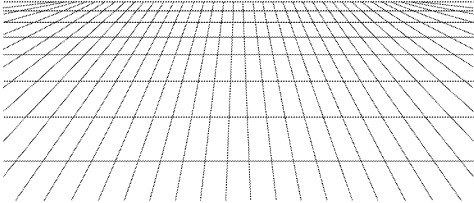


“Most ballet teachers in the United States are terrible. If they were in medicine, everyone would be poisoned.” - **George Balanchine**
‘Newsweek’ (1964)




SEISKAYA BALLET

“Success is how high you bounce when you hit bottom.”
- **General George Patton**



“I’m glad the old masters are all dead, and I only wish they had died sooner.” - **Mark Twain**



**Dedicated to
those who are
in search of
Terpsichore.**



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1993/96/98 & 2003/05/08
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Welcome to **Seiskaya** Ballet Academy

There are normally numerous questions that incoming students and their parents want to ask.



This pamphlet has

been assembled in order to provide the most often requested information and, sometimes lightheartedly, address protocol concerns.

The Philosophy

The Seiskaya philosophy is an important facet of the Academy. Our paramount concern is for the young student. Two abiding principles guide our decisions: first, few aspirants become professionals; however, all students grow up to become adults. The lessons learned, the discipline gained, and the appreciation of classical dance should remain into adulthood. Second, after placing numerous students in major dance companies such as American Ballet Theatre, Royal Swedish Ballet,

Pacific Northwest Ballet, Atlanta Ballet, Ballet West, Boston Ballet, etc., the Academy's reputation rests on no one single student.

First and foremost, Seiskaya Ballet is a preprofessional ballet training academy, attendance to which is a major commitment of effort. Among dancers, personal satisfaction is a universal objective and closely tied to accomplishment. The learning environment must be flexible enough to accommodate different goals and yet sufficiently structured to create an identifiable dance style.

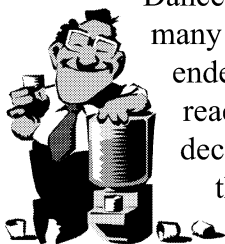
Seiskaya trained dancers enjoy a distinguishing trait that sets them apart - a special quality of movement born of blistering technique and fearlessness. Students are taught to set their sights on world class quality. Seiskaya Ballet creates a level of expectation which is beyond the threshold for success.

The Academy is in the very serious business of education, discipline and fun. That's right, fun! It is easy to have fun when dance education is disciplined, challenging and fulfilling. Discipline is not a negative force in life. An



adage captures this point aptly: *when you know the rules, it is more fun to play the game.*

After over thirty years of operation, Seiskaya Ballet has developed its own distinct *corporate culture*.



Dance schools, as with many entrepreneurial endeavors, seldom reach their third decade. A common thread among the ones that do survive is a

disciplined and reasoned approach to management.

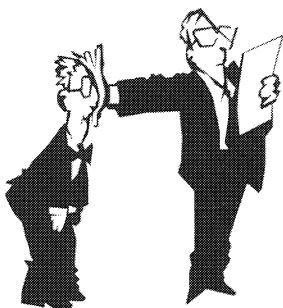
A wit once quipped, “There is no democracy in dance; there is either strong leadership or anarchy.” Our philosophy mirrors that sentiment. One constant over the years has been Seiskaya Management’s ability to maintain a pragmatic perspective.

Seiskaya has established policies that, over the years, have resulted in a time honored regimen. The basic cornerstones are artistic integrity, a strong work ethic, family involvement, loyalty and financial responsibility.

Organizational Theory - There are essentially only two ways to run a successful professional studio: allow

personal accessibility and promote involvement, or maintain a *professional distance*.

The former permits the evocation of greater effort and camaraderie while



the latter often fails to inspire but avoids the pitfalls associated with over familiarity. We have elected to have a large group of surrogate children, emotional baggage and all. Implicit in that decision is the realization that the Seiskaya staff and administration have a finite amount of emotional energy that can be expended.

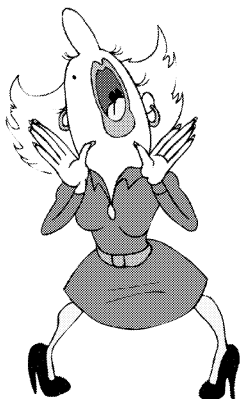
Valia and I are the age of many of our students' grandparents. Of course, some folks might jump to the conclusion that being older is tantamount to being out of touch with today's realities. We are a generation that recognizes the need for adaptability within a framework of consistency and stability. We know where we came from and know where we are going. *We do what we do because we like it, & we're good at it.*

Unlike most commercial dance organizations, Seiskaya exists

for artistic reasons and for the personal gratification of both the staff and management. Seiskaya Ballet School was founded in 1974 with one primary emphasis. Valia wanted to provide the opportunities in dance that she received from her early training. It was obvious from the outset that parents care more about what a teacher can do for their child rather than what the teacher had accomplished in their own career. The Seiskaya mantra is simple - **establish studio credentials based on student accomplishment.** Over the years, the mission has never changed and thus the product remains uniformly excellent.

Valia Seiskaya will never tout her talents as a teacher/choreographer. However, it is a matter of great pride her to watch her kids be competitive and succeed.

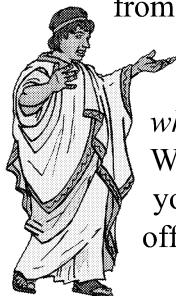
Almost no effort is spared in that pursuit. The major compensation derived by all the professionals at the Academy is the enjoyment and pleasure of developing unseasoned young students into mature, graceful, and technically proficient dancers.



And if you pick up a few lifelong friends along the way, then you are having a great run.

We have a deep abiding faith in the power of the two words: “YES” and “NO!” Uncertainty is a child’s greatest enemy. Being strict disciplinarians is not necessarily a winning formula. Being very demanding is! Show the child the boundaries, and they will tow the line, exceeding expectations. As you enter the cloistered world that is ballet, the end result of Seiskaya’s rigorous training regimen is that our mores, work ethic and attitudes will be imprinted on your child.

We know that everyone is busy and trudging through a manifesto is laborious and daunting. We hope that this *little* volume will be sometimes poignant, sassy or even down right funny. We have included cartoons for those who might otherwise choke on dry text, parables and philosophy for those searching for hidden meaning, and actual humor for those in need of a break from the mundane.



This booklet is a little *when in Rome* tutorial. We are not telling you how to raise your offspring. We are pointing

out that when you and your children are, say, in a house of worship your behavior is probably different than it is at home. The same holds true in public/private schools, at your boss's home or in the presence of an authority such as the police.

Parents must raise children the way that suits their environment. Seiskaya students have to learn to adapt to the ballet world much as Seiskaya does. There are conventions Seiskaya has little or no control over. Our open door policy is in place to facilitate the education of parents so that their ability to provide guidance and support will allow them to be an integral part of their child's support system. To make it easier to assess this strange new world and learn about Seiskaya Ballet's traditions and policies, we have provided this tome as a guide.

A man boarded a plane with six kids. After they got settled in their seats a woman sitting across the aisle from him leaned over to him and asked, "Are all of those kids yours?"

He replied, "No. I work for a condom company. These are customer complaints."

It would be great if we could always come up with an entertaining retort.

We can't. So bear with us as we try to provide our perspective and address a lot of common issues.

Meet the Fokkers

Who is Valia Seiskaya? Valia Seiskaya is the founder and artistic director of Seiskaya Ballet School and Academy. Her professional performing career spanned 17 years. She was a featured soloist with the National Opera of Greece, the country's official opera and ballet company, and toured throughout Europe and Russia. Noted for her prodigious technique, she danced numerous leading roles. Mdme. Seiskaya holds a diploma in dance awarded by the Greek Ministry of Education. Seiskaya Ballet School, established in 1974, has grown into one of the nation's most highly regarded private schools. Endorsements by leading master teachers and referrals from major dance companies validate this point.

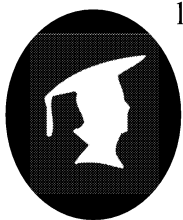
Seiskaya students have distinguished themselves in numerous regional, national, and international competitions including the Prix de Lausanne in Lausanne, Switzerland; the International Ballet Competition (IBC) in Varna, Bulgaria [bronze & gold]; the Prix de Danse in Paris, France [gold]; the International

Ballet Competition in Jackson, Mississippi and the New York City International Ballet Competition.

Graduates have danced with numerous distinguished companies including American Ballet Theatre, Pittsburgh Ballet, Pacific Northwest Ballet, Atlanta Ballet, Ballet West, Boston Ballet, Milwaukee Ballet, Hartford Ballet, Royal Ballet of Sweden, Tulsa Ballet, and Eliot Feld Ballet.

Furthermore, students have garnered scholarships to an extensive group of company-sponsored schools comprised of the San Francisco Ballet, New York City Ballet, London's

Royal Ballet, Houston Ballet and the Joffrey Ballet.



In addition, several Seiskaya students have won a myriad of dance scholarships to celebrated college dance programs includ-

ing New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, Swarthmore College, and the Universities of Indiana, Massachusetts and Utah. Nominated as *Best Teacher and Coach* in the 1994 International Ballet Competition in Varna, Bulgaria, Valia Seiskaya has been universally acclaimed as an outstanding master teacher. She is one of the rare gifted instructors that

can both recognize raw talent in a six year old as well as nurture, teach and polish that student to a level desirable to ballet companies.

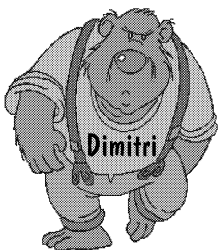
Who is the Administrative Director? Since inception, Dimitri Papadakos has served as Administrative Director providing a plethora of services ranging from publicity and accounting to photography and role selections.

Successful ballet organizations are built on the premise that the artistic side has a solid grasp of administrative requirements, and the administrative side has a full appreciation of the artistic merits of the endeavor. Lincoln Kiersten and George Balanchine were such a pair and created one of America's top companies in the New York City Ballet.

A split artistic/administrative office affords the advantage of having two individuals along with their points of view - allowing for both debate and a more reasoned approach to most situations. Mr. Papadakos is a former corporate CEO/Chairman of a publicly traded company and holds multiple Masters' degrees. He founded the Ballet Education and Scholarship Fund, Inc. in 1981 and has continuously held the post of Chairman since then. A former

member of the Board of Directors of the Smithtown Arts Council, he sat on the NYSCA decentralized funding panel for two years. He has written extensively on ballet with numerous articles and hundreds of photographs published. While amassing an outstanding ballet library for Seiskaya Ballet, he created and taught a ballet history course for several years.

What does the Administrator do? The Administrative Director enforces Academy regulations and provides support services ranging



from letters of recommendation to input for *invite back* deliberations.

All disciplinary actions are processed through the Administrative Director. A common site at rehearsals and coaching sessions, he regularly provides guidance and advice and is often the rehearsal master.

Why is there a need for the *Little Green Book*? *Lost in translation*, has been used to describe breakdowns in communications between individuals, particularly when language barriers are an issue. Valia Seiskaya was born in the country of Georgia, raised in Greece and

transplanted to America. English is not her first language. Customers seldom have any expertise in ballet, ballet terminology or methodology. It is Greek to them. Fortunately, Administrative Director Dimitri Papadakos (Seiskaya's better half and a Greek-American) has been reared and educated in the States and speaks "Gringlish and Balletese." Although he cannot guarantee perfect translations, even after 40 years of marriage, a reasonable facsimile will be provided. When it comes to ballet, Valia Seiskaya possesses evangelical zeal and tremendous experience. Her responses are spontaneous, forthright, tenacious and often not what someone may have expected or even wanted to hear. If you are uncomfortable, you may lack a true understanding of her remarks. Never hesitate to request a translation.

Several years ago a delightful young student was stricken with mono and missed about six months of class time. Valia ran into the mother and daughter at the mall and inquired as to the child's health and return status. Reporting the meeting to me, she happily noted the imminent return of the student. Several months passed before I ran into the same folks at a supermarket. When I inquired why the child hadn't returned to Seiskaya, the

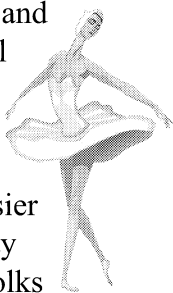
mother told me that Valia didn't want her daughter back. I asked her specifically what Valia had said. "You don't come back!" It was, You don't come back?" Student lost in translation...

Ask questions freely. If you thought of it, the question deserves a responsive answer. Do not depend on the grapevine for information. That is a great way to *get hung out to dry*.

How important is administrative support?

Students have to promote themselves in auditions for acceptance into advanced programs and dance companies. A photo portfolio, résumé and recommendations are all part of the successful support system

Seiskaya provides. A good performance is easier to remember with quality documentation. Some folks have forgotten that the Arts, even with credentials, always require an individual to continually *pay their dues - to start from the bottom* at every level. No matter how talented someone may be, if they do not work hard and/or are not in the right environment, they will not succeed!



Why is Seiskaya Ballet really different? Total commitment to a

single goal: provide the best training available in classical ballet in a nurturing environment! **Seiskaya Ballet teaches only one discipline: ballet.** Commercial dance studios



*Jack-of-all-trades
Master of None.*

teach tap, jazz, hip hop and ballet featuring the annual recital as the operation's financial underpinning. Class sessions are usually closed, and it is not uncommon for six months

of the year to be dedicated to recital preparation. Oftentimes, students are required to take ballet as part of an overall dance program. Students whose primary interest is in other dance forms are often in ballet class against their wills.

The Seiskaya methodology incorporates a very aggressive approach to expanding command of ballet technique at a young age. Cleaning and polishing are done when there is something meaningful to work with. Endless repetition in search of perfection at a young age is counterproductive.

The primary shortcoming with the polish and perfect theory is that an

important opportunity is being lost. Students, when they are young, are fearless and shrug off mistakes painlessly. That is the time to learn to turn, jump and move through space - not when a student reaches 16. At that age, different pressures set in and a theretofore previously unknown self-consciousness takes over. Boredom with the polish and perfect ideology is also a major problem.

What is Seiskaya's formula?

The basic secret of Seiskaya Ballet's success is a unified pedagogical system. By

placing the instructional burden on an established and clearly



identifiable system, both students and teachers have the advantage of measuring progress within a consistent context. Seiskaya rarely engages outside instructors due to the disruptive nature of homogenizing contrasting styles of training. Within their own context, each established system has merits. Seiskaya encourages PREPRO & ACD II students to participate in summer programs that expose them to different styles. Our concentration on a single system provides a secure point of departure for the future

development of the student. Seiskaya teachers are selected based on their familiarity with the Seiskaya system, learning aptitude, performance credits, maturity, and demeanor.

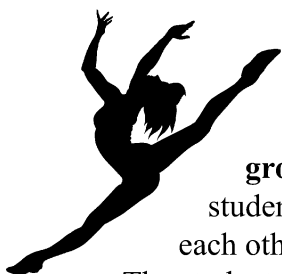
Where do Seiskaya teachers come from? Every instructor is required to be steeped in the entire syllabus during their training period to assure a comprehensive understanding of the Seiskaya pedagogical system. It is not uncommon for a training



program to last two years. Normally younger instructors are selected from a pool of Seiskaya principal dancers, many of whom have been with

Seiskaya for 10 or more years. Each student teacher starts as a teaching assistant, a process that lasts one to three years. Some of the trainees are veterans of international ballet competitions which allows them to bring a special perspective to the classroom. Ancillary factors contributing to the success of the Seiskaya system are: the selection of quality students, utilization of excellent facilities, a corporate culture with a strong work ethic, and comprehensive administrative support.

Who actually teaches class? Besides the artistic director, Valia Seiskaya, the staff is composed of veteran teachers, some of whom have been affiliated with the Seiskaya program for more than twenty years. Among those teachers are: Johanna Hsu, senior instructor; Sara Bedell and Adrienne Vogt. All teachers have received extensive training at Seiskaya. Each instructor is thoroughly familiar with the Seiskaya pedagogy.



How important is the student peer group? Good students make each other better.

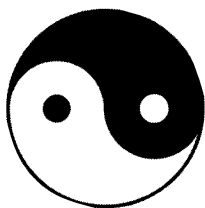
The student that eschews coming to Seiskaya Ballet to remain the studio darling at a local school will lose a rare opportunity. The very students he/she fears are the same ones that will lift the classical dance experience up to the elusive professional level. Classroom competition provides a visible yardstick and creates a positive form of feedback.

What does Push-Pull have to do with a peer group? At Seiskaya, younger dancers are inspired and challenged by the prowess of advanced students (as they are also

by professional graduates) and strive to improve. This is the concept of Pull, where the older and more proficient dancers pull the younger and less accomplished towards them. That said, the flip side of the Push-Pull mechanism is the Push portion. Historically, motivated younger dancers at Seiskaya are always trying to Push the more established dancers out of the way. Youngsters not only contest for dance roles and compete against each other at competitions, but they also continually vie for more attention. The net result of these relationships increases the size of the peer group beyond one's immediate age group or class section. The more inclusive competition, a direct benefit to all participants, ultimately sets the stage for rapid improvement.

Who possesses the true wisdom?

There has been a running controversy for years among pedagogues concerning the issue of placement.

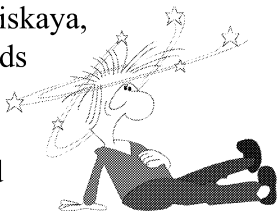


By definition, sound technique requires good body placement. It is physically impossible to have one without the other. The key issue in the body placement discourse is systemic. The Russian school of training

features high leg extensions and thus raised hips. The Checetti method constrains the student, holding hip placement level and forcing small extensions. Similarly, arm movement in the Bournonville school is constrained while both French and Russian schools foster grand sweeping open movements which are again in contrast to the cocked wrist angularity of the Balanchine tradition. At Seiskaya Ballet the Vaganova (Russian) method is primarily favored.

Seiskaya dancers are considered fearless in many quarters.

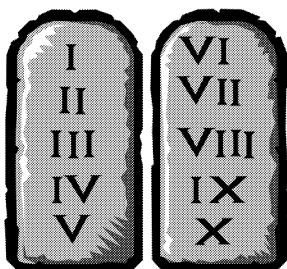
How does the Seiskaya system contribute to that trait? Have you ever noticed that almost every child who attempts to learn to ride a bicycle or ice skate, manages to actually ride and skate? Kids innately are not afraid to fail or land on their rumps. Attitude is also a major factor in progress. Good ballet training will not condition that zest for learning out of the child. We encourage butt time - time spent on the floor after falling. If you are not on the floor occasionally, you are not trying to improve or push your envelope. At Seiskaya, everyone applauds a good flop. We then pick ourselves up and



do it again. The secret to success is simple - do it again. Those instructors or systems that are paralyzed by a preoccupation with “proper placement” at an early age often repress the natural urges of kids to experiment, expand and improve. There is ample time for cleaning and polishing but first a dancer must have something to clean and polish. There are several exercises that Seiskaya uses in its proprietary pedagogical system to promote confidence and consistency. A dancer can only learn by doing, so we offer an ample selection of classes for all levels.

Does Seiskaya ever change its policies? From time-to-time we review our stand on certain issues. Several students brought up the fact that during the summer months their feet swell, making the use of tights while wearing pointe shoes uncomfortable. We changed the policy to allow flexibility during June, July and August at the student’s discretion.

The reasoning behind requiring tights, other than to save



money on wet and consequently rapidly deteriorating pointe shoes,

is that performances on stage are done in tights and students have to retain that feel. We change, albeit gradually.

Frequently Asked Questions

My child has expressed an interest in taking ballet. As a parent what should be my first move? Arrange for a physical exam for your child with specific instructions to the physician to look for any medical conditions that may limit the child's ability to participate in dance classes. Conditions such as asthma, scoliosis or epilepsy should be reported to the Director. If your child requires regular medication, an inhaler or orthotics, kindly provide that information as well. It is imperative that information on registration cards be kept up to date with current parental and physician information. It allows us to be more vigilant.



How does the Academy differ in concept from the Ballet School (OPEN)? There is an entirely different orientation. The Academy

is a preprofessional training institute that fosters serious study under a rigorous regimen leading to a professional career opportunity or a dance oriented college education. The School provides professional instruction to students seeking self-enrichment, fluidity of motion, and increased strength. Academy students are screened and only a select few are accepted through auditions. Nearly any student may join the School and participate in classes once a placement class has been taken to determine class level.

My child really wants to join the Academy but isn't certain about seeking a dance career. Are there still benefits? “...I'll tell you one



thing you probably don't realize, what Valia gives to you is invaluable. Dancing for Valia is more than just studying ballet. In only a few years you get from Valia what few kids today get in a lifetime of learning. Think about it, how scared were you

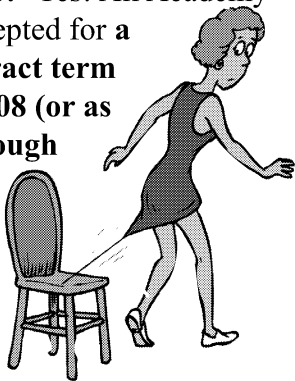
the first time you met Valia? I nearly soiled my tights, but for some reason I hung in there. I was scared but she made me brave. Her 'I won't take crap from anyone' attitude

is something that everyone takes notice of, and as a young aspiring dancer, it's definitely a good tool to have in any stage performance or competition. Studying from Valia gives you discipline like no other sport. How badly do you want that part and to impress her? How many countless hours do you spend at the ballet studio sacrificing social events at school? It's almost a given to your friends and family you're always at the ballet studio. In the future this discipline is useful for studying instead of partying... Dancing for Valia also gives you determination. You know she brings in guest artists for you to learn from but also to show you off. I don't know about you, but knowing that Jock Soto is coming to Pas de Deux class makes me want to perfect everything in my limited repertoire of ballet skills. Determination and diligence are what make hard workers recognized, and hard work gets you well up the ladder of success. I have no clue if any of you aspiring dancers can relate to this now, but I can only write this because I've been where you are. I danced for Valia from the time I was four until I was eighteen. I pretty much had my heart set on dancing as a career, but instead of taking that path, I took the left turn at Broadway and ended up somewhere else. I recently

graduated from the United States Naval Academy which is a world apart from any ballet company. But I can honestly say I would not have made it through any of the hard times in the military if it wasn't for the discipline, diligence and hard work I learned through Valia. I will never forget the tools Valia has given me for life and am forever grateful that she was a part of my life..."

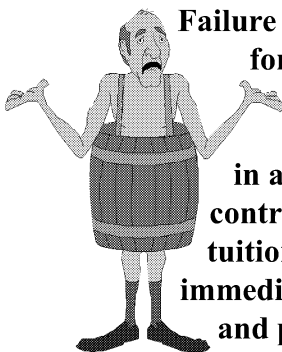
**Ensign Erica Museler, USN
3-time Collegiate All-American**

Does Seiskaya Academy require a formal contract? Yes! All Academy students are accepted for a 10-month contract term - September 2008 (or as applicable) through June 2009 - for which tuition, as a courtesy, is due monthly on the first of each month



during the full 10-month term. No student will be permitted to register for the 2008-09 or current year if a prior outstanding balance is unsatisfied. Tuition is to be remitted whether or not classes are attended. There are no make-ups because students are permitted unlimited classes at or below their assigned Academy class level. In the event of inclement weather, students should

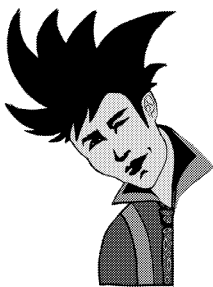
call the studio at 862-6925 for class information. **Only** a bona fide **medical reason** will be considered for a **tuition waiver**. Any physician-validated illness or injury must be in excess of one month to qualify for consideration. Vacations, personal commitments, etc. are not valid tuition waiver considerations. An *Official Seiskaya Drop Notice* must be properly filed. There is a **one-month tuition payment penalty for early withdrawal in addition to the full tuition due for each month where any classes were attended.**



Failure to file the form and pay the penalty will result in all remaining contracted tuition becoming immediately due and payable. A signed registration card, in addition to payment of the annual registration fee, is deemed acceptance of the terms and conditions outlined herein and on the current session's class schedule. In the event of a re-registration from a prior year, payment of the currently applicable registration fee shall be deemed to update and revalidate the registration card for the current year.

Why does Seiskaya place such a premium on work ethic? The Olympics are always an education for Americans. During the 2008 Summer Olympics, a television announcer indicated that Chinese gymnasts see their families only one week out of the year: a regimen that often begins at three years of age and runs into adulthood. That type of dedication seems almost incomprehensible to us.

It is a fact that Americans are part of a global community that has very different standards when it comes to focus and commitment. It is impossible to look at an American ballet company and not notice the plethora of foreigners. The arts require extraordinary dedication. During November 2008, *Sixty Minutes*, the CBS news magazine, did a segment on Gen X and Gen Y children. It was pointed out that the *Mr. Roger's Neighborhood* kids grew up hearing that they were special



and deserved their hearts' desires. Accordingly, we have raised the pampered generations. There is a lack of real-world reality as

older generations knew it. The Gen X & Y kids think they can

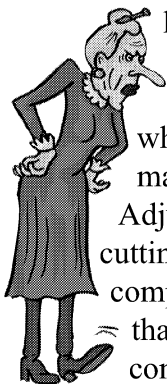
change society with their raised expectations.

To some degree where industry is in need of workers, companies do cater to this new group with nap lounges, bouncing balls for chairs and carnival type events in the office. We now have young people joining the work force who have parents calling the company's Human Resource Department to complain about their offspring's performance evaluation report. College professors have recounted countless incidents where parents call up to complain about grades or provide excuses for students.



The problem is this nonsense does not go on in areas where there is competition for jobs. Other societies have different mores. In part, this is why the honor roles of American schools are often populated by non-Anglo or European names. This Mr. Rogers' attitude is not present in the Far East or other parts of the developing world. Seiskaya Ballet is a small sanctuary for those who want to succeed and are willing to focus on that goal. In the ballet world you can not be successful if everyone else is playing by another set of rules.

How important is learning aptitude? Extremely! Master teachers and choreographers



have little patience with students or even professional dancers who have to struggle to master combinations.

Adjudicators are famous for cutting hopefuls in school and company auditions. A student that has a problem reversing combinations from right to

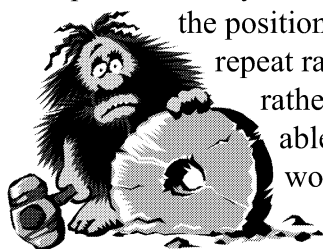
left or simply retaining long enchainement should address the problem before it becomes a fatal error. Although a student may be able to makeup lost ground through sheer effort, all the hard work in the world cannot cover up ineptitude in an audition. The solution is to try to become a Teacher's Assistant (T/A) and take as many classes as possible. Drilling, drilling and re-drilling is the key to improving focus and retention.

What is a T/A? A T/A is a teaching assistant. Senior students and teachers in training are required to **assist** in classroom instruction by demonstrating and helping to correct young students **when requested**. T/A students find the experience very fulfilling. With attention focused on them during demonstrations, they become more focused and self-

aware. The additional class time also proves beneficial.

Can I do anything to improve my ballet learning aptitude? Yes.

There are several things. The most important one is to learn the ballet terms that are used in class. Failure to do this relies completely on your optical memory. You are put in



the position of having to repeat random letters rather than being able to remember words made from letters in an alphabet. With

this tool you can use association to help remember combinations. After each class try to write down the enchainement given during class. Expand this exercise to include the barre work as well. T/Aing is another great way to push yourself to focus. An instructor won't hesitate to correct you if you miss a combination and mislead the class. The last exercise is a bit more like organizing pieces from a jigsaw puzzle. If spatial relations are a problem, i.e. the inability to turn a combination around to the other side, then try to learn the combination as if it were a new combination rather than trying to reverse it on the fly during class. The key to this process is repetition. Take as many lower

level classes as you can in order to work on this aspect of your training. Every time you master a combination and its flip side, you have added two new words to your lexicon.

What is the difference between an audition class and a placement class? The audition's primary use is to determine acceptance into the Academy, and collaterally, correct class level placement.

The staff bases its decision on the applicant's body type, flexibility, turnout, learning aptitude, attention span, technical prowess, and musicality.



Depending on age, the above factors may carry varying weights of importance. A young student would undoubtedly earn more points on body type and flexibility than in the areas of technique and learning aptitude. Acceptance into the OPEN program is normally not an issue. A placement class is utilized to determine class level only.

How are Academy students selected? Primarily on technique. Age is normally of secondary importance. Although new students seeking acceptance into the Academy must audition to determine

acceptance and class level, all Academy students are constantly evaluated throughout the year. If their progress warrants, students may be moved up a level at any time during the year.

How many class levels are there in the Academy, and how long does a student stay at each level? There are five levels starting from Academy V, entry level, through PREPRO. A good rule of thumb is approximately two to three years at each level. Exceptional students often compress this time schedule.

Seiskaya Ballet has a reputation for putting younger students in with more advanced students. Does that denigrate the class level? No! Teachers are instructed to teach to the top of the class. This is done for several reasons. From a philosophical standpoint, not everyone is going to be successful at every level. Some will fall by the wayside or, to quote the graphic euphemism, “hit the wall.” The students with the greatest chance for success are the more technically proficient.

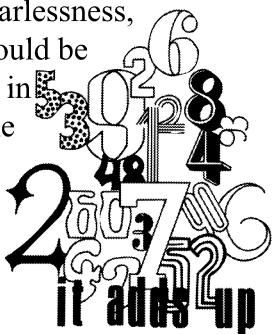


It is extremely important to keep these students challenged and

focused. Second, the younger, less experienced students have instant access to excellent role models. Third, younger students progress more quickly because the expanded peer group sets a higher performance plateau. And fourth, there is increased camaraderie and respect as the younger students struggle with their rite of passage - they earn their stripes the hard way. Finally, older, more advanced students are often called upon to aid their younger counterparts.

Mentoring calls for leadership, maturity and a good command of the discipline you are imparting. There is nothing better for testing your prowess than teaching someone else.

How does addition by subtraction work? A talented and very experienced guest teacher once marveled at the fearlessness of Seiskaya students. After teaching the students for a while, she commented that although younger students needed some “cleaning up” of their technique, their fearlessness, in the long run, would be the real difference in the job market. She then asked, “How do you make dancers fearless?” We noted that



if teachers constantly impose constraints while admonishing students to wait before trying more advanced skills - because of age or ability - they eventually undermine a child's confidence.

Boredom kills incentive. Children are natural mimics. As they watch older dancers practice advanced skills and rehearse variations, they too become inspired to give it a shot. To a degree, it's *ignorance is bliss* and *damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead*. By subtracting the constraining naysayers while promoting inquisitiveness, experimentation and exploration, fearlessness is --- added by subtraction.

Body type is an expression often used in ballet. What does it specifically refer to?

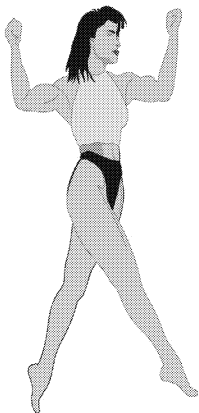


Although variants can be noted, body type refers to the proportion of an individual's limbs to his/her torso, the proportion of chest to hips, height, weight, length of the neck, the shape of the foot in an extended arched position, and size of the head. Parents are also scrutinized because they usually provide a harbinger

of body changes to come during the maturation cycle. Ballet has established a de facto *slim* standard which is pervasive. Serious students have little choice but to adhere to this demanding aesthetic. The Academy follows this convention in auditions.

Nevertheless, the health of the young student is paramount. Good eating habits featuring a well balanced and nutritious diet are strongly encouraged. Students are instructed to strictly avoid fad diets, diet pills, and binge eating. Behavior modification is the soundest method of weight control. In the rare event that a student develops an eating disorder and counseling is ineffective, the Seiskaya policy is to drop that individual from the program. This is done to protect other children who are vulnerable in their formative early teen years.

What about muscle definition



and *baby fat*? Girls bodies change particularly during the maturation process. It is not uncommon for youngsters to shoot up several inches in one year, gain weight or begin to bloat. What was

once a very slender body with an impish quality gives way to a stronger and more muscular version. Weight is usually not the issue. The body makeup, or body fat index, is the culprit. Muscle definition that appears in the later teenage years is often covered earlier on by *baby fat* which melts away or is converted to muscle over time. The problem is one of perception by adjudicators, critics and audiences.

For example, a dancer that does not possess a large split jump with good elevation, will be viewed differently at each age level. When the dancer is younger, the jump is still cute and the execution is age appropriate.

Now older, the dancer's jump can be perceived as sluggish. Limbs that once displayed vertical lines of muscular definition and seemed lengthened now



appear shortened cloaked in pink, a color that widens everything. Adagio is another area of real vulnerability. Poor leg extensions and balance are expected of youngsters, however, a more mature dancer will be perceived as poorly toned and weak - both conditions associated with being heavy.

The good news is that *baby fat* is a phase. It may last months or up to four years before the body chemistry and muscle development reach their full cycle. A dancer **does not have to lose weight** unless an unexpected and unwanted large weight gain occurs.

What the dancer and parent have to consider is that perceptions of the



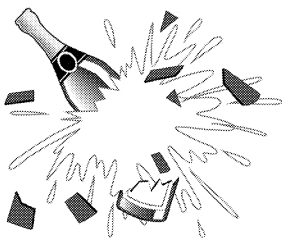
dancer may change for a time affecting everything. Work on what you can control (technique & presentation) and let Mother

Nature do her job in the meantime. Innumerable dancers have been through this gauntlet at Seiskaya and have survived. *Valia herself had a brutal dance review written in a newspaper which recognized her outstanding technique and ended with, "She (Valia) needs to lose the extra (literally translated) meat." She was sixteen at the time. The following year a leaner Valia joined the Greek National Opera Ballet and went on to an impressive 17-year professional career, and, except for a couple of pregnancies, never had a weight issue again.*

What does *crunch your way to success mean?* A strong core is

one of the most important assets a dancer can have. Crunches done properly and in a variety of ways and angles will hit the upper and lower abdominal muscles as well as the obliques. Aside from making the dancer look trim and fit, the exercises make it easier for the dancers to remain pulled up in turns thus allowing more turns. Leg extensions will be higher and can be held longer. Gaining six inches on an arabesque is not uncommon.

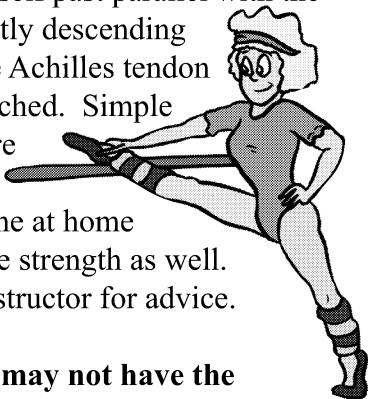
My child was told to hit the bottle. I'm almost afraid to ask. What does that mean?



It usually means the wine bottle. Exercises to strengthen and sculpt a dancer's arch are varied. The most common one is the use of a wine bottle (because it is unlikely to break and has a larger diameter than other bottles). In a seated position, the dancer should roll the foot over the bottle trying to extend the toes downward as much as possible. Some dancers use a ball, surgical tubing or therabands. The problem with these items is, if unsupervised, a dancer may sickle their foot thereby creating muscle memory of an undesirable trait. The bottle is a long

process - up to three years - do not expect immediate results. Sessions can last up to 20 minutes. However, it is a painless exercise that can be done while doing homework or watching television.

Toe-lifts utilizing a step help strengthen the arch. With toes placed on the edge of the step, care should be taken when descending from the raised position to slowly lower oneself past parallel with the step. Gently descending allows the Achilles tendon to be stretched. Simple ballet barre exercises can be done at home to improve strength as well. Ask an instructor for advice.



My child may not have the preferred ballet body. Is there still room for him/her at Seiskaya? Of course. Seiskaya Ballet is not just the Academy. The OPEN program provides the same quality instructors and facilities, but with a different emphasis. No one is completely perfect. The Academy does accept individuals with less than perfect bodies for several reasons. Each student brings to the classroom a special blend of attitude, work ethic and prowess, thus enriching the whole group. A parable:

An elderly Chinese woman had two large pots, each hung on the ends of a pole, which she carried across her neck. One of the pots had a crack in it while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water. At the end of the long walk from the stream to the house, the cracked pot arrived only half full.

For a full two years this went on daily, with the woman bringing home only one and a half pots of water. Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it could only do half of what it had been made to do. After two years of what it perceived to be bitter failure, it spoke to the woman one day by the stream. “I am ashamed of myself, because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your house.” The old woman smiled, “Did you notice that there are flowers on your side of the path, but not on the other pot’s side? That’s because I have always known about your flaw, so I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back, you water them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate the table. Without you being just the way you are, there

would not be this beauty to grace the house.”

Each of us has our own unique flaw. But it's the cracks and flaws we each have that make our lives so very interesting and rewarding. You've just got to take each person for what they are and look for the good in them.

If your child is already in the Academy, then he/she possesses certain desirable physical attributes and has shown potential for progress. Each child matures at a different pace. Many have differing goals. The Academy is not just for those aspiring to a classical dance career. Those students looking to college may want a chance for scholarship money, to major in dance or a related field, or have a prestigious extramural activity on their resumes. Some students may be here as an adjunct to ice skating, gymnastics, other dance forms or sports. Some participate for the sheer physical challenge of the Academy program.



The possibility of utilizing the Academy to achieve other goals is excellent. Some examples:

Jacqueline Kalata has her own successful Flamenco company in Milan, Italy. Jennifer Portnoy went on to college and a professional career in the well regarded modern dance company, Laura Dean. Steven Marshall chose globe-trotting Momix. Michael Cusumano, after several years with American Ballet Theatre, is now performing on Broadway in *Chicago*. Seiskaya provided these dancers with a passport to new horizons.



How does my child know whether or not he/she is making progress? Audition results can be a barometer. Oftentimes you have to look back to see how far you have come. After a recent ABT audition I spoke to a student and asked her how many students she felt were better than her. She answered there were probably a lot in the crowded audition. Then I asked her to put herself back two years into her old school and tell me how many of the auditioners would be better than her at that point. She answered - all of them.

When you are engaged in competition with a vibrant group of young dancers as is the case at Seiskaya Ballet, it is easy to lose sight of how

fast you are traveling because of the *can't see the forest for the trees* syndrome.

Can parents expect a student assessment by the Directors or the Staff? A private chat is always recommended. Parents should never expect to hear that their child is the best thing since sliced bread. An outstanding assessment is that your child is on track for their age and has good upside potential. No one can predict if a 14-year-old will become a professional. All that can be given is an assessment relative to the dancer's current situation. If there are shortcomings, which there normally are, they will be discussed and measures to address them outlined. Annual chats are helpful and recommended.



Why do you preach “don’t take it personally?” Success or disappointment in auditions sometimes depends on factors outside one’s control. Today, a

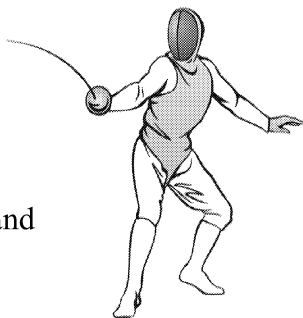


company is only accepting redheads that are 5’4”. If you fit the bill, don’t take it

personally. The requirement is so specific that the qualitative issues may have been minimized. If an applicant is not selected, failing to be a 5'4" redhead is not the end of the world. Oftentimes there are qualitative issues such as height, weight, projected personality, overall aesthetic, etc. that have little to do with technique. Not being selected does not mean the individual is not a good dancer. There are dance companies that favor short over tall, blonde versus brunette or long limbs and small heads only. Each director has his/her subjective preferences that skew the selection process.

Do not personalize every event. Take auditions, competitions and experiences on the whole and look for trends. Discuss your assumptions with us. A student and parent will go through this once. We have been down this road countless times. Everybody is different and circumstances are usually fluid. The best advice is often to keep the faith and continue working hard.

For those who have to evaluate alternative paths, we will share our opinions openly and honestly.



When you are told by the Directors or the Staff to make improvements or changes in work habits, appearance or attitude, rationalizing your position after only partial completion of the improvements may not be in your best interest. A Parable:

A young boy had just gotten his driver's permit and inquired of his father if they could discuss his use of the car. His father said he'd make a deal with his son. "You bring your grades up from a C to a B average, study your Bible a little, get your hair cut and we'll talk about the car." The boy thought about that for a moment, decided he'd settle for the offer and they agreed on it.

After about six weeks his father said, "Son, I've been real proud. You brought your grades up and I've observed that you have been studying your Bible, but I'm real disappointed you haven't gotten your hair cut."

The young man paused a moment then said, "You know, Dad, I've been thinking about that, and I've noticed in my studies of the Bible that Samson had long hair, John the Baptist had long hair, Moses had long hair and there's even a

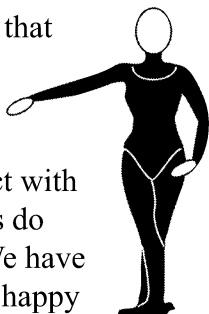
strong argument that Jesus had long hair.”

To this his father replied, “Did you also notice they all walked everywhere they went?”

What does *nobody’s home* mean?

Seiskaya dancers are encouraged to explore dance as an extension of themselves - to speak with their bodies without using words. Classical ballet has a very specific and time honored vocabulary (steps). The sequence of steps (choreography) is interpreted through each dancer’s body language and ability to project to the audience. A deadpan face and technically correct - albeit mechanical - movements yield the *nobody’s home* moniker.

This is in stark contrast to observing a dancer light up the stage with energy, exuberance and passion. With *nobody’s home* - the light is turned off. *Nobody’s home* dancers are also quite likely to become prospectors, that is, always looking down at the floor for money. It is impossible to connect with others when our eyes do not make contact. We have been known to paint happy faces on offenders. At least



the dancer becomes acutely aware everyone is watching them.

What does it mean to be invited back? Annually, in late August or early September, letters are sent to all Academy students indicating each individual's status. Students who have successfully completed the prior year are invited back for the ensuing year. Class level is determined by the Academy staff and is included in the notification.

I didn't get my invite-back letter. Am I out of the Academy? Don't assume the worst. If you are uncertain, call and ask to speak to the Directors. Your letter may have been missent, or we had an incomplete address.



Does the Academy have any attendance requirements?

Academy students are required to attend a minimum number of weekly classes: ACD V, two classes weekly; ACD IV, three classes; ACD III, four classes; ACD II, five classes; and PREPRO, six classes. There are no frequency requirements in the OPEN (School) program. Academy students are entitled to unlimited classes at or below their class level in both the Academy and OPEN

classes. Students attending the OPEN program are not permitted in Academy classes and may attend only OPEN classes for which tuition has been remitted. Academy students are required to attend for the entire September-June year. Classes or days can be excluded from the schedule for religious training, musical instruments, transportation issues, etc. Doubling up on another day or Saturday easily solves the conflict.

Who decides how many additional classes over the required minimum should be taken?

That is a joint decision between the Director, the student, and parents. Each student must balance

conflicting obligations.

Proper scheduling of religious training, school activities, family

events and transportation are all important. Older students may be more aggressive in scheduling, reflecting established academic credentials and sound work habits.



How important is family commitment? *Very!* Good intentions count little. Students need reliable transportation and that takes a tangible commitment of time.



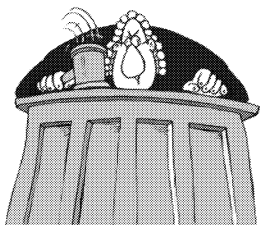
Tuition and supplies must be purchased and that takes a financial commitment.

Encouragement and support are also necessary and that takes emotional commitment. Often a parent's ego dictates a desire for a child to join the Academy. No matter how talented, without follow-through parental commitment, your child is destined to eventually fall by the wayside.

What are the most common reasons for being dropped from the Academy?

A poor attendance record ranks as the number one culprit. Discipline problems, personality conflicts with staff or other students,

loss of focus and inappropriate weight are major contributing factors. Lack of parental support



or a failure to discharge financial obligations are also grounds for dismissal regardless of the student's progress or standing. Students and their families come as a package. Together they come - together they depart.

Does leaving the Academy mean departing Seiskaya? Not normally. An Academy student may voluntarily opt to join the OPEN program. In addition, Academy drop notices are usually accompanied with an invitation to join the OPEN program. The exceptions are discipline and financial dismissals.

What happens if I quit and want to come back at a later date? A student transferring to the School from the Academy does not require a placement class, but rather will be graded according to their Academy level. A returning student who attended an outside program will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

The door at Seiskaya usually swings in one direction. There are numerous talented youngsters opting for



attention and encouragement. Loyalty becomes a hot issue with a boomerang student among his/her peers.

A promising young student would have much less difficulty gaining readmittance while an older child may be traveling with emotional baggage which could become disruptive. Generally, older students who leave the program

for other than medical or academic reasons *need not reapply*.

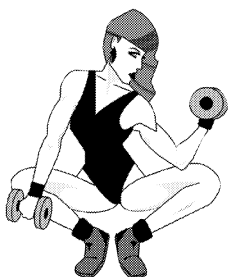
What is character ballet, and why is it required? Character ballet has two primary aspects: ethnic folk dances and characterizations. Folk dances are normally performed in either short heels or boots. Demi-character, character roles on pointe, such as the *Sleeping Beauty's* Felines and Bluebirds are ballet staples. Most major ballet classics such as the *Nutcracker*, *Swan Lake*, and *Coppellia* have numerous character dances. The Mazurka, Czardas, and Tarantella are by now familiar. Animal characterizations, animated dolls and etherial beings permeate ballets with demi-character roles.



Character training adds a new breadth of movement, exuberance, zest and spontaneity to classical dance fare. Most young professionals find themselves initially in folk dance ensembles. Character training is the ideal way to start the familiarization process.

When do students go on pointe?

A teacher recommendation is followed by the Director's review.



Technique and strength are the primary criteria. Development of the arch and feet as well as body weight are evaluated. The

ability to accomplish two clean pirouettes three consecutive times in ballet slippers is a prerequisite. The threshold age is normally between 10 and 11, however, attaining that age is no guarantee a student will be permitted on pointe.

Ballerinas are notorious for having ugly feet. Will that happen to my child?

Each individual is different. Some dancers have feet that bruise easily. Blisters often turn into callouses and bunions are common. Dancers with extremely long toes or with dominating second and third digits are more apt to have difficulty than individuals with toes of more uniform length. A very narrow or wide foot can also be the root cause of trouble. Wear and tear on the feet from pointe shoes is roughly analogous to problems encountered from constantly wearing very high heels. Proper foot care is a must as is maintenance of the

footwear. Keep 'em dry; they'll last longer. Broken or soft pointe shoes can cause discomfort and injuries. Always shop for pointe shoes at stores that have professional sales staff to ensure proper fit. Particularly for growing feet, the journey to find the perfect pointe shoes is akin to the search for the Holy Grail.



Fatigue and injuries. There is little doubt that fatigue contributes to injuries. PREPRO students are particularly susceptible to overload due to academic requirements and additional hours dancing. Seiskaya is in no way suggesting that academics be given short shrift. However, at some point serious dancers have to consider the consequences of constant late night study sessions, risks of injury or increased incidence of nagging illnesses such as constant colds and aggravated allergies. The body and mind need time to heal. When those rare occasions happen, taking a couple of days off from dance to rest and catch up on sleep can be the best prescription.

When planning course loads, try not to max out and consider if every course needs to be an honors section. At some point, almost everyone comes to the realization that one cannot serve two masters: academia

and classical ballet. Both are super competitive and demand tremendous attention.

Seiskaya Ballet gives dancers the opportunity to be competitive on a global stage, but a student must have the physical wherewithal and mental alertness to handle the challenge. If you are constantly tired, nicked up with injuries or feeling over-pressured, it is time to come in for a chat. Sometimes a simple or temporary schedule adjustment can make a world of difference. Discretion has always been the better part of valor.

Are injuries inevitable? Loosely defined there are three categories of injuries: (1) accidental injuries such as those caused by a slip or fall, (2)

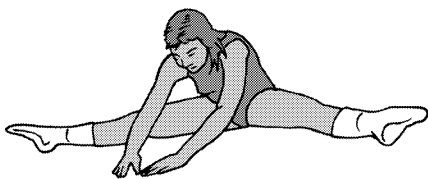


injuries due to improper technique or failure to properly warm-up

and (3) injuries attributable to congenital conditions. Accidents are random injuries that can occur at any time. Avoiding over-fatigue and horseplay can minimize the incidence of this type of problem. However, all the caution in the world cannot prevent the unexpected.

Seiskaya Ballet's pedagogical system emphasizes a rigorous barre prior to centre work in class. Because of that, our injury rate has been exemplary. Try to avoid coming late to class and missing part of the barre. A student has to learn the difference between a boo-boo and an injury. When in doubt, sit it out. That is the best preventative medicine available.

In ballet, lapses in technique are mostly associated with forced turnout (turning out from the knees instead of the hips), improper demi-plié (bending of the knees while not keeping the heels on the floor), hip misalignment and landing flatfooted or with insufficient plié in jumps. As often as not, these problems are brought on by anatomical constraints.



Few students have the perfect ballet body. At Seiskaya Ballet, we do not force turnout. Students are given home exercises to improve turnout which is done slowly and can take several years. Attaining proper pliés can be a struggle for students with short Achilles tendons. Scoliosis and different leg lengths can contribute to improper hip alignment. Displaced or

shallow knee caps and extra bones in the feet can make jumping difficult and painful.

Constant problems need immediate attention and correct diagnosis. If the student complains of unusual soreness or discomfort after particular exercises, bring this situation to the immediate attention of the instructor. Vigilance is that proverbial *ounce of prevention*.

What's a clown costume? Okay, not exactly. We are venting here. Poke your head into a summer class or check out dress down Saturdays. Polka dot leotards, bicycle shorts and the layered homeless look abound. There are several reasons why Seiskaya Ballet requires a specific dress code. In particular, PREPRO is our flagship class and an example of decorum for newcomers and underclassmen alike. Younger dancers mimic the behavior they see in PREPRO. Some PREPROs seem to have a problem embracing this concept.



What is the Ostrich approach? Older students who try to skirt the leotard and tights only dress code by bundling themselves in skirts, warmers and sweats to hide from

looking in the mirror, are playing a fool's game. If the dancers do not feel good about themselves, they will radiate that on stage. Remember,

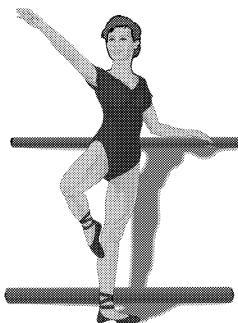


if you can't stand looking at yourself in the mirror, you shouldn't assume that an audience is dying to see you in a tutu. Live with it or fix it, but don't

hide from it. Realistically, most dancers do believe that they belong on stage in a tutu, and if you do, dress for success!

What is the dress code, and why is it required? The dress code for Academy groups II through V requires an official Seiskaya Ballet navy blue leotard with insignia, seamless ballet pink tights, and pink ballet slippers. For those on pointe more than once a week, at least three pairs of ballet pink pointe shoes are required. Initial purchases of pointe shoes should always be checked by the Director.

Split-sole ballet slippers, while fine for complimenting the feet for performances and auditions, are not permitted

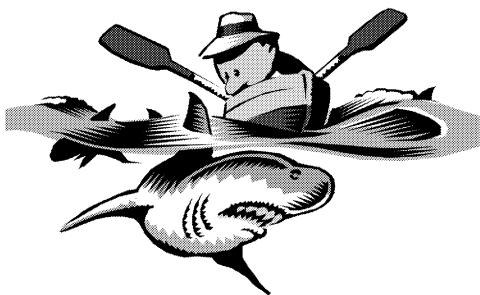


in class because the split-sole design does not provide sufficient resistance to build arch strength.

PREPRO students may wear tasteful black leotards. All attire must be in good repair and snug fitting. Students must be properly groomed with hair secured in a bun. Makeup and nail polish are not permitted for students under 16! Exceptions are approved upon parental request for special occasions. Hanging jewelry is never permitted, nor are skirts, sweat shirts, head bands, or improperly worn leg warmers. Some considerations are for safety, while the rest enforce discipline while developing a coherent aesthetic. Proper dress reflects the correct attitude.

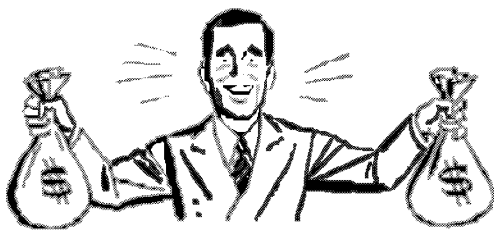
After September 1, 2008, the attire permitted in PREPRO will be black leotard and pink tights and slippers other than during a dancer's monthly cycle when black tights (regardless of thickness) or snug black waist-high leg warmers can be worn over the standard attire. Save your skirts, baggy shirts, multicolored warmers and nylon bloomers for Saturdays. Instructors continue to have discretion with respect to warm-up attire at the barre when the room temperature or a dancer's physical condition warrants. Split sole slippers, "hooker tights" (seamed),

nylon bloomers and incorrect leotards will illicit a *one dollar per infraction fine*. If it is in the wash, buy another one! If you plan on aggravating us, visualize this!



Why is there a dress down Saturday? Doesn't that send a mixed message? Children look forward to public school holidays with a certain degree of glee. Dress down is part of an effort to loosen the strings and provide some more breathing room for fun. In a world where homework seems to be getting heaped on higher and faster on younger students, it is nice to maintain the sanctity of the weekend as a haven for fun. For adults who have to go to work on the weekends, dress down is usually in order as well. Dress down Saturday rules apply to all rehearsals where practice tutus are not required. Yes kiddies, you can dress like an Eskimo for rehearsals if the rehearsals are more than one month prior to performance dates. The message to students


and parents is that in a structured environment occasionally a break from the routine can be refreshing.



Does Seiskaya Academy give scholarships? Yes. Scholarships are based solely on merit and have no relation to need. A scholarship is very rare and is a clear signal from us that we are willing to make a greater investment in your child because we have noted significant potential. No one can guarantee success. All that can be offered is sound advice as to where your child stands with respect to his/her peers. A scholarship represents a very positive assessment. Seiskaya seldom awards full scholarships; it is the ultimate vote of confidence. Scholarships must be earned. Conversely, they can be lost for poor performance. No student will be reviewed for a scholarship unless they are in PREPRO.

What do you look for in a scholarship candidate? With an appropriate body type requisite, emphasis is placed on facilities such as extensions, turnout, and correctly arched

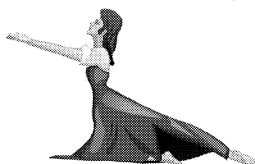
feet. Technical prowess with turns, large jumps and beats is evaluated.

- 
- ☒ **body type**
 - ☒ **technique**
 - ☒ **work ethic**
 - ☒ **musicality**
 - ☒ **learning aptitude**
 - ☒ **age**

A student's musicality and learning aptitude, along with their ability to take and absorb correction, are all closely scrutinized.

Do male dancers get special treatment?

There is a dearth of promising male prospects. On a comparative basis, males begin ballet later than females and mature more slowly.



Encouraging younger males to begin ballet at an earlier age is an avowed goal at Seiskaya. For evaluation purposes, a female student is more likely to be much more proficient technically at any given age up to the late teen level. A male student showing promise will be given every reasonable consideration when he reaches the PREPRO level. The flip side of the equation is even more interesting. Valia Seiskaya has been teacher and coach to Peter Morrison and Michael Cusumano and coach

to Rasta Thomas. The three were arguably the best 15-year-old male dancers in the world at that age. Both Morrison and Cusumano went directly into American Ballet Theatre from the Seiskaya program. With over sixty graduates who have become professionals, Seiskaya training is never a constraining factor. Think of the possibilities; a student's destiny is in his/her own hands!

Will a new student get the same amount of attention as Seiskaya veterans? Yes! In September every dancer is a paying customer. They deserve and get the same amount of attention. There is a simple method

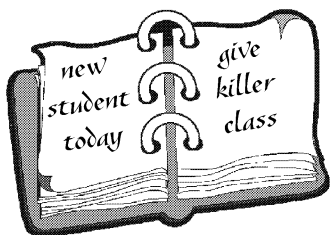


for becoming a teacher's favorite: work harder than anyone else. Body type, talent and work ethic separate dancers into two categories: comers and underachievers; not new and old. Seniority is the traditional tiebreaker. When asked who is the best student she has ever taught, Valia Seiskaya replied, *The next one.*

What is the toughest adjustment new students have to make? The higher the class level the more difficult the transition. ACD IV and V students usually breeze through with little trouble. ACD II and III entrants usually face stiff competition with

respect to technique. Current Seiskaya students are more proficient and acclimated to faster paced classes that require more physical effort and concentration. Often new students must unlearn poor habits, retarding progress. PREPRO students are

usually buffered by two problems. PREPRO is quite competitive, and demands on

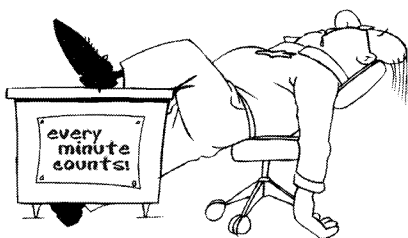


technique are substantial. Additionally, many of your classmates have been together for a number of years and have established strong social ties. Over the years, new advanced students have reported that the bonding among the students is the most intimidating aspect of starting at Seiskaya. Everyone appreciates how difficult it is to adjust from being the big fish in a small pond to a small fish in a bigger pond. As long as they are willing to pay their dues, new students are readily accepted and quickly make friends. Once they get acclimated, parents will discover a very hospitable environment.

What type of class can a student expect in PREPRO? Certainly fast paced with a strong focus on technique. A lot of time is spent on interpretations and “emoting” during

performance rehearsals. The intensity and pace of classes is determined by class level with advanced PREPRO the most rigorous. Ballet classes are geared towards those students seeking a career in classical dance.

It should be recognized that students at many noted company schools spend the whole day in dance programs utilizing either a children's professional school for academics or a dedicated secondary school. In order to compete, Seiskaya students have to make each class count



for a full day's training. Student preparation for competitions is very valuable in stretching and honing artistic abilities. Although few dancers will win a gold medal at a major international ballet competition, the goal is to know that you as a dancer belong at that level. That is a great place to start a career.

Why is longevity at Seiskaya not given more weight? Not everyone has the same talent or learning aptitude. Longevity itself is no guarantee of success. Some high

school students study four hours a night and get C's while others skate on an hour's work and pull A's. New students who have experience elsewhere often quickly realize the opportunities afforded them at Seiskaya. They simply work harder than some longtime students who have become complacent. Success is about talent and work ethic, not about being part of the woodwork. Longevity works in your favor in a toss-up over a role. Unfortunately there are few toss-ups.

What is meant by *Professional Courtesy* with respect to student behavior? In deference to Mdme. Seiskaya, any artistic or sports event in which an Academy student wants to participate, that may result in scheduling conflicts or expose a student to injury, must be cleared by her. In ballet there are numerous programs of questionable value which should be avoided. Additionally, students may not be sufficiently advanced to represent the Academy at certain auditions. Public school events must be reviewed



for merit and commitment. Failure to extend the proper courtesy to the Director is

carefully noted and may precipitate disciplinary action.

How do students get in the dog house with instructors? *Talking is the number one culprit.*

Talking is distracting and disruptive,

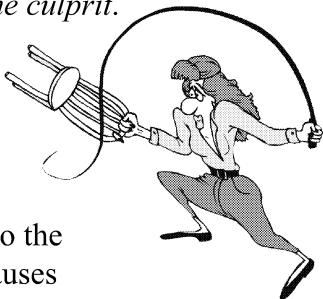
eminently disrespectful to the teacher and causes

friction among students who are trying to concentrate. As a parent you can help the situation by bringing the student early and allowing them to chat with friends prior to class.

Instruct your child not to stand next to his/her best friend at the barre.

That invites talking. Have them take care of grooming issues (hair, pointe shoes, etc.) prior to class which allows for a prompt and ready-to-go attitude.

Wandering in and out of class for water, potty breaks or trips to the dressing room are firmly in 2nd place. Arriving early is great, but failing to move from the dressing room to the classroom in a timely manner is a major no-no and in 3rd position. Parents often have to battle traffic, but chronic lateness has to be addressed. Failure to start with the class in plié becomes a major problem in the long run because pliés are so integral to proper execution.



If you could name one trait that universally leads to failure for dance students, what would it be?



Jealousy.
I am not talking about a twinge of jealousy; I am referring

to consuming jealousy. Concentrate on the opportunities that you receive and how to improve your own lot. Do not waste valuable time and emotional energy dwelling on what others garnered. Jealousy can seem almost obtuse at times. Some students are consumed by what previous generations of students got as roles at their age. Circumstances were probably very different then. Being preoccupied with peers can also lead to disaster. A student and their respective parents are not in a position to be the arbiter of why or how someone else got *moved up*, how a specific role was allocated or whether seniority was part of the mix. If you have a problem - ask us.

An elderly Cherokee man, was teaching his grandchildren about life. He said to them, "A fight is going on inside of me; it is a terrible fight, and it is between two wolves. One wolf is fear, anger, envy,

sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority and ego. The other is joy, peace, love, hope, sharing, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, friendship, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith. This same fight is going on inside you and inside every other person too.”

*They thought about it for a minute and then one child asked his grandfather,
“Which wolf will win?”*

*The old Cherokee simply replied,
“The one you feed .”*

My child wants to feel good about himself/herself. Will there be rewards for taking ballet? News



flash: Not everyone gets a medal for participating in the Academy. We do not have a policy of *no one left behind*. Plenty of people get left behind,

are dropped from the program or leave on their own volition. The Academy is an exclusive place. That is why success is so sweet to those who flourish. Years ago, we had a young dancer with very poorly

arched feet. Her mother's feet were to die for. Instead of quitting, the girl tried harder and found that she excelled in character dance. She went on to become a principal dancer and changed the way girls look at pirouettes.

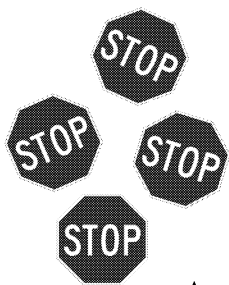
Conventional wisdom has it that boys can do more pirouettes on flat than girls. This girl decided she was athletic enough to match the boys, and thus was born the Queen of Turns: Susan LaMorte. One fine spring day an outstanding male dancer came to Seiskaya looking for guidance as to whether to compete in the International Ballet Competition in Varna, Bulgaria. He was from the vaunted Kirov School in Washington, DC, where he was a budding star, but had been advised by them not to compete because he was not ready.

He sought out Valia Seiskaya because he had seen her student, Michael Cusumano, win the jury prize in ballet at the 1994 Prix De Danse in Paris, France. He came and took class at Seiskaya and started to put on a show. He completed a combination with six or seven pirouettes, but next to him was LaMorte, who finished with nine, utilizing Baryshnikov's famous leg



sweep. After that experience, he told Valia he would listen to anything she had to say. True to his word, he listened. The end result was Rasta Thomas, coached by Valia, won a gold medal at Varna in 1996.

Rasta later recounted that getting beaten doing pirouettes was one thing, but getting blown away by a girl was quite humbling. He had to reevaluate everything, which eventually made all the difference. Limits are stop signs we throw up in front of ourselves.



Every student has the potential to contribute to the overall dance experience and create his/her own destiny.

Accomplishment is always a great reward.

What's wrong with my child? Why isn't he/she allowed to take a higher level Academy section at year's end? There is nothing wrong with your child. Academy levels are either two or three year stints. Only a student in the top half of their Academy section should consider attempting such an undertaking. Normally in May and June, the Directors select students and place them in higher level classes for a

look to see how they handle the class. The decision to try someone out is based on the material to be covered in class that day and the makeup of the class. An Academy class devoid of first year students would usually be inappropriate for a lower level Academy student to attempt.

The correct protocol is for the student to ask a Director if and when such a class would be appropriate. The parent should not ask. If the student is not comfortable with the idea or isn't capable of asking, then they are not mature enough to handle a higher level class. Failure to follow this protocol usually ends in a butt-chewing.

Why you should never apologize for your success. Although this may be a case of semantics, every dancer



must be a little bitchy. Success is something that is earned whether it be

promotion to a higher level, selection for a role, audition acceptances, competition wins, etc. Possessing the feeling, *I earned it* is not only justified but warranted. Empathizing

with others who may not have been as successful is natural but must be kept in perspective. Worry about your own butt. From the studio's point of view, excessive complaints on behalf of others is usually construed as mental sleight of hand and camouflage for your own problems. A parent and student must carry themselves as if they deserve their success. If you cannot wear success successfully, you will not succeed for long - *walk the walk and talk the talk!*

What does self-effacing to a fault mean? Humility is a very desirable attribute in most circumstances. Giving others respect and their due is a sign of maturity. However, when overdone, too much deference can become a real negative projection of your own self-worth.

If you are capable of being generally competitive at every level of an endeavor, then take pride in your accomplishment. Do not underplay your value because you perceive that there may be others who are better or more competent than you in a specific aspect of the activity.



Sophia Loren is generally considered one of her generation's most beautiful movie actresses. As a younger woman, she could not understand her beauty. She noted several times, if taken individually, her nose, eyes, lips and hips were too big. With continued adulation over the years, she came to realize her looks were perceived by the public as a whole framed within her carriage and personality. She became comfortable with herself, and an Italian bombshell was immortalized.

If we ask a dancer about students at another program and the response is they were all so wonderful, we know there is a problem in the making.



Every program has dancers that are not the greatest. Learning to differentiate

between wheat and chaff is an important tool for one's development and psyche. If a dancer cannot discern the shortcomings in other dancers, they will most likely be unable to assess their own issues clearly. If dancers constantly put themselves down, they lose the respect of their peers and the Staff. Classical dancers must be aware of

the image they project on stage and how they carry themselves. Dancing is not just stringing movements together or being technically adept. It is also about artistry, passion and deportment - *the whole enchilada*.

Okay, we have been told we must walk on hot coals. What is the payoff? Unsolicited answer:

*Dear Valia and Dimitri,
This is Kristina Short writing. I know that I am horrible at keeping in touch, and this letter should have been written long ago. Before I left Seiskaya to embark on the rest of my life, I never got the chance, or maybe never had the guts, to thank both of you for all of the support, lessons, and wonderful experiences that you gave me. Despite the fact that it has been two and a half years since I left Seiskaya, I often still find myself reminiscing about my two years with Seiskaya Ballet. When I saw *The Nutcracker* this year, I saw it not only as a wonderfully crafted and danced holiday tradition, but as something deeper. I was overcome with so many memories of my times dancing the same choreography, the endless rehearsals, and the spirit of camaraderie of all the dancers, and in that I saw what makes Seiskaya so unique and so great. Seiskaya is more than just an amazing ballet*

school; its a family. I've realized that the lessons I learned in those two years not only applied to ballet, but to life as well. Now that I've rambled on for a lengthy amount, I can say what I really want to.

TO Dimitri, ... I will always be grateful for your understanding and commitment to help me do what I had dreamed; to get the best education in ballet possible.

To Valia, words cannot express all of the thanks I want to give you. In my entrance essay for college, you were one of the people I wrote about as most influential in my life. Through ballet, I learned the true meaning of perseverance and a strong work ethic. You always pushed me to give 110%, and this is something that I will take with me through all my life.

So, to end this, thank you both for not only pushing me to be the best dancer I could be, but the best person as well. I may not dance all my life, but I will always be a dancer in my heart; dance is not only about the movements, it's a unique type of heart and mindset.

*Love and thanks,
Kristina Short*

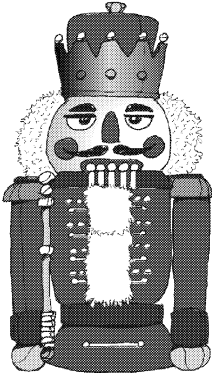
Bring a friend to class for free.
Every year we allow all Academy

students to bring a friend to class for no charge. *There are only two restrictions:* an Academy student cannot bring more than one person to the same class without permission from the Directors, and an outsider can only take a total of two free classes. This is your chance to share the Seiskaya experience with friends, as well as an opportunity for Seiskaya to introduce ourselves to dancers who might not otherwise venture in.

Seiskaya is closing in on certain milestones. What are they? In June 2009, BESFI and Seiskaya will celebrate their 30th anniversary at the Staller Center. Seiskaya Ballet reaches its 35th birthday in the latter part of 2009. Also in 2009, the *Nutcracker* at Staller turns 15 years of age. During 2008, the new phrase, *follow the articles to Studio B* was coined. With the inclusion of several additional news article boards, Studio A is now linked to Studio B. History is everywhere. *Join us to write your own story!*

Performances, Summer Intensives & Ballet Competitions

Do Academy students get an opportunity to perform? Yes. Once they have reached the Academy III



level, students are invited to perform in the annual *Nutcracker* performances at Stony Brook University's Staller Center for the Arts. In addition, students attaining Academy

II level may be invited to participate in the annual spring BESFI Benefit Performances at the Staller Center. Student selection is predicated upon the choreography of the ballet being staged, a student's class standing, and ensemble considerations such as height, technique level and strength. Academy students, who are invited to perform, rehearse on Friday evenings, Saturdays and Sundays. No class time is lost.

Is there a difference in casting procedures between the *Nutcracker* and BESFI Benefit performances?

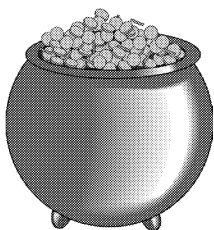
Yes. There is a substantial difference. The *Nutcracker* is staged by Seiskaya Ballet, which is a for-profit entity. Audiences are dominated by folks that are not regular ballet-goers. They are there to enjoy the *Nutcracker* spectacle: the sets, costumes and ambiance. The dancing has to be seamless - as error free as possible. BESFI,

a not-for-profit entity, often affords dancers the opportunity to perform demanding choreography that tests their technical and artistic prowess.

Dancers are encouraged to take chances and *go for it*. Casting for the *Nutcracker* is based on error-free execution, consistency and aesthetics. Casting for BESFI adds variables such as exploring a dancer's potential, offering a challenge and assessing strengths.



The process of casting is a grueling one. We look at a wide range of individuals and groups. Every



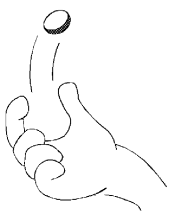
effort is made to spread the wealth while maintaining the integrity of each performance. Casting always brings about some disappointments. There may be several talented dancers that simply do not match up well together. This will definitely affect the selection process.

Once the cast list goes up, you will find that there is not a whole lot of compassion available from the casting Director. Approaching us because little Sally is disappointed

will not engender a torrent of sympathy. We try to fill requests but are not always able to. And yes, some fall through the cracks. Three rules of conversation engagement: 1) do not mention another student as the cause for the disappointment, 2) do not request someone else be bumped or berate a role you received and 3) in the event of a request for a walk-on, ask if there is a work-around. After weeks of endless evenings and countless proofreads, the cast list gets set. Keep that in mind and approach with extreme caution!

What is the policy on missing *Nutcracker* rehearsals? There are only a few **Do Not Miss** rehearsals for the *Nutcracker*. The in-studio dress rehearsals on the weekend preceding the first shows and the Thursday and Friday on-stage at Staller rehearsals prior to show weekends. *Winter music concerts present a major conflict problem for students* in the *Nutcracker*.

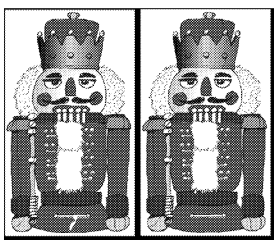
In September, Academy students will have to either opt-in or opt-out of part or all of the *Nutcracker*



performances as the situation dictates. If a student is taking a musical instrument, chorus, band or orchestra in a public

school, you must check to see if there is a Winter concert date conflict with one of the required *Nutcracker* rehearsal dates. Often times, a student will get a failing grade if they miss the concert. *If you cannot make the Seiskaya rehearsal, notify us immediately, and you will not be cast for the performances related to that rehearsal.*

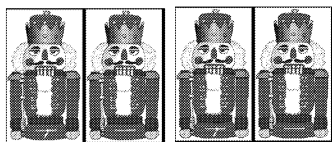
All *Nutcracker* performances are



paired. Thursday rehearsals are for Saturday evening and Sunday matinee

performances and designated Cast A. Friday night rehearsals are assigned for Saturday matinee and Sunday evening performances and designated Cast B. There are certain roles such as *Friend of Clara and Fritz,*

Child at the Party, Angel and Poly that



are scheduled for four consecutive performances on each weekend.

If you have to miss a rehearsal associated with any performance in a pair or set of four, you will be out of those shows and just cast as an understudy when available. For

those who opt-in, **permission will not be granted** for school plays or theatrical shows during the fall term **if** they represent a conflict with the *Nutcracker* schedule.

Remember, nearly all public schools have their winter concert schedule available by May or late August for the ensuing September school year. *If you did not provide us e-mail notice of your conflict and you are cast in October, be prepared to take the failing grade from your school for missing the concert.*

It is your responsibility to check out the schedule. With 80-100 cast members in the *Nutcracker*, verifying a student's eligibility cannot be our responsibility. Several public schools have advised that they will try to avoid the conflict with *Nutcracker* rehearsals once they are advised of our dates which are **available annually in the BESFI journal. Please advise your school's music department at once.**

Nutcracker rehearsals and role preparation require a special commitment, and it is the responsibility of the individual to be properly prepared and attend all rehearsals as far as practical. This policy is not open to negotiation. After January 1st annually, we will

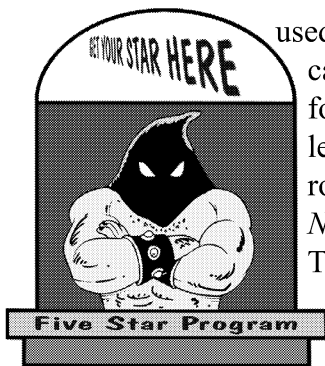
continue to allow participation, where reasonable, in events that interfere with Seiskaya classes or rehearsals.

Nutcracker rehearsal schedule at Staller is as follows: the Wednesday prior to the first performance is only the walk-through (excused absences for this rehearsal are freely given). Thursday is the tech/dress for cast A and Friday is the full dress for cast B. Those dancers not dressing for Friday's rehearsal will do so on Thursdays. The same arrangements



hold true for the second weekend's performances on Thursday and Friday of that week. Complete Staller Center *Nutcracker* rehearsal details are available at www.seiskaya.com annually in September under the heading of *Nutcracker Rehearsal Schedule*. Week-to-week studio rehearsals will be posted in Studio A.

What is the five star program?
Instituted in 2007, the program is

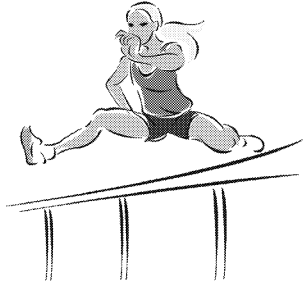


used to evaluate candidates for certain leading roles in the *Nutcracker*. The premise is that if a role is rehearsed

at a level on par with an acceptable stage performance, the dancer will receive one star. Upon gaining five stars, a dancer is now qualified to be selected. Five stars does not guarantee selection for the role because several dancers can qualify for the same role. Failure to gain five stars will eliminate dancers from contention. The audition list with stars is posted in the studio and updated every couple of days so that a current progress report is always available. This minimizes surprises.

My child has his/her heart set on a specific role, what happens if he/she doesn't get that role? If a role is within the technical ability and maturity level of a student, the student will usually be allowed to audition for that role. Every effort is made to provide opportunities. The student's effort never goes for naught. During rehearsals and auditions, we are able to note the growth each dancer experiences

while
preparing for
a role. Not
every student
will live
their dream
this year.



There will be
disappointments. *Get over it!* Most
dancers never reach Nirvana. If you
and your child are interested in a fair
assessment and growth, Seiskaya is
the right place for you. If *the role* is
more important, it's time to move
on. You may want to note before you
start your trek that opportunities to
be involved in professionally staged
productions are few and far between.
A parable, if you will?

***A group of alumni, highly
established in their careers, got
together to visit their old university
professor. Conversation soon turned
into complaints about stress in work
and life.***

***Offering his guests coffee, the
professor went to the kitchen
and returned with a large pot of
coffee and an assortment of cups
- porcelain, plastic, glass, crystal,
some plain looking, some expensive,
some exquisite - telling them to help
themselves to the coffee.***

***When all the students had a cup of
coffee in hand, the professor said:***

“If you noticed, all the nice looking expensive cups were taken up, leaving behind the plain and cheap ones. While it is normal for you to want only the best for yourselves, that is the source of your problems and stress.

Be assured that the cup itself adds no quality to the coffee. In most cases it is just more expensive and in some cases even hides what we drink.

What all of you really wanted was coffee, not the cup, but you consciously went for the best cups. And then you began eyeing each other’s cups. Now consider this: Life is the coffee; the jobs, money and position in society are the cups.

They are just tools to hold and contain Life, and the type of cup we have does not define, nor change the quality of Life we live.

Sometimes, by concentrating only on the cup, we fail to enjoy the coffee God has provided us.”

God brews the coffee, not the cups..... Think roles, costumes, partnersDon’t lose the joy.



What do students do during the summer months? They should dance. The Academy actively encourages all students, above the age of 12, to attend any one of the numerous quality summer dance programs available. Students need the opportunity to compare skills, sample different instructors, and acquaint themselves with new facilities. Audition postings are always available. For summer study, Seiskaya strongly recommends attendance of the BESFI Summer Intensive held at the studio.

Acclaimed teachers from around the globe provide intensive training in a friendly environment. The BESFI Workshop offers three classes daily. Two months of intensive summer programs in total hours can be equivalent to four months of winter classes.

Why summer programs? It is about getting the student out of their comfort zone. In reality the



teachers at the BESFI program are the equal of any program and several notable instructors have been

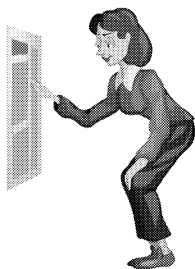
on staff for years. The Seiskaya studios are outstanding facilities.

What is very different for the dancer in other summer programs? The surroundings - from studios and students to time schedules and teachers. There is no time honored pecking order so students have to establish themselves as if they were the “new kid on the block.” Taking a summer program shocks the student out of complacency. And that makes the investment and experience worthwhile.

How do I find out about summer programs?

Asking instructors and the Directors should be your first stop in getting information on age requirements and appropriateness.

There are two bulletin boards in the hallway to the dressing rooms in Studio A where current auditions are posted. Major dance magazines such as Pointe and Dance Magazine have



extensive summer program listings and advertisements. Talking to fellow students who have attended the program in which you are interested is also a very valuable resource.

Your policy has been substantially relaxed with regards to allowing students to audition for summer programs. Why? For years major summer programs held auditions which were akin to cattle calls with hundreds showing up for each audition. We adopted the policy of only allowing students who had a realistic chance of successfully auditioning to compete. This policy created a *halo effect* with respect to the Seiskaya name on an application. Program directors took umbrage when marginally acceptable or unqualified students took up space in auditions. Fully a third of the auditioners would be cut by being paraded across the studio floor in street or warm-up clothes. A dancer's carriage and bearing would quickly show. Another third did not make it past the barre. With the advent of the *audition class fee* and the elevation of summer programs to big business, our attitude changed. Any student willing to pony up the cash for the class is pretty much allowed to compete for three reasons: 1) the experience is generally worthwhile since you will not be



cut and can take the entire class, 2) parental egos aside, it provides a gauge by which to measure one's progress and 3) it may stir a student out of their complacency.

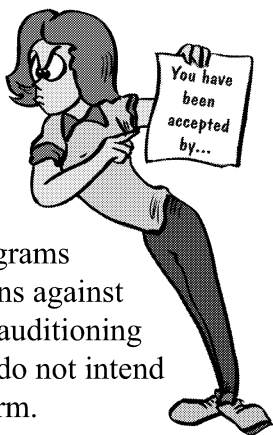
What does a summer program audition rejection mean? Is it a big negative? The reasons for rejection are several. It is not uncommon for some programs to fill up early but the organizations still go through the motions of an audition in order to cover studio rentals and staff salaries. This type of perfunctory audition is completely insignificant. The meat market audition features hundreds of applicants with very limited opportunity for acceptance because the body type criteria may be very rigid. The program's attitude is that you bring the right body, and we will teach you to dance. Technique has been known to be a distant second in importance.

Sometimes the audition can be short and curt while at other times a comprehensive audition class is given. This situation vacillates annually depending on the number of applicants and the assigned adjudicators. Most summer program applications require you to list programs you have attended in the past. For example, Boston Ballet may not be thrilled to see ABT

summer program veterans because of the probability that those dancers will likely requalify for ABT and shun Boston. Why should Boston waste an acceptance on a dancer who has a low probability of attending its program?

The message a student receives by failing to earn an acceptance should always be tempered. Often it is a message that says you are not ready rather than you a poor dancer. Lack of focus in the audition (could be nerves), mental errors or sloppy performance on combinations and unflattering attire are usually the culprits. Use the experience to learn and grow. Don't take it personally, and in the same breath, do not get impressed with yourself if you get accepted.

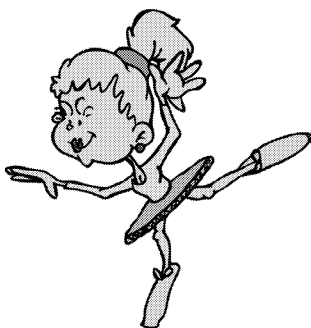
If I get into more than one program, what should I do with respect to the one(s) I will not attend? A respectful declination letter stating a plausible reason for not attending is in order. You should use discretion in couching your response. Some programs do hold declinations against you. Continually auditioning for programs you do not intend to attend is bad form.



Why are some summer programs more important than others?

Prestigious programs look good on a résumé. Programs associated with ballet companies are gaining in popularity because of a structural change in the industry.

We are a litigious society, and ballet companies do not want to work with minors. The era of the baby ballerina

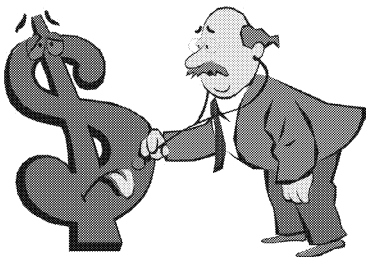


is pretty much over. Colleges have now become much bigger players in the dance education

process. However, it is the companies that have reaped the benefits of the new system. By requiring students to take a summer program before they are offered a traineeship/apprenticeship, company directors can get a much better look at a prospect. The traineeship often lasts a year or more and is equivalent to being a senior in the company's ballet school. An unpaid company apprenticeship follows for a year or two, then a paid apprenticeship or corps membership in a second/studio company. Lo and behold the dancer is now 21 and available for company status. The dancers have been

molded and tested over time with a much higher probability of being viable employees. Your entree into this world was that company summer program.

Why is there a requirement to attend BESFI? The financial viability of the BESFI Summer Program depends on broad support. BESFI cannot continue to indefinitely provide a large pool of scholarship money, maintain low tuition rates



and expand services while some students fail to observe their BESFI commitment by attending other programs. Seiskaya Ballet understands economic constraints on families, difficult scheduling issues and lost time due to injuries. Management often discusses student progress and potential with visiting BESFI faculty. It is important to recognize that promotion decisions, going up on pointe and/or selection for *Nutcracker* roles are often influenced by a student's BESFI workshop performance. In addition, weak overall attendance may make scholarship moneys elusive. Rather than underwrite lower tuition, funds will be used to offset expenses.

I understand that the BESFI Summer Program will continue in the six-week three division format. What does that mean to me? The nominal requirement to attend the BESFI program will remain four weeks for PREPRO and three weeks for Academy II students. At least two weeks participation is strongly encouraged for Academy III and one week for Academy IV.

As currently constituted, the six-week summer program affords students and families flexible vacation schedules and provides a cost effective alternative to sleep-away camps. The expanded program has resulted in smaller classes with a higher technical threshold for qualification for advanced and advanced intermediate level students. BESFI does not hire teachers for cameo appearances. Each instructor teaches for a minimum full week engagement allowing for increased interaction with students. The staff is internationally recognized and is the equal of any major summer program.

I've been accepted to a major summer program that requires a substantial commitment of time and money; how would it affect my Academy status if I opt not to take the required four weeks of BESFI? If you are a PREPRO or

Academy II student, you are obliged to honor your BESFI Summer Program commitment. If you are forced to choose, we strongly recommend that you attend BESFI. BESFI offers students an excellent teaching staff and is considered a top flight program. The synergy created by the BESFI offerings coupled with the Seiskaya program makes for a complete year round experience. If you decide to skimp on BESFI, eventually it will come back to haunt you.

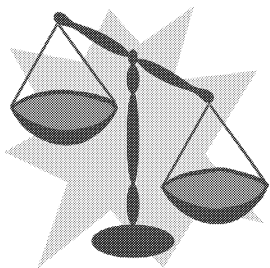


Is it true that dancers attended BESFI in the past on scholarship without being there for the full four week program?

In the past, students attending certain programs that overlapped with BESFI have been given special consideration. Attendance at BESFI could be truncated by a week in order to allow participation in company affiliated programs that required a six week commitment. Waivers to compete for BESFI scholarships were granted on a case-by-case basis. Financial arrangements were predicated on the full four week BESFI commitment. The waiver policy will continue,

keeping in mind that summer programs constantly change with regard to duration, staffing and reputation. Some creative scheduling can usually mitigate conflicts.

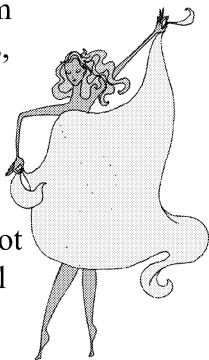
Why do ballet competitions? The competition preparation boost is the key to our reasoning behind entering competitions. It is the journey that is important. The intense preparation and focus required to be competitive is a valuable experience. Performing under pressure in unfamiliar surroundings and competing against other quality dancers is a hallowed rite of passage. Following selection of the required number of variation(s), there are two stages to preparation for a competition: first, learning and mastering the choreography, and second, attaining the polish required for outstanding presentation. If there is too much time spent on mastering difficult choreography, then not enough time will be spent on polishing and tweaking. However, if the scales are to be tipped, traditionally Valia has stressed tak-



ing on difficult choreography to stretch the dancer. *Seiskaya is training professional dancers not professional competitors.*

Polishing and presentation skills can be improved at any time. In fact, both fall under the category of artistry which continues to grow with maturity and age throughout a dancer's career. The open window for technical growth is fleeting, and even more so as one ages. With only about one extra hour daily for rehearsals, it is often impossible to spend the extra time necessary to *get to the next level of polish*. The time is better spent strengthening and creating fearless dancers, who, when they have the opportunity, will acquire additional finesse and polish.

Our goal is for competitors to feel confident that they are at or beyond the technical level required for success in a competition. Oftentimes the competition winners perform an *easy* variation, a minimum number of selections, or change the choreography to cover shortcomings. That may work in a competition, but it will not serve the dancer well in the long run.



The subjects of qualifying for an international competition and garnering financial support for the campaign are items for discussion with the Directors.

The Parent Trap

Why do parents need to read this booklet? Seiskaya Ballet is a large closely knit family. As with any family, close quarters foster a real need for clear and lucid communications. This booklet is a way to facilitate the process and provide a reference guide. It is our hope that parents will find themselves in familiar territory with most of our thoughts and be inclined to explore differences before being galvanized into a contrary position. This is our way of trying to frame issues and set the basis for meaningful dialogue: a dialogue everyone can have by coming in for a chat with the Directors.

In a speech to high school students Bill Gates outlined 11 things students will not be taught. Seiskaya Ballet feels obliged to recognize these guidelines.

Rule 1: Life is not fair - get used to it!

Rule 2: The world won't care about your self-esteem. The world will expect you to accomplish something BEFORE you feel good about yourself.

Rule 3: You will NOT make \$60,000 a year right out of high school. You

won't be a vice-president with a car phone until you earn both.

Rule 4: If you think your teacher is tough, wait till you get a boss.

Rule 5: Flipping burgers is not beneath your dignity. Your grandparents had a different word for burger flipping: they called it opportunity.

Rule 6: If you mess up, it's not your parents' fault, so don't whine about your mistakes, learn from them.

Rule 7: Before you were born, your parents weren't as boring as they are now. They got that way from paying your bills, cleaning your clothes and listening to you talk about how cool you thought you were. So before you save the Rainforest from the parasites of your parents' generation, try delousing the closet in your own room.

Rule 8: Your school may have done away with winners and losers, but life HAS NOT. In some schools, they have abolished failing grades and they'll give you as MANY TIMES as you want to get the right answer. This doesn't bear the slightest resemblance to ANYTHING in real life.

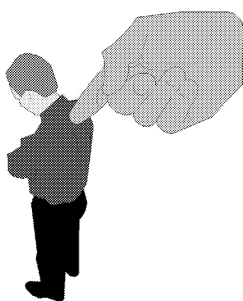
Rule 9: Life is not divided into semesters. You don't get summers off and very few employers are interested in helping you FIND YOURSELF. Do that on your own time.

Rule 10: Television is NOT real life. In real life people actually have to leave the coffee shop and go to jobs.

Rule 11: Be nice to nerds. Chances are you'll end up working for one.

Whose fault is it? Discipline can be an illusory thing. Discipline is about setting guidelines and providing consistent positive or negative consequences - each time those guide lines are respected or violated - in order to mold future behavior.

When consequences are not clearly defined or not consistently applied,



there is a loss of the proverbial *environmental influence factor*.

Children that are disciplined in a consistent manner acquire the invaluable skill of reading their parents and gauging when too far is too far. Whether the carrot or stick approach is used is an individual decision. However, an entire

generation is being raised without this finely honed skill. Discipline has unfortunately become a casualty in today's fierce competition for success. In an environment of limited availability of awards, scholarships, college acceptances, etc., combined with the current parental obsession of ensuring their child's self-esteem and emotional comfort, an attitude of expectation rather than merit has been fostered.



School teachers, the police and authority figures get the Rodney Dangerfield treatment: "I don't get no respect." There have to be consequences for actions - as well as inactions - and children cannot be applauded for accomplishing nothing. Expectation without focused application leads to disappointment. Whose fault is it? Good question!

The inculcation of self-esteem which is not based on any actual effort or accomplishment is exactly what Seiskaya riles against. If your child gets a *not bad* for their effort, take it to the bank. That **was** a compliment. We love the old saying, *when the going gets tough, the tough get going!*

Why does Seiskaya stress academic excellence? One of the worst excuses for missing dance class is that the student is being punished for poor grades. That shows poor discipline on the part of the dancer. Too many incidents of *I have too much homework* indicate poor time management. We expect our students to have their act together. If there's a will; there's a way.

It is said that change is the only constant in life. For years an old analogy linked baseball to ballet in that ballplayers had to come up through the ranks by playing in the minors and ballet dancers had to survive a long multi-step apprenticeship.

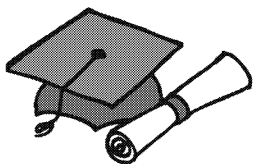
In contrast, most professional football players were drafted out of colleges which had provided them a showcase. The same was true of modern/contemporary dancers who joined companies or ensembles while in or just after college.



From its genesis, modern/contemporary was considered a dance form indigenous to America. It has a long history stretching back

to the early twentieth century with pioneers such as Isadora Duncan, Loie Fuller, Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn. Many first and second generation pioneers like Martha Graham had a huge impact on college curricula. Colleges found it easy to support small performing ensembles to which modern/contemporary lends itself.

In today's world, colleges are affecting not only the way ballet careers are created but also the ensuing opportunities presented. Every major university has a performing arts center as well as departments dedicated to some form of the performing arts - be it theater, music or dance. As colleges add new facilities, engage more ballet professionals, expand their affiliations with ballet companies, offer more education options and scholarships, the perception of the relationship between ballet and academia is changing. Building on the contemporary dance model, colleges have now become a main stream career path for ballet

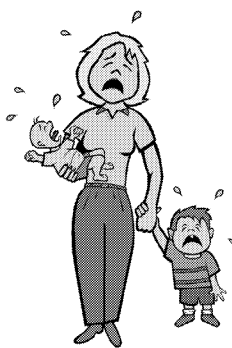


professionals and should be factored into long-term game plans. *So hitting*

the books can be as important as hitting the dance floor.

Is there a parental *Code of Conduct*? A parent never has the right to criticize or malign someone else's child. It is not the offending parent's business to comment on another child's attributes, to question in a derogatory manner another child's progress, spread rumors or incite animosity towards that child.

Parents are not permitted to question or harangue other parents or students



in a quest for information regarding the status of a student, particularly if that student is someone else's child. Accosting a student in an intimidating or

accusatory manner is tantamount to a verbal mugging.

Asking questions is not improper. What crosses the line is a parent's tendency to editorialize when asking questions. Learn not to be presumptive or judgmental. Often a simple question directed to the Directors can clean up any misunderstandings or clear away apprehensions.

Using the rumor mill as a source of information is a disaster waiting for a place to happen. Often a parent has a

preconceived notion of what the answer to a query will be.



Comments such as *that's not fair, that child did not deserve that...* or *my child should have....* are harbingers of derogatory comments to come vis-a-vis the studio and /or studio policy. If you have a problem, the solution to which is unsatisfactory, file a Drop Notice, pay the exit charge and leave instead of making other folks uncomfortable with constant diatribes.

Sometimes it is not what is done, but how it is portrayed, that makes all the difference.

The PASTOR'S ASS

The pastor entered his donkey in a race and it won. The pastor was so pleased with the donkey that he entered it in the race again, and it won again.

The local paper read:

***PASTOR'S ASS OUT
FRONT.***

The Bishop was so upset with this kind of publicity that he ordered the pastor not to enter the donkey in another race.

The next day, the local paper headline read:

**BISHOP
SCRATCHES
PASTOR'S ASS.**

This was too much for the bishop, so he ordered the pastor to get rid of the donkey.

The pastor decided to give it to a nun in a nearby convent.

The local paper, hearing of the news, posted the following headline the next day:

**NUN HAS BEST
ASS IN TOWN.**

The bishop fainted. He informed the nun that she would have to get rid of the donkey, so she sold it to a farmer for \$10. The next day the paper read:

**NUN SELLS ASS
FOR \$10.**

This was too much for the bishop, so he ordered the nun to buy back the donkey and lead it to the plains where it could run wild. The next day the headlines read:

**NUN ANNOUNCES
HER ASS IS WILD
AND FREE.**

The bishop was buried the next day.

The moral of the story is . . . being concerned about public opinion can bring you much grief and misery . . . even shorten your life. So be yourself and enjoy life. Stop worrying about everyone else's ass and you'll be a lot happier and live longer!

What should I expect from others?

Do not assume other parents or children are as nice as you. Some people have mercurial temperaments, different agendas, or are just plain ornery. Being indifferent towards those individuals is the most effective method of calming any situation. The less said the better.



The good news is that individuals who exhibit undesirable behavior inevitably move on or are asked to leave. A congenial environment is the most productive one for your child and the most pleasant for both Management and Staff.

Is mean-spiritedness an inextricable part of ballet? That's a loaded question and has to be

answered with a yes and no. From one perspective, it is impossible for a group consisting of Type A parents, overachieving kids and a world-class ballet program not to have periods when all the gears don't mesh properly. There will always be a few sparks here and there. Parents and students can easily become territorial, volunteers are often stretched and strained to the breaking point and some folks are masters of indifference. Uncensored or thoughtless comments often engender enmity. Think - *loose lips sink ships*.

The biggest contributor to friction is often the maturation process of the dancers themselves.

A child becoming a teenager is a real challenge in itself. Often this period brings on rapidly changing attitudes and social alliances. We preach that there are no friends in ballet. This is not to be cynical but rather pragmatic. There are some friendships that flourish, but those are the exception and not the norm. As adults we all can remember how our friendships ebbed and flowed whether we were on the football team, cheer leading squad, debate team, chorus or cast in a school play.



What makes dance different from public school activities is the amount of parental involvement. Whereas youngsters have relatively short memories, adults have elephantine ones. That can be the crux of the problem. Parents do not want another parent supervising or controlling their child. Be that as it may, other parents are the volunteers who must be empowered to do just that. Not everyone is the soul of discretion and that becomes the rub. Does ballet have to be mean-spirited? Absolutely not, but to think it doesn't happen would be naive. Most problems are a tempest in a teapot. Keeping one's two cents in their pocket goes a long way towards everyone buying some peace of mind.



Are other parents good resources for information? PREPRO parents tend to have been around the longest, are the most involved in ballet activities and have generally learned to be less judgmental. They are often a good source of information and advice. Parents of your child's peers are potentially less helpful. There are old hands in some class sections, but the aspect of possible

competition between your child and the other parent's offspring should temper your enthusiasm for going to the well too often. Stick to parents of PREPRO and feel free to ask the Directors. We are here to facilitate your stay and enhance the experience.

How should parents handle touchy situations? Parental input to students has to be tempered. There are two



types of issues: with other parents/ students and with

the studio. Although a real effort is made, not all comments or observations made by teachers or staff are offered in the most delicate manner possible. Certain issues cannot be skirted easily. A parent may try to mitigate the impact by getting a clearer understanding of the situation from the instructor or the Directors and then explaining it to the child. Being dismissive of the teacher's input is not recommended. A case in point.

Comedian Ron White has made a living out of poking ridicule based on his observations of human behavior. His mantra is that "You can't cure stupid." Well, ballet

has its share. When a professional teacher points out a shortcoming to a student who may want to go up on pointe, such as “Your feet have very little arch and still need work,” the parental response should be: “What do we have to do to improve and strengthen the arch?” If the child consults the parent and gets consoled by, “Don’t listen to that. You’re fine.” You know - YOU CAN’T CURE STUPID.

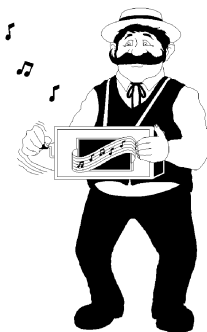
Issues with other people at the studio should be dealt with on a **peer** basis, that is between parents and parents or children and children. Crossovers should be avoided. If there is no easy resolution, by all means bring it to the attention of the Directors. These situations are thankfully relatively rare. However, given our longevity, we have had ample experience.

I have gotten conflicting opinions. Who should I listen to? Some folks may have a different perspective and agenda for their offspring than you for your child. To Seiskaya you are a paying customer who will be treated courteously with



an abiding respect for the needs of your child. However, to another parent, you or your child may be perceived as a threat or, at the very least, competition. We take great pride in the outstanding group of parents that have elected to join our ballet family. Nevertheless, like clockwork, every few years someone gets disillusioned and hankers for the *grass is greener* scenario. Maybe it is a need for a change of scenery, a new pecking order, or a fresh start. Some parents resent contributing time to BESFI or helping out with the *Nutcracker*, considering it an intrusion on their personal time. Everybody is busy. The question: is your child worth the extra effort? Happily, most parents answer with a resounding YES!

Invariably the disenchanted cause discord and soon depart, some, in retrospect, to their never ending chagrin. With a return to Seiskaya precluded, expatriates can be quite uncharitable. Approach all situations



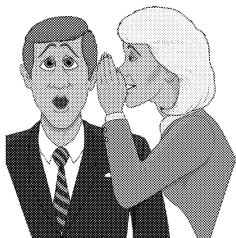
logically and ask questions. You can then avoid being swamped by anyone's outgoing wake or beguiled by their Siren Song to change just for the sake of change.

A student and parent not too long ago were enthralled by a name-brand school in New York City. The student wound up trudging to NYC daily for classes. After about a year's sojourn, mother and daughter were back at our doorstep because the student had not been promoted at the New York school. After a six-month stint back in the Academy with renewed focus, the student was able to retest at the New York school and was reaccepted and promoted two levels. The student again rejoined the New York school although the greener grass was at home. Why? Because the students that stayed at Seiskaya had progressed more than she had and catching up was not really feasible. By the time she came back, someone else had eaten her lunch.

Seiskaya Ballet is not the answer for everyone all the time. No place is. Familial circumstances, personality clashes and different expectations can, do and should lead to departures. For our part, we have the invite-back system.

A note of caution! Students have good and bad days, weeks, months, and even years. The maturation process, like success itself, often occurs in spurts. Parents and students should take a simple tip: lighten up

and do not take everything to heart. Do not hang on each word or day's events. School is a place to learn and grow. It is hardly a life or death situation. Always maintain a degree of skepticism and employ measured responses. A school environment is



like a chicken coup and gossip abounds. No matter how involved in the Academy a student or

parent may become, the fact remains that education is a long process with many potholes in the road. All the effort in the world cannot smooth out every bump. The sure path to disappointment is jumping around from program to program or instructor to instructor. If a change is necessary, fine. If you find yourself on a perpetual quest, then the problem may not be the dance programs.

How do you view departures? We are a way-station on life's path not the final destination. All students will eventually leave; it is the nature of things, a matter of when, not if. As far as Seiskaya Ballet is concerned: if a departing student is successful, we trained



them. If the student stumbles, it is because they left. For us it is always win-win because the students that stay create the next opportunity for success. A favorite refrain extols that *nothing gets filled faster at Seiskaya than a vacuum caused by a departure*. The departing student's roles are usually doled out before the student hits the front door. It is the quality of the program and the depth of talent that create this situation. Seiskaya Ballet doesn't miss a beat in order to continue making each dancer the best they can be. Talent is like a perennial flower. Each year's bloom has its glory period. But with time, the seasons change and a new season is born. NEXT!

How should parents counsel children if their friends leave Seiskaya? When someone leaves, it is always difficult whether the departure was of a family's own volition or studio initiated. Friendships are forged and parting becomes difficult. Our view on this situation is akin to friendship after a divorce. Unfortunately, most youngsters are all too familiar with encountering family friends and relatives who have taken sides after a nasty split-up. Sometimes people simply do not get along. That does not make either good or bad, right or wrong or better or worse. They just

cannot reconcile their differences and must part. If your child is a close friend of a student who departs, for whatever reason, there is little cause to taint a friendship that can continue outside of ballet. We all empathize with a student who is involuntarily separated from the Academy. Just be mindful that if you are continuously getting an earful from someone who departed under less than happy circumstances, you may, as in a divorce, be getting only one side of the story.



It isn't fair. We are not suggesting that at times there are not legitimate issues or that after some lobbying an eraser isn't taken out to modify a decision. Our offer to listen to students and parents would be useless if the willingness to make changes did not exist. To be fair, discretion and patience are always in order. Like beauty, fairness is often in the eyes of the beholder.

When Valia and I look at a situation, we generally consider it in the framework of the total long-term relationship of an individual with Seiskaya Ballet. That relationship entails growth, opportunities, accomplishments, potential,

disappointments and a host of other factors. Normally, parents and students look at a problem as a single point in time. Our reference points are therefore different. We try to maximize the long-term student benefit while balancing those goals against an issue of the moment. That is why we always try to make time to listen. Some issues such as roles or costuming may seem enormous but when placed in a larger context eventually appear relatively insignificant.

The famous Yankee manager Casey Stengel had the philosophy that if he argued an umpire's call, although knowing it would not get reversed, he might have an edge on the next close play. Human nature is what it is. And like the baseball umps, there are limits.

What is fairness? Why is something fair to one person and seemingly unfair to another? Why does every act or occurrence have significance to some people and the same event is background noise to the rest? The concepts of discipline and decorum do not come with



question marks. Success always makes

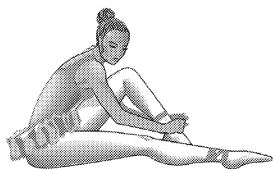
everything look better. So, if fairness is in question, as they say, see rule number 2 which is **Einstein's formula for success:** $X + Y + Z = \text{Success}$. X is a lot of hard work, Y is some play and Z is the ability to keep one's mouth shut at the proper time.

I don't want my child to be disappointed. Can our family survive at Seiskaya? Michael Jordan, arguably the greatest professional basketball player ever, could not make his high school team. He obviously overcame the setback. We all thrive on challenges, and challenges come with adversity. Would you tell your child not to play sandlot baseball because the other kids don't pick him/her first? By comparison, have you ever heard of a success story that didn't involve hard work and overcoming adversity? Parents and children must learn to deal with disappointment and grow from the experience, not hide from it. As a parent you cast a giant shadow. If your child was a tree living in that shadow, you would stunt the little tree's growth. Full sun



brings both a pounding from the forces of nature and the potential for maximum growth. Parents should be supportive and encouraging, while maintaining realistic expectations.

How do I know if my child is really enjoying ballet? The obvious answer is to ask your child point blank. There is a more subtle way to assess a child's interest. Does the child go home and continue to dance? Do they have to be dragged from the studio daily? Love of dance is like a flickering candle. It does not take much of an ill wind to snuff it out. By contrast, that little flame can grow to a raging fire with nurturing and encouragement. Dance students go through periods where they need encouragement. Our philosophy is simple: Seiskaya Ballet recognizes that we are extremely demanding but not excessively strict. We want kids to remain children as long as possible. By providing very positive



role models in the person of older students and professionals, younger

students can bond with them. Those role models display professional level deportment, appropriate carriage and technical prowess.

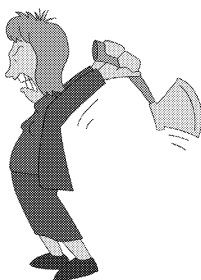
They are a great asset to the studio

and make great friends. Tell your child to feel free to adopt a PREPRO as a big sister/brother. They will appreciate the attention and will be reminded how much it meant to them to have a mentor when they were young.

My child is bored and should be moved up. I'm a parent, and I know what's best for my child. Why doesn't the Academy staff listen to me? If a child is bored or not challenged in class, there can be several causes. The primary reason is usually that the child is not applying him/herself to the fullest. He/she is not sufficiently focused to push to get the most out of class. An instructor observing a youngster with a solid work ethic, a history of accomplishment and a desire to perfect technique will invariably look favorably on advancement. Too often parents confuse physical maturity with technical, emotional and social maturity. "My child is the tallest or oldest in the class, so therefore ..." Seiskaya Academy classes are predicated on achievement and overall maturity, not physical attributes. It isn't that we are not listening. We are simply not responding; we've been there before.



Some parents have related stories that Seiskaya management sometimes does not react quickly or assertively to certain types of situations. Why not? There is a finite amount of emotional energy available and most incidents melt away when cooler heads prevail. A lot of interpersonal angst is just plain nonsense that blows over quickly. Memorializing an issue by Seiskaya getting involved with *he said, she said* often makes a mountain out of a molehill. Situations that need resolution are seldom black or white. It takes a bit of time to gather the facts and evaluate the inputs. Some folks are alarmists, some tend to exaggerate and some to understate. The following tail aptly points out the danger of rushing to judgment.



A large flywheel company, feeling it was time for a shakeup, hired a new CEO.

This new boss was determined to rid the company of all slackers. On a tour of the facilities, the CEO noticed a guy leaning on a wall. The room was full of workers and he wanted to let them know that he meant business! The new

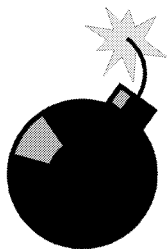
CEO walked up to the guy leaning against the wall and asked, “How much money do you make a week?” A little surprised, the young fellow looked at him and replied, “I make \$300.00 a week. Why?” The CEO then handed the guy \$1,200 in cash and screamed, “Here’s four weeks’ pay, now get out and don’t come back.”

Feeling pretty good about himself, the CEO looked around the room and asked, “Does anyone want to tell me what that goof-off did here?” From across the room came a voice, “Pizza delivery guy from Domino’s.”

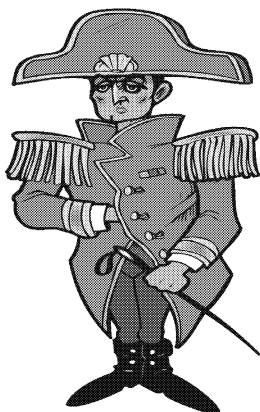
It really helps to get more information. Being a little older and, on occasion, wiser and more cautious, we make haste slowly!

Does the Seiskaya staff have pet peeves that parents should look out for?

Absolutely! Parents that hang in the doorway during class to coach their offspring rate as Public Enemy #1. This is disrespectful and unacceptable. You don’t go to the dentist and then direct how he fixes your teeth. Don’t do it in the dance class. You’re not the professional!



Our second least desirable individual is the student or parent who tries to intimidate, harangue or discourage other students or parents by demeaning, taunting or using of sheer indifference (passive aggressive). We do not brook bullies.



Although in the minority, some parents think their child should never



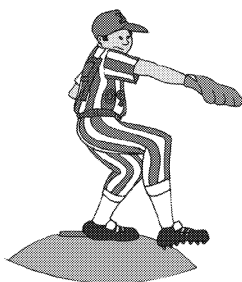
be disappointed or shed a tear. Sorry, but that is

not the real world. We use care and approach issues with concern and caution, but inevitably sometimes toes get stepped on. Decisions have to be made which leads some to second guess out loud. You are Public Enemy #3. That doesn't mean a student or parent can't bitch. (Bitching is defined as continuing to do what you are supposed to do while registering your complaint.) Gripping, however, is out. (Gripping



is defined as not doing what you are supposed to do while whining.) Incessant grouching leads to trouble. Archie Bunker said it best, “Edith, stifle yourself!”

What is the bottom line? Our society is sending mixed messages about discipline, consequences and self-esteem to children. Too much television and not enough physical activity have become hallmarks of the epidemic of obesity in American youths. A widely quoted pundit warned that *we become what we behold*. Think boob tube, gaming, cable fare, performance enhancing drugs, cosmetic surgery, Madison Avenue We are aware of our potential impact on your child. That is why Seiskaya is trying to get on the same page as parents.



What's the difference between a *stage mother* and a *Little League parent*? The *Little League parent* hibernates.

After thirty plus years, these are the six most deadly sins of parents:

- 1) Wanting it more than their child.
- 2) Unrealistic expectations.
- 3) Failure to focus on the child.
- 4) Displaced jealousy.
- 5) Obsessing.
- 6) Gossiping.



WORDS TO LIVE BY:

“There are no shortcuts to any place worth going.” - **Beverly Sills**

“Champions keep playing until they get it right.” - **Billie Jean King**

“Often the best way to win is to forget to keep score.”

- **Marianne Espinosa Murphy**

“If you think you can, you can. And if you think you can't, you're right.”

- **Mary Kay Ash**

“It's hard to detect good luck - it looks so much like something you've earned.”

- **Fred A. Clark**

“Accept that some days you're the pigeon, and some days you're the statue.”

- **Roger C. Anderson**

“In three words I can sum up everything I've learned about life. It goes on.”

- **Robert Frost**



IMPROBABLE

The Time is Available
The Cost is Manageable
The Parent is Agreeable
The Transportation is Reliable

The Line is Classical
The Body is Pliable
The Ear is Musical
The Heart is Inexhaustible

The Choice is Unquestionable
The Discipline is Fundamental
The Hard Work is Essential
The Experience is Enjoyable

The Teacher is Inspirational
The Training is Exceptional
The Talent is Coachable
The Teamwork is Indispensable

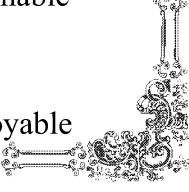
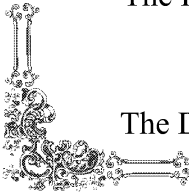
The Technique is Forceful
The Hand is Graceful
The Eye is Fanciful
The Movement is Lyrical

The Competition is Frightful
The Quest is Endurable
The Insecurity is Tolerable
The Ego is Sustainable

The Position is Desirable
The Audition is Crucial
The Scrutiny is Careful
The Selection is Doubtful

The Callback is Suspenseful
The Outcome is Pivotal
The Dream is Possible
The Pinnacle is Attainable

- Just Maybe -



The Dancer is Employable