

**Press Release 4-17-19**

## **Dance Wisconsin Board announces changes to company age requirements.**

The Board of Directors of Dance Wisconsin has decided to lower company age requirements to age 10 along with the creation of three company levels, I, II and III. "I am very excited about the changes the board is implementing," said Artistic Director JoJean Retrum.

On Thursday, May 9, 2019, Dance Wisconsin will be hosting auditions for the company at its home studio Monona Academy of Dance beginning at 6:00 pm. Dancers aged 10 and up are encouraged to attend and take class with Artistic Director JoJean Retrum. All dancers can expect to be separated at points during the audition by age and do combinations with various Dance Wisconsin educational staff including: Ballet Mistress Ashley Christensen, Choreographer Chelsey Bradley and Rehearsal Assistant Miye Bishop.

The levels created will exist with age and desire/ability to attend Thursday/Friday evening classes being a basic guide to level assignments.\*

**Level III:** Primarily ages 10 and 11. These dancers will have an additional class on Saturday afternoons from 1:30 pm – 2:30 pm. The focus of this class will be ballet technique. Some choreography or piece rehearsal may also take place during this time. Dancers this age will not attend Regional Dance America's MidStates Festival but will participate in all performance opportunities. Dancers will not be required to audition for performances as they are guaranteed a performance spot in all productions. However, the attendance at auditions is required as a guide for placement of other dancers in the production.

The company fee will be \$515 and includes: Saturday class, a Dance Wisconsin jacket, a red leotard/skirt and a DVD copy of each performance. This is a great value as the estimated number of additional classes is 33; if charged at the going rate of \$19/hour, class cost alone would be \$627.00. Dancers will be required to pay performance fees, but not audition fees. In 2018/19 these performance fees were \$52, \$285 and \$52. Overall costs will be charged on a monthly basis, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month, and multiple fund-raising opportunities will be provided. Estimated monthly cost September 15<sup>th</sup> – April 15<sup>th</sup> is \$113/month for 8 months. Estimated total cost for the year \$904.00. The Dance Wisconsin Board will set overall fees on or before the August meeting.

**Level II:** Primarily 12 and 13. These dancers will have an additional class on Saturday afternoons from 1:30 pm – 2:30 pm. The focus of this class will be ballet technique. Some choreography or piece rehearsal may also take place during this time. Dancers this age will participate in all performance productions and have the option of attending Regional Dance America's MidStates Festival by invitation of the Artistic Director. Dancers will not be required to audition for performances as they are guaranteed a performance spot in all productions. However, their attendance at auditions is required as a guide for placement of other dancers in the production. Beginning in January, dancers may also receive an invitation to understudy pieces that will be performed at Regional Dance America's MidStates Festival. In agreeing to understudy, the dancer commits to attending Regional Dance America's MidStates Festival in Indianapolis, Indiana in March 2020 and some Thursday/Friday evening classes.

The company fee will be \$515 and includes: Saturday class, a Dance Wisconsin jacket and a red leotard/skirt if the dancer does not already have them, and a DVD of each performance. This is a great value as the estimated number of additional classes is 33; if charged at the going rate of \$19/hour, class cost alone would be \$627.00. Dancers will be required to pay performance fees, but not audition fees. In 2018/19 these were \$52, \$285 and \$52. Fees will be charged on a monthly basis, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month, and multiple fund-raising opportunities will be provided. The estimated monthly fee September 15<sup>th</sup> – April 15<sup>th</sup> is \$113/month for 8 months. Estimated total cost for the year is 904.00 If the decision is made to attend Festival approximately \$932 will be rounded into the monthly payments

beginning January 15<sup>th</sup> adding approximately an additional amount of \$233 per month January – April. Dancers attending festival will need to purchase the two additional leotards needed for festival at a discount from La Boutique.

**Level I:** Performance level can be ages 12 through adulthood. At the May audition ages 12 and 13 can indicate their interest in Level I on their audition form. Interest level does not guarantee a spot in Level I; Level I is based upon age and dancing ability. Level I dancers attend Thursday or Friday evening class from 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm each week. These classes begin with ballet technique and flow into rehearsal of whatever production is in preparation. This level is equivalent to the Varsity level high school sport commitment and dancers are expected to not miss this class. For those wishing to pursue a professional career, it is the closest preparation given to a dancer wishing to experience the Trainee level or Studio Company level of a professional company. Dancers are committed to attending choreography in August 2019, performing in all Dance Wisconsin productions and attending Regional Dance America's MidStates Festival in Indianapolis, Indiana in March 2020. Level I dancers ages 12-14 may be asked to attend auditions for placement purposes of other dancers in the productions.

Cost for this additional class will be \$984 and includes a Dance Wisconsin jacket and three leotards and a red skirt required for rehearsal and festival if the dancer does not already have them, and a DVD of each performance. This is an excellent value as the estimated number of additional classes is 33; if charged at the going rate of \$19/hour class cost would be \$1881.00. Dancers are required to pay performance fees as established by the board. In 2018/19 these were \$130, \$285 and \$52 as well as all costs associated with attending Festival, approximately \$932. Fees will be charged on a monthly basis, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month, and multiple fund-raising opportunities will be provided. The estimated monthly fee August 15<sup>th</sup> – April 15<sup>th</sup> is \$265/month over 9 months.

Adults wishing to be apart of Dance Wisconsin and do not have interest in attending festival will incur a \$621 company fee. This fee includes Thursday/Friday evening classes, red leotard/skirt if needed and choreography in August. Adults will also have to pay individual performance fees as listed in Level I. Adults monthly fees will be charged on a monthly basis, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month, and multiple fund-raising opportunities will be provided. The estimated monthly fee August 15<sup>th</sup> – April 15<sup>th</sup> is \$120.00. Adults, if they prefer, may arrange to make check payments.

Each family is requested to have a credit card on file with Dance Wisconsin for automatic payments to be taken on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month via Square. Receipts will be sent via email and the use of PayPal invoices will no longer occur for company members. An invoice book will be maintained in the offices of Dance Wisconsin and will be available for parents to see upon request. If fundraising for the month exceeds the amount required in the monthly payment it will not be taken.

Thank you for your interest in Dance Wisconsin!

Important Dates in 2019/2020 (multiple dates given as we are waiting on the theaters to confirm):

- New Works @Mitby Theater – Saturday October 5<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup>.
- Nutcracker Ballet @Wisconsin Union Theater – December 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> or December 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- Regional Dance America Indianapolis Indiana March 9-11<sup>th</sup>. Travel days may occur on either side of the performance dates.
- Spring Ballet – Looking at dates in April at the end of April. Easter is April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

\*Classes listed as Thursday/Friday because some dancers have expressed an interest in having class on Friday evening versus Thursday. The Artistic Director was going to discuss this option and the opinions of the dancers at auditions.