

THE
SCHOOL OF
TORONTO
DANCE
THEATRE



Patricia Fraser
Artistic Director

EDUCATOR'S NOTES

*The School of Toronto Dance Theatre
Outreach Program*

Let our students inspire yours!

Message from the Artistic Director

Dear Dance Educator,

Each year, The School of Toronto Dance Theatre's Outreach Programs encourage hundreds of students to experience and explore the physicality and excitement of contemporary dance.

We are delighted to invite you to participate in our Master Class & Matinée program for your students, the perfect complement to your arts curriculum. Our hope is that this unique experience will encourage your students to be curious, intrigued, and inspired by our dancers. We have put together this booklet to give you some helpful information and guidance as you prepare your students for our program. It provides background information on the School, how to prepare for your visit, how to book with us, and suggested activities to follow up on your visit.

We welcome your feedback and hope you enjoy your time with us.



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Artistic Director

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ABOUT THE SCHOOL OF TORONTO DANCE THEATRE

The School of Toronto Dance Theatre was established in 1968 by the founders of Toronto Dance Theatre: Patricia Beatty, David Earle, and Peter Randazzo. It comprises four divisions: our full-time, three-year post-secondary Professional Training Program (PTP) providing training to students intent on a career in contemporary dance; our Summer Intensive, an intensive program for serious students and young professionals; our Adult Recreational Classes, a program of contemporary dance classes for adult recreational dancers; and our Young Dancers' Program, for youth from ages 3 to 17. The School has served as the foundation and inspiration for generations of dancers. We continue to draw from inspirational aspects of our legacy while looking to new directions in dance to develop artistic vision.

The School is passionately committed to training and education in the art of contemporary dance.

Based in downtown Toronto, the School has been a leader in training contemporary dance artists for over 50 years. Through our professional programs we dedicate ourselves to investing in the artistic potential of youth for the development of the art form.

Through our recreational programs we dedicate ourselves to investing in the movement potential and creativity of people within our community.

Specifically:

- The School provides excellent training and education in creative movement and contemporary dance to people of all ages.
- The School serves as an advocate for dance and for education in the arts within the dance community and to the public-at-large.

CURRICULUM LINKS

A visit to the School is a great complement to classroom learning, and supports the underlying ideas of the Ministry of Education's arts curriculum:

- Developing creativity
- Communicating
- Understanding culture
- Making connections

By attending a **matinée show**, your students will learn about the complete creative process. Each work is introduced by our Artistic Director, the choreographer, or artistic staff, who explains the sources of inspiration, and the creative process for taking the work from a concept to the stage. Additionally, students are applying their knowledge of dance as audience members, a curriculum requirement. They will have the chance to analyse, review, and critique a performance, to learn about Canadian dance history through the performances of the works of renowned Canadian choreographers, and to see the results of a creative process.

Participation in a **master class** will allow your students to explore the fundamental concepts of body, space, time, and energy with a dance professional, expanding their movement vocabulary. Our teachers are highly acclaimed within the dance community.

We invite you to contact us for more information on how we can support your classroom learning.



MASTER CLASS & MATINÉES

Sign up for our Masterclass & Matinée program and let our students inspire yours...

MASTER CLASSES

On-site classes taught by our highly regarded faculty, with live music by our talented accompanists, are tailored to meet the individual needs of your school group. These classes usually take place before a matinée and last for one hour, providing a fulfilling, whole-day learning experience for your students.

STUDENT MATINEES

Featuring dancers from our Professional Training Program in new works and classic repertory, all performances are held in our on-site theatre, located in the heart of historic Cabbagetown.

During the matinée, your students will experience:

- Performances of classic and/or new works by renowned choreographers (approximately 1 hour)
- Introductions to each work by the Artistic Director, the choreographer, or artistic staff.
- Q & A session immediately following the performance, where students are introduced to the dancers, and encouraged to find out more about contemporary dance (approximately 30 minutes).



It was by far the best field trip experience I have ever had with a dance class. The workshop itself was done by a brilliant instructor who really gave the girls a true modern class that was ability appropriate - challenging to all levels. The girls loved having the live drummer doing all the music which was a unique and very special experience!



- The Bishop Strachan School, May 2015

BOOKING INFORMATION

There are several ways to request to book any of the School's Outreach programs:

BOOK ONLINE

Send a booking request form from our website:

<http://schooloftdt.org/performances-outreach/outreach/booking/>

CALL US

Call **Lilya Sultanova** to discuss availability and dates, as well as inquire about more information.

Lilya Sultanova
Communications and Outreach Manager
416-967-6887 ext. 25

EMAIL US

Send us an email with your school details, the date you would like to attend (see the [website](#) for the up-to-date matinée schedule), some information about the group you would like to bring (numbers and dance experience), and any other questions you may have.

lilya@schooloftdt.org

PREPARING FOR YOUR EXPERIENCE

We want your students to get the most out of their time at the School, whether they are attending a matinée performance, participating in a master class, or both. In order to ensure they are prepared, we have compiled information on contemporary dance pioneers, watching and appreciating dance, theatre etiquette, and some interesting facts about the School.

CONTEMPORARY DANCE PIONEERS



Martha Graham (1894-1991)

Martha Graham's revolutionary vision and artistic mastery has had a deep and lasting impact on American art and culture. Her bold use of socially infused subjects and emotionally charged performances single-handedly defined contemporary dance as a uniquely American art form, which the nation has in turn shared with the world. Graham's creativity crossed artistic boundaries and embraced every artistic genre.

Sources: <http://marthagraham.org/about-us/our-history/#martha-graham>, Chujoy, Anatole, Manchester, P.W., Kirstein, Lincoln. *The Dance Encyclopedia*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967. 992



José Limón (1908-1972)

José Limón was a crucial figure in the development of modern dance: his powerful dancing shifted perceptions of the male dancer, while his choreography continues to bring a dramatic vision of dance to audiences around the world. During the course of his career, Limón created what is now known as the "Limón technique."

According to the Limón Institute, the technique "emphasizes the natural rhythms of fall and recovery and the interplay between weight and weightlessness to provide dancers with an organic approach to movement that easily adapts to a range of choreographic styles."

Sources: <http://www.limon.org/> and <http://limon.org/about-us/founders/>, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jos%C3%A9_Lim%C3%B3n, September 27, 2011.

TORONTO DANCE THEATRE

Toronto Dance Theatre is one of Canada's leading dance companies, recognized for the intelligent, provocative vision of its choreography and the exceptional artistry of its dancers.

Founded in 1968 by Peter Randazzo, Patricia Beatty, and David Earle, and under the artistic direction of Christopher House since 1994, Toronto Dance Theatre has produced a remarkable body of original Canadian choreography. The company has had – and continues to have – a profound influence on the development of dance in Canada.

Christopher House is one of Canada's "most enduringly inventive choreographers" (National Post). His works are acclaimed for their rich movement invention, subversive wit, and deft handling of multiple layers of meaning. TDT's dancers are remarkable artists who play an essential role in the creative process; they are celebrated for their powerful physicality, imaginative daring, and sensitive, playful ensemble work.

WATCHING AND APPRECIATING DANCE

As students enter the theatre, they will be given a printed matinée program. When students take their place in the theatre, they can take the opportunity to review it. The dancers will take the audience on a journey. Before the performance, ask students to search for movements, emotions, or other elements they recognize during each piece.

Contemporary dance is an art form of kinetic expression, which both represents and reflects back to us our contemporary world through the elements of time, space, energy, musicality, and dynamics. It can provoke joy and wonder, sadness and despair, humour and delight, and deep feelings of passion and spiritual awareness. As an art form it keeps us profoundly in touch with others, with our environment, and with ourselves.

For each performance choreographers create sequences of movements to express ideas, stories, moods, or emotions that will be interpreted and communicated through the dancer's instrument: the body.

During the performance, look for:

- the dancers' movements, such as jumps and turns
- the themes of the performance
- movements that are repeated
- relationships between the movement and the music
- relationships between the performers in groups or duos
- the ways the dancers use the space on stage
- the colours, textures, and design used in the costumes, lighting, and décor

THEATRE ETIQUETTE

The intimate atmosphere of the Winchester Street Theatre is an ideal venue to introduce your students to a contemporary dance performance, while allowing them to see work by a number of choreographers at one performance.

Please keep in mind that you are responsible for supervising your students and their behaviour during the show. We ask that you discuss proper audience etiquette with your students before the performance, such as watching the performance in a quiet and respectful way, not bringing food or drinks into the theatre, and checking around the seats before leaving to ensure they have all their belongings.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Nearly 1000 students trained in the Professional Training Program at the School of TDT.
- The Winchester Street Theatre was built in 1891 by a congregation which started out as a mission from St. Andrew's Church. The main building is now 126 years old.
- The Professional Training Program (PTP) has welcomed students from across Canada, including from First Nations, and internationally students have come to the School from around the globe, including Barbados, Brazil, Colombia, India, Mexico, and Russia.
- A number of PTP students, and several School graduates, performed in the Toronto 2015 Pan American Games opening ceremony. They danced alongside performers from Cirque du Soleil, and several danced with Toronto Dance Theatre in the piece *Storm of Possibilities*.

FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES

After your visit to the School, you can use the following questions to lead a discussion, or to generate ideas for activities suggested below.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

1. What were your first impressions of the performance?
2. What emotions did you feel when watching the performance?
3. What part of the show was your favourite and why?
4. Describe the movements of the dancers in words. What types of movements were used (jumps, turns, développé, plié, etc.) What directions, levels, qualities were used (fast, slow, high, sustained, light, heavy, sharp, etc.)?
5. Discuss the relationship between the choreography and the music.
6. How did the music affect the dancer?
7. Describe and discuss the relationship of the lighting and costumes to the dancers' movements.
8. Discuss how contemporary dance and ballet differ.
9. Describe the role of a choreographer.
10. Compare characteristics of professional dancers with professional athletes. What are some similarities and differences?
11. After seeing the performance, how would you describe contemporary dance?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. In small groups, each student creates a phrase of four movements based on an idea, theme, or emotion expressed in the dance performance.
2. Research three important Canadian choreographers and explain their works either in movement or in written text.
3. Research the work of Toronto Dance Theatre; select three major aspects of their work and create a dance phrase inspired by them.
4. Watch an episode of "So You Think You Can Dance" and explain how contemporary dance differs from other styles of dance performed on the show.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Toronto Dance Theatre: www.tdt.org

Winchester Street Theatre: <http://winchester.tdt.org>

MAGAZINES

The Dance Current: www.thedancecurrent.com

Dance Collection Danse: www.dcd.ca

Dance International Magazine: www.danceinternational.org

Dance Magazine: www.dancemagazine.com

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information about any of our Outreach programs, or to book a unique contemporary dance experience here at the School, please visit our website or contact:

416-967-6887 ext. 25

lilya@schooloftdt.org



ARTISTIC STAFF

Patricia Fraser, *Artistic Director*

Susan Macpherson, *Artistic Associate*

Patricia Miner, *Artistic Associate*

Rosemary James, *Training and Performance Associate*

Andrea Roberts, *Admissions and Records Manager*

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Michelle Yeung, *Managing Director*

Louise Plunkett, *Student Services and Financial Aid Officer*

Lilya Sultanova, *Communications and Outreach Manager*

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In Life, Jennifer Dallas
Shakeil Rollock
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