

## How do I find a pianist?

- Contact other teachers in your area to discuss the availability of pianists that they use.
- Set up a pianist-sharing scheme.
- Contact local piano teachers to see if they have any suitable music students (see below).
- Students at local universities, colleges and conservatoires may be interested in helping out.
- Churches can often be a source of working musicians including choirmasters and organists.
- Many amateur dramatics groups will have contact with rehearsal pianists and musical directors.

## What kind of pianist do I need for classes?

A good dance pianist will have:

- A technical level of at least ABRSM Grade 7–8 or equivalent
- Good practical musicianship skills, including basic improvisation, a feeling for accompanying and the ability to sight-read
- An interest in dance and music for the stage
- Good interpersonal skills and a friendly outgoing personality
- A willingness to learn on the job
- A dedication to your aims as a teacher and the students' aims as dancers.

## What kind of teacher does my pianist need?

The best dance pianists are taught and nurtured by good dance teachers. Many pianists do not attempt playing for dance because it is a closed, mysterious world. If you are willing to help them to learn alongside you, you will find it easier to recruit and keep new pianists.

## What kind of pianist do I need for examinations?

1. Ensure the pianist is familiar with all the music required. In particular, make sure that they know:
  - The music choices for each exercise (in the case of graded examinations)
  - whether any boys' exercises will be needed
  - which set exercises and dances are to be included in demonstration classes, class awards, solo performance awards and presentation classes.
2. Make sure that the students have had a chance to rehearse at least once with the pianist before the exam date.
3. If you are using a pianist for the first time; invite them to audition for one of your regular classes. This is a good opportunity to gauge their personality as well as to assess their musicianship.

4. Make sure that they have the correct music book, and will bring it, on the day of the exam. Check also that there are no missing or torn pages.

## How much should I pay?

With a class of ten students, a pianist will only add approximately £2 to the weekly fees, while increasing your marketing advantage over schools that only use recorded music. Alternatively, by teaching a mixture of classes with live and recorded music, you will be able to both give students the experience of live music and spread your pianist costs over all of your fees.

Fees are almost always negotiable, but the following examples show the wide range of rates currently in operation:

- The Incorporated Society of Musicians recommends an average figure of £25.00 per hour for accompaniment work.
- Freelance pianists engaged by the RAD are currently paid £22.00 per hour plus travel expenses, and other vocational schools in London pay similar rates.
- Some musicians on one-off engagements such as exams or performances may also expect travel expenses.
- Note that the Musician's Union (UK) rate for dance accompanists in ballet schools is considerably higher than all of these – £35.63 per hour, with a 1½ hours minimum call (£53.50). In non-school engagements such as dance companies, the minimum call is 2 hours.

## Can the RAD help me?

The RAD holds regional lists of pianists in the UK, which can be supplied to members on request. Note, however, that these lists are accompanied by the following rider:

*“The Royal Academy of Dance is not aware of any concerns that might prevent the individuals listed above from working with young children and vulnerable adults. It is the responsibility of the employer to request for Disclosure appropriate to the environment in which the individual is to be employed. The Academy is not the employer of the individuals listed above.*

*Although the feasibility of pianist certification and training is currently under review, and materials are in production which may help to improve the standard and reliability of dance accompanists generally, there is no substitute for local knowledge and experience when booking pianists.”*

## Do I need to apply for Enhanced Disclosure?

In the UK, if you teach under-18s, and are working for another organisation, or your classes are held in a

corporately-owned establishment such as a health-club, you may be asked to ensure that you and any other staff who come into contact with children have applied for an 'Enhanced Disclosure'. Insurance companies increasingly demand that owners of schools do this. Your credibility and trustworthiness with parents is increased if you can demonstrate that everyone in your school – including the pianist – has applied for Enhanced Disclosure.

At the very least, make sure that your pianist shares your understanding of the issues surrounding the Protection of Children Act 1999, and how this applies to people working with children in dance classes.

### Where else can I find information?

- **Department of Health NHS Executive:** *The Protection of Children Act 1999: A practical guide to the Act for all organisations working with children* – [www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/pdf/childprotect.pdf](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/pdf/childprotect.pdf)
- **Find a teacher at the Music Industry Association website:** an online database of music teachers in the UK – [www.mia.org.uk/to-find-a-music-teacher](http://www.mia.org.uk/to-find-a-music-teacher)
- **The Incorporated Society of Musicians (ISM):** the ISM website includes a register of composers, performers and musicians in education. Depending on the instrument and specialism, the database covers the UK and other countries internationally – [www.ism.org/registers.php](http://www.ism.org/registers.php)
- **Music at the RAD** – [www.rad.org.uk](http://www.rad.org.uk)

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