



Information Packet
BSA Dance Department
School Year 2021-22

"It's not only about the dance itself. It's about the value of dance *education*."
—Daniel Owoseni Ajala, founder of Nigeria's Leap of Dance Academy, on why young
people everywhere should study dance

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Letter to Families | 2 |
| BSA Dance Department Faculty and Staff | 3 |
| Letter to Prospective Students | 10 |
| Dancers' Objectives for the Grading Rubric | 12 |
| Dance Department Policies | 13 |
| Dance Department Performances | 15 |
| FAQs | 16 |
| Thoughts on the Practice of Dance | 18 |



Performance of *Spring Dance Concert 2021*; Dancers: BSA Dance Class of '21; Photo: Crystal Poteat

Letter to Families

Dear Prospective BSA families,

The past year and a half has challenged us all beyond expectation, but it allowed us an opportunity to learn from this difficult time and move forward with a renewed sense of purpose. The dance faculty is committed to working towards creating a supportive and educational environment for young artists. It is our hope that this program inspires and nurtures young artists to become curious and conscientious adults, capable of adapting and succeeding in the ever changing world in which we find ourselves. Both 2020 and 2021 have reminded us that we must remain fluid, chameleon-like in our ability to respond, yet still thrive, in every environment.

Some time ago, I came across a sentence on the University of Utah's School of Dance website that continues to feel relevant and resonant: "Diversity is welcomed, respected and encouraged; creative and intellectual integrity is required; professional discipline is expected." This simple statement speaks to so many things I believe about dance education. Even if your student decides that dance is not their path, the skills gained through a rigorous dance curriculum will still prepare them for life outside of the studio. Dance students develop personal responsibility, focus, discipline, critical thinking skills, and work ethic. Most importantly, through collaboration, young artists learn to listen to each other, acknowledge and respect each other's differences, and recognize the value those differences bring to the work and to their lives. As American journalist Michele Norris challenges us, "Don't reach for normal, reach for better."

We value a collaborative approach to creating and evaluating departmental policies, incorporating students' opinions to move forward in establishing norms. Established norms will exist as a social contract among students, faculty, and staff, so that mutual respect and professionalism underlies all of the work we do as a community.

Within this packet, you will find helpful information about the Dance Department. If you have any additional questions, please feel free to email us at dance@bsfa.org.

Laura Halm Hamilton, Dance
Department Head

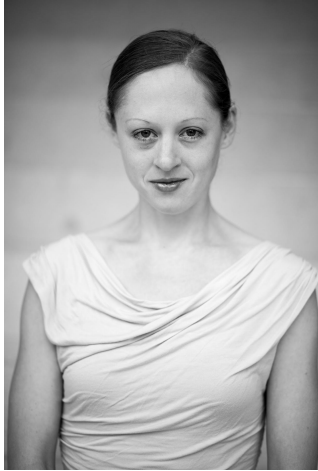
lhalm@bsfa.org

Breaktime during rehearsal

Photo: Allyson Washington



BSA Dance Department Faculty and Staff



Laura Halm Hamilton '99 **Dance Department Head**

A Baltimore School for the Arts alum, Laura Halm Hamilton received her BFA in Dance from The Juilliard School in 2002. She has had the pleasure of performing as a guest artist with the Ballet Moderno y Folklórico en Guatemala, a soloist with Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, and as a principal soloist with the Ballett des Saarländischen Staatstheater in Saarbrücken, Germany. Over the course of her eclectic performance career, she has been honored to perform masterworks across many different genres by choreographers including Michel Fokine, Sir Kenneth MacMillan, José Limón, Paul Taylor, Alonzo King, Jiří Kylián, Ohad Naharin, Nacho Duato, Johan Inger, Aszure Barton, Robert Battle, Stijn Celis, Sharon Eyal, Darrell Grand Moultrie, Marguerite Donlon, Doug Varone, Lou Conte, Martin Chaix, Alejandro Cerrudo, and Reginald Yates, among many others. Highlights of her career include performing the title role of “Anastasia” in Sir MacMillan’s *Anastasia*, the “Black Swan” in Donlon’s *Schwannensee-aufgetaucht*, and the “Red Woman” in Inger’s *Walking Mad*. In 2014, Celis created the role of “Solweig” for her in his interpretation of *Peer Gynt*. As a member of the University of Washington’s Chamber Dance Company in 2016, she performed Lucinda Childs’ groundbreaking post-modern solo *Carnation*. For the 2017-18 season, she was the Choreography Assistant and Rehearsal Director for Dance Company Nanine Linning in Heidelberg, Germany. In August 2018, she was appointed as the Dance Department Head at the Baltimore School for the Arts. In the summer of 2021, she completed her certification to become a Functional Awareness® Movement Educator and is currently pursuing her MFA in Dance through Hollins University.

Leah Allen is the former Company Managing Director of Jenny’s Dance Centre and has enjoyed teaching throughout the Chicagoland area since 2002. Originally from Schaller, IA, she began her dance training under the direction of Tina McMurray studying ballet, tap, and jazz. She received a scholarship to study dance at the University of Arizona where she was a featured member of the U of A dance ensemble and was awarded both the Kenneth Comstock Award and the Jay & Betty Citron Award for Outstanding Talent. Upon graduating with a BFA in Dance, she relocated to Chicago where she performed with Impetus Dance



Theatre, Instruments of Movement, Chicago Dance Crash, and Jay-son Tisa Dance Company. Leah was also a featured member of Cerqua Rivera Dance Theatre where she was appointed Dancer Liaison and Co-Rehearsal Director. She is a national award winning teacher and choreographer for JDC's performance company. Leah holds her certification in Progressing Ballet Technique and is an NDEO member. She and her husband have 2 children, Aiden and Max, and relocated to Maryland earlier this year. Leah joins the BSA Dance Department as our new **Program Manager**.



Iris Anderson Grizzell '96 is a graduate of the Baltimore School for the Arts and holds a BFA from the California Institute of the Arts. Her training began at the Peabody Preparatory Institute with Dale Sehnert, followed by Caryl Maxwell Classical Ballet with Caryl Maxwell and Caroline Denzler, and then Kinetics Dance Theatre with Dottie Fried and Donna Pidel. While attending Baltimore School for the Arts, she studied under Norma Pera, Debra Robinson Deckelbaum, Sandra Lacy, Sandra Fortune, Stephanie Powell, Edward Stewart, and Anton Wilson. She has trained with the Eglevsky Ballet, the Washington Ballet, and the Ailey School. During her four years at California Institute of the Arts, she was nominated for the Princess Grace Award and studied abroad in London at the London Contemporary Dance School. Iris danced with the Pasadena Dance Theatre in California from 2003 to 2011, performing new works by choreographers that included Laurence Blake, Cynthia Young, Leslie Carothers, Scott Putnam, Bill Evans, Andre Tyson, Jeffrey Gerodias, Jodie Gates, and Glenn Edgerton. From 2004 – 2011, she danced with the Francisco Martinez Dancetheatre in both concert and outreach performances throughout California. Iris received first place for her work in Howard County Ballet's Young Choreographer's Showcase in April 2011. Recently, she has performed with Bowen McCauley Dance, the Campbell Dance Experience, and the Harford Ballet. In addition to teaching Modern and Ballet in the high school, Iris is also the Program Manager of the TWIGS program.

Samantha Christiansen '91 is Samantha Christiansen, a graduate of the Baltimore School for the Arts '91, began teaching in the T.W.i.G.S. program in 2002 and in the high school in 2006. She attributes her teaching skills to the great mentors and teachers she had in her formative years. These include Sylvester Campbell, Wendy Robinson, Norma Pera, Debra Robinson, and Stephanie Powell. Although not a dance teacher, Michael Tabegna, a gifted language teacher who demonstrated how important it is to include



the student in the process and make it fun, has strongly influenced her teaching style.

Through generous grants from the BSA foundation, Samantha has received certification to deliver the Vaganova syllabus through John White. She has had the honor of attending a teacher's training session with the Limón Foundation and attended the first Cuban National Ballet seminar that was offered at Towson University.

Before working at BSA/T.W.i.G.S., Ms. Christiansen performed with the local dance companies Stephanie Powell Danse Ensemble I and II and Movement Addiction. During this time, she was also raising her three children and teaching in local studios. In 1999, Ms. Christiansen opened her own school, the Northwest School of Dance. Students from this school went on to prestigious programs including the Kirov Academy, North Carolina School for the Arts, and her own alma mater, the Baltimore School for the Arts. During this time, Norma Pera, then BSA's dance department head, was invited to critique Ms. Christiansen's students. Shortly after this visit, Ms. Pera offered Samantha a job at BSA based on the work she saw there.

Since joining the BSA dance department, Samantha has helped to orchestrate and create a program for city students to learn an audition solo for the high school. In addition to this, she assisted in adding a similar program for T.W.i.G.S. students.

Over a ten year span of time, Ms. Christiansen, along with her colleagues and with the support of Norma Pera and Georgia King, curated a ballet, *Hansel and Gretel*, that was solely for the T.W.i.G.S. students. This began as an in studio production of only two classes, and grew to the stage, with props, sets, stage design, and production support.

Besides her family, Ms. Christiansen considers her work with the dancers at BSA her life's work. There is nothing she enjoys more than watching these young artists grow into amazing, young human beings contributing positively to the society. It is an honor to watch them grow.



Debra Robinson Deckelbaum began studying dance in Baltimore with Ellen Gniazdowska and Wally Saunders, supplementing her studies with Oleg Tupine. Following high school, Ms. Robinson Deckelbaum studied at the Joffrey Ballet School and with Joyce Trisler at the Alvin Ailey American Dance Center. Debra returned to Baltimore to dance with the Maryland Ballet, under the direction of Kathleen Crofton. After dancing with Maryland Ballet, she attended Goucher College, graduating in three years with the support of the Rosenberg Scholarship, majoring in Dance/Performance and Choreography. Following

college, Debra began to teach alongside Wendy Robinson, both at Baltimore Ballet and the Peabody Preparatory. Under Wendy Robinson's teaching, Debra earned her ARAD, studying pedagogy of the RAD system. Ms. Robinson Deckelbaum is an ABT® Certified Teacher, who has successfully completed the ABT® Teacher Training Intensive in Primary through Level 7 & Partnering of the ABT® National Training Curriculum. Debra is also certified with Progressive Ballet Technique, PBT. She has been on the faculty at the Baltimore School for the Arts since 1988. In addition to BSA, she is on the faculty of Peabody Preparatory Dance.

Quincy Dow ('14) was born in 1995 and raised in Baltimore, MD. He began dancing at the age of 14 with the TWIGS program at the Baltimore School for the Arts, where he later graduated from the high school in 2014. With determination and receiving excellent training, he has performed principle roles such as "The Prince" in Barry Hughson's *The Nutcracker* at The Lyric Opera House and with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and in George Balachine's *Serenade*, staged by Deborah Wingert. He continued his training at The University of North Carolina School for the Arts, graduating in 2018. There, he performed works by Helen Pickett, BJ Sullivan, Ton Simons, Martha Graham, Doug Varone, Alexei Kremnev, Robin Mineko Williams, and Shen Wei. Following his studies, Quincy became a company member with Carolyn Dorfman Dance, further advancing his skills as a performer and instructor. He returns to BSA as a **Teacher** for both the TWIGS and high school programs.



Amanda Fair '00 Amanda Fair is a dance and spoken word artist and mom of 1. She is a graduate of The Baltimore School for the Arts and The University of the Arts in Philadelphia where she received her BFA in Ballet Performance. She received additional training in the MFA program at The University of Maryland, College Park and has also trained at schools such as The Dance Theatre of Harlem School.

She has performed with companies like The Washington Reflections Dance Company and has had the opportunity to work with choreographers like Fabian Barnes, Milton Myers, and Ronen Koresh. Her choreography has been performed at venues such as The Kennedy Center and The Baltimore Museum of Art, and she is a 2010 recipient of The Baker Artist Award.

Amanda teaches ages 3-adult in all levels and has taught in Baltimore City Public Schools, private dance studios, community colleges, and universities in Maryland, Philadelphia, DC, and Virginia, while continuing to work as a private dance coach for students in the state of Maryland.

Some of the places she has taught include The University of the Arts, Morgan State University, The Community College of Baltimore County, Howard County Ballet, Baltimore Ballet, The Dance Institute of Washington, and The Maryland Academy of Dance. She is currently teaching at The Morton Street Dance Center, The Dance Conservatory of Maryland, The Crossroads School, and the Metropolitan Ballet Theatre. Amanda is very grateful for opportunities both to teach and to learn. She is in her 25th year of teaching and is very excited to return to the BSA family.

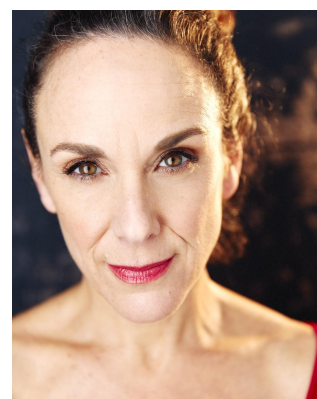
Dmitri Malikov graduated with a Bachelor degree from famed Bolshoi Ballet Academy in 1987. Mr. Malikov was a soloist and principal dancer with Donetsk Ballet Co., Lvov Ballet Theatre, Moscow City Ballet, and Ballet Theatre of MD. He has performed numerous principal roles in famous classical and contemporary works by some of the most recognized world choreographers. In 1999, Dmitri moved to the Baltimore-Washington area and joined Ballet Theatre of MD Company and school. Dmitri has taught and coached at Carroll County Dance Center and Ballet Conservatory, Sudbrook Magnet School, Severna Park Dance Academy, Stageworkz, Baltimore Ballet Company, and Olney Ballet Theatre. In 2010, Dmitri joined the faculty of Baltimore School for the Arts. Also, for many years, Dmitri has taught and coached at the Mid-Atlantic Center for the Performing Arts. His students are successfully performing and competing in various competitions (Youth America Grand Prix 2008, 2012, and 2020 Gold medalist winners). In 2014, one of his students was selected to participate in the International Ballet Competition in Jackson, MS. In 2018, Mr. Malikov received the “Best Teacher” award at the WBAC Grand Prix competition in New York. Since 2004, Mr. Malikov has served as artistic director of Chesapeake Ballet Company, staging and choreographing two full length productions per year, and managing groups of over one hundred children, adults, stage crew, and volunteers.



Da'Shawn Rawl ('14) studied Ballet and Modern at the Baltimore School of the Arts in Baltimore, Maryland. He is a graduate of the prestigious Dance Department of George Mason University (GMU). While at GMU, he had the opportunity to perform works by Alejandro Cerrudo, Andrea Miller, David

Grenke, Doug Varone, Lar Lubovitch, Mark Morris, Robert Battle, and many more. Mr. Rawl teaches at The Washington School of Ballet, DC Conservatory Dance, and Howard University. He will receive his MFA from Wilson College in 2023. He has been teaching and choreographing in the DMV and New York City area since the age of 16. In 2015, he founded the RawArts Dance Company and has created works at the Baltimore School of the Arts, George Mason University, various companies in the DMV area, and festivals in New York City. Some of his recent choreographic endeavors include a dance for film, *Holding My Breath*, *Works Conflict Within A Small Room*, and *Cold Fire: A Story of Emotions*, his first full-length work. Mr. Rawl's passion for choreography was the catalyst for the establishment of the RawArts Dance Company. Mr. Rawl returns to BSA as a **Teacher** in the high school.

Susan Rome '82 (Acting for Dancers) is a member of the first class that graduated from BSA (Theatre, 1982)! She has had a very rewarding acting career that has spanned 40 years on stage, film, and television. She loves teaching at BSA (Acting, Theatre Perspectives, Audition Lab, Interdisciplinary Collaboration, etc.). She holds a degree in Theatre from Boston University, and degrees in Teaching and Education from Western Washington University and Goucher College. She is also a BSA parent!
www.susanrome.com



Anton Wilson Born in Annapolis, MD, Anton T. Wilson began his study of dance with Anne Waugh Allen and Edward D. Stewart before receiving a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the North Carolina School of the Arts. He has performed with Ballet Theatre of Maryland; Parnassus Dance Theatre, Japan; Djazzex, Holland; Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo; Martita Goshen's *Earthworks*; and Jennifer Muller/*The Works*, New York, among others. He has taught, choreographed, and toured internationally for twenty-eight years. Anton is a 2007 and 2009 recipient of the Maryland State Arts Council's Individual Artist Award for choreography. He was one of four choreographers selected to initiate the Four Steps Forward choreography project in The Hague, Holland. Locally, he has choreographed productions for the Annapolis Symphony Orchestra, the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, and Opera Vivente, among others. In addition to workshops and master classes, Anton currently teaches at the Baltimore School for the Arts and the Kirov Academy of Ballet, as well as maintaining his lifelong involvement in equestrian competitions.

Lan Zheng Born in Chengdu, China, Lan started dancing at the age of nine at the encouragement of her mother who was a Chinese Folk Dancer. In 1992, when Lan was ten, she auditioned for admission into the Beijing Dance Academy for its prestigious pre-professional ballet program.

Lan moved to Beijing to live at the Beijing Dance Academy where she trained for seven years. Under the guidance of Shu Xiang Wang and Sin Rong Cao, Lan learned Classical Ballet technique as well as other dance forms such as Chinese Folk Dance, Russian and Spanish Character Dance, and Modern Dance. Upon her graduation in 1999, Lan was hired by the Shanghai Ballet Company, one of the five national professional ballet companies in China.



From 1999 to 2002, Lan was a member of the corps de ballet. She was appointed Leading Dancer in 2002, and Soloist Dancer in 2004.

During her 13 year tenure at the Shanghai Ballet Company, Lan performed in productions directed by José Martínez and Pierre Lacotte of the Opéra National de Paris, Derek Deane of the English National Ballet, Ben Huys of the New York City Ballet, and Bertrand d'At of the Opéra National du Rhin. As a result, while Lan trained under the Vaganova style, she has been influenced by the French and English styles as well. Lan performed internationally in Australia (2002), Spain (*Coppelia*, 2003), Japan (*Swan Lake*, 2006), United States (*Coppelia*, 2007), Thailand (*Romeo and Juliet*, 2009), and Finland (2010). In 2011, Lan was recognized as a "Master" dancer by the Chinese government.

In 2012, Lan moved to New York City and joined the Ballet des Amériques as a Company Dancer and Teacher. At the Company, Lan performed in contemporary dance productions choreographed by Artistic Director Carole Alexis. She also taught advanced ballet technique to the School's students enrolled in the pre-professional program. In the Summer of 2013, Lan joined the faculty of Peabody Preparatory, Baltimore's premier community school for the arts. Peabody Preparatory is a division of the Peabody Institute of The Johns Hopkins University. Shortly afterwards, Lan joined the faculty of the Baltimore School for the Arts, the magnet arts high school for the City of Baltimore.



Performance of *Spring Dance Concert 2021*; Dancers: (L to R) Derrick Shirland, Jr., Kendall Willis, and Isabella Poteat; Photo: Crystal Poteat

Letter to Prospective Students

Dear Dancers,

Our country has faced some of its greatest challenges within your lifetime. As an adult, it is not easy to make sense of it all, so I cannot even imagine how it feels for you. Having been in this position for three years now, I more fully recognize my responsibility to do everything within my power to ensure that this dance department is a place where all students feel respected and acknowledged on their artistic journey.

I consider all students as multi-faceted dance artists who should not limit their focus and energy to just one style or technique. I expect students to exercise the same degree of attention and effort in all classes. Knowing your strengths is valuable, but limiting your entire artistic self to a single label is detrimental to a full understanding of what your body is capable of achieving, and will likely limit your professional opportunities once you graduate. What you learn in one technique will support improvement in other techniques. ALL dancers should develop multiple skill sets in order to be successful. But of course, it doesn't stop there: you will need to use your brains. You must take advantage of the valuable opportunity to learn from your mistakes, interpreting the information gained, and apply it towards progress. You must not be afraid to take risks and be creative. It is only through taking risks that we truly discover what we can achieve!

Your years in high school are when you start laying the foundation for adulthood. It is my obligation to encourage development of personal and collective responsibility, dedication, and focus. I do this through example, trying my best to exhibit professionalism, consideration, compassion, and empathy. I respect students as autonomous, thinking individuals, expecting the same in return.

Dance is not about slaving away, but it is hard work. It is always hard work. Absolute perfection does not exist, but your individuality and unique passions will fuel all of your endeavors. Dance takes concerted concentration, rigor, and embodied effort, but the rewards can be infinite. Together, let's discover what you are capable of achieving!

Sincerely, Ms. Laura



Performance of *Spring Dance Concert 2021*; Dancer: Carissa Robinson; Photo: Crystal Poteat

“Diversity is welcomed, respected and encouraged; creative and intellectual integrity is required; professional discipline is expected.”

(borrowed with great respect from the University of Utah)

Dancers’ Objectives for the Grading Rubric

The evaluations of all dance applicants will be based on the following sets of criteria:

Technique & Craftsmanship

Physical and detailed realization of the elements of dance

- Do you mentally understand what the step requires of your body?
- Do you demonstrate the physical skill to execute the demands of the step with proficiency and apparent ease?

Habits of Mind, Reflection, & Understanding

Thoughtful and open-minded approach to technique, incorporating teacher objectives

- Are you approaching class with an open mind, allowing yourself to take risks?
- Are you incorporating your teachers’ feedback into your movement, and retaining that information from day to day?

Artistry

Movement quality, versatility of dynamics, presentational performance, and musicality

- Are you exploring various dynamics to enhance your movement possibilities?
- Are you attempting to be creative and sincere in your performance to elicit a response within the viewer?
- Are you expressing the rhythm, melody, nuance, and character of the music through movement?

Physical Engagement

Approaching class with athleticism and investment in the mind/body connection

- Are you pushing yourself, giving 100% of the physical effort available to you every day?
- Are you exploring the connections between focus, effort, and physical response, challenging yourself to improve?

Behavior of Learning

Dance class behavior, attendance, and etiquette

- Are you respectful to the teacher and your fellow classmates?
- Are you in class, mentally present, and focused?
- Are you on time?
- Are you in uniform?
- Do you have your pointe shoes when they are required for class? (for those on Pointe only)

Dance Department Policies

Deciding to join the BSA Dance Department is a decision to commit to a community and respect its members' needs.

In this community, there are two pillars that keep us accountable to ourselves, to each other, and to our artform:

1. Personal Discipline
2. Professionalism

They exist to allow us to feel *safe, respected, and ever evolving*. As this department evolves, we will redefine what these terms mean through the lenses of:

1. Functionality
2. Safety
 - a. Your own
 - b. Others around you
3. Mental Wellbeing

Uniforms

A uniform is an important aspect of being a member of the BSA Dance Community. They:

- Cultivate a community identity and sense of belonging
- Encourage discipline - a reminder that there are parameters to follow and respect
- Are practical
 - enable teachers to assist students in learning to dance - provide faculty with the ability to see all movement when giving instruction
 - prevent economic and social differences being experienced within the studios - peer pressure to buy expensive labels is lessened
- help students switch on to dancing when in class by association - a streamlined outfit translates to a focused mindset

Hair

For everyday classes and rehearsals, hair styles are governed by function, and not aesthetic. They must be:

1. Secure to the head
2. Out of your face and off of your neck

How you personally respond to the guidelines is individual, based upon whatever hair you have. Consider the weight of your hair and how you can safely secure it to ensure you protect your neck from becoming overstrained.

You are welcome to dye your hair any color *within the range of natural human hair*.

To remember:

- As a professional dancer, your artistic director has the final say.
- In any artistic work, the aesthetic and artistic choices of the choreographer and designer take precedence over individuality and personal preference (unless that is specifically the aesthetic and artistic choice of the choreographer and designer).

For performances, the Dance Department Head will discuss with choreographers and designers to determine an aesthetic, and then collaborate with the students to fulfill that aesthetic within their own range of possibility.

Nails**Safety Considerations**

- Long nails, regardless of whether they are fake or natural, are a hazard to you and those around you. *Keep nails trim and smooth* to remain respectful towards your fellow community members.
- Partnering perspective
 - No fake nails, no acrylics, no jewels- they hurt! (The last person you want to hurt is the one supporting your weight!!!! Being dropped is NOT FUN!!! Trust me...)

Color:

Not an issue for everyday classes and rehearsals. Have fun!

BUT, for Exams, juries, photoshoots, stage rehearsals in costume, tech and dress rehearsals, and performances, only CLEAR polish or NO COLOR.

Jewelry

- Tech Rehearsals, Dress Rehearsals, and Performances
 - No jewelry unless a part of the costume
- Class and Rehearsal (Safety considerations guide this policy)
 - Body piercings
 - Small earrings are fine; anything that dangles longer than $\frac{3}{4}$ inch is too long
 - Nose studs are fine for class and rehearsal, *no actual rings*
 - Belly button piercings are at your own risk- they must be covered by clothing at all times (easily accomplished when in uniform) BUT be aware that they can be snagged, especially during partnering
 - Necklaces
 - NONE-safety hazard
 - Rings
 - NONE-safety hazard

Dance Department Performances

As our dancers progress through our program over the course of four years, they are offered more opportunities to perform. Incoming 9th Graders generally perform much less than graduating Seniors. We work hard to ensure that performance opportunities, both informal and formal, are made available to all of our students. Many pieces require auditions to be a part of the ensemble, but not all. Audition judges may be invited guest artists (choreographers or repetiteurs) or members of the faculty.

This year, we have the honor of hosting choreographer Amy Hall Garner who will create a new version of *The Nutcracker* exclusively for the BSA Dance Department. Although the lingering pandemic continues to cause many challenges, we will work enthusiastically with Ms. Hall Garner to create a production full of magic.

In the Spring, ALL students in Levels A1, A2, and B will perform at the annual *Open Studio Night*. New this year, we intend to present a *Sophomore Choreography Showcase* featuring works created by Sophomores in their Choreography class. There may be additional opportunities for morning students to perform in other productions throughout the year, but that is yet to be determined, and is not guaranteed.

Students in Levels C1, C2, and D have the opportunity to audition to perform in the *Expressions* Gala performances and the *Spring Dance Concert*, all featuring works of mixed repertoire.



Rehearsal for *Spring Dance Concert 2021*; Dancer: Karilyn Farr; Photo: Allyson Washington

FAQs

What is the expected time commitment for BSA dance students?

In order to achieve the goals set in dance class, it is necessary for students to engage in cross-training outside of our class schedule. These exercises should encourage greater stamina, strength, and flexibility. Implementing an extra routine of physical training will enable students to more readily progress in the technical demands BSA dance classes require of them. The recommended schedule is three 30-minute aerobic sessions, and three 30-minute strengthening/toning sessions each week. If time is an issue, anything is better than nothing, and consistency is essential. Although it may take 6-8 weeks to see solid results, progress can be noticeable in as little as 2 weeks.

Rehearsal commitment:

In addition to the regular day schedule, dancers who are cast in school productions, like *The Nutcracker*, will have after school and weekend rehearsals. 11th and 12th graders have more time commitment after school than 9th and 10th graders as they are involved in more productions throughout the year. After School rehearsals are generally Monday through Thursday, until 6:30pm. Saturday rehearsals are generally 9:00am-4:00pm, including warm-up class.

Most students will not be asked to attend ALL After School and Saturday rehearsals; that is completely dependent upon casting. We consider workload when organizing our schedule, prioritizing student health and wellbeing. That said, putting together performances requires consistent repetition to ensure that dancers build necessary stamina, musculature, and muscle memory to perform safely and confidently.

How do you determine placement for students?

Our levels are fluid and based on the students that are with us in a given year. These students are grouped together based on the challenges we believe they are ready to tackle safely.

What additional costs would we expect?

The school provides most costuming for our productions. The majority of the extra items you would need to purchase are listed on the class uniform list that goes out at the beginning of the year. Families should be prepared to replace dance supplies as they wear out- specifically pointe

shoes, ballet slippers, and tights. Artistic Costumes and Dance Fashions and Dance Supplies, Etc. are very generous with our dance families and offer discounts throughout the year.

If my dancer studies outside of BSA, would that affect their progress at BSA?

We do expect that BSA obligations will be your dancer's priority. The health and safety of our students is our priority. We have found that when students are engaged in additional outside classes or performances they tend to be more fatigued and prone to injury and/or prolonged illness. This may be less of an issue with our morning dancers, but once students move to the afternoon dance classes, they will likely be rehearsing after school and on weekends above and beyond their normal school commitments.

We expect families to be transparent with us if they choose to take classes or perform outside of BSA to be certain there are no conflicts.

Thoughts on the Practice of Dance

ART and Artistry By Diana Turner-Forte

When I study videotapes of dance and observe the perfection of movement, the clarity of line and precision of musicality, it affirms for me that the journey of a dancer is more than the outward manifestation of shapes. It says to me that the art of dance must arise from a deeper spiritual compulsion. When in a dance studio, faced with the distortion of mirrors and with our perceived physical limitations, the challenge of transcendence is almost overwhelming.

Art does not happen instantaneously. Art is born out of a quiet, steady commitment to strive for perfection. Art evolves from the daily attempt to make movement and gesture excellent; to polish a performance; to partake in the ritual of stretching the muscles beyond the last encounter. Knowing that and hungering for the need to excel beyond our own thoughts, energy and physicality, students of the craft, no matter how young or for how long, bear the responsibility of becoming torchbearers for the art form.



Photo via Tim Sawyer.

An allegiance to the ideal of the art of dance makes each experience in the study an opportunity to strive for a higher level of achievement. This cannot be found independent of outside forces of a material world. Appearances are outside; the greater reward lies in realizing and valuing the change occurring within.

Exceptional dancing comes from extraordinary commitment to a lifelong study of the art. There is a balance, however, between an understanding of the history of dance and the roots of the art, and training the body to perform masterful, elegant feats.

The discipline of dance provides joyful moments with our self; it brings out the best within. Once the foundation is grasped, requiring approximately six to eight years of serious study, the rest of the time in the studio is devoted to refining every movement, gesture, step and placement of the head. The mind has to be

trained, as well, to discern whether the message from the body is merely an aching muscle or a call to attend to potential injury.

Compare a dancer's body to a violin, delicate but durable, strings appearing delicate, the bow is drawn lightly across the strings to make sweet sounds. But the sound is harmonious only when the two are cared for properly and played with skill.

While the voice of the violin lies in the strings, the subtle movements of the head, arms, feet, hands and legs speak to us in dance, the torso acting as the central control unit. One irregular action leads to distortion in the meaning; therefore, great care is taken so that harmony is maintained.

Havelock Ellis describes the reverence and importance of dance: "...dancing is the loftiest, the most moving, the most beautiful of the arts, because it is no mere translation or abstraction from life; it is life itself." Because the body is the tool, there is no canvas, no brush, no charcoal, no instrument, no other essential medium. The body is art, weaving the image, the color, textures and the voice through physical movement and shape.

Diana Turner-Forte is a former member of Chicago Ballet, BalletMet Columbus, Des Moines Ballet, San Diego Ballet, and the Taller Coreográfico de la UNAM. She has taught ballet at BalletMet Columbus, Baltimore School for the Arts, and the Virginia School for the Arts. Turner-Forte received her BA in dance, dance theory, and anatomy from Capital University and Master's in dance theory from Antioch University. She has a certificate in ballet instruction from the Royal Academy of Dance in London and a license in teaching the "Silver Swans" program, in which ballet serves as a form of therapy for older adults. Turner-Forte is also trained in "somatic, kinesthetic and holistic brain-body integration modalities" and holds the 2009 Piney Award for Excellence in Dance. Turner-Forte founded the Choreographic Institute of North Carolina, which trains students in classical ballet. Additionally, Turner-Forte has published *Letters to Amelia* and a poetry book entitled *A Feather in the Wind: Poetry for the Mind, Body, Spirit, and Soul*.

Embodied Philosophy in Dance: Gaga and Ohad Naharin's Movement Research by Einav Katan-Schmid

"...dance is... a manifestation of a meaning through movement. [The dancer] does not show, he lives through. The dancer actually moves and is occupied with the act of forming precise physical textures and dynamics. Dancers articulate meaning by dancing. Articulation of movement is not an



Batsheva Dance Company performs Sadeh21

illustration or a demonstration. It is preciseness with physical qualities.”

“Life experiences are in the dancer’s ensemble of techniques, and all of them are physical and mental by definition.”

Einav Katan-Schmid is a research associate at the Cluster of Excellence, Image, Knowledge, Gestaltung: An Interdisciplinary Laboratory, at the Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany. Her work with the research group “Picture-Act and Body-Knowledge” integrates choreography and somatic practices with philosophies of embodiment. She has been practicing Gaga with the Batsheva Dance Company since 2003.

Ohad Naharin is the House Choreographer of Batsheva Dance Company and creator of the Gaga movement language. Naharin was born in 1952 in Mizra, Israel. He joined Batsheva Dance Company in 1974 despite having little formal training. During his first year, guest choreographer Martha Graham invited him to join her own company in New York. Between 1975 and 1976, Naharin studied at the School of American Ballet, The Juilliard School, and with Maggie Black and David Howard. He then joined Maurice Béjart’s Ballet du XXe Siecle in Brussels for one season. Naharin returned to New York in 1979 and made his choreographic debut at the Kazuko Hirabayshi studio the following year. From 1980 until 1990, Naharin presented works in New York and abroad, including pieces for Batsheva Dance Company, the Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company, and Nederlands Dans Theater. In 1990, Naharin was appointed Artistic Director of Batsheva Dance Company, and in the same year, he established the company’s junior division, Batsheva – the Young Ensemble. He has since created over thirty works for both companies. After almost thirty years of leading Batsheva, Naharin stepped down as Artistic Director in 2018, and continues to serve as the Company's House Choreographer.

In addition to his stagework, Naharin also developed GAGA, an innovative movement language based on research into heightening sensation and imagination, becoming aware of form, finding new movement habits, and going beyond familiar limits. GAGA is the daily training of Batsheva’s dancers and has spread globally among both dancers and non-dancers.