

Dance Dialogue... The ABA Newsletter

And it begins!

School just started a few weeks ago. We are adjusting to new schedules, homework, activities... trying to find family dinner time and the smallest window of opportunity to clean, pack lunch, and maybe squeeze in some relaxation time... and I add another thing to the list! Nutcracker!!!! **First and foremost: if you cannot participate, please tell me know.** I will assume all students will be dancing unless told otherwise. The good news: almost all of the practice time is completed when you are already at the studio. What that means, however, is that we really need you to keep class a priority. Missing class frequently will greatly impact the performance experience for your child, and not for the best. Remember, dance is in the word attendance; come to class.

With rehearsal season comes the rehearsal attendance policy. The attendance policy allows each student one unexcused absence per number of rehearsals a week. For example: If your child is in Ballet III, which rehearses twice a week, you should plan for no more than 2 unexcused absences. If your child is in pre-ballet II, or Ballet IV, which rehearse once a week then you are allowed one unexcused absence. If your child will miss more than their allotted number of absences then we may ask them to come in for a private to catch up on choreography. This will help them gain confidence, and ensure they know their part well enough to not slow down and confuse the rest of the class. Of course, the incentive is that privates are not cheap. During the weekday, before classes start, privates are \$25 for a half hour time slot; evenings, Saturdays and weekends are \$30 for a half hour. For the youngest classes 15-30 minutes should be all the time needed to catch up for most dancers. I do promise, we would much rather you come to class than charge for privates! And, we won't ask you to do more than necessary. I don't micro-manage. Every kid is different, and even within the classes there are a number of different skill levels. If your student knows their dance, and isn't slowing the rest of the class down, we

October 2011 –Jumping right in!!!

won't call them in for a private. However, if they seem very lost, or are confusing the other students because they are having difficulty with steps, timing, traveling patterns, etc then don't be surprised if we ask you to schedule one. And, if you really just want your student to have some extra help so they are more confident you are always allowed to schedule privates, regardless of the number of absences they may have had, or not had!

Excused absences are required school events (like Christmas programs –ugh. Always a lot of these right before the show!), illness (don't come in and spread your germs), and family emergencies. Things like birthday parties, weekend trips, or vacations are considered unexcused absences. Plan accordingly; as we get closer to the holidays there will definitely be more conflicts. Don't use up your absences at the beginning if you can at all help it. This is also because it is most difficult to catch up after missing the class where the dance was taught.

Class performance/rehearsal details:
Creative Movement, Pre-Ballet I and Pre-Ballet II will be double cast (only perform one show). Here are your performing days:

Tuesday pm CM: Saturday
Wednesday am CM: Sunday
Thursday CM: Sunday
Saturday CM: Saturday
Tues PBI: Sunday
Wednesday am PBI: Sunday
Wednesday pm PBI: Sunday
Thursday PBI: Saturday
Saturday PBI: Saturday
Tuesday PBII: Saturday
Wednesday PBII: Sunday
Thursday PBII: Saturday
Saturday PBII: Sunday

Ballet I and up perform in both shows. Ballet I: each class is a different dance, so the rehearsal policy applies to different classes separately, not cumulatively.

Ballet II: Monday/Tuesday classes will have a small part. Your main dance will be taught during the Thursday/Saturday times. As each class has different students it is not practical to practice both dances in all classes. Please keep this in mind if and when you miss class.

Ballet IV: Your "rehearsal day" is Wednesday. Starting October 19th you should plan to stay after class for additional practice.

Ballet V: Your "rehearsal days" are Friday and Saturday. Starting October 14th you should plan to stay after class.

Dates: Like stated earlier, most of the dance is taught and rehearsed during regular class time (except older students who stay late). Beyond regular class, here are the dates you need to be aware of:

December 3rd and 10th: All-Cast Rehearsal at ABA

1:00: Act I

3:00: Act II

***3rd: Saturday performance, 10th: Sunday performance for CM/PBI**

December 17th: Dress Rehearsal at the Historic Elsinore

11am Ballet IV/V

11:45 Ballet II/III/Jazz

12:30 Pre-Ballet II/Ballet I

1:00 Creative/Pre-Ballet I

December 17th, 7pm: Performance at the Historic Elsinore (6:00 call time)

December 18th, 2:30 pm: Performance at Historic Elsinore (1:30 call time)

Please, if you are aware of any absences, please let us know in advance. I will have the acts for all-cast rehearsals posted shortly. Everyone should put all cast rehearsals on your calendar now, and if you will not be able to make it need to get advanced approval. Everyone is required to attend at least one all-cast rehearsal, and both is really best. All-cast rehearsals are very important as they are the only time that the dancers get to practice with the other classes. As we do storyline ballets, there are a lot of transitions that have to be worked out, both during dances when other classes are also on stage, and getting on and off stage. All-cast rehearsal allows us to be prepared for dress rehearsal, which is the only time we get to practice on stage. Furthermore, **Dress Rehearsal, on December 17th, is mandatory for all dancers.** I simply can't put someone on stage if they don't practice. Really, it wouldn't be a good experience for them

anyway; going out on stage for the “real” show, before practicing, is way to nerve racking.

Parent Meetings

We started this last spring, and it was generally successful, so we are going to try it again! **The week of October 24-29 we will be having parent meetings.** These meetings will be during your student’s regular class time, so hopefully will be convenient for everyone. They will be led by another parent of the class, not the teachers as we will be teaching. They will be for classes Ballet III and under. Ballet IV and V: I will still need volunteers! But, you have been around long enough that you know the drill, and a lot of your kids are driving, so you probably can’t come anyway. The week of the 24th you should still plan to check out the volunteer sheet. Ballet II students: your meeting will be during your Thursday/Saturday class. Ballet III students: your meeting will be during your Wednesday or Thursday class. Ballet I and jazz students: you should plan to come to every class for a meeting. I will be contacting some of you parents shortly to see if you would be willing to lead the meeting. This meeting is especially helpful for new families at ABA, as it is a good time to ask questions of the other “veteran” ABA parents. This is also when the volunteer sheets will be passes around. Performances are a huge undertaking, and absolutely cannot be successful without a lot of parent support. Each class will need a couple parents to volunteer in charge for each performance, and these people should plan to attend at least one of the all-cast rehearsals to familiarize themselves with everything going on stage (class coordinators). We need people to both help set-up and take-down the stage. Costumes have to altered/sewn before the performance, and organized after. Tickets need to be sold during all-cast rehearsals. We need “runners” to help classes get to stage, and backstage helpers to make sure costume changes happen in a timely manner. Really, this is a team effort. Our goal is to make sure the performance is as positive experience as possible for all the kids. I know that all of you want this too. I understand that everyone is busy at the holidays, and everyone wants to watch the show. Thankfully with Nutcracker there are two shows, so it is possible to watch one and help with the other! I do hope that everyone will step up and help

with any job, no matter how big or how small.

Costumes

I will be sizing for costumes the week of November 7-12. If you will be gone this week you should plan to come in during store hours to be sized for your costume before sizing. As always, I try to keep costumes reasonable and practical. You may need black shoes and tights or a certain colored leotard – things you can wear to class after the show. Average costume cost is \$25 per dance... Nutcracker is often times a little cheaper than spring show as there are a lot of costumes I have in stock that we use year to year! There is a \$5 cleaning fee for any borrowed costumes. I will try to have all costume details and costs posted right after Thanksgiving. **Please note, once costumes are ordered you will be responsible for their costs. Again, if you can’t participate let us know ASAP!**

Tickets

Tickets will be on sale through the Elsinore Theatre, or at all-cast rehearsals. Tickets are \$14 in advance, or \$16 at the door. *Children prices will be available at ABA during all-cast rehearsals only.* Children prices are for kids 11 and under, and are \$11. Please note: there are no children prices at the theatre. Remember! As per our tradition, all profits from the show are donated to the Pediatric Ward of the Salem Hospital. I hope you can all get excited that you will be able to enjoy a holiday tradition while supporting the community!

Buns!

We have a lot of new Ballet I students this year. I know trying to get hair into a bun is an adjustment. It is as much a part of the dress code as ballet shoes and leotards. Just like you wouldn’t play basketball in flip flops, or be on swim team without a swim cap and goggles, you need your hair in a bun for ballet. Creative Movement and Pre-Ballet, which are still very introductory, do not have movements that necessitate buns as much as Ballet I (and up!). We are going to start sending kids home with dress code reminders. If you are having difficulty getting your kids hair in a bun we would be more than welcome to show you a couple tips. I am not trying to be unreasonable or mean (I actually had a teacher who would pull students hair if it wasn’t up properly! Don’t worry, we will

never do that. But, it speaks to its importance). I know some of you have short hair. In general, the rule of thumb is if you can get your hair in a ponytail you can get your hair in a bun. Please aim for this standard. And, it is amazing what kids can do! Starting at around 9 or 10 try to teach your kid to put up their own hair. It isn’t a fashion contest. For class buns don’t need to be beautiful, just functional. Make it a Saturday afternoon project, putting hair up and down several times. Even invite a friend over so they can practice together and make it a play date. Older students: coming directly from another activity is not a legitimate excuse to not have a proper bun. You can do it in the car ☺.

Arts in the Area

Romeo and Juliet: Eugene Ballet Company. This romantic and moving staging of Shakespeare’s tragic love story, with exhilarating sword fighting, lavish masquerades, elaborate scenery and virtuosic dancing will leave you breathless. Oct. 28, 7:30pm, Historic Elsinore. \$20 - \$35. Call 503.375.3574.

Murder on the Nile: Pentacle Theatre. Love, scandal and murder, by Agatha Christy. Need I say more? Oct 7-29. Tickets \$17-\$18. Call 503.485.4300

Happy Halloween! As in accordance with the Holiday Schedule, there is no class on Monday, October 31st. Happy Trick or Treating!!!

For questions please...

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ABA Store Hours:

Thursday 6-7pm; Saturday 9:30-11am;
By Appointment with Annie