

Newtown High School of the Performing Arts provides students a unique environment through the richness of the performing arts curriculum experience. This occurs due to the high standard of talent in the classroom and the opportunity to collaborate creatively with like minded and similarly talented classmates.

Many opportunities for performance are provided within the school curriculum in Dance, Drama and Music class work, throughout the school year. These include solo performances, class-devised work and group performance tasks (see appendix for more curriculum details). Newtown High School of the Performing Arts also provides students with the opportunity to further enhance their performance skills through our co-curricular program. The co-curricula program is a gifted and talented program that both extends and complements the performing arts school curriculum. As such, it should be clearly understood that entry into the program is via a highly competitive audition process. **Not all students are successful in these auditions.**

The Co-curricular Policy addresses the three key words in our school motto:

- Equality comes from a sense of inclusiveness and fairness in the placement of our students in different styles of companies/ensembles. All students are encouraged to audition.
- Excellence is achieved through teacher direction in driving a high standard of performance technique and style; the potential for students to extend themselves in showcase companies/ensembles where they are exposed to a variety of works; outside performance opportunities including such events as the State Drama and Music Companies/Ensembles (run by the Performing Arts Unit), Opera House Festivals, Eisteddfods, the School Spectacular, Regional and State Festivals and charity events.
- Creativity comes from selecting a variety of works and the expressive interpretation of these works in performance; the ability for students to suggest material and the potential for teacher directors and students to rearrange or create new work to suit our companies/ensembles.

Showcase Companies/Ensembles are directed by faculty staff as well as directors from the greater arts community. The potential exists for faculty staff to select students to act as assistant or co-directors of companies/ensembles where appropriate.

All students in the school are able to audition for our showcase companies/ensembles in Dance,

Drama and Music. These auditions are held after school in Weeks 2 & 3 of Term One. Those students who are successful in these auditions are expected to commit for the whole school year. **Students are expected to demonstrate commitment to all their subject areas otherwise they may jeopardise their position in the ensemble/company.**

An ensemble/ company payment must be made each semester.

Priority should be given to all school performances.

Company/Ensemble members are expected to attend weekly rehearsals and all performances. If students are unable to attend rehearsals, parents/caregivers are required to inform company/ensembles directors. Continuous absenteeism will result in withdrawal from ensembles/companies.

Whereas, staff will seek to avoid in school rehearsal time clashes, with over 45 companies/ ensembles spread over 5 days, clashes are sometimes inevitable. In these cases students will need to prioritise and select which company/ ensemble they wish to commit to.

DRAMA

Audition Process

A prepared audition is essential for admittance into one of the nine or ten drama companies that run each semester. All students may audition for these companies. Students should, however, be aware that by successfully auditioning they are committing themselves to the company program for the whole year (with the exception of Year Twelve).

The Drama Company auditions require students to prepare a one to two minute monologue. These should be from a published play. Students are discouraged from sourcing their audition pieces from films. Poetic renditions are unacceptable.

A student's commitment to drama class work as well as whole school participation is also taken into account when deciding on inclusion into a drama company.

Students should be aware that weekend rehearsals are often required during the rehearsal process. The inability to attend these rehearsal times could affect their inclusion into a company.

Selection Criteria

The following criteria are applied to each student's audition piece:

- vocal skills – including projection, clarity, timing, pace, tone and dynamics
- physical skills – including control, energy, spatial awareness
- presenting/sustaining character – clarity in presentation, belief, conviction, energy, complexity
- realisation of an coherent theatrical performance – including the presentation of the chosen material.

It should be noted that the drama company audition requirements (as seen from the criteria above) are dissimilar to those that determined their admittance into the school as an auditioned drama student. Firstly, whereas a prepared audition piece is needed for the former, the school's annual audition process requires no preparation on the part of the auditionee. The school's annual drama auditions, whilst focusing in part on such attributes as vocal and physical skills, also put a large emphasis on teamwork and collaborative skills (which are essential tools for all drama students throughout their school life and beyond). Little emphasis in the annual school audition process is on characterisation and/or sustaining character. This, however, is the major emphasis of drama company auditions and hence the need for auditionees to prepare an audition piece.

Those students who are not successful in drama company auditions are encouraged to seek feedback from the auditioners and to audition again in the next semester.

MUSIC

Audition Process

All students in the school are welcome to audition. All students must audition to be placed in a music ensemble. Instrumental auditions require students to prepare a short work demonstrating technical and expressive abilities. Choral auditions require students to come to the audition, prepared to learn a short song and to be able to sing this song individually, in a small group and

the large group.

Selection Criteria

Large Ensemble Program

- Wind, string, brass, percussion and voice students are placed in at least one of the large ensembles-instrumental/choral. The exceptions are: students who are beginners or who are not progressing on their instrument and need private tuition to get them to an appropriate skill level, or students who make other choices-eg senior students who cannot accommodate clashing ensemble times and choose to do drama/dance companies.
- Guitar students are placed in either of two ensembles- classical or mixed genre to cater for specific styles. These are of necessity smaller groups.
- Percussion students are placed in the percussion ensemble and /or one of the two concert bands and orchestra.
- Our five music staff and two outside directors are involved in the management and direction of the five large ensembles (which include an orchestra, two concert bands, two choirs) and the percussion ensemble.

Participation in large ensembles supports:

- greater literacy skills across the curriculum.improved self-esteem.
- enhanced musical skill and understanding.
- style flexibility.
- co-operation and commitment.

Small Ensembles

- The second stage of audition placement occurs later in Term 1/early Term 2. Small ensembles are an extension of the larger ensembles. Students are selected based on their ongoing commitment to the large ensemble and demonstrated advanced skill level. The small ensembles include in 2010 two vocal ensembles, string ensemble, stage band, junior jazz ensemble.
- Rock ensembles are comprised of students who auditioned in Term 1 Weeks 2/3. These ensembles are formed last in the process. Singers for the rock ensembles are selected from the choirs.
- Students specially selected through school audition are given priority when choices must

be made between students.

- Students are encouraged to form their own bands/groups outside of school. Opportunities for performance inside school for these groups may be taken up through audition for World Earth Day in March and the Talent Quest.

DANCE

The primary focus of the Dance Department is to maximise students' achievements in the Elective Dance Courses and in the major public examinations. Overall success in dance elective classes requires that students achieve at a high level in ALL AREAS of the curriculum, which includes performance, composition, writing and criticism.

The Dance Company/Ensemble Program is a co-curricular activity that focuses on one aspect of the curriculum- performance.

All students may audition for Dance Companies and Ensembles but for students other than Year 7 a placement in a group is not guaranteed. All Year 7 Dance students will be placed in either a Company or Ensemble.

Students should be aware that this is only the case in Year 7; from Year8 onwards not all students will necessarily be placed in a Dance Company or Ensemble.

Students who are in Year 12 may also audition for a Company or an Ensemble. However, they should be aware that by auditioning they are committing themselves to the group for the WHOLE year including the Semester 2 Showcase Concert and (if selected) the Schools Spectacular.

Dance Companies

Dance companies represent the School and Dance Department at major international, state, regional and local dance festivals, prestigious public performances and the School Showcase Concerts. They provide additional performance and training opportunities for students who

have:

- expressed an interest and a commitment to dance performance at the highest level.
- demonstrated commitment to training by maximising their extension opportunities within the curriculum and by attending the additional dance classes at school.
- outstanding dance skills.
- demonstrated commitment to the School and Dance Department rules, policies and contracts.
- Shown leadership skills and responsibility, valuing the opportunities provided and contributing to a positive rehearsal environment.

Dance Ensembles

Dance Ensembles perform in Showcase Concerts and may represent the school at festivals and other events. Students may elect to audition for an ensemble instead of a company if they feel that other commitments may take priority over school activities and/or they may not wish to give the same emphasis to additional training and performance expectations.

Classical Ballet Companies

The Dance Department supports the philosophy that intending performers should diversify their performance experience as much as possible. Consequently the Classical Ballet Companies should not be seen as an alternative to membership in the Dance Companies/Ensembles but rather an adjunct to them. Students who wish to be considered for the Classical Ballet Companies should also audition for a Dance Company/Ensemble.

Where students have concerns about their level of commitment they should contact the dance staff for advice. Members of the Classical Ballet Companies are required to meet the same general criteria for selection as members of the Dance Companies including attending TWO additional Classical Ballet classes a week.

Audition Process

Students are asked (at the top of the audition information sheet) to indicate if they are auditioning for a Dance Company or a Dance Ensemble. If a student elects to be considered for a Company, it signals that the student is willing to accept an increased rehearsal and commitment load, undertake TWO additional classical ballet classes at school to improve their technique and performance quality and reasonably place the companies' activities before other commitments which might conflict. Students in Dance Ensembles are expected to demonstrate commitment to a similar yet smaller workload. They are required to attend at least ONE additional classical ballet class at school. IF IN DOUBT CONTACT THE DANCE DEPARTMENT FOR CLARIFICATION.

Students who audition for a Company and are not successful will be automatically considered for an Ensemble. Students who nominate only for an Ensemble will not be considered for a Company. The reason for this is the different level and expectation of commitment required of a Company member.

The audition process for requires students to attend the first audition in school years; they will be divided into small groups to learn a dance/ ballet sequence, and then they will have the opportunity to perform the work in even smaller groups. (Students should note that it is their responsibility to warm up safely and effectively to enable them to do their best in the audition).

Selection Criteria

The Dance Staff will consider technique, performance quality, commitment, attitude, focus and learning style. On the basis of the first audition students will be invited to attend the CALLBACK. The callback group will be across all grades. Students not invited to attend callback should not assume they have not been placed in a group. Final decisions will be based on the results of the audition process and the student showing evidence of the criteria described.

The number, structure and rehearsal timetable for Dance Companies and Ensembles will not be finalised until the completion of the Dance callback and until auditions are completed in all the other performing arts disciplines. An effort will be made to timetable rehearsals for the Classical Ballet Companies to coincide with the co-curricular classical ballet classes. That is the Junior Classical Ballet Company following the Friday sport classes and the Senior and Intermediate Classical Ballet Companies following the Tuesday classes.

Not every student who attends the dance audition will be successful in obtaining a place in a

Dance Company or Ensemble. It is expected that students who are not successful will accept the challenge to improve their technique and performance quality by the time the next series of auditions comes around.

Classical Ballet Master Classes

These classes are open to all students and occur three afternoons a week. These master classes are taught by industry professionals.

Schools Spectacular

Each year Newtown High School of the Performing Arts auditions for the opportunity to be involved in the Schools Spectacular. The Performing Arts Unit requires schools to submit a DVD showcasing students' performance abilities. If successful, the Dance Department is not able to decide how many students will be involved; this is dictated by the Performing Arts Unit and may vary from year to year. Because of this, an audition process takes place at the end of Term 3. Students who are in Dance and Classical Ballet Companies and Ensembles are given the opportunity to audition for these places. The audition follows a similar process to that at the start of the year. The Dance Staff will consider technique, performance quality, commitment, attitude, focus, courtesy, study habits and learning style. Students wishing to be eligible for inclusion in the Schools Spectacular need to ensure they are enrolled and consistently attend TWO additional Classical Ballet classes a week for the entire year.

Fees

All Dance and Classical Ballet Company and Ensemble members are required to pay a membership fee of \$70 per semester. Additionally, students are required to pay a Costume Levy. A levy of \$120 (\$180 if in two companies) will be applied to all members of Dance companies and ensembles to cover the hire, cleaning and purchase of dance costumes. This levy subsidises the total amount of money required for costumes. The Dance faculty, therefore retains ownership of the costumes enabling them to be reused as situations warrant. If the student is also involved in the Schools Spectacular an additional levy of \$100 will be applied to cover the additional cost of costuming for this event.

TECHNICAL AND DESIGN COMPANY

Students also have the opportunity to join the growing Design and Technical Companies which support the Drama Companies in costuming, set design, props, lighting and sound design. The number of students in these two companies has trebled in number in the last two years.

The selection process for these companies is through expressions of interest and is open to all students in Years 8 to 11.

[Co-Curricular Policy \[168KB\]](#)