



Bridgeman Academy of Performing Arts

PRE-PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM HANDBOOK

Bridgeman Academy of Performing Arts

Pre-Professional Program Handbook, 2024-2025 Season

Pre-Professional Program Handbook

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Introduction

Welcome to the Bridgeman Academy Pre-Professional Program! We are excited that you have chosen to pursue your passion through our Academy. Regardless of your career path, we believe that everyone can find joy and purpose through dance and it is our mission to help students and parents reap those benefits in a way that is glorifying God.

The objective of this handbook is to keep our students and parents aligned and knowledgeable on all policies and procedures at Bridgeman Academy. Both students and parents should attempt to implement all items included in this handbook during their time at Bridgeman Academy so please take the time to read this handbook thoroughly. We continue to update this document annually to ensure the best possible experience for pre-professional students and their families..

Contact Information

ACADEMY LOCATION & MAILING ADDRESS

Persimmon Pointe Market | 1120 Technology Dr. Ste. 104 | O'Fallon, MO 63368

Tel: 636.244.1530

Email: info@bridgemanarts.com

Website: bridgemanarts.com

Owner/Director

Elizabeth Bridgeman

Email: elizabeth@bridgemanarts.com

Calendar 2024-2025

Dates in the below calendar are subject to change. Any changes will be communicated via the Pre-Professional Group on our Studio App.

Pre-Season Dates

Ballet Production Auditions: May 18, 2024

Picture Day: May 29, 2024

Parent/Student Meeting: August 12, 2024

Pre-Pro Summer Intensive: August 12-16, 2024

Important Dates

First Day of regular courses: August 19, 2024

Busch Stadium Performance: TBD

Nutcracker Auditions: September 28, 2024 (**Performance Dec. 20, 2024**)

Ballet Production, Sleeping Beauty: October 14-19, 2024

Holiday Showcase: December 11, 2024

RSIA (at COCA): January 17-19, 2025

Ballet 314 Workshops: February 2025

Jury Week: February 24-29, 2025

New Works Performance: March, 2025

Picture Day: May 27-28, 2025

Recital Week: June 2-6, 2025

Ballet 314 Company Class Days: June, 2025

Last Day of courses: June 3, 2025

Season End Celebration: June 7, 2025

Academy Closures

Labor Day: September 2, 2024

Nutcracker Auditions: September 28, 2024

Halloween: October 31, 2024

Thanksgiving Break: November 27 - 30, 2024

Christmas Break: December 12, 2024 - January 5, 2025

RSIA (at COCA): January 17-19, 2025

YAGP: TBD

Spring Break: March 24, 2024 - March 29, 2025

Jury Week: February 24 - 29, 2025

Memorial Day Weekend: May 24 - 26, 2025

Social Activities

Back to Dance Movie Day: August 11, 2024 (2:00 pm)

Christmas Party: December 10, 2024

Winter Outing: January 4, 2025

Student Lock-In: March 28, 2025

Season End Celebration: June 7, 2025

Dress-Down Days (Company days only)

Last Class of the month September-November, January-April

ABOUT

Part I : About

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

This distinguished program is designed to develop young dancers (ages 8-18) in the art of performance and equip them with the necessary tools and technique needed for a successful career as a professional dancer. This conservatory-style training is modeled after prominent schools such as Balanchine's School of American Ballet.

Students in the program are required to train a *minimum* of 9 hours per week for Level 1 and 13 hours per week for Levels 2 and 3. Students attend a schedule of requisite courses specifically tailored to their level, including ballet, jazz, modern, and contemporary dance. Students are also encouraged to join as many elective courses as they can according to their personal schedules.

This program is a launching point for students to experience professional opportunities in the Saint Louis community and beyond. We encourage students to audition and perform with other prestigious organizations and provide them with the resources to be successful.

FACULTY AND STAFF

We believe that a student reflects the knowledge imparted by their teacher. As a result of this philosophy, our instructors are required to have professional experience and training with their course subjects, along with a significant teaching background to ensure the highest level of learning for the students. A complete list of faculty is not yet available for the 24/25 season.

Robyn Hartley (Ballet and Pointe Instructor): Robyn Hartley trained and performed with many prestigious companies such as The School of American Ballet, The Joffrey Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, Boston Ballet, Kansas City Ballet, and Alabama Ballet. Robyn brings with her over 20 years of teaching experience and a passion for equipping the next generation.

Kayla Neeper (Acrobatics Instructor): Kayla Neeper received her Associate's degree in Dance from Florida School of the Arts and also performed professionally in the company Three Hearts. She received a Bachelor of Science degree in Anatomy and her Doctorate in Chiropractic. She is Acrobatic Arts certified and has over 10 years of teaching experience.

Elizabeth Bridgeman (Company Director): Elizabeth Bridgeman is the founder and owner of Bridgeman Academy of Performing Arts. Throughout her career, she performed with prestigious companies such as The Muny, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Broadway Kids, The Canadian Ballet (Les Grands), and Circus Harmony. She also holds certification in Progressing Ballet Technique (PBT). Elizabeth founded and ran a local non-profit theatre organization for young adults prior to starting Bridgeman Academy. She is passionate about equipping students in the arts to serve God and others and has over 15 years of teaching experience.

Will Brighton (Contemporary Instructor, Boys Technique): Will Brighton is a dancer, choreographer, and teacher based in St Louis, MO. Originally from Ann Arbor, Michigan, Will holds a BFA in Dance and BA in English from Western Michigan University. While at WMU, Will performed in concerts alongside Taylor 2 and Peridance Contemporary Dance Co. and had the honor of performing both in historical works by George Balanchine, Paul Taylor, and Antony Tudor, as well as original works by contemporary artists Christian Denice, Yin Yue, BAIRA, and others. Upon graduating, Will joined The Big Muddy Dance Company where he is currently a company dancer. Will also performed as a guest artist with Saint Louis Ballet in their 2021 production of Alice in Wonderland by Brian Enos.

Kendall Heuman (Ballet and Pointe Instructor): Originally from the Springfield Illinois area, Kendall Heuman graduated with a BFA in Dance, emphasis in Ballet, from Webster University in May of 2020. In the summer of 2018, she studied abroad in Geneva, Switzerland to train in Ballet and European Contemporary Dance. In 2020, Kendall was a member of the Convergence Trainee Program with the Big Muddy Dance company. Kendall currently is in her second season with Ballet 314, under the direction of Robert Poe and Rachel Bodi, performing in their main stage productions and community outreach events. In addition to performing, Kendall has a passion for teaching and is currently on faculty at Saint Louis Ballet School and was with Patzius Performing Arts until the school closed in summer of 2023. She teaches Ballet, Jazz, Contemporary and coaches dancers to compete in Youth American Grand Prix and various regional competitions in the St. Louis area.

Angie Thompson (Academic Tutor): Angie Thompson is an educator with 35 years of classroom and administrative experience. She has worked in a myriad of venues with a variety of students from kindergarten through high

school. For 20 years she was the Head-of-School for a performing arts school for preschool through high school. Currently, she has started her own micro-school where she personally teaches elementary students.

Dorothy Davis (Lyrical Instructor): Dorothy Davis began teaching at Bridgeman Academy in 2021. She graduated from AMDA (Los Angeles) with her BFA in Dance Theater and has been dancing for 20 years. She currently works with the COCA Hip Hop Company dancers, as well as, other St. Louis dance studios, and also performed in a Prince show directed by Stephanie Landwehr.

Marcus Benson (Hip Hop Instructor): Marcus Benson has been dancing continuously for over 14 years. Marcus began teaching at Bridgeman in 2021 and has six years of prior teaching experience. His strengths are step, hip-hop, and mime. With immense competition experience across the United States, he has performed both as a team member & coach. Along with Bridgeman Academy, he currently teaches at Dance Plus & Pointe of Surrender Dance Studio where he also serves on the coaching staff for their competition team.

Teresa Wilmes (Tap Instructor): Teresa Wilmes trained at Virginia James Dance Academy beginning at the age of three. She continued taking classes into her adult years and trained with renowned companies such as Steps on Broadway in New York City. Teresa brings over 20 years of teaching experience and has trained in the subjects of tap, jazz, ballet, baton, pointe, lyrical, and gymnastics. Teresa truly enjoys dance and loves to pass on her passion for the arts to future generations. Her daughters carry on the dancing tradition and are also students at the Academy.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Requisite courses will take place on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. Students will receive their individual schedule once accepted into the program. Elective courses will also be offered on these days, as well as, on Wednesday and Saturday. Students must enroll in at least one elective course OR choose to assistant teach during an elective hour. This extra hour of training is deemed necessary for the pre-professional program, but all other electives are optional.

ELECTIVE COURSES

Elective courses are offered in the subjects of Hip Hop, Tap, Musical Theatre, Tumbling, Leaps & Turns, Contortion, and Baton. One elective is included in the price of tuition. Electives outside of the one required elective, have an additional cost.

COMPANY CLASS

Company class will be divided into four focuses throughout the season.

Focus 1 (AUG 19 - OCT 19): Program Expectations

- The first part of the season focuses on familiarizing students with the program expectations and acclimating them to their weekly schedule.

Focus 2 (OCT 20 - DEC 11): Ballet Technique

- The second part of the season focuses on ballet technique to prepare students for audition season beginning in January.

Focus 3 (JAN 6 - MAR 22): Auditions / Student Choreography

- The third part of the season will focus on auditions the students are attending and preparing for the New Works Showcase.

Focus 4 (MAR 31 - JUN 8): Recital

- The last portion of the year will focus on learning choreography featured in the end-of-year recital.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Part II : Policies and Procedures

ACCEPTANCE AND PLACEMENT

We care deeply about each of our dancers and their development as young artists. Our staff works diligently to select and place each student in the program and level that best suits their individual needs. Student acceptance in the Pre-Professional Dance Program is determined based on a variety of factors, including technique, passion, discipline, strength, flexibility, ability to name syllabus-level vocabulary, punctuality, consistent class attendance, adherence to dress code, observance of classroom etiquette, respectfulness towards instructors and peers, and successful completion of auditions or juries. New students are accepted based on their demonstration of these factors in their audition and application. The determination of level is never based on age or prior dance experience.

PLACEMENT IN THE IGNITE PERFORMANCE COMPANY

- The Ignite Performance Company is composed of select pre-professional students who demonstrate exceptional technique, presence, and work ethic. Students in the Performance Company have the opportunity to perform at various high-profile venues throughout the year. **Pre-professional students who are not placed in the company are still required to attend company class each week,** however they are not required to attend performances. All pre-professional students will be assigned one of the following titles:

- **Alternate:** A pre-professional student who attends company class, but does not actively perform with the company unless a company member is unable to perform.
- **Apprentice:** A pre-professional student who performs with the company, but either needs more company experience or did not perform at the level required to be accepted as a full member.
- **Member:** A pre-professional student who actively performs with the company and has both the experience and technique to be accepted as a dedicated member of the company.

ATTENDANCE

Pre-professional students must maintain consistent attendance in all courses associated with the program. Elective courses that are not a part of the program do not affect a student's status as a pre-professional student. If a student misses a significant number of courses or an instructor notices a lack of effort within the program, a meeting will be scheduled to discuss the student's placement. **Students may miss up to three company classes per academic year.** Exceptions may be made for severe illness, family emergencies, or other necessary circumstances. All absences beyond the three accepted absences will result in removal from the program (unless approved by the director). Students may be dismissed from the program at any time at the discretion of the director. Students may also change between Member, Apprentice, and Alternate at any point that it becomes necessary during the year. Previously paid tuition and fees are non-refundable if a student is dismissed due to behavior or lack of commitment.

DANCEWEAR & EQUIPMENT

Each year, Bridgeman Academy partners with a local store or website to provide students with their dance essentials. The information for our 2024/2025 dancewear partnership is not yet available.

ESSENTIAL PROGRAM ITEMS

The following dancewear items are required for each member of the pre-professional program. For specifics, please reference the full dress code list online (bridgemanarts.com/admissions). Students should keep as many items as possible at the studio in their locker for easy access.

REQUIRED DANCEWEAR

- **Company Leotard** (must be purchased through the studio)
 - Students must wear this leotard each time they attend Company Class. This leotard can be worn to all of their courses for that day.
- **Class Leotard** (must be in the correct color for Level)
- **Ballet Pink Convertible Tights**
- **Company Warm-Up Jacket** (must be purchased from the studio)
- **Ballet Shoes** (MUST have the correct style for their level)
- **Jazz Shoes**
- **Turners**
- **Black Socks (crew not ankle), Black pants, Dress code appropriate long-sleeve shirt or jacket (for contemporary).**
- **Pointe shoes (if applicable)**

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT (all items must be labeled with student's name)

- Yoga Block

- Resistance Band
- Circular Resistance Band

DRESS CODE (abbreviated)

WEEKLY CLASS

- Level specific leotard and dress code appropriate items.

COMPANY CLASS

- Company leotard, ballet warm-up attire (neutral or academy colors), and dress code appropriate items.
 - *Company leotards may be worn to all courses on the same day as their company class.*
 - Hair must be in a nice ballet bun for all Company classes.

PERFORMANCES AND EVENTS

- Company Costume, Company Jacket, tan tights, and jazz shoes. Black dance pants or shorts may also be worn to and from events.

DRESS-DOWN DAYS

- Dress-down days occur during the last company class of each month. On these days, students may wear ballet-appropriate dancewear of any color to class. Students may wear their non-dress code leotard to any other courses they have that day.

“DRESS DOWN PASS” CARDS

Students will be given three dress code cards to use throughout the year. These cards should be kept in their locker and given to their teacher if they arrive to class out of dress code (ex. wrong tights, no pointe shoes, hair not in

a secure bun...etc.). Outside of these three occasions, students will be required to observe class if they are not following the dress code in its entirety.

PURCHASING DANCEWEAR THROUGH THE STUDIO

Select dancewear items are available for purchase through the studio app/website (bridgemanarts.com/shop). If dancewear is purchased outside of the studio it **must be purchased through our dancewear partner or approved by a teacher. Dancewear styles and colors must match EXACTLY.**

DANCE JOURNALS

Pre-professional students will be provided with a dance journal to use throughout the dance season. This is a great tool to track health aspects (such as hydration) and also identify key corrections to help improve technique. Dance journals **must** be filled out on studio days and are optional to fill out during at-home days. Journals will never be turned in to an instructor, but Ms. Elizabeth will check to ensure students are utilizing them effectively.

→ *Dinner & Study is a great time to make sure your journal is completed.*

HOW TO FILL OUT YOUR JOURNAL

Record the following information:

- Your current high-level focus area for your dancing
 - Ex: Turns, Flexibility... (pick one and keep it for at least 1 month)
- Important corrections given during class that day
 - Try to only focus on major corrections - not the little things
- Compliments given during class that day
 - List your current strengths - build on the best!
- Exercises/stretches given by your teacher to do outside of class
- Your water intake and notes on your sleep schedule

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Students may not wear fitness watches or bands during any courses. They may only bring electronic devices such as phones and laptops into the studio during Dinner and Study time if given permission by their instructor.

DINNER & STUDY HALL (not optional)

Dinner and Study Hall takes place from 5:30 pm - 6:00 pm each day (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday) directly following the elective course of the day. All students are encouraged to bring a protein-rich snack or meal to eat during this class period. They may also bring homework to complete or use this time to practice choreography, or fill out their dance journal. This class period will be supervised by an academic tutor. Electronic devices may be used by special permission when needed for homework or practice.

A stretching and conditioning class will be offered during the 30 minute dinner & study period. Students may elect to attend conditioning & stretching class in place of Dinner & Study Hall.

CODE OF CONDUCT

- **Students:** Pre-Professional students at Bridgeman Academy are expected to exemplify exceptional behavior, attitude, and work ethic at all times. Students must follow all studio policies and rules, maintain a positive attitude, encourage and value all other students at the studio, refrain from derogatory conversation or gossip, and demonstrate respect for all instructors, staff members, as well as, their parents and guardians. Students must respect others belongings (including lockers).
- **Parents:** Pre-professional parents play a significant role in the atmosphere and environment at Bridgeman Academy. As such, all

parents are expected to avoid gossip and negative or unsavory conversation relating to their student, other students/parents, Bridgeman Academy staff, studio evaluations and casting results, studio events...etc. Personal issues should be addressed outside of the studio and any issues directly relating to Bridgeman Academy should immediately be brought to the attention of the staff or director.

As examples of Christ, we take the above code of conduct very seriously in regard to both students and parents. Unacceptable or malign behavior (inclusive of bullying) will not be tolerated and will result in a student's dismissal from the pre-professional program and potentially the studio. Previously paid tuition is non-refundable in these circumstances.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

TUITION

Tuition for the pre-professional program is \$2499 per year with the option to split into 11 equal monthly payments of \$249. There are also pay-in-full and family discounts that apply toward tuition.

PRIVATE LESSONS

Students enrolled in the pre-professional program receive a discounted rate for private lessons. The discounted rate is \$25 per 30-minute lesson.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Limited scholarships are available and students wishing to apply should submit their application as soon as possible at the start of enrollment each season.

OTHER FEES

Outside of tuition, students are responsible to pay for the Pre-Professional Summer Intensive (\$200) and purchase all dancewear needed for their classes, inclusive of a custom company jacket (\$60). Students are also responsible for paying all audition fees, production fees, costume fees, and fees related to company performances (such as tickets to Busch Stadium for the St. Louis Cardinals performance).

PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES

Part III : Program Opportunities

AUDITIONS

Students will attend professional in-person auditions and will also be prepared for additional optional in-person and virtual auditions.

- **Nutcracker at the Fox Theater (required)**
- **RSIA hosted at COCA (required)**
- Touring auditions (encouraged)
- Summer Intensives such as SAB and ABT (encouraged)
- Weissman Dancewear Model Call (encouraged)

MASTER CLASSES

Bridgeman Academy offers students a top-tier dance education by hosting exclusive master classes with renowned professionals and companies from around the globe. This unique approach ensures students receive exceptional training and exposure to diverse dance and teaching styles.

PRE-PRO SUMMER INTENSIVE **New to the program**

Each year, pre-professional students will attend an exclusive dance intensive with guest teaching artists and choreographers. During the intensive students will attend classes and rehearse for the fall ballet production. This week will also include a student teaching certification course and mandatory program meeting to review expectations and discuss events taking place during the 2024-2025 season. This intensive is \$200 for the full week and is required for all students enrolled in the pre-professional program.

NEW WORKS SHOWCASE **New to the program**

Bridgeman Academy is thrilled to introduce a dynamic addition to its pre-professional program in 2024. Students in the program will have the opportunity to create and perform in original student-choreographed works, fostering a collaborative and expressive learning environment. These student-created pieces will be showcased in a theater performance which friends and family are invited to attend. Bridgeman Academy remains dedicated to cultivating versatile performers, and this new initiative adds an exciting new dimension to enhance students' training.

Student Teaching **New to the program**

Pre-Professional Students who have been certified through the Bridgeman Academy Student Teacher Training course are eligible to assistant teach classes outside of their requisite course schedule. If selected, students spend the year teaching alongside a Bridgeman Academy faculty member who will continue to train them with hands-on learning and offer opportunities to lead the class throughout the year. Students have the opportunity to assistant teach in place of any elective class taking place from 4:30 pm - 5:30 pm. Students may also teach on Wednesdays and Fridays when no requisite courses are offered. All students will be given an opportunity to express their interest and availability for assistant teaching once they have been accepted into the Pre-Professional Program. Only one student will be selected to assistant teach each class and the students selected will be notified in June. *Assistant teaching is considered a learning experience and is not a paid position.*

YAGP

Youth America Grand Prix (YAGP) is the world's largest non-profit international student [ballet](#) and [contemporary dance](#) competition and scholarship program, open to dance students of all nationalities, 9–19 years old. YAGP annually conducts regional auditions in the United States and around the world, with the Final Round of the competition held every year in [Tampa, Florida](#), United States. Through the Pre-Professional Program, students may elect to attend the Youth America Grand Prix with Bridgeman Academy. Students must follow all Bridgeman Academy guidelines to participate. Some of these guidelines include, participating in a private lesson with an approved instructor prior to the competition, and covering all fees

and expenses associated with the event. Full guidelines are available upon request.

OTHER PERFORMANCES

Students in the pre-professional program will have the opportunity to perform at the venues listed below.

- Lund Auditorium (Chi), Folly Theatre (KC), Tennessee PAC (Nash) - YAGP
- Disney World/New York City (bi-annually)
- Busch Stadium - Cardinals Game (annually)
- The Family Arena - Ambush (annually)
- Fox Theatre - Nutcracker (annually)
- Varies - Community performances (annually)
- MUNY - PreShow (annually)
- Varies - Full Length Ballet Production (annually)
- Varies - Holiday Showcase (annually)
- The Purser Center - End-of-year Recital (annually)

PHOTO SHOOTS

Pre-Professional students will be invited to take part in an artistic photo session that takes place in June prior to the dance season starting in August. They will also have the opportunity to be involved in additional studio photo shoots throughout the year.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Students are encouraged to take part in the Operation Christmas Child outreach that takes place at the studio each November. They will also perform for various community events and retirement homes throughout the year.

STUDIO RULES

Part III : STUDIO RULES

COMMUNICATIONS

Parents and students must be available to receive and respond to communications sent through the following channels.

- **The studio app, Spaces** (code: W3KBST)
 - Parent Group
 - Pre-Professional Student Group
 - General App notifications on
- Email
- Phone

BUILDING & SAFETY

- All students must be dropped off and picked up inside the studio or directly outside the studio front door. Students will not be dismissed to leave the studio unless a parent is visible.
- Street shoes are not allowed on the Marley flooring.
- Food and drinks are not allowed in the dance studios with the exception of water bottles and food for dinner and study time.
- In the case of an emergency, you may call the front desk at 636-244-1530.

USE OF EQUIPMENT

Students may use studio-owned equipment while at the studio. All equipment **must be returned** to its original place after it is done being used. Misplacement or mistreatment of equipment will result in this privilege being revoked. Students may store their personal equipment at the studio as long as all of the items are labeled.

FOOD & DRINK

Food and drinks (other than water bottles) are only allowed in the studios during dinner and study time. No milk-based beverages are allowed inside the studio. All drinks must be in leak-proof bottles/containers and must remain closed when not drinking. Students are responsible for cleaning up any messes created when eating food (trash, crumbs/food...etc.).

AND FINALLY. . .

Thank you for reading this handbook and welcome to the pre-professional dance program at Bridgeman Academy of Performing Arts!

We look forward to working with you to advance your technique, artistry, and passion for dance in the coming dance year. If you have any questions or concerns throughout the dance year, do not hesitate to reach out to us. It is going to be a great season!

We have supplied a copy of the Acknowledgement Form below.

Please be sure to sign, date, and return this form to the director after reading the Pre-Professional Student Handbook!

Acknowledgment Form

This Pre-Professional Student Handbook has been prepared to enhance your understanding of the policies, practices, expectations, and benefits of Bridgeman Academy; it is important that you read this entire handbook. We reserve the right to make changes at any time without notice and to interpret these policies and procedures at the discretion of the director.

After reading this handbook, please sign, date, and return this Acknowledgement Form within seven (7) days of receipt of it. Make a copy of these pages for your records before submitting them.

By signing below, you acknowledge that you have read and understood the policies outlined in this Pre-Professional Student Handbook. You agree to comply with the policies contained in this handbook and to read and understand any revisions to it and be bound by them. You understand that this handbook is intended only as a general reference and is not intended to cover every situation that may arise throughout the year. This Pre-Professional Student Handbook is not a full statement of Bridgeman Academy policy. Any questions about its contents can be discussed with the director.

Student Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Parent Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Student Photograph & Video Release Form

I grant Bridgeman Academy of Performing Arts and all its representatives and employees the right to use photographs of me, my child, and/or my property in connection with Bridgeman Academy of Performing Arts. I authorize the above company to copyright, use and publish the same in print and/or electronically. I agree that the above company may use such photographs of me, my child, and/or my property with or without our names for any lawful purpose, including for example such purposes as publicity, illustration, advertisement, and web content.

By signing this form I acknowledge that I have completely read and fully understand the above release and agree to be bound thereby. I hereby release any and all claims against any person or organization utilizing this material for educational or promotional purposes.

Student Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Parent Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____