

Member Profiles



Canberra Dance Development Centre Students Georgia Powley, Ashlen Harkness, Eveyln Nicoll

Three dance students from CDDC will be looking forward to a very exciting 2014. Georgia has been accepted into the New Zealand School of Dance (NZSD), Evelyn has been offered a place at Queensland Dance School of Excellence in Brisbane, and Ashlen will begin a bachelor of fine arts degree in contemporary dance at the Victorian College of the Arts. We asked them a few questions about dance and their hopes for the future.



Ashlen Harkness

Ashlen, when did you start dancing?

When I was six years old, in 2001.

What do you love about dancing?

Dance has been an escape for me. A place I can just delve into the secrets of who I am as a person. Dance is the reason I smile when I have a hard day. Knowing that I can just slip into my own skin and embody my wildest thoughts and dreams with movement. Dance is my creative outlet; my body simply becomes my pen to paper, allowing me to write down all the things I can't say. I love dance because I have never felt more joy from any other art form; I love the freedom.

Do you have a favourite dance style?

My favourite is contemporary; I haven't had many opportunities to taste a lot of the different styles of contemporary, although my preference falls with choreography with intricate detail. Smaller, symbolic details are what catch my eye within the style I enjoy.

Do you have a favourite dancer?

I don't really have a favourite dancer; I do however admire the choreography by Erica Sobol. I attended a workshop held at our dance school and learnt a piece she choreographed, and was instantly inspired by her open friendly attitude towards everyone in the room. Although I can't say I have discovered a single dancer who I would class as my favourite.

Are there any styles of dancing you'd like to learn, but haven't had the opportunity yet?

I have experienced a small amount of it before, but Musical Theater Jazz; Bob Fosse style. I found it really enjoyable and would love to explore it a little more.

What do you find inspiring?

Poetry, and orchestral, or acoustic music; I find that those things peak my muse more than most things.

What have you been most proud of in your dance studies so far?

My experience in 2012, when I got the chance to attend the Ajkun Ballet Theatre's Dance in Italy summer school. I am proud of myself, because after that experience, I really discovered who I am as an artist, and as a person as well.

What do you keep in your dance bag that you couldn't do without?

Bobby Pins. With having such short hair, it is always important that I have a few sitting in the bottom of my dance bag in case my hair grows just that little bit too long and I need to pin it back out of my eyes.

What are you looking forward to about going to the Victorian College of the Arts?

Attending the Victorian College of the Arts, has been a long held dream of mine, I am excited to experience everything it has to offer, from the dancing to the theory-based subjects. But most of all, I am extremely excited about the opportunities to learn choreography from a diverse range of choreographers.

What one tip would you give to other young dancers who are planning to audition for a school like yours?

Be yourself, the most exciting, and interesting person you can be is yourself. If you are trying to be like everyone else, that's who you will be, everyone else. Be quirky, if you're quirky; be smile-y, if you're smile-y; be loud if you're loud. You'll only dance better if you're confident in your own skin. And that is who they are looking for; they want you.

Georgia Powley

Georgia, when did you start dancing?

When I was 4 at CDDC.

What do you love about dance?

I love dance because its my way to express myself, I get lost in the movement and nothing else matters. I love the feeling when I'm on stage performing and doing what I love and showing my passion for dance to an audience. I love the feeling of getting a perfect pirouette or a split jete, the feeling that you have achieved what you have been working so hard for. I love challenging myself and pushing to achieve my goals.

Do you have a favourite dance style?

Ballet because its so enjoyable and graceful. I'm always learning something new and challenging to work towards and achieve. It's a beautiful creative art form.

Do you have a favourite dancer? If so, who are they and what do you admire in them?

I have so many but the two dancers that inspire me the most are Madeleine Eastoe and Paul Knobloch. They are both such strong, amazing dancers and have achieved so much in the dance careers and performed so many great roles.

Are there in styles of dancing you'd like to learn, but haven't the opportunity yet?

I've been lucky for the past few years, as CDDC offer such a variety of styles, that I have had the opportunity to enjoy styles such as tap, jazz and hip hop.

What do you find inspiring?

I always get inspired when I see ballets and how beautiful and strong the dancers are and it inspires me to know that it could be me if I continue to work hard and strive to reach my goals.

What have you been most proud of in your dance studies so far?

I have had many opportunities to perform different roles. But I have mainly enjoyed performing Juliet from Romeo and Juliet with CDDC and Canberra Youth Music, which was a great experience for me. I'm also very excited about the opportunity to train at the New Zealand School of Dance.

What do you keep in your dance bag that you couldn't do without?

My water bottle

What are you looking forward to about going to New Zealand School of Dance?

I'm really excited for a new challenge and the opportunity to learn from experience and inspiring teachers from around the world. New Zealand school of dance have great resources and a wonderful reputation for dance training.

What one tip would you give to other young dancers that are planning to audition for a school like yours?

Continue to work hard and stay focus to reach your goals.

Evelyn Nicoll**When did you start dancing?**

I started when I was 3 years old.

What do you love about dancing?

I love the challenge. I love working so hard then having everything come together in class on stage. I love when you can forget everything and just dance.

Do you have a favourite dance style?

I love ballet, the pure classical lines and the music as well as the stories that you get to tell.

Do you have a favourite dancer?

I love Natalia Osipova she has amazing energy and attack and of course that jump!

Are there any styles of dancing you'd like to learn, but haven't had the opportunity yet?

I would love to try ballroom dancing one day.

What do you find inspiring?

There's a lot of things that inspire me. It could be just seeing a friend achieve something they never thought possible, it could be a beautiful piece of music that makes me want to dance or watching another great dancer.

What have you been most proud of in your dance studies so far?

Just reaching the personal goals I make for myself in class.

What do you keep in your dance bag that you couldn't do without?

Definitely tape!

What are you looking forward to about going to the Queensland Dance School of Excellence?

I'm looking forward to pushing myself to meet new challenges and meeting lots of new people.

What one tip would you give to other young dancers who are planning to audition for a school like yours?

Just to remember to be confident in yourself. Your technique doesn't magically disappear just because you're nervous!