

Pointe Academy Teachers



Albert “Hank” Adams Co-Director, began studying dance in Des Moines before finishing his training in Chicago’s Stone Cameron School. He danced professionally in Denver, Milwaukee and New York. Since returning to Iowa in 1991 he has danced, taught and choreographed for Des Moines Public Schools, The Des Moines Playhouse, Dance Co’Motion, the Neuman Dance Project, the Des Moines Metro Opera and Iowa Dance Theatre. He choreographs extensively for The Pointe Academy Dance Ensemble

Elizabeth “Beth” Harano Adams Co-Director, came to Des Moines in 1990 as Principal Ballerina for Ballet Iowa. Her ballet training includes scholarships to San Francisco Ballet School, School of American Ballet in NYC, Louisville Ballet and the Frankfurt Musik Hochschule in Germany. Her ten year professional career included Ballet Met, Ballet West, Ballet Oklahoma, Colorado Ballet, Chautauqua Festival Ballet and the Neuman Dance Project. She stages classical masterworks and provides original choreography for the Pointe Academy Dance Ensemble.

Parents of our students are important and treated with respect. We will always support your parenting decisions for your child. We will work together to do what is best for your dancer. You can also contribute to the health of the studio by “Rounding up” your tuition payments in support of the scholarship program or making annual or special donations (which may be matched by your employer) to help us keep costs down for all families.

NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY

THE POINTE Academy is a nonprofit tax exempt educational organization that admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin, or sexual orientation in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies and scholarship program.



Student Handbook

Albert “Hank” and Elizabeth Adams
Co-directors

515-279-0742

6151 Thornton Ave Suite 100
Des Moines, IA 50321

www.ThePointeAcademy.org

(Revised 2020)

THE POINTE ACADEMY

of Ballet & Contemporary Dance

The “No Recital” School

What’s THE POINTE of not doing a recital?

We believe in “the slow road to elegance”. It takes a lot of time to set a “muscle memory” into growing bodies. Preparing for a recital, can be an interruption and distraction from this training. Taking the time to develop a solid dance technique and vocabulary can lead to better parts in The Nutcracker, admission to college dance programs or a career in the dance industry. Professional dancers will perform a lot, but a dancer won’t get there until they’ve acquired the skills that will make them employable and give them a leg up on the competition.

What about Performance Opportunities?

We offer two ways to practice performance skills at the student level. There is more information about our **Showcase** and the **Dance Ensemble** later in this Handbook. We also encourage our dancers to utilize their dance skills in, for example, productions by Iowa Dance Theatre, school swing choirs, dance teams or theater productions.

THE POINTE of our program

Ballet and Pointe training is our strength and our legacy. Your teachers have all danced professionally or at the collegiate level and these experiences help guide dancers toward their goals. The greatest lessons we can teach a student is to believe in themselves, define a direction and capture a vision for their future. It’s up to the dancer to do the work of course, but your teachers at the Pointe Academy have been there and know what it takes.

About Class Size

Nurturing dancers requires individual attention as dancers learn at different rates and unique bodies require unique approaches. At the younger levels, enrollment is limited to 12 dancers per class. We do not use student teachers except occasionally as an assistant. Your dancer will be carefully instructed by a dance professional in every class they take from age 3 to adult.

Private lessons are available as well, but should only be taken in conjunction with our regular group classes. Students study in a group environment because dance is, after all, a social endeavor. Learning and working in a group environment is the way it’s done the world over.

About the Dance Studio Facility:

6151 Thornton Ave Suite 100, Des Moines, IA 50321

As of June 2019 the studio is just south of Park Ave. on 63rd street. The building is dedicated to dance training, and also hosts rehearsals for Iowa Dance Theatre. **Ample Parking** is always free and available during our class times. Enter/exit from the back of the building so as not to interrupt classes.

Use of the Lobby: Use of the kitchenette including FREE COFFEE, is available in our lobby area for students and parents and siblings during class times. We encourage you to use the coat racks, and make yourself at home. During inclement weather, an area for your wet shoes is available by the front door. Since the lobby is not separated from the front studio by a soundproof wall, please keep your noise level to a minimum while classes are in session. Viewing your dancers in class is allowed from the carpeted areas, parents or friends are not allowed on the dance floor during classes.

Use of the Dressing Rooms/Bathroom: 2 large 1 person bathrooms are available for dancers to change into their dress code for class. Please do not leave any personal belongings in the bathrooms, but keep your “dance togs” and “street clothes” together in your dance bag which should be brought with you into the studio during class rather than leaving it in the lobby. Please leave the bathrooms in good and clean condition for the comfort of all.

Use of the Dance Studio: Wearing street shoes on the special dance surface of the studio floors is discouraged in the strongest way possible. Both studios are equipped with a “sprung floor” for the safety of the dancers. Proper class discipline and decorum should be observed in the studio at all times.

Mission Statements:

THE POINTE ACADEMY of Ballet and Contemporary Dance offers serious and enjoyable dance classes for the whole family without the interruption and expense of a recital. Students have the opportunity to study from teachers who had professional dance careers, and who have a teaching philosophy that dictates upbeat, constructive instruction focusing on the pleasure of participation, and the discipline inherent in DANCE.



THE POINTE ACADEMY DANCE ENSEMBLE’s mission is to produce live dance performances as a way to enhance our community and Iowa’s youth.

Discipline and Expectations

Student Conduct: Students are expected to be prompt, prepared to work, attentive, and considerate to instructors and fellow students. Regular attendance is expected. Gum, food and open drink containers are only allowed in the lobby. Students should arrive physically and mentally prepared to participate in dance classes. Any limitations to participation should be brought to the attention of your instructor before class begins. Adherence to the dress code is required for all students in every class. THE POINTE ACADEMY participates in the tradition of student applause at the conclusion of class.

Parent Participation: Parents are allowed to view classes from the lobby at any time. The Showcase is your best chance to view your dancer's progress, and to bring your family and friends to see their work. Parents and siblings with adult supervision, are welcome to use the lobby area during your student's class, but avoid boisterous activity that may disrupt ongoing classes. Please make an appointment to discuss important matters with the teacher since breaks between classes are not long enough. Some of your questions may be answered on our website: www.ThePointeAcademy.org We are available to you by phone at 515-279-0742 or by e-mail: hank@ThePointeAcademy.org.

Acknowledgment of Risk and Waiver of Liability: THE POINTE ACADEMY training emphasizes safety and injury preventing techniques; however any class involving physical activity could result in physical injury. Participation in classes implies agreement to the following terms: Students or the student's Parents/Guardians are solely responsible for any and all liability costs, damages, and expenses incurred as a result of injury sustained from participation in dance classes at The Pointe. The Pointe Academy and its instructors, servants, agents and employees will not be held liable for medical costs or damage to property or personal injury sustained or arising from, attendance at, or participation in dance classes, activities or events sponsored by THE POINTE ACADEMY.

We are a non-profit 501(c)3 educational organization which means that your donations to The Pointe Academy are completely tax-deductable. Special events such as The Pointe Academy Dance Ensemble performances cost money, and we are grateful whenever individuals (sometimes matched by their employers) offer to help cover those costs. Some families choose to "round up" their tuition payments in support of the scholarship program and some make annual donations to The Pointe Academy to help us keep costs down for all. We also accept grant money from foundations and other granting organizations, so let us know if you know of additional funding sources.

Dance Head Start (ages 3-6)

Ages 3-4 Mini Movers a ½ hr class

One class per week suggested. Class emphasis is on the joy of movement.

Large motor skills are introduced. Skipping, hopping, leaping etc

Ages 5-6 Pre-ballet a 45 min class

One class per week suggested. Class concentrates on developing flexibility, musicality, spatial awareness, posture, co-ordination, confidence, and basic ballet terminology.

Dress Code:

Hair must be secured away from face and neck.

Girls:

Pink ballet slippers

Pink tights

Pastel pink skirted leotard.

Boys:

Black Ballet Shoes

Black tights or tight fitting

sweat pants

White T-shirts - tucked in



What's THE POINTE?

Children at this age are building basic body awareness. Our classes are designed to be fun while at the same time working on building strength, flexibility and coordination. Developing the joy of movement and basic musicality is the first step to wanting to be proficient as a dancer. We'll spend time with your children, inspiring them to see how hard work and practice can make their natural talents bloom.

Dance A, B, C's ages 6-12

Level-A (1st and 2nd year of Ballet Training)

At least 2 classes per week suggested. Proper placement and body strengthening are stressed. Ballet barre work is introduced and Tap/Modern class is available.

Level-B (3rd & 4th year of Ballet Training)

At least 3 classes per week suggested. Ballet vocabulary is increased to include Pirouettes and a full Ballet barre. Tap/Modern and Theater Jazz classes also available at this level.

Level-C & D (5th & 6th year of Ballet Training)

At least 3 classes per week suggested. Level-D Ballet classes conclude with 15 minutes of pre-pointe exercises at the barre. Tap, Modern, Theater Jazz, Urban Jazz, and Body Conditioning classes are encouraged to broaden dance vocabulary while Ballet steps are being perfected.

Dress Code:

Hair must be secured away from face and neck.

Girls Ballet:

Pink tights and ballet shoes

Black skirted leotard

Boys Ballet:

Black tights/pants & ballet shoes & "dance belt"

White T-shirts - tucked in

Tap/Jazz Classes:

Low heeled Tap Shoes or Jazz shoes

Neat (tightly fitted) dance clothing of any color.

Modern classes:

Leotard and "convertible", or footless tights (or a unitard)



What's THE POINTE?

The Dance A, B, C's are the building blocks of dance technique. We teach dance in the time honored tradition of a structured dance class. The time your child spends at this level will give them the skills they need to move into the upper level classes. Dancers in level C/D may be in the Pre-PADE performance group if sufficient skill has been demonstrated.

Intermediate/ Advanced (Ages 12-Adult)

Level-5: Intermediate

Level-6: Advanced Intermediate

Level-7: Advanced

Eight to eleven classes per week suggested. Our program is designed to prepare dancers for apprentice programs in professional ballet companies, but can be adapted to meet the dance goals of recreational dancers and athlete's cross-training. Ballet, Pointe, Modern, Tap and Jazz classes are offered. The emphasis is always on proper (injury preventing) technique, athleticism, and artistry; building strength, coordination, musicality, and flexibility.

Dress Code:

Same as Dance A, B, C's except any black leotard is acceptable for the girls. Your teacher may require that all extraneous clothing be removed unless it is protecting an injury.

Dancers in levels 5 and 6 may be invited to be in the performing group, THE POINTE ACADEMY DANCE ENSEMBLE. Involvement in the Ensemble is not required to continue training, but is encouraged for those who have demonstrated a willingness to make the commitment of time and effort.

A word about Pointe Shoes...

Dancing "en pointe" is the dream of every aspiring ballerina. Here at THE POINTE ACADEMY, students **must be at least 11.5 years old** and must have strong ballet placement before being allowed to dance in "toe shoes." It is imperative that growth plates in a dancer's feet have fully formed before pointe shoes can be worn safely. Experience shows that dancers with strong ballet technique can go on pointe easily, but dancers who begin pointe work too early or with poor technique suffer needlessly and never truly achieve the grace on pointe that makes it a desirable endeavor.

Lifelong Learning

Adults are welcome in any technique class on the regular schedule that is at their skill level. Or may attend the adults only ballet or Tap classes. *Many adults take advantage of the 10 Class-card system*

Body Conditioning Classes: Meets 3 times per week. The class is a low-to-no impact exercise class that stretches tones and strengthens muscles while sweating the stress away. Adults in the class encourage each other to work at their own pace.

Senior Fitness: classes meet at our studio in the mornings. It is never too late to begin, but it is always a bad time to stop moving your body for health maintenance and muscle toning.

How to Enroll in Classes

Simply fill out a registration form and pay your annual membership fee at any time during the year. Fill out a new registration form each fall. Class placement is not based on age, but ability, so a free placement class is required for new students. Please pay with cash or check/

Quarterly Tuition: THE POINTE ACADEMY operates on a quarterly (12 weeks) payment system. Tuition is due at the beginning of each quarter. Refunds are not issued for missed classes: students are requested to make up missed classes in another class at their level or below within the quarter of the missed class. We do not currently accept credit or debit cards.

How will I know when to pay? The dates of each quarter are on the website and the printed class schedule. In order to keep administrative expenses down, you will not receive a bill unless you are more than 2 weeks late with your tuition payment and it will include a \$20.00 late fee. Membership and Showcase fees are paid with your tuition payment as you enroll (or re-enroll) at the beginning of each school year.

How much do classes cost? The fee schedule is published on the website and as part of the printed class schedule. Fees are based on the number of classes taken (not the length of each class), so hour long classes are the same price as 90 min. classes. When you take more classes per week, your cost per class is reduced. There are discounts for families of 3 or more.

What is a "Class Card"? The flexible 10-CLASS CARD (aka "2 yr 10 card") is available to students who cannot commit to 12 classes within a quarter. Pay for 10 classes in advance, and then take those classes anytime within 2 years of your original purchase date. We'll hold the class card at the studio for you. Just take any class when you can and we'll keep track of the number of lessons you've taken. Buy a new class card when your old one is used up. Classes on the card system are less expensive than paying the single class rate. SUMMER CLASS CARDS are used for the summer quarter and they expire at the end of the summer term. These cards are less expensive per class than the "2 yr 10 card", and are offered in larger denominations than just 10 classes.

Financial Assistance there are two types of scholarships awarded to students demonstrating financial need and earnest dedication to dance:

- **Work scholarships** may be full or partial and include duties above and beyond the responsibility of dance class attendance.
- **Pre-professional Scholarships** may be full or partial and are given only to students who have professional dance career aspirations.

Parents may request a scholarship by asking any faculty member and demonstrating financial need. There are no limitations or restrictions on the eligibility of applicants. Scholarships must be approved by both the Board of Directors and the teaching staff and is subject to available funding.

Student Performance Opportunities:

What is the Showcase?

Every two years we get together as a school to celebrate the achievements of all the students. It is fun, educational, relaxed and lets students see all levels perform in a lecture demonstration format. All classes at each level combine for the performance, so during the 3 months that we are preparing for the showcase, you'll be preparing the same material in any class at your level.

•**Who:** All Pointe Academy Students ages 3-adult

•**When:** Usually in April or May

•**Where:** A proscenium stage is rented for the event.

•**Rehearsal times:** There's a mandatory "in studio" rehearsal the weekend before the showcase, and one "on stage" rehearsal that weekend. Published rehearsal times for each level are usually accurate.

•**Cost:** All participants pay a small showcase fee. There are no costumes to buy, just the dress code you wear for class. Any costumes are provided to students for the showcase are to be returned following the showcase.

•**Videos:** A professional videographer will record the Showcase for purchase. Personal video & photos may be taken during the rehearsals.

•**Photo Day:** In showcase years a professional photographer takes individual and class photos on the same day as the showcase during rehearsal time. You are not required to purchase photos, but it would be good if everyone is in their class photo.

What is THE POINTE ACADEMY DANCE ENSEMBLE?

Intermediate and Advanced dancers may be invited to join the Pointe Academy Dance Ensemble. With these performance opportunities come responsibilities, both to your fellow dancers and to your own training. See the Ensemble Guidelines. You'll learn classical ballet masterworks as well as contemporary, comic, and story ballets commissioned just for you.

Special Events:

Annual Summer Intensive Dance Day Camp: Beginning at age 9 we encourage all students to get the advantages of a professional school's summer intensive right here at home! During the weeks of intensive, you'll get 3-5 hours of class daily. Occasionally similar Dance Intensives are available during winter and spring breaks as well.

Spring Break New York Trip: A group of Intermediate/Advanced dancers travel with us to New York City to take at least 3 "open classes" per day all over the city. We'll attend at least one dance performance together. Parents are encouraged to join us to see how professional dancers train in New York. This is not an annual event, but is organized in years when sufficient interest is expressed by upper level dancers.

THE POINTE ACADEMY DANCE ENSEMBLE

Guidelines

Eligibility to be a member of THE POINTE DANCE ENSEMBLE:

- ☐ Membership is limited to students who have been invited to be a part of the company by THE POINTE ACADEMY DANCE ENSEMBLE artistic staff.
- ☐ Must be at least 12 years old and a current student at THE POINTE ACADEMY in level 5 or above.
- ☐ Must be enrolled and consistently attending at least 4 technique classes per week.
- ☐ Must be enrolled in at least one Ensemble class/rehearsal per week.

THE POINTE's commitment to Ensemble Members

Work to provide the highest quality training for the company members by:

1. Planning for adequate rehearsal time with professional coaching
2. Fostering a professional working environment in the studio and on the stage, holding everyone accountable to the highest possible standards
3. Assure financial stability by working within a reasonable budget.
4. Uphold the Ensemble's reputation for ethical business practices as a non-profit organization
5. Produce performances of the highest possible quality by:
 - ❖ securing quality repertory appropriate to current dancers,
 - ❖ backing up each performance with appropriate venue, sets, costumes and lighting tech,
 - ❖ casting dancers fairly and commensurate with their skill and devotion.

Company Members' responsibility to THE ENSEMBLE

1. Adhere to attendance requirements: 2 misses will put you in danger of having your "part" go to your understudy. Planned absences should be made known to the teachers as soon as they are known.
2. Strive to improve as a dancer by continued commitment to, and improvement in, technique classes. Attendance in the technique class prior to rehearsal is required.
3. Treat fellow students and faculty with respect, encouragement and compassion.
4. Work to grow as a performer by embracing any role you are assigned (whether it is soloist, corps member, or understudy) with enthusiasm. Do your homework and know the history of dance as it pertains to each role. Understand how your part relates to the other dancers.
5. Devote yourself to dance as an art form. Although dance career aspirations are not required for company members, it is understood that a professional environment is being cultivated within the company. Reverence for the artistic process is expected. A professional work ethic which should include:
 - ❖ consistent attendance at all rehearsals in the studio or theater

- ❖ being on time and prepared to work in classes and rehearsals
 - ❖ adhering to the "dress code" i.e. proper shoes, neat hair, use of "warmers," etc.
 - ❖ proper discipline, protocol and decorum in a class or performance setting
 - ❖ timely communication with directors about physical limitations and schedule conflicts
 - ❖ attendance at rehearsals while recovering from an injury, or non-contagious illness
6. Be honest with yourself about the level of commitment of time and focus you can devote to the company. Utilize and prioritize your time efficiently so as to uphold dance attendance commitments while maintaining high scholastic achievements.
 7. Assume responsibility as ambassadors for dance and THE POINTE ACADEMY in the community:
 - ❖ Healthy behaviors (including good eating habits) are mandatory
 - ❖ Demonstrate good manners and grace at all times
 - ❖ Promote and support quality dancing where it can be found
 - ❖ Communicate to the wider community, the joys of learning and dancing at THE POINTE

Responsibilities of Company Members' Families

1. Make sure dancers arrive at classes, rehearsals and performances on time and prepared with adequate shoes, dance clothing and equipment.
2. Arrange family schedules around important classes, rehearsals and performance dates.
3. "On time" payment of tuition for all technique classes and rehearsals
4. Attend performances and help broaden support for your child's chosen passion by inviting your friends, colleagues, acquaintances, etc. to come and enjoy a performance of THE POINTE DANCE ENSEMBLE.
5. Volunteer to help in all fundraisers and activities which support the group.
6. Consider putting THE POINTE ACADEMY on your list of favorite charities to support. Although a donation is NOT a prerequisite for your child's participation (and WILL IN NO WAY affect casting decisions or inspire favoritism) the long-term financial stability of the company is in everyone's best interest.
7. Parental attendance at company meetings is expected. Parents should make an appointment with the artistic staff or use an e-mail if additional communications are needed.
8. Work with the staff of THE POINTE to make your child's dance goals achievable. This may require participation in auditions for summer programs, enrolling in special intensive dance training events, participation in THE POINTE ACADEMY sponsored trips or other dance performances beyond the scope of The Ensemble. Utilize the knowledge of the staff of THE POINTE ACADEMY gain advice about how best to facilitate your child's dreams.