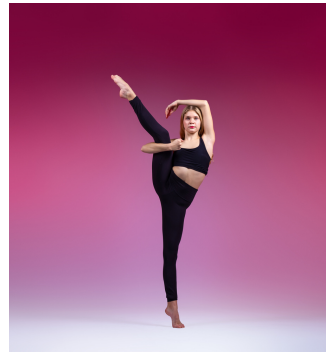




IGNITE

dance company

At Balance Dance Studios



2023-2024 INFORMATION



Meet the Directors



KELSY LEYENDECKER

creative director

Kelsy Leyendecker began her dance training at the age of 3 and has been teaching and choreographing since the age of 16. She began her dance studies and competitive years at Irvine Dance Academy, but went on to receive training at some of the best studios in the country in the styles of ballet, tap, jazz, lyrical, hip hop, cheer, tumbling, and musical theatre. She has had the opportunity to study under legends such as Joe Tremaine, Doug Caldwell, Molly Lynch, Christine Baltes, Jerome Robins, and Susan Stroman. In addition to them, she credits much of her growth and passion to her first mentor, Monie Adamson, who is a 3 time Emmy nominee and 2004 American Choreography Award winner. While still in high school, Kelsy also participated in her school dance team, varsity cheer and show choir. During this time, she also began experimenting with choreography for her high school show choir and other local area theatre and children's programs. As a diverse performer, Kelsy danced as an extra on a couple TV shows, strutted the parade routes and stages of Disneyland, and toured parts of the US as a member of the company, "Dance N' ETC" and the "Concordia University Professional Chamber Choir." She quickly found another passion in musical theatre and was cast in multiple theatre company ensembles and lead roles for musicals. Upon moving to the Austin area, Kelsy explored several studios, in addition to forming her own homeschool dance company. She soon fell in love with Balance in the summer of 2013 where she started out subbing classes and has made it her teaching home for the last 10 years. Before starting Ignite Dance Company, Kelsy had helped direct Push Dance Company as well as Elevate Performance Company. She is proud to be a part of the Austin dance community and loves teaching all of her students at Balance Dance Studios.

Meet the Directors



SHAWNA HESKETH

assistant director

Shawna Hesketh started dancing at an early age at her one room studio in her small Central Texas hometown. Her love of dance grew and she went on to be on her high school's drill/dance team and began to teach dance at the age of 16. She attended Sam Houston State University and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Photography and Dance. While at SHSU she was in several performances including a graduate thesis and also worked in the costume department for their Nutcracker production. Throughout her college days she kept steady jobs within retail management working her way from bottom up to Assistant Manager. After getting married, moving to Austin, and having her first child, she got back into dance full time by diving into ballroom dancing. Then a simple twist of fate and the interconnections of the dance community she began her journey with Balance Dance Studios, joining them in the Fall of 2012, their first year of being open. Since then she has created a home and family with Balance that now she gets to share the journey with her two children as she gets to watch them dance and grow.

Kate McCann Kate fell in love with dance at an early age. The way that movement and music creates its own unique form of artistry has had an unparalleled impact on her life, both in and outside of the studio. She has been working with children since the age of 14, and has found that one of her greatest joys is being able to share her passions with a younger generation. Because Kate didn't start her formal dance training until high school she is a huge proponent of self discipline, and regards dance as the medium which taught her that all things are achievable through hard work and diligence. It was at Balance Dance Studios she cultivated this understanding, as a member of the pre-professional training program. The training Kate received at Balance opened many doors professionally. She has had the privilege of performing on the first ever MLR hype squad, as well as dancing with Prestige productions. She is a current member of the adult performance company, New Genesis. Kate has been working with the competitive dancers for the past few years and expanding her skills as an instructor as well as an award recognized choreographer. She looks forward to continuing to create magic with young artists as well as being a mentor to students at Balance Dance Studios!



KATE MCCANN

assistant director

What Is Ignite?

"NO PRESSURE, JUST PASSION"

Our Mission

IGNITE Dance Company is a combination of different competitive teams that offer a variety of genres, commitment and levels based on the needs of it's dancers. From our new performance team, to our low and medium commitment and multi-leveled competitive teams as well as our pre-professional company, this company has something for all of our studio dancers. The performance team will demonstrate their artistry at approximately 3 shows per year, and are not required to attend conventions or competitions. They also have the opportunity to perform in the Ignite Dance Company Showcase as well as in Balance Dance Studios' Nutcracker and spring recital. Our competitive team will attend 2 spring competitions as well as perform in the 3 aforementioned shows per year. Ignite's Pre-Professional company will attend 2-3 conventions, 2 competitions and perform in shows throughout the '23-'24 season. Ignite Dance Company offers all studio dancers a second family and a way to dip their toes into the performing and competitive dance world, as well as an opportunity for advanced dancers who want to take their artistry and technique to the next level. We are serious about our training and require our students to "bring the passion, and leave the pressure behind."



Opportunities

- Time Management Skills
- Local Performances
- Competitive Growth
- Flexibility with Other Commitments
- Professional Relationships and Support
- Team Building Skills
- Leadership Building
- Professional Level Training
- & More!

Audition Details



AGES 5-7

MAY 17TH | AGES 5-7 | 6PM-7PM Company Evaluation

This process will feel more like a fun dance class. We do not treat this as a serious audition for these young ones. We will create a standard jazz class where we warm up and then use some across the floor and combos to evaluate the attendees for summer and fall class placement. If we feel they are ready to join the company, we will offer them a position on our team. If they aren't quite ready, we will let them know the best class options for summer and fall enrollment to prepare them for the next season. We are looking for students who have a combination of basic body awareness, some flexibility, classroom maturity, passion, motivation, and ability to remember a pattern of steps/movement. Some parents prefer not to even use the word "audition" with their students, and we fully support that as well. Come join us for a fun class evaluation!

AGES 8-12

MAY 22ND | AGES 8-12 | 4PM-8PM

An intermediate jazz routine will be taught, the week of May 15th-17th. Dancers ages 8-12: choreo will be taught and rehearsed (\$20 drop in rate) on Monday, May 15th, at 5pm and 6pm, as well as Wednesday, May 17th, at 5pm. Some advanced students in the upper age range of this audition may be asked to attend the older audition as well.

Students can attend as many audition practice classes as they'd like to register for. This routine will also be sent out via email to anyone registered for auditions.

MAY 24TH | AGES 13+ | 5PM-9PM

An advanced jazz routine will be taught, the week of May 15th-17th. Dancers ages 13+: choreo will be taught and rehearsed (\$20 drop in rate) on Monday, May 16th, at 7pm and at 8pm, as well as Wednesday, May 18th, at 7pm and 8pm. Based on dancer's comfort level, students in this age group may choose to learn the routines for, and attend both the intermediate and the advanced auditions in order to best demonstrate their strengths and artistry.

Students can attend as many audition prep classes as they'd like to register for. This routine will also be sent out via email to anyone registered for auditions.

AGES 13+



Audition Details

DAY OF AUDITION

EVALUATION

Evaluation (5-7): Dancers will follow a simple jazz class format including a high energy warm up and stretching. Following this will be some basic skills demonstrations across the floor and a simple character style dance with the option to show off any of their favorite moves or special skills.

Evaluation (8+): Dancers will sign in, receive their audition numbers and head to the warm up room to prepare. Dancers will go through a very simple ballet warm up to prepare their bodies and demonstrate basic ballet technique. No previous ballet experience is required for this. Then, there will be a quick contemporary phrase taught on the spot to see how dancers learn new choreography and interpret movement. Dancers are not expected to have this combination perfected. We are looking for movement and style as well as how quickly dancers can memorize choreography. The final section of the audition will be across the floor skills and the jazz routine that was previously taught.

CLOTHING

Dancers are expected to come to auditions wearing studio dress code attire that is clean and professional looking. Dancers should wear their favorite solid color leotard with solid leggings. Please no baggy clothing or busy patterns/styles. We prefer clean simple lines. Hair can be worn in any style that is pulled up but should look slicked back, professional and completely out of the face at all times. For example, slicked back ponytails or a variety of braids and buns are a great choice. Please no loose hair, unless very short, as this creates a distraction as well as the occasional safety hazard.

Dancers should have ballet shoes for the ballet portion and then either jazz shoes, socks or bare feet for the other genres. Students are welcome to change shoes as we change styles as well. No jewelry or watches will be allowed other than stud earrings. The use of watches and phones will be strictly prohibited once auditions begin. Please leave those in your bags or at home. No photography or videos will be allowed in the audition room once auditions have started. During check in and warmups however, please feel free to use these items as desired and, if you post on social media, feel free to tag us: @balanceddancestudios and @ignite.dance.co.

RESULTS

Dancers will be notified of their audition results via email on or before Monday, May 29th. At this time, you will be asked to review all company paperwork and complete necessary steps to prepare for an individual planning meeting with your team director to sign up for summer classes and intensives as well as look at fall classes. We look forward to seeing everyone on Friday, June 16th, at 6pm, for our summer kick off and first company event. More info to come.

REGISTRATION IS OPEN!
CLICK HERE OR
EMAIL:
IGNITE@BALANCEDDANCESTUDIOS.COM

The Pre-Professional Go

IGNITE[💧] dance company

Fall Weekly Schedule: 6+ hours required, based on routine casting

Mon or Wed (based on team casting) Ballet, Jazz, Rehearsal
Tues (based on team casting) - Ballroom, Urban Styles, Company Technique and additional rehearsal with Melissa Best
Wed (optional) Tap and Acro (required if in a routine of that genre)
Thurs 1 additional ballet (if level 3 or higher) and contemporary
Sat- occasional rehearsals based on routine casting

Required Routines:

1 to 6 routines based on casting and availability.

Required Conventions/Competitions:

3 required conventions

1-2 required competitions in the spring

Additional Commitment:

Choreography Week

Team Retreat

Photoshoot (includes headshot,
action shot and team photo)

Holiday Party, Spring Showcase, Spring Recital, Spring Banquet

Occasional Saturday rehearsals

Extras:

May request approval to add a solo, duet, or trio, to take to competitions and conventions.

May attend additional events with director's approval.

Summer Requirements

1 hr/week assigned Jazz class, 1.5 hrs weekly Ballet class, Ballet Intensive and Axis Intensive. Please note that Axis week may have choreography set around it, so students may need to be available, if wanting to be cast in those pieces with guest choreographers.

PLUS:

Casting for additional convention pieces, such as Production/Line, Tap, Lyrical, Hip Hop, Acro, etc. These pieces will rehearse on weekends (twice monthly, schedule to go out in advance, but could vary and require additional rehearsals closer to competitions)

Dancers MUST be enrolled in a weekly class matching the genre, for any pieces they are cast in. Example: If a dancer is cast in a tap piece, he/she must then enroll in a weekly tap class. These will be required to take to the required conventions.

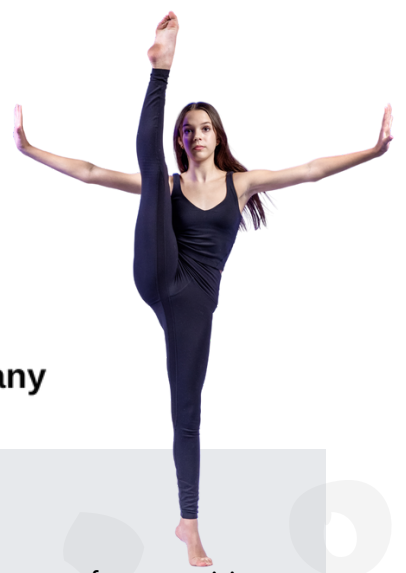
REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

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The
Competition Co

IGNITE dance company



Fall Weekly Schedule:

1-1.5 hours ballet | 1 hour jazz | 1 hour rehearsal
3-3.5 hours total weekly requirement

*Additional classes may be required based on ballet levels and/or genres of competition routine casting

Required Routines:

1-2, depending on team placement

*Additional casting in routines of different genres will require additional rehearsals

Required Competitions:

2 required competitions in the spring

Additional Commitment:

Choreography Week

Team Retreat

Photoshoot (includes headshot, action shot and team photo)

Holiday Party, Spring Showcase, Spring Recital, Spring Banquet.

Extras:

May request approval to add solo, duet, or trio to take to required competitions, and may potentially compete at additional competitions and/or conventions.

May attend additional classes at conventions, with director approval.

Summer Requirements:

1 hr/week assigned Jazz class, 1.5 hrs weekly Ballet class, and Axis Intensive. Please note that Axis week may have choreography set around it, so students may need to be available, if wanting to be cast in those pieces with guest choreographers. Ballet Intensive strongly recommended.

PLUS:

Audition for additional competition pieces, such as Production, Tap, Lyrical, Hip Hop, Acro, etc. These pieces will rehearse on weekends (twice monthly, schedule to go out in advance, but could vary and require additional rehearsals closer to competitions)

Dancers MUST be enrolled in a weekly class matching the genre, for any pieces they are cast in. Example: If a dancer is cast in a tap piece, he/she must then enroll in a weekly tap class. These will be required to take to the required competitions.

REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

CLICK [HERE](#) OR

EMAIL: IGNITE@BALANCEDANCESTUDIOS.COM

The
Performance Co.

 **IGNITE** dance company



Fall Weekly Schedule: 2+ hours required*

Mon or Wed (based on team placement) Ballet and Jazz

Additional classes may be taken, depending on individual goals of each company member

Required Routines:

1 routine in the genre of choreographer's choice, based on strengths of the team

Required Performances:

Nutcracker, Spring Showcase, Spring Recital

Additional Commitment:

Choreography Week

Team Retreat

Photoshoot (includes headshot, action shot and team photo)

Holiday Party

Spring Banquet

2 Saturday rehearsals per month

Summer Requirements

1 hr/week assigned Jazz class and an intensive of dancer's choice. Balance Intensive is strongly encouraged.



REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

CLICK [HERE](#) OR

EMAIL: IGNITE@BALANCEDANCESTUDIOS.COM

Important Dates

REQUIREMENTS

- Summer Intensives: Ballet, Axis, and/or Balance Intensive based on team
- Photoshoot - TBD
- Choreo week - July 21-30 (Pre-Pro) & Aug. 7-11 (All Co)
- All Company Retreat Sept 15-17
- Holiday Party- TBD Dec
- 2 Competitions- TBD Jan-May
- 2 Conventions- TBD Nov-May
- Solo/Duo/Trio Showcase- TBD Jan or Feb
- Spring Recital - TBD May
- Illuminate Dress Rehearsal-
TBD April or May
- Illuminate Showcase and Banquet-
TBD April or May



2023-24 Summer Intensive Opportunities

Ballet Intensive 6/12-6/16: The ballet intensive curriculum focuses on strong technique rooted in the traditions of classical ballet with elements of contemporary movement. It is designed to help advanced dancers in the development of solid technique and artistic style through the challenging combinations and variations presented in each class. In each class, dancers will have the opportunity to gain a greater appreciation for dance and movement, while growing in athleticism, artistry, clarity, grace, speed, and musicality.

To register, [CLICK HERE.](#)

Balance Intensive 7/10-7/13: Our Balance Intensive is designed to inspire dancers and further their technical and artistic training in a welcoming, all-inclusive environment. This program is ideal for the dancer who would like to broaden his/her understanding of various dance styles and may be interested in getting into the convention or competitive dance team world. Classes will be taught by our passionate, engaging, in-house instructors and is a great opportunity for students to get exposure to more of our BDS faculty. In order to allow for more class time and lower the pressure of performing, there won't be an end of week performance.

To register, [CLICK HERE.](#)

Axis Intensive: AXIS Intensive is designed for motivated dancers who come to be trained, inspired and often transformed by these incredible dance experiences. Students will have an opportunity to refine their skills and broaden their dance vocabulary while being exposed to guest master teachers from coast to coast who will push them to unexplored limits. AXIS Intensive is dedicated to the growth of each dancer as a physical technician, as well as an expressive and articulate artist. Taking part in these intensives will help bring students' performance quality to a new level. Designed for the serious multi-level artist, these intensives are geared for those with an eye toward pre-professional quality performance.

To register, [CLICK HERE.](#)

- **AXIS All Genre Intensive 7/24-7/27 (mandatory)**
- **AXIS Hip Hop Intensive 7/31-8/2 (optional)**



2023-24 Summer Requirements

Classes/Workshops: Minimum class enrollment is 1 hour of jazz per week for all Ignite members placed by the directors, so that dancers can progress together and prepare for choreography week. Dancers auditioning for Pre-Pro and Competition teams should plan to add a ballet class at their appropriate level. We understand that with summer travel, some dancers may have to load up classes at the beginning or end of the summer in the form of make ups. Optional weekly workshops are offered to allow dancers to submerge themselves in additional specialities as well. Full descriptions of each are available. Students are encouraged to take as many additional classes as they wish, especially in ballet, to maintain their current level.

Competition Prep (applicable to all Ignite teams):

- Choreography Week (\$150+) depending on team casting: 8/8-8/12. We will set the bulk of Ignite competition and possibly some convention choreography during this week. If you cannot be here for Choreography Camp, it is possible that you may not be able to participate in the 2023-2024 Ignite season. If a dancer is allowed to miss choreography week, he/she will need to pay the choreographer or an assistant for privates to catch up. This is determined on an individual basis. The schedule will not be available until all contracts are signed and teams solidified. Convention piece choreography and additional pieces will be set throughout the summer, based on castings and guest instructors.

Team Building (applicable to all Ignite teams):

- Company Retreat: 9/15-9/17: Friday after school, carpool to Camp for all company dancers ages 10 and up, who will be spending the night. This will be an all weekend retreat. Those under the age of 10 will join us for the day on Saturday with one adult assigned for supervision purposes. Cost and activities are still TBD, as we work out the details with our new retreat facilities.

Summer Class Requirements and Pricing:

All Ignite teams are required to take a minimum 8 total hours (\$178) of jazz technique class with their teams over the summer (equivalent to 1 hour/week). Pre-Pro and Competition teams must add a ballet class for an addition 1.5 hours per week (\$408). If students are gone for part of the summer, they can double up where necessary. Intensives do not count toward class requirements.

