

V. DIVISIONS OF THE SCHOOL

Early Childhood division, Ages 1-6

Exposure to dance at a young age helps children develop good posture, strength, balance and coordination. The Early Childhood Division features a progression of five levels of achievement based on age. Students enrolling in the Early Childhood and Elementary Divisions must meet the appropriate age requirement by the beginning of the current school year.

Mommy and Me, Ages Toddler to 3

Designed to begin movement and body awareness starting with the toddler's first steps, this class uses the mother's assistance in bringing listening skills and initiating movement coordination of body parts through dance, games and songs. Taught once a week for 8 weeks for 30 minutes.

Predance, Age 3

Designed for the youngest students, this class stresses coordination, large motor skill development, musical awareness, spatial awareness, and listening skills. Musical instruments such as bells, rhythm sticks, shakers, tambourines, along with age appropriate activity resources and special music help engage the students' attention and imagination. Taught once a week for 30 minutes.

Creative Dance, Ages 4 and 5

Creative Dance focuses on coordination, motor skill development, listening skills, and the development of a child's natural creativity. Musical awareness is enhanced with the help of a pianist. This program is a prelude to formal ballet instruction and stresses creativity and group interaction. Taught once a week for 45 minutes

Preballet, Age 6

Students begin a more formal study of classical ballet through age-appropriate skill development, creative expression, music appreciation, and the relationship between music and dance. This year they wear ballet shoes for the first time. Taught once a week for one hour.

Elementary Division, Ages 7-10

Students are taught fundamental ballet technique and develop the self-discipline necessary to begin the study of classical ballet. The Elementary Division is made up of three levels carefully graded by age, physical strength and development. Classes meet once a week for one hour. (Elementary 3 meets twice a week for 1 hour and 15 minutes.)

Intermediate Division

Students in the Intermediate division range from those experiencing a fun way to exercise to those considering dance as a career. As in most pre professional programs, advancement through the program is based on a student's level of skill and accomplishment, not on his or her age. *The School of Canton Ballet nurtures both career-track and vocational students.*

Advanced placement

Advanced Placement students demonstrate an aptitude for ballet and the ability to progress more rapidly in strength, line, artistry and technique. The students are judged solely by their drive, ability and work in class and rehearsal. Understanding and development of "line" is key to advanced placement work as is a willingness to accept, implement and retain corrections. Advanced Placement students are selected by their teachers at the end of the school year.

Advanced (Pre-professional) Division

Canton Ballet Company

Students are admitted to the pre professional program by audition, the recommendation of their teacher, the results of final exams and upon the recommendation of the Artistic Director. It is in this division that the young student has the greatest potential for securing technical strengths, musical sensitivity and artistic awareness.

The Advanced Division blends rigorous pre-professional ballet classes with additional enrichment activities that enhance the student experience. The teacher works meticulously on each student's individual dance needs, while closely coaching each student in technique and performance skills. Classes and performances promote the success of dancers both technically and artistically through high-quality ballet instruction. Good, healthy eating practices and injury prevention are promoted.

Teen/Adult Classes

Many students begin while others continue their study and enjoyment of ballet and other dance forms through participation in our Teen/Adult classes in Ballet, Pilates, Yoga, Choreography and other movement forms. Emphasis is on enjoyment of movement and appreciation of dance.

Pointe Work

At School of Canton Ballet, classical ballet is our specialty.

Each student responds to the demands of pointe preparation differently, and some will need longer than others to be ready. Children are given their pointe shoes at 10-14 years old and proceed to grow up with them as a natural part of their ballet training. The decision of when to place a child on pointe is an important one that has physical ramifications for life. When children grow very tall or large for their age, we prefer to wait a little longer so that muscular strength can keep up with size.

Criteria for Pointe Work

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The student must:

- be a minimum of 10 years old and in Intermediate 1AP or Intermediate 2 levels in our school (or come to us from another school with the equivalent preparation and qualifications) consistently taking a minimum of 3 ballet classes a week.
- The student must be of normal weight for their size.
- The student must have sufficient strength to:
 - have a strong, straight lower back while dancing
 - do pique passe with straight legs and 8 relevés in the centre.
 - be able to hold a passe balance on half-pointe
 - consistently take a whole class.

[\(back to technique\)](#)

Guidelines for Advancement in Canton Ballet Company

Taking daily class and working hard each day to improve technique is assumed and is not considered in and of itself as a means for advancement within the company structure.

Apprentice-2 year course

Apprentices are the youngest, newest dancers. They may dance with the corps de ballet but usually in the most inconspicuous place. They spend most of their time understudying corps de ballet and demi-soloist roles.

The position of apprentice offers a special learning opportunity to Canton Ballet students. A dancer is invited to be an apprentice when his or her technique reaches an advanced level, when there is a certain standard of emotional maturity and concentration. During the first year, apprentices learn what it means to attend rehearsals and how to understudy a part. By the second year of apprenticeship, dancers know rehearsal behavior and are developing an understanding of the necessary performance quality and knowledge of how to learn choreography - an art in itself.

Understudies

Understudies dance the main group parts. They learn demi-soloist and soloist roles. They are used in group dances and in certain other roles.

Dancer must:

- show improvement in technique and performance quality.
- attend rehearsals in addition to those assigned and be prepared to perform many roles.
- take corrections quickly, remember and implement them.
- show a willingness and eagerness to learn all kinds of choreography
- be flexible-mentally as well as physically "Go with the flow."

Company Members

Generally takes one or two years of work at the understudy level and extensive technical and performance progress.

Company membership comprises three categories of dancers:

Principal Dancers dance the main roles; Soloists dance the next most important roles; Demi-soloists dance small group roles.

Regional Dance America founded in 1988, followed the National Association for Regional Ballet, begun by Dorothy Alexander in 1956 to promote the artistic development of dance companies and to decentralize dance in the United States.

Every year across the country member companies attend a regional festival to share three days of classes, lectures, seminars, social events and performances showcasing the member companies. The interchange among dancers, directors, choreographers and world-class teachers over the intensive festival period is one of the greatest benefits of Regional Dance America.

Canton Ballet has been a member company since 1965 and an honor company since 1984. A founding director of Regional Dance America, Artistic Director Cassandra Crowley served on its national board of directors for fifteen years and is now a Director Emeritus and Vice-President of the Northeast region.