



## **INFORMATION**

**Office**

**28 Prykes Drive**

**Chelmsford CM1 1TP**

**Tel: (01245) 287638**

**[www.theweston.dance](http://www.theweston.dance)**

Dear Parent or Student,

Thank you for enquiring about the Weston School of Dance & Performing Arts. We have pleasure in detailing herein the work of the school and we hope that you will find something to interest you.

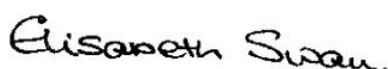
The school aims to cater for everyone. Children are accepted from the age of three years (provided that they are out of nappies), and we provide classes for all ages, including adults. Children can train in ballet, modern theatre dance, tap and, when they are a little older, commercial jazz, contemporary dance and musical theatre. We hold ballet classes for adults, too. The majority of our students want to dance for sheer pleasure, some will want to work towards examinations and others may want to make dancing their career. Whatever their aims we give them every encouragement to achieve them.

Dancing should be fun! Our first priority is that students enjoy themselves, safely and under the eye of experienced teachers. But dancing also provides other benefits: exercise and an improvement in posture and co-ordination; development of confidence and social skills; musical and artistic appreciation; the cultivation of imagination, to mention a just a few.

All of our teachers are either qualified with the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing (ISTD), working towards their teaching qualifications, or are experienced professionals in their field. All are enthusiastic and work hard to ensure that a high standard of teaching is maintained at all levels.

The Weston School of Dance & Performing Arts is an ISTD Approved Dance Centre and, as such, is recognised as one of the foremost dance training establishments in Essex. The amount of interest and enthusiasm generated by our teachers and students means that it will continue to go from strength to strength. We hope you will join us.

Yours sincerely,



GEOFF WHEATLEY AND ELISABETH SWAN

# Why choose the Weston School?

## Our service

The Weston School is a business partnership which aims to provide a friendly and personal atmosphere for students and parents. However, as a client of any well run establishment, you can expect to be afforded a business-like and professional approach. A number of facilities are in place for your convenience.

### Classes

With our many branches we are able to offer a choice of classes at several levels which we hope will make it easier to find something to fit in with already busy schedules. With alternative classes available there is also the facility to make up classes missed during the term.

### To stay or not to stay?

Parents are not encouraged to stay in the studio with their children except when there may be difficulties in the first couple of weeks. However, we do invite family members to watch classes during the final week of each term.

### Newsletter

Published at least once a term this is our way of keeping in touch with you.

### Open Day

This is an opportunity to relax with some light refreshment and talk to the partners and teachers, register for classes, purchase dancewear, and to generally meet us and see what we look like!

### Uniform Sales

As well as being able to purchase dancewear at Open Day, the school's dancewear uniform (not compulsory for pre-school children or adults) is available from our online shop, accessed via our website. It can also be purchased from Danceland at Dalby's in Westcliff-on-Sea, and In-Step, at Blake's End, Braintree - details on uniform guide.

### Peace of Mind

The school carries a comprehensive insurance, protecting students whilst taking part in classes. This does not, however, extend to personal property.

## Office Hours

The school office is open every weekday morning between 10.00 am and 1.00 pm during term time so you can be sure to be able to speak to someone personally between those times. See back page for details.

## Payment

Payment by credit or debit card is accepted for most classes and examinations thus helping you spread the cost to suit your budget. Once your account is established you can also opt to pay by standing order or you can, of course, choose to pay by BACS. We regret that we no longer accept cheques, and would prefer you not to pay with cash.

## Policy Statement

The school has a number of policies in place which have a bearing upon students and their families. These have been crafted for the safety and well-being of all involved. We expect parents and students to support teachers and other staff in achieving these aims. An abbreviated version of each of the Health and Safety Policy, Equal Opportunity and Non-Harassment Policy, Child Protection Policy and Complaints and Appeals procedure will be sent with your first term's invoice. Full versions may be viewed, by arrangement, at the school's office.



### A SHORT HISTORY

*It was in 1939 that Joan Weston, a former dancer with the Paris Opéra, started her dancing school in Little Waltham Memorial Hall, a school which has developed and progressed over eighty years and which regularly sends students for professional training and onto a successful career in international cabaret, television and theatre. Joan trained with Stanislas Idzikowski, a former soloist with the Diaghilev Ballet Company who was himself trained by the Italian danseur, Enrico Cecchetti. It is the Cecchetti method of ballet which is still taught at the **The Weston School** today, alongside tap, modern, jazz, commercial and contemporary dance, and musical theatre. Joan Weston went on to found the Chelmsford Ballet Company but retired from teaching in 1975. The school, which was housed for many years at The Manse in Chelmsford's New London Road, passed into the experienced hands of Wendy Watts who stood at the helm for the next twelve years.*

*The Weston School of Dancing began a new chapter on 1st September 1988 under the direction of Elisabeth Swan and her husband, Geoff Wheatley. Since then it has expanded to take in the Victoria Chappell School of Dancing in Great Dunmow, in March 1989, and four months later the Christina Ballard School of Dance in Ramsden Heath was taken under its wing. In September 2006 the school became **The Weston School of Dance & Performing Arts**, reflecting the wider range of training offered.*

# Your Opportunities

In addition to regular classes, students are given a number of other opportunities to dance, should they wish to do more. NOTHING is compulsory although we do hope that children, with suitable encouragement from their teachers and parents, might like to fully explore all avenues.

## Examinations

These are arranged under the auspices of the ISTD and children (and adults) are invited to enter only when their teacher considers them to be fully prepared - this can be between three and five terms, depending upon attendance, practice and commitment. Children are generally entered in groups and the examiner's aim is to make this an enjoyable experience. However, examinations are entirely optional and a child's progress through the school will not be hindered should he or she decline.

## Prizegiving

The presentation of examination certificates, together with the school's own special trophies and certificates of merit, is made at our annual prizegiving. This is usually held prior to the start of the school year and is always a happy and popular event.

## Choreography Competition

Students are given the opportunity to enter our choreography competition which is usually held prior to the beginning of the autumn term each year. The winners and runners up are then invited to perform their work at prizegiving, the following week.

## School Show

This is a marvellous opportunity for students to dress up, slap on some make-up and put all that hard work into practice! **Everyone** is encouraged to take part, from the youngest three-year-old (who, after all, steals the show) to the most advanced student. Unlike a number of schools we mount a production every two years. This way the syllabus work receives less interruption thus ensuring high standards of technique are maintained and, by taking a whole term to learn the choreography and rehearse the dances, the end result is a polished and professional production of which everyone can be proud. Our last production, 'The Magic Lamp' in July 2023 was highly acclaimed and we are now looking forward to our next in 2025.

## Chelmsford Ballet Company

Ballet students, working at Grade 3 level and above, are able to audition for dancing membership of the city's own ballet company. A number of our students have performed in the Company's annual production and, drawing on this experience, many go on to further training and a professional career in dance.

## Other performing opportunities

The school is occasionally invited to provide students to take part in the productions of visiting professional companies. Those with whom we have danced include *Vienna Festival Ballet* and the *European Ballet Company*. Our dancers have also performed in *Godspell*, *Sweeny Todd*, *The Wizard of Oz* and, for over thirty-five years, the annual Christmas pantomime as part of the professional season at the former Civic Theatre. More recently we have been invited to provide the dancers for the *Jubilee Variety Show* at the Chelmsford Civic Theatre, Bocking End Arts Theatre Pantomime, *Snow White (2012)*, *The Wizard of Oz (2013)* and *Cinderella (2014)*, in Braintree, and Chelmsford City Opera's productions of *The Magic Flute (2013)* and *Opera's Eternal Women (2014)*.

## Cecchetti Associates

The Cecchetti Classical Ballet Associates holds three classes per term at the Rambert School for Dance in Twickenham for talented children, selected from throughout the UK. A number of children are put forward by the school for audition each year, which results in a high success rate.

## Cecchetti Scholarships

These prestigious scholarships for weekly ballet classes in London are offered to talented students, age 11 plus, subject to audition.

## Competitions

When appropriate, students are invited to take part in prestigious competitions such as the **Cecchetti Mable Ryan Awards**, the **Star Tap Awards** and the **Janet Cram Awards** (modern theatre dance).

## Vocational Training

Students who want to make dancing their career are offered the relevant advice and opportunities regarding further training. The school has been fortunate to see former students proceed onto a successful career in international cabaret, television and theatre.

## What to Do Now

Please read through the rest of this information booklet then study the online timetable. Once you have decided on the class or classes for which you wish to enrol complete the enrolment form and return this to the school office. Your enrolment will be acknowledged.

Once a place becomes available you will be sent confirmation. You, or your child, will then be welcome to attend a **free trial lesson** and, provided that you wish to continue, we will send you an invoice for the balance of the term's fees which, for the first term, are afforded a 50% reduction. Please return your remittance to us within three weeks of receipt. If, however, after the trial lesson, you do not wish to continue with classes, you should telephone us immediately and an invoice will not be raised.

## What to Wear

With the exception of "Pay-As-You-Go" and "Ballet with your Bear" classes all students are required to wear the School's uniform, details of which are available on our website and will be sent once your enrolment form has been received. However, we suggest that no purchase is made for the first two weeks. This will ensure that the student is going to settle before investing in such a purchase.

Students attending adult classes may wear any comfortable exercise clothing (no bare midriffs please). Ballet with your Bear class pupils are not expected to wear the uniform but may wear a full skirted dress or skirt and blouse for girls; boys should wear shorts and a tee-shirt.

## Attendance

Dance, especially ballet, is a demanding art form. For this reason we require students and their parents to register for classes and encourage them to commit themselves to a minimum of one term. For ballet we recommend that each student over the age of seven years registers for a minimum of two classes per week but this is not compulsory.

Students are expected to arrive 10 minutes before the start of class. Parents are requested only to drop their children off as many of our halls do not have space for them to wait in reception areas. Any student arriving more than 15 minutes late will not be admitted to class. Students are encouraged not to leave the room once class has begun and time allowance should be made for appropriate rest room use prior to a class.

## **DATES FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR COMMENCING SEPTEMBER 2023**

### **Autumn Term 2023**

Office opens Wednesday 6th September  
Term commences Monday 11th September  
Half term Monday 16th October to  
Saturday 28th October inc  
Autumn term ends Saturday 2nd December

### **Spring Term 2024**

Office opens Wednesday 3rd January  
Term commences Saturday 6th January  
Half term Saturday 17th February to  
Saturday 24th February inc  
Spring term ends Saturday 23rd March

### **Summer Term 2024**

Office opens Wednesday 17th April  
Term commences Saturday 20th April  
Half term Saturday 25th May to  
Saturday 1st June inc  
Summer term ends Monday 8th July

Please note that classes will not be held on Bank Holiday Monday 6th May

# FEES

All fees are **per term** and are inclusive of 20% VAT. To calculate your family's fees, please add the length of the classes together (please refer to the timetable) and then follow the schedule below (for the cost of a mixture of Junior and Senior classes please contact the office):

## FOUNDATION CLASSES

Ballet with Your Bear, Tiny Tappers & Modern Movers	£66.90 (£55.75 + VAT)
Primary Ballet	£89.40 (£74.50 + VAT)

*Reductions for multiple classes*

<b>CORE SUBJECTS - Ballet, Modern &amp; Tap</b> Junior classes <u>only</u> , per term (up to and including Grade 3)			<b>CORE SUBJECTS - Ballet, Modern &amp; Tap</b> Senior classes <u>only</u> , per term (above Grade 3)		
45 minutes	£111.90	(£93.25 + VAT)	45 minutes	£120.00	(£100.00 + VAT)
60 minutes	£134.40	(£112.00 + VAT)	60 minutes	£145.20	(£121.00 + VAT)
75 minutes	£156.90	(£130.75 + VAT)	75 minutes	£170.40	(£142.00 + VAT)
90 minutes	£179.40	(£149.50 + VAT)	90 minutes	£195.60	(£163.00 + VAT)
105 minutes	£201.90	(£168.25 + VAT)	105 minutes	£220.80	(£183.33 + VAT)
120 minutes	£224.40	(£187.00 + VAT)	120 minutes	£246.00	(£205.00 + VAT)

## NON-CORE SUBJECTS (Commercial Jazz, Musical Theatre, Contemporary Dance)

Junior:	One hour per week, per term	£89.40 (£74.50 + VAT)
	Two hours per week, per term	£134.40 (£112 + VAT)
Senior:	One hour per week, per term	£94.80 (£79.00 + VAT)
	Two hours per week, per term	£145.00 (£121.00 + VAT)

<b>ADULT CLASSES</b>	60 minute class - per class	£8.40 (£7.00 + VAT)
<b>(PAY-AS-YOU-GO)</b>	60 minute class - book of 10 tickets	£62.70 (£52.25 + VAT)
	75 minute class - per class	£10.00 (£8.33 + VAT)
	75 minute class - book of 10 tickets	£80.00 (£66.67 + VAT)

## PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Teachers' Qualifying Examinations (i.e. DDE, Licentiate etc)	
Registration fee (includes ISTD £35 registration fee (zero VAT))	£47.00 (£45.00 + VAT)
Hourly rate for teachers' qualifying examinations **	£24.00 (£20.00 + VAT)

\*\* *Part hours charged pro rata*

*Fees correct as at 1st September 2023*

The cost of classes missed through illness or injury will be credited upon receipt of a doctor's certificate. Classes missed for any reason may be made up at an equivalent class within the term. We regret that refunds may not be made.

## **SPECIAL OFFER**

**Your first term's fees  
charged at HALF the above prices!!**

### **FREE TRIAL LESSON**

*Offer excludes Teachers' Qualifying & PAYG classes*

## **TERMS and CONDITIONS**

All transactions are subject to the School's Terms and Conditions which are available upon request. Attendance at class implies acceptance of these.

## **CREDIT / DEBIT CARD PAYMENTS**

The School is happy to accept credit and debit card payments for termly fees, uniform and examinations. Provision is made on invoices for the necessary information to be supplied by card holders. Either complete and return the form to the office, or telephone during office hours to pay over the phone. Please do not leave card information on the school's voicemail.

## **PAYMENT BY BACS**

All invoices carry details of the school's bank account and you are welcome to pay by BACS. Please be sure to include your account number on your payment so that it may be tracked.

## **PAYMENT BY DIRECT DEBIT**

Once an account has been established it is possible to pay the year's fees in nine equal monthly payments via a Direct Debit arrangement. This commences on 1st October each year, with any outstanding balance being settled towards the end of the academic year, in June.

## **Introduce a Friend**

and receive a £10 voucher

We hope you will be happy with the service and training that we have to offer. A referral incentive in the form of a £10 credit is offered to registered students who refer a new student family upon settlement of that family's first term's invoice. Remember to ask them to tell us where the recommendation came from! The more recommendations you make, the greater the discount you can achieve.

# **CECCHETTI ASSOCIATES 2023/24**

Alice Fearn

Isabelle McLatchie

# **CECCHETTI SCHOLARS 2023/24**

Isabelle Baliukeviciene

# **CECCHETTI CLASSICAL BALLET AWARDS**

## **VACANI**

Naomi Esser - runner-up - Junior Award - 2003

Jessica Smart - runner-up - Junior Award - 2004

Jessica Gosling - runner-up - Junior Award - 2005

Jessica Smart - winner - Middle Award - 2005

Naomi Esser - runner-up - Middle Award - 2007

Jessica Golsing - winner - Middle Award - 2008

Naomi Esser - winner - Senior Award - 2008

Jessica Smart - runner-up - Senior Award - 2008

Jessica Bailey - winner - Middle Award - 2012

Maddy Haines - runner-up - Senior Award - 2018

# **CECCHETTI CLASSICAL BALLET AWARDS**

## **MABEL RYAN**

Sarah Holden - winner - Silver Medal - 1992

Amanda Bellamy - winner - Gold Medal - 1993

Belinda Oddy - winner - Bronze Medal - 1998

Belinda Oddy - winner - Silver Medal - 1999

Joe Turner - runner-up - Silver Medal - 2000

Lucy Durno - winner - Silver Medal - 2001

Beinda Oddy - runner-up - Gold Medal - 2002

Lucy Durno - runner-up - Gold Medal - 2002

Samuel Hindmarsh - runner-up - Lower Bronze Medal - 2003

Jessica Gosling - runner-up - Lower Bronze Medal - 2003

Jessica Smart - runner-up - Bronze Medal - 2004

Naomi Esser - runner-up - Bronze Medal - 2005

Jessica Smart - winner - Silver Medal - 2006

Dylan Price - winner Lower - Bronze Medal - 2007

Naomi Esser - runner-up - Silver Medal - 2007

Joanne Quinney - winner - Silver Medal - 2008

Eleanor Austin - runner-up - Silver Medal - 2008

Michael Preston - runner-up - Bronze Medal - 2011

Jasmine Bailey - runner-up - Gold Medal - 2012

Jasmine Bailey - winner - Gold Medal - 2013

Maddy Haines - winner - Gold Medal - 2019

## **ABOUT BALLET**

Ballet, using a strict dance technique which has evolved over the past five centuries, is united with music, decor and costume to create works of dramatic, lyric or pure dance interest. Strictly, the word ballet should relate only to works in the classic style but in recent years, with the increasing combination of classical ballet and freer contemporary techniques, it has come to be used to describe almost any theatrical dance arrangement.

Ballet traces its history from the Renaissance spectacles which combined music, singing, poetry, dancing and decoration - an amalgamation of all of the arts. From Italy it moved to France and found its popularity in the French courts, especially under Louis XIV. Then it entered the professional theatre and the dancing masters of the 18th Century gradually established it as entertainment in its own right. By the early 19th Century Blasis had codified technique and by the Romantic era ballet had arrived in much the form we know. Later, it flowered in Russia and was then revitalized in the West. By the middle of the 20th Century, what had initially been a diversion for the nobility had become popular worldwide.

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The disciplinary training of Classical Ballet provides the student with improved posture and a control of mind and body beneficial to health, physique and artistic appreciation. With regular classes a child will develop his natural co-ordination of movement and musicality and will gain confidence in his own abilities which will be beneficial in everyday life. Students may commence their ballet training from the age of 3 years.

## THE CECCHETTI METHOD

Several syllabi exist for the training of dancers: Royal Academy of Dancing (RAD), Imperial Ballet (ISTD), British Ballet Organisation (BBO) etc. The Weston School teaches the Cecchetti Method, a method of training developed by Enrico Cecchetti in the late 19th Century. Born in Italy in 1850, the son of two dancers, Cecchetti migrated to St. Petersburg where he joined the Imperial Russian Ballet and created the virtuoso role of the Bluebird and the mime role of Carabosse in the première of *The Sleeping Beauty* in 1890. He also taught many Maryinsky dancers including Pavlova, Karsarvina and Nijinsky.

In 1909 he joined Diaghilev's 'Ballet Russe' as a teacher and mime artist. He was recognised as the greatest teacher of his day and his pupils included Alicia Markova, Ninette de Valois, Marie Rambert and Léonide Massine. Cecchetti had trained under Lepri, a pupil of Blasis, whose ideas were developed further by Cecchetti who grouped the classical vocabulary into six sets of exercises, one for each day of the working week.

Cecchetti's work was recorded and published in 1922 by Cyril Beaumont who was instrumental in founding the Cecchetti Society for the preservation and promotion of the Maestro's work. In 1924 the Cecchetti Society became affiliated to the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing.

The continuing importance and value of this method is summed up by one of the Royal Ballet's leading ballerinas, Dame Darcey Bussell, who has said " The Cecchetti work has given me strength, discipline and co-ordination. It wasn't until I got into the Company that I realised how lucky I was to have had that training".

The Cecchetti Society's syllabi of graded examinations for both children and vocational students are based on the principles of Cecchetti's teaching and is continually updated to remain relevant to today's student. This work will ensure that students will receive a sound training.

## **JAZZ DANCE**

Jazz Dance was developed - like Jazz music - by the American Negroes, who took African dance techniques, based on the isolation of individually moving parts of the human body, and adapted them to the needs of their new social surroundings.

The name of Jazz first appeared around 1917. After this, during the 1920's, Jazz was eagerly taken up by the whites and since then has been introduced into the various forms of show business today.

Jazz now makes up the greatest percentage of commercial dance in television and show business, and therefore is vital in the training of the "all round performer". For the student who dances for pleasure, both children and adults alike, it is the best way to stretch and tone muscles, substantially improve co-ordination and improve those dance skills to the best of the latest music.

## **MODERN THEATRE DANCE**

"Modern Dance is not so much a system or technique as an attitude towards dance."  
Jack Andeerson - Dance Critic New York Times

Modern dance styles of today began to develop in the early Twentieth Century as a reflection of Classical Ballet. Finding the technique of ballet very confining, many dancers broke away and began to develop their own styles of dance.

As a result of this we now have many variations on Modern Dance in this country, many complimentary to classical technique and some rather contradictory! However, the most important and successful style in the training and development of children is that of the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing (ISTD).

The Modern Theatre Dance syllabus of the ISTD, including Tap Dance, is aimed at developing a child alongside a good Classical Ballet training. This systemised dance style gives enjoyment and fun to the dance student whilst relieving the child of the technical confines of Ballet. The principles of Modern Dance technique are developed at a young age, making Modern Theatre Dance the perfect compliment to Classical Ballet training. Students may commence training in Modern Theatre and Tap dancing from the age of 4½ years.

## **MUSICAL THEATRE**

Musical Theatre is the coming together of a number of performing skills: singing, acting and dance. Watch any West End musical and there you have it - Musical Theatre. But whether the aim is to appear in *Grease*, or merely to enjoy the company of other like-minded people, Musical Theatre classes will develop confidence and improve self esteem which will help in all walks of life.

The Weston School's Musical Theatre classes are drama based. Students learn to work together, building characters and utilising expressions and mime; they learn stage craft and to use props; to act to music and to move, if not dance; they sing together, and on their own. They grow . . .

Students are accepted for Musical Theatre training from the age of 6 years.

## **COMMERCIAL DANCE**

Commercial dance encompasses a myriad of styles. This can include Street, Jazz, Hip-Hop and Contemporary. It is the type of dance seen in music videos, on the catwalk and at fashion shows, artist tours, advertising campaigns, corporate events, TV and film etc. It is a great way of keeping fit and boosting self confidence whilst having fun!

## BIOGRAPHIES



**ELISABETH SWAN, FISTD, Enrico Cecchetti Diploma, CICB**  
*Principal and Partner*

Elisabeth has been with the school, as student and teacher, for over sixty years, training for two years at the Royal Ballet School with whom she appeared in Rudolf Nureyev's "The Nutcracker". In addition to her commitments with the school, she was Artistic Director of the Chelmsford Ballet Company from 1981 to 1999, and was choreographer of the local professional pantomime from the late 1970's until 2006. She has danced extensively throughout the UK and has appeared on film and television with the Chelmsford Dancers under their director, Elizabeth Twistington-Higgins.

Elisabeth is much sought after as a guest teacher, lecturer and adjudicator, and was, for many years, organiser of the annual Cecchetti International Teachers' Summer School held in Chichester. She was appointed an examiner for the ISTD in 1995 and examines children's work, Vocational Graded and teachers' qualifying candidates throughout the UK, Europe and the Far East. Also, in 1995, she was awarded the Margaret Marsh Scholarship to attend the annual summer seminar of the Cecchetti Council of America in Michigan.

She is a Charity Trustee of the ISTD and the Imperial Benevolent Fund, and the Cecchetti Society Trust of which she is also the Chair. For nine years she held the position of Chair of the Cecchetti Society Classical Ballet Faculty committee of the ISTD during which time she was the UK delegate for Cecchetti International Classical Ballet (CIBB) and co-organiser of the prestigious Cecchetti Classical Ballet Awards. In 2011 she was the recipient of the Imperial Theatre Award for her devoted and valued contribution to the ISTD and, in 2014, was awarded the Enrico Cecchetti Gold Medal, the highest accolade presented by the Cecchetti Society.

**RUTH BOWEN-DAVIES, BA Hons, LISTD, CICB**

*Deputy Principal (Modern Theatre, Tap, Jazz & Ballet)*

Ruth trained with **The Weston** and was an assistant teacher for three years. She danced in pantomime at the Chelmsford Civic Theatre for many years and holds major examinations in Cecchetti Ballet, Modern Theatre, Tap and National Dancing. In 1999 Ruth gained her Associate teaching qualification in both Cecchetti Classical Ballet and Modern Theatre Dance. In September of that year she started a 3-year Dance Degree course at Middlesex University, where she gained her Associate teaching qualification in National Dancing, and a BA(Hons) degree in Dance. Now a highly experienced teacher she holds Licentiate



status in Cecchetti Classical Ballet, Modern Theatre Dance and Tap. She is instrumental in the coaching of the DDE teaching qualification.



**LUCY BEETON** (*Ballet, Commercial Jazz & Musical Theatre*)

After coming to dance at a later age, Lucy achieved her Grade 7 examinations with BBOdance before starting her teaching qualifications. She achieved a distinction with her Level 6 Diploma in Dance Teaching, from the same organisation, in 2019.

Since then, Lucy has taught in a variety of primary schools and dance schools across the country, before spending two years at Bodywork in Cambridge completing her Level 6 Diploma in Musical Theatre; to broaden and strengthen her skills, graduating this year in 2022. During her time at college Lucy performed in a variety of dance, acting, and singing pieces during shows; including a performance in 2022 at the Junction in Cambridge.

Lucy loves to pass on her knowledge to all the students she teaches. As a dance teacher, she feels that it is important for her students to feel motivated, comfortable, and confident, which can be accomplished by creating a supportive atmosphere which builds self-esteem. Her favourite teaching mantra is: 'Practice makes progression! Not perfection.'

**JOANNE LIBBY**

(*Ballet, Modern Theatre, Tap & Commercial Jazz*)

Joanne holds major examinations in Ballet, Modern Theatre and Tap, having trained for three years at the Arts Educational School in Musical Theatre skills. She has worked professionally in various productions and singing projects, including three years with the show, *AbbaMania*, touring all over Europe. Career highlights have included performing with Tom Jones and Meatloaf, and a live television performance filmed inside the Moulin Rouge in Paris. Joanne spent 3 years living in Spain where she performed as lead singer and dancer in a resident Cabaret show and where she also co-produced, choreographed and performed in a fully live Abba show which toured theatres around Spain.



Joanne still works professionally, singing with a local function band, alongside teaching dance and Pilates and is now looking forward to a new venture, bringing her love for teaching dance and performing arts into Primary Schools.

Joanne holds her DDI teaching qualification in both Modern Theatre and Tap.



**GILLIAN MERRY, FISTD**

*(DDE Contextual Studies)*

Gillian is a Modern and Tap examiner for the ISTD. Originally trained at London College of Dance and Drama, Gill has been teaching for over 25 years, including 15 years teaching and choreographing in Trinidad, where she also managed a large school and dance company. In addition to examining, Gill teaches full-time students at Momentum Performing Arts Academy and part-time student teachers at the Dance Teacher Training Centre in Derbyshire. She specialises in vocational exam preparation and teacher training for DDE, Associate and Licentiate exams, as well as tutoring the written units of the DDE.

**KATIE O'DONNELL**

*(Ballet & Contemporary Dance)*

Katie has had a passion for dance from a very early age, beginning at the age of 3 with Cecchetti Ballet at **The Weston**. Over the years Katie has developed as a dancer, and has attained her Advanced 1 in both Cecchetti Classical Ballet and Modern Theatre Dance. She embraces all styles of dance and has achieved a Level 3 Extended Diploma in Dance from Colchester Institute. Currently studying for the DDE teaching qualification in Cecchetti, Katie is also involved with providing choreography and support for a local junior drama group.



**LAUREN TAYLOR-BAKER, DDTAL, DDE**

*(Ballet)*

Lauren has been dedicated to the Arts from a very young age, starting her training at **The Weston** before undertaking vocational training and achieving a Level 6 Diploma in Dance Teaching and Learning for children and young people through Trinity College London. Lauren has gained her qualified teaching status with the ISTD with a diploma in Classical Ballet Education.

Her professional performing career spans almost ten years, working alongside a number of established entertainment companies as a vocalist/performer and has made a number of television appearances. She was also invited to sing alongside Glaswegian 60's legend, Lulu, as her backing vocalist. As well as performing, Lauren has a passion for teaching and passing on her knowledge and love for the Arts to the next generation.



**GEOFF WHEATLEY, *Partner & Business Manager***

Geoff is a Production Manager of over 40 years experience, providing Production Management, Stage & Workshop staff, and support services through his company, TheatreServe. Geoff's experience includes national and international tours, summer seasons, West End, trade shows and exhibitions. Geoff's most memorable projects include a highly successful production of *Sweeney Todd* in the open-air theatre at London's Holland Park, as well as the highly acclaimed *Les Misérables* concert which formed part of the Chelmsford Spectacular.

Currently, Geoff's time is taken up with the provision of video work and DVD production for various clients, as well as IT support and web-development for the School. Needless to say, he comes into his own with the production of the School's biennial show at the Chelmsford Civic Theatre. *Mr Geoff* can also be found at the end of term, operating sound for the Modern, Tap and Jazz exams.

**SHARON ORME, *Administrative Support***

Educated in London, and a former IT Administrator in private banking, Sharon has been involved in the world of dance for many years and now provides secretarial and administrative support, taking an active role in the day-to-day running of the School. Both her daughters enjoyed many years with the School and her youngest, Claire, performed for many years as a professional dancer. Sharon was the Honorary Secretary for The Chelmsford Ballet Company before becoming the ISTD's Faculty Co-ordinator for the Cecchetti Classical Ballet Faculty of the ISTD in 2010 from which she retired in 2020.



**MIKE SILK, GRSM (Hons), ARCM**

*(Accompanist)*

After spending his formative years at the Redbridge Music School, Mike moved on to the Royal College of Music where he studied piano and double bass. A twenty-five-year teaching career saw him leading music departments in mid and south Essex but after taking early retirement from the classroom Mike now concentrates on performing, arranging and composing.

As well as playing for senior and adult groups at the Weston School of Dance, Mike also regularly accompanies classes at Performers College and New Hall School and will visit numerous other sites across Essex when the time comes round for examinations. Although his first love is now

playing for ballet, Mike also works for a number of choirs including New City Voices, men2sing and the Moulsham Singers.

When not at the piano, Mike enjoys arranging and composing original music for local groups. He was the winner of two composing competitions in the London Borough of Havering and was a national finalist in the 2015 BBC Radio 3 Christmas Carol Competition with his setting of Roger McGough's specially commissioned poem, 'Comes the Light.'

<p>School Office</p> <p>28 Prykes Drive CHELMSFORD CM1 1TP</p> <p>Tel: (01245) 287638 Email: office@ theweston.dance</p>	<p>Office Hours</p> <p>10.00 am to 1.00 pm</p> <p>Every weekday morning during term time</p> <p><b>Personal callers by appointment only.</b></p>	<p>Voicemail</p> <p>When leaving messages on the School's voicemail, please state clearly your name and telephone number, together with a brief description of your enquiry</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>INSURANCE</b></p> <p>All students are insured whilst taking part in classes organised by the School. This does not extend to property, therefore the School can accept no responsibility for personal property and recommend that valuables are not brought to class.</p>		