

Newsletter December 2020

You'd be forgiven for thinking that the least said about the past year, the better! But in the spirit of New Year positivity, it occurred to me that we actually have much to celebrate at HSD, and this seems a good time to reflect on our achievements in 2020, and to look forward to a brighter 2021.

BALLET, MODERN AND TAP EXAMS

Back in November 2019 we held RAD Ballet exams for students from Grade 1 up to Grade 5. Results came in January this year, and everyone received either a Merit or a Distinction - a fantastic achievement! We also held ISTD Modern and Tap exams in February, and also received outstanding results across all Grades. Some students took exams in all three genres within this short time frame, and impressed us with their all-round excellence.



MASTERS OF DANCE – THE HAWTH THEATRE



In February 2020, HSD were invited take part in this event at the Hawth Theatre. Several dance schools from across Surrey and Sussex took part, and showcased an extremely high level of talent. There was a great atmosphere on the day, with all the schools and students supporting each other back stage. Each school was asked to nominate their own 'dance star' and our award went to Lucy Barnard for her consistent hard work and also her help with the younger students. The organisers also chose a 'dancer of the day' from among all the participants, and that went to HSD's Alfie Milborrow. They praised Alfie for his energy and commitment, and felt he really stood out. Well done Alfie!

SOUTHERN DANCE CLASS AWARDS – PORTSMOUTH

In March – just a week or two before lockdown - two of our dancers attended the Southern Dance Class Awards in Portsmouth. Holly Whitefield and Lili Harding danced beautifully in all three categories of Ballet, Jazz and Tap. The competition was very strong, but Lili still managed to be chosen for the finals in each genre, and then won first place in the Jazz! I was really proud of both of them for representing HSD so strongly in our first competition of this type.



LOCKDOWN – IT DIDN'T KEEP HSD DOWN!

Of course any other live events we had planned all came screeching to a halt once the pandemic took hold. After the initial shock, it didn't take us long to get to grips with 'Zoom' (how funny to think now that we had never even heard of it at the time!) and to adapt to dancing in our living rooms. It was so disappointing to abandon show rehearsals, which had got off to such a great start, but at least we had enough rough footage of the dances to put a trailer together! Our end of year 'Zoom Party' was a great success and it was lovely to see so many faces of our mums and dads after weeks of no contact!



SOUTHERN DANCE CLASS AWARDS – ONLINE

As dance organisers also adapted to the 'new normal', SDCA moved their competition to Zoom also, and HSD had further success. Abbie Judd was placed 4th in her Commercial class, and Amelia Edson came 4th in her Ballet, and 4th in her Contemporary section. Again the standard was incredibly high and the extra challenge of competing from their homes made it an even more impressive result. Our group piece 'Birds of Paradise' also came 3rd with 86 marks and a Distinction in the nationwide Digital Performing Arts Festival – the only school to beat us have been world champions before!

GRADE 8 BALLET EXAMS – DECEMBER 2020



Despite a disrupted 6 months of dance training, and a second national lockdown in November, our Grade 8 Ballet students managed to film their RAD exam in December this year. I'm so proud of their achievement in reaching this final grade, and of how they approached it with calm positivity, despite the less than perfect situation. The official results won't be in for a while, but it's top marks from me!

STUDENT SUCCESS

Amelia Edson continues with the associate scheme 'Ballet Boost' and also their elite 'Academy of Balletic Arts' programme. Amelia has also been accepted for the 'Surrey Youth Ballet's' associate classes.

Lili Harding was accepted for the 'Elite Associates' scheme in Kent, offering extra ballet training to talented young dancers.

Olivia Barry joined the Brit School in September on their dance strand, following in the footsteps of Abbie Judd who is in her 2nd year of the Musical Theatre strand at Brit.

So - if we managed to achieve all of that in 2020 – just think what next year may have in store! Once again, an enormous and heartfelt **Thank you** for all your support. This year has made HSD even stronger, and built a close and supportive community. And now the only way is UP!

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL!! Miss Annie ☺