

OAKWOOD DANCE PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

The primary goal of the Dance Department is to introduce dance as an artistic discipline that strengthens the mind and body, and offers a means of personal expression. All dance classes have both a technique and choreography component, so that students learn how to dance and how to make dances. The Dance Program also emphasizes historical significance, dance analysis, and both traditional and contemporary dance techniques. We expect students to walk away from dance classes with an appreciation of dance in its many forms and their own power of personal expression through movement. Oakwood Dance prepares students for university level dance courses, which teach the art form as a whole, exposing students to different methodologies, somatic practices, and cultural and social implications of dance performance. Modern and Ballet technique are the foundation for explorations into post-modern and contemporary styles. With a strong base in these foundational movement skills, Oakwood dance students are given the necessary tools to explore and engage with innovative contemporary dance styles and, ultimately, create their own movement language.



DANCE DAY 2015

By Thalia Besson and Hannah Mizutani
GRADE 9

Dance Day, held in the MDA Dance Studio on Saturday, September 19, from 9am to 3pm, was a fun and exciting experience for the entire dance community. Everyone had the opportunity to express themselves through different forms of dance. There were three guest teachers, each with their own original style of dance. The first guest was **TIFFANY SWEAT**, who taught Jazz Funk. We learned a combo to *Applause* by Lady Gaga. Next, we had **CHRISTINA BODIE** who taught us a Choreography/Improvisation class, which tied into what we are learning in Arianne's Modern Dance 1 class. Lastly, a cool guy with only one name: **BLISS**, taught a Hip Hop class that was very different from what we are learning in Modern 1. The entire program was put together by Arianne and Angelina who also both co-taught an amazing warm-up that incorporated elements of Hip Hop, Modern and Improvisation. This day brought us all together as a whole because everyone learned each other's styles of dance. Break-dancers did Modern, ballet dancers did Hip Hop—and we all got a cool tank top that we're wearing in our dance show!



HOW TO CHOREOGRAPH A DANCE

By Aiyana White | Alyse Rovner | Audrey Coolidge
GRADE 9

The Modern Dance 1 class, as a collective, choreographed a dance to the song *Slip*, by Elliot Moss for the **OPEN STAGE 1** dance show. We knew that we wanted a kind of creepy and interesting dance. In class, we improvised movements inspired by binary pairs transitioning in and out of polar opposites, like good and evil. There was a transitioning period between the two sides of the pair, almost like they were slipping through each other. This transition is what sparked the beginning of our choreography. We choreographed each move with the intention of conveying the illusion of slipping. In order to find our music, we each brought in pieces of music that we liked. There were about eight songs to choose from; they ranged from classical to punk. The last song we heard was *Slip*, which ended up fitting the description of what we wanted to show. With its defined beat and melodic vocals, *Slip* was the song best fit for our dance. We each took the lead choreographing solos, duets, trios, and group sections; some featuring complicated partnering and lifts, and others with unison. We also included an audience interaction section to emphasize slipping through the fourth wall.



DANCING IN RENT

by Nicholas Federico-Motley
GRADE 9

I have had a great experience so far in *Rent* dance rehearsals. A big part of a musical theater production is movement and dance. Dance helps to communicate the plot in a show to the audience, even more so when it is put together with music, vocals, and acting. Angelina, the choreographer for *Rent*, does a wonderful job at expressing the creative, outcast-y feel that is *Rent*. She is able to string moves together so that they look good but most of all make sense with the story. Even though I am a beginner in the dance world, I have had a relatively easy time with grasping the moves and timing to our numbers in rehearsal because of the fact that they are so well placed. Every dance rehearsal is a creative space for me and my fellow cast members to express our love for theater through movement—which is one of the best parts about musical theater!



GUEST LECTURER FOR HIP HOP

By Angelina Attwell

MIRI PARK, a dance historian at such institutions as Columbia University, and the University of Delaware, was a guest lecturer in the Hip Hop class this trimester. MiRi's experience as a professional break-dancer, a touring performer in the Broadway musical *Rent* (as Alexi Darling), and 2004 Air Guitar World Champion made her an amazingly diverse and relatable lecturer. She came to connect the historic dots between what we see in contemporary pop music videos and what we are learning in Hip Hop class at Oakwood. She traced the boy-band formula through history and illuminated how what we do today has been informed by what has happened in the past—from The Temptations to Michael Jackson to 'N Sync. She is an entertaining and thoroughly knowledgeable dance aficionado—and she brought a wealth of information to the Hip Hop class. Thanks, MiRi!



THE COLLECTIVE MEMORY PROJECT

ARIANNE MACBEAN and her dance-theatre troupe, **THE BIG SHOW CO.**, recently launched The Collective Memory Project with performances inspired by US military veteran, performer and audience memories. Oakwood dance teacher Angelina Attwell recently performed with the company at a work-in-progress showing at The Brand Library & Art Center. Creative Writing teacher Nathan Clum developed curriculum and co-facilitated three Memory Writing Workshops for veterans that were held over the summer at the Bob Hope Patriotic hall in downtown LA. And recently, three Oakwood students: Elle Mendelson, Monica Nelson, and David Mazur teamed up to create a service learning project that helps veterans who are interested in the field of entertainment get mentored by experienced adults in the film and television industry. If YOU would like to donate an hour (or more) of your time to mentor a veteran, please contact Arianne MacBean. We would love to have your involvement!



ALL DANCE PHOTOS BY ANGELINA ATTWELL, EXCEPT COLLECTIVE MEMORY PROJECT PHOTOS BY DYANNE CANO