

The Classical Ballet Conservatory at Lisa's Dance Connection

What is the Classical Ballet Conservatory Program at Lisa's Dance Connection?

The Classical Ballet Conservatory is a rigorous, syllabus-based program designed for those dancers interested in pursuing a more serious classical ballet education and participate in multiple performance opportunities.

Who can participate?

Dancers age 5 to adult may participate in the Conservatory program. Any LDC dancer ages 5 and up may take the classical ballet classes that are offered through the Conservatory program. Only dancers who meet the ***minimum weekly attendance*** requirements will be considered part of the Conservatory program and be eligible for Conservatory performances.

What do Conservatory classes provide?

Conservatory classes progress through the first six levels of the eight-year graded Russian classical syllabus. Classes provide basic technique, pointe, repertoire, variations, historical dance, ballet mime/acting, strength and conditioning, etc.

What are the requirements to be in the Conservatory?

1. Take a placement class.
2. Attend a minimum number of classes each week.
3. Abide by the dress code and all other LDC and Conservatory policies.

Conservatory dancers are expected to dance year-round. Our summer requirements are flexible allowing for family commitments, vacations, and other summer activities.

What are the costs for the Conservatory/Classical Ballet program?

Costs include regular registration and class tuition fees along with costs for dance attire.

There are no special, additional fees for students to participate in classical ballet classes or to be part of the Conservatory program.

Workshops and master classes will have additional fees for those who wish to participate. These are optional opportunities offered throughout the year.

When does my dancer need to "audition" for the program?

There are no formal auditions for the Conservatory program or classical ballet classes —all interested dancers are invited to participate!

Instead of an audition, dancers are required to take a placement class before formally entering the program and/or registering for a particular level. During that placement class, instructors will evaluate your dancer's current skill level and determine what level would be most appropriate for your dancer.

Dancers may take their placement class at any time during the year but must do so before being admitted into a classical ballet class and/or the Conservatory program.

Once spring ballet/recital preparations have begun, we will close registration for all classical ballet classes.

What level will my dancer be placed in and how will my dancer progress?

Students are placed in and progress through the program primarily based on individual improvement and mastery of skills rather than just age. Age is taken into consideration when evaluating a student's developmental readiness for certain skills, i.e. pointe.

Because we are covering six years of the eight-year syllabus in only three levels—Elementary, Intermediate, and Advanced—dancers should plan to spend approximately two years at each level. Dancers will generally be re-evaluated by instructors near the end of the spring semester and/or over the summer to determine if the dancer is ready for advancement.

Summer is generally a time of significant growth for many students. These classes are designed to be an extension of the previous year where instructors can review material already covered, revisit particularly challenging skills, and introduce skills not yet covered from both the current and beginning of the next syllabus level. Dancers who are continuing through the summer should plan to remain in their current level until the following fall semester.

When can my dancer go en pointe?

Dancing en pointe is a major goal for almost all ballet dancers. It is extremely demanding on the dancers feet, ankles, and knees, so young dancers' bodies need to be physically capable of meeting those demands in order to perform en pointe safely and correctly. Premature or improper placement en pointe can result in significant injury or damage limiting or even stopping a dancer's career.

To avoid serious injury, instructors will generally consider dancers for placement en pointe around 11-12 years old. Dancers who wish to be en pointe should have at least three years of classical ballet experience and be very stable in a turned-out position en releve. For most students this will occur around the second year of the Intermediate level—Intermediate level 4.

Students who wish to train en pointe must be willing to attend a minimum of three classes per week along with the designated pointe class (if we are able to include that in the fall schedule).

What classes/levels are offered?

Preparatory Jr. Class: Designed for students age 5-7 as an introduction to classical ballet and a bridge between primary recreational ballet and the Conservatory Program. Introduces earliest syllabus skills appropriate to this age with a focus on posture, coordination, and musicality.

Preparatory Class: Designed for students age 7-9 as a continued introduction to classical ballet and a bridge between primary recreational ballet and the Conservatory Program. Introduces earliest syllabus skills appropriate to this age with a focus on posture, coordination, and musicality.

Elementary 1 and 2 (2 class minimum per week): Introduces the elementary levels of the syllabus with a focus on strength, posture, and stability required for more advanced work. Includes barre and center instruction.

Intermediate 3 (2 class minimum per week): Covers intermediate levels of the syllabus with an increased emphasis on stability, strength and musicality. Includes barre and center instruction.

Intermediate 4 (3 class minimum per week): Continuation of intermediate syllabus instruction with an introduction to pointe work. Includes barre, center and pointe instruction.

Advanced 5 and 6 (3 class minimum per week): Covers the advanced levels of the syllabus with a continued emphasis on stability, strength, and artistry. Includes instruction in barre, center, pointe, basic repertoire and variations from the classic ballets.

Intermediate and Advanced students may have a combined class weekly as well as a designated pointe class if the fall schedule allows.

In addition to these minimum requirements, Conservatory students are encouraged to attend additional ballet classes at lower levels as well as classes in other styles of dance (jazz, modern, etc.).

Are there any special dress requirements for Conservatory?

Conservatory and classical ballet students do have a specific dress code. We have attempted to keep it as simple and affordable as possible and much of what you need can be purchased directly through Lisa's Dance Connection.

Jr. Prep and Prep—pink, full-foot tights; full-sole leather shoes; black leotard; optional pink skirt (elastic waist preferred)

Elementary 1/2—pink tights; black leotard; full-sole leather shoes with attached ribbons; optional lavender skirt

Intermediate 3—pink tights; black leotard, full-sole leather shoes with attached ribbons; optional white skirt

Intermediate 4 and Advanced 5/6—pink tights; black leotard; ballet shoes; pointe shoes; optional black skirt

Male students—black dance tights; white shirt; dance belt; black shoes

Female students should have hair secured in a neat ballet bun. Short hair should be secured out of the face and off the neck as best as possible. Male students with long hair should secure the hair off the face and neck as well.

What are parents requirements?

Have your dancer prepared for class (proper attire, hair done neatly, etc.) and make sure your dancer arrives on time and attends class regularly.

Conservatory parents, and classical ballet parents whose dancers perform in spring ballet/recital, are expected to volunteer for performances.

What performances are offered?

The Conservatory program will offer at least these three performance opportunities:

1. Nutcracker (Conservatory dancers only), December 13-15, 2019.
2. Spring ballet (all classical ballet/Conservatory students) in early May.
3. Spring recital (all classical ballet/Conservatory students) in mid-May.

In the past, we have also included short performances by selected dancers for our community at the Children's Hospital and local nursing homes.

What are performance costs?

Nutcracker—Performance fees are similar to recital/spring ballet fees and include extra rehearsal times, costumes purchases, costume/prop rentals, dress rehearsal, etc. The exact fee is based on the number of costumes your dancer needs. Generally, Preparatory and Elementary dancers will need one costume and Intermediate and Advanced dancers may need up to two costumes.

Spring ballet—The basic fee for this performance is included in the recital fee. The only extra cost for spring ballet is for costumes. Again, Prep and Elementary students generally need one costume. Intermediate and Advanced may need two.

Recital—Fees are sent home in the early Fall each year. The basic fee includes all facility fees, rehearsal costs, and one costume. For dancers who also participate in spring ballet or other dance classes (tap, hip-hop, jazz, etc.), there is an additional costume fee for each extra class they choose to perform with.

Performance costs are payable in installments over the year beginning in the fall semester.

What are the requirements for my dancer to participate in Nutcracker?

Conservatory dancers in the Preparatory Level (ages 7-9) and up may participate in Nutcracker.

Nutcracker dancers will have about 7-9 weeks of rehearsals **outside of regular class times**, on both Fridays and Saturdays.

Dancers must be able to attend all rehearsals with no more than 2 absences and **may not miss the first two rehearsals**.

What about spring ballet and recital?

Spring ballet performances are scheduled for early May, exact date TBA.

Most rehearsals for spring ballet are during class as learning choreography is an important part of our program. However, some dancers may need additional rehearsal time outside of class based on specific roles. These will be posted as needed.

The LDC recital is generally scheduled for mid to late May. Dancers will perform one of their spring ballet pieces for recital.

Because classical ballet students are preparing for the spring ballet at the same time as recital and the two performances are only weeks apart, recital pieces are taken from the spring ballet dances students are learning. **Therefore, classical ballet students**

who wish to dance in the spring ballet and/or recital must commit to *BOTH* spring ballet and recital performances.

How are dancers cast in performances? Will my child be able to have a solo or primary role?

Dancers are cast primarily based on how their skill level matches that of the role. Some roles may require audition, but most are decided based on classroom evaluation by the instructors, assistants, other staff, and/or outside dance experts.

To be cast as a soloist or in a primary role, dancers ***must*** be in the Conservatory program and meeting all attendance and classroom policies. They must also be available for additional rehearsal times.

Other criteria for casting include but are not limited to:

- How well a dancer's personality fits a certain role; physical appearance, age, etc. (For example, we would not generally consider an older dancer for a role such as Clara.).
- Ability to learn and remember choreography—Soloists/primary dancers will need the ability to learn quickly as well as learn multiple pieces while small/large groups may only need to learn one piece and have much more time to clean that.
- Classroom attitude, focus, behavior—Dancers who are focused in class, come prepared, have excellent behavior, follow policies, including dress code, show their commitment and personal discipline.
- Class attendance and participation—Regular, consistent attendance is extremely important when preparing for a performance.
- Seniority—Occasionally, dancers who have been in the program for a long period of time and may be graduating or leaving but have not had the opportunity for a primary role may be considered before a younger dancer of similar skill who has many years left to dance that same role.

How do I know if this is the right program for my dancer?

Classical ballet classes are an asset to any dancer, recreational, competitive, etc. If your dancer shows interest in dancing at home, enjoys watching ballet, and/or is involved with other dance classes, one or more classical ballet classes weekly should be a good fit. Company members are encouraged to take at least one classical ballet class weekly to satisfy their ballet requirement.

The Conservatory program is designed for those dancers whose primary love is ballet or who are committed to dance as a whole and wish to have the best technique possible. This program requires a dancer to commit significant time to classes, rehearsals, and performances, especially as they advance. In addition, parents should be willing to commit to scheduling their dancer's time to allow for classes, rehearsals, performances, and still allow for school and recreation time. There is also a significant time and financial commitment for parents/families of dancers in the Conservatory program. We certainly want to have as many dancers as possible participate in the program. In order for your dancer to be successful in the Conservatory, please consider all of these factors carefully as you decided if the program is a good fit for not only your dancer but your family.

Is this like “Dance Moms”?

NO!! Just as in all other LDC classes—recreational, company, etc.—all costumes and music are G-rated! Lisa has spent over 25 years building a conservative, positive environment in her studio where young dancers can train in a professional but age-appropriate manner. We encourage our dancers and their families to support all LDC dancers. LDC is truly a dance “family”!!