



Dancing— is like dreaming with your feet!

-Constanze

Dance is a wonderful activity for kids, capable of fostering a positive self image in both girls and boys. Dance lessons can teach a child self confidence, self - discipline, poise and grace. Today's Family is happy to feature select area dance studios on pages 8-13. With so many benefits, why not call today and enroll your child (or yourself) in dance?!

Dancing faces you towards
Heaven, whichever
direction you turn.
-Terri Guillemets



Benefits of dance:

- Builds strength and stamina
 - Builds character
 - Burns calories
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Jennifer Kups, Owner



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Studio J Academy of Dance, a pointe of good technique

By Carrie Bishop

Studio J Academy of Dance makes it a “pointe”, so to speak, to teach proper ballet technique to area dance enthusiasts. In fact, the studio considers ballet the foundation for all forms of dance.

The Beachwood-based studio teaches classical ballet, pointe, jazz, lyrical, hip hop and contemporary dance for students ages 18 months to adult.

Its early childhood program gives young dancers, ages 18 months to 9, an understanding of proper technique and an appreciation for the art of dance in an enjoyable, relaxed atmosphere. Beginning at age 9, however, students can be recommended into the studio’s professional program, in which dancers are encouraged to develop their imaginations, minds and bodies.

Jennifer Kups, artistic director and instructor at Studio J, says she likes to see kids combine technique with choreography and then make the dance their own. “Instead of looking at 10

girls on stage looking like robots,” she says, “they make the movement their own, adding their own personality into it and developing the dance into a greater piece from the audience’s eye.”

Of note Studio J teaches the Cecchetti ballet method and creates opportunities for students to get examined by Cecchetti professionals from across the country. Kups describes the accredited examinations as both physical and vocal as dancers must verbally explain how the ballet is done and then perform it. The dancers aim to pass a sequence of grade levels and receive a certificate, which many have used in their college applications.

Studio J dancers also participate in four competitions per year, attend two conventions annually and perform an end-of-year recital each June.

While Kups believes the majority of her students consider dance their passion, not all are part of the professional program. For these and brand new students, Studio J offers open classes that are less intense.

Visit www.studiojdance.com.



En Pointe Danse nurtures love of the art

By Carrie Bishop

En Pointe Danse is a decidedly intimate dance studio. With only two instructors and a fairly small studio space, it can feel like family for the students.

Now celebrating its thirteenth year, the Chagrin Falls based studio offers ballet, pointe, modern dance, creative movement, and tap classes for students ages 3 and up (including adults). Classes have at most twelve students to allow for personal interaction.

Owner Gail Friedberg says, "I want my students to enjoy themselves. At the same time we stress excellent technique while fostering discipline, self-control, respect, and critical thinking in our dancers."

Each spring dancers ages 6 and above perform a full-length ballet, created or adapted by Miss Gail. Meanwhile the younger children, ages 3 to 5, participate in a separate informal showing. In that way all gain the experience of performing on stage.

Miss Gail's parents met while performing in the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus. Prior to that Gail's mother had danced professionally as a member of the Rockettes.

Miss Gail herself has been dancing and teaching dance for as long as she can recall. She performed in a number of professional modern dance companies over her sixteen year career. She is committed to passing on her love of dance to her students.

"We love dance, and relish the opportunity it gives students to broaden their horizons. We want them to experience the joy of dancing while developing a good foundation, excellent technique, and a sense of discipline."

Visit www.enpointedanse.com.



Joy through dance at Cleveland City Dance

Cleveland City Dance wants students to love dancing and enjoy its many benefits. "The mission of the studio is to let each person experience the joy of dancing and provide opportunities to people based on what they want," says Courtney Laves-Mearini, artistic and executive director for the long-time dance studio. As such Cleveland City Dance welcomes all dancers - recreational, professional or anywhere in between. Conveniently located in Shaker Square, Cleveland City Dance has been developing an appreciation and love for the art of dance in its students since 1965.

Classes, which range from beginning to advanced, are offered seven days a week and include ballet, jazz, tap, modern, hip-hop, lyrical, musical theater, and Pilates. The studio accepts students age 2 1/2 through adult and class sizes are limited in order to help all students reach their full potential. The nonprofit Cleveland City Dance Company is in-residence at the school, providing additional performing opportunities through an audition process. Though its class listing is

comprehensive, Laves-Mearini says ballet is the thrust of the program.

In fact, the majority of classes include a ballet component. "Ballet is the basis for almost all dance forms," she says. Perhaps that's obvious for styles like jazz and lyrical, but it even rings true for less obvious specialties like tap. In tap, Laves-Mearini says ballet experience helps the dancer make his or her upper bodies come to life in how one uses their arms and spine. Beyond its undeniable value throughout dance genres, ballet is also good for the body and mind by improving gross motor skills, focus, posture, strength and even math and language skills. In the end, however, Cleveland City Dance is perhaps most interested in motivating its students to reach their personal full potential. "We want everyone who comes here to experience the joy of dance and recognize they all do have certain abilities in movement they can use. You may be a person with two left feet, but you can still learn to dance if you have the desire and the drive," says Laves-Mearini.

Visit www.clevelandcitydance.com.

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Professional ballet returning to Cleveland

Cleveland School of Dance to re-establish the Cleveland Ballet

By Kim McCloskey

The Cleveland Museum of Art, The Cleveland Orchestra, and Playhouse Square are just a few of the organizations that have brought art and culture to life in Cleveland for decades. Now, the renewal of a professional classical ballet company will be added to the list.

The Cleveland School of Dance, located in Cleveland Heights, is announcing the re-establishment of a world-class, professional ballet company and school – the Cleveland Ballet and the Cleveland Ballet – Cleveland School of Dance.

According to Gino Zavarella, Chairman of the Board, The Cleveland Ballet will be the professional performing arts group, with the Cleveland School of Dance becoming the official training organization for the professional company.

“There is a symbiotic relationship between a dance school and a dance company,” says Zavarella. “When you have this relationship, you can train the dancers in a way that is compatible and workable with the needs of that particular professional company.”

According to Zavarella and Gladisa Guadalupe, Artistic Director and Board Member, this relationship is what sets the Cleveland Ballet – Cleveland School of Dance apart from other area dance schools.

“There are many that can teach a class, but few that can train a body,” says Guadalupe. “We have a responsibility to provide our students with quality classical training and prepare them to meet the needs of a professional company.”

According to Zavarella, the Cleveland School of Dance will have a community and a professional division. The community division will introduce ballet fundamentals, including motor skills, ballet vocabulary, creative movement and musical concepts to the young child. The professional division will offer comprehensive ballet and dance training for the multi-talented students ready for participa-

tion in a professional ballet company.

“The community division is open to anyone who loves and is interested in the arts,” says Guadalupe. “The majority of our community division girls do move up into the professional division. It’s good to see them progress. When they come in, it’s just something fun and entertaining but when they go to auditions, they cannot believe what they can do. It’s really something.”



For those that did not start in the school’s community division, but want to pursue ballet at the professional level, auditions are taken.

“We are focused on teaching a comprehensive curriculum that creates a professional dancer, versus just teaching a technique,” says Zavarella.

This is possible, he explains, because of the quality of the faculty and variety of instruction offered. All the school’s faculty has been trained in classical ballet technique, many were dancers in or associated with the Cleveland Ballet and, according to Guadalupe, know what it’s like on stage.

“Dancers are not made, they are born,” says Guadalupe. “We cannot take ownership of their talent. What we can do is give our students the labor of love and the labor of technique on a daily basis.”

Students at the Cleveland School of Dance receive instruction on ballet technique, pointe, variations, contemporary dance, Spanish dance, caractere, music theory, body alignment and

conditioning, as well as modern dance and jazz.

The school also offers additional courses in nutrition, preventative injury, drama, dance and ballet history and yoga to round out the curriculum and offer the widest range of training possible.

“Our teachers deliver a comprehensive integration of all of the various techniques and also work to preserve the safety and integrity of the dancer’s body,” says Zavarella.

The training facility will remain at the current site of the Cleveland School of Dance in Cleveland Heights, however performances will take place at Playhouse Square or alongside the Cleveland Orchestra at Severance Hall in downtown Cleveland. The official professional season for the Cleveland Ballet will begin in October. Zavarella would not disclose the title of the first ballet performance, but did hint that “every little girl wants to be her.”

“Being a professional dancer is truly a journey, it’s a way of life,” says Zavarella. “If dance is truly important to you and you want to immerse yourself in the art, culture, and technique of artistic ballet; the finest training, the finest curriculum, the finest syllabus and the finest faculty between New York and Chicago is at the Cleveland Ballet – Cleveland School of Dance.”

You can get more information on the Cleveland Ballet – Cleveland School of Dance at www.cleveland-school-of-dance.org or by calling 216.320.9000.

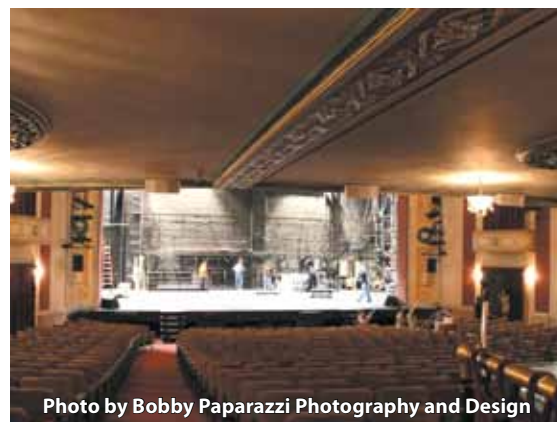


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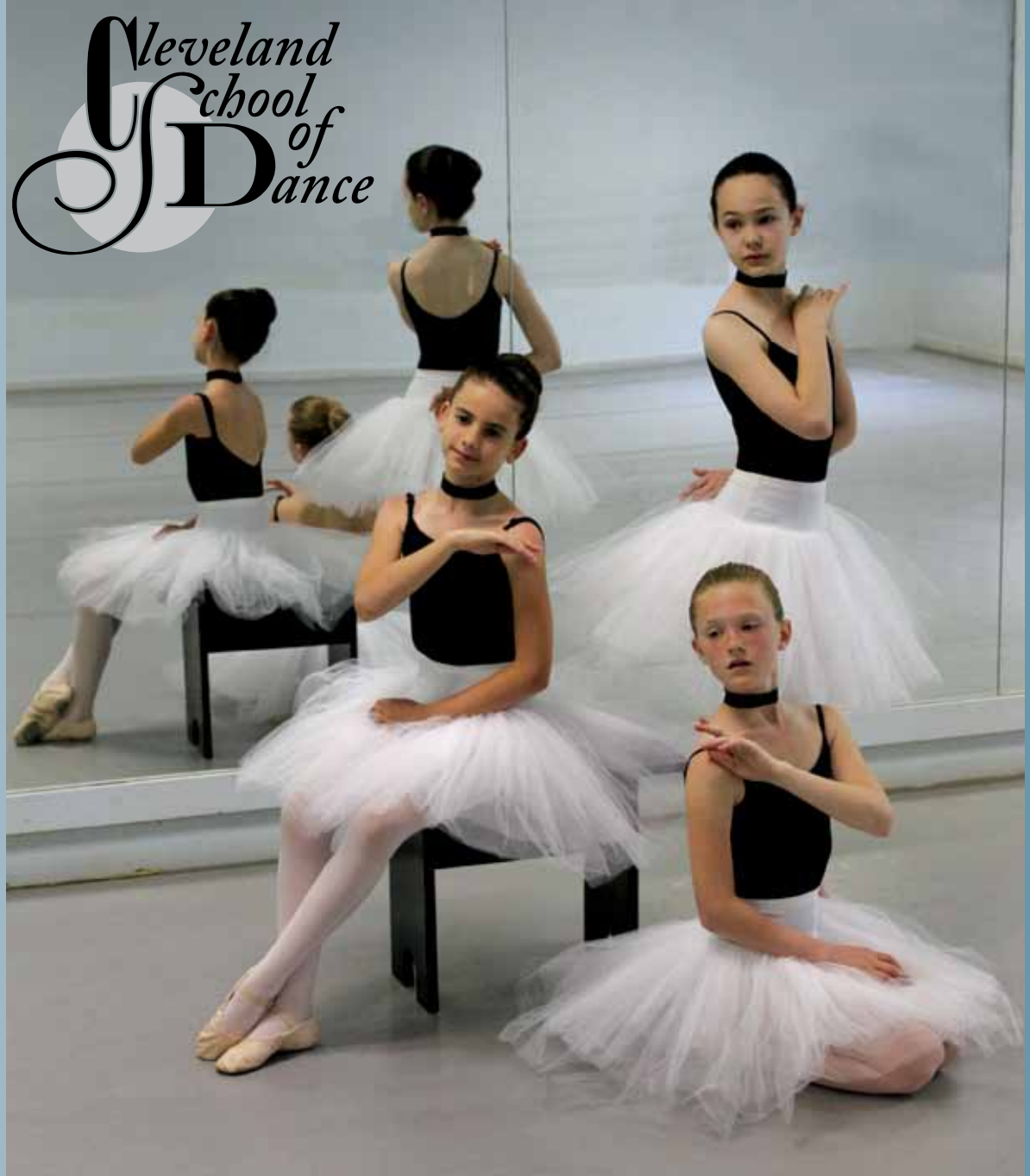
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Classes begin September 6th

The curriculum includes: ballet technique, pointe, variations, contemporary dance, Spanish dance, caractere, music theory, body alignment and conditioning as well as modern dance and jazz. Additional courses offered in nutrition, preventive injury, drama, dance, ballet history and yoga also compliment the Cleveland School of Dance curriculum. As the student progresses, the curriculum further develops into more complex dance combination concepts appropriate to each level of skill. For those interested in the art or desiring a career in professional ballet, Cleveland School of Dance offers quality training and excellent exposure to classical ballet and its related arts.

Cleveland School of Dance Graduates have been placed in local, national and international ballet and dance companies or have pursued collegiate arts study.

In all instances students enjoy the rewards of dedication, desire and discipline as they become successful young adults.



Dancing With Heart

Shaker Dance Academy offers fun, fitness and family values

By Kim McCloskey

Its dance instructors are in-house resident teachers in the Shaker Elementary Schools. Its dancers have performed in Harlem for audiences of more than 300 people and support hospitals and schools throughout the Cleveland area. Its founders have worked in television, on stage and in film with Whitney Houston, Bill Cosby, Aretha Franklin, Diana Ross and Debbie Allen, to name a few.

Of all the many unique things about Shaker Dance Academy (SDA), the biggest may be its focus on relationships and family.

“Our love of children, our value of family and community and our passion for dance allows us to give our students all of our knowledge as performers,” says Tracey Webb. Webb and husband Jonathan founded the SDA, located in Beachwood, in 2001 to bring their love of dance to ages two through adults.

Before committing themselves to

teaching, both had careers in TV, stage and film, a background Tracey feels is a benefit for students.

“Our professional experience in show business gives us the edge our students need to believe they can achieve what we have done, no matter what career they choose,” says Webb. “Shaker Dance Academy is designed to provide fun and fitness to the youth as we teach the tools of living a healthy lifestyle.”

One way SDA accomplishes this goal is through its instructors. Dancers that have gone through the program have received college scholarships in dance and some are performing as professional artists around the world.

“SDA dancers come back from college and teach the younger generation of dancers,” says Webb. “It’s a joy to

watch alumni pass on their gifts and life lessons to others who watched and admired them.”

The instructors at SDA incorporate instruction in ballet, hip hop, jazz, and tap, with professional training in voice, acting musical theater and dance. The structure and curriculum used help to build important skills. These skills, says Webb, include positive thinking, teamwork, leadership, self-expression, self-discipline, and independence.

“Dance training teaches youth how to find their individuality,” says Webb. “Students learn how to take direction and apply it immediately. It is challenging and helps teach the importance of commitment and dedication.”

But the skills don’t just apply to youth. The Webbs are carrying on

their value for families through husband and wife classes called “Dad and Mom Hip Hop”, a way for parents to get out and do something healthy together.

“We encourage parents to enjoy dance as well,” says Webb. “All adults can attend classes that inspire fitness and wellness for healthy living. Imagine couples taking time to enjoy each other. Dance is a great way to reconnect. This could be a great date night.”

No matter what classes are being taught or what age level is attending, Shaker Dance Academy strives first and foremost to encourage individualism and confidence with love.

“Shaker Dance Academy belongs to the youth,” says Webb. “We try to provide them with everything we can to help them achieve their life goals. Providing youth with positive energy, love and guidance is our goal.”

Those interested can get more information on Shaker Dance Academy at www.shakerdanceacademy.net or by calling 216.591.2300.



SHAKER Dance Academy

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“Wigglewords” DVD provides kids with fun word game workout

Verb Ballets promotes literacy through movement

By Carrie Bishop

Verb Ballets, Cleveland’s national repertory dance company, is leading kids toward literacy in an unexpected way: through movement.

This year the dance company launched “Wigglewords: The Super Fun Word-Game Workout,” a DVD that teaches kids to bend and stretch their bodies to look like letters of the alphabet. The goal is to have fun while learning letters, spelling, phonic rules, identification of vowels and consonants, rhyming, and storytelling.

“It is a fun and easy way to exercise and learn at the same time,” says Katie Gnagy, education director and dancer for Verb Ballets.

She says the DVD taps into both brain memorization and body memorization. What’s body memorization? In short, it’s just another way to learn. Just as songs can help kids remember the alphabet, so can movement.

The 45-minute long DVD features an original score, games that bring fun to vowels and rhymes, a rap that has kids freezing in the shape of a letter, and more. Gnagy says the program is best for kids kindergarten to third grade, though all ages can have fun with it.

Wigglewords is more than this DVD. In fact, it

is a full program that Verb Ballets takes into area schools, clubs and community centers. They can tailor the program to meet groups’ various needs. For instance, they can do a two-day program consisting of one 45-minute session per day or create a 10-day program, again consisting of one 45-minute session per day.



Children playing the Same Name Game

Through this in-person outreach, Gnagy has seen the great successes Wigglewords can bring to children. “Kids who don’t normally show success in the classroom will blossom in literacy [through this program],” she says. Teachers have also commented to her that Wigglewords allows them to see a side of a student they don’t normally see which ultimately

helps them better teach the child.

Verb Ballets has also seen a positive response from kids with special needs who benefit from using their bodies to feel the letters versus simply seeing them.

The unique concept was developed by former Cleveland ballet member Pamela Pribisco. As the story goes, Pribisco, who currently lives in New York, taught dance for children who spoke English as their second language and needed a way to better communicate with her students.

“She literally invented this system of teaching the alphabet for children who could not speak English,” says Margaret Carlson, director of Verb Ballets. Her method seemed to work. After taking it into a few New York City public schools, she realized it was equally successful for kids who spoke English as their primary language. She then brought the concept to Verb Ballets to set the wheels in motion for a DVD.

Thanks to Pribisco, Verb Ballets, a generous grant from the Cleveland Foundation, and a few others along the way, the “Wigglewords” DVD is now reality.

You can order the video online at www.verbballets.org or call Verb Ballets directly. The DVD’s introductory price is \$19.95 plus shipping and handling.

The Super Fun Word-Games Workout!

Wigglewords

Full of FUN and ENERGY, the Wigglewords program uses movement to teach literacy skills to children of all ages.

Led by professional dancers from Verb Ballets, students bend and stretch their bodies to form the letters of the alphabet while improving knowledge in spelling, phonics rules, identification of vowels and consonants, rhyming, and storytelling. Wigglewords keeps children active and energized with a variety of word and movement games.

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