



Dancers' Symposium Policy Papers

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Auditions

Auditions occur at the beginning of each semester. Any individual directly affiliated with Carnegie Mellon who has paid their Student Activities fee is welcome to participate in Auditions regardless of background or dance style preference. (In some cases, members of the University of Pittsburgh or other local communities may participate as well.) Experience is not necessary. All Dancers have the right to a fair Audition process.

Audition Process

The Audition process may take anywhere from 3-5 hours, on average. The breakdown of events is as follows:

- Dancers arrive & check-in starts at 11:30am
- Explanation of DS Constitution, audition process, and Introduction of Directors starts at noon
- Choreographers introduce themselves and show 30 seconds of their piece
- Directors and Dancers warm-up and teach an audition piece
- Dancers are given 30 minutes to practice and to complete dance preference sheet with ranking
- (Directors enter in the ranking and make a master spreadsheet indicating who tried out for which pieces)
- Dancers audition in groups of 8 starting from Dancer #1, all will perform twice and will be videotaped
- Once the audition is finished Dancers are asked to leave
- Choreographers are given the master spreadsheet and are allowed to watch the audition tape once
- Choreographers complete the Dancer selection sheet and are asked to leave
- Directors place the Dancers
- Dancers are notified within 2 days

The order of dances is determined by the order in which they are listed on the Dancer Preference Sheets (mostly grouped by dance style).

Before auditioning (i.e. getting on stage), all Dancers **MUST** turn in their Dancer Preference Sheet with their rankings of dances and their Dancer number. Otherwise Directors will not be able to place them in any dance, and they will automatically go onto the Unassigned Dancer List. Dancers may leave after they audition.

Any individual who cannot be present at Auditions but would like the possibility of being placed in a dance should email dancer@andrew.cmu.edu, or contact one of the Directors. This *must* occur *before* the Audition process has begun. If this is done, the individual may be placed on the Unassigned Dancer List, along with any Dancers who attended Auditions but could not be placed in a dance due to whatever circumstances. Choreographers consult this list if they are in need of additional Dancers for their piece. (See the policy paper on Dancer Placement and Unassigned Dancer List for more details.)

Checkpoint

Checkpoint is held approximately mid-way into the semester. A Choreographer is responsible for having at least 1/2 of the dance taught and in presentable condition by this time. (Depending on the Checkpoint date, this may change to a minimum of 2/3 of the dance.)

Choreographers must sign up for a time slot (approx. 15 minutes long) and inform their Dancers of when and where they must attend Checkpoint. A dance cannot be performed at the Show unless performed at Checkpoint and approved by the Directors.

After a dance is performed, the Choreographer(s) must meet with the Directors to discuss costume ideas, special lighting requests, and/or any concerns the Choreographer(s) may have.

Directors may offer to video tape Checkpoint performances for Choreographers to better review and revise their choreography or stage design.

In order to maintain a high quality Show and uphold the Dancers' Symposium name, Directors reserve the right/responsibility of assuring that all dances meet certain performance expectations. If a dance does not appear to meet these standards, the Directors will speak with the Choreographer(s) to see what action, if any, needs to be taken.

Costume Closet

Each semester Choreographers have the option of choosing clothing and/or props from the DS Costume Closet. Choreographers must sign out any items that are borrowed from the Costume Closet, recording the number of items and their descriptions. Anything borrowed from the Costume Closet must be returned to the Directors directly after Curtain Call on the last night of the Show. If anything is not returned, the Choreographer(s) who borrowed the item(s)—not the Dancer(s)—are financially responsible for what is missing.

Each item borrowed from the Costume Closet will be “rented” at a price equivalent to \$2.00. This can come from the budget allotted to each Choreographer. For example, if a Choreographer chooses to borrow shirts for each of his/her Dancers, then there will be \$8.00 per Dancer remaining in their budget for further purchases. This “rental” policy is meant to encourage Choreographers to use the Costume Closet to their benefit, rather than making unnecessary purchases.

Costume Closet “office hours” will be held at various times throughout the semester, usually around Checkpoint and right before the Show. Choreographers are encouraged to search through the Costume Closet to borrow costumes or to get ideas.

Purchase of reusable costumes are encouraged, and purchase of personalized costumes are discouraged.

Dancer Placement and the Unassigned Dancer List

Dancer Placement

After each Auditions process is complete, the Directors begin the Dancer Placement process. This involves a complex mapping of Dancers to Dances, according to both the Choreographers' requests and the Dancers' rankings. Dancer Placement involves the following:

- Directors consult each Choreographer Sheet and determine which Dancers can be placed in that dance
- Placement occurs when:
 - the Choreographer has listed the Dancer as either a "definite" or an "alternate"
 - AND the Dancer has ranked the Choreographer's piece
 - AND the Dancer has not already been placed in his/her max number of dances*

*Note: The maximum number of dances a Dancer can be in during any given semester is 3, unless they are also choreographing or in a Senior Solo/Showcase. (See the Constitution or the policy paper on Senior Solos/Showcases for more details.) However, a Dancer may request that they be placed in less than 3 dances as a maximum, and that request will be granted during the Dancer Placement process. For any Dancer who does not mark a maximum on his/her Dancer Preference Sheet, the Directors will first call the Dancer to verify. Otherwise, Directors will assume the default for that semester, 2 dances, depending on how many people went through the Auditions process that semester.

There are always special considerations or circumstances that must be taken into account during the Placement process, which may seem to be/cause errors but in fact are completely correct (ex. a dance may require the same number of male and female Dancers). Any and all concerns regarding Dancer Placement should be addressed immediately to the Directors.

Unassigned Dancer List

Any Dancer who is not, for whatever reasons, placed in a dance will be placed on the Unassigned Dancer List. This is not an indication of a Dancer's ability or desirability, by any means.

Additionally, any individual who cannot be present at Auditions but would like the possibility of being placed in a dance should email Dancer@andrew.cmu.edu, or contact one of the Directors. This *must* occur *before* the Auditions process has begun.

Any Choreographer, whose dance is not filled, for whatever reasons, may request/invite Dancers from the Unassigned Dancer List and *only* from the Unassigned Dancer List until checkpoint. After checkpoint, Choreographer can pull in anyone in DS meeting the maximum dance criteria OR anyone with past DS experience. This is allowed due to the time constraint the Choreographer faces and to meet the desired show quality.

Music and Choreography Restrictions

Music

A dance may be a maximum of 3 minutes and 30 seconds long. There are certain circumstances under which this time limit may be subject to change, such as size of dance (i.e. number of Dancers) or length of Show.

It is the responsibility of the Choreographer(s) to censor choreography and lyrics to the song(s) of choice. (Please see details below regarding Strong Language/Choreography.)

Once used, a song may not be used again for at least 3 years. If a remixed version of a song is used, the original song may not be used for 1 year.

A song cannot be in a Show more than once. If more than one Choreographer selects the same song, they must contact one another and come to an agreement about who will use it. If an agreement cannot be reached, they should consult the Directors, who will mediate a resolution.

Choreography

In regards to borrowing dance moves or being inspired by other performances, if 32 or more counts of *unoriginal* choreography are used, they must be given credit in the Show's program info.

Strong Language/Choreography

The Dancers' Symposium Show is a performance for people of all ages. Although there are no direct restrictions on the use of harsh language and/or suggestive choreography, it is important that dances maintain a high level of artistic value with tasteful and non-insulting performances.

Strong language (profanity) is to be used only when relevant to the piece. Strong language may not stand alone. It should have no insulting or condescending implications.

Choreography should always be pertinent to the overall performance. No degrading moves that might be interpreted in a disdainful manner are permitted. All choreography must be clear in context. All Dancers reserve the right to remove themselves from a dance if they do not feel comfortable with the content of the choreography.

All music and choreography is subject to the Directors' discretion. Directors reserve the right to require the removal of certain words or dance moves in order to maintain a tasteful performance.

If there is any question about the appropriateness of the music or an element of the dance, the Directors and/or the Dancers' Symposium Advisor should be consulted.

Outside Organizations

In support of diversity and greater opportunity to showcase student performance, Dancers' Symposium welcomes other dance-related organizations to participate in our Show. They are, however, subject to the following guidelines:

- Outside Organizations must sign the Outside Organization Contract which states all their rights and responsibilities in full. Failure to abide by these regulations may result in suspension of the Outside Organization the following semester.
- If the Outside Organization does not open itself to DS members through the DS Auditions process, they are not eligible to receive DS funding for costumes. DS also cannot guarantee rehearsal space to closed dances.
- Outside Organization dances are subject to the same regulations as DS dances (ex. time restriction for music), and an appointed representative of the Outside Organization must meet all Choreographer deadlines (lighting and program information, final cut of music, etc.). ***Also, all Dancers in the piece must participate in Checkpoint, Tech Rehearsal and Dress Rehearsal, AND must stay for the Curtain Call on both nights of the Show.***
- No more than 3 pieces in a given Show may be produced by Outside Organizations. If more than 3 petitions to be included in the performance, Directors will review the applications and select 3 based upon criteria that may include the style of the piece, the music, the history of the organization, etc.

If an Outside Organization is willing and able to meet these criteria, DS will happily include them in the Show.

If a DS member participates in an outside organization, then it counts toward the absolute max of 5 dances per show. If a DS choreographer participates in an outside organization as a Choreographer, then it does not count towards the 2 choreography per show.

Note: Dancers' Symposium will not give out Dancers' email addresses or other private information to Outside Organizations or any other parties, nor will they allow the misuse of the DS d-lists.

Senior Solos/Showcases

Seniors in DS are allowed to perform a Solo dance or a combined Senior Showcase with permission from the Directors. Any interested party must fill out an application to be reviewed by the Directors no later than three weeks before Checkpoint of that semester.

A maximum of 3 Solos/Showcases can be performed in any given Show.

The suggested time for a Solo or Showcase piece is two minutes, and cannot exceed two minutes and thirty seconds.

Note: a Dancer can participate in an absolute max of 5 dances per semester, and 2 pieces choreographed within DS. Senior solo counts toward the absolute max requirement, but not towards the choreography limit.

Like all other dances, a Solo or Showcase must be performed at Checkpoint and reviewed under the same requirements. (See the Checkpoint policy paper for more details.) All other policies and restrictions outlined in the Constitution and other policy papers also apply to Solo and Showcase dances.

Solo/Showcase performers may or may not be given rehearsal space depending on the amount of space allocated to DS that semester.

Show Order

Each semester after Checkpoint, the Directors determine Show Order, or the order in which dances will be performed during that semester's Show. Extensive thought is given to time required for Dancers' costume changes, stylistic redundancies, and audience appeal. An attempt is made to balance the two Acts in length, quality, and style. All these factors, and more, are taken into consideration with the goal of maximizing the production value of each Show.

Tech and Dress Rehearsals

Tech and Dress Rehearsals are held each semester during the week before Show. Choreographers must have their dances finished and taught by this time. They must inform their Dancers of the dates of the Tech Rehearsals and Dress Rehearsal, and they must ensure that every Dancer in their dance is present at both. The order of dances of both the Tech and Dress Rehearsals will follow the Show Order, but Tech Rehearsals will be split over two days according to the Show's Acts. (Please see the Show Order policy paper for more details on how Show Order is determined.)

Tech Rehearsals are held to ensure that lighting and music will be adequate for the Show performance. After performing their dance, Choreographer(s) should consult with the organization providing tech support (lighting, music, etc.) for the Show to go over lighting and stage design. Dancers and Choreographers are allowed to stay for the entirety of either or both Tech Rehearsals, but are only required to be present for the dance(s) they are in.

Dress Rehearsal is held to make sure that the Show is ready to be performed. In order for this to be done, all Choreographers and Dancers are required to participate in both tech and dress rehearsals. Dancers and Choreographers are required to stay for the entirety Dress Rehearsal.

All costuming should be worn at Dress Rehearsal; makeup is optional. Choreographers are responsible for making sure that all their choreography, costuming, makeup, and props are in order for the Show.

Curtain Call will be taught at Dress Rehearsal. All Dancers and Choreographers must be present for this.

In order to maintain a high quality Show and uphold the Dancers' Symposium name, Directors reserve the right/responsibility of assuring that all dances meet certain performance expectations. If a dance does not appear to meet these standards, the Directors will speak with the Choreographer(s) to see what action, if any, needs to be taken.

DS Company

DS Company (official name TBD) is initiated in the summer of 2009 to establish a permanent Dancers' Symposium performance team.

Purpose

- To fill the greater need for artistic exploration in the dance community
- To provide extended dance experience and periodic performance opportunities to DS dancers and choreographers
- To encourage collaboration within DS, with other CMU organizations, and with non-CMU organizations in the greater Pittsburgh area

Structure

- 1 Artistic Director (AD)
 - Selected by the Directing staff based on ability, personality, and contributions to DS
 - Responsible for choreography, lighting, staging, music, costumes and other rehearsal and performance related parameters
 - AD evaluated at the end of the semester by the Directing staff
- Director Point of Contact
 - One Director assigned to keep in regular touch with the AD and the dancers
 - Assists in logistics, planning, and marketing of the company and its performances
 - Ensures proper communication occurs among the company, Directing staff, and DS community
- Company Dancers
 - Up to 10 dancers at any given time, performance appearance guaranteed
 - Selected by audition, all DS dancer responsibilities and expectations apply, see Constitution
- Alternate Dancers
 - Up to 5 dancers at any given time, performance appearance not guaranteed
 - Selected by audition, all DS dancer responsibilities and expectations apply, see Constitution

Process

- Directing staff cannot be an AD, AD and dancers must have past and/or present DS experience
- Audition is held a week or two after DS auditions every semester, structured and led by the AD
- 1 to 3 one-hour rehearsals a week led by the AD, contingent upon rehearsal space
- 0 to 1 one-hour dance class a week taught by anyone within the company or by guest teacher, contingent upon rehearsal space, DS dancers are welcome to attend
- 1 to 3 performances per semester expected, additionally perform at all DS shows

The company members are expected to embrace the opportunities, to embody professionalism, and to be open to both the DS community and the greater Pittsburgh dance community.