**HST Dance Requirements for Advancement**

**HST uses a combination approach to student placement for dance classes, using both age and skill proficiency for assessment.** This was done to make advancement expectations realistic.

First and foremost, there is the social aspect of HST which is often as important to HST students as their desire to dance. **Slowing the advancement process by having a minimum age requirement allows students to connect and communicate in age appropriate ways.** While this may mean that a student does not always feel challenged, the overall value of instruction, positive socialization, and quality of performance is extremely high – particularly when compared to the cost of classes/recitals at dance studios.

**The second factor is consistent skill proficiency.** HST’s dance classes run *20 weeks out of the year which is 20 hours of instruction (Tues. classes & Wed. morning classes) or 25 hours (Wed. afternoon classes) per year.* It is unlikely that a student will achieve consistent proficiency with new skills in just one year at a particular level. Of course there are exceptions - students who are “naturals” and students who are passionate and love practicing or students who take dance outside of HST - but these are exceptions, not the norm.

Students often mistake knowledge for proficiency which are actually two different things. Knowledge is knowing the name of a step/dance move and being able to demonstrate it. **Proficiency is being able to consistently do the steps with proper technique and with appropriate processing speed for the next level.** Processing speed refers to the mind to muscle memory which enables a student to put combinations together as the teacher calls them out. Achieving this connection between mind and muscle requires time and practice. How fast this is achieved is as varied as achieving reading skills. However, the length of time to develop mind to muscle memory is not an indication of dance talent, just as the amount of time it takes to learn to read is not an indication of intelligence. Furthermore, those who read super-fast are not always the best at comprehension and retention. Students who take longer to achieve mind to muscle skills, often end up excelling in technique because they have added time to master the fine-tuning details as they progress at a slower speed. Compare this to any skill quickly learned – carpentry, sewing, cooking, painting, etc. It takes time to learn the finesse of these skills. You may get the job done quickly but the quality is not the same. Therefore it is not a bad thing for a student to “not be challenged.” Pushing them ahead too quickly risks poor quality. Being the top of a class for a year gives them time to really focus on the finesse (sharpness) of their skills. This sharpness is the “wow” factor of dance.

**HST includes an “extra” dance class in May so that all students can be assessed for placement at the same time.** Of course, some students will have to stay at their current level because of HST’s age requirements (it is possible that we would give an age exemption for an extremely progressive student, but it is very rare that this would happen). Students who *do* meet the age requirement will either be assessed to register for the next level or they will be asked to register at the same level. Sometimes the movement to the next level will be dependent on getting some private tutoring over the summer.

**HST wants to be completely up-front about the reality that the size of our dance program adds a random factor to level placement.** HST’s dance program operates within the limitations of studio size and availability. We also have the financial constraint of high overhead for HST’s dance classes. Small dance classes do not break even. So, **while it is wonderful that we can offer dance classes at half the tuition of dance studios, our shoe-string budget does place some additional constraints that are not always ideal.** If the next level up is already a large class, a student with adequate mastery may not be moved up. While this can be frustrating, it is also a great opportunity to work on technique so they can shine during performances. It is up to the student whether they take that opportunity or assume “they already know everything.” Remember professional musicians “already know everything” but they still work on technique. It is no different for dancers.

Skipping a year of dance because a student is sure they will be bored decreases the chance that their proficiency will be adequate to move up the following year. Just as an instrumentalist’s skill level will decrease if they do not play their instrument for more than a year, so too will dance skills decrease if not practiced. **Non-challenged years are foundation-building years that great dancing skills are built on.** We’ve all had our eyes drawn to a particular dancer that stands out within the group. Their skill and sharpness didn’t just happen. It was achieved because of their attention to every muscle, every step, every detail. That kind of attention doesn’t leave time for boredom.

Lastly, **HST wants to be clear that we may still move students in the fall**. Since we cannot know which students will be returning, we do not know class sizes until registration closes. At that point we made need to make additional adjustments to balance class sizes and/or balance class skill levels.

So, **I ask parents to help their student make the most of their placement.** It will always be tempting for a student who did not get moved up to believe that their teacher doesn’t like them. Please try to explain the concepts in this document to them so they can see the big picture. Tell them that slower mobility often results in greater technical expertise. Make sure they do not see their placement as a failure or a reflection of their skills. It is simply the best placement for this particular year with the current students & class sizes.

**AGE REQUIREMENTS for DANCE LEVELS:**

Jazz 1 or Tap 1 or Irish Softshoe – Age 9

Jazz 2 or Tap 2 – Age 11

Broadway Levels 1 or 2 – Age 13

Jazz 3 or Tap 3 – Age 14

Jazz 4 or Tap 4 – Age 16

**Jazz 1 and Broadway Jazz 1**

*Students need to recognize the name and do the step/movement with level 1 proficiency*

* Ballet positions – 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th
* Arm positions prep, 2nd position, high 5th, opposition
* Demi and grand plié in 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th
* Developpé
* Tendu turned out 5th position, front, side and back
* Degagé
* Chasse side and front, right and left
* Chainé
* Passé parallel and turned out
* Relevé 1st, 2nd, 5th
* Grand Battement
* Attitude
* Arabesque
* Turn-out/Sickle
* Basic isolations
* Step ball change side to side
* Pivot step
* Introduction to spotting
* Start work on double pirouettes
* Grapevine step side to side
* Box step
* Kick ball change
* Jazz runs
* Head rolls

**Jazz 2 & Broadway Jazz 2**

*Students need to be able to put Jazz 1 & Jazz 2 steps together in combinations called out by the teacher with consistently proper technique.*

* All Jazz 1 skills
* Port de bra (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th)
* Scissors
* Saute 1st and 2nd positions
* Saute on one leg
* Soutenu
* Pique
* Developpe parallel front, side
* Battements front, side, and back
* Leaps with attitude, arabesque, passé, and stag
* Pas de bourreé
* Tendu combination with simple arm coordination
* Spotting
* Single Pirouette (parallel and turned out)
* Work on double Pirouettes
* 2 step turns
* Echappé
* Changement
* Medium level combinations
* Turn – Chine, Compass, Pique
* Slides

**JAZZ 3**

*Students need to be able to put Jazz 1, 2 & 3 steps together in complex combinations called out by the teacher with consistently proper technique.*

Increase understanding, execution, and technique of advanced combos

* Increase stretch and extension
* Improve students understanding of leg extensions
* Concentrate on abdominal area during warm-up exercises & emphasize proper control
* Arm exercises to develop upper body strength and gain improved understanding of line
* Ensure student plié before and after jumps
* Accentuate articulation of feet
* Incorporate isolations with movement
* Master double pirouettes in turn out
* Increase jumps & leap technique
* Grand jeté
* Attitude
* Arabesque leaps
* pas de bourreé – sideways & back turns
* Rond de jambe
* turns – tour
* Balancé
* Attitude
* Arabesque
* Pas de bourreé traveling front and back
* Bell Kick
* Tend leve
* Stag leap from 5th (in turn out)
* Lay Out

**Tap 1 & Broadway Tap 1**

*Students need to recognize the name and do the step/movement with Level 1 proficiency*

* Hit (tip of toe)
* Dig (heel)
* Toe heels (in place and traveling)
* Heel Toe (traveling forward)
* Step
* Stamp
* Stomp
* Scuff
* Chug
* Ball change
* Brushes and spanks
* Shuffle
* Shuffle step
* Shuffle ball change
* Shim Sham
* Shim sham with shuffle
* Sugars
* Step touch
* Flap
* Flap ball change
* Flap heel
* Flap double heel
* Running flaps
* Introduce Spotting
* Cramp Roll
* Toebacks
* Buffalo
* Crossing shuffles
* Shuffle Hop Step/Irish
* Pick Up Step/Hiccup
* Single Time Step
* Single waltz clog
* Drawbacks
* Buffalo
* Maxiford
* Basic Lindy (step ball change step back front)

**Tap 2 & Broadway Tap 2**

*Students need to be able to put Tap 1 & Tap 2 steps together in combinations called out by the teacher with consistently proper technique.*

* All Tap 1 Skills
* Increased footwork and advanced combinations
* Spotting
* Awareness of rhythm and teamwork with classmates
* Introduction of rhythm tap
* Double shuffle
* Double flap
* Double cramp roll
* Double Irish
* Double buffalo
* Double time step
* Military time step
* Back essence
* Pick Up Step/Hiccup rotating
* Flap ball changes rotating
* Scuffle
* Scuffle step heel
* Shuffle heel
* Step heel turn
* Flap heel turn
* Cincinnati
* Paddle roll
* Paddle turn
* Crossing/Turning Irishes
* Maxiford Turn
* Running flaps – backwards
* Double waltz clog (flap shuffle ball change, flap shuffle ball change, flap flap)

**Tap 3**

*Students need to be able to put Tap 1, 2 & 3 steps together in complex combinations called out by the teacher with consistently proper technique.*

* Ability to recognize sound variations of rhythmn tap
* Ability to combine steps into complex combinations
* Introduction to Improvisational Tapping
* Triple Time Step
* Riffs – 3 point, 4 point, 5 point
* Toe Clicks
* Heal Clicks