

### Understanding the IDTA Exam System

For a newcomer the exam system can be quite bewildering so here is a quick guide to the different types of exams on offer.

#### ☆ Rosettes

Rosette exams are designed for 3 to 8 year olds. For these exams candidates perform two short routines for an examiner. The children go into the exam in small groups of around 4 – 6. The result is either a pass/fail and successful candidates receive a certificate and rosette. It is an ideal introduction to the exam system for younger candidates and it is usual for pupils to have taken several rosettes before attempting a grade examination.

#### ☆ Pre-Juvenile Award

This is an exam designed for Ballet Students before they take the Preparatory exam. It follows the same format as the Grade exam, however candidates can go in in groups of 4, 6, or 8 and they also have a teacher dancing with them. The whole exam is conducted rather like a normal class. All candidates receive a report and successful candidates receive a certificate and plaque. This is a good exam to bridge the gap between rosettes and grade exams and to teach the discipline and presentation required for exams.

#### ☆ School and General Class Graded Exam

This is the first examination where pupils are entered without the assistance of a teacher being present. The grade examination is a forerunner to the ballet grade system and it underpins the basic techniques of running, skipping, walking, jumping and various character mimes. It is a good introduction to the grade system and prepares them for the higher demands of technique in the preparatory ballet grade.

#### ☆ Medal Tests

Medal tests form the basis of the exam system for Freestyle, Ballet and Tap. Candidates go into the exam in small groups and perform together. Successful candidates receive a report, certificate and medal or plaque dependant on the exam. Candidates are assessed on rhythmic interpretation, co-ordination of hand and foot movements and presentation.

#### ☆ Grade Exams

These are available in Ballet and Tap dance. With grade exams candidates perform in twos or threes and perform without a teacher in the room. They begin at 10 minutes in length and gradually increase to half an hour. Candidates have to have a thorough knowledge of all work from that grade and from the grades preceding. Technique is of great importance and candidates are only entered for grade exams after a sufficient period of study and usually some extra lessons in smaller groups. Self-discipline and presentation are also extremely important in grade exams. All candidates receive a report and successful candidates a certificate and plaque.

#### ☆ Musical Theatre Awards

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# FOOTLIGHTS

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## DANCE SCHOOL

These are group tests where the candidates have to demonstrate a series of vocal and physical exercises and then perform a short (5 - 10 minutes) musical theatre piece encompassing singing, drama and movement/dance.

### **Common questions asked by parents before exams.**

#### **☆ Can I come in and watch the exam?**

No. Theatre examinations are deemed 'closed' by the IDTA as candidates require great concentration and silence when in exams so that they can focus on the examiner's requests.

#### **☆ Why do I need to arrive so early before an exam?**

No matter the amount of organising that goes into the timetable things do not always go according to plan on the day. The examiner could arrive late or run ahead of the schedule or some pupils may be running late through no fault of their own. By arriving early and ready means that exam slots can be pulled forward easily to ensure the smartest use of the examiners time.

#### **☆ Why does my child need extra lessons for an exam?**

Dance exams are like any exam – practice makes perfect, and you wouldn't expect your child to take a school exam without putting in some extra study before the exam date. Even if your child practices regularly at home it is essential that their work is checked over by a teacher so that faults do not develop. Also extra lessons are normally conducted in the hall where the exam will take place and in the groups that your child will be going into the exam with. This is almost always a smaller group than the one they are with in normal class and this can quite often throw a child – so these extra lessons are essential. The last extra lesson before an exam is conducted as a mock exam so that your child is fully familiar with the exam procedure and feels totally prepared. Costs for extra lessons are kept as low as possible and are only charged to cover costs.

#### **☆ Presentation and Grooming**

Presentation is highly important for all exams and all candidates should check they have the correct uniform for their particular exam. Make-up or jewellery are not allowed for ballet or tap exams.

Suitable costumes are allowed for freestyle to wow the examiner.

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