

Arlington Dance Ensemble

Philosophy and Qualification Requirements

Philosophy: We strive to make participation in the Arlington Dance Ensemble a positive experience for everyone involved. Self-confidence and self-esteem are attributes that will be nurtured in the Ensemble and are traits that will prove valuable later in life. Working together, we feel we can achieve this goal.

Purpose: The purpose of the Arlington Dance Ensemble is to further the education of young dancers in performance while experiencing a fun and positive environment. Through the Ensemble, we can provide dancers with additional opportunities to take what they have learned in the classroom and perform for local audiences. We believe that participation in Ensemble is a special achievement for those who are dedicated to the art of dance. We understand that not all dance students are interested in performing or extending their dance education outside of classes, but for those who are, the Ensemble is a great experience. We also view our performances as a way to give back to our local community.

The Ensemble is structured like a professional ballet company with four levels: Principal, Premier, Corp and Apprentice.

The **Principal level** is by invitation and is for dancers who are in Ballet level 9 and higher. It is presented to students that have shown dedication to the art and to the studio. Their responsibilities are: performing in outside concerts, Gala, master classes, work with guest choreographers, travel outside the studio to workshops, a trip to New York and ambassador work for the studio. Fee: \$700.00*

The **Premier** and **Corp levels** will perform in outside concerts, Gala, master classes, work with guest choreographers and serve as ambassadors for the studio. Fee: \$700.00*

The **Apprentice** program is for the students who would like an additional performance outlet but may not have the strength in their technique to do all of the Ensemble repertoire. Members of the Apprentice program will be cast in the opening ballet and finale piece and will have the same opportunity to participate in master classes and attend open rehearsals. Fee: \$450.00

**There will be an additional cost for field trips. To support our dancers' dedication to the art of dance, we encourage our Ensemble members to take advantage of every opportunity to learn.*

Auditions: We choose our Ensemble members through auditions held in the spring. Each year we evaluate audition performances relative to the overall skill level of the dancers choosing to audition. In addition to skill level, we are looking at a dancer's ability to work as a member of a team, to quickly pick up combinations, stage presence (being able to sell an audience), technique and how a particular dancer complements or enhances the overall group look and feel. The Ensemble has an apprentice program that is for dancers who still need to work on strengthening their technique. We feel strongly that a motivated dancer can achieve any goal with a little hard work and practice.

Qualifications: To participate in the Ensemble, dancers must be between the ages of 12 and 18 and have completed one year of Ballet 4.

Requirements: As a member of the Ensemble, dancers are required to take a ballet class *plus another technique* (i.e. Jazz, Modern or Tap) in addition to their scheduled Ensemble rehearsals and Master Classes.

Rehearsals: Rehearsals are extremely important to any performance. The choreographers put a lot of time and energy into creating pieces for the Ensemble. They cannot rehearse properly if dancers do not show up. It is like playing a baseball game with no pitcher or catcher. Rehearsals will be held on Saturday afternoon, Sundays and possible Friday evenings. There will also be rehearsals held during Holiday breaks. You only need to be at rehearsals in which you are cast in a piece. If you are cast as an understudy, you *must* attend the rehearsal. *If a dancer has to miss a rehearsal, they must notify the director in writing ten days prior to rehearsal* for it to be considered excused. If a dancer has too many excused or two unexcused absences, they will be replaced in the piece. Absentee forms received 72 hours before a rehearsal are considered unexcused. All rehearsals are open to any member of the Ensemble.

Attendance: Attendance is critical in both rehearsals and regular scheduled classes. The choreography given is difficult and dancers need to be in technical shape. If a dancer does not attend their regular scheduled classes, they are in risk of injury. Ensemble members are also looked up to by other students at the studio and should be role models. Ensemble members who do not show up for classes do not reflect that standard. If an Ensemble member misses too many classes on a regular basis, they may be asked to leave the Ensemble.

Master Classes: We will be offering Master Classes this year. The cost for these classes is included in the Ensemble fees. Master Classes are mandatory. A \$ 25 fine will be assessed to any Ensemble member who misses a mandatory class, whether he/she notifies the director or not. Too many absences from mandatory classes may result in dismissal from Ensemble.

Extra Activities: Participation in Ensemble incorporates additional activities other than performance opportunities. We will be going on some field trips and have parties scattered throughout the year. We want our Ensemble members to have fun and get to know each other on a social basis as well as co-performers and classmates.

Tuition: The fees charged for participation in the Ensemble help offset the cost of costumes, choreography, rehearsals, teacher's hours, theater rental, master classes and music. The balance of the expenses will be covered by our fundraising efforts. It will not cover any field trip ticket prices.

Volunteers: We need a lot of help throughout the year, and we rely on our volunteers. Parents must volunteer at least 6 hours during the year and help backstage during Day of Dance recital. There will be a sign up sheet at the parent meeting for various committees parents can volunteer for. We need help to make the Ensemble a success. The more volunteers we have, the easier the jobs are. Volunteering is a great way of showing your children that you want to be involved in their activities.

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