



**ALABAMA DANCE THEATRE  
HANDBOOK FOR DANCERS & PARENTS  
2023-2024**

*Kate Seale Smith, Artistic Director*

**ALABAMA DANCE THEATRE**  
**HANDBOOK FOR DANCERS & PARENTS**  
**2023-2024**

**Index:**

<b>ADT History.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Contact Information .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Parent Guidelines .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Stores for Dance Attire.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Placement Guidelines.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Casting Protocol .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Classroom Guidelines and Etiquette .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Advice for Parents.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Advice for Dancers.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Notes about Pointe Work.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>ADT Company Obligations.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Company Rules and Regulations.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Financial Commitment for Company Members .....</b>	<b>17</b>

## ADT History

Founded by Artistic Director Kitty Seale in 1986, Alabama Dance Theatre was created as a pre-professional training ground based in the classical repertoire. ADT remains dedicated to the preservation of the 19th century classics as well as continuing to commission new modern and contemporary works from well-known international artists as well as its talented staff of resident choreographers.

In addition to original works, ADT has also performed Balanchine© classics “Stars and Stripes,” “Valse Fantasie,” and “La Source,” all staged by Repetiteur Darla Hoover. Along with Ms. Hoover, ADT’s list of prestigious guest faculty and choreographers include the late Dame Sonia Arova, Francesca Corkle, Magaly Suarez, Marianna Tcherkassky, Alan Hineine, Amelia Hunter, Leslie Jane Pessemier, Shawn Black, Wes Chapman, Maiqui Manosa, and Wendy White Sasser.

Part of “Miss Kitty’s” continuing vision is to challenge her dancers technically and artistically, all the while maintaining a nurturing environment where each dancer, regardless of career aspirations, can excel. This fact is apparent with the success of ADT alumni. Former ADT dancers have performed with companies such as Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, New York City Ballet, Dance Theatre of Harlem, Dayton Ballet, Complexions Dance Company, Kansas City Ballet, Alabama Ballet, Ballet Magnificat, Dallas Black Dance Theatre, Smashworks, and Alonzo King’s Lines Ballet.

By the same standard, ADT students have garnished scholarships to many prestigious schools including School of American Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, Pacific Northwest Ballet, Houston Ballet, Joffrey Ballet, Boston Ballet, and Netherlands Dance Theatre, to name a few. ADT has also held Honor Company status in the Regional Dance America/Southeast continuously since 1992 where it represents the city of Montgomery and the state of Alabama.

In 2002, Alabama Dance Theatre achieved the status of Advanced Arts Institute with the Alabama State Council on the Arts. In May of 2009, 2011, 2014, and 2018, ADT co-hosted the RDA/SE Festival bringing over 1,000 dance enthusiasts to Montgomery. Artistic Director Kitty Seale was honored with a Governor’s Arts Award in May 2013 and awarded the Montgomery Advertiser’s Community Hero Award in August 2019.

ADT’s Season includes two major productions, one fall show and one spring show. “Stars on the Riverfront” is a culmination of an annual summer seminar featuring well-known master teachers. Two free performances are offered in late July at the Riverwalk Amphitheater. The company performs throughout the year at schools and at special events, such as the Governor’s Inaugural Ball in 2003. ADT has also presented companies such as the Chuck Davis African Ensemble, the Alvin Ailey Repertory Ensemble, Alabama Ballet, and Ballet Stars of Moscow.

Artistic Director Kate Seale Smith and her talented staff, many of whom are company alumnae, continue to help young people realize their dreams.

## Contact Information

Here at ADT, we believe communication is important. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, we have listed contact information for your convenience:

**Studio Telephone:** (334) 625-2590

**Website:** [www.alabamadancetheatre.com](http://www.alabamadancetheatre.com)

**Email:** [ADTDance1@gmail.com](mailto:ADTDance1@gmail.com)

**Mailing Address:** 1018 Madison Avenue, Montgomery, AL 36104

## Parent Guidelines

We are delighted to have the opportunity of working with your dancer and look forward to her/his progress in the coming year. The goal of our school is to maintain a high level of excellence in dance training with an emphasis on classical ballet. If you ever have a question or concern with classes, we will be happy to schedule a conference.

### **Attendance**

Students are expected to attend each class. Please contact the studio office if your dancer must miss class for any reason to request an excused absence before class time. Unexcused absences will be recorded, with a maximum of three unexcused absences per semester or the dancer will not be permitted to perform in Recital. Missed classes can be made up in the month missed. We can recommend an appropriate level for a makeup class. Students should sign in after they come to make up class. Students who are unable to meet the attendance requirements may be moved to a lower level.

If a student is tardy for class, they must sign the tardy sheet in the office to be sure they are marked present. Late-comers must have the instructor's permission to join a class that has already begun. Instructors reserve the right to ask the dancer to observe class. This is to protect the dancer from injury, not to punish them for their tardiness.

### **PLEASE DO NOT SEND YOUR DANCER TO CLASS IF THEY ARE FEELING ILL.**

Any other inability that would prohibit a dancer from performing the physical requirements of a dance class (injuries) should be checked by a doctor as soon as possible. Faculty can advise on a suspected injury but are not qualified to make a diagnosis. If a dancer is injured during class, the instructor will notify the office. Any dancer missing more than 3 days of classes due to an injury MUST provide an excuse from a doctor or rehab facility with specific directions before attending classes and/or rehearsals. Injured dancers are asked to observe their regular class and take notes.

### **Medical Information**

It is extremely important that the dance faculty have a good understanding of the overall health of each dancer. If your child has any medical conditions or concerns, or if he or she takes medication with possible side effects, please let the faculty know. We prefer that this information be in writing for documentation purposes.

### **Behavior**

Respectful behavior is expected of each student. Alabama Dance Theatre reserves the right to dismiss any student who is disruptive to class. Please refer to the Classroom Etiquette section to be sure your student is aware of proper classroom behavior. We strive to create a positive and respectful environment to promote growth and collaboration for both students and teachers. Parent conferences may be utilized to resolve any conflict that may arise.

### **Class Attire**

Please make sure your child is properly attired for each class. Ladies wear their hair in a bun for ballet and in a bun or ponytail for jazz, tap, hip hop, modern, and contemporary. Oversized buns cause difficulty in turning and jumping and may not be worn in performances. For ballet classes, female students wear pink or flesh colored tights, pink or flesh colored ballet shoes, and a leotard in the style and color for their level. No skirts.

Male students wear white T-shirts, black tights, dance belt, and shoes. Jazz, Tap, Modern, and Contemporary students wear form fitting dancewear. Jazz students wear jazz shoes (tan for Jazz I-II & Jazz II-III, black for

Jazz IV). Modern students may work in bare feet. Hip Hop students wear pants that cover the knee, knee pads, and tennis shoes with arch support or jazz sneakers. Do not wear jewelry or loose clothing (T-shirts, shorts, plastic pants, sweat pants, skirts, etc.). ADT is not responsible for ANY items left in the building. A “Lost & Found” basket is just inside the dance entrance.

### **Tuition Payments**

Tuition is divided into 10 equal payments (August through May). There is a \$10 discount for company members. Extra classes are strongly encouraged. Additional classes include Jazz, Hip Hop, Modern, Contemporary, Broadway, and Composition/Choreography. Please refer to the brochure for final tuition costs. For the summer session, tuition is higher since more classes are offered at the upper levels.

**A late fee of \$30 is added to any tuition not received by the 7<sup>th</sup> of the month regardless of the day the 7<sup>th</sup> falls on.** We are unable to give refunds.

Checks are payable to Alabama Dance Theatre (or ADT). A discount of \$5 is allowed for additional family members on full tuition. A discount of \$10 is allowed for Alabama Dance Theatre Company Members in good standing.

**Any account past due 30 days may affect the students enrollment and participation.**

### **Annual Registration Fee**

Each family pays a registration fee annually due no later than September 1st. The annual registration fee is \$50.

### **Recital & Fees**

A school recital for all students enrolled is held each May at the Montgomery Performing Arts Centre. Dress Rehearsal is scheduled the day before the actual recital. This is an opportunity for the young dancers to experience the joy of performing and for you to observe the progress in their training. Students with excessive absences (3 or more) or tardies or who miss dress rehearsal may not be permitted to perform in the recital. Any student with an outstanding financial balance will not be permitted to perform in recital.

A non-refundable recital fee of \$135 is due for the first class, \$110 for each additional class. The recital fees are payable in three installments due November, January, and March. Recital fees will increase \$25 per class if the recital form and deposit are not submitted by November 30th. Rates will be provided at the time of registration. **If you order a recital costume, you must still pay the full recital fee if your child withdraws prior to recital.** We are unable to give refunds.

### **Recital Pictures**

This is an optional expense. Class or single photos may be purchased separately or as a package for each class a dancer takes. These will be taken in recital costumes, in full hair and makeup, mid-March or April at the Armory during normal class times. We ask that each dancer come prepared for recital pictures and recital with his or her own hairpins, elastics, hairnets, hair spray.

### **Withdrawal**

Non-attendance is not considered withdrawal. Tuition is due until we receive **written** notification of withdrawal. A late fee of \$30 will be added each month until receipt of written withdrawal. Delinquent Accounts will be turned over to a collection agency.

## **Parking**

The driveway between the Armory Learning Arts Center and the Montgomery Farmers Market is **ONE-WAY** from the rear parking lot to Madison Avenue. **DO NOT ENTER FROM MADISON AVENUE.** Turn on Hilliard to circle the Farmers Market.

- Please pick up an ARMORY sticker for your left front windshield.
- When waiting for your child, do not block the driveway. Please pull into a parking space.
- Do not park in spaces designated “No Parking” at any time.
- Please do not park in a handicapped space unless you have a valid handicap sticker displayed.
- Additional parking is available on the east side of the Armory (except during football games)
- Do not leave valuables in your car. Always lock the car. Never leave a child unattended in your car.
- Large SUVs and trucks, please park only on the “Farmers Market” side. This will allow a better flow of traffic near the ADT studio entrance.
- All vehicles should be pulled fully into the parking space to avoid blocking traffic.
- Thursday Classes may be affected by Cramton Bowl Football traffic. Barriers are placed at approximately 5:00 pm at all entrances. To enter the dance parking lot turn off Hilliard into the Gymnastics parking lot and turn immediately left into our parking area. Your sticker identifies you as an Armory patron.

## **Waiting Area**

Please be considerate of ADT faculty and staff and **BE SURE** to arrange prompt, reliable transportation for your dancer after classes and rehearsals.

**Dancers waiting to be picked up after class are not permitted to wait outside.**

**We do not allow any talking in the large rehearsal hall when classes are in session. Dancers are encouraged to use this area as a quiet study hall area to do homework.** Children are not allowed to roam into other parts of the building unless you are accompanying them or they are headed to another classes.

## **Vacations**

Holidays are listed on the current class schedule. Any class missed because of a holiday may be made up in an appropriate level. This is not required.

## **Alabama Dance Theatre Performances**

Alabama Dance Theatre is an honor company in RDA/SE (Regional Dance America/Southeast). Please plan to bring your young dancer to ADT’s performances whenever possible. Whether the show is virtual or live, no aspiring dancer should pass up the opportunity to watch a dance performance.

## **Weather**

In the event of a weather emergency, the ADT office will notify dancers and parents of cancellation of classes and rehearsals. ADT has discretion regarding cancellations and postponements. Missed classes may be made up in a different level, but must be coordinated with the office. Should a weather emergency take place during class or rehearsal ADT will follow the following procedures:

*Tornado:* The instructors will escort the dancers down to the Armory basement.

*Fire:* The instructors will follow normal fire emergency protocol, escort the dancers out of the building, and take roll.

### **Emergency Protocol**

In the event of an emergency, ADT instructors and staff will follow the emergency procedures of the Montgomery Cultural Arts Center office.

---

## **PLEASE LABEL ALL OF YOUR DANCE ITEMS!**

Dance Attire can be purchased at the following locations:

Bou Cou Boutique - 334-239-0655  
2920-A Zelda Road  
Montgomery, AL 36106

Dancewear Etc. - 334-277-4963  
Located inside MAC Sporting Goods  
400 N Eastern Blvd.  
Montgomery, AL

Leap Dancewear - 334-592-9835  
6152 Atlanta Highway  
Montgomery, AL 36117

---

## **Placement Guidelines**

ADT Faculty are well-trained former dancers. Currently, all of our faculty are ADT Company alumni. ADT faculty have prepared a school syllabus containing details of each class level's specific steps, requirements, and expectations. It is intended to be a reference for substitutes, dancers, and faculty. Founding Artistic Director Kitty Seale and Ballet Mistress Valari Lagrone studied the Russian Syllabus together under Jurgen Schnieder and Janine Cunova. Artistic Director Kate Seale Smith attended Russian syllabus seminars in Houston and Tampa, as well as the National Choreography Conference, and attended teaching seminars at Ballet Academy East in NYC. Dance is handed down from person to person, generation to generation. Full faculty bios, including awards and recognitions, are posted on our website.

ADT Faculty meet in spring and late summer to place students for the upcoming sessions. Placement for ballet classes is set by faculty decision for classes Ballet 2 and higher. Placements in classes like Contemporary or Modern correspond to a dancer's ballet level. Their placed level will also determine their eligibility to take additional classes in our intermediate and advanced ballet classes on the schedule. Dancers who wish to take advanced Contemporary are required to also be enrolled in ballet classes.

Teachers will observe and review each dancer's growth and development throughout the year, offering notes and corrections during class. We suggest that dancers keep a notebook to record corrections, notes, and observations, and write their notes down after class and/or rehearsals each day. New students can sign up for a beginning class to be evaluated by the instructor.

Summer placement is a continuation of the full year's study level. Advancement to a higher level is prolonged until the NEXT fall/spring session. We encourage taking extra classes to build strength and technique. Taking a class below one's normal level en pointe or taking a class in a new style to develop a quick learning ability would be beneficial to the dancer.

When placing a student *en pointe*, faculty consider a number of factors: age, experience, technique, skill level, physical and mental maturity, fitness, work ethic, strength, and stamina. A dancer's skeletal development is not typically ready for pointe work until age 11, and several years of technique classes are needed to develop proper foot and ankle strength in order to protect the dancer from serious injury. Maintaining a healthy weight is

important in a dancer's training. ADT does not address body weight with individual dancers, but good nutrition is stressed overall. Excess weight puts unnecessary demands on a dancer's muscles, bones, and joints. It puts them at a greater risk for injury and can keep a dancer from being able to start pointe work.

## Casting Protocol

The Artistic Director makes all casting decisions and is responsible for all production matters. ALL CASTING DECISIONS ARE FINAL AND NON-NEGOTIABLE. Many considerations and much time go into making these decisions. From the youngest dancer to the most advanced, every role is vitally important to every performance. There are NO small roles. Please encourage your child to cheerfully accept any role they are given as a challenge and to dance it to the best of their ability. Hard work, dedication, and a positive attitude are a dancer's tools for achievement. Additionally, it is a privilege to be asked to understudy a role. Understudies are vital to the production and are expected to attend every rehearsal. While an understudy is not guaranteed to perform, they do often end up dancing the role! Again, please trust the knowledge and expertise of the dance professionals and refrain from questioning casting decisions.

## Classroom Guidelines & Etiquette

### Guidelines

- ❖ Dancers are expected to attend every class they are enrolled in.
- ❖ Dancers should place the portable barres, and begin warming up (stretching, doing abdominal exercises, etc.) when the instructor enters the room.
- ❖ Stand up when the instructor enters the room. Be ready to begin class. For ballet classes, go to the barre.
- ❖ Talking is not permitted during class (unless a dancer has a question or is doing group work). PLEASE do not distract others from learning!
- ❖ Be prepared and properly dressed for each class, with hair neatly secured in the appropriate manner (ballet bun, pony tail, etc), and the correct shoes required for each technique (ballet, pointe, jazz, etc). Dancers are welcomed to wear flesh colored tights and shoes during class.
- ❖ Please note: oversized, bulky buns are a hindrance to ballet technique and are strongly discouraged in ballet class. Dancers will be required to remove braids, weaves and extensions for performances and recitals.
- ❖ Jewelry, skirts, T-shirts, sweaters, sweatpants, shorts, or other additional garments are not permitted in dance classes. If you must wear a cover-up for ANY reason, you must get the permission of the instructor before the class starts. Tights must be worn over the feet and tucked into shoes.
- ❖ DO NOT exit the building wearing only your dance attire! A cover-up or clothing MUST be worn over your dance clothes when you leave. Wearing dance shoes to enter and exit the building is strongly discouraged.
- ❖ BE ON TIME for all classes! Regular tardiness to class is rude and disrespectful to the instructor and other students. If arriving to class on time is difficult due to school or a parent's schedule, please have parents notify the office in writing. Dancers who are tardy must sign the Tardy Sheet. Late-comers must have the instructor's permission to join a class that has already begun. Instructors reserve the right to ask the dancer to observe class. This is to protect the dancer from injury, not to punish them for their tardiness.



- ❖ If you must miss a class, call the office at (334) 625-2590. Do not text or email the instructor.
- ❖ Make up missed classes as soon as possible. Dancers taking a make-up class or an extra class (outside their regular classes) must sign in- in the office.
- ❖ Food & drinks are NOT PERMITTED in the dance studios or on the stage. Absolutely no gum-chewing in class! Snacks should be eaten in the auditorium area ONLY.
- ❖ Dancers are encouraged to bring a water bottle to classes. Students will not be permitted to leave class to get water. Dancers should use the restroom before class starts.
- ❖ Keep your purse secured in your dance bag and keep your dance bag in the studio with you. Avoid bringing or wearing valuables to the dance studio. ADT is not responsible for missing valuables.
- ❖ Label ALL of your dance items, including your dance shoes, and water bottle. Items left behind in the studios will be placed in the “Lost & Found.”
- ❖ Cell phones must be TURNED OFF. Texting or checking messages is not permitted. If this rule is violated, cell phones will be removed by faculty and returned at the end of class.

### **Etiquette**

- ❖ Do not lean on the barres or mirrors.
- ❖ Corrections are given to help dancers improve their technique. Be attentive to the instructor’s remarks and corrections given to you and others.
- ❖ Respond to the instructor when given corrections- verbally, physically or both! It is respectful to respond by physically making the correction, immediately following the correction. This demonstrates to the instructor that you have heard and understand the correction, and are willing to work toward improvement in a positive way.
- ❖ Following barre work, help fellow dancers move the barres to the side. Move quickly to the center and stretch on the floor until the instructor is ready to begin center exercises.
- ❖ Maintain checker-board formation for center exercises. Alternate lines when exercises are repeated. Be considerate of fellow dancers; take turns and allow others to be in the center of each line. Keep lines spread out! Do not hang back unless you are in a more advanced class than your usual level.
- ❖ Respect your instructors and your fellow dancers by arriving on time for class and being prepared with the proper shoes and attire.
- ❖ Do not distract another dancer from paying attention to the instructor.
- ❖ Stay focused on the task at hand. Do not practice movements other than the one being conducted when the instructor is addressing the class.
- ❖ Keep the groups moving in traveling combinations across the floor, without missing counts between groups. Each dancer must travel in the correct direction as instructed (side to side, corner to corner)! Do not clump together. Keep groups spread out.
- ❖ After completing an exercise across the floor, dancers should change places before repeating the exercise to the other side. This allows every dancer the opportunity to be closest to the mirror/instructor/audience.
- ❖ During class, mirrors should be used for self-correction, not personal grooming.

- ❖ Dancers should never be seated or leave the classroom without permission from the instructor.
- ❖ In the event of an accident or emergency the instructor will supervise procedures.
- ❖ Do not block the pianist's view of the activity during across the floor combinations.
- ❖ ALWAYS thank the instructor and pianist after each lesson.
- ❖ When making up a class in a level other than your own, remember that you are a guest to that class. Be sure to allow the dancers in that level to have priority in spacing and in order of who goes first across the floor. Find space toward the back unless the instructor calls you forward to demonstrate.

## ADVICE FOR PARENTS

The training of a dancer is similar to the training of a serious athlete. The rewards of achievement will come with the responsibility of hard work. There will be times when your dancer may become frustrated, or disappointed with his or her progress. Keep in mind that this is normal, and part of the process of becoming an artist. Success does not occur in one day, but rather as an accumulation of learning experiences and focused self-determination. With that said, please keep the following in mind:

- ❖ Make sure your dancer is well nourished and well rested. These are an extremely important part of a dancer's training. Maintaining a healthy weight should be a safety priority for a dancer, especially regarding pointe work, leaps, and jumps. A dancer cannot expect to perform or learn at maximum potential if the body is not respected as the dancer's instrument.
- ❖ Allow your dancer to "own" his or her experiences—the joys AND the disappointments. Disappointment can be a wonderful opportunity for self-reflection and growth. Sometimes, it is through the disappointments that we learn the most.
- ❖ Please resist comparing your dancer to his or her classmates. This also pertains to role assignments. Remember, dance training is not a race! There is no winning or losing in dance classes or performances. Each dancer develops at his or her own rate, especially during adolescence. Please TRUST the knowledge and expertise of the professionals responsible for the training and safety of your child.
- ❖ Remind your dancer to be open to corrections. They are not being put down, picked on, or criticized when corrected. Proper technique is often subtle. Those who seek out corrections and apply them often become the best dancers. Doing so also indicates to the director, instructor, or choreographer that the dancer has understood the correction and is willing to work toward improvement in a positive way. In fact, professional dancers consider corrections to be compliments and are often disappointed when they are not corrected in class.

## ADVICE FOR DANCERS

- ❖ Make sure you are well nourished and well rested. These are an extremely important part of a dancer's training. Maintaining a healthy weight should be a safety priority for a dancer, especially regarding pointe work, leaps, and jumps. A dancer cannot expect to perform or learn at maximum potential if the body is not respected as the dancer's instrument.
- ❖ All beginners are placed according to age. Students with prior dance experience are placed according to ability. The goal of our school is to maintain a high level of excellence in classical ballet training. As a student progresses, more frequent classes are required. Students must take the required number of classes for their level.

- ❖ Allow yourself to “own” your experiences—the joys AND the disappointments. Disappointment can be a wonderful opportunity for self-reflection and growth. Sometimes, it is through the disappointments that we learn the most.
- ❖ Refrain from comparing yourself to other dancers. This applies to role assignments as well. Remember, dance training is not a race! There is no winning or losing in dance classes or performances. Each dancer develops at his or her own rate, especially during adolescence. You are not qualified to determine which dancers are better than others or which roles are better than others. You must learn to TRUST the knowledge and expertise of the professionals responsible for your training and safety!
- ❖ Be open to corrections. You are not being put down, picked on, or criticized when corrected. Proper technique is often subtle. Those who seek out corrections and apply them often become the best dancers. This also indicates to the director, instructor, or choreographer that you have understood the correction and are willing to work toward improvement in a positive way! In fact, professional dancers consider corrections to be compliments and are often disappointed when they are not corrected in class.
- ❖ Research dancers from around the world and throughout dance history. ADT has worked with many renowned artists who are often invited to come teach master classes. It would benefit you to be familiar with their involvement in the dance community. Watching and learning from dancers adds to the enrichment of your own artistry. Social media is a great resource for learning about various dancers and styles of dance. If you do not use social media, ADT has many magazines located in the lobby that are filled with dance information. In addition to the supply of magazines, a variety of dance literature is available for reading.

## Notes by Francesca Corkle of the Joffrey Ballet About Pointe Work

### **Beginning Pointe**

Strong stomach muscles, ankle muscles, and back muscles are important before beginning pointe. How you work your feet in soft shoes is how you will work your feet in pointe shoes. Do not curl your toes in the shoe; it shortens the foot. Instead, push your arches over the shoe. Your weight is distributed differently on pointe. To balance, you have to go farther over your foot to get on your box.

### **To Harden Skin**

Alum powder from the drug store can be used to keep skin on toes hard. Put powder in a tub of warm water and soak every night for 20 minutes, then rinse. It will toughen the feet within 2-3 weeks. Do not soak if you have bloody blisters. Instead, apply paste to areas not blistered. Do not pop a blister if you can avoid it. If the blister does pop, do not remove the extra skin. That skin helps protect the raw skin underneath from infection-it is best to tape over it.

### **Pedicure**

Nails should be cut down very short to avoid bruising the nail bed while dancing en pointe. If you have thick nails, use an emory board. Trim regularly. Clear nail polish will help reinforce and protect nails.

- ❖ If you get a pedicure at a salon, it is best to not allow them to remove skin with a beauty stone. If you do, you will have to rebuild those hard-earned calluses all over again.

### **Finding a Shoe**

The pointe shoe is really a tool for the dancer to use, so it is important to have shoes that fit well and allow you to dance safely. Your feet will grow and change throughout your career, and so will your needs. This is why it is never a bad idea to be re-fitted or to try something new. It might be that you prefer to have a few pairs on

rotation. For example, you might prefer using a harder shoe for class and a softer one for performance. Having multiple pairs also allows the shoes time to dry out between wears, extending their life.

Some recommended brands for beginners:

*Russian Pointe, "Rubin" & "Brava"*

*Bloch, "Hannah" & "European Balance"*

*Grishko, "Pro-Flex"*

- ❖ It is a good idea to take your teacher or an experienced pointe dancer with you to your first pointe shoe fitting.
- ❖ Do not fit your first pair of shoes to have "growing room." Excess room in the shoe will lead to blisters from the extra rubbing and instability.

### **Padding**

Be careful to avoid having too much padding in the shoe. Thin pads are ideal for beginning pointe dancers so that the dancer can feel the floor. You want to be able to feel the toes and be sensitive to the floor - too much bulk inhibits working through the muscles of the foot. Thinner pads also promote skin hardening and callus build up in the right areas.

- ❖ Numbness is a sign of too much padding.
- ❖ Recommended toe pads for beginning dancers are Pro Pads and Ouch Pouches. Gel toe pads are okay for those who have very sensitive toes or have trouble finding a well-fitting shoe.
- ❖ Toe tape, second skin squares, moleskin, and lambswool are good to keep handy in case of blisters.

### **Preparing New Shoes**

If you are having trouble breaking in new shoes, the following methods may be used:

- ❖ Flattening the box by gently stepping on it, or by gently closing it in a door at an angle.
- ❖ Gentle steam from a tea kettle can soften the areas of pressure or pain.
- ❖ Rubbing alcohol will also help soften hard spots and will dry quickly.
- ❖ Gently bending the shoe at the arch and/or the demi pointe can help the break-in process happen faster. If you are a beginner, it is best to have your pointe teacher or a more advanced dancer assist you the first time.

Be careful to not use any of these methods excessively, or you risk seriously damaging the shoe! It is always preferable to break in the shoes with your feet rather than your hands. It is not about the beauty of the shoe - it's about the beauty of the foot in the shoe.

### **Sewing Ribbons & Elastic**

The purpose of the ribbon and elastic is not just to keep the shoe on, but also to support the front of the arches and to pull up the shank to the arch of the foot. To determine ribbon placement, start by folding down the heel of the shoe and mark where the fold comes to on either side. This is where the back edge of the ribbon may be sewn. If the center of the arch is farther forward on your foot, move the ribbons farther forward. If you find the shoe slips easily off the heel, sew the elastics there. An elastic loop can be sewn on the heel seam to thread the ribbons through if the shoe is constantly slipping.

- ❖ Dental floss and carpet thread are ideal for hand stitching because they are stronger than standard thread. Pointe shoe sewing kits also contain quality thread. You will most likely need a thick needle to go through the shoe fabric.
- ❖ Everyone has a different arch, so every shoe will be sewn slightly differently. If you are unsure about how to sew your shoes, ask your teacher or a more experienced dancer with similar feet.

### **Care of Shoes**

Your first pair of pointe shoes will likely be the longest-lasting pair you will ever have. If you need to clean them, you can use soap and lukewarm water to remove the dirt. Be careful with water, because water will break down the glue used to harden the box. Pink calamine lotion can be used to remove shine. Pancake make-up may also be used to mattify.

- ❖ If the satin on the tip of the box starts to come up and you see threads hanging off the edge, be sure to trim them off to avoid slipping or looking messy. If this happens frequently, you may cut off the satin in the beginning and secure the remaining fabric by stitching around the edge of the box.
- ❖ Jet Glue, Pointe Shoe Glue, or Shellac can be used to re-harden parts of the shoe and extend its life. Apply glue to the inside of the shoe where it has become soft. This could include the toe of the box, the demi pointe, or the shank. If you glue the tip of the box, make sure to let them dry upright (in pointe position) so that the glue dries flat.
- ❖ Allow your shoes and pads to air-dry overnight and store them in a breathable mesh bag for longevity.

## **ADT COMPANY OBLIGATIONS**

### **A Note of Welcome**

Congratulations on becoming a Company dancer with Alabama Dance Theatre! We'd like to welcome you to the 2023-2024 Season of Devotion with Alabama Dance Theatre (ADT)! Founded in 1986 by former Artistic Director Kitty Seale, ADT is a special place, with a faculty dedicated to helping young dancers grow technically, intellectually, and emotionally within a professional setting.

Included here you will find important information regarding Company procedures as well as contact information. Please read everything carefully and contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

Once accepted into ADT, Company dancers are expected to adhere to the established criteria of behavior and attire traditional for all professional dance programs. ADT is admired and respected for presenting polished and professional looking performances. The integrity of the art of dance is closely guarded by ADT's Artistic Director, faculty, and staff. Proper dance etiquette and respect for the art form are strictly enforced. Dancers are expected to demonstrate self-discipline, poise, and respect for teachers and fellow dancers alike. It is in an environment of mutual respect and focus that true learning can take place.

ADT aspires to help each dancer succeed both inside and outside the studio. Whether students become professional dancers like many before them or move on to other professional fields, our hope is that the education and experience provided here develops them into happy, confident, and successful young people.

Whatever path you take beyond your years at ADT, remember that any dancer who has left ADT in good standing will always be welcome to come take class. We look forward to an exciting, rewarding year with you! Please feel free to contact us if you have questions.

Kate Seale Smith, Artistic Director  
 Sara Sanford, Assistant to the Director  
 Valari Lagrone, Ballet Mistress  
 Emily D. Flowers, Managing Director

## Company Rules and Regulations

Thank you for auditioning to be considered as a member of the Alabama Dance Theatre. Established in 1986, ADT considers it an honor to welcome new members. ADT will continue the legacy and follow the vision set forth by Kitty Seale.

**COMMITMENT:** (If accepted into the ADT Company) This audition and contract requires a commitment from every dancer for the signed season. The Season involves one full year: August to August which includes ADT's summer intensive and performance of *Stars on the Riverfront*. A dancer must have approval from the Artistic Director if they must miss the intensive or performance. This is a serious responsibility, not one to be taken lightly. This contract is a binding agreement between the dancer and ADT. ADT cannot function effectively without the total commitment of each of its members. Please be sure you are ready to make any accommodations necessary to fulfill the requirements of being a Company member.

**CLASS ATTENDANCE:** Class attendance is mandatory. In addition to Company class on the weekend, Company dancers are required to take the assigned classes for their level (a minimum of 5-6 classes per week). These are the minimum and must be attended. All missed classes must be approved by the Artistic Director and made up in an appropriate level. Company members are allowed 1 excused day per month at the Artistic Director's discretion. Dancers are required to notify the office by phone call (334-625-2590) if they will be missing a class and indicate when they plan to make up the missed class. Do not send a text message to the instructor! Dancers must sign in when they take a make-up or extra class. If a dancer is injured or ill (no fever) they are required to observe class. Two unexcused absences result in probation. Three unexcused classes may result in dismissal from the Company. Extra classes are encouraged. Be properly attired, neatly groomed, and on time for all classes.

**REHEARSALS:** Rehearsals are mandatory. Most rehearsals are scheduled for Tuesday and Thursday evenings and Sunday afternoons. Close to performance time extra rehearsals will be scheduled. **Please note:** The weekend before performances there will be **Saturday and Sunday** rehearsals. These are mandatory! Additionally, extra rehearsals may be scheduled for work with a choreographer. ADT will post and email rehearsal schedules in advance. We will do our best to notify dancers of changes in the rehearsal schedule. However, it is the **dancer's responsibility** to check the Company board **every time** they come into the studios to see if rehearsals have been added or changed. Missed rehearsals must be cleared in advance **in writing** with the Artistic Director. Otherwise, missed rehearsals may result in the loss of a role. Classes can be made up, but rehearsals cannot.

**CASTING:** The Artistic Director makes all casting decisions and is responsible for all production matters. **ALL CASTING DECISIONS ARE FINAL AND NON-NEGOTIABLE.** Much consideration and time go into these decisions. Every role, from the youngest dancer to the most advanced, is vitally important to every performance. There are **NO** small roles. Cheerfully accept any role you are given as a challenge and dance it to the best of your ability. Hard work, dedication, and a positive attitude are a dancer's tools for achievement. It is a privilege to be asked to understudy a role. Understudies are vital and are expected to attend every rehearsal. While there is no guarantee that an understudy will perform, they do often end up dancing the role! **Please refrain from questioning casting decisions. If you are unable to do this, please do not audition for ADT.**

**BEHAVIOR:** Good behavior is expected of ADT Dancers both in and out of the studios. **YOU** are ambassadors for this Company! Be helpful and kind to younger and new dancers in the school. Set a positive example with your conduct, vocabulary, and attendance. The integrity of our art form is respected and closely guarded by the faculty and staff of ADT. You have worked very hard to become a Company dancer and are

expected to demonstrate self-discipline, poise, and respect for students and teachers alike. It is in an environment of mutual respect and focus that true learning and significant growth can take place.

**SOCIAL MEDIA:** Disparaging or harassing remarks made on social media (in any format) about ADT dancers, faculty, staff, or parents will be considered a breach of contract and will result in immediate dismissal from ADT. Please think **VERY CAREFULLY** before you post on social media. If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all. If you have questions, problems, or concerns, bring them to the attention of the Artistic Director or faculty member in a respectable manner.

The Alabama Dance Theatre takes bullying in all forms very seriously! Students accused of bullying will be called to a conference with their parents, the Artistic Director, the Assistant to the Director, and the Ballet Mistress. Bullying includes, but is not limited to verbal and/or physical abuse, intimidation, and abuse via social media, phone, email, etc.

ADT requests that all cell phones be turned to vibrate mode upon entering the building. Cell phones must not be used during classes or rehearsals unless the dancer experiences an emergency. Dancers are encouraged to keep cell phones with their personal items.

**PUBLICITY:** As members of Alabama Dance Theatre, dancers' names and photographs may be used in publicity at the discretion of the Artistic Director, faculty, and staff. At any time, the use of a photograph must include acknowledgment of the photographer if used by a company member.

**VOLUNTEERING:** There are multiple community engagement and education programs that ADT hosts or participates in throughout the year. As a company member, you may be called upon to volunteer. While not mandatory, we strongly encourage our company dancers to participate as volunteers. Doing so enriches the experience of a company member and most importantly impacts the lives of members of the River Region community.

**ATTIRE REQUIREMENTS:** All dancers are expected to adhere to the established criteria of attire traditional to professional dance programs. Male and female dancers are expected to wear the correct style and color of leotard and the appropriate shoe for each of the dance disciplines (i.e. ballet, jazz, and pointe). ADT embraces the diversity and uniqueness of each of its beautiful dancers. Flesh colored tights and shoes are welcome in classes. Hair must be properly secured as required for each class. Hair that is secured in a tight bun or cropped close to the head are a must. This is important in dance training for two reasons: it ensures that hair will not fall out of place into the dancer's face and eyes, and the tightness of the hair to the head helps the dancer with a technique used in turns called "spotting." Dancers will be required to remove braids, weaves, and extensions for all performances. These create too much volume and cause a problem in securing the hair, therefore detracting from the benefits mentioned above. **Please note: Hair and costume requirements for performances are at the discretion of the Artistic Director and/or Choreographer. Dancers may be asked, for the sake of uniformity, to wear a particular color of tights, or fix their hair in a specific way. They may be asked to wear their bun at a specific height. Please be co-operative. It is ADT's goal to present polished, professional performances!**

**THEATER ÉTIQUETTE:** Other than your own tights and footwear, the costumes, headpieces, and earrings provided as your costume during a performance are the property of the Alabama Dance Theatre. The Costume Committee will handle cleaning and repairs of the costumes; please notify them immediately if there are any cleaning or repair needs. Keep up with your costumes. There are hangers and storage for your use in the dressing rooms. Sometimes we borrow costumes and props; treat them well and do not lose them.

When you are dressing for a performance backstage, it is an exciting time. Please respect your fellow artists' preparation time and space. Keep your area clean. Keep your voice at a moderate volume downstairs and do not speak backstage in the wings - the audience may hear you!

**HEALTH & NUTRITION:** ADT advocates for good nutrition for its dancers. Dance is not only a highly visual art form but is physically demanding as well. Sound nutrition, proper rest, and good health are an extremely important part of a dancer's success. This includes maintaining a healthy weight, especially regarding pointe work. The dancer's BODY is his or her instrument. It must be respected and properly cared for. ADT implements this mindset by allowing for a 10 minute break per every 1.5 hours of rehearsal. We understand that the dancers are working to maintain a strenuous and busy lifestyle and encourage our dancers to listen to and take care of their bodies. Good nutrition is a topic emphasized every year during Summer Seminar through special lectures given by guest speakers. Education regarding nutrition is essential for dancers! ADT is happy to recommend a nutritionist if needed.

Another way that dancers should make sure to maintain a healthy body is through strength training. Conditioning muscles outside of class aids in reducing injuries and in improving the dancer's performance capabilities. Taking advantage of conditioning classes offered is a great way to enhance one's dance training. Feel free to ask your instructors for tips on stretching and caring for feet and muscles.

**RDA/SOUTHEAST:** As a member of ADT, you are also a member of Regional Dance America/Southeast. This is a distinct honor achieved by founding Artistic Director Kitty Seale and former ADT dancers. Being a member of this prestigious organization has been achieved by only a select number of companies in the Southeast. Additionally, ADT is ranked as an Honor Company in the region. ADT attends a regional festival for 5 days, normally scheduled in late April/early May. All Junior and Senior Company members are required to attend. Apprentices may only attend with the permission of the Artistic Director. A signed Commitment Form and a non-refundable deposit are required on October 1st. Company Members, parents, and staff must join RDA Associate to participate in a festival each year. All Company members are asked to support and participate in the Festival fundraisers. Any member not participating will not benefit from the Festival fund.

**ACADEMICS:** ADT expects Company members to maintain good academic standing. ADT faculty and staff support parents in their efforts to ensure each dancer's academic success. Study Hall is available for the dancers after school in the large auditorium. Missing class due to incompleteness or falling behind in your schoolwork is not considered an excused absence. Please keep the lines of communication open.

**SUMMER CLASSES:** Summer dance classes are required for ADT Company members either at ADT or an approved dance program elsewhere. ADT offers 5-6 weeks of summer classes in addition to the Summer Seminar. Summer classes ensure a dancer's continued growth; they stay in shape without regressing, build strength and endurance to help prevent injuries, and enhance performance skills. Please plan ahead and arrange your schedule so that you are able to participate in summer classes. These classes are followed each year by ADT's annual Summer Seminar Intensive, taught at a high level by professional master teachers. Dancers will want to be in top shape in order to participate to their fullest capacity in *Stars on the Riverfront*.

**SEMINAR:** All Company dancers are required to take the Summer Seminar Intensive during 2 weeks in July and perform in the production of *Stars on the Riverfront*. This is a highlight and vital part of our Season. Dancers must obtain permission from the Artistic Director to miss Seminar, and a partial fee may be required.



## Financial Commitment for Company Members

### **Company uniforms**

All company dancers are required to have Company pants & jackets approximately \$90. Company T-shirts are optional \$25.

### **RDA/Southeast Festival**

All Senior and Junior Company Members will attend RDA/Southeast Festival. Apprentices who are age 12 by January 1st are encouraged to attend with the Director's permission. Anticipated costs are included with the audition packet. Payments are accepted September-March. A non-refundable deposit of \$250 and Participation Form are due no later than October 1st. ADT will conduct several fundraisers to help defray the cost for our dancers. **All company members are asked to support and participate in ALL Festival fundraisers.** Any member not participating in ALL fundraisers will not benefit from the Festival fund.

### **Summer Seminar/Stars on the Riverfront**

Seminar is required for all company members. Approximate cost is \$450 (discounted to \$400 if you register early!).

### **Tickets**

Parents are required to purchase tickets for one performance of each production. Tickets may be purchased online by going to ADT's website and clicking the "Buy Tickets" button. In addition to the tickets you purchase for your family, please encourage your extended family and friends to buy tickets to our performances. Ticket prices range \$15-\$30 for ADT performances.

### **Cast Party & DVD Orders**

All company members are encouraged to attend our cast parties. We have two cast parties- after the Spring performance and after the Stars on the Riverfront. Cast Party is \$12-\$15 per person. DVD's are \$25-\$30.

### **Donations**

Over ¼ of Alabama Dance Theatre's budget is derived from contributions. Any size contribution is welcome. If you know of parents, family members, friends, or businesses that might be willing to contribute, please encourage them to do so or let us know to contact them. Donations may be made in honor or in memory of someone special. Donations may be made online by going to ADT's website, clicking to go to the "Donate" page and then scrolling down to click "Support ADT."

### **Tuition Payments**

Tuition is divided into 10 equal payments (August through May). There is a \$10 discount for company members. Extra classes are strongly encouraged. Additional classes include Jazz, Hip Hop, Modern, Contemporary, Broadway, Composition/Choreography). Please refer to the brochure for final tuition costs. For the summer, session tuition is higher since more classes are offered at the upper levels. Reminder: Tuition is due on the 1<sup>st</sup> with a late fee of \$30 for any tuition not received by the 5<sup>th</sup>.

### **Annual Registration fee**

ADT requires an annual class registration form and registration fee of \$50 due no later than August 1.

**Recital fees**

Company members are required to be in Recital for their Ballet Class and may choose to be in recital for their other classes (jazz, modern, etc.). The recital fee is \$135 for the first class and \$110 for additional classes.

**Recital pictures**

This is an optional expense. There will be additional recital photos available for purchase in the spring.



**Alabama Dance Theatre**  
**at the Armory Learning Arts Center**  
**Kate Seale Smith, Artistic Director**  
**1018 Madison Avenue**  
**Montgomery, AL 36104**  
**(334) 625-2590**  
**E-mail: [ADTDance1@gmail.com](mailto:ADTDance1@gmail.com)**  
**Website: [www.alabamadancetheatre.com](http://www.alabamadancetheatre.com)**