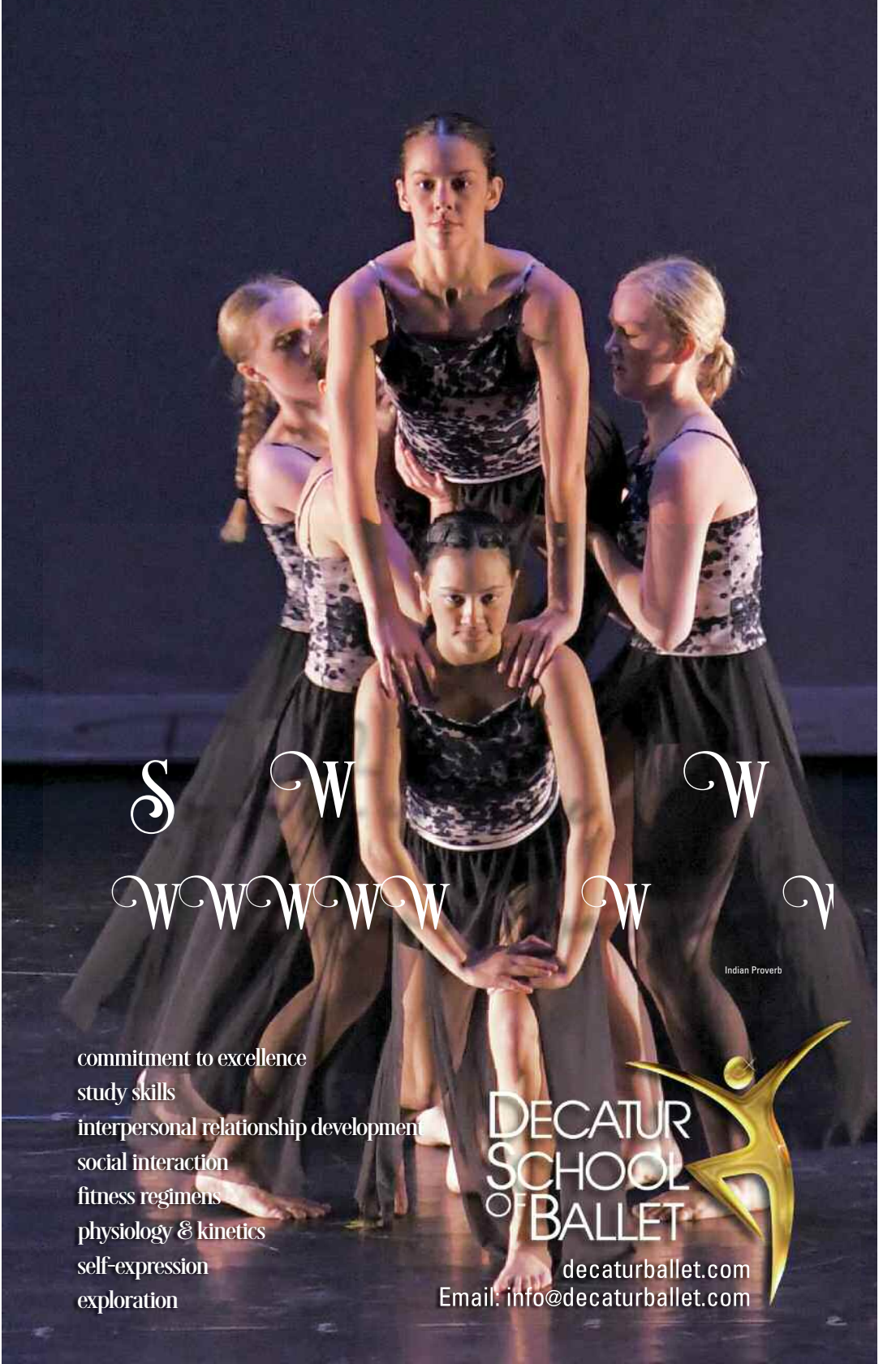


DECATUR
SCHOOL
OF BALLET

79
YEARS

Legacies in Dedication

1947-2026



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Indian Proverb

- commitment to excellence
- study skills
- interpersonal relationship development
- social interaction
- fitness regimens
- physiology & kinetics
- self-expression
- exploration

DECATUR SCHOOL OF BALLET



decaturballet.com
Email: info@decaturballet.com

Decatur School of Ballet Alumni

have continued to perform with...

AboutFace, GA
The Ailey School, NY
Ailey II
(Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater), NY
American Dance Festival, NC
Artpark, NY
The Atlanta Ballet, GA
Atlanta Dance Collective, GA
Bacchus Productions, GA
Ballet Hispanico, NY
Beacon Dance, GA
Brazz Dance Theater, FL
Brooks and Company Dance, GA
Bucks County Playhouse, PA
Camp Broadway
– Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, NY
City Springs Theatre Company
The Cleveland Ballet, OH
Contemporary Dance/Ft. Worth, TX
CORE Performance Company, GA
DanceAntonini, Washington, DC
Dance Canvas, GA
Diablo Ballet, CA
Fuerta Dance Company, GA
Full Radius, GA
Gathering Wild, GA
GLO/Atlanta, GA
Immerse ATL, GA

Hubbard Street Dance, IL
Joffrey Ballet, NY
Alonzo King LINES Ballet, CA
Kit Modus, GA
La Mezcla, CA
Meadow Brook Theatre, MI
The Ruth Mitchell Dance Company, GA
Modco Dance Company, GA
The MUNY
(The Municipal Theatre Association
of St. Louis), MO
Music Theatre Wichita, KS
The Nashville Ballet, TN
New York Theatre Ballet, NY
NW Dance Project, OR
Opus Dance Theater, NY
Paper Mill Playhouse, NJ
PCLO (Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera
Association), PA
Poetica, GA
The Rose Bowl Parade
The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo
SIDEWAYS
Contemporary Dance Company, GA
Smuin Ballet, CA
staibdance, GA
Visceral Dance Chicago, IL
Choreographer for Britney Spears

have continued to study dance at...

Agnes Scott College, GA
Belmont University, TN
Brenau University, GA
Davidson College, NC
DeKalb Center for the Performing Arts, GA
DeKalb School of the Arts, GA
Governor's Honors, GA
Elon University, NC
Emory College at Oxford, GA
Emory University, GA
Florida State University, FL
Goucher College, MD
Kennesaw State University, GA
Point Park University, PA

Randolph College, VA
Saint Mary's College of California, CA
Smith College, MA
State University of New York
(SUNY - Purchase), NY
Texas Christian University, TX
University of Alabama, AL
University of Georgia, GA
University of North Carolina
– Greensboro, NC
University of North Carolina
School of the Arts, NC
University of South Florida, FL
University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee
Washington University, MO

About the School

Decatur School of Ballet offers classes for adults, teens, and children in ballet, jazz/hip hop, tap, modern, swing, creative movement, and lyrical. Headquartered in the City of Decatur, the school is structured on a ten-month curriculum (August-May) and offers special summer programs. Careful attention is given to placing each dancer in appropriate classes based on age, technical level, and ability. Individual evaluations are done for each student. Providing quality dance instruction by professionals in a friendly atmosphere is the foundation of our school. Decatur School of Ballet serves the needs of students who wish to dance “just for fun” and those who aim to be professional dancers and teachers. Our school welcomes people from varying racial, cultural, and economic backgrounds.

Although we are in the business of teaching dance, the development of each student as an individual is at the core of our endeavors. Experience in and knowledge of the arts help us express our individual creative and cultural human potential.

Visit our website at decaturballet.com



What We Offer

The discipline of dance training improves muscle tone, posture, coordination, flexibility, strength, and endurance. Other benefits are increased self-confidence and musical awareness. Here are the classes we offer:

Creative Movement (ages 3-4): An unstylized approach to developing basic motor skills which allows for the creativity of the child within a structure that builds basic dance experience.

PreBallet (ages 5-6): Preparation for classical ballet which includes some basic ballet technique as well as creative movement.

Classical Ballet (ages 7 up): A system of traditional dance steps and movement handed down over hundreds of years to train the body as a performing instrument. Ballet training develops strength, proper posture, flexibility, and coordination. Our carefully paced classes are designed to make ballet enjoyable and accessible for students of all ages.

Pointe (on the toes - ages 11 up): An extension of classical ballet.

Lyrical (ages 8 up): An expressive contemporary genre of dance that focuses on control and fluidity of movement. Heavily concentrated in ballet and jazz technique, dancers will develop their musicality, advance their performance skills and solidify their artistry through an understanding of expressing emotions through movement.

Jazz/Hip Hop (ages 7 up): Jazz is a truly American born and refined dance style which ranges from the lyrical soft shoe of Astaire and Rogers to the high intensity movement of television's dance reality shows. Jazz blends popular music and current dance trends with the polish and technique of performance dance. Hip Hop, based on street dance styles such as "Locking," "Popping," and "Break", is primarily performed to Hip Hop music, and is a must for students who want to stay up-to-date with the latest dance trends.

Modern Dance (ages 7 up): A contemporary approach to dance training. Skill building in modern dance allows dancers to acquire technique while developing movement vocabulary. Principles of conditioning, alignment, and musicality make modern dance a great form of athletic artistry.

Tap (ages 5 up): An original American dance form that lets you use your body as a rhythm instrument. With an emphasis on fancy footwork and sound, tap develops agility, musicality, and stylized movement. You will study basic exercises, time steps, and razzmatazz that make tap so much fun.

Swing (ages 13 up): Learn the mechanics of leading and following in one of the most versatile partner dances around. Vernacular jazz and the Swing Shim Sham will also be included – no partner required!

Meet Our Faculty & Staff



Leslie Palmer Gourley, Owner and Teacher

Leslie started her dance training at age six in Marietta and continued her dance studies in Mississippi and with the Joffrey School of Ballet in New York. At age 16 she came to study with Decatur School of Ballet. After graduating from Texas Christian University with a BFA in ballet performance in 1986, she returned to teach with Decatur School of Ballet and to perform with Decatur City Dance. She has studied with notable instructors such as Stanley Zompakos, Terrell Paulk, Delia Stewart, Fernando Schaffenburg, Lisa Fusillo, Meli Kaye, Peter Powlus and Martha Goodman. In July 2018, Leslie purchased Decatur School of Ballet and became Artistic Director of Decatur City Dance.

Andre Lumpkin, Administrative Assistant

Andre is an artist, educator, and entrepreneur from Athens, Georgia. Andre spent his youth immersed in different cultural dance forms and was introduced to concert forms at Emory University. Majoring in Sociology and minoring in Dance and Theater Studies, and then earning his MFA in Choreography and Performance from Florida State University, Andre's focus and passion centers around the integral nature of arts and creativity in community and everyday life. Andre continues to create, educate and perform nationally and internationally. As a professional, Andre has dedicated himself to a holistic approach to choreography, teaching, performing, production design, and community empowerment.



Heidi Cox Santa Maria, Office Manager

Heidi started her dance training at age six at Decatur School of Ballet and continued to dance in the company until she graduated from high school. In the summer of 1987, she participated in the Governor's Honors Dance program. She trained as a demonstrator and teacher in younger children's classes at our school. While earning a B.F.A. in Arts Management from Brenau Women's College, Heidi danced with the Gainesville Ballet Company.

Caroline Alcott, Receptionist

Caroline is an interdisciplinary movement artist based in Atlanta, Georgia. She earned a BFA in Dance (2023) from the University of the Arts located in Philadelphia, PA. Caroline is a company member of Atlanta's site-specific dance company, *Bautantz Here*, where she danced on the Atlanta Beltline as part of the company work, *Avoiding Highways* (2024). She has had the opportunity to present work in festivals such as the *Modern Atlanta Dance Festival* (2024) and *Fall for Fall* (2024). In the Fall of 2023, Caroline was awarded the Meli Kaye Artist Residency where she debuted her choreographic work researching the idea of tragedy entitled, *Well, that Didn't Work...* She most recently collaborated with the Atlanta based artist, Merryn McKeough, for the work *True Middle*, presented Spring 2026 for Beacon Dance. Caroline has performed in works by notable artists including Ashlee Jo Ramsey Borunov, Mara Flamm, Meg Gourley, Curt Haworth, Jesse Zaritt, and Nadya Zeitlin.



Sophia C. Hom, Receptionist

Sophia recently graduated from Agnes Scott College with a major in Psychology. She began her dance training at the age of three in Springfield, Missouri, where she studied ballet, pointe, variations, modern, jazz, and Irish step dancing. At Agnes Scott, Sophia worked for the college's New Student Orientation program and was a performing member, rehearsal assistant, and communications director for Studio Dance Theatre. She also enjoys taking creative writing and dance classes, and plans to pursue a career as a counseling psychologist that specializes in sports injury recovery and rehabilitation.

Danny Iktomi Bevins, Teacher

Danny is thrilled to be on faculty at the dance studio that helped raise him! After training at Decatur School of Ballet, he received dance and theatre training from Alvin Ailey, Interlochen Center for the Arts, and ultimately graduated Summa Cum Laude from Elon University with a BFA in Music Theater. Danny moved to NYC and began performing around the country at top regional theatres such as The Muny, Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera, Music Theatre of Wichita, Papermill Playhouse, Bucks County Playhouse, Barrington Stage Co. and Off Broadway at Out of the Box Theatrics. Danny also performs locally at theaters like City Springs Theatre and the Aurora Theatre. Outside of dance, Danny is an ACE certified strength coach, and specializes in functional movement based training. Danny also made his film debut in #1 global Netflix film, *Reptile*, opposite Academy Award winning Benecio Del Toro. Danny continues to work on set as an actor in TV, film, and commercials, and is signed with Houghton Talent and DGRW Agency.



Meg Gourley, Teacher

Meg Gourley is a dance artist, choreographer, and educator whose work bridges performance, research, and community engagement. She holds an MFA in Dance from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and BFA in Dance from the University of Georgia. She began her training at Decatur School of Ballet and has since studied with the Joffrey Ballet School, Staibdance, the Governor's Honors Program, and the American Dance Festival.



As a performer, she has performed with Maria Gillespie, Atlanta Dance Collective, Valletto Dance, Monica Hogan Danceworks, Patsy Collins, Emma Morris, and Decatur City Dance. Meg was a company member with Kit Modus for seven seasons under the direction of Jillian Mitchell, performing works by Mitchell as well as guest choreographers including Christian Denise, Marco Palomino, Noelle Kayser, and Annalee Traylor.

As a choreographer, her work has been presented in Atlanta, Milwaukee, Philadelphia, and New York. In 2025, she premiered her evening-length work *In Light of These Regrets* in Atlanta. Her collaborative projects include works with Catherine Messina presented at Dixon Place and at the DanceUSA conference, and *Tethered Together* with Jordan Young and Andre Lumpkin, shown at Underground Atlanta, Fly On A Wall's Excuse The Art, and The Goat Farm's Site. She has received commissions from Agnes Scott College, Dekalb Symphony Orchestra, Peach State Opera, Emory University, and the University of Georgia, where she served as Alumni in Residence in Spring 2026.

Gourley is an active educator, serving as faculty at Decatur School of Ballet, Covington Regional Ballet, and tour faculty for The Joffrey Ballet School. She worked as a Graduate Teaching Assistant at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and is adjunct faculty at Reinhardt University.



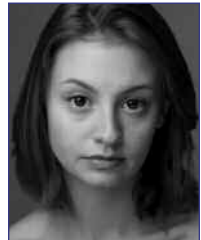
Kyme Hersi-Sallid, Teacher

Kyme is a graduate of the acclaimed New York City High School of Performing Arts, and has performed nationally and internationally as a dancer, singer, and actress. Her credits include three Broadway shows and tours of an additional three Broadway shows. As a film and TV actress, Kyme played Rachel Meadows in Spike Lee's film *School Daze*, and guest starred on TV shows such as *24*, *NYPD Blue*, *Frasier*, and many more. Her love of teaching and the arts led her to found a performing arts academy in a charter school in Los Angeles in 2006. She moved to

Atlanta in 2012 where she continues to share her passion and pass on the fruits of her experience and success. Kyme is an Associate Director of Decatur City Dance.

Jodie Jernigan, Teacher

A dance artist deeply invested in exploration, Jodie Jernigan received her A.A. with an emphasis in dance from Florida State College at Jacksonville before receiving her B.A. in Dance and B.A. in English from Brenau University. Her choreography was selected to represent Brenau University at a variety of events and conferences, including the 2022 American College Dance Association Southeast Conference. She served as an intern with Fly on a Wall in Atlanta, Georgia for their 2020-2021 season, and in 2021 she was commissioned by Zoetic Dance Ensemble



to create an independent dance film for their annual Mixtape Atlanta film festival. Jodie currently performs with Full Radius Dance, and recently was selected by Dance Canvas to create a dance film for their dance film series.



Madeline O'Brien, Teacher

Madeline is an interdisciplinary dancer and artist based in Atlanta, Georgia. She holds a BFA in Contemporary Dance with a minor in Arts Entrepreneurship from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts.

Her teaching experience includes leading a professional development trip to Panama with Movement Exchange, serving as adjunct faculty at the Boston Arts Academy, and assistant teaching with United Dance. She also spent two years teaching older adults in assisted living facilities

through Abilities Dance Boston.

Madeline is passionate about teaching students of all ages at The Decatur School of Ballet, Neighborhood Ballet, and in DeKalb and Atlanta public schools.

Her teaching prioritizes creating safe, supportive spaces where dancers feel empowered to grow and explore. She values curiosity, welcomes questions, and encourages creative experimentation. Her classes are known for being lively, informative, and open-minded, always aiming to deepen both her and her students' understanding of the art form.

Eliza Reese, Teacher

Eliza started her dance training at our studio at age four and has been assistant teaching since age nine. She was a member of Decatur City Dance (Junior and Apprentice Ensembles and Junior Rhythm Keepers) and Decatur School of Ballet's Rug Cutters. Eliza is a graduate of Agnes Scott College and Mercer University's nursing program. She works as a nurse at The Shepherd Center. Eliza is also a member of The Rhythm Keepers and a co-director of the Rug Cutters.



Jessica Paget Reese, Teacher

Jessica began her dance training at the Gainesville School of Ballet at age six. A professional performer with South Carolina Ballet Theatre, she also taught with the Columbia Ballet School before opening her own studio in Lexington, South Carolina. In addition to her classical ballet training, Jessica has performed in musical theater productions. With a B.A. degree in English and a M.Ed. in Elementary Education from Columbia College, she taught seventh grade for seven years. Jessica is a choreographer and Associate Director of Decatur City Dance.



Jessica Williams, Teacher

Jessica began dancing at age 4, and quickly discovered a passion for tap dance. In high school, she discovered the tap classes at Decatur School of Ballet, where Birda Ringstad gave her a strong foundation in Rhythm Tap, and helped broaden her tap education by introducing her to tap festivals. She has been performing with The Rhythm Keepers, the adult tap company of Decatur City Dance, since 2006, has been choreographing and performing solos and small group acts for special events since 2014, and has been teaching tap to adults since 2016.

Toya Willingham, Teacher

Toya started her dance training at age three and came to Decatur School of Ballet at age 13. She has been a company dancer with Decatur City Dance since 1992. She is a graduate of the DeKalb Center for the Performing Arts. In the summer of 1995, she participated in the Governor's Honors Dance program. Toya trained as a demonstrator, an assistant teacher, and a substitute teacher in younger children's classes at our school. She has a strong foundation in ballet and has also trained in modern dance, jazz, and tap. Toya is Director of AboutFace, the professional contemporary ensemble of Decatur City Dance.



Heather Yates, Teacher

Heather began her dance training at Decatur School of Ballet at age eight and continued her study with the Atlanta Ballet, the Royal Academy of Dance, and the Cleveland Ballet, where she also danced in the company. She also danced professionally with the American Ballet Theatre in New York City from 1988 to 1994, working with such notable artists as Twyla Tharp, Natalia Makarova, Jiri Kylian, and Mark Morris. Heather is also a professional chef and pharmacy technician.

Emma Yu, Teacher

Emma began her dance training at age six in Shanghai and continued her studies after moving to Georgia. From middle school through college, she was a member of competitive dance teams, gaining experience in ballet, classical Chinese dance, and contemporary styles. She also completed Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) vocational exams, which strengthened her classical foundation. While pursuing graduate studies, she choreographed for student dance groups. After earning her Master's from Emory University and her PhD from Johns Hopkins University, she returned to Atlanta and began taking open classes at Decatur School of Ballet (DSOB). She now teaches adult and teen ballet open classes at DSOB, where she emphasizes strong fundamentals and a supportive learning environment. She is also thrilled to perform with Decatur City Dance.





Decatur School of Ballet is the official school of Decatur City Dance (DCD). Under the artistic direction of Leslie Palmer Gourley, DCD is the oldest performing dance company in DeKalb County and is currently in its 73rd season. The company is a nonprofit corporation financially supported by contributions, grant funds, membership dues, and ticket sales. Four performing groups are under the company umbrella. *AboutFace* professional ensemble (directed by Toya Willingham) presents contemporary, modern and jazz, *The Nexus Company* (*Nexus Premiere*, *Nexus Apprentice*, and *Nexus Contemporary*, directed by Leslie Gourley and Jessica Reese) present ballet, jazz, and contemporary, and *The Rhythm Keepers* and *The Junior Rhythm Keepers* (directed by Kyme Hersi-Sallid) present tap. As a community arts organization, DCD provides quality performances for metro Atlanta audiences and outreach programs for retirement homes, schools, and community groups.

Dancers become members of DCD by audition. They are talented dancers who are either professional performers or want to make a commitment to dance as one of their special extracurricular activities. Many company dancers started their dance training at our school at an early age and progressed into the performing company. Many teachers in the school have worked with the company as performers and/or choreographers.



Decatur School of Ballet has been in continuous operation since 1947 and is the oldest classical ballet school in DeKalb County. 79 years ago, Hilda Gumm and Marie Roberts started a ballet school for young girls with just a few students in a small room over the ice cream shoppe in Downtown Decatur. In 1980, Kathleen and Ron Everett purchased the school where Kathleen had studied since age six. In 2018, Leslie Palmer Gourley purchased the school where she had studied, danced, and taught since 1980. 79 years after its founding, the school is still going strong, offering many styles of dance for anyone who wants to dance. Over the years, thousands of students have trained, learned, and grown at our school.





Rug Cutters

Rug Cutters is a teen swing dance performance group co-directed by Danny Iktomi Bevins and Eliza Reese and headquartered at Decatur School of Ballet. Membership is by invitation or audition. The Rug Cutters perform often during the season at community events and at Decatur School of Ballet Annual Performances.

Adult Rates Single Class = \$26
Six Classes = \$130

Note: All adults must register on the Parent Portal. Adults do not pay a registration fee.

Teens and Children

Class Hours per Week/Monthly Payments

45 minutes per week	\$78
1 hour per week	\$90
1 1/2 hours per week	\$120
2 hours per week	\$147
2 1/2 hours per week	\$168
3 hours per week	\$184
3 1/2 hours per week	\$200
4 hours per week	\$216

Tuition

is based on a yearly fee for the total amount of instruction provided.

Monthly tuition is NOT based on the number of classes per month. Allowance is made for holidays.

Registration for Teens and Children

Early registration is recommended to assure a place in the desired class or classes. A non-refundable \$50 registration fee plus one month's tuition (prepayment of May 2027) will be charged upon registration on the Parent Portal.

Tuition Payment for Teens and Children

You are registering for the ten-month term August through May. You may make one full season payment or ten monthly payments. If you make one full season payment by the first day of class, you receive a 5% discount. If you choose monthly payments, each payment is the same, regardless of the number of classes in the month. Payments will be automatically drafted from the credit card or debit card on file on the 5th of each month. **We do not send reminders about tuition payments. If you receive a bill, it means your account is PAST DUE. A late fee of \$10 will be charged for payment received after the 10th of the month. A \$20 fee will be charged for any returned check. No deductions will be made for classes missed, but students may make up missed classes.** Students may attend class only if tuition is current.

One month's tuition (prepayment of May 2027) is required with registration. If you must withdraw your child after the school year begins, **please notify the office in writing** to give official notice of your intentions. Prior to December 31, 2026, the advanced tuition for May 2027 is refundable, **when a month's written notice is given.** After January 1, 2027, the advance tuition for May 2026 is NOT refundable.

For your convenience, we accept VISA®, MasterCard®, American Express®, Discover®, and debit cards.

The Dance Emporium

The Dance Emporium, located at our studio, offers the following items:

- Leotards (pink, royal blue, garnet, black)
- Tights (pink, black, brown, light tan)
- Hair Supplies
- White, Pink and Brown
- Ballet Shoes
- Ballet Skirts

2026/2027 Dance School Calendar

Open House:

August 1, 2026

Winter Holiday:

December 21, 2026-January 3, 2027

First Day of Classes:

August 3, 2026

Martin Luther King Holiday:

Monday, January 18, 2027

Labor Day:

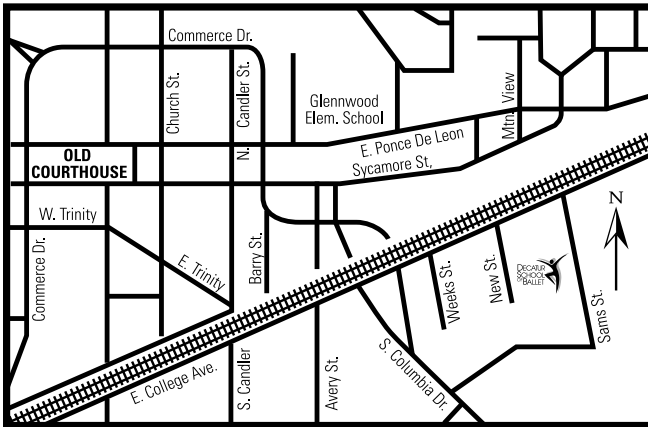
September 5-7, 2026

Spring Break:

April 5-11, 2027

Thanksgiving Holiday:

November 23-29, 2026



For Further Information

Sams Street Studio

141 Sams Street, Suite C | Decatur, Georgia 30030

p 404.377.6927

decaturballet.com

Email: info@decaturballet.com

The highest compliment our patrons can give us is the referral of their friends and family.

Thank you for your trust.

DECATUR SCHOOL OF BALLET

141 Sams Street

Suite C

Decatur, GA 30030

deaturballet.com



photos

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