

Friday, October 10th

1:00 - 1:50 PM



15th Edition of the SDTA Scottish National Dances Textbook

Lecturer(s): Gregor Bowman & Jacqueline Smith



Explore the key updates in the 15th Edition of the SDTA Scottish National Dances Textbook, including refined step descriptions and changes. This session will help teachers and dancers understand the latest revisions that preserve tradition while enhancing clarity and consistency in instruction.



Open Highland Technique Jumpstart

Lecturer(s): Eleanor Belton



Start the World Highland Dancing Conference weekend with an energizing Open Highland Technique session designed to set the tone for learning and collaboration. This class will focus on fundamental movements and exercises—building strength, alignment, and precision—while giving dancers and teachers the chance to warm up together in a supportive environment. From basic steps to essential drills, participants will leave feeling grounded in technique and ready to dive into the workshops ahead.



Open Forum for BATD Members

Lecturer(s): Joy Tolev & Diane MacPhee Krugh



This session offers BATD members an opportunity to engage in constructive dialogue on matters of shared interest. Participants will be able to exchange perspectives, raise questions, and discuss initiatives relevant to the Association. Designed to foster collaboration and strengthen professional connections, the session encourages meaningful discussion that supports the ongoing advancement of BATD and its members.



Reel Elevation Through Strength & Power Training

Lecturer(s): Sandy Gribbin



Stand out on stage with explosive elevation that commands attention. This high-energy session is designed to help Highland dancers unlock their full elevation potential through targeted strength and power training tailored specifically to the demands of the dance. You'll learn how proper body alignment, muscle engagement, and dynamic conditioning work together to create higher, more controlled jumps—safely and effectively. Walk away with practical drills, a deeper understanding of jump mechanics, and the tools to elevate your performance with confidence and precision.

Repeated on Sunday at 3:00PM



Mindfulness for All: Meditation Session

Lecturer(s): Alison MacGregor



Join us for a rejuvenating meditation session, open to all conference participants—whether you're a dancer, teacher, or parent. This calming practice will focus on mindfulness and relaxation techniques designed to reduce stress, improve focus, and promote mental clarity. Take a moment to unwind, connect with your inner self, and explore the powerful benefits of meditation for both personal well-being and performance enhancement. No prior experience is required—come as you are and discover how this practice can support you on and off the dance floor.

2:00 - 2:50 PM



Teaching New Beginners: Building a Strong Foundation in Highland Dance

Lecturer(s): Kate DeGood

This session is designed for teachers working with new beginners, especially the youngest dancers. Learn how to effectively introduce Highland dance by incorporating songs and movements that engage young learners while teaching them the basics of rhythm, coordination, and footwork. You'll gain valuable tips and tricks from an expert, experienced teacher who knows how to make the learning process fun and accessible. Whether you're guiding toddlers or first-time dancers, this class will provide the tools to create an exciting and supportive environment for your students to thrive in their Highland dance journey.

Injury Prevention & Recovery: The Role of Physiotherapy in a Dancer's Journey

Lecturer(s): Laura Donlan



Injury prevention is a vital part of every dancer's longevity and success—and when injuries do happen, physiotherapy plays a key role in the healing process. This informative and practical session will explore the most common injuries seen in Highland dancers, how to recognize early warning signs, and strategies to reduce risk through proper technique, conditioning, and rest. Learn how physiotherapy supports recovery through individualized treatment plans, hands-on care, and exercises that restore strength, mobility, and confidence. Whether you're aiming to stay injury-free or return to dancing stronger than before, this session offers essential knowledge for dancers, teachers, and parents alike.

Repeated on Sunday at 2:00PM



Hebridean Laddie: A Scottish National Dance

Lecturer(s): Jacqueline Smith



Part of the SDTA Scottish National Dance textbook and syllabus, *Hebridean Laddie* is a lively and distinctive dance with roots in the Hebrides. This session will explore its unique style, rhythm, and technique, offering practical tips for both dancers and teachers to enhance performance and understanding of this spirited national dance.



Her Heart Will Go On — A Tribute to Mrs. Jessie Stewart-Haggarty, MBE

Lecturer(s): Christine Lacey MBE



Celebrate the legacy of **Mrs. Jessie Stewart-Haggarty, MBE** in this special tribute session honouring her profound impact on the Highland Dance community. Participants will learn the commemorative dance **Her Heart Will Go On**, created in her memory to reflect her enduring spirit, lifetime of dedication, and the countless lives she touched as a mentor, leader, and inspiration. Previously honoured by the World Highland Dancing Conference for her outstanding contribution to Highland Dance, this session continues her legacy through movement, remembrance, and celebration.



Elements of Highland Choreography: Tradition and Creativity in Balance

Lecturer(s): Sheryl Joyner



This session explores the essential components of choreography—space, timing, dynamics, and musicality—through the lens of Highland dance. We will look at how these universal elements interact with the traditional vocabulary, steps, and stylistic qualities unique to Highland, shaping dances that honour the technique while allowing for creative expression. Practical examples will highlight how to structure choreography that is both engaging and authentic, with attention to formations, transitions, and storytelling. Teachers and dancers alike will leave with tools to enhance their choreographic process and bring fresh artistry to the Highland stage.

3:00 - 3:50 PM



Behind the Score Sheet: Understanding Judging and RSOBHD Rules

Lecturer(s): Deborah Wardrope



Ever wonder what adjudicators are really looking for on the platform? This informative session is open to all dancers, parents, and teachers who want to better understand the judging process and the RSOBHD rules that guide adjudicator decisions. We'll cover how dancers are evaluated, what common deductions are based on, and how consistency and fairness are maintained. This session is a great opportunity to demystify the judging process, ask questions, and gain clarity on how competition results are determined.



Highland Musicality: Mastering Rhythms and Phrasing

Lecturer(s): Donald MacPhee & Deryck Mitchelson



Unlock the secrets of Highland musicality in this insightful session, where we'll dive into the rhythms and phrasing that drive Highland dance. Understanding how the music influences movement is essential for precision and performance, and this class will guide you through the key patterns and structures in traditional Highland tunes. Whether you're a dancer or teacher, you'll gain a deeper appreciation for how musicality enhances your technique, helping you move in perfect harmony with the music. Learn to listen, feel the rhythm, and bring the music to life in your dance!

Repeated on Sunday at 1:00PM



Tribute to J.L. McKenzie: Honouring a Legend in Highland Dance

Lecturer(s): Kelly Abrahart



This professional lecture will provide a detailed breakdown of the steps in the *Tribute to J.L. McKenzie*, a commemorative dance choreographed by the legendary Elspeth Strathern. Attendees will explore the technical composition of the dance, including step sequences, stylistic choices, and movement quality, all thoughtfully designed to honour the legacy of J.L. McKenzie.



Sadie Simpson Honor Dance — A Tribute to Miss Sadie Simpson

Lecturer(s): Christine Lacey MBE



This special session honours the legacy of **Miss Sadie Simpson**, a respected and influential figure in Highland Dance. Participants will learn the **Sadie Simpson Honor Dance**, created to recognize her lasting contributions as a teacher, mentor, and advocate for the development of dancers and the art form. The choreography reflects Sadie's commitment to precision, tradition, and musicality—qualities she instilled in countless dancers throughout her career. Join us as we celebrate her impact and keep her memory alive through this special dance.



Mastering the Basics: Open Scottish National Technique for Pre-Premier

Lecturer(s): Dougie McFarland



Strong fundamentals are the foundation of every successful dancer. This practical, technique-focused session is designed specifically for Pre-Premier dancers and those who teach or support them. Participants will work through essential Scottish National movements with an emphasis on clarity, precision, and consistency, gaining valuable tips and drills to build confidence and long-term improvement.



4:00 - 5:00 PM



Examining Bodies Meet & Greet

Hosts: BATD, SDTA and UKAdance

Join us for a relaxed and welcoming Meet & Greet Reception, bringing together three leading dance associations: the British Association of Teachers of Dancing (B.A.T.D.), the Scottish Dance Teachers' Alliance (SDTA), and UKA Dance. This informal gathering is a wonderful opportunity to connect with fellow dance professionals, ask questions, share experiences, and learn more about each organization in a friendly setting.

Enjoy lively conversation—and perhaps a wee glass of wine—as we celebrate our shared passion for dance and community. Representatives from each association will be present to welcome you: **Diane MacPhee Krugh, Vice President (B.A.T.D.); Joy Tolev, North American Coordinator (B.A.T.D.); Gregor Bowman, President (SDTA); Jacqueline Smith, Fellow and Examiner (SDTA); and Rhona Lawrence, Past President, Fellow Member, and Examiner (UKA Dance).**

Saturday, October 11th

8:15 - 9:00 AM

Open Forum for RSOBHD Judges: Navigating Challenges in Adjudication (RSOBHD Adjudicators Only) Lecturer(s): Christine Lacey MBE & Deryck Mitchelson



This exclusive session for RSOBHD Judges provides a platform for open discussion on critical topics in Highland dance adjudication. The panel will explore effective methodology, strategies for overcoming unconscious bias, and how to navigate common marking challenges. Judges will also delve into the differences between marking large groups versus smaller groups and discuss best practices for applying penalties appropriately. This session aims to foster a deeper understanding of the nuances in adjudicating, offering insights and practical advice to enhance consistency, fairness, and clarity in every competition.



Yoga for Highland Dancers: Flexibility, Strength, and Focus Lecturer(s): Alison MacGregor



Join us for a rejuvenating Yoga session designed for all conference attendees, with a special focus on how Yoga can enhance your Highland dancing. This class will guide you through stretches and poses that improve flexibility, build strength, and increase balance, all essential elements for a dancer's body. Learn how Yoga helps prevent injury, improves posture, and promotes mindfulness, enabling you to perform with greater control and precision in your Highland routines. Whether you're a dancer, teacher, or simply looking to improve your overall fitness, this session will leave you feeling energized and ready to take on any challenge!

9:00 - 10:10 AM

Open Forum for Teachers: Enhancing Your Highland Dance Best Practices Lecturer(s): Jennifer Stephenson



This engaging session for Highland dance teachers will feature several experts discussing key aspects of effective teaching. Topics will include setting competitive goals, managing expectations, and structuring classes for maximum impact. The panel will also address general questions about teaching Highland dance, offering practical advice and strategies to help you elevate your teaching practice. Whether you're working with beginners or advanced dancers, this session will provide valuable insights to help you inspire and guide your students to success.

Wired to Cope: Practical Tools for Managing Stress, Burnout, and Wellbeing Lecturer(s): Alison MacGregor



In a world where demands on dancers, teachers, and parents can feel relentless, wellness is not a luxury but a necessity. This practical session explores the concept of self-regulation—how we respond to stress, plan effectively, and cope with both everyday pressures and high-stakes moments. Participants will gain insight into how stress manifests in the body and brain, and learn strategies to build emotional resilience, manage anxiety, and prevent burnout. With real, actionable tools to help regulate and reset, this session offers valuable support for anyone looking to strengthen their well-being and thrive in all aspects of life.

Repeated on Sunday at 1:00PM

2026 Championship Steps: Sword Dance & Reel Lecturer(s): Sheryl Joyner & Delma Wilson



Join us for an essential class covering the 2026 Championship Steps for the Sword Dance and Reel, designed for dancers, teachers, and judges alike. This session will dive into the core movements and their seamless linking, with a strong focus on the essential High Cuts that elevate the performance. Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of technique, execution, and precision required for these two iconic dances, ensuring they're fully prepared for competition. This class is perfect for refining skills and mastering the new 2026 set step.



Mastering the Basics: Building Strong Highland Technique for Pre-Premier Dancers (Fling/ST)

Lecturer(s): Steven MacRae



Strong fundamentals are the foundation of every great Highland dancer, and this practical, technique-focused session is designed specifically for Pre-Premier dancers and those who teach or support them. We'll take a deep dive into essential movements such as Back-Steps, Pas de Basques, and High Cuts—breaking them down for better understanding, cleaner execution, and long-term improvement. Through targeted drills, corrections, and helpful coaching tips, dancers and teachers will leave with tools to build consistency, strength, and precision in their technique, ensuring that whether you're just starting out or refining your approach, you can take those all-important basics to the next level.

10:20 - 11:30 AM



Inside the Exam Room: What the BATD Examiner is Looking For

Lecturer(s): Diane MacPhee Krugh

This session offers an in-depth look at what BATD examiners are looking for across both amateur and professional levels. We'll walk through the structure of the BATD syllabus, highlight key assessment areas—such as technique, musicality, posture, presentation, and theory—and explain how the marking system is applied. The session will also cover common challenges and how to best prepare dancers for success, from first medal tests to associate and higher-level qualifications. A valuable session for teachers, candidates, and anyone seeking a deeper understanding of the standards behind the BATD award.



Inside the Exam Room: What the SDTA Examiner is Looking For

Lecturer(s): Gregor Bowman

This session offers a detailed look at what SDTA examiners are looking for, with a guided walkthrough of both the amateur and professional syllabus. Participants will gain insight into key assessment areas—technique, timing, deportment, presentation, and theory—along with a clear explanation of the SDTA marking structure and how marks are awarded at each level. Common errors, examiner expectations, and practical preparation tips will also be discussed. Whether you're a teacher, candidate, or mentor, this session will help ensure confident, well-informed exam preparation from medal tests to professional qualifications.



2026 Championship Steps: Fling/Seann Triubhas

Lecturer(s): Joy Tolev, Alison Plemmons & Jacqueline Smith

Dive into the 2026 Championship steps for the Highland Fling and Seann Triubhas in this essential session for dancers, teachers, and judges. We'll break down the fundamental movements, refine technique, and explore the seamless linking of steps required for the upcoming competition season. Gain valuable insights into execution, rhythm, and style to ensure a strong foundation and confident performance. Whether you're competing, coaching, or adjudicating, this class will provide the knowledge and precision needed to master the new set steps.



Mastering the Basics: Building Strong Highland Technique for Pre-Premier Dancers (Sword/Reel)

Lecturer(s): Sue Burgoyne

Strong fundamentals are the foundation of every great Highland dancer, and this practical, technique-focused session is designed specifically for Pre-Premier dancers and those who teach or support them. We'll take a deep dive into essential movements such as Back-Steps, Pas de Basques, and High Cuts—breaking them down for better understanding, cleaner execution, and long-term improvement. Through targeted drills, corrections, and helpful coaching tips, dancers and teachers will leave with tools to build consistency, strength, and precision in their technique, ensuring that whether you're just starting out or refining your approach, you can take those all-important basics to the next level.

11:40 - 12:30 PM



RSOBHD Penalties: Correct Interpretation and Application for Adjudicators (RSOBHD Adjudicators Only)

Facilitator(s): Shendl Russell BEM

This session is exclusively for RSOBHD Adjudicators and provides a focused review of the official penalty guidelines. It will cover the correct interpretation and consistent application of penalties as outlined by the Board, with discussion on practical scenarios and common areas of uncertainty. This is an opportunity to align understanding, ensure uniformity in adjudication, and uphold the standards of fair and accurate judging across all competitions.



Joining a Tattoo: Your Ultimate Guide

Lecturer(s): Rachel McLagan via Video Conferencing



Interested in performing at a Tattoo? This session will cover everything you need to know to make your dream a reality! From understanding the audition process to the dos and don'ts of preparing for the big stage, we'll walk you through the key steps to get involved. Learn about the unique experience of performing in a Tattoo, including rehearsal expectations, performance tips, and what it's like to be part of such a prestigious event. Whether you're auditioning for the first time or looking to refine your approach, this class will equip you with all the essential knowledge to succeed.



Open Highland Technique Masterclass

Lecturer(s): Andrea Tronnes, Michele Yonge & Ellen Cameron



This masterclass will focus on Highland technique for the 2026 Championship Set Steps, providing professionals and dancers with in-depth guidance on footwork, timing, and stylistic execution. Attendees will explore key technical observations set down by the RSOBHD Technical Committee and receive practical exercises, targeted corrections, and performance tips to refine their technique, enhance control and precision, and perform the 2026 Championship Set Steps with confidence and mastery.



Mastering the Basics: Open Highland Technique for Pre-Premier

Lecturer(s): Linda Armstrong



Strong fundamentals are the foundation of every successful dancer. This practical, technique-focused session is designed specifically for Pre-Premier dancers and those who teach or support them. Participants will work through essential Highland movements with an emphasis on clarity, precision, and consistency, gaining valuable tips and drills to build confidence and long-term improvement.

2:00 - 2:50 PM



RSOBHD Scottish National Dances Textbook (2020 Edition)

Lecturer(s): Rhona Lawrence



In 2009, the Royal Scottish Official Board of Highland Dancing (RSOBHD) released a book of Old Steps, a publication that helped shine a light on a rich collection of traditional steps that reflect the depth and variety of Highland dancing. This session will explore the origins, evolution, and distinctive features of the Old Steps, offering insight into their historical context and continued relevance in today's dance world. Whether you're a dancer, teacher, or enthusiast, this session invites you to celebrate and deepen your understanding of these treasured dances within our living tradition.



Dance Foundations: A Teacher's Toolkit for Functional Anatomy

Lecturer(s): Deborah Wardrope



Join us for an engaging Applied Anatomy session designed to deepen your understanding of anatomy in Highland dance. This session will explore strategies to improve functional turnout, develop strong insteps, and refine posture coaching techniques. Learn how to support dancers in achieving optimal body balance, alignment, and fluid movement while building a solid foundation of transferable dance skills rooted in Anatomy and Physiology. Ideal for dancers, teachers, and judges, this session will offer practical insights to enhance technique and overall physical well-being through the application of key anatomical principles.



World Highland Dancing Conference Special Choreography - A Tribute to Sandra Bald Jones & Cathy Hynd

Lecturer(s): Sherril Medd



Join us for an unforgettable class as we learn a specially choreographed dance by award-winning choreographer Sherril Medd, set to a beautifully composed tune by Terry Medd. Created as a tribute to Sandra Bald Jones and Cathy Hynd, this unique dance blends creativity and tradition to honour their lasting contributions to Highland dancing. Designed for dancers of all levels, the class offers not only the chance to learn this exceptional choreography but also includes notes to take home and share with your students.



Introduction to the Sailors' Hornpipe and Irish Jig for Pre-Premier Dancers

Lecturer(s): Dougie McFarland



Ready to explore the lively world of character dances? This fun and energetic session introduces Pre-Premier dancers to the Sailors' Hornpipe and Irish Jig—two dynamic styles that blend strong technique with storytelling and personality. Dancers will learn foundational movements, character traits, and rhythmic patterns while building confidence, accuracy, and performance skills. Perfect for those just starting out or preparing for competition, this session offers a great mix of education, enjoyment, and a few laughs along the way!



Basic Movements Technique Lab - Highland Fling

Lecturer(s): Rhona Lawrence



These series of interactive labs take a deep dive into essential Highland basic movements through small group breakout groups of professionals. Each group take one or two basic movements and will share their technical approach, key corrections, and effective drills for refining execution. Designed to encourage dialogue and detailed feedback, this session gives teachers the chance to explore multiple perspectives on how to teach and perform these foundational movements with strength, clarity, and precision. A must-attend for anyone looking to sharpen the building blocks of Highland technique.



3:00 - 3:50 PM

The Power of Two: Maximizing Success Through Team Teaching

Lecturer(s): Jennifer Miller & Alison Plemmons



Team teaching combines the strengths and expertise of multiple instructors to create a richer learning experience for dancers. This session explores how collaborative instruction can boost engagement, improve class dynamics, and provide more personalized feedback—all while working within RSOBHD rules and guidelines. Learn practical strategies for planning lessons as a team, managing different teaching styles, and ensuring a unified approach that benefits every student. Whether you already share instruction or are considering it, this session offers tools to make team teaching effective.



RSOBHD 2026 Set Step Lecture (with Technical Committee video)

Lecturer(s): Christine Lacey MBE & Deryck Mitchelson



Team teaching combines the strengths and expertise of multiple instructors to create a richer learning experience for dancers. This session explores how collaborative instruction can boost engagement, improve class dynamics, and provide more personalized feedback—all while working within RSOBHD rules and guidelines. Learn practical strategies for planning lessons as a team, managing different teaching styles, and ensuring a unified approach that benefits every student. Whether you already share instruction or are considering it, this session offers tools to make team teaching effective.



The Ultimate Masterclass

Presented by the *David Wilton Dance Clinic*



In this one-of-a-kind session, the professionals become the masterclass specialist working directly with David Wilton, who takes on the role of the “ultimate student” in learning and refining basic movements and steps. This session is designed exclusively for professionals, who are encouraged to observe, share insights, and collaborate, creating a dynamic and interactive learning environment. This session is for professionals only and will be video recorded for the *David Wilton Dance Clinic*.



Open Scottish National Technique (Excluding Premiership Dances)

Lecturer(s): Sherril Medd



This session will focus on the technical execution of Open Scottish National dances, providing dancers with detailed guidance on footwork, timing, and stylistic expression. Excluding the Premiership Set Steps, the session will cover a broad range of Scottish National dances, highlighting key technical observations set down by the RSOBHD Technical Committee. Professionals and dancers will receive practical tips and insights to refine their technique, improve performance quality, and develop confidence in executing these traditional dances with precision and flair.



Strong Starts: Building Turnout and Strength for Pre-Premier Dancers

Lecturer(s): Sandy Gribbin



This session helps Pre-Premier dancers develop essential strength and control by focusing on turnout and balanced work between the working and support sides. Through simple exercises and conditioning drills, dancers will improve alignment, muscle engagement, and body awareness—building a strong, injury-resistant foundation to support their technical progress from the very beginning.





Highland Dance & the Body: Understanding Physiology for Performance

Lecturer(s): Deborah Wardrope



This session explores the physical demands of Highland dancing through the lens of dance physiology. Learn how alignment, muscle engagement, flexibility, and endurance all contribute to performance quality and injury prevention. We'll break down how the body functions during key Highland movements and discuss strategies for developing strength, mobility, and recovery practices tailored to the needs of competitive and recreational dancers alike. Ideal for dancers, teachers, and parents looking to build a foundation of healthy, informed training.



4:00 - 4:50 PM



Hebridean Weaving Lilt

Lecturer(s): Shendl Russell BEM



This lively session explores the *Hebridean Weaving Lilt*, a national dance full of rhythm, swing, and island flair. Dancers will learn the unique steps that mimic the weaving motion of the looms, building both musicality and lightness of movement. With its lilting melodies and flowing choreography, this dance brings the spirit of the Hebrides to life. Participants will enjoy practicing technique while also embracing the fun, social character that makes the *Weaving Lilt* such a favourite to perform and watch.



Basic Movements Technique Lab - Seann Triubhas

Lecturer(s): Joy Tolev & Diane MacPhee Krugh



These series of interactive labs take a deep dive into essential Highland basic movements through small group breakout groups of professionals. Each group take one or two basic movements and will share their technical approach, key corrections, and effective drills for refining execution. Designed to encourage dialogue and detailed feedback, this session gives teachers the chance to explore multiple perspectives on how to teach and perform these foundational movements with strength, clarity, and precision. A must-attend for anyone looking to sharpen the building blocks of Highland technique.



Pilates for Highland Dancers

Lecturer(s): Deborah Ward



Designed specifically for Highland dancers, this Pilates based session focuses on movement efficiency and muscle balance thus enhancing control and stability. Through targeted exercises and mindful movement, participants will develop strength and alignment that translate directly to better technique, reduced fatigue, and injury prevention. Whether you're new to Pilates or looking to deepen your cross-training routine, this session offers practical tools to support long-term success in the studio and on the stage. While it complements the "Highland Dance & the Body" session, it can also be taken separately. *Participants for this session are encouraged to bring a 6' flex/thero band and hand towel.*



5:00 - 5:45 PM



Reimagining Tradition: RSOBHD Updates and Future Directions

Lecturer(s): Christine Lacey MBE & Deryck Mitchelson

This professionals-only open forum will provide an overview of the most recent developments within the RSOBHD, highlighting current initiatives, key decisions, and areas of focus. Looking ahead, the session will explore upcoming plans and priorities that aim to strengthen the future of Highland dancing while reimagining tradition for a modern and evolving community. Professionals are encouraged to ask questions, share perspectives, and engage in open discussion, fostering constructive dialogue and collective insight into the path forward.

Sunday, October 12th

8:00 - 8:50 AM

RSOBHD Judges Meeting (RSOBHD Adjudicators Only)

Co-Chairs: Christine Lacey MBE & Deryck Mitchelson



The RSOBHD Judges Meeting is a vital session designed to ensure consistency, accuracy, and fairness in Highland dancing adjudication. This meeting provides judges with important updates on technique, performance standards, and rule clarifications, as well as discussions on adjudication best practices. Led by RSOBHD officials, the session encourages collaboration and professional development, equipping judges with the knowledge and guidance necessary to uphold the highest standards in competitions worldwide.



Stretch & Warm-Up: Preparing the Highland Dancer's Body

Lecturer(s): Sandy Gribbin



This session focuses on safe and effective techniques to prepare the body for the physical demands of Highland dance. Participants will be guided through a progressive warm-up designed to increase circulation, activate key muscle groups, and enhance mobility. We will also explore targeted stretches that promote flexibility, alignment, and injury prevention, with attention to the specific needs of Highland dancers. Whether used in class, rehearsal, or competition, these tools will help dancers perform with greater strength, control, and confidence.

9:00 - 10:10 AM

The Role of Amateur Exams in a Highland Dancer's Journey

Presented by the BATD, SDTA & UKADance



Amateur examinations are more than a measure of ability—they are a valuable tool in guiding the growth, discipline, and confidence of Highland dancers at every stage. This session will explore how structured assessments support technical progression, goal setting, and personal achievement. Learn how exams foster a deeper understanding of dance theory, encourage consistent training, and provide meaningful milestones that motivate dancers to strive for excellence. Whether you're a teacher, dancer or parent, this session will highlight the long-term benefits of incorporating exams into a dancer's development path.

This session will be co-presented by representatives from the **BATD**, **SDTA**, and **UKADance**, offering a well-rounded perspective from all three Examining Bodies.

RSOBHD 2026 Set Step Lecture (with Technical Committee video)

Lecturer(s): Deryck Mitchelson



Team teaching combines the strengths and expertise of multiple instructors to create a richer learning experience for dancers. This session explores how collaborative instruction can boost engagement, improve class dynamics, and provide more personalized feedback—all while working within RSOBHD rules and guidelines. Learn practical strategies for planning lessons as a team, managing different teaching styles, and ensuring a unified approach that benefits every student. Whether you already share instruction or are considering it, this session offers tools to make team teaching effective.



2026 Premiership Set Steps: Scottish Lilt, Blue Bonnets & Earl of Errol

Lecturer(s): Christine Lacey MBE & Shendl Russell BEM



This session will cover the 2026 Premiership Set Steps for the Scottish Lilt, Blue Bonnets, and Earl of Errol, along with the technical observations as set down by the Technical Committee of the RSOBHD. Dancers will work on key footwork, timing, and style, receiving practical guidance to refine their technique and build confidence for Premiership-level performance.



Mastering the Basics: Building Strong Highland Technique for Pre-Premier Dancers (Lilt/Flora)

Lecturer(s): Fiona Lee



Strong fundamentals are the foundation of every great Highland dancer, and this practical, technique-focused session is designed specifically for Pre-Premier dancers and those who teach or support them. We'll take a deep dive into Scottish National technique—breaking it down for better understanding, cleaner execution, and long-term improvement. Through targeted drills, corrections, and helpful coaching tips, dancers and teachers will leave with tools to build consistency, strength, and precision, ensuring that whether you're just starting out or refining your approach, you can take those all-important basics to the next level.

10:20 - 11:10 AM



2026 Premiership Set Steps: Sailors' Hornpipe

Lecturer(s): Gregor Bowman & Kate DeGood



This session will cover the 2026 Premiership Set Steps for the Sailors' Hornpipe, along with the technical observations as set down by the Technical Committee of the RSOBHD. Dancers will work on key footwork, timing, and style, receiving practical guidance to refine their technique and build confidence for Premiership-level performance.



Introduction to the Broadsword for Pre-Premier

Lecturer(s): Jennifer Miller



This engaging session introduces Pre-Premier dancers to the Broadsword, focusing on building familiarity with the dance and its traditions. Dancers will learn a simple, age-appropriate choreographed Broadsword that emphasizes timing, spacing, and teamwork. With clear instruction and guided practice, participants will gain confidence in both the technical steps and the performance aspects of the dance, making it an enjoyable first experience with this exciting Highland tradition.

11:20 - 12:30 PM



Fuel for Success: Understanding Nutrition for Dancers and Beyond

Lecturer(s): Alison Fettig via Video Conferencing



This session is open to everyone, whether you're supporting a dancer or simply seeking to learn more about nutrition for yourself. Discover the essentials of good nutrition, including how to fuel the body for optimal performance, energy, and recovery. We'll explore balanced meal planning, hydration, and the importance of vitamins and minerals, providing practical tips that can be applied to any lifestyle. Whether you're guiding a dancer or looking to enhance your own health, this class will help you gain a deeper understanding of how proper nutrition supports overall well-being and success.



Open Scottish National Technique Masterclass

Lecturer(s): Jacqueline Smith



This masterclass will focus on Highland technique for the 2026 Premiership Set Steps, offering professionals and dancers comprehensive guidance on footwork, timing, and stylistic interpretation. Participants will examine key technical observations outlined by the RSOBHD Technical Committee and benefit from practical exercises, targeted corrections, and performance strategies. The session is designed to refine technique, strengthen control and precision, and prepare dancers to perform the 2026 Premiership Set Steps with confidence, artistry, and mastery.



Open Irish Jig Technique Masterclass - Premier

Lecturer(s): Steven MacRae



Step into the lively world of the Irish Jig in this dynamic class, focused on the core techniques that make this traditional character dance so exciting. We'll break down shuffle rhythms, refine timing in key Breaks, and highlight the distinctive style and personality that bring the Jig to life. Whether you're sharpening your footwork or learning to embody the energy and spirit of the dance, this session will provide essential tips to elevate your performance. Perfect for dancers eager to master this high-energy favorite!

Basic Movements Technique Lab - Sword/Reel **Lecturer(s): Rhona Lawrence**



These series of interactive labs take a deep dive into essential Highland basic movements through small group breakout groups of professionals. Each group take one or two basic movements and will share their technical approach, key corrections, and effective drills for refining execution. Designed to encourage dialogue and detailed feedback, this session gives teachers the chance to explore multiple perspectives on how to teach and perform these foundational movements with strength, clarity, and precision. A must-attend for anyone looking to sharpen the building blocks of Highland technique.

1:00 - 1:50 PM

Highland Musicality: Mastering Rhythms and Phrasing **Lecturer(s): Donald MacPhee & Deryck Mitchelson**



Unlock the secrets of Highland musicality in this insightful session, where we'll dive into the rhythms and phrasing that drive Highland dance. Understanding how the music influences movement is essential for precision and performance, and this class will guide you through the key patterns and structures in traditional Highland tunes. Whether you're a dancer or teacher, you'll gain a deeper appreciation for how musicality enhances your technique, helping you move in perfect harmony with the music. Learn to listen, feel the rhythm, and bring the music to life in your dance!

Repeated on Friday at 3:00PM

Open Scottish National Technique (Excluding Premiership Dances) **Lecturer(s): Sherril Medd**



This session will focus on the technical execution of Open Scottish National dances, providing dancers with detailed guidance on footwork, timing, and stylistic expression. Excluding the Premiership Set Steps, the session will cover a broad range of Scottish National dances, highlighting key technical observations set down by the RSOBHD Technical Committee. Professionals and dancers will receive practical tips and insights to refine their technique, improve performance quality, and develop confidence in executing these traditional dances with precision and flair.

Wired to Cope: Practical Tools for Managing Stress, Burnout, and Wellbeing **Lecturer(s): Alison MacGregor**



In a world where demands on dancers, teachers, and parents can feel relentless, wellness is not a luxury but a necessity. This practical session explores the concept of self-regulation—how we respond to stress, plan effectively, and cope with both everyday pressures and high-stakes moments. Participants will gain insight into how stress manifests in the body and brain, and learn strategies to build emotional resilience, manage anxiety, and prevent burnout. With real, actionable tools to help regulate and reset, this session offers valuable support for anyone looking to strengthen their well-being and thrive in all aspects of life.

Repeated on Saturday at 9:00AM

Mastering the Basics: Building Strong Highland Technique for Pre-Premier Dancers (Barracks/Laddie) **Lecturer(s): Carmen Munawych**



Strong fundamentals are the foundation of every great Highland dancer, and this practical, technique-focused session is designed specifically for Pre-Premier dancers and those who teach or support them. We'll take a deep dive into Scottish National technique—breaking it down for better understanding, cleaner execution, and long-term improvement. Through targeted drills, corrections, and helpful coaching tips, dancers and teachers will leave with tools to build consistency, strength, and precision, ensuring that whether you're just starting out or refining your approach, you can take those all-important basics to the next level.

Irish Jig Technique for Males: Mastering the Shillelagh and More **Presented by the David Wilton Dance Clinic (Guest Lecturer Bill Troock)**



In this high-energy session, we'll dive into the unique Irish Jig technique for male dancers, focusing on everything from twirling your shillelagh to perfecting the sharp, rhythmic footwork that defines the dance. Whether you're a dancer looking to refine your technique or a teacher guiding young male dancers, this class will offer valuable insights into the specific style and strength required for Irish Jig. Learn how to emphasize power, precision, and style, while maintaining the distinctive flair that makes male Irish Jig performances so captivating. This session is packed with tips and drills to help both dancers and instructors excel in this exciting and dynamic dance form.



History Lesson: An Introduction to the History of Highland Dancing

Lecturer(s): Jennifer Stephenson



This fun and engaging session introduces participants to the rich history and traditions behind Highland dancing. From its origins in Scottish culture to the stories behind iconic dances, you'll discover how Highland dancing has evolved and why it remains such an important and celebrated art form today. Perfect for anyone curious about the heritage of Highland dancing and eager to connect with the spirit of this tradition beyond the steps.



Injury Prevention & Recovery: The Role of Physiotherapy in a Dancer's Journey

Lecturer(s): Laura Donlan



Injury prevention is a vital part of every dancer's longevity and success—and when injuries do happen, physiotherapy plays a key role in the healing process. This informative and practical session will explore the most common injuries seen in Highland dancers, how to recognize early warning signs, and strategies to reduce risk through proper technique, conditioning, and rest. Learn how physiotherapy supports recovery through individualized treatment plans, hands-on care, and exercises that restore strength, mobility, and confidence. Whether you're aiming to stay injury-free or return to dancing stronger than before, this session offers essential knowledge for dancers, teachers, and parents alike.



Repeated on Friday at 1:00PM



Unlocking Your Core Potential

Lecturer(s): Sandy Gribbin



Core strength is essential for achieving elevation, turnout, posture, stability in leaps, and precision in High Cuts and other important basic movements. In this dynamic session, you'll learn how to properly activate and engage your deep core muscles to build a strong, supportive foundation for optimal performance. Say goodbye to outdated crunches—this class introduces innovative, dance-specific core training techniques that will enhance control, alignment, and power in every movement. Whether you're a dancer or teacher, this session will equip you with the tools to strengthen from the inside out and elevate your Highland technique to the next level.



Rediscovering the Old Steps: Tradition Preserved

Lecturer(s): Rhona Lawrence



In 2009, the Royal Scottish Official Board of Highland Dancing (RSOBHD) released a book of Old Steps, a publication that helped shine a light on a rich collection of traditional steps that reflect the depth and variety of Highland dancing. This session will explore the origins, evolution, and distinctive features of the Old Steps, offering insight into their historical context and continued relevance in today's dance world. Whether you're a dancer, teacher, or enthusiast, this session invites you to celebrate and deepen your understanding of these treasured dances within our living tradition.



Practice with Purpose: Building Strong Habits for Pre-Premier Dancers (and Their Parents!)

Lecturer(s): Sherril Medd



Good practice habits are key to a dancer's progress and confidence, and this session helps Pre-Premier dancers and their parents build a solid, stress-free routine at home. We'll explore how to structure effective practice sessions, set realistic goals, stay motivated, and develop self-discipline while avoiding burnout. Parents will also learn practical ways to support their dancer by fostering a positive environment, encouraging accountability, and knowing when to step in or step back. This session provides valuable tools to make practice time productive, enjoyable, and rewarding for the whole family.



Highland Technique with David & Delma

Presented by the *David Wilton Dance Clinic*



Join this highly entertaining and informative session with David & Delma, a world-acclaimed teacher and World Champion dancer, as they delve into the intricacies of Highland technique. With their unique relationship as teacher and student, David & Delma will offer an exclusive glimpse into their dynamic approach to technique, emphasizing precision, strength, and artistry. This session promises to reveal the deep connection that drives their success, providing attendees with insights that go beyond standard technique—expect an experience that could rival any entertainment on the Vegas Strip. Whether you're a dancer or an instructor, this class is an unmissable opportunity to learn from two of the best in the w



Unconscious Bias in Judging: Awareness, Impact, and Strategies for Fairness (RSOBHD Adjudicators Only)
Lecturer(s): Alison MacGregor



This thought-provoking session invites RSOBHD adjudicators to explore the role of unconscious bias in judging and how it can subtly influence decision-making on the platform. Through guided discussion and real-world scenarios, we'll examine common forms of bias—such as appearance, region, reputation, or familiarity—and how they may affect evaluations, often without awareness. Participants will learn strategies to recognize and reduce these biases, with the goal of enhancing objectivity, fairness, and consistency in competition outcomes. This session is designed to foster reflection, accountability, and continued professional growth within the adjudication community.

Reel Elevation Through Strength & Power Training
Lecturer(s): Sandy Gribbin



Stand out on stage with explosive elevation that commands attention. This high-energy session is designed to help Highland dancers unlock their full elevation potential through targeted strength and power training tailored specifically to the demands of the dance. You'll learn how proper body alignment, muscle engagement, and dynamic conditioning work together to create higher, more controlled jumps—safely and effectively. Walk away with practical drills, a deeper understanding of jump mechanics, and the tools to elevate your performance with confidence and precision.

Repeated on Friday at 1:00PM

Highland Choreography with a Twist
Lecturer(s): Eleanor Belton



Take your Highland dancing in a fresh direction! This energetic session mixes traditional Highland steps with a creative twist—adding playful patterns, surprising transitions, and even a touch of jazz-inspired movement. Dancers will leave with new ideas to liven up their choreography while still staying true to the spirit of Highland dance.