



NDA D - EXAM INFORMATION

The studio is once again preparing our students for ballet examinations through the Canadian Dance Teacher's Association (C.D.T.A.). The cost of an exam is \$100, and this fee covers all travel and lodging expenses of our examiner, as well as all C.D.T.A. registration and administration fees. **Exams will take place at the studio Saturday December 10th and Sunday December 11th.** All competitive students must participate in exams if eligible. Any students interested in competing in the 2012 -2013 season should consider taking exams to be eligible for next years' team. The following is some basic information regarding dance exams.

What Are Dance Exams?

Dance exams are tests taken by the students through the Canadian Dance Teacher's Association (C.D.T.A.) by certified member teachers who have qualified to become Examiners. Students are tested individually in Tap, and in small groups of two or more in Ballet. There is both an oral and technical part to all exams, and all of the required exercises and possible questions are well rehearsed in class. The C.D.T.A. has developed a well-founded syllabus of dance technique divided into grades from Primary to Grade 4 (Tap) or Grade 5 (Ballet). Once these levels have been successfully passed, the student moves onto the Major grades - Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced. Those students successfully passing their Elementary level may be tested to obtain their teaching certificate. The Association is still working to have an Elementary certificate accepted as a high school arts credit.

When Should I Start Taking Exams?

The earliest age allowed is 5, however I prefer to wait until students are about 7. The work and skills required are specific and younger students find exam work stifling and are not able to focus their attention as well as a more mature student. Students should begin exam work as soon as their teacher is reasonably sure they can pass their exam grade level. The C.D.T.A. also has age recommendations for each grade, and the age and physical maturity of each student is a factor in marking them. For example, the recommended age for Ballet Grade 1 is 7 - 10 years, however a 7 year-old is not as physical mature as a 10 year-old, thus the examiner will take this into consideration when marking the students.

Why Should I Take Dance Exams?

Students are not examined by their own teacher, but by a well-respected C.D.T.A. examiner with many years of dance and teaching experience. Students taking exams are individually critiqued and commended on her /his skills, while the teacher learns what errors were common to all students, and what to work on individually. This ensures the highest quality of dance education from both teacher and student. Exams work makes the studio and its teachers, as well as the individual student accountable for /his own abilities. The teacher must ensure she is teaching the appropriate skills proficiently at the appropriate time, while the student must work to perfect the required skills in order to advance. Those students taking exams usually work harder than those who don't. They are still having fun and enjoying their dance studies, however they are more motivated to master the skills and exercises because they know that at the end of the day they will be marked on them. How well would our children really do in school if they were never tested or made accountable for their education? Exam work builds motivation, discipline, and self-esteem in each individual student, and assures that they are meeting nationally accepted dance standards.

Can I Fail An Exam?

Sometimes, for whatever reason, a child may not pass her exam. Students who have done poorly in the past have usually been absent from a large number of exam preparation classes. Remember you cannot pass if you do not do the required work. This is a test, and you are expected to know all of the material. Do not expect anyone else to help you along. If you need to look at the girl next you to keep in time and to remember the exercise, you are demonstrating that you do not know the material. Students who work hard and practice generally always do well. Students who skip class and show up at the last minute to "crunch" will not fair as well. Sometimes our nerves just get the better of us, and even a well-prepared student can have a very bad exam day. Remember the examiner is only able to mark you on that one performance, and just like in recital or competition, it is only one opinion of one specific performance. A missed exam does not mean you should discontinue dance lessons, or that you will be held back from your classmates. It simply means you need to work harder to master the skills at that level before advancing to the next. As parents we always want to see our children succeed, and failure can be very disappointing and discouraging. It is also important to note that criticism builds character, and with encouragement most students get over their misfortune and use the experience to work harder the next time. The studio has not had any failed dance exams in a very long time.

What Can I Expect During And After My Exam?

You will have practiced a variety of dance exercises and combinations in class prior to your exam, and you will be asked to do them exactly as you practiced. Ballet exams are done in groups and are structured like a regular class, conducted by your teacher up to Grade 3. The teacher cannot correct or help you in anyway during the exam. The examiner will conduct the class from Grade 4 on. The examiner says little in Ballet, and will often write down remarks between exercises. This can be stressful, however remember that she must write a comment for each student, and that many of the comments are positive! You must remain quiet and respectful throughout the exam, and there should be absolutely no communication between students. Arms must be held en bas and feet in first when waiting for instructions. Tap exams are conducted by the examiner and are taken individually, with the teacher out of view. All of the work is practiced and rehearsed, including entrance and exits. Both exams have a verbal portion where students are asked to describe things. Remember that the examiner may phrase things differently then your teacher, so listen closely and answer carefully. Don't be afraid to ask questions if you are unsure of what you have been asked. Stand quietly with feet flat on the floor and hands behind your back during your tap exam. Examiners always appreciate being acknowledged, so remember to say "hello", at the beginning, and to say "thank-you" at the end.

I will receive all marks, certificates and comment sheets immediately following the last exam of the weekend. I will hand them out in class, or you can phone me at home for results. The marks are as Follows:

Try Again	skills not performed adequately enough to advance - more practice required
Pass	performed all skills fairly accurately, however general technique and overall knowledge of material is still weak and should advance slowly
Pass Plus	performed all required skills adequately - ready to advance, however still weak in some areas and should still advance slowly
Commended	all skills well known and performed efficiently - a disciplined student ready to advance
Highly Commended	all skills very well known and performed with good technical ability, confidence and some artistic merit - an excellent student
Honors	all skills mastered and performed with a very high level of both technical skill and artistic merit - a superior student

Exam Attire

Students taking exams must wear their hair in a classical bun with all hair gelled completely off of face and neck. No bangs are allowed. Use lots of hair pins or a black hair band for students with shorter hair. Junior girls must wear a tank styled black leotard with pink tights that fit well with no wrinkles, while Intermediate and Senior students should wear a camisole styled black leotard. Keep the back style of the leotard as plain as possible. Beige or black tights can be worn for tap exams only. No heavy make-up, nail polish, jewelry, shorts, skirts, leg warmers or pants are allowed. Ballet slippers should be as clean as possible and fit well. Your appearance is your examiners first opinion of you. Please look professional and disciplined. Ballet students must wear a corresponding felt number pinned to the center front and back of their leotard in all 4 corners. Please remember to remove your numbers before you leave the studio.



C.D.T.A. EXAMINATION FORM

You / Your child is eligible to take the following dance exams offered by your studio as a member of The Canadian Dance Teachers Association:

Ballet Grade _____

Please the following:

Yes, I / my child will be participation in the above ballet exam(s) this year.

No, I / my child will not be participation in exam work this year.

Name of Student _____

Parent / Guardian Signature _____

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