



## **Basic Information and Background to the Courses**

### **Location**

There are three DAPA Academies, the original in Deal, the second one in Dover and the newest one in Canterbury. Classes in Deal take place at The Landmark Centre, 129 High Street. There is a car park adjacent. Classes in Dover take place at Dover Christ Church Academy, Melbourne Avenue. There is parking in the school grounds. Classes in Canterbury are at The Prince of Wales Youth Centre and the Northgate Community Hall, both on Military Road (near the main Postal Sorting Office). There is on street parking nearby.

### **Teachers**

DAPA employs experienced teachers often with a background in the professional theatre. All teachers are CRB Police Checked and are registered with Kent County Council as Chaperones licensed to oversee Children in Entertainment. All teachers working with exam pupils are qualified to teach the syllabus.

### **The Timetable**

The DAPA year is based on three twelve week terms. There is a half term break which coincides with the Kent School holiday. Our terms always begin on Mondays and end on Saturdays. Please refer to the schedule of Term Dates.

### **Class Fees**

Pupils pay one term at a time. New pupils joining part way through a term are charged pro-rata for the remaining weeks left in the term. We request payment in advance of the lessons. Cheques should be made payable to DAPA Ltd and returned with the completed Registration Form in the envelope provided – we ask that fees are never handed to the teachers in class.

Some parents find it easier to pay the fees in two instalments. This is done by sending in (before the start of term) two cheques, one cheque for half the fees, plus a second cheque (dated the half term week) for the balance of the payment.

If we have to send out a reminder for any unpaid fees we add an Administration Charge of £8.00 per child. If a cheque is returned by the bank we pass on the £4.00 Bank Charge levied against us.

### **Public Performances**

Unlike other dance and drama schools DAPA pupils regularly perform for the public (not to mention family and friends) in major theatres. Students make a minimum of two appearances per year. We expect all pupils to participate in the shows. During the refurbishment of The Marlowe Theatre Canterbury, we are staging our annual pantomime, and the DAPA Graduation Show at the Margate Winter Gardens. DAPA also has an Irish Dance Troupe and a classical Ballet Company – in both cases DAPA students appear alongside professional dancers. All DAPA Holiday Workshops culminate in public performances.

## **Parents**

Parents are not invited to sit in or watch classes. However, the final week of the Spring Term is designated "Open Doors", when we encourage parents and friends into the classes to observe the students at work. The Summer Term culminates in The DAPA Graduation Show when all parents, plus family and friends are invited to attend. A Year Book is produced listing the achievements of each pupil, and photos of every class. At the Graduation Show, the students perform class work from the previous three terms, receive their Certificates of Achievement, Exam Medals and DAPA Awards from a celebrated Guest of Honour.

## **The Courses**

We recognise that there is no typical DAPA student. Our courses have therefore been structured to appeal and inform everyone from the unsure to the seriously ambitious! Many of our teachers have performed at the highest levels on the professional stage, and can encourage and develop those students who have the ability and determination to pursue a career in the theatre. However, just as important to us are those pupils who wish to experience the thrill of performing in public and acquire new skills but don't intend to make the theatre their life. For a few children, DAPA is the first step to a career on the stage, but for most it is a great way to meet new friends, gain confidence, appreciate the beauty of dance, music and drama, and keep fit!!

### **The Structure of the DAPA Timetable**

The youngest pupils are found in our Jolly Tots classes. Before long they move to First Steps in Ballet, Tap and Modern Dance in preparation for the journey through the dance syllabus. From this point onwards pupils have the opportunity to take exams at each level gaining qualifications, medals and awards. After First Steps comes Grades One, Two and Three, then Bronze, Grade Four, Silver, Grades Five and Six, then Gold, Intermediate and finally Advanced.

- Irish Dance Classes are given at five levels of complexity, within three categories namely Junior, Intermediate and Advanced.
- Street Dance is given at Intermediate (Street Fusion) and Advanced levels (Elite Street), coupled with an associated Stretching and Limbering class. For our younger Street Dance pupils we offer Funky Cheer.
- Singing is offered at Junior and Senior levels.
- The Musical Theatre Classes, where dance, singing and drama combine, are graded as Musical Theatre 5+yrs, Musical Theatre 9+yrs and Musical Theatre 12+yrs.
- DAPA also offers Adult Tap Classes

### **Modern Dance, Street Jazz and Tap Dancing**

These classes give the student a sense of movement, rhythm and musicality. We encourage students to discover the joy of performance. Classes are structured to appeal to all levels of ability. The more serious student may take exams in Modern Dance and Tap. All students have the opportunity to perform in public, and discover that dance is great fun and good exercise. Adult classes are all offered at levels that encompass beginners and experienced dancers.

### **Ballet**

Ballet provides the basic technique that underscores all other styles and forms of dance. Pupils begin their study of ballet by acquiring an appreciation of the art form, improving posture and strength. Progress through the graded exam syllabus leads to the highest levels of achievement in all forms of dance.

### **Musical Theatre / Performers (Drama)**

Through Drama Workshops, improvisation games, mime, movement and comedy, students acquire the basic skills of acting, characterisation and performance. The syllabus is allied to DAPA's Public Stage Shows and all students have the opportunity to perform in public.

Drama develops a person's individuality and self expression, improves presentation skills, develops imagination and increases artistic awareness. The study of Drama brings fluency in speech and self-confidence. Some of the work in the Performers' class is text based, and students have the opportunity to work with a range of directors on group and individual projects. Performers' classes also encompass music and singing as essential elements of Musical Theatre.

### **Irish Dancing**

DAPA boasts two Irish National Dance Champions among its teaching staff, and is therefore uniquely positioned to offer lessons in Traditional Irish Dancing. Both heavy and soft shoe techniques are taught. This ever-popular style of dance can be learnt at any age, and classes are geared towards public performance.

### **Stretching and Limbering**

This exercise based class is essential for building the strength and flexibility of students who wish to take dancing to an advanced level. It also caters for students who wish to improve their posture and fitness. This course is not recommended for pupils under the age of nine.

### **Singing**

Beginners and experienced singers are accommodated in a course that is tailored to individual requirements. Classes are given in small groups. Basic and advanced techniques are taught, and individual coaching undertaken within the group.

### **Boys Only Classes**

We offer a Boys Only Class for 5+yrs to encourage boys to take up dance classes with their friends. It is important for boys to feel confident in their dancing. This class runs alongside their various other dance classes.

### **Vocational Training in Preparation for a Career in the Theatre**

A new two year course studying dance, drama, singing and performance intended to prepare students for successful application to full time training establishments.

This course of training is specifically geared to the needs of those intending to pursue a career on the stage or in dance training. Places are limited in number, and offered only to those students most likely to benefit from the course. DAPA has unique connections with the professional theatre, and these contacts are exploited to benefit students in the achievement of their goal to join the ranks of working performers. In addition to advance study in ballet, tap and modern dance, students study drama and singing. Advice is given in audition technique, grooming and preparation for life at college.

Vocational students work with a range of theatre practitioners, receiving often one-to-one training from experts in the field. In their final year students are given advice on college selection and assistance with their applications.

The proof of the success of the Vocational Course is that in the last two years more than a dozen DAPA students have gained places at top colleges studying full time for careers in the theatre.

## **Sarah Dean – *Principal***

Sarah Dean founded DAPA in 1998. In twelve years DAPA has grown to become one of the largest and most successful Performing Arts organisations in the country with close to five hundred pupils. In addition to overseeing the running of the three Academies, Sarah is also one of Britain's leading professional choreographers, constantly working at the highest level of theatre. It is this close connection with the professional theatre that gives DAPA a unique opportunity to prepare ambitious students for careers in the theatre, and gives all DAPA pupils the chance to appear on big stages, in real theatres in properly produced shows.

For the last six years Sarah has been the Dance Co-ordinator for First Family Entertainment, the country's leading producer of pantomimes. In this capacity she has overall responsibility for four hundred dancers and twelve other top choreographers. Last Christmas Sarah had overall responsibility for the dancers at Brighton Theatre Royal, Bristol Hippodrome, Bromley Churchill Theatre, Glasgow Kings, Liverpool Empire, Manchester Opera House, Milton Keynes, Richmond Theatre, Stoke Regent Theatre, Sunderland Empire, Wimbledon Theatre and Woking New Victoria. Sarah took personal control of London's biggest pantomime at The New Wimbledon Theatre starring David Hasselhoff and Louis Spence.

But these achievements underline her commitment to dance training for children. Like today's DAPA students, Sarah began dancing as a young child at her local dance school in North London. By the age of ten, (and having moved to Bedford) she was dancing every day, studying a whole range of dance styles from ballet to national dance. She was particularly adept at Irish, achieving National Champion status, (a skill that would one day see her in a leading role in *Spirit of the Dance* in the USA). However, back in Bedford she kept up her ballet, tap and modern, and her obvious talent marked her out for a career as a professional dancer. She trained for the stage at one of Britain's leading colleges, Arts Educational School in Chiswick. On graduation contracts flowed in from dance companies and productions in Britain, Ireland, Europe and Japan. In 1994 she began an association with the Marlowe Theatre in Canterbury, which brought her to East Kent where she still lives. She appeared in eight Canterbury pantomimes, and was appointed choreographer. Between stage roles, she made several television appearances including *EastEnders*, *Dangerfield* and *Family Affairs*.

Sarah was responsible for ten pantomimes at The Marlowe Theatre Canterbury, before moving on to larger theatres. At times other than Christmas, she choreographed celebrated productions of *Oliver!* starring Ron Moody as Fagin, *Annie* with Vicki Michelle, *The Wizard of Oz* starring Stephen Gately, *Peter Pan* starring Brian Blessed, and *The Mystery Plays* in Canterbury Cathedral with Edward Woodward playing God. Her Irish Dance show *Celtic Journey* has been performed in several top theatres. Closer to home, Sarah is the Artistic Director and Choreographer for the St Margarets Festival Ballet – this year's production will be a glittering new *Sleeping Beauty*. In between all these shows, she can be found at 4pm most days at the Landmark Centre in Deal, St Edmunds in Dover or The Prince of Wales in Canterbury working with the students at DAPA, passing on her enthusiasm for dance and preparing the next generation of performers.

***For more information about DAPA, and lots of photos of our classes  
and productions visit...***

***www.dapa.co.uk***