

# WORCESTER STAGE DANCE FESTIVAL (WSDF)

## 2026 SYLLABUS

Reg Charity No: 1052803

Affiliated to The British and International Federation of Festivals (BIFF)

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This syllabus contains all the information you need when entering a Festival organised by Worcester Stage Dance Festival, including Disciplines, Time Limits, Age Classifications, Fees, Festival Marking System, Rules of Entry.

In the event of any query please refer to the WSDF website or email us directly using the contact details below:

Website: [www.WSDF.org.uk](http://www.WSDF.org.uk)

Email: [enquiries@WSDF.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@WSDF.org.uk)

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### **DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION:**

WSDF is committed to treating each individual as a person in his or her own right, with equal rights and responsibilities for all, whether they are an adult or child. Discrimination on the grounds of gender, age, race, religion or belief, disability, sexual orientation, ethnic or national origin, or political belief has no place within this organisation.

### **DATA PROTECTION:**

WSDF holds data solely for the purpose of running the festivals. Personal data will not be disclosed to third parties without the express permission of the data subject unless such disclosure is to enable the Festival to fulfil its constitutional purpose. Please see our Privacy policy for further details which is available on our website.

### **APPENDICES:**

Please refer to the following which form part of this document:

Appendix 1 – Disciplines & Time Limits

WSDF Final Syllabus 2026. Updated 9.10.25

## Appendix 2 – Age Classifications

Appendix 3 – Festival Marking system. We will be adopting the AED system.

### **RULES OF ENTRY:**

1. This Festival is for amateurs and students who do not derive the main part of their income or livelihood from the performance or teaching of dance.
2. All entries must be:
  - a. Submitted by using the WSDF online booking system.
  - b. Priority entry schools must have submitted by the closing date of 15 December 2025 and paid for, at the latest, by the 15 December 2025.
  - c. If the festival decide to allow a limited number of further entries to all schools then entries for this must be submitted by the closing date of 4 January 2026 and paid for at the latest by the 5 January 2026.
3. When completing the online booking system, teachers must refer to the genre descriptors contained in this syllabus to accurately enter dances in the correct discipline. This cannot be corrected subsequent to the entry closing date.
4. The age of competitors is taken as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2025. Accuracy in birth dates is essential. The age of the eldest competitor in a Duet, Trio, Quartet or Group determines the correct age group.
5. The organisers of the Festival reserve the right to:
  - a. Reasonably refuse any proposed entry without assigning a reason for so doing
  - b. Combine, separate, or cancel sections or classes
  - c. Limit the number of entries from schools as deemed appropriate
6. The adjudicator's decision is final and no discussion or correspondence concerning such decision may ensue. The Adjudicator reserves the right not to award any place when, in their professional opinion, the standard of dance is insufficiently high, or to individuals who infringe these rules.
7. Communication with the Adjudicator concerning any matters relating to the Festival by competitors, teachers or other interested parties prior or during the Festival is strictly prohibited.
8. Solo performers who are awarded a 'Place' will receive the appropriate medal and certificate. For duets, trios or quartets all dancers will receive the appropriate medal, but only one certificate will be presented and for Groups only a certificate will be issued to the School with dancers receiving a pin badge for first place.
9. The stage and stage wings are out of bounds to all except authorised persons and competitors who are about to perform.

10. Competitors must dance in the correct programme order. Variation of this will only be allowed at the discretion of the Festival organisers. **DANCERS MUST REPORT TO THE APPOINTED AREA A MINIMUM OF 10 MINUTES BEFORE THE START OF THE RELEVANT SECTION. IT IS THE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY OF DANCERS TO REPORT TO THE APPOINTED AREA A MINIMUM OF 10 MINUTES BEFORE THE START OF THE RELEVANT SECTION. IT IS NOT THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE FESTIVAL REPRESENTATIVE TO COLLECT DANCERS FROM CHANGING ROOMS. FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THIS COULD RESULT IN THE DANCER MISSING THEIR SECTION WHICH THE COMMITTEE WOULD WISH TO AVOID. COOPERATION FROM ALL RELEVANT PARTIES IS REQUIRED TO COMPLY WITH THIS REASONABLE REQUEST.**
11. Music must be uploaded via the online booking system. It is the responsibility of the dance teacher/Responsible adult in the case of a private entry, to upload the correct music and to have a backup for use in an emergency. The standard of music quality is crucial.
12. Dancers will not be permitted to dance again except for pre-junior sections, unless a technical issue occurs, or at the discretion of the Adjudicator.
13. Competitors may enter once in each Solo, Duet, Trio or quartet class and perform in only **five** solos, **four** duets and **four** trios and quartets overall. Schools may enter **twice** in their age group for each dance technique in a Group section with a maximum overall of **20** Junior Groups, **25** Intermediate Groups and **25** Senior Groups.
14. A minimum of **5** and a maximum of **10** constitutes a small group and a minimum of **11** and a maximum of **30** constitutes a Large group.
15. Only small portable properties will be allowed on the stage and the placing and removal of such is the responsibility of the dancer.
16. Substitution of a dancer in a duet, trio or quartet at the Festival is permitted in exceptional circumstances and with prior discussion with a member of the Festival committee.
17. Titles for dances for Character, Global and Greek are permitted subject to a maximum of 30 words and will be announced prior to the dance.
18. Pre-recorded music used in any Musical Theatre performance must not include any singing or chanting. Pre-recorded music in any tap section must not include any recorded tap or similar sound effect.
19. Pointe work and Contemporary dance is not permitted for any competitor under 13 years of age in all categories from solos, through to groups. Fixed tap (single sound) only may be used for tap dancing. Acrobatic, gymnastic, hip hop and street dance are acceptable when combined with a strong dance technique. Contortion is not permitted.

20. This Festival is affiliated to The British and International Federation of Festivals (BIFF) and participates in its Group License to cover fees for the use of recorded music at its events.  
Teachers and choreographers using music created from commercial recordings are advised that they are responsible for seeking permission to re-record from the recording companies concerned.  
It has been brought to our attention by the British and International Federation of Festivals that we are not covered by the blanket copyright agreement in respect of music/songs from shows and that as a result teachers/performers need to obtain their own licence for such items from Phonographic Performance Ltd. Teachers should ring 07380 350080 with any queries on this matter.
21. Photography, filming, video or tape recording, and the use of mobile phones during any performance are prohibited. Permission to video or to take pictures during performance is granted only to a licensed photographer appointed by WSDF who has been subject to a DBS check. Any other person appearing to be taking pictures or videoing will be asked to leave the premises. By entry to the Competition, competitors agree to perform before the cameras of the media or agents of the Competition.
22. Safety of Performers. It is necessary for teachers and parents to be aware of their respective responsibility for the safety of any performer and in particular when entering any performers with limited physical capabilities or special needs, bearing in mind the limitations imposed by the stage and surrounding environment. It is also necessary for the teacher or parents to pass onto the adjudicator, via the organisers, any such information that would impact on the adjudicator's work. In addition by entering the Festival the parent/carer is confirming that a child is fit to take part and that the child's health will not suffer as a result.
23. The Child Protection Policy forms an integral part of the Rules of this Festival and must be adhered to. Particular attention is drawn to section 6 Performance and Changing areas and to section 7 Photographs, Videotapes and Press Photography. Claims of ignorance of this Policy in relation to these sections will not be accepted. Please see our separate Policy for further details which is available on our website.
24. WSDF will provide a lost property system during the period of the Festival. Any unclaimed items will be kept for a period of 3 weeks from the end date and any items unclaimed will be disposed of.
25. Entry fees for the 2026 Festival are as follows:
- SOLO - £6 per solo
  - DUET - £11 per duet
  - TRIO - £16.50 per trio
  - QUARTET - £22 per quartet
  - GROUP - £2 per dancer

## **GENRE DESCRIPTORS**

The following descriptors, compiled by All England Dance, should be used to assist with choreography and for ensuring dances are entered into the appropriate discipline when completing the online booking system.

### **1. Ballet (Classical Ballet)**

Classical Ballet should include elements of both adage and allegro. Stylised ballet is a communication of an idea through movement, danced with/without the use of hand props, and could reflect elements such as the Hornpipe, Spanish and Tarantella for example. Soft or pointe shoes must be worn (depending on age and technical proficiency). The use of classical repertoire is not allowed. Music should be drawn from the classical genre and be suited to the range of vocabulary steps utilised.

#### **Criteria**

- Dancers should demonstrate the principles of classical ballet, which include secure posture and alignment, turn-out, weight distribution and placement.
- A well-schooled port de bras is an essential component that should exhibit correct shaping, flow, and coordination of the head and eye line.
- Attention should be paid to the grouping of fingers and relaxation of the hands.

#### **Guidance on Costuming**

- Costuming should be relevant to the choice of style but also allow freedom of movement. Leg lines should not be obscured by heavy skirts as classical lines and correct technique need to be seen. A romantic length tutu may be utilised if appropriate to the choreographic style.

### **2. Ballet (Modern Ballet)**

Contemporary Ballet is a fusion of both classical and modern ballet styles which may or may not be danced with a parallel line of the leg. Choreographers such as Crystal Pite or Wayne McGregor are examples of the type of work we would expect to see in this section, neo-classical work would also be acceptable. Soft or pointe shoes must be worn. Music choices could be more varied and draw from a wider body of material than is suggested for classical ballet performances.

#### **Criteria**

- Evidence of a secure ballet technique should be demonstrated but displaying freedom and articulation of the spine, moving away from the traditional classical lines, is encouraged.
- Choreography should draw from both styles of dance exploring elements and pushing boundaries where these two techniques meet.
- Floor work may be incorporated.

## Guidance on Costuming

- Costume should be suited to the style of the piece and allow for freedom of movement and complete visibility in the body lines.

### 3. Narrative/Character

In this section you may portray a character, fictional or non-fictional, or you may choose to interpret an animal or an element from nature, a feeling, an emotion, or something more abstract. The fundamental element of the performance should always be focused on the storytelling and development of the narrative. Demi-character could be presented within this section.

## Criteria

- The acting skills and an ability to communicate using the whole body should be visible throughout. The performance must be visceral.
- The character should be expressed through body and facial expression with a clear sense of purpose behind the movement.

We would normally expect a classical genre to be utilised for this section, however on the odd occasion other forms of dance may be used if they aid the characterisation. The technique must be consistent throughout and appropriate to the piece as a whole. The chosen dance technique *MUST* serve the purpose of storytelling, a hybrid and creative utilisation of different dance techniques will be accepted.

Some examples:

- A tap dance to the song 'Mr Bojangles' would not be suitable if the movement does not convey a story.
- The use of tap to portray the Mad Hatter in *Alice in Wonderland* (as in the Christopher Wheeldon ballet) would be suitable.
- A modern dance with lyrics is not a narrative dance - although it may interpret the lyrics. However, a dance performance that focused on global warming for instance, that used the jazz vocabulary, could be used as a narrative piece if the overriding purpose of the choreography was to tell a story.
- *La Fille Mal Gardee* contains a clog dance which is a character piece.
- A piece exploring the issues/characters within *West Side Story* that utilises a hybrid of jazz and classical ballet work could be construed as a narrative piece.
- Lip-synching to a song, in a characterised manner, is not a character dance.

**Exception:** Classical Greek would not be accepted here as the genre already utilises characterisation and interpretation as part of its own performance criteria. However, in a hybrid form, a character piece could draw from Classical Greek vocabulary if suited to the mood and feel of the characterisation.

All choreographers are asked to consider the appropriateness of the topic to the age of the dancer. Alongside, sensitivity and thought must be given to the context in which the performance is presented and to ensuring that chosen themes are also appropriate to a competition aimed at young performers.

### **Guidance on costuming**

Costumes and makeup should reflect the character choice being portrayed. Footwear, if required, should also be suitable and appropriate to the character, the style and period and should always facilitate correct technique.

N.B. Please see further guidance on the use of the props which are only necessary if enhancing the overall performance.

## **4. Contemporary**

Breath should inform movement, with weight, swing, suspension, and release applied.

Choreography should explore themes and the use of contraction, extension, and relaxation should be explored along with the use of the spine. The performance should avoid being presentational and dancers should demonstrate they have a deep understanding of what initiates movements and why. The space should be explored in a multi layered way including, levels, planes, and facings.

At its core the work should demonstrate a clear underpinning of recognisable contemporary dance techniques (such as Graham, Cunningham, Horton, Release) which may be amalgamated. However, the choreography should not be a hybrid of modern theatrical dance, which is not contemporary dance in its purest form.

### **Criteria**

- The work should be rooted in Contemporary Dance techniques.
- Theme and/or choreographic devices should be apparent in the presentation of the work.
- A sequential use of the spine should be clearly understood.
- Clear initiation of movement is essential.

### **Guidance on costuming**

Costume for this style will be dictated by the style and theme of the piece. The line of body and shape of the movement should always be clearly visible throughout.

## **5. Global**

All traditional music, songs, and techniques appropriate to the country of choice are acceptable. Younger competitors are expected to demonstrate traditional performances. Seniors may introduce theatrical performances that are clearly based on a national tradition. The choice for this section is broad and

encompasses both traditional folk dances and dances drawn from the rich body of cultural dance practices from around the world.

### **Criteria**

- Deliver a performance which captures the essence of the chosen country. Footwork and body movements should have an authentic feel with the arms co-ordinating in the correct style.
- A theme maybe used but is not compulsory and small props which help to create an authentic story can be incorporated into the performance.
- The floor patterns and choreography should mirror those used in the chosen area (as appropriate to the specific region/style).
- The musical choice should incorporate the spirit of the country but doesn't have to be a traditional folk piece.

### **Guidance on costuming**

The costume should be authentic with the correct length of skirt or trousers and an awareness of the material types used in the Country. Footwear should be appropriate for the style. Jewellery can be worn if it complements the authenticity of the costume.

## **6. Classical Greek**

Based upon the technique of Ruby Ginner, classical Greek is performed barefoot and is essentially showing the use of opposition and relaxation through the movement which was core to Ginner's work. Dances should reflect the title. Myths, studies from nature and modern-day themes are acceptable, together with the accompaniment of many different genres of music or the spoken word, provided the movements are given their appropriate interpretation and relate to one or more of the seven styles of this technique which are:

- Lyric
- Athletic
- Bacchic
- Pyrrhic
- Choric
- Ritual
- Tragic

The choreography should be based upon the natural movements of the body such as Standing, Walking, Running, Skipping, Leaping, Jumping and Spinning, whilst experiencing the cultural connections to other arts such as Sculpture, Ceramics, Painting, Poetry, and Music. Aspects of the performance should include expression, use of breath and musical understanding. Also demonstrated should be balance, strength & control, relaxation, elevation, and flexibility through the spine.

### **Criteria**

- The dancer should demonstrate the correct technical and artistic requirements for the relevant styles: lyrical, athletic, bacchic, pyrrhic, tragic, choric, and ritual.
- The use of breathing, weight and relaxation and full use of the body should be evident throughout. The use of the spine, body turn, and precision of line should be secure.
- The quality of the movement dynamics should match the chosen style, whilst showing fluidity and sensitivity where relevant. A connection and response to the chosen music, words or sound should be demonstrated.
- A connection and response to the chosen music, words or sound should be demonstrated.

### **Guidance on costuming**

Costuming and the use of props should be relevant to, and enhance, the portrayal of the title, myth, or theme of the dance. Bare feet should be worn for the Classical Greek dance technique.

## **7. Musical Theatre**

Musical theatre encompasses the 'triple threat' abilities of performers and adjudicators will consider the following aspects:

- Vocal ability and technique.
- Acting through song and connection to the words.
- Acting through dance and/or movement.

The choice of the material should be both suitable in terms of age and cultural identity. Characterisation and believability are integral to the performance, and it is important that the song choice is relevant to the performer. The lyrics are important, and clarity of diction should be thought about. Breath control and pitching are also a key element and need suitable training. The key to the accompaniment should be within the range of the performer and it is permissible to change this to suit the voice type. Dance should not be included for the sake of it and should flow naturally out of the lyrics and characterisation. Pedestrian movement and staging are considered appropriate, and each action should have a clear purpose and intention. Any genre of dance can be utilised, the focus should be that the genre enhances the role that is being played and is in keeping with the character and era of the chosen material. Ensure that the performer understands the context, period, and location of the song and/or musical.

For younger candidates in Pre Junior, A and B sections, it is acceptable for the performers to choose songs that are not necessarily drawn from musical theatre.

**THERE IS NO REQUIREMENT FOR THE PERFORMANCE TO CONTAIN 50% SONG AND 50% DANCE.**

### **Criteria**

- Suitability of the song choice to age of performer.
- Vocal placing and pitching.

- Characterisation and connection to the words.
- Appropriate use of movement and/or dance.
- Understanding the context of the piece.

### **Guidance on costuming**

Costume choices should reflect the period and setting of the song choice and the character being portrayed. Footwear should also be suitable, and considerations should be made as to what the character would wear as this will also dictate the type and style of movement incorporated. For example, bare feet would not be suitable for a song that is set on the streets of New York during the 1920s.

## **8. Tap**

Tap encompasses many different styles – often dictated by the choice of accompaniment. The use of the body and/or arm lines and overall performance should work in unity to form a cohesive presentation that is informed by the style of tap that has been utilised. Tap dances should be rhythmic, show clearly defined rhythmic patterns and precision in beating and footwork. There should be variance in the use of tonal quality which may, or may not, be influenced by the accompaniment.

### **Criteria**

- Timing and musicality.
- Tonality and use of light and shade.
- Clarity of beating and articulation of footwork.
- Stylistic interpretation and use of the body as a whole.

### **Guidance on costuming**

Costumes can be varied and creative, just ensure that emphasis is not drawn from the feet and a clear action should be visible. Taps should not be loosened as this will blur, and detract from, the clarity of sound. Hard soled shoes are preferable as they produce a more confident sound and are more protective of the feet.

## **9. Jazz/Modern**

Jazz utilises the underpinning of a clear jazz technique in its presentation. There is plenty of scope for freedom in the style, choice of music and theme, if relevant. The term, theatrical jazz, refers to the fundamental jazz dance techniques which evolved from musical theatre into more contemporary hybrids such as modern dance and which may incorporate influences from contemporary dance. The term Theatre Jazz does not dictate that the source material must be derived from musical theatre and the two should not be confused (although it is clearly permissible to use this style in the genre). Choreography should reflect the rhythms and dynamics of the music, clear sustained technique in turns, kicks and elevated steps and should avoid being solely based on limbering movements. Tricks can be utilised, but should have purpose to the piece, ensure that focus and consideration is given on the linking steps in between to help with flow in the transitions.

## **Criteria**

- Clarity of line through the limbs and body.
- Control in technique (turns, kicks, elevation).
- Use of dynamics and rhythmicity.
- Stamina and consistency in performance.

## **Guidance on costuming**

There is complete freedom in the costuming, it should allow for freedom of movement and not obscure the line of the dancer's body. Any costume should be appropriate to the age of the dancer and considers modesty.

## **10. Lyrical**

Lyrical allows the dancer to interpret the music and lyrics through movement and encourages a sense of musicality and connection between the dancer and the accompaniment. The use of breath is important and strong technical application will allow for simplicity and space in the presentation. Highlights in the movement should match that of the orchestration/musical arrangement.

Lyrical is a pure interpretation of the music and should therefore show fluidity, resistance, suspension, relaxation, purpose and create physical shapes that are aesthetically pleasing. Vocal or non-vocal music may be utilised, however if interpreting the lyrics, the performance should be consistent throughout. The choreography should have a continuous sense of flow showing breadth, expansion, and release. Whilst the use of floor work is permitted, it should be kept to a minimum. Ask yourself, does the music suggest going to the floor?

Music should be age appropriate and the size of orchestration and emotive content should relate to the age and ability of the dancer.

## **Criteria**

- The dancer should demonstrate a sustained technique, extension, and continuity of line where relevant and fluidity in the movement.
- The music should be embodied fully within the performance and the two elements should work in harmony with one another.
- A range and richness in dynamics should be ever present in the work.
- Throughout, the use of space and freedom in the movement should be evident.
- The emotive response should come within and not be forced or contrived.

## **Guidance on costuming**

- Costume choices can be varied and creative, they should allow for freedom of movement and compliment the lines created by the dancer. The costume should have some link to the quality of the music and the fluidity in movement of the dancer.

## **11. Open Section (Small groups and groups)**

The open section is for any dance routine that doesn't fall into the specific categories outlined above. It can be a hybrid of different dance styles. Examples of dances that could be suitable may include: an acrobatic dance; a lyrical jazz that incorporated elements of acrobatic work; a lyrical routine that combined elements of contemporary and jazz work.

N.B. Please note that this is not an opportunity to perform another dance from a section already outlined above.

## **Criteria**

- Clearly identifiable dance technique should be evident throughout.
- Movement and choreography should be artistic and relate to the musical choice.
- The dance should not fulfil the criteria outlined for the other sections/categories that All England Dance offer.



# Worcester Stage Dance Festival – Syllabus

## Disciplines & Time Limits

	Solos				Duets/ Trios/ Quartets			Small Groups			Large Groups		
	Pre-Junior	A & B	C	D / E / F	Pre-Junior & Junior	Inter	Senior	Junior	Inter	Senior	Junior	Inter	Senior
Ballet - Classical <sup>1</sup>	1.5 mins	1.5 mins	2 mins	2 mins	2.5mins	2.5mins	2.5mins	3 mins	3 mins	3 mins	4 mins	4 mins	4 mins
Ballet - Modern <sup>1,2</sup>				2 mins		2.5mins	2.5mins		3 mins	3 mins		4 mins	4 mins
Narrative / Character	1.5 mins	1.5 mins	2 mins	2 mins	2.5mins	2.5mins	2.5mins	3 mins	3 mins	3 mins	4 mins	4 mins	4 mins
Contemporary <sup>1,2</sup>				2 mins		2.5mins	2.5mins		3 mins	3 mins		4 mins	4 mins
Global Dance	1.5 mins	1.5 mins	2 mins	2 mins	2.5mins	2.5mins	2.5mins	3 mins	3 mins	3 mins	4 mins	4 mins	4 mins
Classical Greek	1.5 mins	1.5 mins	2 mins	2 mins	2.5mins	2.5mins	2.5mins	3 mins	3 mins	3 mins	4 mins	4 mins	4 mins
Musical Theatre	2 mins	2 mins	2.5 mins	2.5 mins	3 mins	3 mins	3 mins	3.5 mins	3.5 mins	3.5 mins	4.5 mins	4.5 mins	4.5 mins
Tap	1.5 mins	1.5 mins	2 mins	2 mins	2.5mins	2.5mins	2.5mins	3 mins	3 mins	3 mins	4 mins	4 mins	4 mins
Jazz / Modern	1.5 mins	1.5 mins	2 mins	2 mins	2.5mins	2.5mins	2.5mins	3 mins	3 mins	3 mins	4 mins	4 mins	4 mins
Lyrical <sup>3</sup>		1.5 mins	2 mins	2 mins		2.5mins	2.5mins		3 mins	3 mins		4 mins	4 mins
Open <sup>4</sup>								3 mins	3 mins	3 mins	4 mins	4 mins	4 mins

1 Please consult the separate genre description schedule carefully to ensure dances are entered into the correct sections.

2 Dancers under 13 years may not enter Modern Ballet or Contemporary sections, except in a group setting.

3 Lyrical is open to A, B, C, D, E & F solos, inter & senior duets, trios / quartets and groups. Lyrical dances for Pre Junior solos and junior duets, trios / quartets and groups should be entered into the Jazz / Modern section.

4 The Open section is for small or large group dances which do not fit into the specific categories listed above.



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## Age Groups

	Class	Age on 31 August 2025*
Solo sections	Pre-Junior	6 & under
	Class A	7 & 8 years
	Class B	9 & 10 years
	Class C	11 & 12 years
	Class D	13 & 14 years
	Class E	15 & 16 years
	Class F	17 - 21 years
Duet, Trios & Quartets	Pre-Junior	7 years & under
	Junior	10 years & under
	Intermediate	14 years & under
	Senior	21 years & under
Groups	Junior	10 years & under
	Intermediate	14 years & under
	Senior	21 years & under

\* Accuracy in birth dates is essential when entering – see *Rule 2*

## Important Notes for Teachers

Worcester Stage Dance Festival follows the rules and syllabus of The AED Competition which are available on The AED website (links are below):

Rules - <https://all-england-dance.org.uk/competitions/rules-of-the-competition/>

Syllabus - <https://all-england-dance.org.uk/competitions/syllabus/>