

## WHY WOULD YOUR DANCER WANT TO BECOME A MEMBER OF CANTON BALLET COMPANY?

The most obvious reason is this: the opportunity to be a member of the most outstanding regional dance company in Ohio!

- Members of Canton Ballet take part in three to five full stage performances per year giving them the opportunity to use their technical skills in professional style performances.
- In addition to receiving an excellent dance education, Canton Ballet members have the privilege of working in ballet and modern idioms with professional choreographers from across the United States.
- Dancers take part in Regional Dance America's annual Festival in May-June where other regional companies join to present the best works available to all. This is where directors and teachers from all over the Northeast come to view dancers for their summerschool and apprentice programs.
- Guest teachers and choreographers in ballet, modern and jazz enhance the learning process and give dancers an opportunity to expand their awareness of the dance world beyond their own studio walls.
- The discipline and dedication required of all Canton Ballet Company dancers makes an impact on their education. Most of the CBC members are honor students at their schools. Self-motivation and organization are attributes needed to complete schoolwork successfully in the face of extensive rehearsal and class schedules. Those dancers who plan to go on to college find that their involvement in the company enhances their resumes and helps them to stand out among other applicants. In addition, many colleges and universities have scholarships for students pursuing dance.
- Canton Ballet dancers study ballet year round. This allows them to progress and strengthen their technique. Many older dancers go to nationally recognized programs for summerschool while Canton Ballet also offers extensive summer classes.
- Canton Ballet studios have state of the art floors, designed to give dancers the best surface support possible, thereby reducing potential for injuries.

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN IF YOU ARE ACCEPTED AS A CANTON BALLET MEMBER?

- As a member, you are required to take a minimum of five, 90 minute to 2 hour ballet classes per week and additional classes as scheduled. All Canton Ballet dancers are under the instruction of Cassandra Crowley in the preprofessional classes. Ms. Crowley enhances the dancer's training with regular periodic classes with prominent guest teachers in ballet and other dance styles whenever possible.

- Members are required to attend rehearsals every Saturday 12-4:30 pm and Sunday 1-4:30 pm from September until late May. Additional rehearsals scheduled evenings until 9pm during the week as needed.
- Members are required to study a minimum of five weeks of intensive ballet during the summer. Classes are held at Canton Ballet's studios during the months of June through August. Company dancers and those in Advanced Placement may study locally at School of Canton Ballet or the University of Akron. Having company dancers attend other local ballet schools that train dancers in a completely different method of ballet, would compromise our company style. We work very hard to train the dancers to work together and to look unified onstage. This is a step to further that process. Classes at other local schools with pre-professional companies are not permitted for those who wish to be part of Canton Ballet Company. As always, dancers are encouraged to audition for and attend nationally recognized ballet schools during the summer months.
- Dancers must maintain good academic standing at their school.
- Dancers will miss 8-10 days of school October - May in order to do lecture demonstrations for the community and to attend the regional ballet festival.

## HOW DOES HAVING A DANCER IN THE CANTON BALLET COMPANY IMPACT ON PARENTS?

- In the beginning of training, parents have no idea of what they are getting into. If the ballet bug bites your child, it can totally overwhelm all other aspects of their lives. They live, breath and sleep dance. This is wonderful for teenagers because it gives them a sense of purpose, of self-discipline, of self-knowledge as well as a beautiful body to carry them through life. In a world filled with drugs, sex and alcohol and with peer pressure to conform, the teenager can find in ballet a world consumed with other things.
- Dancers spend many hours each day at the ballet studio. Many students come to the studio directly from school and remain until classes finish at 9pm. They bring meals, homework and spend their evenings and weekends "dancing their toes off", far from a TV or the mall. They come home exhausted but exhilarated. In order to spend this much time dancing, they become organized and self motivated to complete their homework as quickly as possible. Most of our dancers are on the honor roll and many have straight "A's".

## WE NEED YOUR HELP TO OFFER THESE THINGS TO YOUR CHILD

- You will be asked to support your dancer and Canton Ballet with your time, energy and finances.
- You are encouraged to join the Barre Association, a parent's group that educates parents; raises money for needed items and helps to provide the volunteer labor behind the scenes.
- Your participation Canton Ballet's fundraising efforts is needed and encouraged.
- You will be responsible for all ballet study fees and for providing your dancer with the necessary dance clothing and shoes.

- You will be expected to get your dancer to classes and rehearsals on time and to see that your dancer makes up all missed classes due to absence.
- You will be responsible to ensure that your dancer eats correctly so that a strong and healthy body is achieved. Fast food and teen diet crazes must be guarded against and a balanced meal program followed.
- You will be expected to learn as much as possible about the Canton Ballet organization and philosophy to maximize both you and your dancer's experience with the company.
- You are expected to give or assist with cast meals and parties during and following each performance.
- You are expected to help with the Board of Director's annual fundraiser with your time, effort and various types of donations.
- You will be responsible to provide the funds to send your child to the Regional Dance America/Northeast Festival taking place in the late spring/early summer of each year. Chaperones are always needed for this activity and you are encouraged to help.
- You are responsible to provide or arrange transportation for your child to summer School auditions taking place throughout Ohio and Western Pennsylvania between January and April of each year.

WE WANT TO BE UP FRONT WITH YOU, BECOMING A  
MEMBER OF THE CANTON BALLET COMPANY IS A  
SUBSTANTIAL COMMITMENT FOR BOTH THE DANCER AND  
THEIR FAMILY.

- The decision to accept membership should be thoughtfully considered. Once your dancer agrees to become a member, after auditioning and being invited by Ms. Crowley to join the company, they and you will be asked to sign a contract accepting their position as a member for one year. Once the contract is signed, the dancer is expected to live up to those terms for the dance year. All company members work together toward the goal of attaining the best performances possible from the group.
- The opportunity for you and your dancer to be involved in Canton Ballet could be one of the most significant experiences in your lives, enriching personal growth and experience in the arts. Many parents who have worked with Canton Ballet over the years have credited this experience as having profound impact on their dancer's lives.
- Although these young dancers are all full time students in area schools, their commitment to dance is as professionals. Each dancer signs a contract each year promising to attend all rehearsals; to maintain good grades in school; to participate in a minimum of five classes a week during the school year and five intensive weeks during the summer; to maintain a performance weight; and to conduct himself/herself at all times in a professional manner. Rehearsals are held some weekdays and every Saturday and Sunday, excluding Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years and Easter, from September through May, for four or more hours per day.

In general, no one is denied access to the company due to financial need. Fees for classes, rehearsals and performances are kept at a minimum and financial aid and a work study program is available to students as well. Applications can be obtained from the office.

## OUTLINE OF TRAINING PROGRAM AND CLASS CURRICULUM

- Canton Ballet endorses the philosophy that to create a strong dancer, performance experience must be offered as a counterpoint to an intensive technique program. As a result, Canton Ballet has developed an approach that involves a variety of elements. This includes in-school performances, exposure to guest teachers, guest choreographers and summer study programs, weekly rehearsals and a rigorous classroom technique schedule.
- Canton Ballet provides a varied faculty for the training of company members. Throughout the year, dancers study from various instructors who teach different styles of ballet and modern. This exposes the dancer to a variety of movements and energy levels while it broadens their perspectives and makes them more adaptable. Instruction and correction by different teachers throughout the year inspires dancers and makes them more discriminating.
- The commitment to an in-school performance schedule contributes to dancer training. It provides increased performance exposure for all, as the dancers encounter contrasting situations and conditions at each site. By the time they enter the theatre, dancers are prepared to face almost any predicament while maintaining the quality of their performance.
- Canton Ballet dancers are encouraged to study at major schools across the United States during the summer and therefore they audition frequently. Auditions begin in January of each year. Each dancer is required to take a minimum of three auditions annually *even if finances do not permit attending an away program*. Dancers are counseled prior to their auditions that this is an opportunity to learn how to take criticism and rejection as well as to see how they compare to dancers of their own age elsewhere. In preparation for these auditions, dancers will need to take studio photographs of various ballet poses. Ms. Crowley will help to pose and select the best photographs to use.

Being a member of Canton Ballet Company is a huge responsibility and commitment but the rewards are great. Dancers learn skills that will hold them in good stead throughout their lives whether in the dance profession or not. Welcome. We look forward to having you join our dance family!