews, we are proud to introduce an Adapted Dance Section. This section will provide a platform for dancers with disabilities to compete and be recognised for their exceptional skills. We believe that all dancers deserve equal opportunities to participate in our prestigious event.

We are actively working with experts to ensure that our Adapted Dance Section is inclusive, accessible, and aims to support the different needs of our participants. More details about the specific requirements and categories will be shared in the coming weeks.

Please keep an eye on your emails for updates and additional information regarding Grand Finals Day 2025. We look forward to a weekend filled with incredible performances, camaraderie, and celebration.

Right Laura (centre) with Emma and Phoebe
Far right Grand Finals Day 2024

More than dance

ISTD committee member, Laura Rampton, reflects on the vital role of teachers to guide pupils in the studio and beyond.

During the summer whilst catching up with friends and peers from the world of dance, a topic of conversation came up on several occasions, 'seniors flying the nest.' I am certain that many of you can relate to the feeling you experience when your 'home grown' pupils have the next chapter of their lives to embark on.

“

Behind every dancer who believed in themselves, is a teacher who believed in them first.

At the beginning of a pupil's 'dance journey' and at any age, we as teachers are there from day one, to teach, nurture, support, guide, encourage and to create a safe space for learning and hopefully falling in love with dance!

So many of you reading this will wholeheartedly agree that it is an incredible privilege to be a part of a pupil's childhood, teenage and young adult years.

The 'Journey of dance' can look quite different to each individual. However, the impact that dance has on our pupils, along with fostering a community and

belonging, friendships, support networks, opportunities, and experiences, along with 'real life' moments, where we discover that every ounce of love and care we pour into our schools creates something so beautiful. It's 'more than dance.'

From our social dancers to those who may attend once a week, or indeed those pupils who participate and train for examinations and competitions, the impact we as dance teachers have on every young person within our care is truly remarkable. From building confidence, self-esteem, and the ability to creatively express themselves – our role is so important.

I wanted to share photo of two of my beautiful 'home-grown' pupils who are starting university and who I have had the absolute pleasure and joy of teaching since they were little girls. Emma Waller and Phoebe Licence have been best friends and dance partners for their entire dance journey. They are both dearly loved and will be missed enormously, and I very much look forward to the academic holidays when they can visit.

As dance teachers, we continue to inspire generation after generation to find love and joy in dance and appreciate all it has to offer.





Imperial Classical Ballet

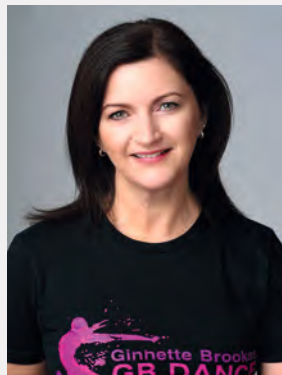
The benefits of dancing in adulthood

Ginnette Brookes, AISTD, looks at how to successfully introduce adult ballet classes in your school and the rewards of entering mature students for exams.

Across Britain a significant percentage of adults engage in dance as a form of exercise. Ballet is the most popular form of dance in the UK and adults seem to be increasingly drawn to this beautiful dance genre. The benefits of ballet in terms of improved posture, strength, balance, cognitive development, and more, engage adults and draw them to commit to weekly classes.*

*Turn to page 12 to read more about 'Let's Dance'

— an exciting new national campaign to advocate for the proven physical and mental health benefits of dance, led by ISTD Grand Council member, Angela Rippon CBE. This ties in with our existing advocacy projects and member resources to encourage even more people to enjoy the benefits of dance with ISTD teachers.



Ginnette Brookes

Ginnette Brookes AISTD (ICB and National), is a full member of the ISTD and the Owner/Principal of GB Dance, Leicester. After graduating from the London College of Dance in 1988, Ginnette gained extensive experience teaching at private dance schools, for local education authorities, and at events. In September 2021, she founded GB Dance, focusing exclusively on adult dance classes in Leicester and Leicestershire. Ginnette teaches Ballet, Tap, Dance Exercise, Seated Exercise for care homes and community groups, and Silver Swans Ballet, with over 100 adults attending her weekly classes.

In 2021 I started my own business focusing on teaching dance to adults. In the post pandemic year, I could see that activities for adults were an important way of not only bringing people together but also providing everything they were looking for in a safe and non-judgmental environment. I wanted to give them a place to be themselves, some learning a new skill, others rediscovering a former hobby. Little did I think that in April and May 2024 I would be entering my first sets of candidates for their ISTD Imperial Classical Ballet Grade 2 exam.

The idea started when I saw my adult dancers really valued the sense of learning and achievement the ballet classes offered them. This wasn't influenced by a sense of competition, more a pride in their progression and understanding. I tentatively suggested working towards an

exam and was surprised at the response.

I had to consider how this would work, both for me as a teacher and for those aiming for the exam. I arranged a collaborative meeting for all those interested to cover the detail and answer their questions so they could make informed decisions. It was important to remember these were adults attending classes not attached to a dance school, so they were unfamiliar with any of the processes building up to and taking a dance exam.

I decided to create a separate exam class from my general adult ballet class, offering a comfortable environment where they could ask questions, and we could break down the exercises and vocabulary. Many continued attending both classes to give them extra practice. Their dedication and focus were joyful to



Imperial Classical Ballet Awards 2025

Combined Junior and Senior Ballet Awards.

- Video entries will be adjudicated online.
- International finalists will be adjudicated online and a winners showreel shared on Friday 25 April 2025.
- UK finalists will attend live UK finals on Sunday 27 April 2025 at Elmhurst Ballet School, Birmingham.

Save the dates in 2025:

7 January: early bird booking opens

21 January: early bird closes

22 January: full price booking opens

17 February: full price booking closes

For further details, visit:

www.istd.org/events



witness and incredibly rewarding for me. The exam itself was a thoroughly positive experience for them all and I am grateful to the examiner for making each of them feel safe, comfortable and valued – they went in nervous and came out elated! She created a positive and memorable experience for them – they asked about the next exam straight away!

In advising anyone thinking of offering adults the opportunity to take an exam, I would highlight their tremendous sense of achievement and my heartfelt sense of pride as a teacher. In times of greater inclusion, we should embrace mature learners and celebrate them too!

Teaching dance to adults top tips:

- A meeting to give the whole picture of commitment, timeline, dancewear and more.
- A WhatsApp or email group for practice videos, terminology explanations and weekly motivation.
- A collaborative approach.
- A flexible approach to exam wear.
- Consider entering candidates at a lower grade than they are capable of, to build confidence and introduce them gently to the examination process.

Above Ginnette Brookes and her students at GB Dance in Leicester

Right Finalists at Imperial Classical Ballet Awards 2024



Imperial Classical Ballet Vocational Grades

Your Facebook pop-up surgery questions answered.

Intermediate Foundation

Do Option B candidates do a fouetté in pirouettes en dedans?

Like Option A, candidates can either take a fouetté action or bring the foot straight to pirouette position.

Please clarify 'working foot' in posé en avant, en arrière and de côté at the barre. When doing the exercise 'de côté', does the foot that comes up go devant or derrière?

When taken de côté you use the front foot to posé and the other leg (the working leg) is placed in pirouette position devant.

Do rises en pointe in 5th just rise, or can students rise and bring in front/back foot to a closed 5th en pointe?

Rise through the feet and stay, unless it's the end of an exercise and balancing. For relevés, both feet come together to make a closed 5th position en pointe.

Footwear for Intermediate and Intermediate Foundation: would canvas split sole with elastic be ok?

Yes. Please also see the uniform guide: www.istd.org/examinations/theatre-dance-syllabus-outlines

Intermediate

After the dégagé to 2nd in pliés, if students don't have a wide enough base to dance a full grand plié, can they adjust the leg closest to the barre?

Yes. A simple readjustment of the inside foot is acceptable without fully extending into a dégagé.

Forward port de bras at the barre and 1st port de bras in centre: should the recovery be with a straight back or a curl up?

Recovery of the forward ports de bras at the barre at Intermediate is a natural recovery through the spine. In the 1st set ports de bras, start with a natural recovery through the spine then the back extends into a diagonal as you draw up to the dégagé derrière and the arms lift to en couronne.

Développé passé and tombé en avant: is the leg held at around 45 degrees after the tombé, or can it squeeze a little higher?

The height of the raised leg is no higher than 45°. The focus is on the movement of the tombé and use

of the supporting leg and foot, not the height of the arabesque line.

Does the examiner or candidate choose between 1st and 2nd Port de bras, 1st and 2nd Adage, posé en avant and posé en arrière on barre to show in examination?

Live exams: candidates choose between the 1st or 2nd Adage Enchaînement, and examiners choose which Demi-Pointe exercise or Port de Bras Enchaînement to see.

Remote exams: information is on the Remote Examination Format script; the teacher delivering the exam chooses which demi-pointe exercise is shown.

Is emboîté on pointe taken as 3 mini extensions to the side 1 and 2 or as the emboîtés from the corner with retiré each time but not turning?

Emboîté (as opposed to emboîté relevé en tournant) commences 5th position en pointe then a small glissé extension to 2nd with the back leg to close 5th devant; repeated with the other leg. Any number can be asked for in an exam, not always 3.



Advanced 1

What is the height for Advanced 1 battement fondu?

Slightly higher than in Intermediate but no higher than 90°.

Adage at the barre: does the head turn towards the barre in the développé to ecarté (as in the DVD), or does the option remain to turn the head to the raised arm?

Either is acceptable. Generally, if the leg line of the développé is higher, the head is taken towards the barre then turns to the écarté arm on the rise. If the leg is squarer (90°) the head turns towards the leg and the écarté arm remains on the rise.

What is the timing for Grand Battement Développé?

Retiré (1) Extend (2) Close (3) hold (4).

Is the renversé taken to arabesque or attitude line, and with opposition arm in grecque or back arm high?

To arabesque. If using the right leg, raise the right arm into attitude grecque.

Where is the épaulement in the set jeté rond de jambe sauté?

En dedans, the same shoulder as the working leg comes forward. En dehors, the opposite shoulder to the working leg comes forward.

Are pas de bourrées en tournant over and under seen with an extension à la seconde or a rond de jambe?

Either. From 5th with an assemblé soutenu movement; from an extension 2nd; or from, for example, the landing of a jump in a cou de pied position.

Does temps de flèche in the grand allegro enchaînement take off in a croisé alignment so the développé action is also croisé? Or is it ouverte?

After glissade derrière (taken more as a passing glissade derrière), the back foot (right leg) lifts to attitude then the left leg does the développé movement to finish 5th position croisé.

Advanced 2

Please break down the Advanced 2 sissonne doublée battu over and under

Sissonne doublée battu over, commencing right foot devant in fifth position: Sissonne ouverte battu de côté with the beat of a changement battu travelling to the right, coupé over, then assemblé battu over.

For under, commencing right foot devant: Sissonne ouverte battu de côté with the beat of a changement battu towards back foot, coupé under, then assemblé battu under.

Licentiate

Is the coaching lesson free or do you need to show set exercises?

In the first part of the exam, candidates teach a free class to their students; the second section concentrates on the set work.

Latin American, Modern Ballroom and Sequence

Membership

International Dance Shoes Ltd is one of our trusted partners and provides our members with an exclusive discount. ISTD Members get 10% off at check out. Login to My ISTD to access the exclusive discount code. **www.istd.org/partner/affinity-partners**

Elegance meets performance

We caught up with Justin Patel of International Dance Shoes Ltd.

Evolution of dance shoes

Since I've been in the business for the last 12 years or so we've seen greater demand for more and more flexibility so both male and female dancers can really maximise the use of their feet. Our exciting challenge therefore is to make shoes which look beautiful and elegant, but they need to be very strong whilst lightweight, and very supportive yet flexible.

With such strong traditions in the ballroom, stylistically the shoe style trends don't change much, we do see heel shapes come in and out of fashion, and back in again. Slim heel styles went even slimmer, then came back to being just slim again! Though your most popular heel globally will always be the classic 'flared' shaped heel.

Footwear trends for all genders

In recent years, we've begun offering a broader range of choices that cater to all genders. Recognising the diversity within dance communities, we now offer more inclusive sizing and styling options. We have some unisex models and additionally we offer probably the biggest range of heel options on the market, allowing

dancers to personalise their shoes to suit their individual preferences and needs. There is still work to do in the expansion to reflect a bigger commitment to inclusivity and diversity, ensuring that dancers of all genders can find footwear that not only enhances their performance but also aligns with their personal style.

In terms of trends and innovations, all dancers benefit from advancements in materials and construction techniques that enhance comfort, durability, and performance in our shoes. Of course with the typical men's shoe not being an open toe sandal or court shoe, we're able to add even more layers of padding and cushioning to our insoles. Generally, though, we try to get as much cushioning and support into every shoe no matter what style.

Justin Patel

Justin Patel is the co-owner of International Dance Shoes Ltd, along with his father, Rashmi, who founded the business in 1981. While Rashmi primarily focuses on the manufacturing side, Justin takes responsibility for the overall strategy. Their factory, which includes a shop, along with their team, is based in Milton Keynes.



Left Justin Patel holding the Queen's Award for International Trade

Developments in comfort

Comfort is so important to us. When you speak with dancers you learn just how much they are either training, performing or teaching. A lot of dancers are on a dancefloor for 10 hours a day and if they're going to have a long and pain-free career, they need comfortable shoes.

Whilst we've always paid close attention to comfort, in the years before Covid I spent some very enjoyable time with a physio in London who would see a lot of dancers and tend to their injuries. I'd take samples I'd picked up at trade fairs in Italy and Spain to her and she'd help me choose which were most essential given the rigours of dancing. Arch support has been very important and having shoes padded from the back of the heel to the tip of the toe is vital.





There is always a fear that a dancer will only ever pay so much for a pair of dance shoes as for a regular dancer, these can get beaten up quickly. A manufacturer can strip out the padding to lower the cost to produce a shoe, to sell it at a lower price, but that's something we wouldn't budge on. Instead, it's important to educate dancers to place a high consideration on comfort when choosing a shoe to dance in.

Dance shoes must fit like a glove and feel like a second skin.

New materials and colours

We've got our 'shimmer' material that is available in Tan, which is an alternative to the traditional Tan Satin, and it's more durable. Satin is the classic look, but it can wear easily and be tough to clean (though we have recently added some great shoe care products to our website).

Overall, ballroom and Latin American dance shoe styles tend to remain the same, traditional and classic styles in the same traditional colours. In 2021 though, we extended the range of 'nude' tones we offer. Historically, all brands (as is still the case with most), only offer a light skin

tone colour and label it 'Flesh' whereas we, understanding that not everyone has the same colour flesh, changed that colour reference to 'Peach' and added two darker skin tones, as part of our responsibility to help make the dance world more inclusive.

Many years ago, we also noticed that for teaching shoes, most on the market were black, beige or with the classic leopard print. We already did these but thought one day – when a teacher is running a kid's class, why don't we use some even more interesting fabrics so it's easier to draw attention to the footwork? In 2015 we started working with Strictly's Katya as she was always quite the fashionista when competing



and we were sponsoring her and Neil. The 'lipstick' print was a huge hit and then we made a fabric where we added our dogs faces to it, which was wild and people loved it! We did one with paint splats, and recently we introduced a fabric which is a glittery blue from one side, and a glittery pink if you look from the other (our brand colours), it's crazy. Dancers love it though, it's great to work with fun fabrics and do something different

With a growing demand for vegan shoes, we were the first I believe to add vegan soling options, plus non-leather upper material options so we can make a fully vegan shoe.

There is growing attention on sustainability in materials and manufacturing, so we're also having some fun testing some new, innovative materials and hopefully we're not a million miles away from bringing more new developments to the market soon.

Impact on dancesport teachers and students

I think one of the most important things is the classic 'you get what you pay for'. A dance shoe must fit like a glove, and it needs to be comfortable – to the point where you don't even need to think about your shoes while you dance. 'Buy cheap, buy twice' is the other one: shoes need to have been made using good materials so that they last.

It is very important to pick a fit and a heel that works for you and that might often mean that what's £20 on Amazon isn't right for you. Do you feel comfortable on a high heel, or should you go lower? Should you take a wider fitting because you're taking your dance class in the evening after a day at work when your feet are a bit swollen? Should you take a ballroom shoe with a strap because your feet are narrow because you don't want your shoe to fly off mid dance?

We hope that dance teachers will give the best advice for two reasons: first, based on the considerations of the dancer. A tall and slim heel might look sexy, but is that what the dancer needs to enjoy dancing and maximise performance? And secondly, as a teacher, they will be on their feet for hours on end, so they should place a high emphasis on the need for comfortable shoes to their students too.

Experience with Strictly Come Dancing

It's crazy how we've been involved in Strictly Come Dancing for 20 years now! It is such an incredible show. The trends for their needs from us have typically remained similar – and that's good because the show needs to maintain the traditions of ballroom and Latin American dance styles.

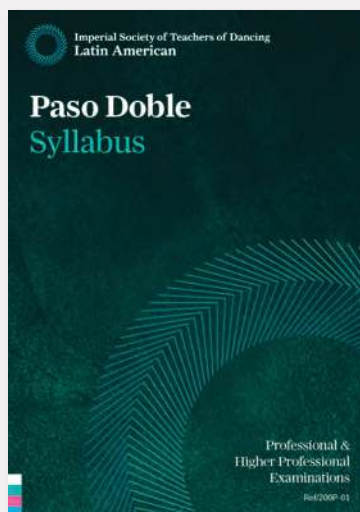
We bring a classic, traditional style to the show, with just a subtle update recently in that the ladies' Latin shoes are typically a bit lighter than before. As we expanded our range of nude tones, we began offering some of our ladies' Latin shoes in Peach Satin – a finish previously reserved for ballroom shoes. Since the dancers on the show don't tend to use as intense a tanning routine as those on the competitive circuit, Peach Satin has become a popular choice for the ladies' Latin shoes on the show.

Personal involvement and insights

What's not to love about shoes? And we make them, which is special. Our family business may not be the biggest, but I love that everything's under one roof, so we can act on new ideas right away. It's a tough industry, with few UK shoe manufacturers left,

especially for ladies' shoes. 75% of our business is export, offering great travel opportunities and insights into overseas markets. We even won the Queen's Award for International Trade. The best part? The challenge of creating shoes that are both elegantly stylish and built for performance.

i Updated Paso Doble Syllabus Refreshed, inclusive, and easier to use!



This refreshed edition features a new A4 format for easier reading and adopts the ISTD's modern visual brand. In keeping with inclusive dance practices, gendered terms have been replaced with 'Leader' and 'Follower' throughout.

This essential reference for teachers includes a clear analysis of figures and technique, helping you guide students from beginner to professional levels.

Available from the ISTD shop.

Party dance corner

Party Line Dance

Our Ballroom, Latin and Sequence faculties bring you a fun party dance for you to teach and share with your pupils.

Instructions	Counts
RF diagonally forward Close LF to RF RF diagonally forward Tap LF to RF	1 2 3 4
LF diagonally forward Close RF to LF LF diagonally forward Tap RF to LF	5 6 7 8
RF diagonally back Close LF to RF RF diagonally back Tap LF to RF	1 2 3 4
LF diagonally back Close RF to LF LF diagonally back Tap RF to LF	5 6 7 8
Cross RF over LF LF Back RF side Replace weight to LF	1 2 3 4
Repeat for the count of 5678 turning ¼ to the right over count 7 & 8	
RF back on diagonal line LF side RF forward on diagonal line Point or Kick LF forward	1 2 3 4
LF back on diagonal line RF side LF forward on diagonal line Point or kick RF forward	5 6 7 8
Repeat the above 8 counts	
Turn 7/8 to the right – RLR then tap LF to RF	1 2 3 4
Turn a complete turn to the left – LRL then tap RF to LF	5 6 7 8
Start again with RF	

Thanks to Sharon Skingley of Danceasy for choregraphing this dance and sharing with members.




Upcoming review of amateur medal tests – get involved!

We're excited to announce that in early 2025, we will be reviewing and restructuring our amateur medal test exams. We want your input! Whether you're a member, teacher, examiner, or student, your insights are invaluable in helping us create products that suit your needs and support your business. Join one of our four focus groups and be part of shaping the future. Contact us today to get involved in this important process. Email mhill@istd.org to register your interest.

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**

 **ISTD: Modern Theatre Faculty**

Modern Theatre

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From a choreography perspective, the impact of music is a significant component of my creative journey.

Barbara Evans' journey in Modern Theatre

From student to innovator, director, choreographer, teacher and educator.

Tell us about your training and your experience with ISTD from an early age?

I'm an ISTD baby through and through! I began my journey in at a local ballet school, and by age 11, I was taking the bus multiple times a week to the exceptional Jennie Smith School of Dance in Bolton. There, I honed my skills in ISTD Modern Theatre, Tap, and RAD ballet through rigorous training and examinations.

At 16, I transferred to the Elliott Clarke School, never hesitating to make the three-hour round trip each day from home to Liverpool. It was here that I further developed my modern theatre skills and was introduced to Graham technique by the influential Mavis Taberner. I cherished every moment of training with her, as she became my idol.

My parents valued education and believed that having “letters” after my name was important for dance training at the time. My Mum had her own local acrobatic act and participated in formation ballroom dancing with my dad.

They had learned about the London College of Dance and Drama from another local dancer, and inspired by the prospect of dance qualifications, I moved to London at 18 and enrolled



Barbara Evans

Barbara Evans FISTD is a Director and Choreographer who specialises in narrative driven theatrical experiences. She has lectured globally and trained many dancers with her unique jazz technique. As a Peter Pan Director she has worked across the UK to create over 20 productions. In September 2024 she was appointed Senior Lecturer on the The Wilkes Academy Degree Course, in addition to her position as Head of Jazz.

at the ISTD's London College of Dance and Drama (LCDD).

What was training like as a college student and did this affect your ambitions?

I didn't have a specific ambition; I just knew I wanted to dance. Being at LCDD exposed me to a wide array of opportunities within the performing arts. I explored everything from ballet to jazz, modern theatre to classical Greek, and historical dance, guided by the inspirational Principal, Phroso Phister. She instilled in me a lasting appreciation for the beauty of the Renaissance, which I carry with me to this day.

We were also taught by an unbelievable teacher of Early Dance, Belinda Quirey, who at the time had a TV series about early dance.

She had such intellect, I would sit

crossed-legged on the studio floor totally enthralled with her dance knowledge.

We were a stone's throw from the West End, and so this meant I could attend external classes with Arlene Phillips at The Dance Centre, which was perfectly placed for me to develop the professional side as well.

During my third year at LCDD, as part of our Associate training, we were required to gain teaching experience in a school. I went to Ivy Baker's Dance School in Clacton, where Miss Baker needed a teacher who could instruct at an advanced level. Since I had my ISTD qualifications, I taught alongside other instructors, including Alison Willett. Alison inspired me with her choreography and opened my eyes to the possibilities within choreography. She was an exceptional teacher, known for her straightforward approach that made everything





accessible and easy to understand.

Miss Baker connected me to Murielle Ashcroft who took me under her wing, and I taught for her at New Hall School in Chelmsford. These two ladies then put me forward to work for Betty Laine, where my teaching and choreography pathway took off. If I didn't have these three women in my life, along with my mother, I'm really not sure what I would have been doing! As looking back now, I was so lucky to have these wonderful and dynamic ISTD woman pushing me forward.

Once I arrived at Betty Laine's, I jumped straight into choreography, which began to develop my choreographic skills. However, it was quite daunting to have my work showcased alongside the creations of choreographers like Pat Dennison and Lyn Richardson. Nevertheless, witnessing the way these choreographers collaborated with their dancers and music was at times pure genius.

I recognised a deep connection in how these choreographers' used music, as I believe music is the driving force behind any creative project. My late father, who played the piano, once told me, "Barbara, it's all about having great music," and his words have left a lasting impression on me. The emotional relevance and connection to the music

are crucial; for many of us in the dance world, it becomes an innate, visceral feeling that evolves into second nature over the years. From a choreography perspective, the impact of music on my creative journey is a significant component of my creative journey.

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Looking back, I didnt focus on technique, as it became embodied due to my ISTD training. However, the weekly repetition and progressions for exams greatly boosted my development and remains crucial in fostering elite technique for students today.

Who were your role models growing up and do they affect your projects?

I have two main strands of influence: the theatrical-showbiz side and the dance theatre world. One of my biggest inspirations in the dance theatre genre was Lindsay Kemp, the brilliant mime artist and dancer. His collaboration with Christopher Bruce on Rambert's *A Cruel Garden* left a lasting impression on me. I've never been so riveted by a performance; the combination of theatricality and movement narrative, paired with Bruce's choreography,

was on another level. This experience has stayed with me ever since.

Of course, on the showbiz side Bob Fosse was a huge role model for me as both a choreographer and a director. Particularly in my early teaching days, as the film *All that Jazz* had just opened and the underlying stories and how he delivered his vision as both a choreographer and director amazed and inspired me. In my own projects I fuse together my work as a director and choreographer so there is a cross-pollination of ideas. Wearing both of these 'hats' like means that I can give the performers the conceptual thoughts as well as creating the steps behind those themes.

In my college projects, I experienced different types of pressures compared to the professional world, but always developing the choreographic muscle. However, I have been fortunate to collaborate with many talented college students who are now professionals. This collaboration allowed me to develop choreographic themes and ideas throughout classes and into the final pieces. While at Laine's, I worked with students like Charlie Stemp, who played the lead role in a concept piece called *Evolution*, which was centred around the industrial revolution. This piece was later recreated at Wilkes Academy and eventually made its way into the professional world, where P&O picked up the show.

How do you use your ISTD training with teaching style and technique with your students?

Having trained extensively in the ISTD technique for many years, I found that it significantly elevated my teaching abilities through the training and exam experiences I underwent. In the 21st century, students must be as versatile as possible, and a strong foundation in technical skills allows them to be more 'market-ready' as skill-based performers.

Reflecting on my younger self and my love for performing, I didnt focus on technique as it became embodied due to my ISTD training. However, working towards exams through the repetition and progression of the syllabus each week added immense value to my development and remains an essential

aspect of students' training today, fostering an elite level of technique. Following a syllabus like the Intermediate Modern provides students with a solid foundation in modern theatre jazz, teaching them about alignment and placement while delivering quality and style in a measurable way, regardless of whether they are new to ISTD or not.

What are your current/future projects?

Currently, I am in the midst of a development project that emerged from a mentorship programme I participated in during 2021–2022 with Mercury Creatives in Colchester. This experience has ignited my passion for writing scripts and lyrics, providing a creative awakening for me. Working on a project that "feeds my soul" and supports my mental health has been incredibly cathartic. In addition, I am

teaching at Wilkes Academy alongside Dr Robert Marsden from Staffordshire University on the Musical Theatre degree programme. This opportunity is very exciting and represents the next step in my teaching journey.

What advice would you give to any student or teacher wanting to go into the performing and/or teaching?

For everybody whether you are a dancer or a teacher – education, education, education! It's so important that you must never stop learning and to create a rich learning environment for both yourself, and your students. Having a positive working attitude is key to booking future work, as the dance world is small and having a good reputation is important.

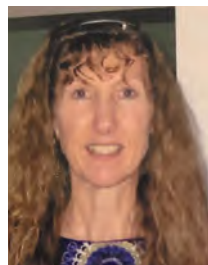
Being prepared for any job or project is essential, and I firmly believe in the famous saying, "fail to prepare,

prepare to fail." This means that no matter what studio or theatre you find yourself in, being thoroughly prepared for as many eventualities as possible allows you to pivot easily if something doesn't go according to plan with a dancer or celebrity, rather than relying on improvisation. Preparation empowers you to make informed choices. This principle applies to various circumstances, whether in teaching, exams, or performance.

Lastly, don't be afraid of failure. Remember, to fail at something is simply your first attempt at learning. Failure should be viewed as a natural part of your journey, providing valuable lessons that contribute to your growth and development.

Voices of experience

Fellow members share their thoughts on the value of our teaching qualifications.



Helen Green

Being a member of the ISTD has had a huge impact on my life. The qualifications I gained have enabled me to teach, travel, examine and meet some

incredible people. It has also enabled me to continue to develop and grow and realise that you never stop learning! There are still so many opportunities to take and new goals to reach!

into contact with the exceptional genius of the individuals who have created and developed the ISTD work through their own exploration of, and passion for, the art and science of dance. Through their generosity of spirit in passing on this work we can learn from this rich heritage and ideally continue to develop and search for teaching excellence from the foundations they have provided.



Sadie Morgan

Many years ago, whilst studying at Bush Davies I was asked by Daphne Peterson if I would like to take my Associate Modern. My initial thought was no. As

a naive 18-year-old I thought I couldn't ever teach! However, you didn't say no to Miss Peterson, so I took on the challenge and completed my Associates.

When I retired from dancing professionally, I thought "what do I do now?" and I was so relieved to have my

teaching qualifications as this seemed the next step on my dance journey. So, my next phase began, and I realised I needed to update my skills. Chichester beckoned and again Miss Peterson was there and asked "have you taken your Licentiate yet?" A recurring theme ensued, I said no, and she said you ought to, so I did!

Whilst gaining my Licentiate and Fellowships I've had guidance from amazing teachers namely Judith Hockaday, Heather Fish and Teresa Theodoulou. Taking these status exams has made me analyse my teaching much more and made me realise what amazing syllabi we have.

The next chapter of my dance career was examining! A friend asked me if I'd thought about applying, I said no (you know where this is leading!) she said "go for it" so I did. I'm so pleased that teachers and mentors encouraged me to get my ISTD qualifications – I love the work, I love the fact it's brought me amazing friendships and taken me to places I would never have been to.



Valerie Jones

Information is not knowledge, and a course is not a qualification, and herein lies the value of ISTD qualifications, which do more than recognise the skill

of knowing which boxes to tick. Studying for these qualifications brings the student

National Dance



Our Grandison Clark Awards

David Needham, Adjudicator, shares his experience and highlights the continuing importance of National Dance.

I believe National Dance remains essential for developing vital skills in today's professional landscape, despite competition from popular new genres. I often find myself explaining vital group choreography skills to professional dancers who have not enjoyed the benefits of National Dance.

The Grandison Clark Awards day was a success thanks to the support of teachers, parents, and volunteers.

Talented competitors participated in the newly introduced class awards and also in the traditional solos, duets and groups sections, demonstrating musicality and enthusiasm, whether live or via video. The professionalism of their costumes and choreography made selecting winners a challenging but rewarding task.

“

The national dance genre offers many dance skills vital for today's profession.

As the adjudicator in the well-equipped Oak Theatre at Scarisbrick Hall School (November 2023) I was reminded of esteemed colleagues from my early choreographic days, including Robert Harrold, whose guidance was invaluable.

Why teach National Dance?

National Dance deepens cross-cultural knowledge and understanding. Its rich content enhances many cross-genre core dance skills essential to today's dancers. These include:

- spatial awareness
- musicality
- partner work
- choreography
- attention to stylistic detail




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**

 **ISTD: Street Dance of The DFR Faculty**

Street Dance

The heartbeat of dance

Patrick Alan, CEO and founder of Musicbox Live, shares his passion for movement and teaching.

What are you best known for in the industry?

I was a breakdancer during the 1980s and danced for Michael Jackson in *Moonwalker* and *Smooth Criminal*. At a young age, Michael asked me to coordinate street dancer auditions, specifically for poppers. Over two days, I auditioned hundreds of dancers in groups of four, working 8–12 hours each day. I taught and danced the popping routine with them as a reference. Michael praised my dedication. Across the hall, Vincent Patterson was auditioning jazz and commercial dancers. The auditions took place at the famous Debbie Reynolds Studios in North Hollywood.

Can you share your background and how you got started in the world of dance?

I'm from St. Louis, Missouri, and started as a local disco kid in the late 1970s. Breakdancing was brand new and 70s dance styles like popping, electric boogaloo, locking, waacking and punking were making a huge comeback. My first dance partner and I won the TV dance competition *Dance Fever*, hosted by Denny Terrio, known for teaching John Travolta to dance for *Saturday Night Fever*. After winning, a major management



company approached me to move to Hollywood for acting and dancing.

My parents had musical backgrounds – my mother was a black opera and gospel singer who studied with Grace Bumbry, and my father, a Scotch-Irish boogie-woogie

pianist, played mostly for fun. They were a hot double act I can imagine.

What styles of dance do you specialise in, and which do you find most challenging or rewarding to teach?

I'm a popper, locker, waacker, jazz dancer,

Teach Street Dance



and a decent street tapper. I could do 10 pirouettes before ever taking a dance class, with my signature move being 10–15 turns while holding my foot above my knee. I prefer teaching street styles like popping, locking, and waacking. These styles are challenging because they rely on feel, which affects execution. Without the right feel, the moves won't flow or look right. While repetition is key in any dance, street styles require an individual feel – the 'x-factor' that makes even simple moves captivate an audience. Charisma can raise a dance to the next level and is what makes stars. Once a dancer masters the feel, I encourage adding charisma through facial expressions, exaggerated gestures, and playful eye contact with the audience. Musicality enhances charisma, especially when it's spontaneous, not choreographed. Filming yourself is important so you can capture unexpected moves and use them in future choreography. Improvising from your feel is key to a great performance, whether in class or on the dance floor.

What inspired you to pursue a career as a dance professional, and what motivates you to continue in this field?

I've always had a love for dance. My mother says I was born singing and

dancing, and while she wanted me to be a singer, I chose dance first. Even as a professional singer-songwriter, I was expected to dance and became known for it. To this day, I still get cast as a dancer, proving you can't escape your calling. Even with sore knees and feet, and fewer turns, if you've got the groove, feel, charisma, and moves – even if a bit rusty – you can still get booked!

“

I like to teach students within their comfort zone to boost their confidence before introducing new challenges. With this confidence, they'll tackle difficult tasks without realising they might be tough, becoming open to trying anything.

How do you approach creating choreography, and what influences your creative process?

I'm a daydreamer and visualiser. While I can create moves on the spot, I prefer to daydream and then bring that vision to life. You can match steps to the bass, drums, or accents, or tell a story by miming the lyrics. For pop

music videos, I like to set consistent choreography for the chorus so fans can easily pick it up, aiming for it to become popular among teens. The rest of the choreography can be as easy, difficult, trendy, or abstract as needed.

Can you discuss any notable performances or projects you've been involved in throughout your career?

Michael Jackson's ever popular *Smooth Criminal* is the most iconic. I was a choreographer and performer on *Thriller Live* in London's West End, which broke box office records. My dance partner Cat and I created the Cat Scat move in the 1980s, which cheerleading squads across America incorporated into their routines. Beyoncé Knowles also credited us as her idols when she performed with her girl band, *Girls Tyme*, on *Star Search* in 1994. Recently, I was part of *OMG* (Old Men Grooving), which placed fourth on *Britain's Got Talent* in 2015, with our first gig in Las Vegas. While I used to be the skinny one, I now inspire many overweight fans to dance without embarrassment. Amazingly I got lots of fan mail from overweight people out there who said I inspired them to get up off the couch and not be embarrassed to have a boogie on

the dance floor or at the family BBQ. Praise God! I'm glad to be used to inspire people and make them feel confident.

What do you think sets apart exceptional dancers from the rest, and how do you cultivate those qualities in your students?

They have a gift that can't be defined or boxed – either a dancer has it or they don't. As a teacher, you must nurture this talent. While you can create a class of great dancers, you can't make them superstars; that exceptional quality is rare. Building a class of world-class dancers requires repetition and drilling toward excellence while inspiring them to pursue it. Competition is healthy and motivates improvement. In class, you'll find jumpers, turners, kickers, and versatile dancers, with groups often forming based on their skills. Despite some rivalry, this competitive environment helps dancers improve: jumpers become great turners, and turners become great jumpers.

How do you stay updated with current trends and developments in the dance industry?

I mentor dancers and share my knowledge of dance history, especially in the street styles I'm known for. My idols passed their knowledge to me, and now it's my responsibility to do the same. I stay connected with young, trendy dancers who are in tune with current trends.

Could you share some insights into the importance of technique versus artistic expression in dance, and how you balance the two in your teaching or performing?

Even the most charismatic dancer seeks work. They must know when to stand out as an individual superstar and when to blend in as part of a company supporting a lead artist, without upstaging them. While some dancers aspire to be stars, most simply want to dance. To secure work, it's essential to be team-oriented and tone it down when necessary. After all, there's no "I" in team.

What advice would you give to aspiring dancers looking to pursue a career in the field?

Work hard and ensure they love

dance, even if it means potentially starving for their art. Be versatile: learn partner dances like salsa and ballroom, and master lifts. Understand how to count eight counts and do some choreography to become a choreographer's assistant, eventually evolving into a choreographer or dance teacher themselves.

Can you discuss the role of dance in promoting physical and mental wellbeing, and how you incorporate this into your teaching philosophy?

It's part of the process. Dance builds coordination and confidence, while the exercise releases endorphins that enhance mood and mental health. I like to teach students within their comfort zone to boost their confidence before introducing new challenges. With this confidence, they'll tackle difficult tasks without realising they might be tough, becoming open to trying anything.

How do you foster a supportive and inclusive environment for your students, regardless of their

background or skill level?

By praising their strengths and highlighting their unique skill sets, I help build their confidence. I feature them in areas where they excel and encourage them to work in groups, emphasising their importance to the team. I let them know that the success of the performance depends on everyone doing their part, not competing, but coming together as a team to achieve the impossible. This demonstrates my trust and belief in them.

Can you share any memorable experiences or moments from your teaching or performing career that have had a significant impact on you?

I taught occasionally at The Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts (LIPA) and was contracted to direct and choreograph their graduation class's end-of-year piece. I was warned about a difficult group, as one student had spiritually poisoned the class and was eventually expelled. My challenge was to help the students believe in themselves. I had 33 girls and 5 boys and created a two-hour dance piece based on the biblical story of Esther, featuring every street dance and hip hop style, including dubstep, jazz, ballet, and more.

After the first week of auditions, the students apologised for their slow progress, realising I treated them as artists with their best interests at heart. They became supportive, arrived on time, and enjoyed the creative process.

As excitement grew, the lead girls' solos included performances with a live snake, pole dancing, fire dance, silks, and pointe shoes. We had support from all departments, with a cast of 35-40, including some sophomores. The

performance was a great success, leaving the audience and LIPA staff in tears, declaring it the best piece in their student show history. The students, who were ready to quit when I arrived, were elated and decided to pursue their dance careers. They gifted me a coffee mug, t-shirts, and hoodies with the show's title and credits, and we shared

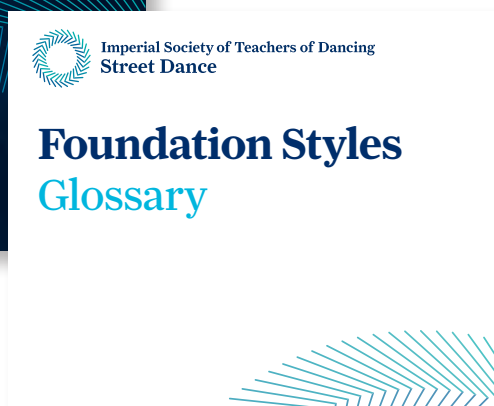
tears and laughter over our accomplishment. It was one of the best experiences of my life, and several dancers were cast in *Thriller Live*. What a result!

Interview by Anna Knowles-Hibbert, DFR committee member

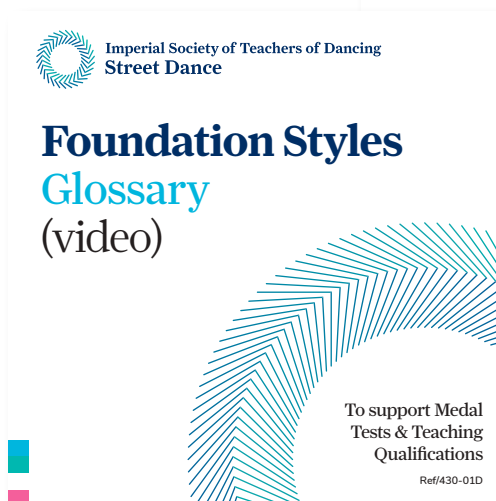




Available to purchase via the ISTD digital shop



Available to purchase via the ISTD physical shop



Available to purchase via the ISTD digital shop



Syllabus updates active from 1 January 2025

A reminder for members already entering Street Dance exams, updates to the syllabus and examination are live from 1 January 2025. Please see a summary of updates below:

- The Street Dance Syllabus Outline is replaced by the Street Dance Medal Test Specification document, providing detailed information about examinations and requirements, as well as important contextual information about the history of Street Dance and different Street Dance styles. Download for free from the ISTD website.
- Pre-Bronze exams are now a Medal Test instead of an Introductory Test
- From Gold level, routines must 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
- Imperial Award has been renamed as Platinum Award
- Pairs will no longer be an option for Street Dance examinations
- Demonstrators are applicable for examinations up to Pre-Bronze only

For any questions, please visit istd.org or contact streetdance@istd.org



2025 Street Dance syllabus updates

Hip Hop routines available now from the ISTD digital shop!

We are pleased to launch new video resources for members teaching Street Dance in their studios. A series of eight Hip Hop routines for Under 6 through to Platinum Award, created by Hip Hop specialists Dominic Hamilton and Joseph Francois are now available as a digital download to learn and teach your students. Teachers also have the option to enter these routines as one of the exam routines at the relevant levels.



Calling all Theatre members teaching Street Dance

We are delighted to invite Theatre members to enter Street Dance Medal Tests in 2025 in the following ways:

1. Full live day of examinations
2. Remote examinations
3. London Centre (at ISTD HQ during the Spring London Centre Exam period, dates tbc between March–April 2024)

Theatre Faculty multi-genre exam days including Street Dance tbc from Summer 2025.

Jason Di Mascio
Head of Faculty Development
for Tap Dance
tap@istd.org

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

 **ISTD: Tap Dance Faculty**

Tap Dance

Optimise your tap exam day

ISTD examiner Elizabeth Reeves offers practical tips for ensuring a smooth, stress-free experience for all involved.

As an ISTD teacher and examiner with over 30 years of experience, I have had the privilege of witnessing exam days from both sides of the table. The success of these days depends not just on the students' preparation, but also on the environment on the day. Here are some helpful ideas to create a smooth-running, stress-free exam day for everyone involved.

The studio

Ensure the studio is big enough for the dancers to be able to demonstrate their work with enough space to have the freedom to travel as a dancer, without being obscured by others. If it is not the dancers' regular studio, try to get at least one practise in the new studio, so the students can find their orientation and feel comfortable in the new space. The examiner will need a bell to let you know when they are ready for the next session and ensure that a bottle of water and a glass are available on their table.

Arrange the studio to provide the examiner with the best view possible. Remind your students to stand away from the table with enough distance for the examiner to be able to see the



Elizabeth Reeves

Elizabeth Reeves has taught ISTD Modern, Tap and Jazz for over 35 years and runs The Betty Wivell Academy ISTD Approved Dance Centre in South London. Elizabeth is an ISTD Fellow in both Modern and Tap and an Examiner in Tap, Modern and Contemporary Faculties.

dancers clearly. Explain to them it is just like sitting in the front row of the stalls in a theatre. It is not always the best view of the performance. A bit of distance offers a better overall perspective.



The success of exam days depends not just on students' preparation, but also on the environment on the day.

The iPod operator

Place the iPod operator to one side of the examiner, preferably not behind, to maintain the examiner's personal space.

The operator should be positioned so they can easily see both the examiner and students. This visibility ensures that they can quickly respond to the examiner's directions and adjust the

music as needed. It is helpful to conduct a mock exam beforehand, where the iPod operator can practise working through the various grades and playlists. This rehearsal will help minimize any technical hitches on the actual exam day.

Mock exam

Conducting a mock exam is an excellent way to prepare your students for their actual exam. During the mock exam, have the teacher sit behind a table, this setup will focus the students on responding to verbal instructions, rather than physical cues from the teacher.

Make the mock exams a special day by inviting the dancers' parents/friends to come and watch. The students enjoy showing their audience all the work they have learnt, and the progress made throughout the year. This also gives the parents and friends a great



Left Some inspiration for longer hair types



insight into the exam process, which is often an eye-opener for many.

Training for leadership and musical adaptability

Encourage your students to take turns leading different exercises, as this will prepare them for the possibility that they might be asked to start first during the exam.

Please make sure all turning exercises are prepared to be shown on both sides.

Also, practice exercises using the entire track, as the beginning of the track can sound different from the middle or end, which might throw the students off. Where possible teach the pupils to “follow on” from one another, however, do listen to the musical phrasing when using the “free music” playlist, as this does not always work.

Exam day attire and etiquette

Exam day is a celebration of the students' hard work and dedication. Wearing the correct uniform plays a significant part in this. Ensure the uniform fits well and is appropriate for the dance style with hair tied back neatly. The ISTD has recently introduced a stunning new uniform in partnership with Dansez, offering a variety of sustainable dancewear options suitable for all exams. Find out more: www.istd.org/examinations/dressed-for-success

Have your students wear their exam uniform for the mock exam to get used to it, as an ill-fitting uniform can have a negative effect on their performance and overall confidence and poise. Make sure the tap shoes fit correctly, too big tap shoes can really affect the tonal quality and overall articulation of the feet. New shoes should never be worn for the first time on an exam day, as they need

to be broken in, this can take months depending on the make of shoe.

Explain about exam etiquette, that they need to stand quietly while waiting to dance and not to talk to their friends when others are dancing. Practice entering the room in the correct order and maintaining this order throughout the exam ie, number 1 stands on stage right, 2, 3 in the middle and number 4 stands on stage left. Remind them to listen carefully to the examiners' instructions and be adaptable to different situations. The examiner does not need to see every exercise, let the pupils know this, as this can put the pupils off. Clear guidance is in the new Tap Specification, use this as a guide when you run your mock exam days. The new Tap Specification is available for download at: www.istd.org/examinations/theatre-dance-syllabus-outlines



Free music playlist

If using free music options, it is helpful to give the examiner the playlist of music choices on the table for when they arrive. If the dancers get lost or seem unsure, the examiner will be able to help if they can see what music the students should be dancing too, also give a copy to the iPod operator.

If using the free music playlists, cut any long introductions, and remember to edit the dance music appropriately.

Primary class test

Remember to introduce each candidate to the examiner, before you start the class exam. If you are going in as the teacher stand where the examiner can see you, it's important to see the interaction between the teacher and the students. Allow the examiner time to write notes in between exercises. If you think something can be demonstrated better, you can ask the pupils to perform the exercise again and offer them some encouragement.

Final preparations and communication

Before the exam day email or call the examiner to confirm logistical details such as the timetables start and end time, dietary requirements, parking, transportation, guidance regarding local hotels and any other specific requirements they may have.

Day of exams

Arrange for your students to arrive one hour before their exam, to allow them time to warm up, ask any questions and

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Wearing the correct uniform plays a significant part in exam day. Ensure it fits well and suits the dance style.

get focused for their exam. Doing a warm up before their exam really helps them to feel more confident and can be a quick reminder of exercises to help with their response and knowledge in the exam. Allow the dancers to take water in with them, especially if it is a long exam. We

set out four chairs in the room, one for each candidate to place their water, tissues, inhaler or props onto and we call that their “station” where they go to wait and relax before it's their turn to perform, like being “in the wings”. It can really help the students relax if they know where they should stand when not dancing and to be allowed to take a break and breathe!

All these are ideas that I hope you find helpful to make The ISTD exam day fun for all involved, a special occasion and run as smoothly as possible.

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New Tap Specification

Please note that the new Tap Specification, which is replacing the Tap Syllabus Outline, is available for download at: www.istd.org/examinations/theatre-dance-syllabus-outlines This document contains the latest information on the qualification framework, examination formats and mark schemes. You will also find a separate specification for the revised Advanced 1 Tap syllabus on this webpage.

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Examination reminders

Can we please remind all teachers entering candidates for centre examinations to please bring the music for the syllabus work, that their candidates have been preparing with, on the day of the examination. A reminder to all teachers that the revised format for the Intermediate Tap examination commenced in examinations taken from 1st October 2024. For details, please see the Tap Specification found here: www.istd.org/examinations/theatre-dance-syllabus-outlines



Imperial Society of
Teachers of Dancing

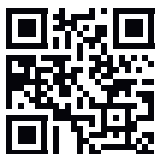
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DANCE is for **EVERYONE**,
regardless of **AGE**,
gender, **ABILITY**, or
FITNESS levels.

FIND
YOUR
DANCE
SPACE



Join us in getting more people
across the UK dancing with
ISTD qualified teachers.



Scan the QR code
to find out more

What's on

Dates for your diary

 Discover more and book our events and courses at www.istd.org/events

Renew your ISTD membership from March

Renew your membership to continue accessing valuable resources in the **Member Resources Hub**:

- **Step Up to Success:** Campaign resources to promote ISTD exams at your school.
- **Promote Your Business:** Business guides, tutorials, and Find Your Dance Space materials to attract new students.
- **Support ISTD:** Use Registered Member logos, Proud to Teach assets, and the Mark of Quality.
- **Webinars:** Teaching tips and professional advice.
- **Member Guides:** Includes diversity, inclusion, safeguarding, and ISTD rules.
- **Playlists:** Curated music for your classes.

Read about 10 ways to get the most out of your membership on page 18.

2025 wall calendar

Enclosed with this issue of *Dance* magazine you will find a handy ISTD wall calendar.

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



Above ISTD President, Shirley Ballas leading a masterclass at our 120 Celebration: BLS Congress 2024, on 1 September 2024

Make a date for your CPD in 2025

We are dedicated to high standards in dance education, offering CPD opportunities like workshops, masterclasses, and seminars on topics such as technique, teaching methods, and injury prevention. Learning from industry experts will enhance your teaching and ISTD members receive discounts on CPD events year-round. Check out the feedback below from our recent BLS Congress in September.

"The afternoon finished with a masterclass from Shirley Ballas. I could see how excited the students were for this class. Shirley took questions after it, too, and happily posed for photos with probably everyone in the room!"

Kay Fairgrieve, Sequence Faculty committee member

"The highlight of the weekend was the opportunity to meet and learn from the legendary Shirley Ballas. Her expertise in Latin dance, coupled with her engaging teaching style, made the experience unforgettable."

Joe Thomasson, student participant

"Shirley was very impressed with the standard of our ISTD dancers and commented on this to many of the participants."

Charles Richman, Latin American Faculty committee member

Don't miss Residential Summer Programme 12–20 Aug

ISTD Calendar

Jan–Apr 2025

January



ISTD CPD courses

- 26 Jan** New Advanced 1 Tap – Clacton-on-Sea, Essex
- 26 Jan** New Advanced 1 Tap – Southampton
- 26 Jan** An Introduction to Locking and Hip Hop – London



ISTD events and competitions

- 03 Jan** Janet Cram 2025
– online and live regional heats open
- 07 Jan** Imperial Classical Ballet Awards 2025
– online heats open
- 12 Jan** DFR Area Competition
– Salisbury, Wiltshire
- 19 Jan** BLS Medallist Series
– Canvey Island, Essex



ISTD Important Dates

Ongoing CPD courses – UK and international

February



ISTD CPD courses

- 09 Feb** New Advanced 1 Tap – Bristol
- 17 Feb** Safeguarding Best Practice for Events – online
- 19 Feb** Intermediate Modern Part 1 – online
- 20 Feb** Intermediate Modern Part 2 – online
- 20 Feb** Safeguarding: How to Handle Disclosures – online



ISTD events and competitions

- 02 Feb** DFR Area Competition
– Bournemouth, Dorset
- 09 Feb** DFR Area Competition
– Grays, Essex



ISTD Important Dates

Ongoing international member meetings
Ongoing CPD courses – UK and international

March



Awareness days/months

- 02 Mar** Let's Dance (see page 12)



ISTD CPD courses

- 02 Mar** New Advanced 1 Tap
– Leicestershire, East Midlands



ISTD events and competitions

- 09 Mar** DFR Area Competition
– Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire
- 09 Mar** Southern Janet Cram Regional heat
– Chichester, West Sussex
- 09 Mar** Southwestern Janet Cram Regional Heat – Bristol
- 16 Mar** Northern Janet Cram Regional Heat
– Chester, Cheshire
- 23 Mar** Southeastern Janet Cram Regional Heat
– Chelmsford, Essex



30 Mar BLS Medallist Series – Wimborne, Dorset

30 Mar Street Dance Competition – Salisbury, Wiltshire



ISTD Important Dates

Renew your ISTD membership
Ongoing international member meetings
Ongoing CPD courses – UK and international

April



Awareness days/months

- 29 Apr** International Dance Day



ISTD events and competitions

- 27 Apr** DFR Area Competition
– Clacton-on-Sea, Essex
- 27 Apr** DFR Area competition
– Sudbury, Suffolk
- 27 Apr** Imperial Classical Ballet Awards 2025 Finals
– Elmhurst, Birmingham



ISTD Important Dates

Ongoing CPD courses – UK and international

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



Continuous professional development (CPD) courses are planned throughout the year. For details and how to book visit 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



ISTD important dates to help you plan. For ISTD exam centre dates and tour dates, visit: www.istd.org/examinations/uk-examinations

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

Creating joy and belonging

Recipient of our Broadening Access to Dance Award and founder of Happy Me Dance, Michelle Clark, is making a significant impact through Project Wave–Connect to Dance, a tailored dance programme designed for young adults with Down's Syndrome.



Michelle Clark is an Educator, Consultant, Practitioner, and Creative Director with a passion for transformational dance. She holds a BA Hons in

Performing Arts from Middlesex University and Memphis State University, and a PGCE in Dance from the University of Brighton. Michelle was Assistant Director at The BRIT School (1995–2001) and Director of Dance at a top UK boarding school (2001–2018). She founded Brighton's first commercial dance studio, Dancecenter (2002), and in 2019 launched Happy Me Dance, an inclusive dance company focused on promoting physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing through dance for all ages and abilities.

In June 2022, Michelle became a certified Movement in Practice Facilitator after studying with dance and science expert Dr Peter Lovatt. By January 2024, she also qualified as a Move Assure coach. Her initiative, Project Wave, launched during her time at the Movement in Practice Academy, focuses on creating inclusive, diverse, and transformative dance programmes for bespoke groups.

Michelle, a full ISTD member, was excited when Happy Me Dance (HMD) received the ISTD's Broadening Access to Dance Award in January 2024. This enabled the creation of a Down's Syndrome dance group in Langton Green, Kent, for Clara Wheatley and her friends. Clara's mother, Sarah Wheatley, approached HMD requesting this custom social dance group. Baroness Monckton MBE, Patron of Project Wave, strongly supports its national expansion

to raise awareness of dance's inclusive power across various settings.

Promotion of the project was mainly through word of mouth, reaching out to local community groups and to the friends and family of Clara.

The project's biggest successes came from the strong support of the local Langton community, including LGCSA, Speldhurst Parish Council, and the Community Hub. These organisations share the values of Happy Me Dance and Project Wave, and the Pavilion, located at the heart of the village, offers an ideal space for the classes.

strong sense of identity and belonging. Michelle is grateful for ongoing support from Speldhurst Parish Council, which helps fund the venue, and LGCSA, which sponsors their work.

Their work has attracted media attention from BBC Radio Kent and local press, *Langton Life*, which have reported on the project. They welcome further media involvement. Michelle also presented this work at STEP 24, the first Movement in Practice Academy conference, hosted by Dr Peter and Lindsey Lovatt at Arts University Bournemouth in March 2024.



Above Michelle and students at a Project Wave – Connect to Dance session.

Michelle's biggest challenge was ensuring the class met expectations and was enjoyable for everyone. Thankfully, it was warmly embraced by the families. She created a class that balances structure, technique, and fitness with space for individuality and self-expression, plus social elements like end-of-term gatherings and discos. She also collaborates with other companies and organisations.

Participants have embraced the project with joy and commitment, forming a close-knit community with a

One unexpected benefit has been raising the profile of bespoke groups, encouraging people to reach out to her. Participants in the classes feel a sense of trust and authenticity, openly sharing their experiences with chronic illness or personal challenges and wanting to join their dance and movement family. Relatives also contact her to find, or to create, dance activities for

family members with diverse needs. It's wonderful to know they're building an inclusive community, bringing fun and lightness where barriers once existed.

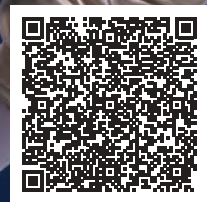
Their future ambitions are to build a legacy for Project Wave and to offer bespoke projects and collaborative opportunities nationally with increased funding and financial support from leading organisations and government/National Lottery funding.

To find out more about our funding, bursaries and awards, visit: www.istd.org/discover/funding-bursaries-and-awards



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