



Newsletter

18 August 2018

NOTE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Hello, Dancers!

The next five weeks will see us all – and especially those who are taking a studio exam next month – carefully crafting and polishing our technique.

Whether you are taking an exam or not, we find that the “exam hype” around August/September reinforces a sense of purpose and concentration in class, which results in some conspicuous improvement in your performance. It’s so rewarding for the teachers who are behind you all the way, and we can tell from the buzz after class that you are enjoying the visible signs of progress and looking forward to the challenge of dancing in front of the examiner. Keep going, everybody, and let’s aim for some spectacular results!

Term 4 starts on Saturday, 8 September. We’re extending the opportunities for enrolment this month, with private lessons available to anybody who would welcome individual attention and customized tips on technique. Have a look on Movitae for available times.

We’re also getting in touch with our inner drama queens and offering a two-hour Theatre Dance Workshop, based on the musical *Cats*,

on 29 September. What a great chance to let loose and have some fun after the discipline of exams! Along with our new Repertoire and Lyrical/ Contemporary classes offered on Saturday mornings as a component of the Ballet Packs, there is going to be quite an expansion of the ‘theatrical’ side of classes at AAAB...

In class, we’ll be starting to prepare for some dances to perform at the end-of-year Showcase. Even the Senior Swans, who, a year ago, were overwhelmed with shyness at the idea of performing in front of an audience, have decided to make an appearance. They’ve been busy with media appointments in the last month or so, as the wider world is beginning to sit up and take notice of dance as the most effective form of defence against aging, both mental and physical. We wouldn’t be surprised to see some of our Swans still in the studio 20 years from now!

It’s all a part of us bringing you the joy of dance. As the motto in the front foyer says, ‘Love the Art, Believe in Yourself and Dance with your Heart!’

Kathy xx

BARRE TALK WITH ASHLEIGH PERRY



How long have you been dancing?

I started dancing at the age of 5 at the Albany Hall over on the North Shore. I danced all the way through till I was 21. I did a mixture of ballet, jazz, tap, lyrical and hip-hop. At about 19 years old, I started teaching kids ballet. I did it for about two years before beginning my office job.

What was the best thing about ballet for you?

Originally it was for enjoyment. As I got older, I realised that I was happiest when I was in a ballet class surrounded by others who loved the same thing.

What or who has been the single most important inspiration for you to dance?

My grandparents. The looks on their faces when they saw me dance was magical. They always came to any performance I did. It didn't matter whether it was small or large, they were always there.

When do you enjoy dancing most? Home alone? On stage? At a party?

I most enjoy dancing on stage in front of an audience. There is nothing better than showing other people what makes you feel great.

What's your favourite step to perform?

I love grand jetés. Anything that involved jumping was always my favourite.

Have you had any bad dance-related injuries?

Luckily enough, I managed to stay injury free for most of the time I danced. I did dislocate my knee during a pointe class, which meant I was out of class for about 6 months (the longest 6 months of my life!) I have dislocated it twice since then, but they weren't dance-related injuries (snow skiing and running along the beach).

What state are your feet in – and what do you do to look after them?

My feet aren't actually too bad, especially for dancing en pointe for about 8 years. In fact, I think my best asset would be my feet. I would always get compliments on them from other people. I have had a couple of issues with ingrown toenails but had surgery last year to get them fixed. I used to put a foot lotion on my feet twice a week when I was dancing to stop dry skin forming.

What piece of music or song would you find it impossible not to move to?

"I've Had the Time of My Life" from Dirty Dancing. Whenever I hear that song I always want to move my feet.

On days when you don't feel like you have the energy to dance, how do you motivate yourself?

I will always start with a nice yoga flow and stretch to get my mind focused. I know that once I move my body in some way, I will feel better and the motivation will come.



If you weren't teaching, what career would you have ended up in?

I am not 100% sure. I have always loved helping other people, so it would be something in that area.

How did you come to teach at the AAAB?

Kathy sent me an email after she found my info on a barre directory (if that is such a thing!) She needed someone to take the BarreFit classes until Tharina came back from her holidays. When Tharina decided that she was going overseas permanently, Kathy let me take over the BarreFit classes on a regular basis.

What three adjectives would you use to describe your classes?

Lively, Amusing, Welcoming (the more the merrier!)

It's a date...

Friday, 14 September **1pm–2pm** Senior Swans exam rehearsal

Saturday, 15 September **1pm–2.30pm** Grade 4 Exam rehearsals

Sunday, 16 September **1pm–2pm** Grade 2 exam rehearsal

2pm–3.30pm Grade 3 exam rehearsal

3.30pm–5pm Grade 5 exam rehearsal

Friday, 21 & Saturday 22 September Studio exams

Saturday, 29 September **1pm–3pm** Theatre Dance Workshop with the wonderful

Kimberley Cousins. All levels of ability are catered for, so the workshop is suitable for all AAAB dancer. Purchase a single 'Workshop' pass on the booking system for \$29.



Private Lessons

Private lessons are available by appointment, as per the availability sheet posted on Movitae last week. A private lesson or two is a great way for you to get a thorough assessment of where you are at and what adjustments can be made to improve your technique and are highly recommended for those taking exams next month! Please email Kathy ballet@nzballet.co.nz to arrange.



Term 4 Classes

Term 4 starts on Saturday, 8 September. (AAAB runs 4½ terms per year.) There are a few slight adjustments to times but quite minimal ones. Your current class will naturally progress upwards as a group, so there's no need to swap days, unless suggested by your teacher, or if your circumstances change, just drop Kathy a line and discuss the best alternative for you.

We will be starting on some Showcase work in your classes too, so try to stay with your current group for the remainder of the year if possible.

New for Term 4: Ballet Packs

To give you even better value when you are at the AAAB studio, in Term 4 we will offer "Ballet Packs" on Mondays and Thursdays 10am–12pm and Saturdays 8.50am–11am.

You get 3 classes for the price of 2:

1. Ballet
2. Conditioning
3. Repertoire (Mon/Thurs) or Ballet Lyrical/Contemporary (Saturday)



Tiny Tutus & Leap & Learn Programmes

To fill in some daytime hours at the studio and to respond to many requests, we will conduct some pre-school Creative Dance and Pre-Ballet classes at AAAB!



Designed for children aged 2–5 years and using the excellent Leap & Learn programme from the USA, we hope to provide excellent pre-school dance for our families and the wider community. Please check timings on the posters that are up on the walls at the studio. We

expect to start trialling classes from mid-September. Email Kathy if this interests you... and spread the word! I will post this announcement on Facebook next week so please SHARE the post! Flyers will be available from the end of August to distribute to daycares, kindies, etc.)



Having our cake and eating it too

A multi-talented Senior Swan, AnnMay Morris is the genius behind not only the costumes we need for the mid-year display and end-of-year Showcase, but also the celebration cakes we've all enjoyed. Here, she shares the triumphs and tragedies of her baking art – and how she navigates her way through airports with cake in hand.



“I first became interested in baking cakes when I was aged five, watching my grandfather, a master baker at the Portsmouth dockyard in England. My grandmother also made all the family wedding cakes – we kids just licked all the icing bowls out. I've been baking cakes for some 65 years now!

“The first cake I can recall making entirely on my own was when I was about 8 and it was for my mum's birthday. It was a disaster! It was burnt black, as my mum's oven had no proper heat control and you had to adjust the long gas flame by turning a big chrome tap which took a bit of getting used to. I cried my eyes out, as I had used the family whole week's ration of eggs (4) to make the cake. Sad day indeed.

“The biggest, most colourful and probably the most difficult cake I've baked was a creation inspired by *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*, for a young couple who were very dear friends. It was multi-coloured and took over ten kilos of fondant. In my photo album, the caption beside this cake photo reads 'Never attempt this again!'



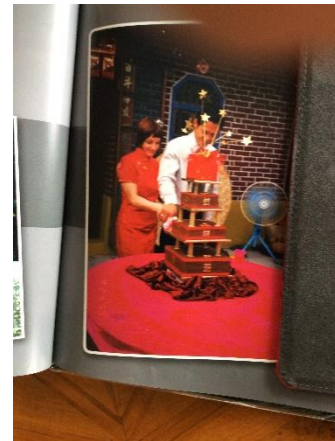
“The cake I'm proudest of was a teaset-shaped cake(s) I made for my mother's 90th birthday. Taking the un-iced cakes to the UK through a stopover in Germany was nearly my downfall. Some security officers at Frankfurt airport decided that they would make a good tea break by confiscating them. I sat on the floor and threatened to eat them myself, there and then. They let me go through then!

“My kitchen is just an average size with two medium-sized bench tops and a regular-sized electric wall oven. I keep my Kenwood mixer in the pantry and use it there. I do have loads of cake tins. I add to them all the time, and I use all sorts of things to make odd shapes and sizes of cakes. I have a huge collection of recipes, even some from my grandparents, (some of their equipment as well), which I have collected over the years. And I've got lots of cake books, too, collected from vintage book fairs. My favourite flavour is definitely chocolate. Everyone loves it, especially if a flavoured liqueur is added to it. One tip I share is that a few dashes of thick soy sauce added to the cake mixture before baking seems to intensify the chocolate flavour.

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"I never watch *Masterchef*, apart from the trailers. They are all so precious, and I never see any of them washing their hands or covering their long hair! Nigella is lovely, but I can't say I learn anything of value from her. I do like watching *Extreme Cake Makers*, if only to see the mess they make of transporting their masterpieces. After all the hard work, they really should put more care into transporting the finished cakes. I once transported a four-tier wedding cake to Taiwan, in my hand luggage, on the first day of an earthquake. I then set it up in a farmyard only sixty kilometres from the epicentre of the earthquake, amid multiple aftershocks, for the start of a two-day family wedding. Great fun!



"Cake baking is a bit stressful sometimes. I haven't had any spectacular flops, but I've had some very near misses. One very hot February day, I was delivering two 4-tier totally chocolate cakes to a double wedding and had to refuel the car. I then got stuck in traffic, then got lost, then got shunned and banned from the kitchen by the wedding breakfast caterer. I only just managed to finish the setting up as the two bridal parties came in the door.

"I nearly always wish my creations could look or taste better— not that I am a perfectionist; I just wish I had more talent. If I could be a cake myself, I would be a rich dark fruitcake, with soft marzipan icing and soft Royal icing beautifully decorated in my grandparents' style..."

Note: Look out for next month's newsletter, which will show you what AnnMay made for her mother's 99th birthday on August 18, and also bring you the recipe for the wickedly good Display Day cake!

Seeing double

To promote New York's Museum of Modern Art's 2016 exhibition *Edgar Degas: A Strange New Beauty*, Misty Copeland, principal dancer at the American Ballet Theatre, posed as some of Degas' most iconic subjects. The photographs were captured by Ken Browar and Deborah Ory for *Harper's Bazaar*, as part of an interview which examines Copeland's own place in ballet's history.



Copeland recreates 'Little Dancer Aged Fourteen'

"It was interesting to be on a shoot and to not have the freedom to just create like I normally do with my body," Copeland relayed in her interview piece.

"Trying to re-create what Degas did was really difficult. It was amazing just to notice all of the small details but also how he still allows you to feel like there's movement.

That's what I think is so beautiful and difficult about dance too. You're trying to strive for this perfection, but you still want people to get that illusion that your line never ends and that you never stop moving."



Copeland recreates 'Swaying Dancer (Dancer in Green)' by Edgar Degas



Copeland recreates 'The Star' by Edgar Degas. Degas depicts a prima ballerina taking her applause on stage.

To read more: visit *Misty Copeland recreates Degas' iconic ballerina works:*

<https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art/news/famed-ballerina-misty-copeland-recreates-the-paintings-of-degas-a6879516.html>



Dancer of the Month: **Rose Hepözden**

Did you dance when you were a child?

When I was 15, my best friend took up jazz ballet, so I did too. I remember going along to lessons in a gloomy church hall, and will never forget how the teacher, a very tiny woman, kept urging us to be 'salubrious'. The routine involved a lot of being coiled around a chair, rather like Liza Minelli in *Cabaret*, so I think what she actually meant was 'seductive'. Anyway, I could never quite overlook her misuse of the English language or my own ineptitude, and that's probably why I didn't advance beyond the beginner level. My dancing career entered a 45-year hiatus, until I discovered the AAAB.

How long ago did you join? How did you feel the first time you walked into the studio?

When Margo White asked me this question for her story in *North & South*, I confessed that I felt as though I'd turned up at the wrong party on the wrong day. My sense of dislocation was made worse when I had to stand next to a tiny, bendy, *young* woman at the barre. I'd forgotten that 20-somethings were adults too. I had imagined that everybody else would be about my age. I was 60 years old then, and that was two years ago.



What class or classes are you doing now?

My balletic turangawaewae is the Senior Swans.

I dance with the flock three times a week, and also puff and pant my way through Seniors BarreFit on Mondays.

What improvements have you noticed in the time you have been attending the AAAB?

I've developed a whole new department in my brain. I wake up and flex my feet before getting out of bed, I stand on one leg while waiting for the kettle to boil, I practise my *posé coupé* going up and down the swimming pool, and I go online to order huge leotards from the US.... Not that any of this obsessive behaviour shows up as a perfect *plié* or dazzling *degagé*. But I love it. Sometimes I wonder if I've tapped into a previous existence, because where else could this late-in-life, boil-over passion have sprung from? It's already lasted two years and that for me, in any relationship, is a very long time!

What factors in your life contribute to your coming along to lessons? What discourages you or makes it difficult?

In a blind panic, I can get from my home to the studio in under 4 minutes. That's what encourages me. What discourages me? Just about every other circumstance in my life, to be honest.

Who – or what – has been the single-most important influence on you and your love of ballet?

Without wanting to sound sappy, the most important influence on my love of ballet has been the teachers at the AAAB. Never once has one of them pulled me aside and said 'Rose, there's something we need to discuss...' Being given this certificate at this age and stage is one of life's most unexpected and delightful surprises. I'm just chuffed.

What do you get from ballet that you couldn't get in any other way? What's the magic of ballet?

Nothing about ballet comes naturally to me, so I have to concentrate like crazy to perform even the simplest sequence. When I'm in class, I can't think of anything else, and so ballet gives me unparalleled respite from the world outside.

What do your friends or other people in your family say about your study at the AAAB?

When I started, friends assumed I must be taking the mickey. The idea that I would try ballet – at my age, at my height, and at my weight – challenged their most compassionate imaginings. They laughed loudly. Now that they've had a couple of years to get used to the idea, they are nothing but admiring.

On days when you don't feel like bothering, how do you encourage yourself to get along to class?

Actually, I don't always succeed. I sometimes get overwhelmed with frustration, aching joints and lack of confidence. On those occasions, I'll allow myself to hide at home and *think* about ballet instead. That feels like an acceptable compromise.



Complete this sentence: I'm heart I'm just a...

Cygnets!

Self-care shopping



Wobble Cushion

\$45.00

(\$5.50 for postage)

A cross between a fitness ball and a sitting wedge, the wobble cushion or stability disc can be used on any type of chair or stool to promote an upright posture, improve balance, and help in enhancing core stability, calmness and concentration. It can also be used as a tool in the management of lower limb stability and is a great addition to any training regime for that extra challenge. Weighs 900g.

Available from Total Rehab Physio in Tauranga:

<https://www.totalrehabphysio.nz/product/wobble-cushion/>

Exam technique 101

WikiHow likes to think it has the answer for everything! At <https://www.wikihow.com/Do-Well-in-a-Ballet-Exam> are some timely tips for anybody who's entered an exam in September. These will be second nature to the mature candidates from AAAB, but just in case...



Part 1: Presenting Yourself Well

1. **Keep your hair neat.** If it's short, comb through it. If it's long, put your hair in a bun. Use hairspray on flyaway hair and do use hairspray or gel if needed.
2. **Abide by the dress code.** Ballet examiners don't like it when you have anything underneath your leotard (other than a bra) or on top. This includes t-shirts, leg warmers, pants, shorts, skirts, or other warm-up clothing. Remove all jewellery except for small stud earrings, and take off any nail polish.
3. **Ensure that your attire is neat and clean.** This includes clean tights that are free of holes, a clean leotard (or bodysuit), immaculate ballet slippers or pointe shoes (if necessary) and no fraying ribbons. Have any other ballet wear in its absolute best condition, as specified by your examiner.

Part 2: Starting the Exam

1. **Stretch before you start the exam.** Stretching will help prevent injury while dancing and is also very important for high extensions. You will need to stretch your arms and legs for at least 10 minutes before you perform for the examiner.
2. **Smile.** Show the examiner that you are willing to enjoy the exam, even if you're nervous. Sometimes smiling can actually make you feel more confident.



3. **Stand in first position while waiting.** This will show the examiner that you care, and that you are bringing your ballet technique with you. Stand and walk like a proper dancer.
4. **Greet and be polite to the examiner.** Don't be embarrassed to say, "Good morning" or "Good afternoon". They'll appreciate your respect and it can also help them to warm to you.

Part 3: During the Exam

1. **Make sure you know every exercise perfectly.**
Practise until you are confident and tell yourself that you can do it!
2. **Use lots of expression in your dances.** When the music comes on, think about how it makes you feel inside and use these feelings in your movements. Don't be afraid to show your emotion – if you are, you will appear as stiff and nervous!
3. **Use your head.** Find a focus during the exam. Do not stare at the examiner, but make sure you do sometimes look at them. Try not to watch the other candidates.
4. **Have fun.** Smile and enjoy the performance (no matter how nervous you are).
6. **Say thank you at the end.** Always thank the teacher, examiners, and pianist. This helps show that you are respectful, which is an important trait in a dancer.





True story

After seeing the knitting pattern for legwarmers in the June newsletter, I cheekily forwarded it to the only semi-regular knitter I know – my mum. Unexpectedly, she called my bluff and replied, ‘What colour, and would you like stripes?’ And thus, the knitting of the legwarmers began...

I opted for baby blue and no stripes. Mum took her time with the knitting, so they took her about six weeks, but she estimates it could take you a week or less if you're an avid knitter.

I took my newly minted legwarmers for a spin to the Tuesday beginners open class and they are fantastic! Worn during warm-up, they keep your legs, especially the Achilles and calves, toasty warm to minimise the risk of injury. I wore them throughout the entire class on Tuesday, but if you found them too warm you could easily slip them off after warm-up.

I definitely recommend these if you're a knitter or you have a friend who is. Getting someone to knit them rather than buying them allows you to specify the length too! The wool cost about \$35.

–Rachel (Beginners 2–3, Saturday 9am)

Puppy Love

They're here! Adriana knew something exciting was about to happen when, on Friday, her dog Chica was showing particular interest in her nesting bed. By the time Adriana got home from teaching the Senior Swans class on Friday, the Vegas household had expanded. Three new Pomchi (Pomeranian x Chihuahua) puppies – two girls and a boy – were nuzzling in to their tired-looking but clever mum, who had gone through the birth completely instinctively. Mother and puppies are doing well, the father Ricco (full Chihuahua) is still shy about having his photo taken, and Adriana is over the moon with love for the new additions!



The Auckland Academy of Adult Ballet

1 Pearce St, Onehunga, Auckland 1061

Principal	Kathleen Curwen-Walker
Email	kathy@nzballet.co.nz
Website	www.nzballet.co.nz
Facebook	@aucklandadulthoodballet
Instagram	auckadulthoodballet