

Extra-Curricular

Junior Dance Team



Daisy Coen

I'm Daisy Coen, I am in Year 11 and since Year 8 I have been a part of Banbridge Academy's Dance Team. For the past three years I have been a member of the Junior Dance Team.

When I was in primary school my older sister was a member of the Junior Dance Team. Every Friday she would come home to tell us all about what she got up to at dance that day, and when it came to competition time my mum and I would go and watch. It was amazing; not only was the talent so unbelievably pleasing to watch but seeing the friendship and support throughout the team was the sweetest thing! When the team got second place in an extremely tough competition and chanted, cheered and hugged each other, there was so much love and joy, not only amongst the team but amongst every single team at the competition. That was when I decided that if I went to Banbridge Academy, I was most definitely going to audition and try my best to get on the team.

My first year at the Academy came up much quicker than I'd anticipated and so did the auditions. I was extremely nervous; I was a dancer for a team already but all throughout primary school I never got the chance to represent my school in any way, so making this particular team meant a lot more. Luckily I made the team and I was ecstatic! After years of waiting to even audition, I was finally on the team.

Rehearsals began and they were tough. Ruth,



the dance teacher, pushed us but it was worth it because we danced to the best of the abilities we didn't know we had. At the Ulster Dance Championships our group routine, 'The Schuyler Sisters' ended up placing 3rd and the team and I were so overjoyed and excited to have placed in a tough competition. Later on that year the Junior Dance Team held a dance dinner and it was fantastic. It had everything from fun to food and awards. We had the awards to show that dance wasn't just about the talent, but about everything else that went into making a team - like support and smiles. Fortunately I was lucky enough to win the 'Rookie Rockstar' award for stage presence and it was one of the best moments in my Junior Dance Team journey.

In my second year on the team our dance was 'Inside Out'. This dance was extremely creative and I was lucky enough to land the role of 'Disgust'. This year of dance was definitely a lot tougher and my costume was a lot greener, but it was an extremely fun year. During this year there were many ups and downs, but each one brought us closer together and stronger as a team: from flaws to



face paint, we worked hard and we built many bonds that year.



My third and final year on the team was extraordinary. The team worked extremely hard in 2024 and we came out with our first ever placing at Nicmac with 'The Little Mermaid' and we were proud of ourselves. I gained many things during my time on the Junior Dance Team such as new skills and talents. Not only did I create bonds with my teammates, I also created bonds with the teachers involved with the team: Ruth, Mrs Neill, Miss Warnock and Miss Galashan were amazing role models to us girls on the team and we couldn't appreciate them more than we already do. The Junior Dance Team gave me life long lessons and friends that I will have forever. It was the best thing about school and I always look forward to a Friday afternoon and dance.

Extra-Curricular

Senior Dance Team

Keisha Moulton 14E



Back for another year of school dance, and we had a feeling this would be the best year yet. This year, our dance teacher Ruth Reid decided to go with the trending theme of “Barbie” as the new live action film had just been released at the time. As a team we were all ecstatic to begin rehearsals for such a fun-filled dance, so we dived straight into the process in September.

There was a lot of chopping and changing at the beginning but eventually there was a foundation set, which we added to and polished every Friday after school. Arguably, the best part about this dance was the range of costumes we were given. From Disco Barbie to Pyjama Barbie, Tennis Barbie to Chanel Barbie, and even a Weird Barbie! In addition, we can’t forget about our very own Ken portrayed by none other than Reece Wilson, who dazzled us with his facial expressions and lively performance. We had roughly 26 different costume ideas so as you can imagine, we had a blast trying them all on. Once that was sorted, the grind started for perfecting the dance. With ideas flying all over the place, Ruth tried to make the choreography as engaging as possible by adding several jumps, leaps, aerials and even a hip hop section choreographed by our dance captain Lauren White. This was very well received by the audience as they loved the creativity and authenticity of it.

By competition day, we were more than ready for the stage. The nerves, mixed with excitement, kept us energised in order for our performance to excel and that it did! We were so pleased to find out that we had made it to the next competition, so we immediately got straight back into rehearsals. Additionally, we were all still reeling from excitement after the school’s production of “The Wizard of Oz” that we decided to bring our dance “One Short Day” to the NICMAC competition.

For the first time ever, the dance team decided to do a mixed routine with both boys and girls dancing as partners and believe it or not, we actually convinced boys from our Senior Rugby and Hockey teams to be a part of it. We began rehearsals for this performance around February which meant we had very little time to perfect it; but we knew how amazing it could be if we put the work in. The collaboration between boys and girls showcased how we complement each other’s strengths such as the boys being capable of doing intricate lifts and the girls’ flexibility and agility creating a graceful yet striking performance. As the final beat of the dance had played and we were all in our finishing positions, the crowd erupted into applause and even continued into a standing ovation. After what felt like forever, the crowd eventually eased into faint clapping and we exited the stage with almost painful

grins on our faces.

As though we weren’t pleased enough already, the highlight of it all was when we heard a voice in the microphone announcing that we had won the award for the best dance overall for “One Short Day”. We were beyond thrilled and rushed up to collect our well-deserved trophy, before thanking Ruth, Mrs Neill, Miss Warnock, Miss Galashan and many of the other teachers who made this opportunity possible for us.



Senior Mixed Dance Team

Anna Macauley



When I was chosen to be a part of the Senior Mixed Dance Team for 'The Wizard of Oz' last year, I was really pleased and excited about what it would involve. I have always been a keen performer, already having years of dance experience outside of school, and couldn't wait for another opportunity to perform on stage.

Rehearsals took place on a weekly basis every Monday evening, where I had to work with my dance partner Adam and learn the routines that would be performed on stage last December. Our lovely dance coach, Ruth Reid, taught our team the iconic number 'One Short Day', a song taken from the musical 'Wicked' and it took place at the start of act two when Dorothy and the other principals discovered the magical city of Oz. Within this routine, there were elements of partner work and lifts that required lots of skill and concentration, both of which took quite a while to show! Regardless, everyone found the learning process fun and rewarding, especially when we knew that all our hard work paid off at the end.

During the early days of rehearsals, all of us could pick up short sections of the routine, adding small parts on to what we had already learned each week. After a while, everything started to become much more intense as the show got closer, with us having to give up the occasional break time each week as well as staying after school late into the evenings to perfect what we had done. However, Mrs

Neill was able to keep our spirits high with a tempting Domino's each week for dinner before getting stuck back in again after! With only a matter of weeks to go, everyone was starting to feel the pressure, especially since most of us were involved in multiple dances and scenes. All of us were needed for extra practices, including some Saturday mornings and some nights, occasionally being as late as 11 pm at times which was exhausting for everyone.

After countless run-throughs and dress rehearsals, the time had finally come. We performed one matinee show for local primary schools, along with the other three sold-out nights. All of the shows went really well which was clear when we were showered with so much praise after. The costumes, glitter and tan really added to the experience, along with the boys giving their partners flowers on the final evening which was lovely.

Looking back on this amazing experience now, I am extremely grateful for the opportunity of being a part of this show. Even though the team put in heaps of effort, none of it would have been possible without the help of Ruth, Mrs Neill, Miss Galashan and Miss Warnock, to name a few. At times, it was tiring and slightly overwhelming, however, it taught me that dance is what brings me joy in life. Even though it may not be for everyone, it is definitely for me and something I will do for many years to come.

