

AREN'T ALL DANCE STUDIOS BASICALLY THE SAME?
Consider these 10 points before choosing a Dance Studio:

1. QUALIFIED TEACHERS

All MPAC teachers are highly qualified, passionate and caring professionals who always put their students' best interests first. Most of the teachers at the other area schools have never danced professionally for a reputable company, nor have they earned a college degree in dance or even studied under a world renowned dance master. Sadly, most of the other teachers' listed qualifications are that they studied at the local dance school they currently teach at, or they paid to go to a "high volume mill" program (meaning they "studied" at a place that would take anyone that was willing to pay and not necessarily a reputable intensive program that enlists students through a rigorous audition process), or a teacher says, believe it or not, they are qualified to teach dance because their parent was a dance instructor.

ALL OF MPAC'S TEACHERS HAVE DANCED PROFESSIONALLY AND STUDIED UNDER SEVERAL OF THE BEST MASTERS OF THEIR TIME AND/OR HAVE EARNED AN ADVANCED COLLEGE DEGREE IN DANCE. MPAC's teachers and staff members bring with them a large, active network of professional connections in the world of dance and the arts community at large. In addition, most of MPAC's teachers are either first aid trained through the Red Cross or have a current CPR Certification. Find out more about each of our specific teachers under the "Teachers" link on our home web page.

2. PARENTS ALLOWED

Believe it or not, most dance studios in the area do not let parents watch classes...not even when a student is new and trying a class for the first time. We can't speculate as to what they are trying to hide, but at MPAC parents and guardians (as well other members of the family) are always welcome to watch classes, as long as they do so in quiet observance.

3. FAMILIES WELCOME

Some local dance studios have policies where parents have to drop their child off at the door and pick them up at the door when they are finished. At MPAC, we have an inviting lobby space where parents and students' siblings are more than welcome to wait. We have a small area for youngsters to play or work on a craft, and parents can relax on one of our comfy couches or chairs. We also have a television where people waiting in the lobby can watch one of MPAC's past productions or a child/family appropriate movie.

4. CLASSROOM TEACHING STYLE

When looking for a studio, pick one that focuses on dance education, not on competitions or the end-of-the-year recital. All of the other studios focus their class time on a single piece of choreography to be used in a dance competition or recital. Some even ONLY work on one dance for an end-of-year recital that they begin to learn in September. Dance education encourages individual work ethic and the satisfaction that comes from personal achievement rather than from a trophy or merely learning one dance, not to mention how expensive competitions are.

MPAC is proud to offer an on-going, professional dance education that allows children to learn proper technique and terminology while also having FUN! Our classes capture dancers' imagination and creativity, and since our Artistic Director was extensively trained under the Royal Academy of Dance, as well as Vaganova curricula, parents can rest assured that MPAC students are getting the proper education respective for their age, addressing each child's unique anatomical and psychological development.

While performances are taken seriously at MPAC, our priority is making sure that the students learn the proper foundations of a dance education; which includes the formal classroom experience, professional performance experience and regular participation with some of the world's top professional dance companies through workshops, master classes and seeing their performances.

5. PROMOTION OF STUDENTS' BEST INTERESTS

MPAC has a 10-year history of proving their students' interests come before all else. As such, we encourage students that are serious about growing in their dance education to look to other companies outside of MPAC where they can apply and audition for summer intensive programs, take classes with other great teachers and see as many dance shows as they can by as many different companies as they can. We know that a dance student is not best served by being forced to take only those classes offered at their local dance studio and by the same teacher or teachers all of the time. While it may not be the smartest "dollars and cents" practice, we promote learning to students, and even sometimes that means we push our most advanced students, who have learned all that they can from our teachers, out of our doors to go on to the next level of their dance education.

We love to hear from our former students, and often do throughout the year. MPAC is very proud of all of our former students, and we have a very long list of successful students who have made it into excellent college programs, professional companies and have gone on to very promising careers in and beyond the arts.

Of course, we are always there for our students, even when they do eventually move on. We help guide them through the whole process from finding auditions, learning about the various companies/college programs, putting together their headshots, bios and resumes as well as constructing and critiquing their audition pieces. We even give them valuable firsthand advice once they make it in.

When it comes to school work, grades are very important to us, and we work hand in hand with parents by supporting their decisions and not talking out against them. When a student is falling behind in school, we call on other students in the studio who know the subject(s) well to help tutor, and when necessary, we even suggest reducing or eliminating dance classes until the grades get back to where they need to be.

You'll find that the other studios in the area are very possessive and controlling over their students and you will be remised to find any of them encouraging their students to take classes outside of their own studio despite if the student would grow by doing so. You'll also find it difficult, if not impossible, to find a studio that cares enough about the student beyond the class they are paid to teach where they would even suggest dropping some or all of their classes.

6. FACILITIES

Dance is very often a high impact activity. Things like repetitive jumping can harm the body and lead to shin splints, damaged joints and even stress fractures. Slips, trips and falls are also very common for studios that don't have the proper surface intended for dance. That is why professional dance companies require 'floating' floors to preserve their dancers' physical well being along with a "Marley" dance floor. Our studio has a Marley dance floor lying on top of a professional floating floor that reduces fatigue and prevents injuries.

The studio also has a quality stereo and speaker system that allows our teachers to limit the volume needed to hear clarity in the music.

7. PROFESSIONAL-QUALITY PERFORMANCE EXPERIENCES

MPAC produces three major productions each year in addition to other performance opportunities that come along such as charitable benefit appearances, nursing home presentations and similar such activities. Our shows are kept to a manageable time length, approximately 2 hours or less, so you don't have to wait long to see your child. Rehearsals are well organized, comparatively speaking, and always on time.

All MPAC shows are optional, and students are welcome to take classes only, understanding that their class(es) will be extensively working on production numbers two weeks before each show.

Each December, MPAC presents a full ballet production of "The Nutcracker" complete with full costumes, backdrops, scenery and specialty lighting and effects. All MPAC students are invited to participate, but participation is not required. Students must let their teacher(s) know that they are interested in performing in "The Nutcracker" by mid-November. Handouts with specific information is distributed at the beginning of each Fall term (mid-to-late September).

In early Spring (typically March), MPAC's Dance Company presents a full dance show (either a classical ballet or contemporary ballet show) which also includes full costuming, sets, scenery, etc. These shows are only open to MPAC Dance Company Members to perform in, as well as guest artists and the occasional invited MPAC student that is not a Company Member (depending on the show). MPAC students who are not in the show are invited to attend the performance, FREE of charge.

Each May, the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend to be exact, MPAC holds an Annual Spring Recital and Variety Showcase. This is where each MPAC class presents a dance or two for their families and invited guests. In addition to the dances, we always like to mix things up with some live music presentations and a surprise or two to keep things interesting between numbers.

8. COSTUME FEES

Unlike the other studios in the area, MPAC rents costumes to students at a very low fee. For example, a student who participated in our May, 2011 Recital, who was in one dance number paid only \$33 for a rental fee as opposed to purchasing a costume that could range from \$75-\$180. Several students, in our May, 2011 Recital, were in five dances, and they each paid a \$75 rental fee in total for all five costumes.

Our rental fees include all costumes, personalized fittings, adjustments and accessories. This is a significant savings compared to all of the other dance studios in the area that make you buy a costume that could range from \$75-\$180 per dance! A teen student who is in several dances classes can end up paying several hundreds of Dollars in costume fees elsewhere, but that will never happen at MPAC.

9. REGISTRATION FEES

MPAC charges a low, one-time-only registration fee per student. All other dance studios charge an annual registration fee year after year. At MPAC, you can register one year, take the next year off, and then return to us and not have to pay the registration fee again.

10. SCHOLARSHIPS

MPAC provides opportunity to students who have a financial need and/or show strong interest in pursuing a career in dance. MPAC's scholarship fund offers two types of scholarships: (1) Tuition Scholarships allow all students to dance at MPAC despite any financial hardship, and (2) Auxiliary Scholarships reward select students continuing their arts education in college or a professional summer program. The financial hardship scholarships are always kept confidential, but the auxiliary scholarships are awarded at the Spring Recital each year.

In addition to scholarships, MPAC offers Internships and Teacher's Helper programs that also help reduce or eliminate tuition for classes, and there is a sibling/parent discount for multiple students from the same household. Unlike other studios that also offer a sibling discount and only give the reduction to the second or third student, MPAC applies this discount to all members of the household that take classes, including the first one.

MPAC believes that the arts are important and refuses to allow for things like financial hardships to be a reason for a student to stop dancing; especially if they love doing it. How many other studios in the area offer these types of programs that take away from their bottom line?