

Commotion
School of Performing Arts

**Commotion
Student
Handbook
2010**

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Welcome to Commotion!

Commotion School of Performing Arts was founded by Ben Stokes in 2002. Ben wanted to open a unique studio that was parent friendly and which provided a relaxed yet professional approach to performing arts.

Commotion offers high quality performing arts education at a minimal cost to parents. Our policy includes low fees, inexpensive costume hire, flexible dress code and convenience of location. While remaining affordable and hassle-free, Commotion School of Performing Arts provides quality teaching with an emphasis on performance professionalism. "Dancing without the fuss."

Our aim is to provide a safe, educational and recreational environment for all ages, with high-energy fun classes taught by experienced teachers in a friendly and encouraging atmosphere.

Operating out of our fully-equipped studio premises in Mount Annan, Commotion School of Performing Arts offers a huge range of classes catering for students of all ages and abilities. Our 2010 timetable has over 80 classes per week including Jazz, Hip Hop, Tap, Ballet, Modern Expressive/Lyrical, Musical Theatre, Acrobatics, Singing, Acting & Drama and more.

Commotion School of Performing Arts, although only 8 years old, has fast become one of Sydney's most reputable dance and performing arts schools. Our students have competed in numerous elite competitions at which we have been very successful. In January 2009, 50 Commotion students travelled up to Queensland to perform at the Showcase National Dance Championships, representing NSW against top studios from all over Australia. Last year we were proud to have won 1st place in that prestigious Sydney Eisteddfod.

Whether you do one class a week just for fun & fitness, or you train for many hours a week in our "UNLIMITED" Program, Commotion School of Performing Arts is the place to be.

There's a class for everyone at Commotion!

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Classes...

We have over 80 classes per week on our 2010 timetable, in a variety of styles. We cater to all ages and abilities, from beginner to advanced.

PRE-SCHOOL JAZZ

Available... to all students aged 3 - 4

Requirements... black Jazz shoes

Mixing important Jazz technique with funky choreography, this class provides important dance technique foundations, whilst focusing on nurturing student's love of dance through fun movement and familiar songs. Starting with a warm up and stretch, the students then work on some technical progressions down the room (what we call corner-work), then return to the centre to learn some fresh choreography. The students develop a large range of skills including the art of performance. This fun class is ideal for everyone and is guaranteed to put a smile on any kids face.

PRE-SCHOOL FAIRY BALLET

Available... to all students aged 3 - 4

Requirements... a fairy dress and a wand, and Ballet shoes.

This very special class is all about being fairies. The students dressed each week in fairy dresses with wings and wands will be led by their lovely teacher. The students will take a magical journey of the imagination as they are introduced to fundamental Ballet techniques including Tendus, Plies, Port de bra and Sautés. Dancing to popular music that students of this age group can enjoy, the fairies have so much fun each week whilst learning all about Ballet.

JAZZ

Available... to all students aged 4 to 20.

Requirements... soft black Jazz shoes (not Jazz Sneakers)

The most popular of all of our classes, Jazz is the class where students can really develop the widest range of skills. We start with an extensive warm-up and stretch, then do some corner work (ie. Kicks, Leaps, Spins etc.) We then return into the centre to learn some choreography. Each week students learn new combinations, this helps them develop the ability to quickly pick up new choreography and introduces them to a large variety of movements and steps. It also adds variety to the class, making it more fun and exciting. Most weeks, the students will break into groups to perform the choreography for each other, helping to develop performance skills and confidence.

TAP

Available... to all students aged 4 to 20.

Requirements... black lace-up Tap shoes

Tap dancing is all about rhythm and co-ordination. In this class students work on various Tap techniques including everything from shuffles to double pick-ups and wings. Each class at every level will be introduced to at least one brand new tap step or combination every week. Students are introduced to a variety of tap styles including Traditional Tap, Broadway Tap, Street Tap and Stomp Tap.

HIP HOP

Available... to all students aged 6 to 20.

Requirements... Hip Hop sneakers, sandshoes or "chucks"

Hip Hop is the most fun of all the dance styles, and the most modern. Students will develop isolation techniques and classic Hip Hop skills. Most of the time in class will be spent learning new choreography and developing performance skills. At Commotion we always use inoffensive music and keep the movements appropriate for the age group.

Commotion specialises in Hip Hop for children, and we are proud to provide up-to-date relevant moves and innovative choreography. In 2009 we were crowned the National Champions of Hip Hop for all age groups under 15 at the Showcase National Championships.

BALLET

Available... to all students aged 4 to 20.

Requirements... pink Ballet shoes or foot-thongs

Many people say Ballet is the foundation of all other styles of modern dance. Ballet is all about grace, strength and control. The techniques learnt in Ballet class are essential for all dancers, even if your specialty is Hip Hop. Those that do Ballet will see improvement in all their other classes too. This year we have separated Ballet and Lyrical, so that our students can fully develop the necessary technique to take their dancing to a greater level. Ballet is where students learn about the discipline of dance and focus on developing and strengthening their technique.

We will be working with our own unique syllabus, which incorporates the best of R.A.D, B.A.L and Checetti. Commotion Ballet is fun and user-friendly. We use music from the pop charts, we avoid the out-dated old-fashioned exercises and we focus on developing the techniques and skills that are most relevant to modern dancers.

LYRICAL

Available... to all students aged 8 to 20.

Requirements... foot-thongs or bare feet

****Students must do Ballet to be eligible to take this class*

Lyrical is a relatively new style of dance, which is a cross between Modern Expressive and Modern Contemporary. Lyrical takes the techniques learnt from Classical Ballet and puts them into context with modern music. Students dance to ballads from the current charts.

Lyrical dance is about expressing emotion and portraying meaning or story through dance. It's about breaking down the structure and rules of Ballet and exploring new movement and feeling. Lyrical cannot be categorised into a box – it is an open dance style with endless possibilities and creative freedom.

SINGING

Available... to all students aged 6 to 20.

Requirements... plastic sleeve folder for lyrics and notes

Commotion School of Performing Arts offers group Singing lessons under the direction of our wonderful Singing teacher Hanna Hyeronimus. Students will learn various techniques and styles from Musical Theatre to Pop. Other topics in the course include scales, pitch control, microphone skills, performance techniques, breathing exercises, projection and harmonies.

Our Singing classes are kept to a small size so that each student gets individual attention. Over the year the class will build a repertoire of songs to perform. Many students will get the opportunity for small solo parts within some of the songs.

DRAMA/ACTING

Available... to all students aged 6 to 18.

Requirements... plastic sleeve folder for scripts and notes.

Our Drama/Acting classes are fun and challenging. Under the direction of our Performing Arts Co-ordinator Marlee Hyeronimus, the Drama/Acting students will learn a range of theatre and acting skills. Some of the topics covered are Improvisation, Drama Games, Shakespeare, Various Theatre styles, Physical Performance, Acting for Screen & TV, Scriptwriting and Play building, Speech patterns and Accents, Projection, Monologues, Character work and more.

All of our Drama classes are kept to a small size to ensure plenty of individual attention for all students. Over the year, the class will learn several plays and scripts as a group, in pairs and also individual monologues.

MUSICAL THEATRE

Available... to all students aged 9 to 18.

Requirements... plastic sleeve folder for lyrics, scripts and notes.

Musical Theatre is where Dance, Singing and Drama meet. In this class students will learn a range routines and songs from Broadway Musicals. This class is heaps of fun and will prepare students for a career in Musicals. Under the direction of our Performing Arts Co-ordinator Marlee Hyeronimus, students will enjoy exploring the exciting world of Musical Theatre, working on character, musicality, performance techniques and stage presence. The students will also learn about the audition process and what its like to develop and rehearse a Broadway Musical.

TECHNIQUE TRAINING CLASS

Available... to all students aged 9 to 20.

Compulsory for Troupe students, but also open to all other students, this class focuses on developing strong Jazz and Ballet technique to help dancers improve in all styles. Students will master essential dance skills including pirouettes, fuettes, jump-splits and more, as well as working on strength and flexibility. Under expert instruction with individual attention for each student, the class will also learn motivation techniques and guidance in goal setting.

BOYS HIP HOP CLASS

Available... to all students aged 7 to 12.

Requirements... you must be a boy!

Boys only! This class provides an opportunity for the guys to work on their dance skills in a safe, comfortable environment – free from judgement and criticism. Focusing on a more masculine style of Hip Hop and utilising strength and attack, the Boys Hip Hop class is carefully designed to suit the needs of young male dancers from Beginners to Advanced. There is an exclusive reward system used in this to help motivate and inspire a love of dance. In addition to Hip Hop skills techniques and choreography, students will also learn dance tricks and will be introduced to some basic Break-dance moves.

ACROBATICS & TUMBLING

Available... to all students aged 6 to 20.

The students in these classes last year achieved amazing results and wowed us all at the concert with their display. The amazing Tracey returns in 2010 and will focus on a developing a wider range of skills – everything from cartwheels, round-offs, walkovers, Barahnis, handstands, dive rolls, front flips, back flips, partner lifts, layouts and more.

GLENN WOOD TAP

Available... to all students aged 4 to 20.

Requirements... Black lace-up Tap shoes.

The Glenn Wood Tap Syllabus is fast becoming the most recognised Tap syllabus in Australia. There are now hundreds of dance schools all learning this unique and revolutionary style of Tap. The program breaks Tap dancing down into a simple and user-friendly structure to help students learn and master a wide variety of steps and techniques. There are currently 9 levels in the syllabus, from Beginner to Advanced. Twice a year an examiner comes to our studio and assesses the students on what they've learned. The creative rhythms, clear structure and rehearsal repetition of this syllabus make this class the best, most effective way to become an expert Tapper.

SENIOR OPEN CLASSES

Available... to students aged 14+

These classes are for those that have been dancing for years and aren't ready to give it up yet. Casual classes mean you don't have to pay for the lessons that you miss. You just pay weekly when you turn up. The prices are the same as other classes. Jazz, Lyrical and Hip Hop will each contain some technical work and plenty of choreography. Due to the nature of this class, we will not be doing a concert routine. It's all about having fun, keeping close with your friends and enjoying dance. *Please note this class is designed for Advanced dancers, it will be fast paced with high choreographic and technical content.

NU SKOOL HIP HOP

Available... to students aged 10 to 16.

Requirements... Sneakers/Joggers

Develop and master great Hip Hop technique and classic moves including Popping, Locking and more. Taught by our resident Hip Hop expert "Jet", who made it into the top 100 for SYTYCD 2009. This class is perfect for anyone who loves Hip Hop and wants to add variety to repertoire and learn to be a more versatile Hip Hop dancer.

DRAMA COMPANY

Invitation only.

Students will be invited to join our Drama Company, which is an elite group of actors who will work on advanced dramatic skills and techniques and perform at several events/competitions throughout the year.

Taught by Ben Stokes, both the Senior and Junior Drama Company will each have a maximum of 15 in each group, so that every student receives plenty of feedback and personal attention.

Fees & Payment...

Classes at Commotion won't cost you an arm and a leg. In fact, even though Commotion School of Performing Arts has a reputation as one of the best dance schools in Sydney, we are still one of the most affordable.

Students who do more than one class per week receive a large discount.

Classes p/wk	Cost p/wk	Saving
1 class	\$10	-
2 classes	\$19	\$1
3 classes	\$27	\$3
4 classes	\$35	\$5
5 classes	\$41	\$9
6 classes	\$46	\$14
7 classes	\$51	\$19
Unlimited	\$55	unlimited

Troupe rehearsals are free, but there is a weekly \$10 troupe membership fee which helps to cover eisteddfod entry fees, and troupe costumes, which are also provided at no additional cost. Those that are on the "UNLIMITED" plan, do not need to pay for troupe.

All classes missed must be paid for. If you are going to be away on holidays or in the case of injury for more than 3 weeks and you let us know in advance, you won't be charged for those classes.

Payments can be made weekly, monthly or per term, as long as they are made in advance. (Please don't wait until week 9 before paying for that term's fees.)

Payments can be made in cash or cheques made out to Commotion School of Performing Arts. We have EFTPOS services available at the studio (Minimum \$15, Credit card payments incur a 2% surcharge). If you require a receipt, they are available upon request.

Refunds are not available for change of mind or change of circumstances. However, in some cases, you may be able to put the fees towards another class for the following term. If a class is cancelled, a refund will be given only upon request.

Students who don't pay their fees on time may lose their position in their class or have their enrolment suspended. If you are having financial trouble, please arrange talk to Ben privately and arrange a payment plan.

What is "UNLIMITED"?

Any student aged 6+ can become a Commotion "UNLIMITED" member. This allows them to attend as many classes as they want. "UNLIMITED" members can even apply to dance in the classes that are above their own age. At only \$55 per week, "UNLIMITED" membership is great value. You also get a massive 20% off all Commotion Workshops throughout the year, as well as 20% off all Commotion dancewear. Also, if you are on "UNLIMITED" you don't have to pay for Troupe.

Policies and Guidelines...

UNIFORM

There is no set uniform at Commotion School of Performing Arts. (*"A dancer should not be measured by the neatness of their bun or the clothes that they wear, but by their attitude and dance skills alone."*) It is necessary, however, that all students wear appropriate dance attire to ensure that they feel comfortable and are able to move without restrictions. - no jeans, heavy jumpers, skirts etc. Correct shoes must be worn for each class. For safety reasons, no jewellery or watches should be worn to class. **Hair must be neat and tidy and worn off the face.**

We have a huge range of optional Commotion brand dancewear available at the studio for sale. Stock varies and is subject to availability. Prices are very affordable, with t-shirts \$20, pants \$30 and jackets from \$35. We also have bags, headbands, shorts, singlets and lots of limited edition Commotion clothing.

FOOD AND DRINKS

Refreshments are available for sale at the studio at our front desk kiosk. We have cold drinks, lollies, chips, chocolates and more. We now also have fruit for sale, as well as dinner options such as frozen dinners and other microwavables.

There is a microwave in the foyer, available for use by students and parents. Please ask for assistance if you are under 10 years old.

TOILETS

The toilets are located opposite our front door and next to the florist. The toilets there are locked so you will need to pick up the key from the front desk. If you lose the key, you will be liable to pay \$70 for the replacement costs. For safety, students under the age of 10 are not allowed to go across to the toilets without an adult accompanying them. Students under the age of 14 must travel in pairs. Please make sure that you look both ways before you cross the car park. PLEASE NOTE: Commotion School of Performing Arts holds no responsibility for any accidents that may occur as students cross the road to go to the toilet. It is up to the parents to decide if the student is capable to crossing safely.

LOCKERS

We have 50 lockers at the studio which are available for hire. The cost is \$50 for the whole year and must be paid in full to reserve a locker.

Some of the lockers have locks included, but others will need padlocks. Most students should not require locks on their locker unless they are planning to leave valuables in there during the week. If you do put a padlock on your locker you must give a spare key to the ladies behind the desk for emergency access. We will keep it safe for you in an envelope with your name.

LOCAL SHOPS

Senior and Pre-Senior students are allowed to leave the studio during their breaks to buy food from the local shops, only with written permission from parents. We will keep the note on file and it will last for the whole year. No student will be allowed to leave without permission.

BAGS, RUBBISH AND NOISE

When called in for their first class of the day, students should bring their bags into their studio and put them along the wall in the designated bag area or hanging from the bag hooks provided. No belongings should be left in the foyer. During breaks in between class, and short drink breaks within class time, students should remain in the dance room unless going to the foyer to meet with their parents, buy something from the desk or go to the toilet. The foyer should be left for parents and students who are waiting to begin their first class of the day.

Students should not enter the dance rooms until the teacher calls them in to begin class. Please don't come in and sit down during the class before yours, because it is a distraction to the other students.

All rubbish **MUST** be removed when you leave. There are bins provided in the foyer and in the dance rooms. If your drink spills or your bag leaks, you are responsible for cleaning up the mess – please use the mop or sponge from the kitchen.

Parents and students need to keep all noise to a minimum when in the foyer or waiting in between classes. Our studios are soundproofed, but some noise still leaks through and can distract the classes still in progress.

DISCOS AND EVENTS/FUNDRAISING

Commotion regularly runs children's discos and other fundraising events. These are always themed and are lots of fun. Most events for 2010 will be organised by the Commotion Fundraising Alliance - a committee of parents and friends of Commotion School of Performing Arts who are willing to donate their time to fundraising for performance tours as well as troupe costumes and expenses.

TEACHER COMMUNICATION

Commotion School of Performing Arts now has a faculty of nearly a dozen teachers. Our teachers are talented, professional and dedicated.

If you would like to speak to your child's teacher, whether it is to discuss their progress in class or just to ask some questions, please ask for an appointment at the front desk. We now have a message book, where you can write your name and number and who you would like to speak to, and that teacher will contact you at their earliest convenience.

If you only have a couple of short questions you might manage to catch the teacher in the foyer between classes. Please remember though that they have another class starting immediately and may not have much time.

Under no circumstances should any parent enter the studio unless specifically invited in by the teacher. If you need to give an urgent message to your child please ask the receptionist at the desk to send in a note – rather than going into the dance room and interrupting the class.

WEBSITE

Commotion School of Performing Arts has an official website www.commotionkids.com, on this site you can find all the recent newsletters as well as lots of information about our studio, the teachers and our class timetable. There are also photos and videos.

EMAIL

This year we are implementing a new email system. Please make sure that we have accurate email information for you, as we will be trying to do the majority of our communication with parents via email.

HOLIDAYS AND WORKSHOPS

Commotion follows the NSW public school terms and does not usually run classes in the holidays. We do however usually start the year one week after school goes back, and this year we will also finish the year one week early – so that parents can have more time to wind down the year and get ready for Christmas.

In the case of public holidays and long weekends, any cancelled classes will be listed on the website and students will be notified by email. If you don't hear from us, assume classes are still running as normal.

During the holidays we do offer dance workshops for those students who want to extend themselves as dancers and learn new things. All of our workshops feature guest teachers, who provide a unique perspective and innovative new choreography.

We also run a Summer School for a week during January, with well known guest teachers from within the industry and from TV. Our workshops are open not just to Commotion students but also students from other dance schools too. Information about our workshops will be posted on the website.

LABELS AND LOST PROPERTY

There is a box of lost property behind the door in the foyer behind the door to studio one. At the end of every term, the box will be emptied and the lost property will be given to Lifeline. Please ask your child to check if they have left anything behind as you leave the studio. Please also make sure that you label all belongings.

SECOND HAND DANCE SHOES

If you have any old dance shoes sitting at home, you can bring them in to the studio and put them into our second hand shoe box. Just write your name and number and amount you'd like to sell them for on the sole. When the shoes sell, the money will be given to you. Commotion will keep 20% commission towards our fundraising.

The Benefits of Dance...

The following is an excerpt from a website about raising children written by a mother of two, Chantal Hubert.

I didn't realize that there was such a stigma toward competitive dancing until my daughters became involved. I suppose dance competitions are lumped in with pageants, cheerleading, and other events that involve "showcasing" young girls.

It's not that I don't understand the thoughts and feelings behind the strong opinions surrounding competitive dance (I held many of them myself before we started), I do. What I want to do is dispel some of the myths. You know the ones. That dance Moms are living vicariously through their children, placing ridiculous amounts of pressure on their child and expecting only the best.

At least one of my daughters has been dancing competitively for two years. Our nine-year old started dancing recreationally at the age of three, like most dancers. Despite being asked several times, I resisted allowing her to attempt competing. Finally, at age seven, I felt she was ready enough to handle the task. She loved dancing, and being with her teachers and friends, but I still felt a small amount of trepidation that she would be too timid and shy to get up in front of judges to dance. It's true, Erin tends to be on the shy side, but how she carried herself on stage turned out to be a complete surprise to me. Gone was the girl who twisted her feet into the ground and stared down when people talked to her. What I saw was a girl with a wide smile, confident gaze and a back straight with pride - and that was just being on stage, none of it related to any of the scores or medals she received.

The positive aspects of dance allowed me to be quite a bit more comfortable when it came to including our six-year old daughter this year. Totally opposite her older sister, she seems born to perform. She can't resist the stage or spotlight and I know she is in her element.

Dance itself doesn't have to be about competition or exams or hours of preparation. It can be a thirty minute creative movement class, ballet or a recital performance, but the benefits are undeniable...

- **Posture.** Early on, dancers are taught that proper posture is essential to peak performance. Dancers have straight backs and heads held high. I'm amazed when I see my daughter walk into a room with better posture than anyone I've seen.
- **Focus** is essential to dance. I find that after a class or practice my girls listen better and focus on tasks at hand.
- **Friends.** Our girls have made some awesome friends in their years of dance. Not to mention many of the other mothers I have become...

...close to. I would never hesitate to call one of them for anything and I know they feel the same way. This weekend, I am missing a competition because of an important event in my business and the amount of Moms helping us out moves me.

- **Confidence.** I've said it over and over again; dance itself is not about the scores they receive. They get up on stage, they smile and they perform. That in itself deserves a trophy and it's the only thing I expect from them, the rest is just bonus.
- **Commitment and dependability.** Both girls' teams depend on them to attend practice, participate in their numbers and show encouragement and dedication. They know what it's like to have people invested in their performance and attendance and vice-versa. They've learned not to let others down and that it's okay to expect the same in return.

This is the time of year when studios are seeking dancers for the next dance year. If you've been offered a chance, I would encourage you to open your mind and give it some thought. I'm continually amazed at the strength my daughters have gotten out of their dance experience, both in mind and body. I'm a Dance Mom and proud of it!

Developed by Audrey Dascomb, RDE, Director of Dance Expressions Unlimited, the following chart highlights the most common benefits of studying dance. There are physical, intellectual, artistic, social and individual rewards which can enhance and enrich lives.

“Commotion Kids” Troupe...

Every year Commotion School of Performing Arts selects a few very advanced dancers who demonstrate extraordinary skill, or great potential, in dance technique and performance to be a part of our exclusive performance group the Commotion Kids.

Students are auditioned in class over the first few weeks of the year. If your child has made it into our Troupes, they will receive an invitation letter with more details.

Split into various Troupes ranging from 6/under to Seniors, the Commotion Kids perform at numerous events and functions all around Sydney, as well as competing in several dance competitions.

The Commotion Kids are focused and dedicated dancers who work hard to learn and perform impressive routines which consistently do very well at competitions. All of the trophies on display in the foyer have been won by the Commotion Kids over the last few years.

In 2009, 50 of our Commotion Kids travelled to Queensland to compete against the best studios from all over Australia in the Showcase National Dance Championships. We received several first place trophies and were crowned the “National Champions of Hip Hop” in each of the Petite, Junior and Preteen divisions.

At the end of this year in January 2011, The Commotion Kids are returning to Queensland. Those who are successful in their audition for Troupe will receive a letter with information about this exciting tour, and our plan to raise enough money to be able to send all of the kids for free.

After hearing some feedback from parents of last year's Troupe members, we are going to cut down on our eisteddfod commitments and do only around 12 performances in total for the year. That is approximately one per month.

At the beginning of each year, students are auditioned in class and invited into our Troupes. Parents must understand that being in Troupe is a commitment and that you must be available for performances and extra rehearsals.

Troupe membership is only \$10 per week on top of your regular fees, and includes all rehearsals, performances and even your costumes. In some cases, there may be some additional one-off fees to help cover the costs of a particularly expensive competition, but this is very rare.

Remember, students on “UNLIMITED MEMBERSHIP” don't have to pay for Troupe membership fees. That means for \$55 per week you get unlimited classes, troupe rehearsals, troupe costumes, and even discounts of dancewear and workshops.

It is important that “Commotion Kids” Troupe members do a variety of classes to develop their technique and dance skills to a level that can compete against other schools. There are some pre-requisite classes and conditions for those who are in our Troupes...

- Troupe students must do a minimum of 4 classes, but should do much more. These classes must include Jazz, Hip Hop and the Friday night Technique class.
- Students must have a good attendance record, especially to Troupe rehearsals and performances.
- Students must be willing to work hard at all times in class, and take responsibility for knowing all of their routines.
- Students must purchase the compulsory Troupe Uniform which is to be worn to all performances and competitions. The cost of this is \$65. (The uniform is the same as last year's. New Troupe members will be able to order new ones, or purchase second hand tracksuits.)

If these conditions are not met, the student will not be allowed to continue in the Troupe.

Those students that are chosen to be a part of the “Commotion Kids” Troupe have the amazing opportunity to gain extensive performance experience which is vital to any young dancer in training. The team-work skills, discipline and self-confidence that students will develop from being in Troupe will help them grow not just as dancers, but also as people.

Please note that each year all students must re-audition for admission into Troupe, regardless of whether or not they were in Troupe the year before.

Students that enrol at Commotion after the auditions will have the opportunity to request a private audition. In some rare cases, we take on new Troupe members halfway through the year.

Throughout the year, parents of Troupe students will be able to find information about upcoming performances and rehearsals on the Notes page of the website.

All members of the “Commotion Kids” Troupe receive their own trophy, inscribed with their name, at the end of each year.

If you have any questions about Troupe, please send an email to ben@commotionkids.com

The Concert...

Every year all the students at Commotion School of Performing Arts are invited to perform in our annual dance concert. This is usually held in late November and is a huge event that all of the students and parents look forward to. This is day when all students get to feel like a star.

Each class will begin learning their concert routine at the beginning of Term 3. The students work on this each week in class, developing their skills in the process and learning the importance of rehearsal, commitment, performance techniques and teamwork.

This year we will have three concerts. The Pre-School and Pre-Junior classes will have their own concert which will be held locally. The dates have not been confirmed for this, but they will be published soon. Troupe students will be performing some of their routines at this concert.

We've decided it is essential to have a separate concert for the youngest Commotion students, partly because as a studio we've grown so much that we can no longer fit everything into just 2 shows, but also, it will mean that we can cater the event both on stage and backstage to suit the needs of this age group. It will allow us better supervision and organisation, to help the concert run smoothly for parents and children alike.

The rest of the students at Commotion will be performing at the Evan Theatre in Penrith Panthers World of Entertainment. This is a great venue which has professional lighting, tiered seating for 900 and excellent backstage facilities.

The 2009 Main Concerts are booked for **Sunday 28th November.**

There are two main concerts, one for our Junior and Intermediate age groups, and the other for our Pre-Senior and Senior age groups. Once again, Troupe students will be performing some of their routines in each of these shows.

Tickets are available through the studio at the end of Term 3. Prices are kept to a minimum, and are very low considering the calibre of the venue. There is also a discount if you buy tickets to both shows. This year there will be a massive discount offered to parents who wish to purchase tickets to all three concerts, plus the Drama/Singing recital.

DVDs of the concert are also available, for a very reasonable price, as well as amazing photos.

Rather than making parents pay hundreds of dollars buying costumes that their children will only wear once, or have to run around to dozens of shops trying to find a specific item, or sew it yourselves, we hire out our costumes for the concert. Over the last 8 years Commotion School of Performing Arts has built up quite an extensive costume library, which we add to each year with new custom-made costumes.

Your child will receive their costume the week before the concert and will be able to take it home and even get photographed in it, at home. Students then bring their costume to the concert and after their performance, it is left with us, and we clean it and store it ready for re-design and re-use.

This process saves parents from so much stress and hassle.

The costume hire fee is reasonable at only \$40 for the first costume. For students who are in more than one routine in the concert, the cost decreases by \$5 for each extra costume. (ie. second costume \$35, third costume \$30, fourth costume \$25 etc.) This fee also covers the costs of the rehearsal and the medallion that each student receives at the end of the year.

More information about the concert will be released throughout the year.

You can still purchase last year's concert DVD. There are a few available at the front desk. We also have Photo DVDs and the 2008 DVD available too.

The Recital...

The Singing, Drama/Acting and Musical Theatre students have their own special recital. Last year we filled the Campbelltown Arts Centre, so this year we will be finding a new bigger venue. As soon as it is booked I will put out a newsletter with details.

The Recital features all Drama and Singing students and will also include some guest performances. Costumes will be provided by us, and the pricing is the same as above.

The Benefits of Drama...

Self- Confidence: Taking risks in class and performing for an audience teaches students to trust their ideas and abilities. The confidence gained in Drama applies to school, career and life.

Imagination: Making creative choices, thinking of new ideas, and interpreting familiar material in new ways are essential to Drama. Einstein said, "Imagination is more important than knowledge".

Empathy: Acting roles from different situations, time periods and cultures promotes compassion and tolerance for others' feeling and viewpoints.

Cooperation/Collaboration: Theatre combines the creative ideas and abilities of its participants. This cooperative process includes discussing, negotiating, rehearsing and performing.

Concentration: Playing, practicing and performing develop a sustained focus of mind, body and voice, which also helps in other areas of school and life.

Communication Skills: Drama enhances verbal and nonverbal expression of ideas. It improves voice projection, articulation of words, fluency with language and persuasive speech. Listening and observation skills develop by playing drama games, being and audience, rehearsing and performing.

Problem Solving: Students learn how to communicate the who, what, when, where and why to the audience. Improvisation fosters quick-thinking solutions, which leads to greater adaptability in life.

Emotional Outlet: Pretend play and drama games allow students to express a range of emotions. Aggression and tension are released in a safe, controlled environment, reducing antisocial behaviours.

Relaxation: Many drama activities reduce stress by releasing mental, physical and emotional tension.

Self-Discipline: The process of moving from ideas to actions to performances teaches the value of practice and perseverance. Drama games and creative movement improve self-control.

Memory: Rehearsing and performing words, movements and cues strengthens this skill like a muscle.

Social & Cultural Awareness: Legends, myths, poems, stories and plays used in Drama teach students about social issues and conflicts from cultures, past and present, all over the world.

Helpful Hints...

WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE LATE OR GOING TO BE ABSENT?

If you're late for class, please make sure that you come in quietly and with your shoes on ready to dance.

If your child is really too sick to come to class, or if you have other commitments that were unavoidable, then you should send an SMS to 0402 119 073 explaining that they won't be there that night, and why. This is really important – especially for Troupe rehearsals.

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR CHILD SAYS THEY DON'T WANT TO GO TO DANCING TODAY?

Children are fickle. Little things can change their mood so easily, and the reason they might not want to go to dancing could be something little like a fight with a friend or even just wanting to watch TV – even though they might not admit it.

When I was young I absolutely loved dancing – just as I do now – but every now and then I would beg my mum to not have to go. She had a rule; if I didn't want to go to dancing three weeks in a row, then I was allowed to quit – because it meant that I really didn't enjoy it, not just that I decided on a whim I didn't want to go anymore. She would ask me every week after I walked out of class if I wanted to keep dancing, and my answer after class was always yes, even if before the class it had been "no". - I recommend that parents try this little test out for their children, if they say "I don't want to go to dancing today."

HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD IMPROVE?

Firstly, you should inspire them. Take them to musicals and shows, rent dance DVDs and expose them to the potential of professional dancing. Secondly, don't stand there and make them practise in front of you – the rehearsal process is a very personal one, and it is much easier without another person there to judge you. If you want your child to practice, suggest they put the music on and ask to see the dance after they've practiced it – not during. Remember, they don't want you to give criticism, all they want from their parents is praise & encouragement.

You could also consider purchasing a few private lessons either with their regular class teacher, or with one of the assistant teachers in the Dance Coaching Program. You'd be surprised the difference that a couple of private lessons can make, especially for improving technique and lifting the student's confidence.

Also, a lot of people only do one class per week and wonder why the other students around them are improving so much quicker. The more you put into your dancing training the more you get out of it. Try a few different classes to see which styles suit your child the best.

Please don't underestimate the importance of eating healthy and staying hydrated. Dancers are athletes, and dance class can be extremely physically exhausting. Make sure your child has a drink (preferably water) with them, and some light snacks for during the breaks.

Class placement...

For many of our classes we split the students into Advanced stream and Standard stream. We can do this because of the size of our dance school, and it's great that all students can be working at their own level and get the most out of their dance class.

On this year's enrolment form, each student writes down **requests** for which class they want to do. The teachers will review the form and put the student into the appropriate class for their level. This will depend greatly on the amount of students in the age group, and the overall level of those students. Just because your child is not in the Advanced class, does not mean they aren't brilliant dancers. The teachers put a lot of thought into which students will work best in which class.

Over the first few weeks of Term 1, the teacher will observe the students and may move them into the appropriate classes. This is only for the classes that are offered in two streams. Please do not be offended if you are moved from an Advanced class.

The staff at Commotion School of Performing Arts are extremely careful and concerned when choosing the correct level class for each student. It is very important to remember that all students are individuals with very different talents and ability levels and they will not all progress at the same rate. In maintaining a high quality of dance education, it is therefore sometimes impossible to keep the same students together in a class year after year. Many students may need extra help and a slightly slower pace to help them master new steps that might come easily to others. This is carefully considered when placing students in a class. Many students are easily discouraged when they are placed in too difficult a class. The most important thing is that the student enjoys the class and feels comfortable and happy. A happy learning environment is sure to yield progress. Remember, it is very common to see two children of the same age and with the same number of years training with extremely different capabilities. Commotion is a very progressive school and all of our classes are challenging.

Please do not be a competitive parent and want your child in a certain class because you think it's more advanced or a more difficult class. Class placement is the teacher's decision. After all, that's what he/she is trained to do. Every dancer is unique and we cater to the individual needs of every student.

Commotion School of Performing Arts has established itself as an institution of excellence in dance training. Please give the teachers the opportunity to observe your child in class, so that he or she may be placed at the appropriate working level.

Frequently asked Questions...

Q. What is the youngest age that you accept students?

A. Students must have turned three years old already, or by March 2010.

Q. How much does it cost?

A. One class per week is \$10. There is also a large discount available for those that do more than one class a week. Our "Unlimited" membership is only \$55 per week and allows the student access to as many classes as they want.

Q. Do you have to pay for the lessons that you miss?

A. Yes. But in some cases you may be able to take a make up lesson at a different time in the week. (Not during concert time however).

Q. Are parents allowed to observe the class?

A. We don't allow parents into the classroom, because it can prove to be a distraction for the students. We do have an exclusive DanceCam system set up, with cameras in each room transmitting footage onto three LCD screens in the foyer. This lets parents see what's going on in class without distracting the students.

Q. How much does it cost to enrol?

A. There is no enrolment fee at Commotion School of Performing Arts. The only costs throughout the whole year are the regular class fees and the concert costume fee at the end of the year.

Q. Do you do exams?

A. Most of our classes are non-syllabus, and therefore the students do not sit for exams. We are a progressive dance school, and we believe that students can get more out of their dance experience not being confined to the same steps week after week with the stress of examination. We do offer Glenn Wood Tap in all levels and send students for exams with this syllabus.

Q. Do you have insurance?

A. Commotion School of Performing Arts has \$10 million of Public Liability insurance which covers all students, teachers and volunteer workers. Our insurance is with AON Risk Services. Students are also covered by our insurance whilst performing with Commotion anywhere within Australia.

Q. How do you quit or cancel enrolment?

A. If your circumstances change, or your child changes their mind, you can quit at any time. Please just notify the team at the front desk, or send an email. If you do not notify us, you will still be liable to pay because we will assume your child has just missed a lot of classes and will be returning. This also applies for changing classes.

If you have any other questions please don't hesitate to call Ben on 0402 119 073, or email ben@commotionkids.com

The Team...

Commotion is lucky to boast an amazing team of dedicated, talented teachers and a hard-working support team. Our staff are friendly, helpful and committed to making Commotion School of Performing Arts be an outstanding institution of dance excellence and a great place to be.

Ben Stokes	Owner/Director/Teacher - all styles
Kristel Arnold	Dance Teacher - various styles
Ash Giles	Dance Teacher - various styles
Hayley Turski	Dance Teacher - Ballet, Lyrical, Pre-Junior Jazz
Jet Valencia	Dance Teacher - Hip Hop
Marlee Hyeronimus	Performing Arts Co-ordinator/Drama Teacher
Hanna Hyeronimus	Singing Teacher
Camilla Jakimowicz	Technique Training Coach
Tracey Smith	Acrobatics Teacher
Katrina Cleary	Assistant Manager/Reception
Tracey Fisher	Reception
Alex Summerell	Reception

Do you own a local business?

Commotion School of Performing Arts' amazing performance team the "Commotion Kids", are currently seeking sponsors to help raise money to compete in the Showcase National Championships 2011.

Various sponsorship packages are available. Benefits include advertising in Commotion newsletters (reaching 500 students), and on our very popular website. As well as guaranteed support from our Commotion family, who would be grateful for your donation and happy to prioritise your business when searching for services or products in your industry.

Basic packages start at just \$50, and elite packages can be catered to suit your needs. Other options include advertising of logo on the Queensland Tour T-shirt, signage and advertising material displayed in foyer, and even options with expanding your advertising to our hugely successful dance competition the Australian Dance Challenge, that has audiences of over 5000 each year.

Alternatively, rather than donating money, your business may be able to donate products or services that could be used to improve our studio, help the Commotion Kids achieve their goals, or even be given away as prizes in one of our major raffles/fundraising events.

All help is greatly appreciated. Our job at Commotion School of Performing Arts is making your children's dreams come true. For the last 8 years we have nurtured and developed talent, and trained many amazing dancers. Some of our students are now taking their final steps towards careers as professional dancers and performers.

Help us work towards a new level of greatness and be able to provide more exciting opportunities for the Commotion Kids.

If you would like more information about sponsorship, please contact Ben.