

BDC



Allison Ellner

“Taking risks is paramount to growth, and while we all stay true to our foundation, I think it’s very healthy to try something different.”

BROADWAY DANCE CENTER

221 West 57th St, 5th Fl

New York, NY 10019

212-582-9304

www.broadwaydancecenter.com

CEO: Allison Ellner

YEAR FOUNDED: 1984

FOUNDER: Richard Ellner

NUMBER OF STUDENTS ORIGINALLY: 500

NUMBER OF STUDENTS NOW: 7,500

AGE RANGE OF STUDENTS: 12 and older in open classes; 3 to 16 in the children s/teen program

NUMBER OF TEACHERS ORIGINALLY: 10

NUMBER OF TEACHERS NOW: 96

NUMBER OF CLASSES OFFERED: 385 per week

GENRES OFFERED: African, ballet, belly dance, Cardio Barre, contemporary jazz, dancehall, floor barre, harmony, hip hop, hip-hop fundamentals, Horton technique, house, jazz, jazz funk, J-F-H, jumps and turns, Latin jazz, lyrical, lyrical jazz, Pilates, pointe, pop & lock, pure funk, street jazz, stretch, tap, tap jam, tap technique, theater, theater performance, theater tap, tumbling, video, voice, voice performance, voice technique, wackin, yoga

FACILITIES: 26,500 square feet encompassing seven studios, BDC Caf , library with computer area, dressing room and bathroom with showers, office



An intermediate advanced jazz/hip hop class at BDC, taught by BT (Brian Thomas)

Allison Ellner, CEO of Broadway Dance Center, describes her New York City studio as a “second home for dancers.” Operating since 1984, the studio evolved out of Hines-Hatchett, a tap and jazz operation run by veteran jazz instructors Maurice Hines and Frank Hatchett. Allison’s father, Richard Ellner, had studied there and saw an opportunity to create a studio that would offer diversified training in a single location.

More than 20 years later, BDC is committed to its founding philosophy. “What’s most important to us is providing dancers and artists with top quality New York City-caliber professional training, recognizing what’s happening in the dance world and then providing every possible resource and tool for a dancer’s education,” says Allison, who took over the reins after her father passed away in 1998.

BDC is always bustling with an extensive schedule of open classes, in addition to special programming that includes summer and winter intensives, specialized workshops, master classes and a program for children and teens. The studio also has forged a number of partnerships in the dance community: An arrangement with Pace University allows dance majors and minors to take class at the studio, while an international visa program currently hosts more than 100 students from more than 30 countries. In addition, BDC interns assist with Radio City’s Rockette Experience. In fact, Allison notes, 10 BDC interns have gone on to become Rockettes.



Helping students find work in the dance world is a constant goal at BDC. September 2005 will mark the launch of the newest venture, the Professional Program. Developed by BDC jazz teacher Wes Veldink, the program will expose advanced dancers to 10 months of intense training and mentoring, culminating in a showcase that will be presented to dance industry leaders. Allison excitedly describes the program as “a jump-start to a career.”

BDC is almost bursting at the seams in an effort to house this array of programs in its 26,500 square feet, which, in addition to seven studios, include the BDC Café, an office and the Phil Black Reference Library, complete with lounge and computer access for dancers. “We dedicate space to the comfort of our students so that they have space to hang out. And hanging out means that BDC is their second home, part of their community. Dancers need a community to learn, and so rendering a space for that community is very important,” Allison explains.

It would seem that one might need to be a drill sergeant to run such a large operation, but Allison seems to rule with a gentle hand. “My style is very much like my father’s,” she says of Richard, whose ideals were generosity and open-mindedness. She is committed to keeping BDC’s offerings fresh and relevant to aspiring dancers as well as professionals.

“Every young dancer needs to make a trip to either New York or Los Angeles. I think it’s a mandatory part of training, because a studio in New York or L.A. is going to offer a taste of what a professional career may look like,” Allison says. “It’s incredibly important for young dancers to dance side by side with professional dancers. And sometimes knowing that you’re a small fish in a big sea is a very inspirational tool.” —*Katia Bachko*