The School of Classical and Contemporary Dance Handbook

Dianna Cuatto
Artistic Director/School Director

Nicole Kelsch
School Principal

The Official School of the Ballet Theatre of Maryland

Maryland’s Premier Professional Ballet Company
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**BTM Office and Staff**
Ballet Theatre of Maryland is a tenant and resident company of Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts, The Modell Lyric, soon to be at the Bowie PAC, and a tenant at the Merritt Annex building.

Maryland Hall Office Hours(410-263-8289): M 4:30- 8:30PM, T 4:30-7PM, W 4:30-8PM, S 10:30AM-12:30 PM 801 Chase St. Annapolis, MD 21401 410-263-8289

Merritt Annex Office Hours(410-224-5644): M-F 9:00AM- 8:00PM, S 9:00AM-7:00PM 1981 Moreland Parkway, Building 4A, Bay 4, Annapolis, MD 21401 410-224-5644

Artistic Director, Dianna Cuatto, the School Principal, Nicole Kelsch, and the faculty can be reached through either office. All messages will be returned as soon as possible.

**Disabled Access**
Both Maryland Hall and the Merritt Annex are barrier-free facilities with handicap parking, a wheelchair ramp and an elevator serving all floors. Handicap seating can be arranged for all performances.

**Statement:**
Ballet Theatre of Maryland’s School of Classical and Contemporary Dance offers classes for students age two through adult who enjoy dancing as well as for those who wish to pursue a professional career.

Ballet Theatre of Maryland’s School of Classical and Contemporary Dance is a non-profit 501c3 organization.

**Ballet Theatre of Maryland’s School of Classical and Contemporary Dance reserves the right to change without notice any statement in this handbook concerning, but not limited to, rules, policies, tuition, admission, evaluations, and curricula.**

**Notice of Non-Discriminatory Policy**
Ballet Theatre of Maryland’s School of Classical and Contemporary Dance admits students of any race, color, sexual orientation, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin in administration of its education policies, admission policies, scholarship programs or any other school administered programs.
**Mission and Purpose**

Ballet Theatre of Maryland (BTM) was founded in 1978 to provide Maryland with rich traditional and innovative programs that educate, inspire, enlighten and entertain through a language more powerful than words – the language of classical ballet and contemporary American dance. BTM’s mission is to provide Maryland with a fully professional ballet company and training academy by:

- Educating the community to the beauty, joy and discipline of dance as an art form and as an enhancement to their lives.
- Creating programs that make ballet more accessible to the underserved.
- Performing known and original works of artistic integrity.
- Creating new eclectic works that express both American and Maryland culture and values.
- Preserving the tradition of the classical form, while promoting the continual evolution of dance as an art.

The founding Board’s vision was to provide Annapolis, and later, Maryland with a professional Ballet Company and School, so that Marylanders did not have to go to DC or New York to see quality dance or receive quality professional training.

**Vision of the School**

BTM offers a complete curriculum for the aspiring professional dancer as well as for the dancer seeking good solid dance training for pure enjoyment. Our curriculum is designed to provide anatomically sound training, while providing an increasing variety of classes and performance opportunities.

BTM’s school is the only one in Maryland that offers a fully comprehensive ballet training program for the beginner student up to Aspirant, Pre-Trainee, Trainee and the professional dancer. A focus on the healthy body aesthetic (healthy body types and healthy monitoring) is a hallmark of BTM’s Company and School. In addition to training students of all ages with differing interests for learning the discipline of dance we also take great responsibility in our goal to train fine professional dancers and share this vital art form with our community. It is central to the mission of the school to expect the very best effort of each student, whether or not he/she chooses the professional track. We provide professional faculty and the best possible instruction to serve the dance needs of all of our students. Our instructors give each of the students the care and attention they deserve in the hopes that they will become self-confident young adults and artists.

**Philosophy of School: What Makes a Good School?**

**What is a professional dance or ballet school and why should my child be in a professional school if he/she is not going to be a dancer?**

The art of ballet is a multiple discipline combining dance and music with an appreciation of painting, literature, history and sculpture, as well as other artistic dance forms. It is also an arduous sport, which requires repetition, hard work, determination and stamina. Ballet is a special, beautiful expressive art form that teaches poise, grace, discipline, focus and self-esteem. It also fosters a healthy work ethic, a sense of commitment and teamwork.
A good school requires fine ballet teachers. According to Angela Whitehill in her Handbook for Dance Parents:

The fine ballet teacher is an artist first, with professional training, then a teacher. The fine ballet teacher strives to infuse a child with a deep love of all the arts and must have a personal respect and love for the ballet art form. The teacher should believe in it, live it, and have trained or performed professionally for at least 6-10 years with a recognized reliable professional company.

In addition, a degree from either a professionally recognized training program such as the University of Utah, Mercyhurst, or experienced training with a recognized professional ballet company or its attached school, like BTM, Richmond Ballet, Houston, The Royal Winnipeg Ballet or New York City Ballet is essential.

While professional stage experience is not mandatory for a fine teacher, it is essential in bringing the best in both performance and classroom technique to the student which is paramount for the total education of the young dance student.

A good school also offers more than one professional instructor to meet the needs of the different learning styles in students, but should also follow a carefully designed syllabus of instruction.

A good syllabus takes the best from all the training methods: Vaganova, Cecchetti, Danish, French, RAD, and American and combines them with the latest in Kinesiological and anatomical research to bring out the best in each student, regardless of the body type or ability of each student. Each student’s body is unique and requires the teacher to apply the best of all these methods to bring out the best in each individual student.

A good syllabus requires and offers cross-training to round out and balance the student’s training at appropriate levels. As in any sport, greater demands are called upon the student as he/she masters each level.

BTM’s syllabus is based on the syllabus evolved by Ruth Petronovich, Joanna Kneeland and David Howard at the Harkness House in New York, and it encompasses all of the above.

Our Director adds to this training holistic and scientific knowledge, which prepares all of our student graduates with the tools necessary to sustain a healthy body throughout his or her life.

A good school has strong training, fundamentals, with disciplined verbal and hands on corrections and with a positive, demanding, classroom approach. Before there can be a love of the art of dance or professional dancers, there must first be a school with good teachers, a good syllabus, and young students.

A good school provides an increasing variety of classes as well as high quality performance opportunities. Our students are given the opportunity to rehearse and perform with professional dancers, who can inspire them to follow their passions and strive for excellence at school and at work. Our students have the opportunity of working with top professional choreographers who round out their dance education by challenging them with performance technique. Every student is the future of the art form, whether as a performer, an audience member, a student, a company member, or a lover of the art.
**Values**

While teaching students the art of ballet is important at BTM, it is equally important to the staff and director that the students learn the life skills and values necessary to help them grow into successful citizens and strong leaders. As parents and teachers, we share this goal in common.

There are four principles or agreements that we at BTM try very hard to instill within our students:

1. Be impeccable with your word—speak with integrity. Say only what you mean. Avoid using the word to speak against yourself or to gossip about others or to demean any other person or the organization.
2. Don’t make assumptions—communicate with others as clearly as you can to avoid misunderstandings, sadness, and drama. And when in need of discussion, seek out the proper authority to help you.
3. Don’t take anything personally—rather; seek to communicate with others by listening and through understanding.
4. Always do your best—your best is going to change from moment to moment; it will be different when you are healthy as opposed to sick. Under any circumstance, simply strive to do your best at any given moment, accept that with gratitude, and you will avoid self-judgment, self-abuse, and regret.

   -Miguel Ruiz, The Four Agreements

**Code of Conduct for Parents**

1. Please respect the expertise and decisions of the Ballet Theatre of Maryland Staff and Faculty.
2. Support your dancer at all times.
3. **Be attentive to people who are around you as you comment.** Young dancers are very sensitive. Negative comments can turn the most positive time into a negative time. Instead, attempt to develop positive solutions and avoid gossip.
4. If you have major concerns, see the administrator so an appointment to address your concern can be scheduled.
5. Be courteous.
6. Encourage your dancer to enjoy their training and to have fun.
7. Think about the benefit your dancer(s) receives from their ballet experience.
8. **Ballet is not a dance discipline that should be left within the walls of the studio.** It needs expression in our daily lives. The parent can be a healthy part of this process by exposing children to it in its various forms by attending or participating in a professional BTM production; reading books like Angelina Ballerina or by watching dance movies or tapes together like American Ballet Theatre’s Barbie’s Swan Lake.
9. **Any questions** you may have regarding your dancer’s placement or progress or concerns regarding training should be directed to the School Principal or the School’s Artistic Director.
Code of Conduct for Students
It is the policy of Ballet Theatre of Maryland’s School of Classical and Contemporary Dance to maintain a positive, healthy, and productive learning and working environment for all students, staff and dancers. BTM students are supported by a dedicated faculty and administration.

As part of their training, BTM students are expected to behave in a responsible and disciplined manner and to adhere to the School’s rules and regulations, both inside BTM’s facilities and outside in the greater community as representatives of BTM. Students are expected to treat BTM staff with respect and maintain a positive attitude. BTM strives to ensure that all rules are clear and reasonable, and students are expected to observe the established Code of Conduct. BTM reserves the right to suspend or dismiss any student whose conduct or attitude is found to be unsatisfactory. Please respect the expertise and decisions of the BTM School faculty and staff.

The following are absolutely forbidden at Ballet Theatre of Maryland’s School of Classical and Contemporary Dance:
- Physical intimidation or injury, verbal harassment
- Theft, destruction of School property or property of others
- Verbal abuse; lewd, vulgar conduct; profanity
- Sexual harassment or coercion
- Possession of drugs and/or alcohol
- Smoking: The Merritt Annex and Maryland Hall and their surrounding grounds and parking lots are non-smoking facilities
- Firearms or weapons of any kind
- Self-destructive behavior
- Willful destruction or misuse of BTM School or another person’s property
- Improper use of cell phones or the internet

Any of the above actions will be reported immediately to the School Principal, who will, in consultation with the Director of the School, decide the appropriate disciplinary action. Penalties may include (but are not limited to):
- Dismissal from the school
- Suspension from classes
- Referral to counseling
- Fines
- Probation
Important Guidelines

These guidelines have been developed to assist our school in functioning efficiently. The Director and our faculty ask for your consideration with regard to the following issues:

- When entering and leaving the school students must wear appropriate clothing (slacks, skirts, shirts and shoes). During cold weather students are to wear warm clothing (i.e., jackets & coats.)
- For security reasons students are to wait inside the building, not on the street, for parent pick up.
- During the school hours, students are asked to keep the sound level low when in the lobby or hallway, so our classes are not disrupted.
- At the Maryland Hall Studios, please bring all of your belongings into the studio and pick up after yourself.
- At the Annex Studios, please place all items in the empty lockers provided. Do not leave items in lockers overnight. Be respectful of the lockers and belongings of others. Do not invade them or touch or move the belongings of others.
- Students are to enter the classroom promptly and are encouraged to bring water bottles, but not food or other types of drinks, into the studio.
- Beg Ballet 3-Adv students are encouraged to stretch before class.
- We reserve the right to suspend or dismiss students from class for inappropriate behavior; we reserve the right to dismiss any student from the school who consistently displays inappropriate behavior.
- The office phone is for business use. It can only be used by customers for important and brief calls.
- Use of Hot Stuff or “jet glue” for pointe shoes is prohibited inside the building.

Admission and Enrollment

**Lower School classes**, which include all Creative Movement and Pre-Ballet classes have an Open Enrollment policy. Please note classes may fill quickly and are on a first-come, first-served basis. Students enrolled in Pre-Ballet classes are evaluated in the Spring by BTM faculty, in consultation with the School Principal, for suitability to the demands of Beginning Ballet 1 in the Middle School. Advancement from Pre-Ballet to Beginning Ballet 1 is not automatic.

**Enrollment in the Middle and Upper School** levels (Beginning Ballet 1-Advanced Ballet 2) is by evaluation and placement by the School Principal and BTM Faculty. Please contact the BTM School office for placement in these levels.
Students age 14+ who wish to be considered for BTM’s Aspirant, Pre-Trainee and Trainee programs should attend one of the company and summer intensive auditions held in March if they meet the following criteria: 1) At least 4-5 years of classical ballet training; 2) Minimum of two years of pointe work; 3) Currently studying 8.5-14 hours per week.

**Promotions, Evaluations, and Conferences**

Formal evaluations are held each year for students in Beginning Ballet 1 through Advanced levels (Students in Pre-Ballet and below do not receive a formal evaluation). Students will be evaluated by their teacher(s) and another member of the faculty. These evaluations address effort, attendance, technical development, strengths and weaknesses, conduct, potential, and will include suggestions for improvement. It is important that parents discuss these evaluations with their child to ensure that there is a shared understanding of the student’s progress.

**Advancement from one class level to the next is not automatic; therefore, students may receive an additional evaluation at the end of Summer Intensive to follow up on progress and class placement.** It is not uncommon for students to spend two to three years in a level. At BTM’s recommendation, students may be mixed in two class levels until they are ready to fully move into the higher level. **Students in Beginning Ballet 3 and above are required to participate in BTM’s Summer Intensive and continued enrollment and advancement in the school is dependent upon this participation.**

Individual conferences are held for students in the Pre-Trainee and Trainee programs and for other students by request. Conferences last approximately 15-30 minutes and involve the student, parent(s) or guardian if desired, and the School Director and, when available, the School Principal. Students are expected to take notes in their class journal (see below) during the conference to use as a reference during the school year.

BTM faculty, in consultation with the School Principal evaluate each Pre-Ballet student for his or her suitability to the demands of classical ballet in Beginning Ballet 1. All students enrolled in the Lower School levels receive written confirmation of class placement for the following year in June at the School Show or during the final week of classes for the Spring Semester if not in a level that performs at the School Show.

The School Principal and/or School Director are available to answer any questions or concerns throughout the year. Appointments can be made through the BTM School office.

**Class Journal**

All students in Beginning Ballet 3 and above are required to keep a class journal to record corrections. A spiral notebook or composition book may be used for this purpose. Students are
expected to bring this notebook with them to every class. We recommend that at the end of each
class, each student record all corrections made to him/her personally or to the class in general.
**This list should be reviewed daily** to remind the student what to think about and work on in the
studio. If there is something that student does not seem to understand, he/she should ask the
teacher who made the correction for clarification or help. **Journals are used as a tool for**
**student progress and understanding.**

**Class Observation and Written Exams**

We allow our parents to observe classes twice a year, in November for the fall semester and in
May for the Winter/Spring semester. Families will be notified when observation weeks are
scheduled. Visitors are asked to restrict observation of classes to designated observation weeks.
Please remain in designated waiting areas at all other times.

**Starting with the Beginning Ballet 1 level, students take written/oral and physical exams**
**each May.** This helps the faculty evaluate the students and determine if they have fully mastered
each level of the syllabus before moving to the next.

**Outside Dance Instruction and Performances**

Each class level follows a carefully planned curriculum each year, requiring students to attend a
specific number of hours of class each week throughout the school year. For consistency and
clarity of ballet training, it is best to remain with one school. Therefore, BTM does not allow for
students to train at other schools or with other teachers, as this conflicts with the curriculum of
Ballet Theatre of Maryland’s School of Classical and Contemporary Dance.

Ballet Theatre of Maryland has two schools in Maryland that are partner schools that act as
feeder schools and one public school partner. For more information on these schools, please
contact the BTM office.

Students wishing to participate in performances outside of BTM’s professional productions
should request permission from the Artistic Director and/or School Principal. The Artistic
Director reserves the right to deny permission to audition for or participate in productions outside
of BTM if it serves as a conflict of interest to the organization.

**The Programs**

Ballet Theatre of Maryland’s School of Classical and Contemporary Dance is divided into three
divisions designed to challenge the physical and technical abilities of each student. The School’s
syllabus, developed by Ruth Petronovic, David Howard, and Joanna Kneeland, establishes
classroom curriculum and defines how it is to be taught, thus assuring consistency within the
School. The syllabus is periodically reviewed by the Director, School Principal and faculty with
the objective of offering the finest possible ballet training.

**The Lower School – The Formative Years**
Creative Movement - Ages 3-4
For ages 3 to 4 and even ages 5 and 6, the physical rudiments of ballet are simply too taxing. Creative movement classes, from the Tap Ballet Sampler to Story-time consist of preliminary instruction that touches on dance, music appreciation, creativity and imagination to teach students the development of basic axial motor and locomotor skills to entice students to use their bodies in an expressive way.
Proper dance instruction is based on the child’s physical ability and stage of development. At ages 3 and 4 through ages 5 and 6, a youngster’s bones are quite soft and malleable and severe damage could result from arduous training or exertion. The Creative Movement courses allow students to develop age appropriate “formative” skills as a precursor to more arduous dance classes at the transitional or formative years.

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The Lower School – The Transition Years
Pre-Ballet - Ages 5-8
A year can make a difference – depending upon the development of a child. A 5 or 6 year old may now learn to channel his or her sense of imagination and begin to apply it with discipline. Pre-Ballet is the first lesson of the beginning of a possible ballet career. Ballet is first a discipline; at 5 and 6, it is time for an initial exposure to the discipline, the tradition of ballet. At this level, students become acquainted with barre work, focusing attention longer, and they are introduced to the most elementary vocabulary and tenets of ballet. There is still room in both levels of Pre-Ballet for creativity, imagination and exploration. At ages 5-8, a child has an instinctual facility to remember words, names, or phrases in another language. So French terminology can and should be introduced and then expanded from Pre-Ballet 1 to Pre-Ballet 2. This is also a good time to introduce
children to the art of listening and hearing music tempos and rhythms and to begin to understand their bodies. Basic posture is introduced. Familiarity with all of these aspects will bridge an important gap when formal ballet classes begin at age 8 or 9.

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**The Middle School – The Foundation Years**

**Beginning Ballet 1 – Beginning Ballet 3**

**Ages 8-12**

The progression of ballet training parallels the physical and intellectual development of growing children. Before age 8, children perceive and cope with only gross motor movements. They have neither the physical ability to hold a position or the concentration to follow through in a series of motions. Although Creative Movement and Pre-Ballet classes are useful in teaching rhythm, a degree of control and use of imagery, no attempt should be made to teach ballet technique or introduce movements before ages 7 or 8 that could prove injurious to the joints.

Between ages 7 and 10, the body gains in strength as the mind acquires the ability to concentrate for longer periods of time. While the 7-year old will probably forget to stretch the knee when pointing the toes, the 8 or 9 year old will be able to do both. The 9 year old will be able to begin correcting or using the arms at the same time. Positions are taught before transition; single steps are mastered before they are linked in combinations.

From the beginning of Ballet 1, the entire course of study should cover a minimum of 9-10 years. But from Beginning Ballet 1 – Advanced there are only 7 levels of training. That is because the training from Beginning Ballet 1-3 takes approximately 5 years on average to complete, if the student is taking classes a minimum of 2-3 days per week. In these all important foundation years, students must build appropriate musculature and a specific neuromuscular response, which makes it possible to accelerate the correct acquisition of dance vocabulary after the initial 4-5 years of Beginning Ballet 1-3 studies. Proper body and leg alignment at this stage is essential to achieve for the health and longevity of the student and early alignment training is a meticulous, tedious but necessary process.

At Beginning Ballet 3, students are introduced to pre-pointe strengtheners (physical therapy exercises) to prepare them properly for the difficult demi-pointe and pointe work which begins in Intermediate 1 and continues in Intermediate 2. At this stage students must take a minimum of 3 technique classes per week to build the strength necessary to begin pre-pointe work safely and prepare them for demi pointe work around age 11 or 12. Cross-training is also introduced and encouraged for attaining muscular balance. Advancement into demi-pointe or pointe shoes happens after the class has been taken in
ballet slippers for one or two semesters at the discretion of the teacher. The school principal will accompany students to be fit in demi-pointe and pointe shoes.

After age 11, at approximately age 12, a child may enter an accelerated program of dance training, whereas before that age, more harm than good will result from a too rapid progression up through the levels. Moving ahead too fast will ultimately compromise the goal of the craft and may endanger the natural development of the child.

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<td>Beginning Ballet 3: Pre-Pompe/Demi-Pointe Strengtheners and Stretches</td>
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**Upper School – The Developmental Years**

**Intermediate Ballet 1 – 3**

**Ages 12-16**

Ages 12 to 16 are the most important, critical years for the development of the young dance student. At this stage, beginning in Intermediate 1, demi-pointe, pointe and boys or men’s work are added to the daily regimen of technique classes. At Intermediate 1, students are still required to take ballet classes 3 days a week, but are also required to take at least one cross-training class in jazz as well as at least 2 demi-pointe classes per week. Older, serious students in Intermediate 1 are encouraged to take additional classes. Intermediate 1 may require students to study for 2 or more years before moving up. At this level all the preparation and vocabulary needed for pointe, men’s work, big jumps and turns is established. It is important for the student to master this level, so that no gaps in their training or ultimate body alignment occur.

Intermediate 2 and 3 completes the process and continues to strengthen students to prepare for advanced class work. Beginning with Intermediate 1 and progressing through Intermediate 3, the requirements of classes increases incrementally - 4 days per week at Intermediate 2 and 5 days per week at Intermediate 3. Pointe classes increase from 2 classes per week at Intermediate 1, to 3 classes per week at Intermediate 2 & 3.

Variations or partner classes may be offered at Intermediate 3 level. Female students should be 14 or 15 for partnering class; males should be about 16 or attain special approval from the Artistic Director.

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### Advanced - Pre-Professional Trainee Division

**Ages 12+**

Between the ages of 12 and 17 students will enter the Advanced Level of class training. According to Angela Whitehill, at the advanced and pre-professional class levels students should take a minimum of 3 hours per day of classes, 5 to 6 days per week, including technique, pointe, variations, jazz or modern or both.

The Advanced-Pre-Professional Trainee division lays the foundation for a professional career. Serious dance students at this level should aspire to enter into a Trainee Program with a professional company or professional regional company like BTM adding a minimum of 8-12 hours of rehearsal time each week to the class schedule, plus some additional rehearsal time as the performance dates approach.

BTM’s Pre-Trainee Program serves to prepare young students for a professional career either in a professional company as an apprentice or to enter a top university for dance. It also allows students to experience what a professional dancer’s career is like, so they can decide whether or not they wish to pursue it as a career.

Students who complete at least 2-3 years of the Pre-Trainee or Trainee programs and elect not to pursue a degree or professional career in dance will have an edge on receiving acceptance and scholarship monies at prestigious universities like Harvard,
Stanford or Brown, who recognize that students excelling at high school while participating in a stringent quality program like BTM’s Trainee program, are set apart from other equally qualified students with a high GPA.

**Advanced and Recreational Students**

Students who are not selected or do not elect to become a Pre-Trainee or Trainee can still choose to take 3 to 4 hours of classes per day, 5 or 6 days a week to continue pursuing their passion and artistic excellence through high school and beyond. Recreational students from Intermediate 2 and up may elect to take from 1 - 3 teen adult ballet classes per week or may take 3 or 4 days per week in Intermediate 1, or 2 if approved by the Director and School Administrator for pure enjoyment. See recreational division for additional classes.

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<th>Time</th>
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<td>4:30-6:00</td>
<td>Advanced Ballet 1 &amp; Trainee 1&amp;2 Tech</td>
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<tr>
<td>6:00-7:00</td>
<td>Advanced Ballet 1 &amp; Trainee 1&amp;2: Pointe</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:15-6:15</td>
<td>Advanced Ballet1 &amp; Trainee 1&amp;2: Technique &amp; Pointe Variations</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:30-6:30</td>
<td>Advanced &amp; Trainee 1&amp;2 Ballet: Technique &amp; Anatomy</td>
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<td>6:00-8:30</td>
<td>Trainee: Technique &amp; Partnering</td>
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<td>11:00-1:30</td>
<td>Apprentice/Trainee Technique</td>
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<td>9:00-10:30</td>
<td>Advanced Ballet 1 Tech &amp; Int/Adv Adult/Teen Ballet</td>
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*see cross-training division for additional courses*

**Trainee & Apprentice (Pre-professional)**

**Ages 17+**

The Trainee & Apprentice Programs are at the top of any good, comprehensive classical or contemporary program of dance.

Students in these programs are graduates from high school and or solid college dance programs. Students in the Trainee program are transitioning between the school and Company. A portion of their classes are with students in the Advanced and Trainee 1 & 2 levels in the school. The rest of their training takes place during the day with the professional company. Apprentices are like apprentices with any craft. They are in training learning from BTM’s professional dancers and BTM’s Artistic Director on a daily basis. Students in these levels are also eligible for college credit through AACC.
Students come from all over the United States to complete their training with BTM. Each year 10 new apprentices are selected from over 330 applicants.

**Adult Division**  
**Ages 16+ or by permission**  
These classes are designed for the beginning to Intermediate Advanced students, who want to experience ballet as exercise, or who want to continue developing their skills as dancers. Students may sign up for anywhere from 1-4 classes per week. Annex classes maybe paid by the semester or per class. The drop in rate is $20 per 1 hour class, $25 per 1.5 hour class and $30 per 2 hour class. Maryland Hall classes must be paid by the semester. (Students from Intermediate 1 on up may elect to take classes in this division if they want to reduce their class load in the Intermediate 1 – Advanced levels.)

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**Recreational and Cross-Training Division**  
**Ages 7+**  
Students may sign up for these classes as individual classes or with no requirements or may add them as cross-training for the ballet program. Students may also customize these classes with adult or other ballet to prepare them for musical theatre, or maintenance work in jazz or modern. Contact the BTM School Principal to customize your course of classes. There are no pre-requisites for students signing up for beginning classes in these last 2 categories.

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<td>Musical Theatre Tap 4</td>
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**Summer Intensive**

Students in Beginning Ballet 3 and above are required to audition and participate in Ballet Theatre of Maryland’s Summer Intensive. Summer Intensive is a 6-week summer training program for students in Beginning Ballet 2 through Advanced & Pre-professional.

All classes are Monday-Friday, 9-5pm. For students, Beginning Ballet 3 and above, it is essential for the training and development of the young student to attend a six week summer intensive session in order to develop the strength, stamina and athletic skills necessary for them to maintain their level and ultimately progress to an Advanced level status. For every one week that a student takes off, it takes an average of three weeks to return to the level the student was at. It is critical for health and safety in the pre-pointe and pointe years to maintain a continuous flow of training throughout the year. BTM’s summer intensive allows students to develop themselves as both athletes and artists in a comprehensive training program that meets the national standard for good dance training and for excellence. In addition to daily technique, pointe or pre-pointe classes, students also experience other facts of that discipline including: jazz, musical theatre, anatomy, Pilates, modern, character dance, acting for dancers, choreography, rehearsals and performance. In addition, they explore dance history, nutrition, resume writing, literature, music and more. All of these courses help to prepare students for success in college and the work force regardless of whether they decide to pursue a profession as a dance artist.

The Summer Intensive culminates with a performance showcasing the work of the students the first weekend in August. Auditions for the Summer Intensive are held at the Merritt Annex the first 2 Sundays in March. For more information, contact the school office.

**Faculty**

Ballet Theatre of Maryland’s faculty is comprised of instructors currently working as professional dancers and instructors who have previously had a professional career.
They come from many professional dance backgrounds and have performed and taught for such companies as Ballet West, Sacramento Ballet, Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, Connecticut Ballet, and Montgomery Ballet. Many are current Ballet Theatre of Maryland company dancers and have also completed a university degree in dance education. They are dedicated to the success of each student. All school faculty members adhere to the School syllabus, while bringing their unique backgrounds to the studio, giving students a broad dance background designed to meet the eclectic needs of dance companies today.

Performance Opportunities

The Nutcracker and Other Company Productions
The Nutcracker and selected company productions are open by audition to all eligible students age six and above. One of the greatest opportunities afforded students in a good, professional school is the chance to work with top rate professional choreographers who coach and develop the performance technique appropriately in the young dancer and challenge them to be the best they can be. It is also a privilege and gift to be able to dance alongside professional dancers who serve as good role models who also mentor them and help them to strive for excellence. Through performance opportunities, students learn the value of teamwork, commitment, follow through and community service, and are able to become a meaningful part of the creative expression of beauty in service to humanity. As part of BTM’s dedication to the education and development of each child, children participating in company productions are training and are coached to dance, rather than to just walk on as “supers”, which happens in many other professional company productions. Productions like Nutcracker require a long term, intense commitment with longer scenes like Party scene and Fight scene starting rehearsal during the 6 weeks of Summer Intensive. Shorter roles for Nutcracker audition in Fall. Other company productions require 3-4 weekends of rehearsals plus 4-5 days in the theatre during the week of the show.

The Annual School Show
All students in Creative Movement 2 and above are eligible to participate in the annual school performance, the first weekend of June. This commitment is less intense than the commitment to any company production and shows off the accomplishments of students from Creative Movement 2 up through Advanced & Adult classes.

Rehearsals will take place during the last 10-15 minutes of class in Creative Movement 2- Intermediate Ballet 1, tap, jazz, and modern so as not to disrupt the more important aspects of training. The classical piece for Intermediate Ballet 2-Advanced will rehearse on Friday nights from 7-10pm beginning in March and the contemporary
piece for Intermediate Ballet 2-Advanced will rehearse on Saturday afternoons from 1:30-5pm beginning at the end of April. The Adult ballet piece will rehearse on Saturday afternoons from 1:30-3pm beginning in March. All of these rehearsals outside of class time will take place at the Annex and you will be given notice prior to the start date.

Due to the limited rehearsal time, there will be a strict policy regarding absences for students participating in the show. From January 1st through April 30, students will be allowed two previously excused absences which can be requested using dancer release forms which will be provided in January. **After April 30, there will be no absences allowed. Missing class or rehearsal will result in the student being removed from the performance.**

Students are required to fulfill their full class requirement for their level in order to be eligible to participate in the school show. **The school advises parents and students that a decision to participate in the annual school performance is a commitment to faculty and classmates, and should be made only after carefully considering a student’s ability to attend all required classes and rehearsals.** Absences due to mandatory school trips and/or camps must be submitted in writing as far in advance as possible; students may be asked not to participate in the performance, depending on the length and time of absence.

**There is an annual costume fee and production fee for each participating student.**

The annual school performance is a ticketed event. Tickets are purchased through BTM’s box office at Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts by phone at 410-263-5544 or online at www.marylandhall.org.

**Registration**

Students must register on-line at [www.marylandhall.org](http://www.marylandhall.org) for all Maryland Hall classes and must register online through the school’s online Jackrabbit program, in person or over the phone for all other locations. A $10 registration fee is charged to each student at the time of registration. Payment can be made using Visa, MasterCard, American Express, and personal check. There will be no prorating or refunds due to absences.

All students must be registered by the end of the first week of classes for all of their classes for the semester. If a student is not registered for their classes by this time, they will be asked to sit out and watch class until they are fully registered. If there is need for a payment plan, please speak to the School Principal prior to the start of classes for the semester.

**Discounts**

A 5% discount is awarded to any student who takes over 6 hours of class in a week and a 10% discount is given to those who take over 10 hours a week. Maryland Hall does not
recognize BTM’s discount policy; however, with proof of registration from Maryland Hall, the total discount will be taken off at the Merritt Annex location.

**Payment Plans**
Payment plans are available only at the Merritt Annex and only by permission of the School Principal and/or the Director. For all financial aid concerns, please make an appointment to speak to the Director.

**Late Fees**
A $25 late fee will be charged by BTM in the first month of classes for those who did not register and make payment prior to the end of the first week of class at Maryland Hall or the Annex. A 5% fee of the total amount owed will be charged after the first month of late payment. A 5.5% fee of the total tuition owed will be charged after the second month of late payment. A 6% fee will be charged after the third month of late payment. After that, the account will be up for legal review.

**Tuition Waiver**
Maryland Hall does offer tuition waivers each semester. Recipients are selected by Anne Arundel County Public Schools Department of Curriculum and Instruction. Please contact Maryland Hall’s main office or Anne Arundel County Public Schools Guidance Offices for more information and applications.

**Scholarships**
The Ballet Theatre of Maryland has a limited number of scholarships for classes at the Merritt Annex available to students who meet financial based eligibility requirements. Applications can be acquired from the staff at the Merritt Annex

**Withdrawing**
Students who decide not to continue for the second half of the school year must formally withdraw (via written notification) before January 30th.

**Student Tickets**
All new students will receive two tickets to the BTM Company show of their choice at Maryland Hall or Bowie Center for Performing Arts. Any current student who refers two new families to BTM will also be eligible for two tickets to the BTM Company show of their choice. Tickets can be requested through the BTM School Office.

**Policies and Procedures**
BTM has developed Policies and Procedures as a guideline to help students and parents understand what to expect from our school. Questions concerning these Policies and Procedures should be brought to the attention of our staff.
**Attendance**

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes. Students or their families must report all absences to the School prior to class time in order to be excused. **Students who are injured are expected to observe classes and take notes.** Attendance is critical to consistent progress and advancement in the School. Poor attendance (for any reason) may jeopardize a student’s placement, participation in productions, or promotion.

In case of any planned or unplanned absence, parents or guardians must contact the instructor through either BTM office. If the student has been kept home from academic school because of an illness, it is recommended that he/she not attend BTM classes on that day. However, if the student has attended academic school but is not feeling well enough to do physical activity, it is suggested that he/she observe dance class.

If a student knows of a scheduling conflict in which he or she will miss class, the instructor should be notified. If there is a conflict with a rehearsal, a release form must be filled out and signed by the Director and the school administrator. Not all requests for release will be approved. These forms are available at each office.

**In cases of extended absence for any reason, for the physical safety of the student, he/she may be asked to return at a lower level until further assessment can be made.** On average, it takes students three weeks for every one week missed to catch back up to the level they were at when they stopped dancing.

Should a student need to be removed from a class due to illness or another unavoidable emergency, the office should be contacted immediately. If a student must be withdrawn from a class at Maryland Hall, the Maryland Hall main office must be contacted.

**Make-Up Classes**

If a student misses a class for any reason, he/she may take any class in the same level or lower as a make-up class. The student must inform the instructor of the regularly scheduled class and the make-up class and clear it through the school principal. If a class needs to be canceled for any reason, BTM will make other arrangements.

In such cases, for the physical safety of the student, he/she may be asked to return at a lower level until further assessment can be made. Should a student need to be removed from a class due to illness or another unavoidable emergency, the office should be contacted immediately. If a student must be withdrawn from a class at Maryland Hall, the Maryland Hall main office must be contacted.

**Instructor-Student Contact**

The Ballet Theatre of Maryland strives to offer teaching that is individual and “hands-on”. It is appropriate for a member of the faculty to manually and physically position a pupil to expound a point of instruction or to pinpoint an individual flaw in his or her technique. The school neither condones nor tolerates any touching of students by
instructors that is harmful, professionally reckless, or that violates generally accepted
tenets of propriety.

**Arrival**

**Students are to arrive on time and be properly dressed** (see dress code). Parents or
guardians of any student 12 and under must sign him/her in and out for each class in any
location. For the safety of all of our students, we ask that the parent or guardian drop the
student off and pick the student up from outside the classroom rather than at the front
door. If an exception needs to be made, please contact your student’s instructor and the
school administrator. Instructors will take attendance at the beginning of each class. If a
student in Creative Movement through Beginning Ballet levels is more than 10 minutes
late, he/she will be asked to observe the remainder of class. If a student in Intermediate
Ballet or higher is more than 10 minutes late beyond the therapeutic barre, he/she will be
asked to observe and take notes on the remainder of class.

**Behavior**

Students are expected to demonstrate respect towards their instructors, other adults and
other students at all times. Disruptive behavior will lead to disciplinary action including
asking the student to observe the remainder of class. In extreme cases, BTM may
schedule a conference between the student, parent, instructor, school administrator and
the Director and if necessary, the student may be dismissed from the class and/or the
school.

**Electronic Devices**

Students are prohibited from using electronic devices while in the studio during class
time. Including, but not limited to cell phones, music devices, gaming systems, and
video/digital cameras. School faculty reserves the right to confiscate any and all devices
during class, to be returned to the student at the completion of the class.

**Conflict/Resolution**

Students and parents who experience difficulty with other students or with an instructor
should try to resolve the issue with the instructor first. If a resolution cannot be reached,
or if you feel uncomfortable discussing the conflict with the instructor, please contact the
school administrator for assistance or to arrange an appointment with the Director if need
be.

**Inclement Weather**

If Anne Arundel County public schools are closed, BTM will also be closed. If public
schools have a 1/2 hour delay, morning classes will be canceled but evening classes will
take place. If public schools are dismissed early, evening classes will be canceled at the
discretion of Maryland Hall.

**Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

In the event of an emergency, all students and staff will exit via the side stairway closest
to the studio at Maryland Hall and proceed away from the building. They will remain
there until given the clear to return to the building or they are picked up by parents. At
the Annex, exit via the front or rear door, whichever is closest.
In the case of a hurricane or tornado, Maryland Hall staff will direct students and faculty
to the gym area on the first floor. At the Annex, students and staff will go to the back
office that has no windows.

Restroom
Parents are requested to make sure their child uses the restroom prior to class to minimize
interruptions. In levels Beginning Ballet I and below, a parent volunteer will be asked to
escort students to the restroom. If a parent volunteer is not available, the instructor will
take the entire class. BTM requires students in Beginning Ballet II and above to use the
buddy system. Please notify your child’s instructor if he/she has a condition that causes
excessive restroom use.

Lost and Found
All missing items can be dropped off or picked up at either office; however anything
remaining at the end of each month will be donated to charity.

Safety and Security
At the beginning of each semester, students and their parents are asked to complete an
emergency contact sheet. This is kept on record at both offices in case of emergency. For
safety purposes, we ask that students not roam the building in any location. An instructor
or the school administrator must know where each student is at all times.

Dress Code
Ballet:

Girls- Black leotard with BTM logo, pink tights, pink ballet shoes/pointe shoes, no
jewelry with the exception of stud earrings. Hair must be neatly pulled back, away from
the face, into a clean bun or ponytail if hair is too short.

Boys- White t-shirt, black tights and white or black ballet shoes.

Creative Movement through Beginning Ballet students are required to wear the BTM
leotard for all classes and rehearsals.

Students in Intermediate Ballet and above are required to wear the BTM logo leotard
for classes taken at the Maryland Hall location and any rehearsals with the company. The
logo leotard is encouraged for all other classes.

Adult/Teen:
Comfortable ballet attire, ballet shoes.

Jazz:
Girls- Any solid colored leotard, jazz pants or tights, black jazz shoes.
Boys- T-shirt, jazz pants or sweats, black jazz shoes.
Tap:
   Girls- Black leotard, tights or socks, shorts are optional, black tap shoes.
   Boys- T-shirt, pants or shorts, black tap shoes.

Modern:
   Girls- Black leotard, black tights, bare feet.
   Boys- T-shirt, pants or shorts, bare feet.

For BTM leotards, order forms are available at either Maryland Hall or at our Merritt Annex office.

For all other dance supplies, BTM dancers and students often use the following:

Dance Supplies, Etc.
556 Governor Ritchie Hwy.
Severna Park, Md. 21146
www.dancesupply.com
800-90-Dance

Discount Dance Supply
www.discountdance.com

Additional Dress Code Guidelines
No Shirts, legwarmers skirts, etc., may be worn.
Jewelry should be minimal; small earrings at the teacher’s discretion. No facial jewelry.
Shoes should be neatly sewn with like colored thread. Pointe shoes must have ribbons.
Dancewear is to be kept laundered and in good repair. Any holes should be mended with same color thread.
Please mark clothing, shoes, and dance bags with the student’s name and class level.
Dress code must be adhered to in all Company rehearsals.
Do not use fabric softeners when laundering dance attire; it damages studio floors.

Health Issues

Injuries
All student injuries and accidents in and out of ballet class must be reported promptly to the School office. School staff will document the student’s condition and any medical guidelines for activity.

If an injury occurs, please do the following:
   • Notify appropriate faculty and the School office immediately so that proper documentation can be made
• Have your doctor fax a report on you injury to the School office in order to facilitate your recovery
• We must receive written permission from your doctor allowing you to resume classes.
• Any student with an injury requiring limited participation in class or a significant leave of absence from BTM must meet with the School Principal or Director to set up a recovery plan before returning to classes.

Allergies and Pre-Existing Conditions
Please make the instructor aware of any allergies or pre-existing conditions that your child has. Make sure these are also indicated on the emergency contact form.

Weight Loss
The Ballet Theatre of Maryland promotes good nutrition for all our students. Students who need help in this area may consult with the School Principal and/or the Director. Following acceptance, students who experience difficulty in meeting the physical conditioning standards necessary for ballet, or who manifest signs of eating disorders, may be provided with referrals to health care specialists where counseling may help the student to reach his or her goals in achieving and maintaining optimum physical conditioning.

Notices and Messages
It is the responsibility of each student to check the bulletin board before and after each class. Class and rehearsal schedules are subject to change; therefore, students need to check the board daily. Parents should check posted information for younger students. Changes and important notices are emailed through the School’s Jackrabbit software and posted on social media. The student board is above the water fountain at the Merritt Annex and in the BTM office at Maryland Hall.

Photography
A photo release form will be required from each student giving BTM permission to take photos of students in classes and/or performances to use for purposes of promoting Ballet Theatre of Maryland. Students may NOT take any photos/videos on the BTM premises without prior permission from the School staff.

Tickets/Attending Performances
We encourage all students to attend BTM Company performances. The live theatre experience provides an essential and enriching component to the education of our students. Tickets for all BTM performances at Maryland Hall may be purchased in person at BTM’s Box Office at Maryland Hall, by phone at 410-263-5544, or online at marylandhall.org. To purchase tickets for performances at The Modell Lyric or Bowie PAC, please call 410-224-5644. BTM Subscriptions are available for the season beginning in July or August and until the first production is held. A season subscription offers a 35% discount on tickets.

Expectations for Students Attending Performances
BTM students are expected to behave in a responsible, respectful, and disciplined manner when attending the ballet. Be mindful of other patrons seated nearby and remember you are representing BTM. The theatre experience should be enjoyable for all. Disruptive behavior (talking, kicking chairs, excessive fidgeting, chewing gum) will not be tolerated. Conversation/critiquing of performances should be saved for intermission or after the performance. Should surrounding patrons complain of such behaviors from students, disciplinary action may include a warning to cease the disruption, suspension from the theatre and/or loss of any ticket privileges.

**Important Dates**


Fall Company Production Auditions: Second Sunday in September

Winter Company Production Auditions: First Sunday after New Year’s in January

Summer Intensive Auditions: First two Sundays in March

Annual School Show: First weekend in June

*Audition information is posted at [www.balletmaryland.org](http://www.balletmaryland.org) or you may contact the office for exact dates for each audition.

**Parent Resources**

**Yahoo User Group**
Information about auditions, rehearsals, performances, pointe shoe fittings, Friends of the Ballet Theatre of Maryland and other happenings is often posted on our electronic bulletin board. You may subscribe to this at the following address: [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BTMDance/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BTMDance/)
Select “Join This Group” – for security reasons, a moderator may e-mail you to confirm you are a part of our BTM community before approval.

**Friends of Ballet Theatre of Maryland**
The Friends of Ballet Theatre of Maryland (FBTM) is a standing committee created by the Board of Trustees of Ballet Theatre of Maryland. It included parents and community members who support the Ballet Theatre of Maryland (BTM) Company and School by recruiting volunteers and organizing BTM’s various volunteer activities. FBTM organizes fundraisers to support production parties, scholarships and the professional dancers.

In the past, FBTM has sponsored the Sugarplum Parties for the Nutcracker and the Princess Party for many productions. **Through their fundraising efforts they have been able to present the BTM School and Company with donations.**
The FBTM has open meetings monthly, held at Maryland Hall or the Merritt Annex. Social events are held periodically. For more information, contact the School office.

**Renewed BTM Parent Ambassador Program – Coming Soon!**

In an effort to better connect with the parents of Ballet Theatre of Maryland School students, BTM is implementing a parent ambassador program. The purpose of the Ambassador Program is to act as liaisons between the school (Director, teachers, staff, etc) and the parents of the school, as well as identify ways to promote the school and enhance the overall experience of our students.

Ambassadors will welcome parents and families new to the BTM School and be available to answer new parents’ concerns, acting as a general educating body for newcomers. Additionally, it is our hope that the ambassador program will help connect our various locations—Both Annapolis locations and Baltimore— as a cohesive unit.

Ambassadors will also work to help bridge the gap between the BTM School and the BTM Company, working under the auspices of the Friends of BTM organization.

Ambassadors will be provided ‘talking point’ cards and will be trained on information about the school and company to help them answer basic parental questions.

**Donations**

As a non-profit organization, tuition covers less than 70% of the cost of operating Ballet Theatre of Maryland’s School of Classical and Contemporary Dance. Gifts from BTM parents, both past and present, are encouraged and are vital and appreciated to continued operation of the school. Visit balletmaryland.org/supportbtm to view ways to donate or make your gift easily and securely over the internet. To discuss your giving options and benefits, or to make your gift today, please contact the BTM Development Officer at 410-224-5644 or vbecerra@balletmaryland.org.

There is no correlation between parent’s personal gifts to the school and a child’s progress in BTM classes or in the casting of BTM productions.

**Ballet Theatre of Maryland Website** – [www.balletmaryland.org](http://www.balletmaryland.org)
FAQ

1. How do I know when my child is ready to move up?

The entire course of Ballet training beginning with ballet covers a minimum of 9 – 10 years. But from Beginning Ballet 1 – Advanced, there are only 7 levels of training. That is because the training from Beginning Ballet 1-3 takes approximately 5 years on average to complete, if the student is taking classes a minimum of 2-3 days per week. (see Beg Ballet 1-3 for complete information) Students in all levels are evaluated annually at the end of each winter, spring semester. From Beg Ballet 1 through Advanced, all students are evaluated based on two exams: 1. A graded written/oral exam encompassing the material from the syllabus for each level including the French terminology; 2. A class exam in which students demonstrate their mastery of syllabus material evaluated by the instructor and at least one other assigned faculty member. All evaluations are synthesized by the School Admin or the Artistic Director and mailed home for parents to review.

In addition, each student is monitored continuously throughout the year by the faculty, School Admin and Artistic Director who reserve the right to change a student’s level up or down when appropriate. All decisions are made by the Artistic Director, who is also the Director of the School, in conjunction with the School Administrator and in weekly conferences with the faculty.

2. For first-time students, how do I know what level to place my child in?

Students in Creative Movement, Tiny Toes or Tiny Tots may sign up for age appropriate as listed online or in our catalogue at any time. Beginning students with no previous dance experience may sign up for Ballet 1, Tap, Modern, or Adult Beg classes at any age appropriate Beginning 1 classes at any time.

Students with no dance experience who are older than our beg 1 classes may contact the School Administrator to set up an audition placement class or determining placement in the appropriate level class/classes.

Students who are new to BTM but who have had previous dance experience should also contact the School Director to take an audition placement class to determine the appropriate placement level in BTM's school.

3. Why must my child take 3 technique classes per week in order to take pre-pointe, demi-pointe or pointe classes?

At the pre-pointe level of development, students must take a minimum of 3 technique classes per week to build the strength and alignment necessary to begin pre-pointe, or continue demi-pointe or pointe training safely. 3 classes per week follows the “rule of 3” determined by sports & Dance Medicine Specialists required to develop the musculature necessary to minimize soft-tissue displacement, stress fractures and improper alignment in the legs, spine, knees or ankles that can lead to back, knee and other neuromuscular problems when students reach their 30's. If
trained properly with enough strength building repetition, pre, demi and pointe work will be safe and a healthy, beneficial strengthener for your child-correcting neuromuscular and alignment problems rather than displacing or causing them. As the student progresses into higher levels, the requirement increases incrementally to prepare students to develop the strength, control and stamina necessary for them to safely meet the increasing demands of the art form.

4. How do I know when my child should get demi-pointe/pointe shoes?
   After a student has completed at least one to two semesters in demi-pointe or pre-pointe class in ballet slippers, their instructor will determine if they have achieved the necessary strength and proper leg alignment to start to work in demi-pointe shoes. Demi-pointe shoes have a hard toe box and slightly harder shank or bottom of the shoe allow the student to go onto ¾ pointe, but not all the way up onto pointe and continue to strengthen the legs and feet. After working in demi-pointe shoes for one to two years, and continuing to gain strength, control, stamina and proper alignment, the instructor will refer the student to the school director and/or school principal for assessment as to their readiness for pointe shoes. Each student will develop at their own rate and will progress to demi-pointe shoe or pointe shoes when they are ready. The class as a whole will not make these progressions together. When a student is told they are ready for demi-pointe/pointe shoes, they should set up a time to get fitted at Dance Supplies Etc. with the school principal. Students should not go on their own to purchase demi-pointe or pointe shoes.

5. Why does BTM require Jazz and/or Modern as a cross-trainer?
   Cross-training with Jazz and/or Modern is strongly recommended from Intermediate 1 on up. When the young dance student begins to intensify their training in these other forms strengthens and stretches opposite muscular groups which creates more of a balance in the development of the dancer. This helps to minimize risks for potential overuse injuries. It also begins to prepare students for the diversity of styles required in the training of all ballet students.

6. My child is interested in Jazz, Tap or Musical Theatre. Why should he/she take ballet?
   Ballet forms the base technique for musical theatre, jazz and modern dance forms. It is the foundation for each of these forms. Without it, students are limited as to how far they can progress in any of these forms. Students who wish to focus on these forms my contact the school admin or director to have a dance schedule customized to fit the needs of students interested in these forms.

7. My child is never going to dance. Why should he/she have to take all the required classes?
   Students at every level should strive for excellence and to be the best they can be regardless of whether or not they plan to dance. Until their bodies are set at age 17 or 18, it is not possible for a young dance student to be able to maintain the
strength, alignment in the legs or spine, etc., to be able to execute the increasing demands of the Ballet Syllabus safely or properly. As the classes increase, the amount and difficulty of jumps, grande turns and pointe work increases proportionally. Again students could end up with back or knee problems later in life from doing difficult work without doing the training necessary to build up the structure to sustain it. Typically, they can't keep up with students who are doing the full schedule, either, and will end up with alignment problems. Students who want to continue dancing without doing the full commitment can take classes in a lower level, where the requirement is less stringent or can switch into our adult classes at age 12 or 13. Again they arrange an appropriate schedule, contact the school admin.

Class requirements are in place to ensure that your child achieves success on the artistic level as well as the athletic and that he/she can do so while maintaining a healthy body and strength level. Remember, ballet is a difficult, arduous, demanding sport, but can be an asset to the healthy development of a student, physically, mentally and spiritually.

8. Why is Summer Intensive required when my child reaches the Beginning Ballet 3 level?

For students, Beginning Ballet 3 and above, it is essential for the training and development of the young student to attend a six week summer intensive session in order to develop the strength, stamina and athletic skills necessary for them to maintain their level and ultimately progress to an Advanced level status. For every one week that a student takes off, it takes an average of three weeks to return to the level the student was at. It is critical for health and safety in the pre-pointe and pointe years to maintain a continuous flow of training throughout the year. BTM’s summer intensive allows students to develop themselves as both athletes and artists in a comprehensive training program that meets the national standard for good dance training and for excellence. In addition to daily technique, pointe or pre-pointe classes, students also experience other facts of that discipline including: jazz, musical theatre, anatomy, Pilates, modern, character dance, acting for dancers, choreography, rehearsals and performance. In addition, they explore dance history, nutrition, resume writing, literature, music and more. All of these courses help to prepare students for success in college and the work force regardless of whether they decide to pursue a profession as a dance artist.

9. Your school is so serious, why should we commit to your school?

A serious school, and especially one attached to a professional dance company offers the best and most up-to-date training methods fro students at any level or commitment to dance. As expert Angela Whitehill explains: A good school should not be based on convenience or cost.

a. A good school requires fine ballet teachers who have trained or performed professionally for at least 6-10 years with a recognizable, reliable, professional Company.
b. A good school offers multiple, professionally trained instructors who can present students with differing viewpoints.

c. A good school follows a carefully designed syllabus like BTM that takes the best from all the training methods: Vaganova, Cecchetti, Danish, French, RAD and American and combines them with the latest in Kinesiology and anatomical research.

d. A good school provides an increasing variety of classes, the full number of required classes at each level rather than just 2 or 3 a week to ensure the health, safety and proper development of each student.

e. A good school provides students with high quality performance opportunities, where students learn performance technique and artistry directly from a top professional Artistic Director and Choreographer.

f. A good school provides students with the opportunity to rehearse and perform with professional dancers, who can inspire them to follow their passions and strive for excellence in dance, at school and at work.

g. Because ballet is such an arduous discipline to learn, all parents should want only the best to teach their child. And, the best is found in a professional company school like BTM.

8. Who do I contact for any concerns or questions I might have regarding my child’s progress, registration etc.?

   All concerns regarding students should be directed to the School Administrator first who consults daily with the Artistic Director/School Director and faculty. Please call 410.224.5644.

9. Why is the BTM logo leotard required?

   The BTM logo leotard helps create a uniform appearance in the school. It also helps our students stand out from students in other dance school's classes at Maryland Hall.

10. Should my child perform with the Company in selected performances? Why?

   One of the greatest opportunities afforded students in a good professional school is the chance to work with top rate choreographers who coach and develop the performance technique in the young dancer and challenge them to be the best they can be. It is also a privilege and gift to be able to dance alongside professional dancers who serve as good role models who also mentor them. Through performance opportunities, students learn the value of teamwork, commitment, follow through, community service, and are able to become a meaningful part of the creative expression of beauty in service to humanity. As part of BTM’s dedication to the education and development of each child, children participating in company productions are training and coached to dance, rather than just walk on as “super” as happens in many other professional company productions.
Dianna Cuatto,
Artistic Director

I have read and understand Ballet Theatre of Maryland School of Classical and Contemporary Dance’s handbook and agree to abide by its policies and guidelines.

Date:____________________________

Parent’s Signature:____________________________

Parent’s Printed Name:____________________________

Student’s Name:____________________________

Student Signature (Beginning Ballet III and above):____________________________

*Please detach and return to either BTM office at your earliest convenience.

Thank you,
BTM School Administration