

THE INTERNATIONAL VOICE OF THE IMPERIAL SOCIETY OF TEACHERS OF DANCING

Issue 504 • May – August 2025

Dance



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“ISTD’s values guide how we support and empower dance teachers.”

Welcome to issue 504, which is packed with inspiring articles that celebrate ISTD’s values through the voices of our members. The Society’s values of quality, inclusion, innovation, passion, and integrity are at the heart of everything we do and are reflected in the appointment of our two new Vice Presidents. Read more about the work of Anthony van Laast and Shobana Jeyasingh on page 4.

The Society has always been trusted to provide excellent dance teaching, training and qualifications. This is exemplified in ISTD member, Lynsey van Aswegen’s, account of her professional development journey. You can also read some brilliant demonstrations of inclusion in action on pages 10 and 13, where ISTD members are improving equal opportunities in their local area by providing dance classes to children in primary schools.

At ISTD, we strive to be creative in our thinking and to deliver dynamic solutions that make a difference to dance education, and we are hugely aided in doing so by member feedback. In this edition, we report the annual member survey results and how we are responding to provide you, and your learners, with the very best services.

I hope you enjoy reading these examples of how ISTD’s values guide how we support and empower dance teachers, so that together we can provide more opportunities for children and young people to access and progress in dance.

Ginny Brown
Chief Executive

Regulars



Business

- 10 Inspiring the next generation**
WhizzDance founder shares tips on primary school dance teaching
- 13 Dancesport in primary schools**
Testimonials from two primary schools



News

- 14 Inclusivity at the heart of teacher training**
The ISTD Academy is expanding opportunities in dance teacher training



Membership matters

- 16 Navigating your finances**
Advice for teachers and school owners
- 20 Our survey said...**
Revealing the results of our 2024 member survey



International update

- 24 Meet our international representatives**
Discover the vital roles our representatives play in supporting and advocating for members



Focus on

- 28 Cecchetti Classical Ballet**
An interview with Ruth Brill and other faculty news
- 32 Classical Greek Dance**
A celebration of the Ruby Ginner Awards and a focus on medal tests
- 34 Classical Indian Dance**
Vibha Mamtara's shares her dance journey and teaching tips
- 36 Contemporary Dance**
Expertise on Advanced 1, plus teacher's corner
- 38 Disco Freestyle, Rock n Roll**
Your questions answered and a costuming guide for new competitors
- 40 Imperial Classical Ballet**
Reflections from residential Summer Programme and news about the Grade 6 exam
- 42 Latin American, Modern Ballroom and Sequence**
The power of Sequence, plus our handy guide to creating a visual guide for your dance school
- 46 Modern Theatre**
Thanks to Lyn Richardson for her contributions to the faculty, and helpful teaching insights from Cathy Stevens
- 50 National Dance**
Non-European dances, character compared to national, and the power of national dance
- 54 Street Dance**
Introducing street dance to your classroom
- 56 Tap Dance**
How ISTD tap training is preparing dancers for the global stage

Features



UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST
MEMORIAL MUSEUM, COURTESY
OF SADIE RIGAL-WAREN

RICHARD HAUGHTON



PAGE 4

Celebrating leadership

New Vice Presidents join the ISTD to champion teachers and dance



PAGE 6

Inspiring growth through dance

Lynsey van Aswegen's passion for professional development

PAGE 8

Hiding in plain sight

The story of the remarkable dancer who inspired a new novel, *The Paris Dancer*

PAGE 18

ISTD exam uniform

Wear it your way



New Vice Presidents

Introducing Anthony van Laast CBE and Shobana Jeyasingh CBE.

The Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing (ISTD) is thrilled to announce the appointment of Shobana Jeyasingh CBE and Anthony van Laast CBE as Vice Presidents of the Society. These distinguished choreographers and dance practitioners bring decades of experience and a shared passion for advancing the art and accessibility of dance.

Both Shobana and Anthony have long been advocates for the ISTD's mission to make dance teaching and learning accessible to all. Now, as Vice Presidents, they are set to play pivotal roles in championing the work that you, our teacher members, do every day to inspire and nurture the next generation of dancers.

Reflecting on his new role, Anthony van Laast CBE shared, "I am thrilled and honoured to become a Vice

President of the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing. I have always considered the role of the teacher in the dance world to be paramount. I look forward to being an ambassador for the ISTD, an organisation that plays such a very important role in our industry."

Shobana Jeyasingh CBE echoed this enthusiasm, stating, "It is an enormous privilege, pleasure, and source of pride to be Vice President of ISTD. I look forward to supporting their stellar work in making dance and movement accessible to all and encouraging the widest possible participation for both enjoyment and specialisation."

The newly appointed Vice Presidents will join ISTD President Shirley Ballas in supporting and advocating for the Society and its teacher members, who are instrumental in training the next generation of dancers. This leadership comes at a critical time, as highlighted in the ISTD's recently published *Extending Our Ambition for Dance* report. The report underscores the challenges faced by the dance sector and calls for collaborative efforts to ensure its growth and sustainability.

"The ISTD has always played a vital role in training the next generation of dance artists. So, we are delighted that two of the UK's leading choreographers have accepted roles as Vice President," said Ginny Brown, ISTD Chief Executive. "With Shobana and Anthony's extensive industry knowledge, we can ensure the Society remains firmly connected with the latest dance innovations. Working together with our President, Shirley Ballas, and our newly appointed Vice Presidents, we will continue to promote the value of dance and remove barriers to access and progression."

The position of Vice President is among the highest honorary accolades the ISTD can bestow. With Shobana Jeyasingh and Anthony van Laast joining the team, the Society is well-positioned to further its mission of making dance an inclusive and transformative experience for all. Our members' commitment and expertise is at the heart of this mission and we are excited to continue building on this strong foundation together.

ROBERT PIKWO



With Shobana and Anthony's extensive industry knowledge, we can ensure the Society remains firmly connected with the latest dance innovations.



AMELIA TROUBRIDGE



Anthony van Laast CBE

Anthony is a renowned choreographer whose career spans theatre, film, television, and live performance. A graduate of the London School of Contemporary Dance, he began as both performer and choreographer with the school's company.

Anthony's theatre credits include global hits such as *Tina The Musical* (Outer Circle Critics Award,

Tony Award nomination), *Mamma Mia!* (Dora Mavor Moore Award), *Sister Act* (Olivier Award nomination), *Joseph and the Technicolor Dreamcoat* (Olivier Award nomination), and *Candide* (Olivier Award for Best Musical). In film, his work features in *Beauty and the Beast*, *Mamma Mia!*, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 1*, and more.

On television, Anthony has served as Creative Director for *The Olivier Awards* and *The Royal Variety Show*. He has also choreographed concerts for iconic artists including Cher, Kate Bush, and Sarah Brightman.

A dedicated educator, Anthony has taught at the London Contemporary Dance School, The Royal Ballet School, and Rambert Dance Company. He is a patron of Midlands Academy of Dance and Drama, Urdang, and The Place.



I look forward to being an ambassador for the ISTD, an organisation that plays such a very important role in our industry.

Honoured with an MBE in 1999 and a CBE in 2018 for services to dance and choreography, Anthony also holds an Honorary Doctorate of the Arts. As Vice President of the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing, he continues to inspire the next generation of dance artists.



Shobana Jeyasingh CBE

Shobana is an internationally acclaimed choreographer and founder of Shobana Jeyasingh Dance. Since 1989, she has created over 60 critically acclaimed works for diverse settings, from Palladian monasteries in Venice to contemporary fountains in London. Her choreography is celebrated for its intellectual depth and dynamic physicality,

reflecting her perspective as a postcolonial global citizen.

Trained in Bharatanatyam, the classical dance of South India, Shobana also studied English Literature at the University of Sussex. Her works have toured globally and are featured in the UK's National Curriculum for Dance. Notable collaborations include Rambert, Ballet Black, and Opera National du Rhin, with acclaimed pieces like *Faultline*, *TooMortal*, and *Material Men*.



I look forward to supporting the ISTD's stellar work in making dance and movement accessible to all.

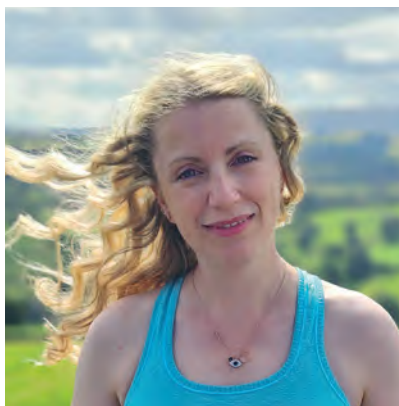
Beyond choreography, Shobana has contributed to theatre, judged BBC *Young Dancer*, and held cultural production and leadership roles at Middlesex University and King's College London. Her accolades include honorary doctorates, an Honorary Fellowship at Trinity Laban, and major awards such as a CBE in 2020.

As Vice President of the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing, Shobana is committed to supporting dancers and dance educators.

Above *Counterpoint*, choreographed by Shobana Jeyasingh CBE and performed in Somerset House, London

Inspiring growth through dance

Lynsey van Aswegen's higher teaching qualifications journey.



Lynsey van Aswegen embodies the transformative power of dance education, blending her love for teaching with an entrepreneurial drive that has seen her create opportunities and inspire others to do the same. With a decade of teaching experience and a wealth of qualifications, including those gained through ISTD, Lynsey has stepped into a career that she clearly loves, helping fellow educators explore not just **what** to teach, but **how** to teach.

Her story is a testament

to the value of higher teaching qualifications, demonstrating how they can unlock new pathways in the creative industries – often shaped by the individual themselves. Lynsey's commitment to mentoring and continuing professional development (CPD) highlights the importance of looking beyond the syllabus, embracing innovation, and developing skills that uplift both teachers and students. Her journey reflects the entrepreneurial spirit and professional growth that can inspire us to reimagine our own teaching practices and advance our careers.

What inspired you to pursue a higher teaching qualification?

Honestly, after teaching for a decade I started to feel like my classes had gone a bit stale! I was being diligent about getting the syllabus right, but I wanted to give more to my students. I started with just one Diploma in Dance Pedagogy (DDP) unit covering social and emotional development, and I loved it – the lecturer Siobhan is so knowledgeable, and gaining an understanding of the science behind things helped me to make sense of the behaviours and outcomes I saw in class.

I decided to sign up for the rest of the course because I could see how all this extra knowledge was going to supercharge my teaching practice and help me get the best out of my students. The

process of planning, recording and reflecting on my lessons really made me think about what and how I was teaching, and what I could do to improve.

It took me more than three years to finish the course. In that time there was a pandemic, I got married, moved 300 miles from London to Cumbria, and had two babies – I'm heavily pregnant in nearly all my video submissions with one baby or the other! I'm massively grateful to Lucy McCrudden at Dance Mama for all her mentoring support, and to Julie Campbell, Head of Qualification Development at ISTD for keeping me trundling along and accommodating my ever-changing circumstances.

“

It's one thing to be a great dancer, and another entirely to be a great teacher.

What did you learn from the experience?

The main thing I learned was how passionate I am about dance education! I got really fired up when we talked about the importance of dance and all the side benefits of learning to dance – social, emotional, physical and intellectual. I studied education at university but from a classroom teacher perspective (maths teaching in fact!) so I really enjoyed applying those theories to the dance studio and thinking through what all the academic stuff really means for dance teachers.

The course also gave me more confidence in my teaching. I was applying new things as I learnt them and also reinforcing things I already did as good practice. I got so much value out of working with a mentor and getting regular feedback, it was great to put it in to practice straight away and I loved using reflective practice models to really think about my teaching skills.

I set out to bring more to my dance classes than just getting the steps right, and I definitely feel like that's what DDP has given me. My classes are more balanced now and I think more widely about what the students are getting out of being there, beyond learning the syllabus or getting ready for exams.

“

Being an ISTD member shows you are dedicated to getting the best out of your dancers.

What is your current ambition?

The DDP made me realise I'm passionate about the **how** of dance teaching, so I've decided to move into teacher training. I'm thrilled to have been accepted by ISTD as a DDE tutor for the generic teaching units 1, 2 and 5 and I have also been accepted to tutor RAD's Assistant Teacher Award.

I was really inspired by DDP to build more educational resources for dance teachers. There are loads out there for classroom teachers, but not so much for us! So, I have just launched DanceCPD (dancecpd.com) as a place to share resources and offer 1-2-1 mentoring support in teaching and leadership for all dance teachers at any stage of their career, and regardless of the genre or style they teach. I'm on mission to shout about all the benefits of learning dance beyond just the steps, and to help dance teachers get qualified and continue their professional development.



I have also written a book! Inspired by learning about reflective practice as part of DDP, I have put together a

Dance Teacher's Journal. It explains what reflective practice is, what an awesome tool it is to improve your teaching, and it gives you a place to keep all your reflections together. I never thought I'd be selling something on Amazon but here we are!

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

Do it! Investing in yourself as a professional educator is so worth it – for you and for your students. It's one thing to be a great dancer, and it's an entirely different thing to be a great teacher, so getting qualified and continuing to learn is the best way to bring the two together.

I also think teaching qualifications are much more accessible now, it's great to see so many online and flexible courses. If you run your own school or maybe teach at the weekends alongside a day job, it can be hard to find time to attend courses, so it's a welcome shift to help more dance teachers get qualified, give the best dance education to their students, and spread the word about the benefits of learning to dance – it's a creative and physical art form like no other!

As an active ISTD member, what inspired you to join, and what do you consider the top benefits?

Being a member is a mark of quality for you as a teacher and also your school. It shows parents and students that you've put in the work to really understand how to teach dance safely and effectively, and you are dedicated to getting the best out of your dancers. It's also a big draw to be able to enter your



students for exams. It's a boost for your school and it's great to be able to give your students some formal recognition for all their hard work – we all know it takes years of training and dedication to be a great dancer, that's something that can get a bit lost in today's 'on-demand' pace of life. I think the ongoing support and training offered by ISTD is valuable and I enjoy feeling part of something as a member.

Hiding in plain sight

Author Nicola Rayner tells the story of the remarkable artist who inspired her latest novel, *The Paris Dancer*.



Above Nicola Rayner

“
Florence Warren arrived in Paris as Sadie Rigal and became a celebrated dancer at the Bal Tabarin.

Right Pierre Sandrini and Sadie Rigal (later Florence Warren). Pierre Sandrini helped save four Jewish employees of the Bal Tabarin

PHOTO CREDIT: UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM, COURTESY OF SADIE RIGAL-WAREN

Most dancers today will have heard of Paris's famous music halls, the Moulin Rouge and Folies Bergère, but far less widely known today is a dance venue called the Bal Tabarin, which was sadly razed to the ground in the 1960s. There were many remarkable things about the Tabarin, which stood on 36, rue Victor-Massé, in Pigalle, and was famed for its outlandish spectacles, with fantastical designs by the father of Art Deco, Erté.

Another thing that set it apart from other music halls was its artistic director, Pierre Sandrini – the son of prima ballerina Emma Sandrini – who hired classically trained dancers to perform the French cancan. These performers underwent rigorous training, which was relatively new for cancan dancers in Paris at the time

More important, during Paris's occupation by the Nazis, the director protected the Jewish artists who worked for him. Unlike other employers, he continued to offer them work and advised them not to register as Jewish. One such artist to benefit from his kindness and courage was a South African dancer who arrived in Paris in 1938 as Sadie Rigal, but became Florence Warren for the stage – a name she stuck with after her time in France.

My third novel, *The Paris Dancer*, is inspired, in part, by Florence's life, as well as those of other dancers and music-hall artists who worked for the Resistance. Born in 1917, Florence grew up in Doornfontein, a Jewish neighbourhood in Johannesburg. She fell in love with ballet at a young age and took classes with Audrey Grose, who, in turn, had trained with Enrico Cecchetti, alongside Anna Pavlova.

But for Grose, the studio rather than the stage beckoned. Teaching became her life, specifically bringing her beloved art form back to South Africa, where ballet was taking its first steps. After a promising start in Johannesburg with Miss Grose, Florence made the journey to Europe in 1938 to fulfil her lifelong ambition of joining one of the

Ballet Russe companies. She trained with Madame Egorova and other Russian ballet mistresses in Paris and auditioned for the Bal Tabarin.

There, Florence was fortunate enough to work for artistic director Pierre Sandrini, who could see the writing on the wall in 1939. He helped set up an audition for the young hopeful to join De Basil's Ballet Russe in London. It went well, and the plan was that Florence would be picked up in Paris by the company on their return to France, but in September 1939 the outbreak of World War II prevented this from happening.

Instead, during the war, Florence went on to join forces, in a hugely successful ballroom partnership, with the dancer Frederic Apcar. As ballroom partners, Florence et Frederic, as they were known, joined Edith Piaf, Charles Trenet and Fred Adison's band in Germany on a tour of the prisoner-of-war camps, from which Florence brought a suitcase of letters home that, briefly, ended up in a Berlin bomb shelter.

It was an act of unbelievable courage, as was her hiding two Jewish sisters in her flat in Paris in the early 1940s. Because of Florence, the pair survived and came to find her in person to thank her after she moved to the United States in 1948. They clearly never forgot the person who risked her own life to save theirs. Neither did France, which made Florence a privileged resident in May 1947 before she left for the US, in 1948, on tour with Frederic Apcar.





“

Florence Warren risked her life to hide two Jewish sisters in her Paris flat – an act of unbelievable courage.

Left Edith Piaf (foreground) dances across a street with Sadie Rigal – also known as Florence Warren – a Jewish dancer in hiding, during their German tour (1943).

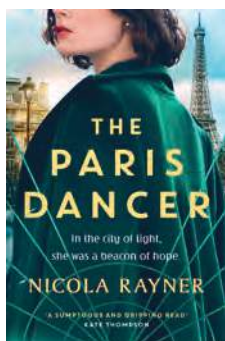
Many decades and miles separated me from the lives of Florence and the other musical-hall artists who worked in the Resistance in wartime Paris. Early on in the process, I asked myself: how would I find my way into a novel inspired by their lives? After a week or two of research, the answer became clear: one thing I share with these women is a deep love of dance.

As a journalist, I have watched, interviewed and written about dancers for two decades. I first fell in love with dance when I came across the Argentine tango while travelling in my twenties, and I ended up editing the tango section of *Time Out Buenos Aires*. Back in the UK, I edited the ballroom and Latin magazine *Dance Today* from 2010 to 2015, where I was lucky enough to interview almost all of the Strictly Come Dancing professionals, and, later, worked as assistant editor of *Dancing Times*, the UK's leading dance publication, from 2019 until 2022.

In short, I have spent many hours watching dancers, listening to them talk about their

passion and, whenever I can, dancing for my own pleasure. And although I'm a social rather than a professional dancer, the art form has been life-changing for me – as exercise, physiotherapy and even a means of connection and healing. This, too, found its way into the novel, in a modern-day strand, that sees my protagonist, Mim, explore the dance classes and ballrooms of New York City to find the right dance for her.

I know how strong dancers are and how hard they have had to work to get where they are, all the while engaging in an art form that, done at its best, must look effortless. This information was very useful to me in considering how those skills might benefit Florence as she hid in plain sight in occupied Paris – still being able to perform under extreme duress and keep a cool head under pressure. The novel is my love letter to dance and, as we mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day this year, it is a way of remembering and honouring the unsung heroines of the occupation.



***The Paris Dancer* by Nicola Rayner was published by Head of Zeus on 13 February 2025.**

Competition terms and conditions:

- The competition opens on 2 April 2025 and closes on 30 June 2025.
- Winners will be chosen at random after the closing date.
- To enter, email dancemag@istd.org with your email address and include your full postal address for prize delivery if you win.
- There is no cash alternative to the prize.
- ISTD's decision is final, and no correspondence will be entered into.
- By entering, you agree to the terms and conditions.

WIN!

We have copies of ***The Paris Dancer*** by Nicola Rayner up for grabs.

Inspiring the next generation

WhizzDance founder and ISTD teacher, Maria Brodmann, shares tips on primary school dance teaching.



Maria Brodmann

WhizzDance teaches 432 children weekly within 28 after school clubs and enrichment delivery across 14 Primary Schools in London and Cheltenham. Based in Streatham, South London, WhizzDance HQ has 207 students from 2yrs to adult. As WhizzPrincipal, Maria oversees operations, mentors the WhizzTeam, and teaches ISTD Imperial Ballet and Modern Theatre.

What inspired you to include outreach in your career, and how has it shaped your teaching?

After dance college, I found myself in and out of professional performing contracts for several years. Through this period of ad-hoc work I ended up working for a few companies in London that worked in primary schools delivering a range of after school clubs and daytime enrichment delivery of dance, drama and performing arts. I learned how to motivate a large group of students and the difference in objectives between private dance teaching and teaching within a primary school with a holistic approach. Even though that was 10 years ago now, this experience helped shape the delivery, ethos and positive impact that WhizzDance has across our HQ (private setting) and our primary school delivery.

How has ISTD training supported your journey as a teacher and school founder? What do you value most about membership?

I describe myself as ISTD born and raised. I am a hugely proud member and advocate of the ISTD. I have had brilliant mentors over the years (shout out to Jill Redford, Elizabeth Reeves and Cathy Russell) and have always found the senior faculties I have met on courses very generous with their knowledge, support and skill set.

I am passionate about the value of examinations and the high standards we achieve because of this process. I find the communication with the exams department always quick and efficient.

Lately I have found myself most valuing the connection in the community. To be reunited with old friends on courses and making new teacher friends and connections is something I now value much more as I approach 40.

I am very happy to see the ISTD honouring, encouraging and supporting dance in schools. More dance teachers working and inspiring, offering opportunities to explore and enjoy dance is hugely beneficial for the future of dance.

What first steps would you recommend ISTD teachers take when starting outreach programmes in schools?

Find out who is the person that oversees clubs and/or enrichment. Discuss how you can add value and opportunity to their school offering. Schools are very busy so don't be afraid to reach out more than once. If you run a class or dance school, get one of your parents to recommend you as a club provider and put you in contact with the relevant person – this approach has been a very successful way of growing our clubs.





Inclusivity is a core value at WhizzDance.

What advice do you have for teachers creating programmes for children with additional needs?

Understanding that inclusivity is an ongoing process and knowledge is power. Communication is key – with the school and parents/guardians. Asking questions is important and valuable. If working in a primary school – always ask the school before the first session if there are any “children of note” on the register rather than Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) specifically because sometimes children that would be helpful for you to be aware of in advance may not be on the register. Then you can ask further questions about how you can support the individuals with their experience and learning within your setting. Schools will often be helpful with support and strategy suggestions and in some instances will put you in contact with their parents or the school coordinator (SENDCO).

“

Find out who is in charge of clubs and enrichment at schools and don't be afraid to reach out more than once.

How do you keep young dancers engaged, especially in schools?

This is a very big topic, one that WhizzDance focuses on a lot in our WhizzTeam training.

Refocus to re-engage. Plan class re-focusers as you would your class activities/exercises. Re-focusers may be something like a verbal, physical or audio cue, such as: “hands on your head-shoulders-knees” or “clap when I clap” or the sound of an instrument. Alternatively, a call and response style vocal/ rhythm clapping or a chant, such as: “One, two, three – eyes on me” and “One, two, two – eyes on you.” Gamified re-focusers are fun and will encourage focus and attention.

Understanding and honouring the different reasons for attending our clubs is important to us at WhizzDance. Motivation is key to a smooth delivery. Allowing the children to feel like

i

Top tips for teachers starting outreach programmes and engaging students

Reach out early: contact the person in charge of clubs or enrichment at schools. Don't hesitate to follow up if you don't hear back. Leverage parent recommendations to get in touch with the right contacts.

Focus on inclusivity: keep learning and asking questions to support children with additional needs. Ask schools about any “children of note” who might not be on the SEND register but could benefit from tailored support.

Keep young dancers engaged: use fun “re-focusers” like chants or claps to regain attention. Allow students to help shape the class with their input on activities, music, and props. Always be generous with positive reinforcement.

Class management: set clear expectations and be consistent each week. If the school has a rewards system, use it to your advantage. Don't shy away from using “brain breaks” to support children who might be overwhelmed.

Adapt for differentiation: recognise that students will have varying levels of experience. Keep your lessons inclusive by offering challenges for advanced dancers while ensuring everyone is engaged and enjoying the experience.

Planning flexibility: adjust your plans depending on the group's energy. If they're tired or emotional, incorporate mindfulness or a longer cool down. If they come in full of energy, start with a lively, high-energy activity.

Start early with retirement planning: as a new teacher, make sure you set up a pension as soon as possible, even if it's a small contribution – it will benefit you in the long run.

they have ownership of the club is encouraged – what activities/ music/props do they enjoy? How can you facilitate that and expand that in the session and use that as a motivator?

Allow flexibility in your planning and be sensitive to the energy in the room. If the group has had a tiring or emotional day, you may want to include a longer cool down, breathing or mindfulness at the end of the session or if they come in with lots of energy the group may need a big energetic burst of movement at the start of the session.

Be generous with positive reinforcement and cheer every small win.

What challenges do outreach programmes face, and how can teachers overcome them?

Class management can be more challenging within a primary school due to several reasons.

A big factor is children are in the same environment they have been in all day, they are perhaps fatigued from learning or emotionally tired. Group sizes can be bigger in a school setting with classes up to 30 if delivering curriculum or enrichment during the day.

To help support class management, set clear class expectations and repeat these every week. Some

schools encourage you to use their rewards or behaviour management system, which is often helpful and if this is not in place for clubs, I recommend you create your own.

I am a firm advocate of aiming to motivate over exclusion. However, depending on the situation “brain breaks” or “breathers” are a helpful tool to offer children who are experiencing sensory overwhelm without the shaming of “time out” style sanctions.

Differentiation in abilities. In attendance you may have a child that attends a weekly class out of school that is very confident and coordinated and a child that has never danced, all within the same group. You may have a wider range of ages than you usually would in a private setting, for example Key Stage 2 (KS2) groups are typically 7–11 years. Stripping objectives back to ground level is important. Are they all engaged and learning? Are they having a positive experience? How can you plan to include everyone and offer opportunities that will challenge the more confident individuals?

Looking back, what advice do you wish you'd had as a new teacher?

Make sure you get set up with a pension as soon as possible, even a small contribution each month is better than nothing.

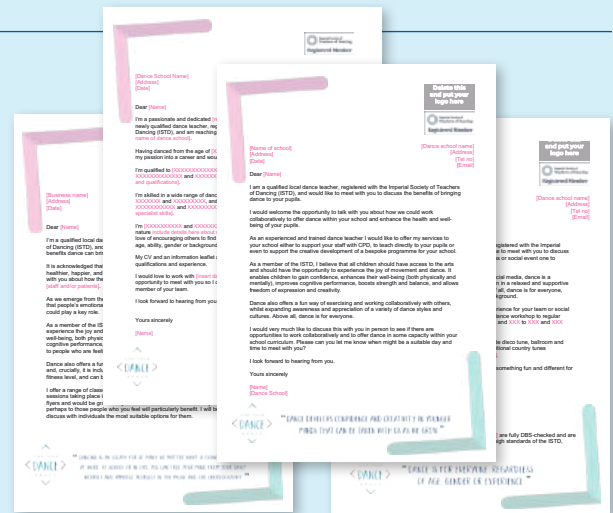
Membership

Member benefits: reach out to schools and secure dance business

Log in to **My ISTD** to discover our tools for members, including:

School cheat sheets: access these invaluable cheat sheets packed with expert advice on how to successfully approach primary and secondary schools for dance teaching opportunities. With top tips on building relationships and standing out in the

education sector, you'll be ready to expand your outreach efforts.



Editable letter templates: download four professionally crafted letter templates, ready for you to customise with your business information. Use these templates to pitch your services to schools, corporate events, and as a newly qualified teacher looking to secure work in the dance education sector. Save time and increase your chances of success with these ready-to-use resources!

Dancesport in primary schools

Testimonials from two primary schools.



Riverley Primary School

ISTD Fellow and Examiner, Malcolm Hill has been delivering ballroom dancing lessons to pupils at Riverley for well over a decade. Although it took a little time for our 'East End' pupils to see the purpose in ballroom sessions, it is now a key highlight of our pupils' weekly school experience.

Lessons are carefully planned and structured to meet the diverse needs of pupils – both adapting lessons to suit the needs of those who need a little support while carefully nurturing the talents of pupils who excel in this line of dance.

Our ballroom dancing lessons not only serve to enhance dance skills, they are also a catalyst for fostering cognitive development, coordination and discipline. Pupils understand the importance of working systemically with a partner or as part of a team and paying attention to detail – all skills which enhance pupils' holistic and academic successes.

Alongside this, the lessons encourage creative expression as our pupils learn to interpret music and convey emotions through movement, developing a deeper appreciation for the arts.

Teachers also gain skills in dance through these engaging sessions and have developed such as a strong rapport with Malcolm. His warmth and sense of humour is such that lessons

are not only a weekly highlight for pupils but also for teachers.

Delivering high quality performance is a key attribute of our school and Malcolm works seamlessly with class teachers to incorporate elements of dance into each performance. This allows pupils a stage on which to share their progress in dance with their peers and families. The Year 5 classes at Riverley

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The Year 5 classes at Riverley are preparing to take their first ISTD medal in the summer term.

are preparing to take their first ISTD medal in the summer term.

To date these lessons have enriched the lives of many pupils and our plan is for this to continue for many decades more.

By Sabrina Reilly, Head of School, Riverley Primary School

Willow Brook Primary

We are delighted that ISTD Fellow and Examiner, Malcolm Hill has joined our school to teach ballroom dancing to our children, bringing with him a wealth of experience and passion for dance. This has been an extraordinary opportunity for our students, who are gaining a wide range of skills that extend far beyond the dance floor.

Integrating dance into our school curriculum has been a carefully considered process. We started by allocating regular slots in the timetable specifically for dance, ensuring that all children, regardless of age or ability, have the chance to participate. We also collaborated with Malcolm to design a programme that aligns with the educational goals of our school, focusing on both the physical and emotional development of the children. By embedding dance into our daily activities and encouraging cross-curricular connections, such as linking dance to music and PE, we have made it a vibrant part of our school culture.

Dance enhances students' development by improving coordination, rhythm, balance, and flexibility—essential skills that benefit overall physical education. Beyond movement, it fosters communication, collaboration, and confidence, helping children express themselves and build trust. Notably, dance breaks gender barriers, promoting inclusivity and mutual respect through shared creativity.

The positive effects of dance extend beyond the individual students to the broader school environment. We have noticed a marked increase in the overall confidence of our students, which has translated into more engagement and enthusiasm in other subjects. The energy and creativity that dance brings have permeated the school, creating a more vibrant, inclusive, and supportive community. Inclusivity is a core value in our dance programme, ensuring that children of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, can fully participate and feel valued.

By Lucie Dawn, Head of School, Willow Brook Primary

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Dance has become a vibrant part of our school culture, fostering confidence, creativity, and inclusivity.

Inclusivity at the heart of teacher training

The ISTD Academy is expanding opportunities in dance teacher training.



Natalie Dickmann
ISTD Academy
Programme
Manager

As the Academy continues to grow, we're taking time to celebrate our developments while setting the stage for a brighter, more inclusive future. Alongside delivering exceptional dance teacher training, our strategic aim is to create an accessible and welcoming environment where everyone can thrive.

Where are we now?

Since becoming an Approved Dance Centre (ADC) in 2023, the Academy has reached some notable milestones. We've launched five online, part-time intensive courses, reaching participants across six different countries, including Malaysia and America! These courses are tailored to fit into the busy lives of both aspiring and experienced teachers, breaking barriers of geography and accessibility.

We're proud to have supported students through various examinations, including:

- Licentiate Imperial Classical Ballet (ICB)
- Diploma in Dance Pedagogy (DDP)
- Diploma in Teaching Community Dance (DTCD)
- Units 1 and 5 of the Diploma in Dance Education (DDE)

One of our most significant achievements has been piloting the ISTD's innovative Level 4 teaching qualification, the Diploma in Teaching Community Dance (DTCD). This course supports those who are passionate about teaching in community settings and want a regulated teaching qualification, particularly individuals who may not have followed traditional dance routes.

By equipping students with essential teaching skills and a strong foundation in inclusivity, the DTCD is opening doors for a more diverse range of dance teachers enabling them to gain a qualification and become an ISTD member.

What's next?

Initial Teaching Qualifications

We're thrilled to announce our upcoming Level 4 courses designed to meet the needs of student teachers around the world.

- **Level 4 Diploma in Teaching Community Dance (DTCD):** A one-year course starting in September 2025
- **Level 4 DDE Unit 1 (Preparing for Safe Teaching Practice):** Short course starting in January 2026
- **Level 4 DDE Unit 5 (Child Development):** Short course starting in April 2026

Higher Teaching Qualifications

For experienced teachers, the level 6 DDP has always been a popular choice for those wanting a regulated higher teaching qualification.

- **Level 6 Diploma in Dance Pedagogy (DDP):** A two-year course starting in September 2025

Students focus on analysis and higher-level teaching strategies with 1-1 support from mentors.

A highly successful programme that enables progression routes to further study with a master's degree or to ISTD Fellowship. Don't forget there are options to use Licentiate as an exemption for DDP unit 4, so you combine the best of ISTD higher teaching qualifications.

All our courses will be led by highly experienced lecturers and mentors who are dedicated to fostering inclusivity and excellence in dance education.

Keep an eye on www.istd.org/teach/istd-academy for even more exciting announcements, including upcoming street dance associate opportunities!



“

Working with the ISTD Academy has been effortless and uncomplicated. Communication and support have always been accessible.

Licentiate ICB Student

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It's been fantastic to be able to focus on my personal development and be able to pass on my learnings from the DDP to all those at my dance school.

DDP Student

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Embrace lifelong learning: there's always more to discover in dance education. Whether you're starting out or looking to expand your skills, there's a course for you.

Prioritise accessibility: seek opportunities that fit your lifestyle. Our part-time and online options are designed with flexibility in mind.

Celebrate diversity: teaching in community settings brings unique challenges and rewards. Embrace the diversity of experiences and backgrounds you'll encounter.

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Explore your career pathways with confidence

If you are unsure about pathways, we are happy to have a chat with you with no commitment to sign up. We are here to support teachers and enable access to courses with ease. We will guide you with the right pathway to support your career journey and develop your business: www.istd.org/teach/istd-academy

Navigating your finances

Advice for teachers and school owners.

In the ever-changing landscape of dance, financial planning has become more crucial than ever. Whether you're a seasoned school owner or an independent dance teacher, having a clear understanding of your finances can help you thrive, even amidst challenges like those brought by the pandemic. Here, we provide practical advice to help you project income, plan expenses, and secure a stable financial future for your dance business.

1. Understand your income streams and associated costs

Dance teachers and school owners often rely on multiple income sources, including tuition fees, workshops, merchandise, and performances. Start by categorising your income streams and allocating the costs associated with each. Use this information to identify which streams are the most reliable and profitable. This clarity will help you prioritise efforts and forecast earnings more accurately.

2. Set financial goals

Establish short-term and long-term financial objectives. These might include saving for equipment, studio upgrades, launching new programmes, or building an emergency fund. Goals provide direction and help you measure progress.

3. Develop a budget

Creating a detailed budget is the cornerstone of financial planning and will help you achieve your financial goals. When preparing your budget, include fixed costs such as rent, hall hire, utilities, insurance charges and staff salaries, as well as variable costs like costumes and marketing. Factor in seasonal fluctuations – for example, lower enrolments during school holidays – to avoid surprises. Track your progress

against the budget to help you better understand your financial performance and to estimate your tax liability.

4. Use technology to simplify financial management

Consider software that improves and streamlines your admin (customer database, class scheduling, invoicing). These packages often generate reports on revenue per class, class sizes, number of classes taken by each dancer and more. These reports are key to unlocking opportunities for your business.

Where possible look for admin software that integrates with accounting software to manage the end-to-end process and help capture complete and accurate data for your tax return.

5. Prepare for tax obligations

Stay informed about tax requirements and updates specific to your region. Keep clear records and evidence of your transactions. Work with an accountant familiar with the dance industry to maximise deductions and avoid penalties.



Diversifying your offerings can help you reach new audiences and stay resilient.

6. Diversify your offerings

Consider adding new revenue streams, such as online classes, private lessons, teaching in local schools, teaching adults, community outreach, collaborations with other creative professionals, or hosting taster sessions at local schools and community centres. Diversification can mitigate the impact of economic downturns and help you reach new audiences. Start by assessing market



demand and understanding your audience's needs. Similarly, offering introductory workshops in schools, evening classes for adults, or partnering with local organisations can establish new revenue opportunities while promoting dance education. Evaluate your existing resources – such as studio space, staff availability, and expertise – to determine what is feasible without overextending your capacity. Experiment on a small scale to test the viability of new offerings before committing significant time or financial investment.

For additional ideas and support, log in to your **My ISTD** account. In the *Find Your Dance Space* section, you'll find cheat sheets with top tips for securing dance business in primary and secondary schools, sample letters for contacting local schools, business guides, and many other helpful member-only resources to help grow your dance business.

7. Build a cushion for uncertainty

The pandemic highlighted the importance of having an emergency fund. Aim to set aside 3–6 months' worth of operating expenses to cushion against unexpected disruptions.



8. Monitor and adapt

Review your financial plans regularly. Analysing past trends and adjusting for market changes ensures your strategy remains effective and aligned with your goals.

Taking control of your finances doesn't have to be overwhelming. Start by applying one or two of the strategies outlined above, and build from there. Remember, small, consistent steps can

lead to significant progress. Make the most of the exclusive tools and resources available to you as a member – log in to your **My ISTD** account today to access business guides, practical cheat sheets, and member-only discounts to support your financial journey. Secure your dance business's future by planning ahead and staying adaptable in this ever-changing industry.

Smart financial moves for dance teachers

Know your income streams. Identify your most reliable and profitable revenue sources.

- **Set clear financial goals.** Plan for short-term needs and long-term growth.
- **Create a detailed budget.** Include fixed and variable costs, and plan for seasonal fluctuations.
- **Use technology to simplify admin.** Invest in software for invoicing, scheduling, and reporting.
- **Stay on top of taxes.** Keep clear records and seek expert advice if needed.
- **Diversify your offerings.** Explore new revenue streams like online classes or school workshops.
- **Build an emergency fund.** Aim to save 3–6 months' worth of expenses.
- **Monitor and adapt.** Regularly review your finances and adjust your strategy as needed.
- **Make use of ISTD resources.** Access guides, templates, and discounts via your **My ISTD** account.

Membership +

Save money with our affinity partners

DanceBiz: Streamline your school's admin with booking and management software used by 2,500+ schools. Members get a 14-day free trial, first month free, and discounts on texts – no fees or contracts.

Dell Technologies UK: Save up to 20% on laptops, desktops, monitors, and accessories, plus exclusive promotions and expert advice.

Danzez ISTD Exam Uniform: A sustainable, inclusive uniform range in partnership with ISTD. Members get 20% off, with personalisation options available.

Gallagher Insurance: Specially negotiated cover for teachers, adjudicators, and principals. Call 0800 062 2305 to discuss your needs.

HMCA Medical Plans: Private medical plans with guaranteed acceptance, no exams, and extras like dental and travel. Members get a £50 gift card or £100 off the first year.

Shades Dancewear: An inclusive UK brand celebrating identity and diversity. Members get 10% off all products. Log in to My ISTD for your discount codes.

International Dance Shoes: Leading Ballroom and Latin footwear brand. Members get 10% off at checkout.

Big Yellow Storage: 50% off up to 8 weeks, plus 10% off thereafter – ideal for costumes and equipment, with 100+ UK locations.

Log in to **My ISTD** for your discount codes to access business guides, practical cheat sheets, and member-only discounts.

Need clarity on VAT?

Join chartered accountant Sam Smith for online courses offering clear guidance on VAT for performing arts:

- 14 May: Part 1
- 21 May: Part 2
- 28 May: Part 3

Keep an eye on the events page of our website to find out more.

ISTD exam uniform

Wear it your way.

The ISTD capsule collection, created in collaboration with Dansez, is made from sustainable materials. Designed for performance, the collection offers high elasticity and resilience, ensuring dancers can move freely and confidently. With a colour progression from bright tones for younger dancers to sophisticated darker shades for adults, the range is both stylish and practical. All items feature the ISTD crown, with selected outerwear available for personalisation. The collection has been thoroughly tested by schools and received excellent feedback. More genres will be added in future. ISTD members receive an exclusive **20% discount** on RRP, available via email and **MyISTD**. Order now at www.dans-ez.com and share your photos with **#ISTDUniform** **#StepUpToSuccess**.

DANSEZ
PLANET FRIENDLY DANCE WEAR

HEALTHY SEAS
a journey from waste to wear





"I run a small school where we have always had two uniform styles – one for ballet and one for modern and tap. With the current rise in the cost of living I felt it was fairer to my families to provide a uniform that would suit all disciplines. So, I was overjoyed when Dansez brought out the new styles. Our previous leotards had always faded through lots of washing, and we have found these new leotards are easy to wash and dry and the colours are still as sharp as from the first day they were worn.

"The parents particularly like the quality of the material and feel they are excellent value for the price. We also feel that we are helping the environment by purchasing the eco-friendly leotards."

Louise Carter, ISTD teacher



"The thing I most enjoy about the new uniform is how versatile it is for every student. If there is something that a child or adolescent is self-conscious about, there are options so they feel comfortable in classes and therefore they are able to express more in their dancing."

Siobhan Harmon-Beglan, ISTD teacher

Our survey said...

Revealing the results of the 2024 ISTD Member Survey.

Each year we ask you to take part in our member survey to find out about the challenges and opportunities facing you and your dance schools. We use this information to help shape our work and the development of products and services to better support you and your students.

Thank you to everyone who took part and responded to our online survey of 38 questions, which was emailed to our entire membership on Thursday 17 October 2024. The survey was live for four weeks and it was promoted in newsletters and faculty Facebook groups. The response rate was 12%.

Who took part?

80% of respondents are Full Teaching members. 74% were based in the UK. Full Teaching members make up 60% of our membership.

The majority of respondents are aged between 45–64 (46.7%) and 26–44 (35.1%). And the dance genres taught most in 2024 are the same as those in 2023, with Modern Theatre at 68.6% (64% in 2023) and Tap at 61.9% (60.9% in 2023), followed by Imperial Classical Ballet at 48.1% (48.7% in 2023) and Contemporary Dance at 18.8% (21.3% in 2023).

The types of settings where our respondents are teaching dance (%)

Employment

Our members are entrepreneurs. Just over three quarters of all respondents are self-employed. Almost 60% run their own dance schools, and most are small in terms of staff numbers. Those not teaching in their own school teach in a private dance school setting (88%).

Wherever you teach, our priority is to support you to run your dance business by helping you to attract new students and giving you the resources to develop your teaching and business skills.

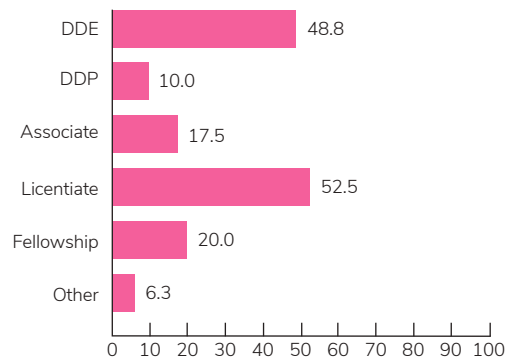
With over 140 downloadable assets available in **My ISTD**, you have access to a wealth of resources to promote your schools and the benefits of taking examinations. **Step Up to Success** with campaign resources specifically designed to highlight ISTD exams at your school. Promote your business with comprehensive business guides, tutorials, and **Find Your Dance Space** materials to attract new students. Showcase your ISTD membership **Mark of Quality** by using Registered Member

logos and **Proud to Teach** assets. Explore webinars offering valuable tips and professional advice, as well as member guides covering diversity, inclusion, safeguarding, and ISTD rules. You'll also find curated playlists of music tailored for your lessons.

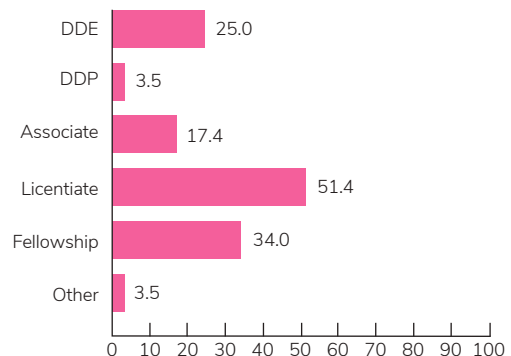
Our members are keen to add to their qualification portfolio

25% of respondents said they are considering more ISTD qualifications, and 14% are in progress. 52% are planning to progress to Licentiate, 34% Fellowship qualifications.

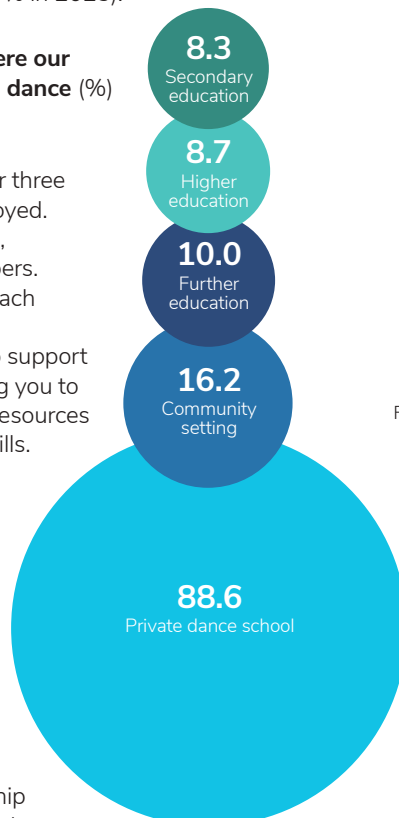
Qualifications (in progress) (%)



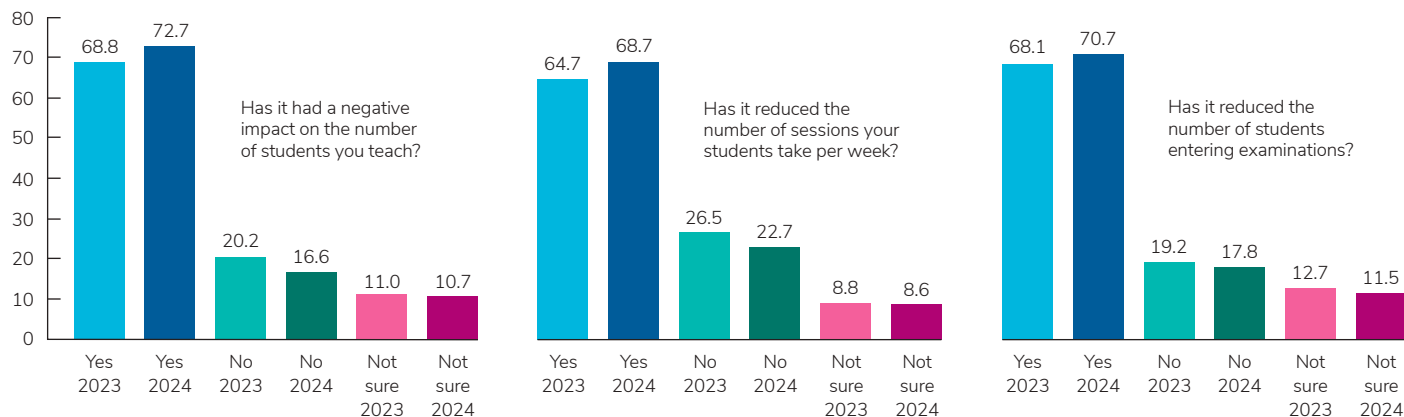
Qualifications (under consideration) (%)



ISTD Academy has extended opportunities for ISTD members to take their higher-level qualifications, with online, flexible courses on offer for teachers to develop their teaching skills and develop their careers. This year the Academy has launched courses in Licentiate Imperial Classical Ballet and Modern Theatre and will be adding Cecchetti Classical Ballet and Classical Indian Licentiate courses next year.



Impact of the cost of living (percentage difference between 2023 and 2024)



The challenges and opportunities

This year you told us that the cost-of-living crisis was having more of an impact on your businesses than in 2023.

- 72% state a negative impact on students they teach
- 68% state reduced number of student sessions per week
- 70% state reduced number entering exams
- 61% state reduced attendance at CPD

However, while there may be fewer students, we have seen that they are taking more classes than in 2023, with 59% of students taking an average of 2–3 classes. And over a third of students take exams in two genres of dance with just under a third taking exams in three genres. An increase of nearly 7% on 2023.

76% of respondents feel ISTD examinations meet the needs of them and their students. But they reported that the barrier to taking examinations is cost, followed by students dancing just for fun.

Members provided feedback on the positive impact of cost-effective class exams – enjoying the newly available Modern Class exams, which encourage all students to participate in the examination experience. Our members made requests for expanding this offer into other genres such as Tap – which we are pleased to be launching in 2025.



Positively, the number of respondents feeling the exam experience is stressful has decreased from 32.6% in 2023 to 27.9% and the number who feel the student lacks confidence has dropped from 25.3% to 19.9%. Which is just as we would hope as students get used to being back in the studio dancing

post pandemic. We've seen more members than ever use our Application for Reasonable Adjustments (ARA) to make examinations more accessible for all students.

However, members also indicated they would like more materials to support promoting the benefits of entering examinations. Our **Step Up to Success** campaign is being developed to offer even more assets to support teachers communicate the benefits of participating in dance exams to students and parents. These will include social media assets, posters and letter/email templates which can be personalised

for your dance studio. We encourage you to share your students celebrating their exam participation and success with the hashtags **#ISTDStepUpToSuccess** **#ISTDDanceExams** **#ISTDdance**, to inspire even more people to take part.

Rating our benefits

The benefits most important to members, selected by over 70% of respondents as being extremely important or very important are: teaching resources, examinations, discount on CPD courses and safeguarding information.

The benefits members are most satisfied with – with 40%+ respondents rating them a 4 or a 5 are: examinations, Facebook groups, safeguarding information, faculty committees, email newsletters, teaching resources and Dance magazine.

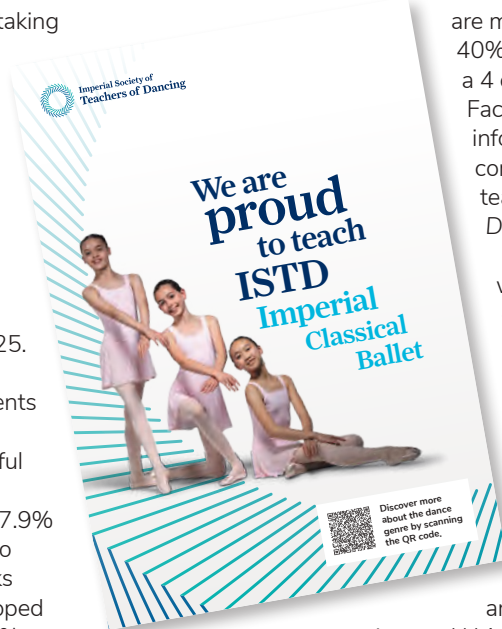
Respondents said they would like more business guides and networking opportunities. We have a range of regional and international member meetings, in-person CPD (including our Residential Summer School and BLS Congress) and our virtual communities – Facebook groups

and online learning

experiences. We're keen to hear

about other ways you may want to come together to network, interact and develop your dance community.

The results of the survey indicate we've work to do to ensure everyone is aware of and satisfied with our suite of benefits. And where you've told us that these services don't meet or exceed your needs, we are committed to reviewing, refining and introducing new offerings. To do this we will be working with member focus groups – such as our recently formed Early Career Group and our faculty committees, to develop even more information, resources and training that supports teachers across a range of topics including how to grow business, health and well-being, marketing your dance school, GDPR and data protection advice, managing your finances and VAT guidance. With over 100 products already available to



Membership matters

purchase as digital downloads, we will be working this year to complete the digitisation of our film and audio content. This is together with the development of the CPD programme which supports syllabi training for all teachers in person and online.

This year we will also be looking at our communications, and how we give you the information and resources you need, in the most user-friendly format. From Dance magazine, to newsletters, social networks and web content.

Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey. As our business plans for 2025 develop we'll provide more information on the developments you can expect to see from the ISTD in our newsletters and member meetings.

Keep in touch

While member surveys are a great way to benchmark our activity year on year, you can contact the Society with your feedback, concerns and suggestions at any time.

You can do this in a number of ways: call +44 (0)20 7377 1577, email or write to us (visit www.istd.org/



contact-us for details) or by contacting us on social media. Our ISTD Faculty Facebook Groups are private groups for members only (www.istd.org/dance/dance-genres).

Alternatively, come along to our regular regional and international member meetings check out the latest What's on email or the events page for meetings in your area (my.istd.org/events).



Membership

Need exam adjustments for your candidates?

Dance should be accessible for all. If you have a candidate with a disability, you can apply for an Application for Reasonable Adjustments (ARA) to ensure they have equal access to assessments.

The ISTD's ARA policy supports candidates with medical conditions, physical disabilities, sensory impairments, learning difficulties, developmental disorders, or mental health difficulties.

Find out more about how Reasonable Adjustments can remove barriers and provide inclusive opportunities. To learn more and apply, visit: www.istd.org/examinations/applications-for-reasonable-adjustments-ara

Membership

Online CPD for VAT and performing arts

Managing finances and tax can be an area of business that raises lots of questions. Join chartered accountant Sam Smith on these courses in May, specially designed to provide clarity and clear guidance on VAT for performing arts. Visit www.istd.org/events

Have you renewed your ISTD membership?

Embrace another year of dance excellence.

In 2024, we celebrated our 120th anniversary in style, showcasing dance excellence across the globe. Now, we invite you to renew your membership – if you haven't already – and continue this inspiring journey with us.

If you haven't renewed before 1 April, it's not too late! Log in to My ISTD today to renew your membership, or contact the team: membership@istd.org +44 (0)20 7377 1577 (Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm).



Why renew your membership?

You are part of a prestigious network of dance educators who are committed to excellence. Your membership offers a wealth of benefits designed to support your professional growth and teaching success.

Mark of Quality: Your status as an ISTD-recognised teacher is a global symbol of excellence in dance education. Being part of our directory of teachers enhances your professional credibility and visibility.

Step Up to Success materials: Gain access to exclusive, member-only downloadable guides and resources. These materials are designed to help you promote the benefits of ISTD examinations to your students and their parents, ensuring they understand the value of their dance education.

Examination uniform discount: Enjoy a special discount on our new ISTD examination uniform range, available exclusively to members.

Discounted CPD rates: Save on professional development opportunities, including our highly anticipated Summer Residential Programme at the University of Chichester this August. This event offers world-class training and networking opportunities, helping you stay at the forefront of dance education.

Reflecting on a milestone year

2024 was a landmark year for the ISTD, as we celebrated our 120th anniversary with a series of spectacular events and initiatives. Here are some highlights:

91,469 examinations: We conducted an impressive number of examinations, supporting dancers in their journey towards excellence.

£34,000 in bursaries and awards: We provided financial support to 24 learners, helping them achieve their dance dreams.

140+ downloadable resources: Our members' resources hub is packed with valuable materials, including marketing guides, video tutorials, safeguarding leaflets, social assets, and promotional posters.



As a member exclusive resource, use the Step Up to Success poster included in this issue of Dance

to showcase the benefits of dance examinations to parents and students that visit your school! Tag us on social media with your posters in pride of place in your schools [@istddance](https://www.instagram.com/istddance)

What's ahead for 2025?

Building on the success of 2024, we have an exciting year planned for our members. Here's a glimpse of what's in store:

Global events and competitions: From the DFR Grand Finals to the BLS Congress, we're showcasing dance talent and innovation on a global stage.

Evolving examination structure: We're introducing new Class Examinations for Modern Theatre and Tap later this year. These exams provide learners with more ways to develop their skills, artistry, and creativity in a supportive environment.

Exclusive CPD courses: Continue your professional development with our range of CPD courses, including the Residential Summer Programme in August and sessions on teaching dance in schools and the community.

Resources and support: Access guidance on safeguarding adults and children, join our online community groups, and celebrate all genres and faculties of dance.

Enhanced digital tools: Connect with the global dance community and receive expert marketing guidance. We're continuously developing new digitised assets to support your teaching and business growth.

Meet our international representatives

Discover the vital roles our international representatives play in supporting and advocating for our members.



Astrid Sherman
International Representative
for the Americas

My journey as the International Representative for the Americas began when I moved from Vancouver to Los Angeles. With experience on both sides of the border, I understand the unique needs of teaching dance in Canada and the USA. My right-hand

person in Mexico, Gail Clifford, provides invaluable support, particularly for our Spanish-speaking community.

My role is to champion the ISTD, raising awareness of training and professional development for members and non-members alike. I highlight the benefits of examinations – not just for structured learning but as a tool to engage and retain students. Since Covid, I've been running regular Zoom meetings in English and Spanish, keeping members informed and connected, with guest speakers from the Examination, Membership, and Education Departments.

Collaboration is key. As a member of the Dance Educators Committee for the International Association for Dance Medicine & Science (IADMS), I helped bring about a partnership with ISTD and Safe in Dance International (SIDI), leading to our 2022 online symposium: "Talking Dance Science and Being a 21st Century

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My role is to champion the ISTD, connecting teachers across the Americas, fostering collaboration, and ensuring they have the tools to inspire the next generation of dancers.

Dance Teacher.” Last November, I organised the first all-Spanish dance science event for IADMS and ISTD in Mexico City, bringing together Spanish-speaking researchers and teachers from across the Americas and Europe.

Post-pandemic, I've been reconnecting ISTD teachers in the Caribbean, encouraging collaboration and growth. Over the past year, we've also reintroduced ISTD Ballroom and Latin to international members, thanks

to support from Chua Zhen Fong, our International Rep in Asia.

The ISTD is a true 'Global Village,' with International Representatives working together to support members worldwide. Looking ahead to 2025, my goals include working towards accreditation for ISTD examinations, introducing opportunities for Approved Dance Centres (ADCs), and increasing safeguarding awareness. With such an engaged community, the future looks bright for ISTD in the Americas.

asherman@istd.org

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



Carole Ann Watson
International Representative for Europe

As International Representative for Europe, I play a key role in supporting ISTD members, fostering connections, and promoting professional development across the continent. I am grateful to local organiser, Theresa Lungaro-Mifsud, who provides essential support in Malta.

My journey with ISTD began in the 1990s, organising examination tours in Italy. This paved the way for local CPD courses, masterclasses, and summer schools, attracting teachers and students worldwide. In 2019, I stepped into my current role, taking on the challenge of representing and strengthening ISTD's presence in Europe.

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Collaboration is at the heart of my role – whether liaising with international reps worldwide, attending key industry events, or brainstorming new ways to support members.



Above Dance Science for Dance Teachers in Mexico City with ISTD, IADMS and UNAM

liaising with international reps worldwide, attending key industry events like IADMS, or brainstorming new ways to support members. I remain committed to keeping ISTD at the forefront of dance education, advocating for recognised qualifications and enhancing global connections.

With a passion for communication and a deep belief in ISTD's international strength, I continue to champion the Society's growth, ensuring European members feel engaged, supported, and inspired.

cwatson@istd.org

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



Delia Sainsbury

International Representative for Africa and the Middle East

What does it mean to be International Representative for Africa and the Middle East? My ISTD journey began with training at Bush-Davies Schools in London. After a year-long West Side Story tour, I moved to South Africa in 1976 with my late husband, Keith

Galloway. Seeing a need for strong technical training, we opened a school – helping to introduce ISTD to the region.

Initially, my role was local. I was the only teacher reaching Associate level, so all qualified ISTD teachers in South Africa trained at my studio. By 2004, my husband's illness forced me to step back, and ISTD HQ took over administration. But the organisation continued to grow, and in 2016, I was invited to become Liaison. With ISTD's expansion into five global regions, we recognised the need for local representation to support members and uphold teaching standards.

In South Africa, Facebook and WhatsApp keep our community connected – essential for sharing updates, syllabus queries, and exam information. My role has since expanded to the whole of Africa, supporting teachers in Nigeria, Ghana, Seychelles, Mauritius, and Israel. My school is also a key source of teachers for the Middle East, with many working in the UAE and Doha.

The ISTD is truly global. I could not be prouder to be part of this outstanding society. Though we may be scattered across the world, we are one enormous family. Recently, Astrid Sherman and I collaborated on a dance film based on gender-based violence, originally choreographed as a stage piece in Canada. Since the incident that inspired it took place in South Africa, I was asked to recreate it with my African dancers. The resulting film is now being presented at international festivals.

When we need dancesport expertise, we turn to Chua in Malaysia. Carole in Italy is my go-to person for DDE enquiries. Kim Scott in Australasia and I share similar challenges in navigating vast distances to keep our members connected.

Wherever you go in the world, you'll find one of us. After all, it's "My ISTD."

dsainsbury@istd.org

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

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My role has expanded to the whole of Africa, supporting teachers in Nigeria, Ghana, Seychelles, Mauritius, and Israel. My school is also a key source of teachers for the Middle East, with many working in the UAE and Doha.



Chua Zhen Fong

International Representative for Asia

Back in 2020, when I was first contacted by ISTD for an online interview to become the International Representative for Asia, I couldn't have anticipated how rewarding the role would be. This position has given me the unique opportunity to work closely with members across the region, gaining a deeper understanding

of their needs and helping them navigate their ISTD journey.

As international representatives, our primary goal is to support members in every way possible. We organise regional



International update

member meetings, provide guidance on administrative processes, promote ISTD activities, and handle urgent or special cases. Whether it is ensuring examinations run smoothly across time zones or addressing specific member concerns, our role is to act as a bridge between members and ISTD, ensuring that everyone feels supported and connected.



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Of course, challenges do arise. From addressing last-minute requests to coordinating online examinations across continents, the work requires adaptability and dedication. But these experiences have also underscored how resilient and resourceful our members are. Each interaction reminds me of the incredible commitment and passion that ISTD members bring to their teaching, examinations, and dance communities.

Building strong relationships is key to making the most of the resources available. Connecting with your local International Representative is a great way to stay informed, receive timely support, and contribute to the growth of ISTD in your region. For members in Asia, I've had the privilege of meeting many of you both online and in person, and I encourage anyone with questions or concerns to reach out.

Together, we can continue to grow and strengthen the ISTD community, advancing dance education for all.

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Kim Scott
International Representative
for Australasia

As I reflect on this role, I can't help but think of Delia Sainsbury, our ISTD Representative for Africa and the Middle East. Delia has been in the position for what seems like a lifetime, while for me, it's only my first year. The experience has certainly been eye-opening, but in many ways, it's been

like coming home – albeit with a few more responsibilities!

I've been part of the ISTD community since I was four years old, taking my first dance steps in a small church hall in Portsmouth. As a child (and even as a teenager), it was easy to take for granted just how much work goes into being a dance teacher. We show up to class, do our thing, and head home – right? It wasn't until I moved to Italy and became a dance teacher myself that I truly understood. Teaching dance isn't your typical nine-to-five job. It's more like a 24/7 commitment, where the lines between work and life often blur.

When I decided to introduce examinations into my school, I felt like I was diving into uncharted waters. That's when I realised just how invaluable a local rep can be – thank goodness for



Carole Ann Watson, our Representative for Europe. She was an absolute lifesaver, guiding me through every step of the process. It was then that I realised how crucial it is to have someone in your corner who understands the ins and outs of the system.



When I was offered the role of ISTD Representative for Australasia, I thought back to how Carole Ann Watson [Representative for Europe] helped me, and I knew I wanted to give back in the same way.

As teachers, we already juggle a massive workload, so having a dedicated point of contact to answer questions, clarify syllabus details, or provide guidance is invaluable. When I was offered the role of ISTD Representative for Australasia, I thought back to how Carole helped me, and I knew I wanted to give back in the same way.

I'm still learning the ropes, and there are certainly challenges along the way. But the beauty of being in a similar time zone is that it makes everything that

much easier. If I can make even a small difference – whether it's answering a question, planning a course, or offering support to a fellow teacher – then I consider that a win.

Of course, there are some questions I just can't answer (I'm not a miracle worker, after all). But that's where my incredible backup team at ISTD Headquarters comes in. Their ongoing support and collaboration are what allow me to do my job effectively, and I'm deeply grateful to them for always having my back.

So, being the ISTD Representative for Australasia is not only rewarding, but it's an honour. It's a role that challenges me, teaches me, and reminds me every day why I'm so passionate about dance and education. And, like any good dance class, the journey is as important as the destination!

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facebook.com/groups/istdaustralasia



International exams at a glance

Below data covers in-person and remote Theatre and Dancesport examinations for 2024 (Jan-Dec).

Totals for the year

Exam periods: 121
Countries: 37
Exam days: 689
Tours: 449

The Americas

Exam periods: 14
Countries: 5
Exam days: 138
Tours: 92

Europe

Exam periods: 69
Countries: 14
Exam days: 346
Tours: 214

Asia

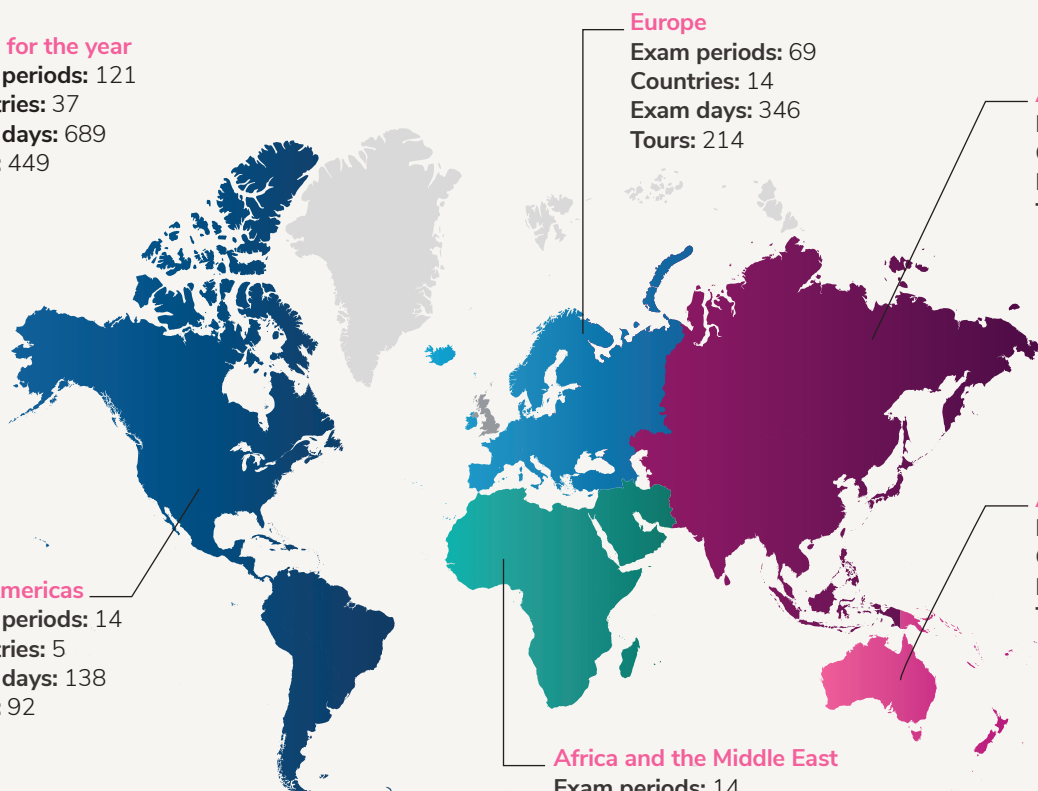
Exam periods: 21
Countries: 11
Exam days: 101
Tours: 77

Australasia

Exam periods: 3
Countries: 2
Exam days: 36
Tours: 17

Africa and the Middle East

Exam periods: 14
Countries: 5
Exam days: 68
Tours: 49





Cecchetti Classical Ballet

Ruth Brill

A visionary choreographer



Ruth Brill is a choreographer renowned for her passion for music and storytelling. A graduate of Tring Park School for the Performing Arts and English National Ballet

School, she enjoyed a successful career as a dancer with English National Ballet and Birmingham Royal Ballet, where she began honing her choreographic voice. Her notable works include *Rhapsody in Blue* (2014), *Arcadia* (2017), and *Peter and the Wolf* (2019).

Since retiring from performing in 2019, Ruth has served as Artistic Director of London Children's Ballet while pursuing her freelance choreographic career. Known for her ability to blend narrative, music, and movement, she continues to create compelling works that connect deeply with audiences and showcase her innovative vision.

What initially drew you to ballet?

What really drew me to dance and theatre was growing up watching musicals like *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*, *The Sound of Music*, and *West Side Story*. I am from a creative household; my dad had a diverse music collection because he is involved in radio and we had a big dressing up box! We spent a lot of time listening to a

wide range of music styles at home. I was always dancing and making up shows with my siblings with sheets hanging over the washing line as stage curtains. Age three, I went along to a ballet class in the local village hall with my friends to burn some excess energy, and it all grew from there. My teacher was Judith Wilson and I was taught in the Cecchetti method. I also did modern, jazz, tap and drama. Over the years, I started to travel up to London for ballet classes and competitions and fell in love with the idea of becoming a dancer.



Do you feel that training in the Cecchetti Method has given you a deeper understanding of the classical repertoire, and if so, how?

First and foremost, the Cecchetti Method educates you to move your body in different ways. In particular, using the upper body, expressive Port de Bras

and fast footwork. These elements are suited to much of the Ashton repertoire, which I was fortunate to perform. I've always felt at home in Sir Fred's ballets like *The Dream*, *Les Rendezvous*, *Dante Sonata* and *La Fille Mal Gardée*. Working with choreographers on new neo-classical work requires you to embrace unique movement styles, experiment, push the boundaries, go off balance, and just allow your body to move in a different way. The Cecchetti method trains you to be a coordinated and courageous dancer, which enables you to tackle any repertoire.

When you are choreographing new pieces, how do you find inspiration, and how does your Cecchetti training help you?

Every new work I create is different and I respond to the given brief accordingly, but I do always end up coming back to music. From the music, I get the structure, dynamics, nuance and the personality of the piece. As a dancer, I think my strengths were my musicality and dynamism, which in turn has shaped my choreographic voice. I'm also deeply inspired by the dancers I work with and want them to feel that it has been made for them. I love working with other collaborators – designers, composers, creatives – People who take your ideas further and beyond what you initially imagined. That's really exciting for me as an artist.

You were coached by Diane Van Schoor for the Cecchetti Diploma DVD. What did you take away from this experience and how has it helped you today?

Revisiting rigorous training while in a professional company was incredibly beneficial. I think it's no coincidence that I was promoted at Birmingham Royal Ballet during this period; the additional strength and confidence I gained were pivotal. Working with Diane, who is an exceptional mentor, alongside dedicated dancers from the Royal Ballet and Birmingham Royal Ballet made it not only an inspiring venture but also a truly joyful one. Our classes were just so rich in knowledge and dedication. Although we were giving up our precious days off and arriving to the Royal Opera House feeling tired because we might have done eight *Swan Lakes* that week, coming together to keep building and learning on those Sundays was special. We worked with Diane for three years, so we all learned and studied everything in great depth, and we all grew hugely as artists as a result. I'm so grateful and feel honoured to have been part of it.

“

The Cecchetti method trains you to be a coordinated and courageous dancer, which enables you to tackle any repertoire.



Who are some of the people in the ballet world, past or present, who have inspired or influenced you?

I think being a good teacher is a huge gift and I feel that there are many teachers that I have to thank because they inspired and encouraged me so much in my journey. Judith Wilson, right at the very beginning, helped to grow that spark of fire within me. Anita Young at the Royal Ballet Associates, Eve Pettinger at Tring Park, Anthony Dowson at English National Ballet School and then through ENB Company, Marion Tait and David Bintley have all contributed to my development and encouraged me. Diane Van Schoor remains a key inspiration for her passion and dedication to the Cecchetti Method, as was Richard Glasstone – I travelled to Paris with him to demonstrate the Cecchetti work. Additionally, I was so fortunate to work with Cathy Marston at a young age as she choreographed on 11-year-old me at London Children's Ballet. It was transformative. Her leadership, intelligence, kindness and creativity continue to inspire me, and I also admire how she balances her professional life with having a family.

Ballet is constantly evolving. How do you think the art form is changing, and what excites you about its future?

I think ballet is evolving because the world is evolving, and I think that it's only right that new work responds to the world

that we live in. There are waves of what is fashionable, and I feel like the dance world went through a phase where it was more about pushing the physical boundaries of the art form. I feel as though it's all swinging back now to connecting with the audience, emotion and telling stories. That is where my passion lies. I think the heritage of the ballet world is important too. Companies have a responsibility to retain and respect the heritage works and keep their integrity.

What is a successful work? There is no right or wrong in dance. It's an art form. New work needs to be made to challenge audiences. New collaborations, new creative voices and a sprinkle of bravery will mean that it continues to evolve.

What advice would you give to young dancers who are considering the Cecchetti Method as part of their ballet training?

I'm grateful that my dance school offered the Cecchetti Method. It's a beautiful way to train, helping dancers develop not just technique but also artistry, musicality and therefore the ability to express yourself. I'd encourage everyone to try ballet, or any kind of dance. I truly believe that dance is beneficial at any age – it is good for your physical and mental health. It enhances social skills, it instils discipline and focus, and boosts confidence.

How would you like to see the Cecchetti Method evolve in the future?

I'd love to see the Cecchetti Method become more accessible to a wider audience. Raising its profile will encourage more people to explore and appreciate its depth. It's crucial to think about the next generation – passing down knowledge to ensure the method continues to thrive. While retaining its essence is vital, it should also evolve to stay relevant. I believe the Cecchetti Method has much to offer, and I want as many people as possible to experience its beauty.

Interview by Jacqueline Lewis FISTD



Cecchetti Classical Ballet Scholars Showcase and Open Day

6 July at The Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation Theatre, Arts Ed, Chiswick

An afternoon of scholars demonstration, workshops for Cecchetti students and information about the Cecchetti scholars scheme – generously supported by the Cecchetti Society Trust. An opportunity to observe and share Cecchetti Classical Ballet for all teachers and students to take back inspiration for your practice.



Above Cecchetti teachers and lecturers at ISTD Residential Summer Programme at the University of Chichester in August 2024

Book your place now: Visit www.istd.org/events/residential-summer-programme-2025 to secure your spot and join us this August to learn, grow, and connect with like-minded professionals.

ISTD Residential Summer Programme 2025

Join us 12–20 August.

Reconnect, refresh, and reinvigorate your teaching this summer at the University of Chichester. Expand your knowledge, embrace new ideas, and catch up with friends in an inspiring environment designed for lifelong learners.

Do your students thrive when you embrace lifelong learning? Educational experts agree: the answer is yes! But lifelong learning isn't just about enriching your teaching – it's about revitalising you.



Teaching tip

A look at Simple Polka versus Balletic Polka.

Are your pupils showing the correct Polka in their exams? It is important to understand the difference between a Simple Polka and a Balletic Polka, and when each is required in the syllabus.

Do you have any questions about the syllabus or how to teach certain aspects? You are very welcome to join us for our next Teacher support meeting on-line on Monday 12th May from 10–11am. Book here: www.istd.org/events

Mabel Ryan Awards 2024

Lisa Hunter, Mabel Ryan Awards Organiser, reflects on last year's celebration of young talent, held on 17 November 2024.

Named in honour of Mabel Ryan, a beloved Cecchetti ballet teacher and pupil of Enrico Cecchetti, the Awards showcased confident performances from young dancers, supported by an exceptional team onstage and behind the scenes.

Adjudicators David Yow, Linda Isaacs, and Mary Stassinopoulos provided invaluable feedback, and students are encouraged to return this year, 2025, to compete again. For the first time, Scholars Committee members Gillian Toogood and Judith Wilson, alongside Jo Hurst from Central School of Ballet, assessed the performances to award scholarships.

The dedication of teachers shone through in the dancers' beautiful Cecchetti qualities. Results were published on our website shortly after the event, celebrating a day of exceptional talent. Keep a lookout for details of this year's Awards on our website.



Above Mabel Ryan Awards 2024

Cecchetti Malta Awards 2024

A celebration of talent and tradition.

The sixth Cecchetti Malta Awards took place on 1 December at Johane Casabene Dance Conservatoire Studios, welcoming 117 students. The standard was exceptional, with participants showcasing refined technique and a deep understanding of Cecchetti principles.

The event featured classes taught by Nina Winter and Elizabeth Garner Watson, with piano accompaniment by Veronique Vella, and was adjudicated by Brenda Lee Grech, a renowned professional dancer. Special thanks go to the local organising team and The Cecchetti Society Trust for their support. Results were published on our website following the event.

Looking ahead, we encourage teachers to watch for details of the Cecchetti Malta Awards 2025. This event is a valuable opportunity to support students' development and celebrate the Cecchetti Method.



Above Malta Awards 2024



New resource:

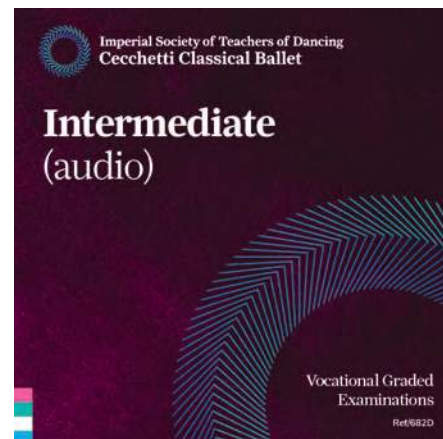
Cecchetti Intermediate Syllabus Music.

We are thrilled to introduce an updated and expanded Cecchetti Intermediate syllabus music resource!

Based on feedback from our members, in addition to the official syllabus music this resource includes:

- A variety of alternative tracks (for studio/classroom use only, not for exams).
- 29 additional tracks to support unset enchaînements and classroom practice.
- Select exercises recorded at two different speeds to accommodate varied physiques.

This versatile recording is ideal for classroom use. While a pianist is mandatory for vocational examinations, this resource is suitable for use in an Intermediate examination in the event of an emergency where a pianist is unavailable. Available now from the ISTD digital shop.



Above Updated and expanded Cecchetti Intermediate syllabus music resource with pianist, Jonnie Gait

Audition date:
10 May 2025

Location:
Arts Educational
School,
Chiswick

Cecchetti Classical Ballet Scholars Auditions 2025

The prestigious Cecchetti Scholars scheme provides aspiring young dancers with exceptional weekly training to refine their technique, build strength, and deepen artistry under the guidance of expert teachers. This exceptional scheme is generously supported and funded by the Cecchetti Society Trust.

Important details:

- Applications close Wednesday 7 May
- Apply online: www.istd.org/events/cecchetti-scholars-audition-2025/#event-details
- Successful applicants will need to travel to London for weekly Saturday classes during term time
- Promotional assets for Instagram are available for download via the entry page on the website



Classical Greek Dance

Grace, expression, and joy

A celebration of the Ruby Ginner Awards.

Participants perspectives

By Eliza Lillyman (age 10)

It was my first time at the Ruby Ginner Awards and I enjoyed the class, particularly the improvisation because it made me feel free to interpret the music my own way. It was lovely to have the music played by a pianist and we had a really nice teacher as well.

We were all placed in a class according to the grade we are at. We did three set pieces from our grade and a nature study. I enjoyed our nature study, where we had to dance like mist rising into the sky. When you enter

the Ruby Ginner Awards you get to do a different nature study each time so it's fun to imagine what it might be!

Everybody came off stage smiling and very happy, including me. It was nice to meet dancers from different schools and I would recommend entering the Ruby Ginner Awards. I hope to be there next year!

By Matilda Briggs (age 9)

After arriving, we went into the Green Room and got our numbers allocated, and had a practice of the set exercises, before going backstage to wait for our turn to dance. We were all scared and excited to meet our teacher and to dance in front of the judge.

When we were on stage the teacher asked us to show her and the judge some made up exercises, the three set exercises and another exercise which was like a dance to finish. Afterwards, we went into a semi-circle on the stage, and we got our awards.

Overall, it was a really nice thing to do, and I would do it again. I love doing Greek because when I move around the stage or studio, I feel free to express my feelings and it has made me more confident. When you dance you are the light of the room and when you dance with emotion you shine even brighter.



A teacher's perspective

By Eloise Hardy

As a child I loved competing in the Ruby Ginner Awards. The opportunity to showcase sequences I had learnt over the past year and to characterise and express stories and emotions in unseen sequences made the competition exciting and great fun. It's a unique and special competition incorporating aspects of Classical Greek dance to create an experience unlike any other.

Classical Greek medal tests are an ideal way to prepare for the Ruby Ginner Awards. They develop musicality and expression as they provide opportunities for each individual dancer to explore, create and perform sequences to tell a story. My own students love being able to add their own drama, expression and interpretations.

I was honoured to be asked to teach Class A this year. There was a buzz of excitement backstage. My class opened the day with the youngest competitors, participating for the first time. My class included many opportunities to explore expression, and they did brilliantly at bringing their own unique ideas to each exercise. I especially enjoyed watching their Wizard interpretations! Their characterisation was fantastic, and the standard was very high.

I chaperoned for the rest of the event, and it was great to watch the talent and joy from every competitor taking part.

An adjudicator's perspective

By Helen Leek

The venue was lovely, and the dancers had such a beautiful stage to perform on. Each class was inspiring, and all the teachers managed to relax the students, so that they could perform at their best.

It was obvious how well prepared everyone had been by their teachers. However, for me, what was most impressive was the students' musicality and their ability to improvise and be creative. We saw some wonderful individuality and it really showcased what a fabulous dance genre Classical Greek is.

Results were published online after the event.



The Medal Tests offer candidates a great opportunity to showcase their performance skills.



Focus on Medal Tests

A flexible and rewarding exam option.

Classical Greek Medal Tests are beautifully designed short exams that offer candidates a great opportunity to showcase their performance skills, including technique, musicality and performance, and creativity and response. After a brief set technical warm up, candidates dance a set technical sequence and a set dance sequence alongside the free sequence given by the examiner before ending the exam with a performance of their own prepared dance or dances.

The Medal Tests are very useful exams. Dances created for them can be used again in other contexts, for example at festivals, or for school shows. Equally, dances created for festival performance may be suitable for a medal test, offering teachers a multi-purpose model that can work well with their busy schedules.

Teachers can select a remote exam session or can host or join a live session, depending on what works best for them. For live sessions, the inclusion of medal tests offers candidates more than one chance to shine and could contribute towards ensuring a full schedule for the day. Whether live or remote, the students benefit from the opportunity to refine and develop their skills so they can excel in performing in a variety of settings.

There are four levels, including: Bronze, Silver, Gold and Gold Star with timing ranging from Bronze at 10 minutes to Gold Star at 25 minutes. Candidates can enter Bronze, Silver and Gold from 8 years of age, and must be at least 13 years old to enter Gold Star.

Full details can be found on the ISTD website here: www.istd.org/examinations/theatre-dance-syllabus-outlines Scroll down to find the Classical Greek syllabus outline with medal tests information on page 7.

By committee member Lucy Pohl



Classical Indian Dance

Passion, progress, and performance

Vibha Mamtora's dance journey.

SIANTRENBERTH



Can you tell us about your dance training with the ISTD syllabus and who your role models are?

I began my Bharatanatyam training with my mother,

Kiran Ratna, at India Dance Wales, progressing through the ISTD syllabus to Advanced 2 and recently earning my Licentiate teaching qualification. I now teach and perform in Exeter, Devon.

My mother has always been my role model. We performed duets at local events and worked on outreach projects with organisations like the BBC, which taught me invaluable lessons about being on stage with a professional. Over time, I gained confidence and improvisation skills, while learning the behind-the-scenes work involved in running a dance company – research, preparation, music editing, and administration.

Reflecting on my mother's innovative touring productions, which blended Bharatanatyam with Shakespeare, animation, Welsh folklore, and philosophical themes, I feel lucky to have her support and aim to develop similar ideas in my own work.

What do you enjoy about the ISTD syllabus, and how does its structure support your teaching?

Following the ISTD syllabus provides students with a sense of accomplishment and progress, which helps motivate them to improve, especially in the earlier years. The experience of ISTD exams also taught me how to perform under pressure and stay composed when questioned – skills that differ from written exams.

Learning through the structured exam syllabus has boosted my confidence in both dance and when working with musicians. The skills gained from exams have also helped me in life, particularly during job interviews, where I could stay calm and remember that I do know what I'm talking about!

ISTD exams taught me how to perform under pressure and stay composed when questioned.

Can you share your journey from student to professional?

Teaching lower grades at India Dance Wales helped me identify areas for improvement and build essential teaching skills. This grew further at university, where I taught beginner classes alongside fellow Bharatanatyam dancers.

When I moved to Exeter, starting my own classes felt natural, as I'd already taken on similar responsibilities at India Dance Wales. I'd unknowingly begun learning about class planning and progressions. With my mother's invaluable support and advice, especially for my exam candidates,



I've been able to grow further.

Over the years, I've gained confidence in assessing my students and developing my teaching style through experimentation. Watching them in class or performance, I feel proud of their progress.

In my own performing, every solo production has been a career highlight, especially *Nayika* in 2016, where I choreographed most of the work, edited the music, and managed the production details for the first time. A key focus for me has been making Bharatanatyam accessible to everyone. Hearing audience members, new to the art form, express their excitement and appreciation has been incredibly rewarding.

Another highlight was collaborating with dance friends I trained with. A few years ago, five of us, who completed our Advanced 2 together, reunited from across the country to create a Margam show. The result exceeded our expectations, and we were all immensely proud of what we created and performed.

Above Vibha Mamtora with her mother Kiran Ratna

Right Vibha Mamtora

Can you tell us about the students and teachers you work with in your community?

Over the years, my students have participated in various collaborative events across Devon and Cornwall, including community groups, schools, city-wide events, and theatre productions. These opportunities allowed them to perform and experience the entire rehearsal process. A highlight was a three-year project with the Barnfield Theatre in Plymouth, involving productions with flamenco and contemporary dancers, as well as performances at Exeter Cathedral. These experiences are crucial for a performer's growth. Many of my closest friends are those I've danced with, and it's rewarding to see my students start forming similar connections.

What tips have you found helpful for students at any level?

With younger students, focus on developing correct placement and timing. Over time, practice will bring clarity and precision. No matter their personality, encourage dancers to perform with confidence!

For older students, remind them that it's not just about 'what' they're doing, but 'how' they're doing it. Ask them to focus on specific elements in their practice and add one correction at a time to encourage continuous improvement.

For Abhinaya, students must build confidence and engage their

imagination to play characters unlike themselves. Empathy is key to helping them react as their character would.

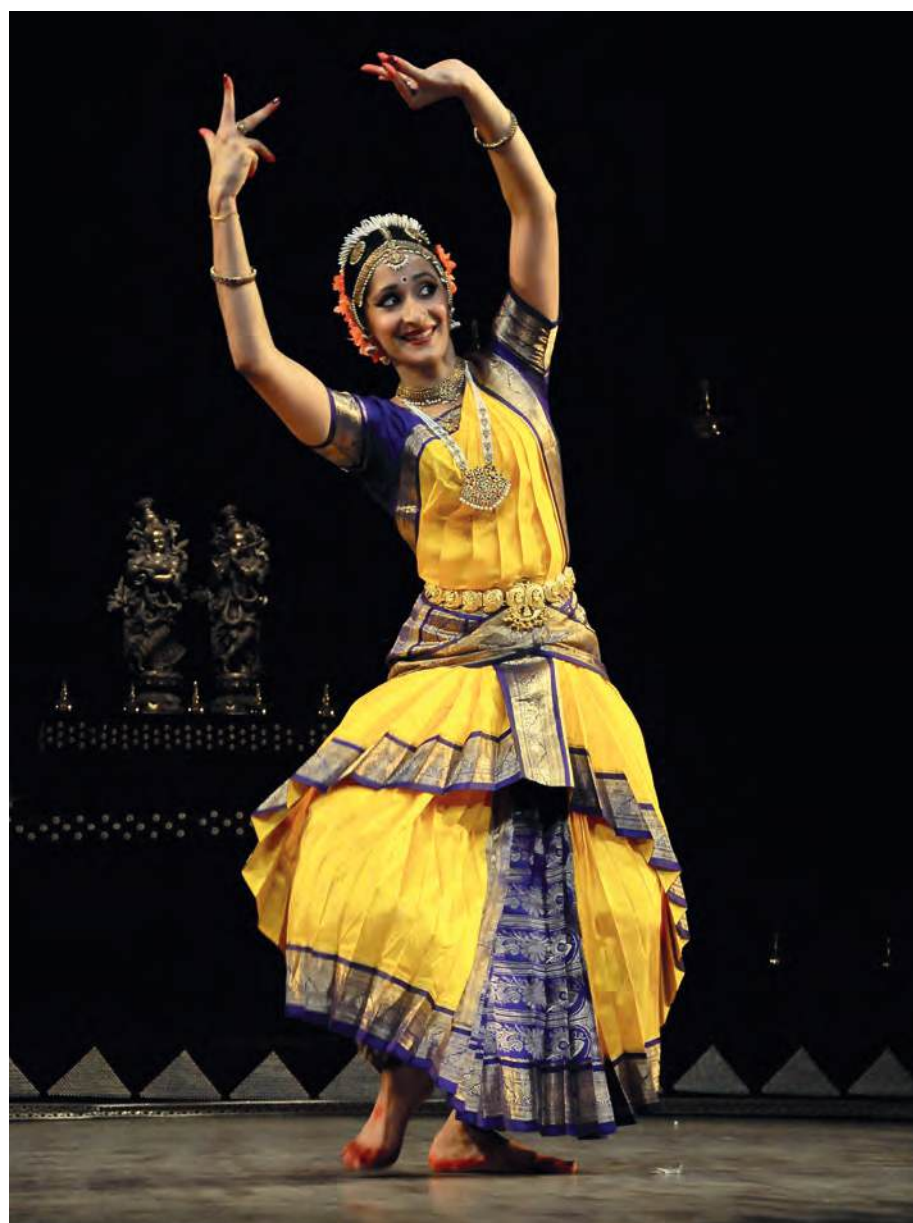
What qualities do you believe are important to instil in your students and young teachers?

One of the most important lessons in dance training is the drive to always improve. It can be hard for students to understand that mastering a dance doesn't mean the work is done. Dance is different from academic subjects – techniques and routines can always be revisited and improved. I encourage my students to embrace this idea, as it helps them analyse and correct their practice. I see this especially in my older students, who support and guide the younger ones, becoming more mindful of their own dance development.

What advice or key strengths would you highlight for those entering the dance or teaching profession?

As a student, it's easy to forget how long learning takes. As a teacher, it's important to be patient and avoid overwhelming students. Encourage them to take responsibility for remembering lessons and teach them 'how to learn,' as practice is key to mastering this skill.

Lastly, always enjoy your dance! We practice so hard, correcting all the details, so that when it comes to performing, your students can have the brain space to "let go" and truly lose themselves in their expressions, storytelling and beauty of our art form.



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We picked out some of Vibha's top tips:

- **Focus on placement and timing:** Build these foundations for younger students through consistent practice.
- **Emphasise quality:** For older students, focus on 'how' they move, not just 'what' they do.
- **Encourage self-correction:** Make refining technique a regular part of practice.
- **Build confidence in Abhinaya:** Help students develop empathy to portray characters authentically.
- **Be patient and teach responsibility:** Encourage students to take charge of their learning through practice.



Contemporary Dance

Advanced 1

Sian Hopkins, Contemporary Lead Lecturer, explores how to embrace Contraction and Spiral, and looks at the accumulation of themes throughout levels.

“It begins with attention to breathing and grows out of that act.”

The contraction emerges from an exaggeration of natural movement patterns. Our attention to breath, fully emptying the lungs either softly or with force, alters movement dynamics. Engaging and elongating the core muscles creating a curvature through the spine, gives aesthetic focus. Returning through release or inhalation offers a cyclical movement process. Fully emptying the lungs allows for the natural impetus to breathe in again to be felt.



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

“Contractions that move the body.”

Although the contraction makes sense of its name, evident from the lungs emptying, and of engaging deep pelvic and abdominal muscles, the movement is simultaneously incredibly expansive. The spine lengthens rather than shortens as it curves. The core elongates as it draws in towards the spine, seeking an opening of space between vertebrae and a hollowing out of the centre. The contraction moves us, literally causing the body to fall through space, shifting and powering us as we travel. A spiral simultaneously contains and frees us, adding momentum and fluidity. The concept of opposition or opposing forces within the body, the inner struggle, gives expressive power to our movement.

“A possibility the contraction holds...”

The energy felt in the body aims to be one of connection to earth and sky, grounding us down while projecting energy upwards and outwards. There is a gravity to the deep muscular contraction low in the pelvis and a subtlety to the energy up and out through the throat.

A similar sensation to contraction can be found when on hands and knees, pressing into the earth. Press down through contact points on the ground and feel the centre and spine drawing up to the sky – like a cat after a long nap! As

the abdominals engage, lengthen and draw them in towards the spine creating a curve of the lower and middle back. The pelvis will shift, drawing the tailbone down and under. Imagine opening space between the vertebrae of the lower back. The curve formed will be evident from tailbone to the top of the skull.

The softening of the chest in a contraction can be challenging. To experiment, place the outside edge of one hand, with side of little finger against sternum, and take a deep breath in feeling the chest rise. As the breath empties, gently press inwards sliding the hand down as the chest lowers. Increase this feeling of hollowing out, or concave rounding of the chest area. At the same time, pull the shoulders out and away, as if you could increase the space in the front of the shoulder joints, creating a sensation of generous breadth across the chest and upper back.

Play with how long you can suspend a fall backwards initiated by a contraction, before recovering or continuing in the direction of the fall. This helps discover depth of movement but also optimum point for rebound or surrender. In taking a step forward with the intention of falling off the leg, opposite arm reaching forward diagonally high, we reveal a spiral connection suspending us from fingers to toes. See how far you can stretch the space in between before giving in to the fall. In contractions we press the arms away, creating a feeling of all body surfaces pressing outwards. Pressing the palms away to the front, with elbows bent to the sides helps the chest soften and the back broaden.

A contraction can feel very satisfying in the body yet may stay elusive, demanding investigation each iteration. Explore making the movement so small you can barely feel it, concentrating on the out breath, then exaggerate. Enjoy the physical satisfaction of finding what feels good when attempting to seek and embody both concept and literal motion.

“In dance [the spiral] is usually thought of as relating to such a field of force that is opposed to, or that contains, an oppositional element within itself.”

Spirals encourage elements of resistance in the body as well as elongation and freedom of the spine. Working against the self informs the feeling of inner opposition


 Teach

Contemporary

holding us together, winding up and unwinding with a range of momentum and force. Spirals encourage connection through the body, both in a natural manner and by deliberately exaggerating movements and exploring full range. Spirals can support flow of phrasing and transition by going to our limits, winding up fully to unwind naturally leads into the next motion. This concept continues to explore the element of expansion, reaching and sending energy further than the limits of our physical body in space.

Give attention to where the energy of the movement might continue. Where does it want to take you? Where can we lean further into this? At which point does the energy return to the body or dissipate? What is the movement demanding in order to continue or transition? Play with the concepts of spiral, contraction and fall to investigate transitions in new ways.

The collated contemporary work encourages embodied expressiveness, deep physicality and philosophical thought. Theory and practice intertwine generating movement with power, grace and conviction. The spiral progression through the syllabus levels embraces repetition, and therefore, principles established early on continue to develop as new layers of information are revealed through practice. Encouraging young dancers to engage in reflection and investigation, can transform their learning experience and develop their individuality as artists. Embodied knowledge grows as progression unfolds, informing artistic growth and offering sensations of joy and wildness in the fullness of movement.

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

Teacher's corner

Try this!

Explore a short improvisation task in the middle of the class. For example, if students have been working on the floor, can they pick their favourite floor exercise and explore the movement by changing levels, moving in and out of the floor, gradually coming to standing in the space. There is no need to 'set' anything, just simply explore where the movement can take them when playing with different levels.

Disco Freestyle and Rock n Roll

Carl Alan Awards

ISTD members celebrate success.

The Carl Alan Awards is a prestigious annual event in the United Kingdom that celebrates individuals who have made a significant impact on the dance industry. In 2024, ISTD winners and nominees in the Freestyle category included Paul Streatfield, who received the Outstanding Services Award, and Oliver Kirk, who won the Performers Award. Additionally, Joanne Bevan was nominated for the Choreographer Award, while Yvonne Taylor-Hill was recognised as a nominee for the Lifetime Achievement Award.

Reflecting on his award, ISTD Fellow and Examiner Paul Streatfield said: "The award ceremony is always a wonderful evening with reception, dinner, cabaret and dancing in a room of profoundly talented performers and teachers from the freestyle and theatre world. When my name was called out as this year's recipient of a Carl Alan Award, it was a moment of total shock as the other nominees and colleagues were all worthy of this prestigious award. I can't thank the selection committee

enough for bringing my name to the shortlist and for the ISTD committee for nominating me in the first instance.

"Reflecting on this award, which stands in pride of place in my lounge, reminds me of my achievements and most certainly those that have supported and believed in me along the way and during my professional journey, for which I thank you all wholeheartedly. I've achieved much in my working years and feel honoured and proud to have received another award, the Carl Alan Award for Outstanding Achievements in Freestyle Dance."



DFR Q&A

Your top competition and exam questions answered.

What is the difference between the grades and the Social Dance Test (SDT), Pre-Bronze (PB), Bronze and upward examinations?

The graded syllabus examinations start from the very basic technique and each grade works through a syllabus of progressions, which help to improve technique and understanding the linking of different steps and movements. The different level examinations such as Bronze, Silver, Gold, are mainly taken for students who compete in the medallist area qualifying competitions. This is mainly down to the fact that you must have taken one of these exams to allow you to compete in these specific competitions.

If a school has the capacity on their timetable to incorporate both the grades, as well as the medal tests, then this is highly recommended as even the most advanced dancers can always benefit from going back to basics for technique to help improve their performance further.

Where can we buy the graded syllabus exam music?

This can be purchased online via the ISTD shop. Just type the grade in the search bar and it will come up.

Who do I contact if I have any questions or queries regarding competitions or exams?

All questions should go to dfr@istd.org.uk

Where can I find all the DFR exam information and guidance?

These documents can be found on the ISTD website, once you log in under your membership. They specify what is required within the examinations for each level.

I have a student who is now in professional training at a specialist dance college, but they would still like to come back and compete at the area competitions and take their exams. Is this possible?

Unfortunately, the area competitions are for amateurs only and anyone who is in full time training at specialist dance colleges, or gaining their teaching qualifications, is no longer eligible to compete in these competitions. If you have any questions regarding

students who go to university and are studying dance in a small way or at a 'musical theatre' college and doing little dance performance, they may be entitled to compete. You can address questions to dfc@istd.org.uk
By committee member,
Anna Knowles-Hibbert

Don't forget to join your faculty Facebook group to engage with fellow members and ask your burning questions: www.istd.org/discover/our-governance/faculty-committees

Costuming confidence

A guide for new competitors.

Your students' parents have agreed to allow their child to start competing at the ISTD DFR competitions and now panicking about what they are or are not allowed to wear... My advice to any schools or parents, new to competitions is to 'start small'.

The biggest panic in all parents is the thought of what they must remember for each event and secondly, how much is it going to cost them?

For beginners up to and including Bronze level, they are not allowed any sparkle or shimmer until they get to Silver level (excluding Rock n Roll as there are not restrictions for any levels, including U6 and U8).

So, the most simple and cost effective way would be to buy a plain leotard (can be short or long sleeved) and wear it for both Set Dance, Solo and even Freestyle Pairs if your partner matches. This then means you only have to think about this one outfit throughout.

For Set Dance, students can wear leg warmers and MUST have shoes if dancing either a Rock'n'Roll or Street style dance. They can also wear shoes for Freestyle but this is optional.

For the Rock n Roll event, there are no restrictions in terms of sparkle for any level or age category.

If you are trying to budget in terms of how much you spend (mainly due to the fact it may be a student's first time out and they may decide competitions aren't for them) you can always buy sparkly costumes on places such as EBay and Amazon to keep costs down to begin with.

Once you know that a student is committed to competitions, you can



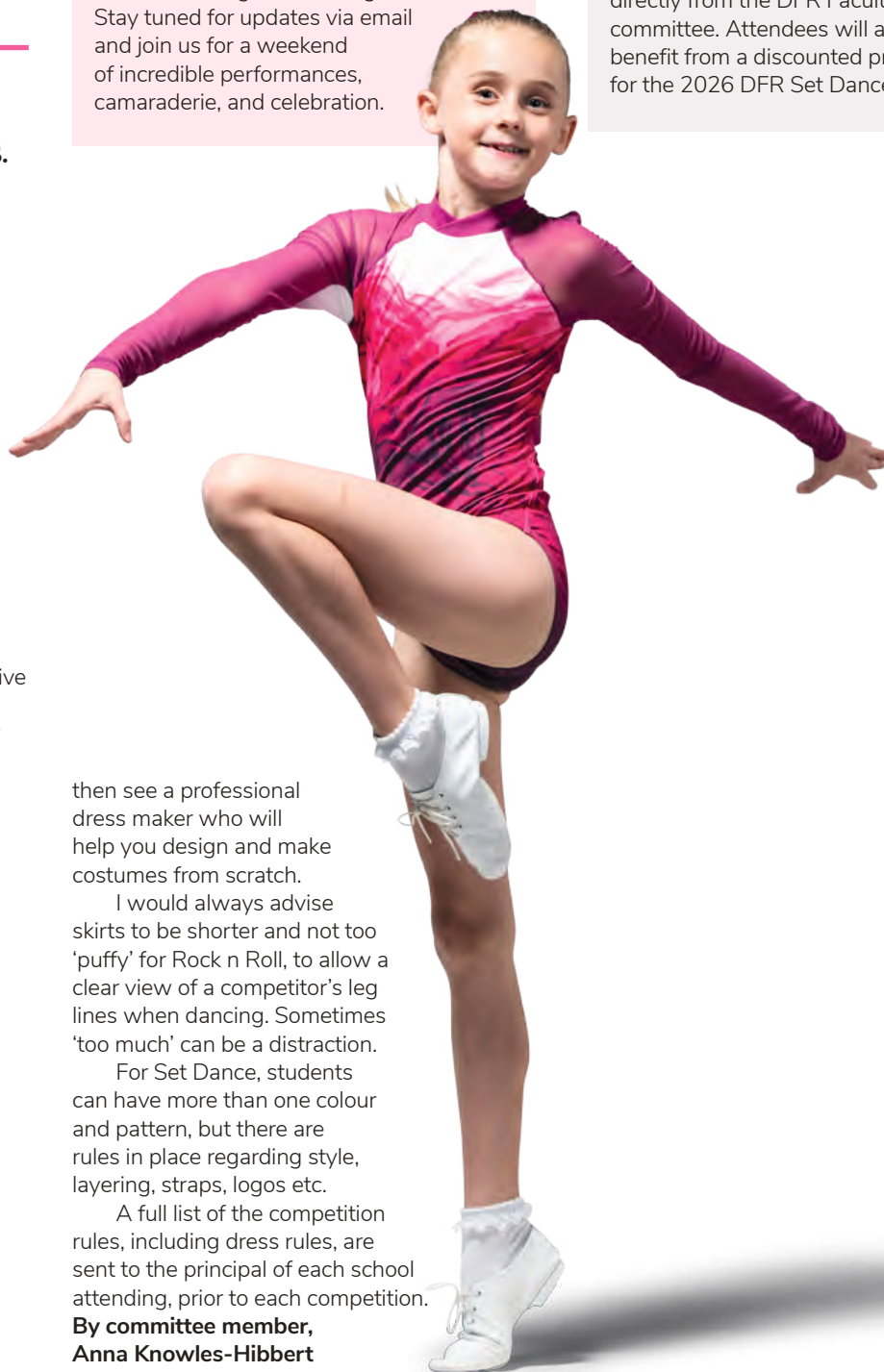
Grand Finals Day 2025

This will be a two-day event on 11–12 October, allowing more dancers to showcase their talents. Alongside DFR Grades, Street Dance Solos, Teams, and Crews, we're excited to introduce an Adapted Dance Section for dancers with disabilities, ensuring inclusivity and recognition. We're working with experts to make this section accessible, with more details on categories coming soon. Stay tuned for updates via email and join us for a weekend of incredible performances, camaraderie, and celebration.



DFR Dance Exchange

On 14 September 2025, the Elgiva Theatre in Chesham will host a day of lectures for teachers, focusing on DFR and street dance. This event provides a valuable opportunity to network with fellow teachers and receive guidance directly from the DFR Faculty committee. Attendees will also benefit from a discounted price for the 2026 DFR Set Dances.



then see a professional dress maker who will help you design and make costumes from scratch.

I would always advise skirts to be shorter and not too 'puffy' for Rock n Roll, to allow a clear view of a competitor's leg lines when dancing. Sometimes 'too much' can be a distraction.

For Set Dance, students can have more than one colour and pattern, but there are rules in place regarding style, layering, straps, logos etc.

A full list of the competition rules, including dress rules, are sent to the principal of each school attending, prior to each competition.

By committee member,
Anna Knowles-Hibbert



Imperial Classical Ballet

Reflections from ISTD Residential Summer Programme

Charlotte Rintoul and Caroline Burke share their experiences from last year's Summer Programme in Chichester, highlighting the intensive learning, camaraderie, and professional development opportunities that left them eager to return.



Charlotte Rintoul

Charlotte trained in ISTD at the School of Ballet Theatre UK (2014–2017) and holds a Level 6 Diploma in Dance Pedagogy, Licentiate Modern, and DDE in Imperial Classical

Ballet. An Acrobatic Arts Certified teacher, she teaches Ballet, Modern, and Acrobatic Arts at Page Mason School of Dance, Kent. Charlotte is dedicated to providing high-quality dance training in a supportive and positive environment.

My first experience at Summer Programme

It was my first time attending ISTD Residential Summer Programme in Chichester, and I had no idea what



The atmosphere was so welcoming and inclusive. I left feeling inspired, eager to return, and wishing I had booked more days!

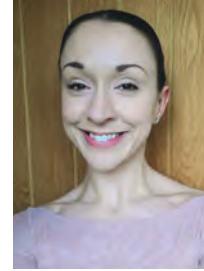
to expect. To my delight, I recognised some old faces from previous courses and met new people, which made the whole experience very welcoming. The atmosphere and learning environment were inclusive and positive, allowing me to connect with others in the dance community and build relationships I hope will be useful in the future.

I attended just one day, and felt the intensive nature of the course was very manageable. It made me nostalgic for my vocational training. The course was very well organised, and our lecturer, Claire Slater, provided in-depth knowledge on the Advanced 2 Imperial Classical Ballet syllabus for Options A and B, which is not available in a syllabus book or DVD. This in-person experience allowed me to absorb the information in detail and pass it onto my students in order to enhance their training and promote their cognitive and physical development.

Looking back, I wish I had booked myself onto more days at the Chichester summer programme as this would have benefited my own professional development and the friendships I had built in a short space of time. It left me wanting more and I was eager to

book onto the next available course. I will indeed be signing up for a place on future summer schools – and this time, not for just one day.

By Charlotte Rintoul



Caroline Burke

Caroline is a dedicated dance teacher specialising in Ballet, Tap, and Modern. She teaches at three Hertfordshire-based dance schools and is committed

to nurturing the next generation of dancers. Having recently achieved her Licentiate in Ballet, Caroline also holds DDE qualifications in Tap and Modern, reflecting her passion for both teaching and continued professional development.

A transformative experience at Chichester

Last year was my first time at Chichester. I was nervous but so looking forward to dancing and learning. On the first evening I realised there was nothing to worry about, as the ISTD had organised a welcome talk and drinks. Everyone was friendly and people had come from around the world to attend. Chatting to other like-minded teachers during our shared mealtimes made us all realise that despite living hundreds or even thousands of miles away, we all fundamentally faced the same challenges when teaching.

The morning warm up and evening classes/lectures for residential delegates were a brilliant chance to dance for yourself and feel your muscles working.



I left Chichester with my love for teaching reignited – motivated, inspired, and eager to bring new ideas back to my students.

Also, for multi-genre teachers, these classes allowed you to do different genres across a day, which was a bonus. I loved the Advanced 2 ballet barre warm up with live piano first thing in the morning – a joy; and the morning conditioning warmups were also a great challenge. The jazz free work class on the Monday evening

(taught by the Modern Faculty) was also a great addition to the timetable; fast paced, including exercises and musical theatre jazz choreography, it was pure fun!

I have been working towards my Licentiate Ballet, so a particular highlight was the Advanced 1 Ballet course on the third day, led by Claire Slater and overseen by Jackie Styles. Claire's approach was meticulous, and we spent the day in a beautiful, mirrored studio going through all the new vocabulary in this grade, dancing Option A and B set enchaînements and learning new ways to train advanced movements. This included useful floor, barre and centre-based training exercises for

difficult new steps such as penché and allongée. Claire also guided our work in groups to create free enchaînements.

It was a luxury to have a wonderful live pianist in Debbi Parks, and to be inspired by everyone's creativity, feel motivated and have new ideas to go home with. I left Chichester with my love for teaching ignited even more by this setting. The ballet and modern course lecturers were all passionate and thorough in their delivery and it was a great experience to be taught by people with such extensive subject knowledge who could deliver in such a way that they make you want to be better for your students.

By Caroline Burke



Imperial Classical Ballet Grade 6 Examination

In response to feedback, minor changes to the ICB Grade 6 examination have been agreed, to ease time pressures on candidates during the examination. These changes will come into force on 1 October 2025.

1. Barre

1.4 Battements frappés and battements frappés fouettés (set exercise)

1.5 Petits battements sur le cou-de-pied (set exercise)

EITHER 1.4 OR 1.5 to be seen in the examination – Examiner's choice

1.8 Fouettés ronds de jambe en tournant - no longer seen in the examination

Centre

4. Adage

4.1 Temps Lié en l'air en avant and en arrière (set exercise)

4.2 Fouetté of adage (set exercise)

EITHER 4.1 OR 4.2 to be seen in the examination – Examiner's choice

6. Pirouettes

6.1 Single pirouettes en dehors from 5th (set exercise) no longer seen in the examination



Residential Summer Programme 2025

Don't forget to book your place, and invest in your CPD this year, 12–20 August 2025 at the University of Chichester. Check the website to discover more.



Latin American, Modern Ballroom and Sequence

The power of sequence

A fresh take on teaching
sequence dance.



**Sequence Faculty
committee member
Kay Fairgrieve
explains how
sequence dancing
offers more than
just variety, it's a
chance to challenge
your pupils, refine
their skills, and**

**introduce them to new opportunities,
from medals to social dance success.**

You may be wondering what is happening to the sequence exams. They are being revised, not disappearing completely. The ISTD has been seeking representation from teachers to ask their opinion on medal tests, so please volunteer.

I apologise in advance to all of you who are already teaching it, but this article might give you some more to think about. I started teaching it because I had taken over a pupil who was already advanced in medals (up to the supreme award stage) but wanted something else to take medals in. We had just started teaching sequence dances in a social class, so we went for it (and that also explains how I became qualified.) Teaching in a school unfamiliar with sequence before introducing it in a social class was initially challenging. But having Classical, Ballroom and Latin Sequence also helped as it gave us lots of choice for new

routines – and it opens more competitions up too, if that is what interests your pupils.

For our children's classes we started introducing it from the beginning – square tango is great for getting people to walk backwards properly – and if you have pupils who are taking medals regularly, it makes a nice change to do some different steps by using sequence dances. I am well aware of the benefits of doing four times Social Dance Test (SDT), four times Pre-Bronze, but there are only a few steps in the syllabus at Bronze level and below, and it can be a bit boring for the pupils (at any level). Doing Ballroom

**Sequence
dancing opens
up new routines
and more
opportunities
for your pupils.**

and Latin Sequence can also help get them more advanced before they reach that level in their 'normal' medals. And at SDT you can use mambos, bossa novas etc, which can be good fun for pupils.

Doing Classical Sequence for medals can be a bit more difficult – you will soon twig whether it is going to be easy for

pupils or not, but I have had very few people who have not enjoyed it. At the beginning, go gently. I tend to do an old time waltz and a tango, or a two-step and a saunter, so they don't have to manage two turned-out foot dances simultaneously. And always pick a dance with as little old time waltz as possible for those new to it. At social dance tests you can do eight bars of a routine, which also helps avoid too much waltzing. (It is quite difficult to do old time waltzing well, and funnily enough, the examiners tend to be quite keen on it being done competently!) My pupils all loved wearing a full skirt and doing the poise as well, but start that early as they often find it difficult to add that at the last minute.

One thing I found really helpful for medallists was the Classical Sequence grading. I put quite a few people in for grading exams, but that doesn't suit everyone. But everyone can do the exercises – we used to do that at the beginning of an adult medallist class, and the improvement in their footwork and balance was huge. It was also quite interesting when we did the clapping along to the beat – that showed us why their timing wasn't great! The Classical Sequence grading is also quite useful for teachers, too, either to take before you take your Student or Associate, or just to look at the exercises. The exercise for doing waltz turns is good (first two bars of the Liberty 2 Step, done more slowly), and the "progressive combination exercise in ¾ rhythm" at Grade 3 is great for a beginner's exercise or as an 8 bar medal routine for SDT.



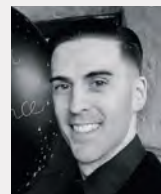
For non-medallists, sequence dancing is quite important at social dances, too. You don't want to turn down pupils who want to learn the latest waltz, rumba, mambo etc. I asked some of my pupils what they enjoyed about sequence dancing – I had a variety of answers – “more interesting than basic figures”, “easy to learn the other role”, “it is only 16 bars to learn” and also “very easy to lead an unfamiliar partner through a dance”. For some adults, this can be a good way into medals. I had a pupil who didn't want to do medals – partly because it was basic steps and he was an accomplished social dancer, but I persuaded him to do a SDT in Ballroom Sequence. Another couple said that at social dances they used to do three different sequence waltzes to warm themselves up, and then start

thinking about what other steps they knew. It was also quite handy in teaching samba and tango to social pupils – lots of social dances don't bother with those as not many people know those dances (don't get me started on that one) but if you have a couple of sequence tangos, then you can dance. Same with the samba – I am aware that it probably isn't the easiest to dance socially, but Social Samba, Shoebury Samba and Belvedere Samba (non-syllabus) all start in the same position, and if you join those together, you have a nice long samba routine.

One of my teachers always said to me it isn't important what you find interesting, it is about what your pupils enjoy. And unless you explore different styles of dance with them, how do you know what they enjoy?

Modern Ballroom Faculty election results

The following members were elected unopposed to the Modern Ballroom Faculty Committee in 2024:



Stephen Arnold



Michelle Chapman



Teresa Jay



Nicholas Jury



Argo Oblikas



Claire Thompson

Introducing our new committee members

Argo Oblikas

Argo Oblikas, originally from Estonia, has been living in and representing England for the past 13 years. He began dancing at the age of eight in Estonia. His current accolades include multiple appearances as a Professional European Championship finalist, a Blackpool Rising Star finalist, and numerous national and international wins.

Michelle Chapman

Michelle turned professional at 16 and became an ISTD Fellow at 26. She holds ISTD qualifications in Ballroom, Latin American, and Sequence. She runs a successful school in Bournemouth and adjudicates events. Michelle is passionate to continue to uphold the values of the ISTD whilst also looking to develop ideas to deliver to future generations of teachers.

Biographies of committee members appeared in Dance issue 501.

Creating a visual brand for your dance school

Does your visual brand reflect your school's identity and the excellence of being an ISTD Registered Member?

As a teacher of Latin American, Modern Ballroom, Sequence, or more, a polished and professional visual brand will help communicate your school's identity, values, and the quality you bring as an ISTD Registered Member.

Here are some top tips to help you create a visual brand that is both current and timeless while showcasing your professionalism and commitment to excellence:

1. Define your school's personality

Your visual brand should reflect the essence of your dance school. Are you known for nurturing young beginners? Perhaps your focus is on training competitive dancers for the ballroom floor. Defining your school's unique identity is the first step in creating visuals that resonate with your audience.

For example, at the heart of everything we do at the ISTD are our core values: **quality, inclusion, innovation, passion, and integrity**. These principles guide how we support and empower



our members, as we continually strive to be the leading authority in dance examinations and training. By staying true to these values, we aim to grow and retain our membership, ensuring they remain the foundation of our efforts.

Tip: Write down five words that describe your school's values and teaching style (for example, elegant, energetic, inclusive, innovative, or quality-driven – your choices will depend upon your core values and style). Make sure these words reflect the diversity of your students and the inclusive atmosphere of your school. Use these words as a guide for all design decisions, ensuring that your visual brand is welcoming and representative of everyone in your community.

2. Choose a cohesive colour palette

Colours evoke emotions and help build recognition. Think about the mood you want to convey. For example, golds and deep blues might suggest tradition and quality, while bold reds and blacks can evoke passion and energy.

Tip: Stick to two or three main colours and one or two complementary tones to ensure your materials always look polished. Think about accessibility – are the colours contrasting enough to be easy for everyone to read.

3. Select timeless fonts

Typography can make or break your branding. Opt for fonts that are easy

to read and suit the professionalism of dance education. Avoid overly trendy or ornate fonts that might look outdated in a few years.

Tip: Use one primary font for headlines and a secondary, simpler font for body text. This consistency creates a polished look.

4. Incorporate quality imagery

Photos and videos are powerful tools for showing off the atmosphere of your classes and the achievements of your students. If you can, why not invest in professional photography or ensure your own images are well-lit, sharp, and engaging. (And always make certain you have full permission to share.)

Tip: Show variety in your imagery, including action shots from lessons, group photos from events, and close-ups of dance shoes or costumes.

5. Create a memorable logo

A well-designed logo is the cornerstone of your visual brand. It should be simple, versatile, and instantly recognisable. Make sure the logo can be reproduced across different platforms and media such as studio signage, your website, social media posts, or uniforms.

Tip: If you already have a logo, consider updating it to reflect modern design trends without losing its essence.



Your visual brand tells the story of your school – make sure it reflects your identity, values, and commitment to excellence.

6. Showcase your ISTD affiliation

As an ISTD Registered Member, you have a mark of quality that sets you apart. Use the ISTD Registered Member logo on your website, brochures, social media, and even your email signature. It's a clear sign to prospective students that you adhere to the highest standards in dance teaching.

Tip: Pair the ISTD logo with a short tagline about your membership, such as, 'Proud to be an ISTD Registered Member' or 'Teaching excellence with ISTD accreditation.'

7. Consistency is key

From your website to your social media and printed materials, consistency is essential. Use the same colours, fonts,

Membership

Log into My ISTD to discover more about branding

Visual branding is just one aspect of your brand. To read more about branding, log into My ISTD and download our *Building Your Brand* marketing support guide, which takes you through the nature of branding itself, establishing your brand position, tone of voice, business name and tagline, visual style, and using imagery in your brand. Visit: www.istd.org/findyourdancespace/business-guides

And don't forget that within My ISTD you can also access your Registered Member logo, along with a wide range of additional assets to share to promote your ISTD membership and mark of quality teaching: www.istd.org/my-istd/member-resources-hub

and logo placement across all platforms to build trust and recognition.

Tip: Create a simple brand guide to share with anyone helping with your marketing. This ensures everyone stays on the same page.

8. Keep it fresh

While consistency is important, your brand should also evolve over time. Regularly review your materials to ensure they remain relevant and reflect the current trends in dancesport.

Tip: Update your promotional materials annually or when introducing new services or classes.

9. Engage through social media

Your visual brand extends to your online presence. Platforms like Instagram and Facebook are perfect for sharing your school's personality. Use a mix of images, videos, and graphics to connect with your audience.

Tip: Create templates for posts and stories to maintain a consistent look and feel.

10. Focus on quality

Above all, your visual brand should communicate quality. As a dancesport teacher and an ISTD Registered Member, your expertise and dedication are your greatest assets. Let your branding reflect that excellence.

Choosing a graphic designer or DIY for your dance school's brand

Creating a strong visual brand for your dance school is essential, but it doesn't always require a professional graphic designer. Many dance schools use accessible design tools like Canva to create their own branding materials. Canva offers easy-to-use templates for flyers, social media posts, logos, and more, allowing you to maintain control over your visual identity.

However, if you're looking to boost your brand or create a more cohesive, professional look, hiring a graphic designer may be the right choice. A designer brings expertise in brand development, helping you craft a unique identity that stands out in the competitive dance education market.

If you choose to go the DIY route with Canva or similar tools, consider whether you'll need templates for ongoing use, such as for social media or posters. Keep your school's values in mind to ensure the templates you choose reflect your teaching style and ethos. Be mindful of equity, diversity, and inclusion in both your photography and wording. Choose images that represent the broad spectrum of students and staff, showcasing diverse backgrounds, body types, abilities, and experiences. Likewise, ensure your language is inclusive and welcoming to everyone in your community.

If you prefer a more polished result, a designer can create a full branding suite, including logos and guidelines, while still allowing you the flexibility to create materials in-house.

When hiring a designer, make sure their experience aligns with your needs, whether it's a full branding package or specific assets like a logo. Prepare a detailed brief to communicate your vision clearly and ensure the outcome matches your goals.

Whether you opt for DIY design tools or hire a professional, remember that your visual brand tells the story of your school. A consistent, well-crafted brand will help you attract more students and position your school as a leader in dance education, connecting you to the ISTD's legacy of excellence.

BLS Congress 2025

Join us for a day of workshops and masterclasses!

Teachers and students are invited to a special day of workshops and masterclasses, led by world-class champions. This is an opportunity to network with fellow teachers, get advice from the BLS Faculty, learn from the best in their field, and meet our President, **Shirley Ballas**, and Strictly's Director of Choreography, **Jason Gilkison**.

Date: 17 May

Location: Copthorne Hotel, Effingham

The event is being held in collaboration with TBC Promotions (Michael Stylianos and Lorna Lee) as part of a week of BLS competitions: www.thebestcomps.net



Ballroom Latin Sequence Medallist Series

Showcase your talents and compete!

Join us for a fun and exciting opportunity to showcase your skills and compete with fellow BLS enthusiasts in front of a live audience. Dancers can participate in a variety of events throughout the day, including solos, couples, and newcomers. Check online for dates and locations.



Modern Theatre



Lyn has an innate ability to engage with others and help them find their inner strengths and own beliefs and learn more than just ‘to dance’ from her teaching.

Celebrating Lyn Richardson

Reflections and thanks from faculty members on her lasting impact on the Modern Dance Faculty since the 1990s.

Lyn Richardson's dedication and visionary leadership have profoundly shaped the Modern Dance Faculty for decades. In this collection of reflections and thanks, her committee colleagues honour her enduring contributions and the lasting impact she continues to have on our dance community and students.

Angeliki Andrinopoulou FISTD

Lyn's creativity is evident in her ability to innovate and think outside the box and is deeply attuned to the world around her, drawing inspiration from human relationships and society's evolving needs. Her style and approach to choreography are characterized by a perfect blend of imagination, technique, precision, and expression, producing work that is both visually stunning and emotionally resonant. Lyn is meticulous in her attention to detail, yet allows for spontaneity and individuality, encouraging dancers and teachers to be unique and authentic. When mentoring, Lyn is unwavering in her belief that creativity can be a force for positive change and always inspires me to push my limits and embrace the artist within me.

Stepping away from the committee



Lyn Richardson FISTD

Former principal of Performers College, Lyn Richardson trained at Bush Davies and Laine Theatre Arts and has taught at the UK's leading colleges, namely Laine Theatre Arts, Bird College, Performers College, Morea Performing Arts, where she is patron.

Lyn is a member of the Creative Development Team for the Modern Theatre Faculty, developing many of our syllabi, including our Advanced 1 and 2 syllabi. She was a previous Chair of the Modern Theatre Committee, and most recently as Lead Examiner. Lyn examines extensively for the ISTD across the UK and internationally

and enjoys teaching and mentoring teachers and students alike.

Lyn cares passionately about the future generations of teachers and their learning, and advocates development of musicality and artistry in all. She has been a dedicated committee member expressing her experience and knowledge, and her presence will be sorely missed in our meetings. Her legacy continues with our new committee, who hold fast to Lyn and the faculty's principles, of artistry and having the members voice at the heart of our discussions. We do not lose Lyn from our faculty, as she remains on our Creative Team and as our Grades and Vocational Lead Examiner. However, we are indebted to Lyn for the many hours and years of work spent on committee and we are forever grateful.

after so many years is no small decision, and while her departure marks the end of an era, it also opens space for new chapters for Lyn, and I'm incredibly grateful for the opportunity to have learned from someone as passionate and driven as Lyn.

Ruth Armstrong FISTD

It has been an honour to sit alongside Lyn on committee and witness her

unending commitment and passion for the development of the Modern Theatre Faculty's excellent training. Her ability to honour its foundations, values and the inspirational driving forces who devised our work, alongside embracing change for a new generation of dancers has been a pure masterclass.

One of Lyn's favourite analogies for a dancer is that of a tree; one that can be applied to her time on committee. Seeds



Above Tereza Theodoulou, Lee Lee Lan and Lyn Richardson at ISTD Malaysian Awards 2019

have been sown, roots cared for, a strong stable trunk has grown allowing the work of the faculty to artistically branch out. I'm sure that the next committee will be inspired to carry forward your passions and inspiration to ensure a bright future for our young dancers and teachers alike.

Valerie Jones FISTD

To work with Lyn on committee has meant working with someone who has been the ultimate voice of artistic integrity, musicality, and meaningful movement. She is a master of the choreographic art and imparts her knowledge and experience with generosity and passion, and all wrapped up in a rather naughty sense of humour which definitely added to our meetings! We will miss you, Lyn.

André Koschyk FISTD

I met Lyn while working for my status exams, and she has been an incredible supporter ever since. She is a fantastic mentor, always ready with wisdom and encouragement and with a great sense of humour, that makes even the toughest moments lighter. Lyn is truly a force to be reckoned with and I am honoured to have worked alongside her on the Modern Theatre Committee.

Sadie Morgan FISTD

I came onto the committee not really knowing what to expect, and so it was lovely to have Lyn there sharing her wealth of knowledge. Lyn has been a great support and always with such a

great sense of humor and I'm honored to have worked alongside her.

Elizabeth Reeves FISTD

Working with Lyn on the Modern Theatre committee has been a privilege, to learn from someone who has so much experience, sound advice, and knowledge of our Modern Theatre work. Lyn has always been a massive inspiration to me, and I will miss her kind words of wisdom, encouragement, generosity, creativity. Lyn's beautiful choreography and legacy lives on in her work in the Modern Theatre syllabus, but we will miss her very much on committee

Penny Meekings FISTD

Lyn has been and will continue to be, my aspiration and my inspiration. She is true to herself with her love of dance and its characteristics of self-expression through movement and music. She has an innate ability to engage with others and help them find their inner strengths and own beliefs and learn more than just 'to dance' from her teaching.

Lyn has always been steadfast to her predecessor's legacy in her ability to focus her decision making and consider the bigger picture and the effect decisions may have on the wider teaching community. Lyn leaves a great legacy of choreography in the Modern Theatre syllabi, and we will continue to enjoy that steadfast approach to decision making that we continue to gain from her Leadership of the LEXT teams.

Modern Theatre Faculty election results

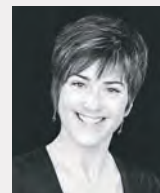
The following members were elected by ballot to the Modern Theatre Faculty Committee:



Angeliki Andrinopoulou



Ruth Armstrong



Valerie Jones



André Koschyk



Penny Meekings



Sadie Morgan



Elizabeth Reeves

Introducing our new committee member

Angeliki Andrinopoulou

Angeliki Andrinopoulou FISTD, a Licensed Physiotherapist, holds a BA in Physical Therapy. Based in Athens, Greece, she is Co-founder/Co-Principal of Dance Texture (www.Dancetexture.com), and an ISTD Modern Theatre and Contemporary Examiner, Assessor, and Lecturer. Trained at the Diana Theodoridou School of Dance, Angeliki has a diverse teaching portfolio and is committed to advancing dance in her community.

Biographies for committee members were published in Dance issue 501.

Teaching insights

Reflections on training and advice for teaching qualifications from Cathy Stevens.

Tell us about your dance training and pathway to professional performer and teacher.

I was fortunate to train at Roshe Performing Arts, with Rosemary Woodd being my role model and then onto fulltime training at Bird College. Both establishments trained in the ISTD syllabus with Miss Bird giving us choreographic opportunities as students and from there I always knew that I wanted to teach. I still remember my ISTD classes as a young dancer and I know my love of rhythm stems from those syllabus classes. I try to instil that same love in my own students by showing them novel ways to teach rhythm and improvisation. I believe that the structure of our syllabi is second to none with the technical and artistic journey that children and students have the opportunity to follow.

“

Be proud to belong to this community.

I secured my first professional contract just before the end of my training at Bird College and spent a year on the luxury QE2 liner. I was lucky enough to then work in the West End, and loved this time because it was so challenging, learning different routines and shows which was very good for the brain. The transition to teaching happened gradually by working at fulltime colleges and then running my own school for over 20 years.

I was fortunate to fulfil my lifelong ambition of becoming an ISTD examiner in 1996 and I still love examining to this day. Dance has always been the ‘trunk of the tree’, but I’ve branched out and completed training with Body Control Pilates, Eric Franklin and most recently UK Hypopressives. I really enjoy incorporating these holistic approaches into all my teaching.



Cathy Stevens FISTD

Cathy Stevens FISTD is an International Examiner for the ISTD Modern Theatre and Tap Faculties, with extensive expertise in dance education. She is also a Founding Member of the Body Control Pilates Academy and a qualified UK Hypopressives Trainer, combining her knowledge of movement and fitness to offer a comprehensive approach to training and performance.

What would be your main tips for teaching qualification exams?

My teaching tips stem from the wonderful people who have guided me, either individually or on an ISTD courses. Many a happy week was spent at Chichester, and it was there I picked up gems from teachers such as Christina Ballard, Sarah Wilson, Lyn Richardson, Karen King, Tereza Theodoulou, Katie Morea and Barbara Evans, all of which have shaped my teaching of teachers.

DDE – When I was upgrading to examine DDE, Myra Tiffin explained that “Don’t damn the candidates for the ideas that you know will not work. The important thing is that they have ideas!” So, I spend much time working on teaching methods, training ideas, developing artistry in my DDE classes and the only answer they are not allowed to give is “I don’t know.”

Licentiate – The emphasis towards exam time is on getting the class right.



Tereza Theodoulou says “Bring your class to life.” Therefore, it’s important to choose your young dancers carefully. They do not need to be your best pupils, but those who will respond and help lift the atmosphere of your class.

It is a coaching class, so remember to observe, correct and develop your dancers so that they improve. Ensure to play any music so that dancers can understand the musical style and quality for your freework.

It is important to me for candidates to exude professionalism and remember that we are teaching Modern **THEATRE**, and as Christina Ballard would say “Look fabulous!”

Always have a Plan B for your class, in case you are running out of time, Miss Bird coached me for my Licentiate and so I went in with Plans A to G!

My last tip – be honest when you are discussing your class in Section 2. Discuss with the examiner what you were and weren’t pleased with. Did you run out of time? Did the students

react as you expected? Having these honest discussions will highlight your awareness to your examiner of how your students responded in class.

Fellowship – This exam should be a



Keep being thirsty for more knowledge.

demonstration of your confidence and ability as a teacher. Your Advanced 2 level class is your own creation, whether that is using a basic Pilates exercise as a thread through the class or a musical theme from a show where students hone their own artistic ideas.

Always remember that the level of artistic demand increases with the difficulty of the class just as much as the technical demands. However, your class choreography should enable the dancers the opportunity to make their own stylistic choices within your free work. If you have any areas of expertise i.e. Yoga, Pilates,

Musical Theatre then use these as an impetus for your class, the sky is the limit!

For Fellowship candidates you do not know them, so ensure that your “eye” is developed sufficiently so you can see the dancers’ strengths and weaknesses quickly and affect change. Therefore, it is useful to have a Fellowship study buddy, so that you can trial and teach each other’s pupils and practice your class.

What advice do you feel is important for students in today’s world?

Dancers and dance teachers are wonderful human beings. Be proud to belong to this community and to share your own love of dance, never forgetting those who helped you achieve your dreams. As a teacher these days, you need to hone a multitude of skills. Empathy, Patience, Creativity, Adaptability, Respect and Lifelong Learning. Don’t ever stop and keep being thirsty for more knowledge.



We are
proud
to teach
ISTD
Modern
Theatre

Assets
now available
in **Greek,**
Italian, and
Spanish



Download your Proud to Teach assets and showcase the genres you teach.



National Dance

Embracing global traditions in national dance examinations

A National Dance syllabus initiative encouraging teachers to include non-European dances of their choice in exam entries for medal tests and vocational grades.

As a faculty, we are proud of the beautiful and diverse range of dances in our National Dance examination portfolio. Meticulously researched, they represent the richness of European folk dance and offer young dancers today an enriching training to support their career aspirations and their development as human beings.

We also recognise they are just a tiny part of the vast wealth of traditional folk dances that exist around the world, all vibrantly expressive of the breadth of culture and customs in every corner of the globe. To acknowledge this, our medal tests and vocational grades offer teachers the opportunity to showcase their own, or their candidates', specialist knowledge of traditional, non-European dances.

Medal Tests

Junior tests can be entered from 7 years and Senior tests from 14 years. Both Junior and Senior have four levels: Bronze, Silver, Gold and Gold Star. Each level includes a set solo and a solo, either European or non-European, arranged by the teacher.

Vocational Grades

Each level of the vocational grades: Intermediate Foundation, Intermediate, Advanced 1 and Advanced 2, offers teachers the option to include a non-European dance of their choice.

National examiners are thoroughly trained to assess candidates on their style and musicality, their technique and their group dance skills. These attributes are common requirements for folk dance regardless of origin, and examiners are skilled in applying their huge wealth of experience to assess candidates' dances of all kinds.

If you, or one of your students, has specialist knowledge or interest in a non-European folk dance, examiners would love to see your candidates performing the dance in their examination.

By Pippa Cobbing, former Head of Faculty Development for National Dance

“

If you, or one of your students, has specialist knowledge or interest in a non-European folk dance, examiners would love to see your candidates performing the dance in their examination.

Character versus National

Understanding the difference.

There has long been confusion among dancers and non-dancers alike about the difference between character and national.

Simply put, character is the performance on stage by a classically trained dancer that incorporates perceived characteristics of the folk dance of a particular country or region. So, there is rarely anything authentic about it other than it was choreographed for the stage. There is certainly a tradition that has evolved a system of study that results in the education of classical dancers in various characterised styles – that's what you will see performed in the classical ballets. That is character dance.

National is a whole other subject. The term has been used widely in the UK and in other areas where the ISTD National Dance Faculty is active but otherwise it remains largely unknown. Folk Dance, on the other hand, suggests for most a clearer picture, for example dancers of a particular region engaging in a form of social dance particular to their area. Often, the aim is that all participate, not

“

The Faculty is committed to preserving its European dance heritage while expanding to embrace a more global representation of dance.



so much that it is a performance. With the growing tourist industry, however, many of these regional dancers have evolved into performing groups, which has changed the tenor of the folk dance.

The term 'folk' in and of itself also has connotations that are not always positive. For many, it evokes something that is ancient, and perhaps is no longer relevant except to those interested in the history associated with folk dances. Also, the term seems more associated with European dance, which limits its appeal for some.

Every country in the world has a tradition of dance that is unique to its own development. In fact, it's not just countries but regions within countries that have distinct styles. Dance is an expression of self that is undeniable and unstoppable. It is also one of the best ways of sharing understanding amongst cultures.

This is what is so appealing about the work that the ISTD National Dance

Faculty has developed. However, if few know what the term 'National Dance' means, then naturally, its existence won't be sustained. In this current dance climate, it is more important than ever to embrace as broad an experience of dance as possible. The Faculty is committed to cherishing the meticulously researched European dances with which our founders established National Dance whilst

simultaneously working hard to explore practical ways of enabling a more international, worldwide representation of dance within our syllabi.

By Anuschka Roes, FRAD, FISTD, MA, Examiner for the ISTD and the RAD



Above Liz Witt students

The power of National Dance

Shaping versatile, culturally enriched performers.

Chelcie Sherrington: championing versatility in dance

As a freelance dance teacher based in Liverpool, Chelcie Sherrington holds full ISTD membership, with DDEs in Imperial Ballet and National Dance, along with Licentiates in Modern Theatre and Tap. With nearly a decade of teaching experience, she is passionate about the importance of working across genres to provide well-rounded training, believing that National Dance is essential in developing spatial awareness, musicality, and artistry in all styles.

“

I can't imagine ballet without national and vice versa. My ballet classes are so much more elevated and cultured when I mix the two.

“I've been teaching now for almost 10 years. I received my DDE qualifications in ballet, tap, modern and national eight years ago with Cathi-Conroy Jones and have since taken Licentiate. During this time nothing has become more apparent to me than the importance of working across genres, to ensure my students receive the best training. The genres work hand in hand with equal importance and missing any of them out of my teaching would affect my students' progress.

“National dance for me has always been a staple, informing the skills and knowledge I have now. I have learnt that teaching national dance delivers improvement in spatial awareness, posture, partner work, co-ordination and musicality. So, I decided to start teaching national syllabus in a primary school and those who had little to no dance experience improved so much quicker.

“I can't imagine ballet without national and vice versa, my ballet classes are so much more elevated and cultured when I mix the two. Sometimes timetables are busy and so we do have to combine the genres we offer, but leaving out national just isn't an option for me. It helps my choreography, and my knowledge of music goes beyond the basic time signatures; not to mention the beauty it brings to your work when you select pieces of music that only those with knowledge in national would consider using. National is a part of my dance teaching career and always will be, I honestly think without it I wouldn't be the teacher I am today.”

Katie Thompson: a lifelong love for National Dance

Former student of Elizabeth Witt at The Dance Consortium, Katie Thompson reflects on the joy and cultural richness of National Dance. From childhood performances in traditional costumes

to sharing dance stories while working in France, she highlights how National Dance fosters versatility, community, and a deep appreciation for global traditions.

“For me, national isn't just a celebration of culture; it's undoubtedly one of the fondest memories I have growing up.

“

National dance teaches you lessons you don't realise you're learning – commitment, patience, cultural appreciation – all of which can one day connect you to complete strangers and form beautiful relationships.

“The variance in style, technique, music and culture allows each dancer to shine in their own unique way. Whether the harsh accents of the Russian Cossack or the gentle grace of Armenian, we all found the style we most loved performing. National sections at a festival can include children as young as four years old, dressed in traditional costume, keeping generations of heritage alive as they polka, pivot or pas marché across the stage. As we grew up, side by side, admiring each other's costumes and props, we all experienced success across the years.

“We had so much fun learning new choreography, amongst flower garlands, maypoles and Chinese ribbons. We spent weekends creating intricate patterns and learning new styles, inspiring the younger



Above Liz Witt students



Above ISTD Grandison Clark Awards 2023

children watching on in amazement. We sang and hummed to the Italian music of the tarantella and learnt to count in Romanian. Every class, rehearsal and performance was unique and engaging, and we loved each one!

"Now, working mostly in France, in travel and tourism, I meet people from all over the world. Often, someone will spark memories of a costume, piece of music or a well-rehearsed step from my dancing days. I share stories of how I learned about their tradition and culture and occasionally demonstrate a step

or two! At a recent Fete de l'Alpage in France, I reminisced and danced alongside the local folk dancers, who performed steps I remember from years ago.

"National Dance teaches you lessons you don't realise you're learning. Commitment and reliance on a partner and group; patience and empathy to encourage, teach and assist your peers; cultural appreciation that will one day link you to complete strangers, and form beautiful relationships."



National Dance helped build my versatility and gave me the confidence to audition for professional dance shows.

Hayden Woodcock: the impact of National Dance on his career

A BA (Hons) graduate of Bird College with ISTD Advanced 2 in National Dance, Hayden began training at Pirouette Academy of Dance at age 10. Learning a diverse range of styles strengthened his versatility and understanding of movement quality. The social and partner-based aspects of National Dance provided essential skills for his professional career, leading to successful auditions for Irish dance shows such as *Spirit of the Dance* and *Emerald Storm*, with multiple tour performances.

"I started National Dance classes at Pirouette Academy of Dance at the

age of 10. I enjoyed learning a range of styles from different countries, working towards my ISTD National examinations. The variety of styles helped to build my versatility, which I think is super important as a professional dancer because the more styles you can do helps broaden your opportunities. It also developed my knowledge and understanding of how each style requires different stylistic qualities.

"National Dance is often a social dance, meaning that you dance with other people. I always found this super fun. It introduced me to partner work, which has been beneficial towards my professional career because most dance shows feature partnering so it was useful that I already had the experience and the trust required when dancing with others.

"Ultimately, National Dance gave me the confidence and the skills to successfully audition for Irish based dance shows like *Spirit of the Dance* and *Emerald Storm*, and perform in multiple tours. I will always be grateful for my National Dance classes because they helped to lay the foundations towards my professional dance career, and they were always really enjoyable and informative."



Left Katie Thompson with fellow dancers

How teaching street dance can enhance your teaching skills

Both learning and teaching the different styles of street dance has helped me massively as a teacher. The reason for this is because street is a whole new style of dance, but with aspects of theatre work included. As previously mentioned, street is a type of freestyle dance where students can express themselves and come up with ideas of their own to compliment the choice of music or song. This adds both variety and diversity to the classes.

"Street dance makes me feel free and empowered." Lilly, student at AK Academy of Dancing

Street dance has boosted students' skills and confidence

We have seen a huge impact on the students' confidence by adding street classes to our timetables. Because it isn't a set syllabus as such, students can pick and choose moves from the syllabus book that they enjoy doing and are stronger at, all while adding their own ideas. This adds variation to the classes and is beautiful to watch.

"The style of street dance is unique compared to other genres and it gives me a chance to add my own style to different routines." Emmy, student at AK Academy of Dancing

Advice for theatre-based dance teachers adding street dance

The best advice I would give to any teachers looking to add street into their academy is to learn a bit from each style of street dance and start incorporating moves into classes and see which is the most favoured style and start from there. It is important to differentiate classes when teaching street, to accommodate all students. However, it is equally important to take baby steps when starting out, otherwise it can be overwhelming quite quickly.



To learn more about how to incorporate street dance into your teaching, visit www.istd.org/streetdance

Introducing street dance to your classroom



Anna Knowles-Hibbert
LISTD DDE,
founder of AK
Academy of
Dancing, grew

her street dance programme to over ten weekly classes alongside her theatre offerings and shares tips for teachers looking to do the same.

About AK Academy of Dancing

The AK Academy of Dancing opened its doors in 1992, teaching the theatre genres of ballet, tap and modern/jazz.

Shortly after opening, we decided to start freestyle classes within the school, and it just took off. Over the years, we saw a valuable difference between students who studied the theatre side as opposed to just the freestyle side and that is because of the discipline of the syllabus work and technique involved, especially with the ballet, in terms of how they hold themselves and their lines; nonetheless, freestyle has evolved hugely over the years with technique.

We then grew further and started introducing street dance within our freestyle classes and it was clearly

noticeable how much the students enjoyed the funky side of street, along with the modern music. With the variety of styles of that street dance offers, students can learn a variation of technique and styles that suit them best.

"I think the choreography is very creative, it's a fun style of dance, it makes you feel free, and the music is amazing." Isla, student at AK Academy of Dancing

The inspiration behind adding street dance alongside theatre genres

Having a background of theatre training, our students both past and present are already learning the core technique of dance in terms of poise and different styles. This is extremely beneficial for anyone looking to start street dance within their school as it is a type of freestyle where students express their own style on the floor, along with the core technique they have already learnt.

"Street dance is where you can move freely and feel yourself." Layla, student at AK Academy of Dancing

Student response to adding street dance classes

Students absolutely love street dance within the school because they can add their own music interpretation to any song, producing a variety of different styles which is amazing to see.

"I love street, as I am able to express myself and show my personality by having attitude or being sassy." Lily, student at AK Academy of Dancing

Before you know it, you will surprise yourself as a teacher with how quickly you start learning steps and movements and linking them together to create powerful routines; you will also learn from your students with how they adapt.

"Street dance makes me feel like I can be myself and where I can move freely without feeling silly." Leyla, student at AK Academy of Dancing

New classes due to popularity of street dance

We started off with one street class at one of our branches, alongside our theatre and freestyle timetable, and quickly grew to having street classes at all our branches and teaching over 10 classes a week, which also include commercial.

"Street is really fun and it's the class I can do tricks in, and I like the music." Bea, student at AK Academy of Dancing

Skills gained from street dance enhance existing classes

Locking and Popping is a big part of our street classes as it's very much like 'isolation movements' and personally as a teacher this is something I have learnt lots about and enjoy teaching. We also teach Acro within our academy and students who train in this also find the breakdancing side a lot easier as it can be acrobatic in many ways.

"Street makes me feel like I can express myself as well as be confident and sassy all at once." Jess, student at AK Academy of Dancing

Inspiring aspects of street dance

The aspects of Street dance that inspire me the most is the overall diversity of what it offers in terms of styles and different techniques. As a teacher, your ability to learn is never-ending with street dance as there is always something new to learn and pass on to your students; keeping classes exciting and rewarding each week.

“

Theatre training gives students a solid foundation for street dance, combining core technique with freestyle to express their own style.

Below Boys only street dance class

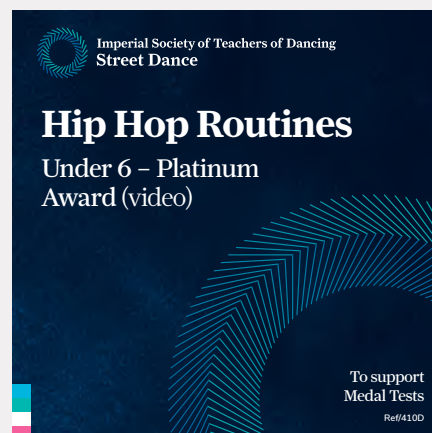


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New resource:

Street Dance Hip Hop Routines: Under 6 – Platinum Award (Video)

Take your street dance teaching to the next level with this dynamic digital resource, designed to support the ISTD Street Dance Tests. Featuring eight Hip Hop routines, expertly choreographed by Joseph Francois and Dominic Hamilton, and set to the energizing music of Auris Delan, this video is perfect for ISTD members looking to teach, learn, or prepare students for examinations. Let your students shine with routines designed to inspire and energize!



"I look forward to Tap Fest / Marjorie Davies Star Tap Awards each year. I felt lucky to have been chosen as an award winner. It was so inspiring to watch the talent and choreography of the senior section. I can't wait for next time!" **Georgia Ashton, Junior Class Runner Up, Marjorie Davies Star Tap Awards 2024**

"I've been lucky enough to take part in the workshops and compete in Star Tap at Tap Fest for a number of years, always wanting to return for more! It is a fabulous opportunity to be challenged by a wide range of guest teachers and learn a variety of styles within the genre, taking new skills back to the studio to use in the future." **Erin Hughes, Workshop Scholarship Winner, Tap Fest 2024**

"I loved my experience at this year's Tap Fest and Star Tap Awards, the workshop classes are an amazing way to meet new people, and the teachers were inspirational and so welcoming." **Samuel Phillippo-Clapp, Senior Winner, Marjorie Davies Star Tap Awards 2024**

Many of the students that have taken part in the ISTD Star Tap Awards in previous years have gone on to participate in other competitions, the IDO World Championships, being one such example. The International Dance Organisation (IDO) is a non-profit World

Tap Dance

A training programme to be proud of

How ISTD tap training is preparing dancers for the global stage, from Tap Fest to the World Cup and beyond.

Participation in competitions and festivals is embedded in the life of many young dancers in the UK and worldwide these days. It becomes increasingly difficult to choose the most appropriate to meet the needs of the dancer, their training, the school and their future aspirations. A hard task for our teachers!

The Tap Faculty is proud that its tap syllabus is a great foundation and stepping stone to take our students beyond and into the realms of becoming an ISTD Tap Fest/Star Tap winner, an International Dance Organisation (IDO) World Champion (which comes after the opportunities of auditioning for the UK Tap Team through Tap Attack) or competing internationally at the Dance World Cup. Our syllabus supports the dancers into the realms of worldwide competition.

Add to the above, the opportunity to attend tap festivals and summer schools, our tap faculty works to nurture well rounded and well informed tap dancers and teachers. External CPD in this manner, in turn means that we 'return home' with better informed, inquisitive ISTD tap dance teachers and teachers of the future.

Our home grown ISTD event is Tap Fest, incorporating the Marjorie Davies Star Tap Awards. It has evolved from

the 1977 original, Star Tap Awards. Following its great success, it quickly became an important event in the Society's annual calendar. The 2024 event happened last November in Birmingham, welcoming many participants.

The tap dancers participated in inspirational workshops showing a variety of styles. We had outstanding experts in their field to provide these: Leslie Garcia Bowman, Noemi Simon Couceiro, Adam Denman and Tara Yasmin. Many students also chose to perform their dances in the incorporated Marjorie Davies Star Tap Awards. Adjudication was: Helen Green (Examiner, member of the Lead Examining Teams for Tap and Modern and former Tap committee member), Andrew Hindley (Tap committee member and Dance Principal at Preston College) and Tara Yasmin (theatre and television performer, and choreographer of the Revised Advanced 1 Musical Theatre Dance Sequence).

Right (L to R) Dolly Hammerton (SJ Academy of Dance), Ellie-May O'Shea (Elite Dance Centre), Abi Reynolds (Forte Dance and Performing Arts Studios), Leah Gordon (The Dance Company) and Florence Hazell (The Dance Company) at Tap Fest 2024



Dance and Dance Sport Federation consisting of over 90 member and contact nations, representing more than 500,000 dancers from all continents. (www.ido-dance.com)

"Dancing at the Tap World Championships for me will always be a memory I will never forget, there is just something about walking onto that huge stage and the lights are shining on your face and everyone is cheering for you. However, nothing beats the final results when they call out everyone's places like the Olympics." **Macauley Clifton, Star Tap Winner and IDO World Champion**

For over 20 years, the World Tap Dance Championships have gathered tap dance enthusiasts from all over the world to Riesa, in Germany, and now moving forwards to Prague. Here the students continue to share their passion for this percussive art form. An exciting opportunity to share tap dance together, even online by livestream.

“

ISTD-trained dancers are making their mark in competitions worldwide.

Many former ISTD students have competed in this event, with several going on either to place or win their section outright as world champions. Examiners and ISTD trained members coach and Judge at these competitions also.



Above Macauley Clifton, winning the Senior section of the 2023 Star Tap Awards. L to R: Nick French (Lead Adjudicator), Macauley Clifton, Michael Lin (Adjudicator) and Adele Joel (Adjudicator)

For many tap students who achieve at this high level from the UK, the ISTD was their foundation of technique, examination and performance. We hope to develop commitment, self confidence, focus, cooperation, discipline and teamwork as well as talent, rhythmicity and ability.

Thanks to the continuing evolution of the ISTD syllabi, there has been a constant injection of rhythm tap technique throughout, to culminate recently in our new Advanced 1 Tap Syllabus.



Above Macauley Clifton at the Tap World Championships

We hope as a faculty to not only provide an examination system, but a training programme to educate and further our UK tap dancers and teachers beyond our syllabus and back again to then create and evolve it in the future. Many of our dancers are also now performing professionally, in the West End and abroad. We provide a foundation to be proud of.

By committee members Alison Forrester and Antonio Barone

Tap Dance Faculty election results

The following members were elected by ballot to the Tap Dance Faculty Committee:



Andrea Ashton



Antonio Barone



Alison Forrester



Andrew Hindley



Aaron Lissimore



Carla Moore



Carole Moseley

Introducing our new committee members

Alison Forrester

Alison Forrester FISTD, an ISTD-trained dancer, performed worldwide for 14 years, including seven in Las Vegas. While in the USA, she studied tap with legends like Gregory Hines and Henry Le Tang. An ISTD Fellow since 2007, she

co-developed Grade 6 and led the revised Tap Grades. An Examiner since 2016, her passion is raising UK tap dance standards.

Carla Moore

Carla Moore LISTD is a freelance teacher/choreographer from Liverpool, England. She teaches from Primary to DDE at dance schools across the North West: Dynamix Performing

Arts College, LMA and University of Liverpool. Carla is excited to be joining the ISTD Tap Faculty, to work as a team bringing the best opportunities to Tap members around the world.

Biographies for committee members were published in Dance issue 501.

What's on

Dates for your diary

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

Renew your ISTD membership

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 more about getting the most out of your membership on page 23.



Step Up to Success wall poster

Enclosed with this issue of *Dance* magazine you will find a handy wall poster to showcase the benefits of ISTD exams.

Residential Summer Programme 2025

For teachers

12–20 August



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

Bookings
Now
open

BLS Congress 2025

17 May
Crawley,
West Sussex

Learn from the best in their field, and meet our President, **Shirley Ballas**, and *Strictly*'s Director of Choreography, **Jason Gilkison**. See page 45 for details.

Book
Now



ISTD Calendar

May–Aug 2025

May



Awareness days/months

03 May National Fitness Day

25 May National Tap Dance Day



ISTD CPD courses

11 May Tap Dance Advanced 1 (Day 2) – Norwich, UK



ISTD events and competitions

10 May Cecchetti Scholars Audition – London

11 May DFR Area Competition – Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire

14 May VAT and Performing Arts – Part 1 – online

17 May BLS Congress – Crawley, West Sussex

18 May DFR Area Competition – Horsham, West Sussex

21 May VAT and Performing Arts – Part 2 – online

27–30 May Tap Dance Advanced 1 – online

28 May VAT and Performing Arts – Part 3 – online



ISTD important dates

Ongoing CPD courses – UK and international

June



ISTD events and competitions

01 Jun DFR Area Competition – Grays, Essex

08 Jun DFR Area Competition – Cambridge

08 Jun Janet Cram Awards Live finals – Basildon, Essex

22 Jun DFR Area Competition – Chippenham, Wiltshire

28–29 Jun Tap Dance Advanced 1 (Day 1 and 2)

– Arklow, Ireland

Jun TBC Grades 4, 5 and 6 Musical theatre amalgamations– Mexico City, Mexico



ISTD important dates

Ongoing CPD courses – UK and international

July



ISTD events and competitions

06 Jul Cecchetti Classical Ballet Scholars Open Day – London

06 Jul Street Dance Competition – Portsmouth, Hampshire

Jul TBC Tap Dance Advanced 2 – Athens, Greece



ISTD important dates

End of membership grace period – reinstatement charges apply

Ongoing CPD courses – UK and International



August



ISTD CPD courses

12–20 Aug Residential Summer Programme – Chichester, West Sussex



ISTD events and competitions

13 Aug – Ballroom Latin Sequence
Medallist Series – Chessington

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.

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