

From the Desk of the Director of Examinations~1.26.18

Dear Friends,

At the recent Annual Examiners' Retreat held every January in Connecticut, my fellow colleagues and I had our usual review of the past year of examining across the country and, as always, discussed how best we can serve our member teachers, as well as their students. This year, we were fortunate to include a full day of qualifying exams, where examiners had the opportunity to increase their knowledge and training at this level.

I am pleased to make the following announcements:

- **Judith Hawkesworth** has been upgraded to Third Tier Examiner. This qualifies Mrs. Hawkesworth to examine through Grade 9.

After the initial acceptance as a First Tier Examiner, each level beyond Grade 7 requires every examiner to do additional training, per level, in order to be considered for upgrading.

- **Exam Successes in 2017** for Final Diploma, Teaching Exams, and Grade 10 are:
 - **ENRICO CECCHETTI FINAL DIPLOMA**
Alison Miriam Philips Durham – Adult Dancer (B)
Ami Watters – Adult Dancer (B)
 - **LICENTIATE**
Nicole Siu Bennett
Anne-Marie Ludwig – Distinction
Ivana Matovia
 - **GRADE 10**
Calista Cartwright
Lorraine Chong (B)
Jennifer Forcucci-Marzluf (B)
Ellaura Harris (B)
Kayla Kressin
Amecie Lublin
Lydia Marzluf
Hannah Marie Thornhill
 - **TC 2**
Claire Fiorino
Rebekah Pritchard
Kalena Tano

- **TC 1**
 - Kara Felmlee - Distinction
 - Mariette Feltrin
 - Serena Feltrin – Distinction
 - Jenae Irwin
 - Sarah McDowell
 - Elizabeth Smyth

Congratulations to all the teachers who prepared these candidates for their exams!

Exam Fever struck early this year in January with exams in CT! As well, I am proud to announce that our newest CUSA certified member hosted her first exam session, in Wyoming, with **Louanne Davies!** Welcome, and thank you for putting Gillette on CUSA's map!

Leading our Spring Exam Session in March will be **Louanne Davies** going to Santa Barbara, CA. Yours truly, Director of Examinations **Betty Seibert**, will be going to Huntington Beach, CA. In April, **Sylvia Palmer** will head for Niagara Falls on the Canadian side, **Louanne Davies** will go to Cheshire, CT, and **Norine Brown** will finish the month by going to Plattsburgh, NY for her first time there.

In May, both **Beverley Feder** and **Denise Rinaldi** will travel to San Diego, CA; **Norine Brown** will enjoy travelling to Camden, SC, and being the first examiner to go to Simpsonville, SC, - another new pin! **Sylvia Palmer** will go to Denver, CO. **Norine Brown** and **Judith Hawkesworth** will travel to Lakeland, FL and Cheshire, CT, respectively, to round out the exam season at the end of July, prior to our summer course in Maryland.

If you do not see your neck of the woods listed above it is because there has not yet been confirmation, or you have not yet requested exams.

If you have not yet booked your exam session, please note that all of our examiners are willing to go out, but are not always available on the date(s) requested due to their own studio responsibilities. The more notice you give me, the better chance I have of fulfilling your request. Please use the **NEW 2018 Examination Spreadsheet** attached to this email to make your preliminary timetable, and send it back to me as soon as possible.

The Examining Board recommended a small increase to some of the Standard and Grade exams, which was accepted by the Board of Directors, and made effective immediately as of February 1, 2018. You will find the exam fees posted on the electronic Excel spreadsheet under the tab entitled "Summary of

Entries”. There you will see the charges for each exam level, with the new increases in **bold red**.

Attached to this email is the electronic copy of the **NEW 2018 Examinations Spreadsheet**, and the **2018 Examinations Procedures Handbook**, with all revisions or additions clearly marked in **bold red**. Previous directives that were in bold red will now be **unbolded red**, then changed to **bold black**, and finally unbolded black.

I have also included a generic letter for teachers to give to their students who need to produce further evidence of why they might need to miss school for an exam.

Please note that the **2018 Syllabi for Teaching Examinations**, is currently under review by the Examining Board and will be sent out as soon as possible.

As always, it is imperative that you throw out any previous hard copies, and/or delete any previous electronic copies, so that there is no chance of you not using the most current and up-to-date information!

Be sure to check that the syllabi material you are using is current as you prepare for your next exam sessions, especially involving Grades 6-10! These syllabi materials are available for purchase from the CUSA Bookstore – www.cecchettiusa.org

Please remember that your 2018 CUSA Membership Dues must be received by the Membership Chair, Ami Watters, in order to request exams. If you do not get them in on time, you may still be allowed to host exams, but the reports and certificates will be held back until notice has been received that you are current and up-to-date. This includes any late fees that may have been incurred! Contact Ami at cecchettimembership@gmail.com.

We encourage you to always include the Ballet Scholar Membership Form (available on our website under “Join CUSA”) when you deliver your reports and certificates to all of your successful candidates! Your invitation for your students to become Ballet Scholars will help the organization grow and, in turn, they will have more opportunities to be awarded summer course and regional scholarships!

This year, our Residential Summer Course will take place in a brand new venue for us – The University of Maryland! **Anyone wishing to take a summer exam should make their desire known as soon as possible. We honor Qualifying and Final Diploma requests first.**

Again, we remind everyone that the **“Essential Anatomy: A Multimedia Anatomy Course”** is the required anatomy component for anyone wishing to attain their Licentiate status. Please contact the Director of Examinations if you are interested in purchasing the CD of Deborah Vogel’s “Essential Anatomy” which, in fact, is the cost for the exam (whether or not you decide to take it)!

To inquire about hosting an exam session, or for any questions regarding the syllabi or exams, or that arise from reading the Handbooks, please contact me at exams@cecchettiusa.org, or call my cell phone 203.710.8372. My job is to help you get the most, and best, out of every exam experience!

You may also consider requesting student workshops, or private coaching, with members of our Examining Board.

Here’s to a Sparkling new year!
CHEERS!

Betty B. Seibert

Betty Seibert, Fellow CUSA & ISTD;
Director of Examinations, CUSA;
Co-Delegate and Treasurer, Cecchetti International - Classical Ballet;
Senior International Examiner; Final Diploma

Personal Note from the Director of Examinations:

I have become aware more and more as I travel to each of our members who host exams, that there is a difficulty with receiving notice of students who receive Standard Not Yet Achieved (SNYA) or Not Awarded (NA). I draw your attention to pages 25 & 26 in the Examinations Procedures Handbook – Mark Allocation for Dancers Exams and Teaching Exams. These two marks are actual options given our examiners to use when necessary. Please know that no examiner takes this option lightly, and all go through much soul-searching before applying it to a report. Some teachers fear retaliation from their clientele if a student does not pass their exam. And examiners are greatly cognizant of the fact that all students represent the bread-and-butter for every teacher.

I wonder if you, the member/host teacher, have properly prepared your students, as well as their parents, of all potential marks for their exams? Personally, I copy the mark allocation sheets and hand them to each participant. I think it very important for parents, especially, to know that “failure to achieve” is an option. I’ve heard before the comment “Well no one ever fails these exams, right?”, and I think how degrading it is to our organization to believe that the examination process is so simplified that everyone can pass any level!

It is important to know that even examiners have had students fail, and worse still, examiners have had to fail other examiners' students! In an organization as small as ours, and given how well we know each other, that's a very bitter pill to swallow. But every examiner agrees in a written statement to uphold the integrity of the work – and this integrity is based on an international set of standards! All of us wish to remain competitive with our colleagues world-wide, and since the inception of the Cecchetti International Classical Ballet Competitions, it is imperative that our advanced students achieve a high mark of excellence that would be recognized as comparable in Canada or Italy, as it is in Australia or South Africa!

Help your clientele understand that the Cecchetti exams are very similar to the Olympics! Their children are being assessed, examined, on their performance before an impartial “judge.” It is what they present in the room on that day that they are being critiqued – not how well they did last week, nor what their potential is for next year. These 30 – 45 minutes, or more, in front of the examiner, without the teacher in the room, is what counts. Each examiner has a set of ideal standards upon which to assess all candidates. If a candidate does not live up to the minimum required, then a non-passing mark must be given. No one likes to hear this, and no teacher likes to have to tell their student and parents that the child did not pass. But if your dancers are prepared, and you use the remarks on the report itself to support the non-passing mark, they can know that this is another opportunity for them to grow. Students tend to want to take it again to prove, if only to themselves, that they can master the work and demonstrate it presentably. Some teachers may elect to forego a retake, and just move them up to the next level along with their peers. This is perfectly permissible up through Grade 8. The major exams (Grades 8 – 10) must all be taken sequentially.

Bottom line – if the teacher prepares the students and parents of all potential possibilities, and assures their dancers that the world will not end if they do not pass, that they can go on to become great dancers – or great anythings! – because the experience will have given them the opportunity to prove to themselves that they have survival skills. As someone very wise once said “It's all right to fall down eight times as long as you stand back up 9!”

The concept of “gambaru” is deeply rooted in the Japanese culture and approach to life. The literal meaning of gambaru expresses the idea of sticking with a task with tenacity until it is completed - of making a persistent effort until success is achieved. The imperative form, “gambette,” is used very often in daily language to encourage others to “do your best” in work, to “never give up!” during a sporting event or studying for an exam.

Let us teach our children to keep a positive attitude by saying, “You do not always have to win, but you must never give up!”

~BS