



VG Dance Show 2024 – “Make Your Move”

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

We have been running shows successfully for approximately 20 years and hope to cover most things to ensure everyone has a good experience. The following are questions we have been asked along the way and the things we feel people most need to know – especially when people are new to all this. For any other questions please contact vgdanceshow@gmail.com or ask your class teacher.

- **“I’ve never done a VG Dance show before. I don’t know what to do. Help!”**
 - Don’t panic! We send out a lot of information (some might say too much, but it *is* necessary and we want to keep everyone as informed as possible) by way of a series of letters in the lead up to the show detailing everything you need. It can feel a bit overwhelming (we’re with you, believe us!) and it is a commitment, but we try to make it as easy as possible and the pay-off for our students performing on a professional stage is always worth it.

- **“Can I go backstage/into rehearsal spaces with my child?”**
 - No. We’re sorry but we have very strict limits on numbers backstage and in rehearsal venues for fire regulations, venue specific capacity and for the general welfare of our students. Our priority at all times is the safety and wellbeing of our students and staff/helpers, and we also must comply with venue regulations. We have a sign in/out procedure for photo call, rehearsals and performances at each venue so that we know who is in the building at all times in case of emergency/evacuation and to keep our students safe. Teachers, backstage helpers, chaperones and venue staff are included in our backstage/venue numbers, but for the protection of our students we cannot allow people who are not involved in the running of the show to come into the venues. In cases where a student has significant additional supervision needs due to health issues or disability, please discuss with us well in advance so that we can work together to ensure they are supported.

- **“Will my child be ok backstage without me?”**
 - We do our absolute best to make the experience of being backstage exciting, safe and happy for our students. Our parent-volunteer chaperones act in loco parentis, taking on the role of temporary guardian for the group of children assigned to them (much like a teacher in school), and we always ensure that there are the legal number of chaperones for students so that everyone is well taken care of. Many of our experienced chaperones are wonderful with the children backstage, ensuring they are kept safe, happy and occupied so that when their time to shine comes they can go on stage and perform at their best. We try to place new chaperones with more experienced ones so that they also feel supported and we provide them with all the information they need to take care of our students. All of our teachers are first aid trained, as are many of our volunteers and, of course, Anvil staff. To help us take care of your child to the best of our ability, please make sure the emergency

contact and medical forms are filled out in detail and that we are aware of any issues (medical or otherwise) that may arise where students may need extra support or care.

- **“How much are tickets?”**
 - Ticket price is set by us **and** The Anvil. The Anvil add their own booking fee on top of our set price which is applied before sale to all paid tickets. Tickets in 2024 will be £18 adults and £10 concessions, which includes the extra £3 Anvil booking fee.

- **“Do you profit from the show?”**
 - No. We aim to break even with our expenditures and usually just about make it work. However, if we added in the extra time that VGDance staff spend outside of their paid hours on choreography, admin, organisation, costume making, rehearsals and the show weekend itself, plus the time that volunteers give us for free, we would make a considerable loss. We produce our shows to give our students the opportunity to perform on a professional stage and a memorable experience for all involved. We know that times are pretty tough for everyone at the moment, us included, but please do spread the word to help us get enough ticket sales to cover costs, and to give our students a good-sized audience to perform all their hard work to.

- **“Does my child have to be at all the rehearsals?”**
 - Yes. Dress rehearsal and tech rehearsal are very important (as are all their normal weekly in-class rehearsals) and are compulsory. If it is of interest, here is a breakdown of why attendance is so important (in the least “preachy” way I can describe it):
 - Normal weekly classes are where choreography is learned, cleaned and practiced to ensure students are well prepared. Dance cannot be crammed last minute; technique and choreography take time to learn and creating muscle memory from regular practise is vital to proficiency and confidence. Missing class leads to falling behind in terms of learning sequences, formations and performance skills. Group choreography is a team effort. In most cases it is actually the other students in the class who suffer most from others’ absence as they cannot practise formations, spacing or partner work properly with people missing, and in following weeks more time has to be spent going over already learnt material for those who missed class rather than moving forward. From a practical point of view, especially as they get older, in order to build up the strength, coordination, flexibility and stamina required to dance safely and with confidence, students must be attending class regularly. We understand that class absence is sometimes unavoidable and that extenuating circumstances such as illness mean occasionally class justifiably has to be missed, but please try to make every class possible, for the sake of both you/your child and the other students in the group.
 - Dress rehearsal is the first time the entire cast is together and the purpose of this rehearsal to ensure that: the show runs smoothly, any problems that we need to fix are highlighted, choreography works in the measured-out stage space, entrances and exits to stage work and that costumes and props work as designed. Dress rehearsal gives all students, staff and volunteers the chance to get to grips with the running of the show and allows us to plan/practice evacuation procedures.

- Technical rehearsal is the first time that the cast is in the theatre and the Anvil specifies that a full cast must be at the technical rehearsal for a safety briefing, evacuation practice and show run through to ensure a safe and successful performance. Technical rehearsal is also the first run through with extra considerations such as lighting, special effects and curtains/wings which can be a little disorienting at first. Tech rehearsal gives us the chance to practise in the real performance space with all the extra elements so that everyone is fully prepared for the final performance. It also allows the cast to familiarise themselves with backstage areas, dressing rooms and the theatre in general so that they feel more comfortable with their surroundings and can perform with confidence.

In short, rehearsals are really, really important for everyone.

- **“Does my child have to be at the photo shoot?”**
 - No. However, we would strongly recommend it. Photo shoot days are optional, but they are a really lovely experience for the students and provide a lasting memory for you and your child. Group photos (and senior solo shots) are used in the programme so it’s a shame to miss out on the photo shoot days. If you wish your child to have solo shots taken these can be requested (more information will be given out closer to the time), and they can then be purchased directly from our photographer. Our photographer, Drew Tommons, is one of the most respected and experienced dance photographers in the country and we’re very lucky to have him. He has created some incredible images with our students and given them a lasting reminder of their talent and hard work. There is no pressure to buy the photos, however they are a lovely memory for the students and their family.
- **“What are the requirements for solos?”**
 - Solos are offered to graduating seniors who have earned it by showing commitment, dedication and hard work throughout their time with VGDance. They are usually given to students who consistently attend every class possible, train hard, have an excellent attendance record, show respect for dance etiquette (arriving on time, in proper uniform, hair tidy, respectful attitude etc.), and have an outstanding work ethic. Solos are a way of saying thank you and goodbye to our graduating seniors for all their hard work over the years. We know that our younger students look up to our seniors so we expect them to be good role models showing that all the work pays off.
- **“If I volunteer to chaperone a show can I watch it?”**
 - No. We’re sorry, but if you are a chaperone your role is to be with your assigned group of children backstage ensuring that they are taken care of. The Anvil also has a very strict security policy meaning only staff members or VGDance staff with Anvil door passes can move between backstage and Front of House. If your child is performing in one show and you would like to volunteer, we would very much appreciate your help in the other shows or the performances you are not watching.
- **“Do we get to keep the dance costumes?”**
 - Yes and no – it depends on the costume. Many of the costumes are made/bought specifically for each show number and students can often keep them afterwards. However there are some costumes (usually seniors) that are either hired in or are

particularly expensive to make/buy (like tutus). In these cases we do take back certain costumes to return from hire or to reuse in future shows.

- **“I have a junior dancer. Can they watch the Senior show free of charge?”**
 - YES! We know that our Junior dancers love to watch the older dancers perform, so we have set up a password deal with the Anvil where our junior dancers can attend the Senior Matinee performance FREE of charge when accompanied by a paying adult. More information will be sent out before tickets go on sale.

- **“I can’t pay the show fee all in one go, is there any help?”**
 - Yes. If finances are an issue please do talk to us (in confidence) and we will do our best to support you and your child as much as we can. We can offer payments plans, split payments/instalments. We can’t waive fees altogether, because we don’t profit from the show and need to cover expenses, but we will work with you and try our hardest to make it possible for your child to be involved.

- **“Does my child have to wear makeup onstage?”**
 - Yes (unless there are health issues preventing it such as skin problems or allergies), but there is a practical reason. Stage lights are very bright/powerful and will wash out features onstage without make up. While stage makeup may look a little heavy under normal lights, the aim of stage makeup is to ensure that a performer’s facial features can be seen on stage from the audience. This makes sure that dancers are able to perform to the best of their ability with their facial expressions, and so that you are better able to recognise your child from the audience. We are not trying to make children look “older” or “better”, only to enhance every person’s natural appearance so that their features are recognisable on stage and not washed out by the stage lights. The exception is our pre-school students where we suggest minimal make-up but it is not compulsory. Stage make-up is needed for dress rehearsal (to check and practice), technical rehearsal and performances (on stage under lights). Make-up is not required at the photo shoots.

- **“Why do we have to buy our own make-up?”**
 - We are conscious of the hygiene issues surrounding sharing of make-up products/brushes, so each dancer must have their own supply. We understand that for those of you with more than one child dancing it feels silly to buy two separate supplies, however children are not necessarily using the same shades and unless your children are in the same class as each other it is unlikely they will be in the same dressing room as we coordinate our dressing rooms by age/class/dance. They will need a supply each. If you want to (and are able to) split what you have into separate bags so that each dancer can have their own sealable bag of all the make-up items that’s perfectly ok, but they can’t realistically share the same item between different dressing rooms.

- **“Can my child be in a particular dressing room?”**
 - We coordinate dressing rooms by class/dance, and therefore age, to ensure students are with classmates they know and so that our runners are able to collect each group from their dressing rooms and take them to the stage as easily as possible so that the show runs smoothly. There is limited capacity in dressing rooms so some groups may have to split over more than one dressing room and it can be a bit of a jigsaw trying to organise everyone into a sensible place backstage. We cannot guarantee that students will be placed in a particular dressing room due to

numbers, however they will always be with others from their group and where there are known friendship groups we do try our best to keep students together. Siblings are unlikely to be in the same dressing room unless they are in the same age group/classes.

- **“Why are there so many letters coming out? Can’t you just tell us everything in one go?”**
 - Honestly, no. The first reason for this is that, in our experience, we genuinely feel that everything in one go would be even more overwhelming, and important information would likely get missed, whereas sending it out in separate letters over the lead up to the show allows people to stay on top of things and allows us to put reminders along the way of the important stuff (like dates and times). We try to number the letters and each letter refers to a specific thing so it splits the information into more manageable chunks (for us as well as you!). The second reason is that things do sometimes change and evolve as we get further through the process and feeding out separate letters allows us to make any updates and give you the most recent information we have. Thirdly, there are some things we just don’t know until further down the line, like running order, specific costume lists, photo shoot timetables and details of how to order photos/dvds etc.

- **“I’ve lost a letter! Where can I find the information?”**
 - Every letter will be available for download from the show page on our website www.vgdance.co.uk/show-info so you can easily replace a letter if lost. We are aware that unfortunately Coacha emails sometimes don’t get through to everyone or end up in junk folders so please do check your junk and check that you have all the letters to date so that you don’t miss anything. It sometimes helps Coacha emails get through by adding the email address myclub@e.coacha.app to your safe senders list.

- **“I don’t want my child to do the show. Can they still come to class?”**
 - Yes. They can learn the choreography alongside the others (out of formation) and can still practice and learn, possibly even act as a ‘swing’ filling in for anyone missing. We do encourage as many students as possible to do the show as it’s such a wonderful experience and we’re very aware that in class it can be difficult/disheartening working towards something they won’t end up doing. We try our best to make students not taking part feel included but the nature of group choreography means that there will inevitably be moments where they have to stand out of formation and may feel like they are not as involved.

We hope this helps with some of the more common questions. More detailed information will be coming out over the next few months and if you have any worries please e-mail vgdanceshow@gmail.com or ask your class teacher.