

COMPANY

INFORMATION

PACKET



2026-2027

WHO WE ARE

Rise Dance Collective is The Dance Spot's Multi-Genre Pre-Professional Dance Company, offering training and performance opportunities for dancers ages 6-18.

Our essential focus is to offer a path for dancers seeking a higher level of versatile dance training combined with artistic exploration and technical excellence. We equip hard-working and well-rounded dancers with all the tools that they need to continue their journey in the professional dance world, if they so wish to.

Dancers of each age group will be challenged appropriately to their age and level. We will work diligently to foster the love of dance, preserve a curious spirit, and practice self care techniques to stay grounded and balanced.

Company members are given support, instruction, and mentorship to enhance and personalize their craft, and work toward their goals through intense training, competitive avenues, and commercial and artistic exploration.

THE COLLECTIVE

We consider all dancers as a collaborative unit of Rise Dance Collective. Dancers are cast into competition pieces based on their audition results. Dances are based on age AND skill level, to achieve maximum benefits, socially and technically. Dancers will fall into age divisions at conventions, however, and there are no exceptions to convention rules. These are often referred to as "minis", "juniors", "teens", and "seniors". Rise is designed to help all team members by surrounding them with like-minded dancers to help advance their growth appropriately. Having ONE family limits "competition" with one another and encourages growth, both personally and as a team.

We value balance in our training and believe that, to be your best, you need to be committed fully to your growth as a human and dancer, in AND out of the studio.

OUR PHILOSOPHY



We believe that the work that our dancers are doing is extremely hard and important but should be taken with a fun and light-hearted approach.

We laugh, have silly moments, AND get it all done - after all,

we dance because we LOVE it.

We aim to create a collaborative experience where the dancers feel like they have a stake and say in what we are doing. We do frequent check-ins to make sure that we are all on the same page, to set and reassess goals, and to see how we can offer support to each other.

We hope to empower each of our dancers to find and use their voice, while also learning and upholding time-tested dance traditions that teach respect, time management, and many more skills needed for their whole lives.

Dancers will develop leadership skills, strategies for stress and time management, focus, injury prevention, accountability, resilience, holistic health and mindfulness practices—building a personal toolbox that helps them perform at their best both in and outside the studio. These tools foster growth not only as artists, but also in school and everyday life.

We strive to lead with care for each dancer's heart and come to the table of every struggle with honesty and an open mind. We ask that every parent supporting their dancer as part of this very special dance company trust and partner with us, in facilitating the growth of their dancer.

Dancers on this company set the example and the tone of the entire studio. Our goal is building leaders, creative thinkers, and **people who truly CARE.**

We use dance as the vehicle to not learn not only about our own body, mind and spirit, but how to use it for the better and to help others.

YOUR DIRECTORS

Avery Hampton & Melissa Best

Avery, originally from Savannah, GA, started her dance journey at the age of three. She explored a diverse range of movement styles, including tap, jazz, acrobatics, ballet, modern, and contemporary, through her training with the Gretchen Greene Dance Company. In 2021, she earned her degrees in neuroscience and dance movement studies from Emory University, where she had the privilege of training under esteemed mentors such as Kristin O'Neal, George Staib, Greg Catellier, Nicole Johnson, and Alex Abarca. It was during this time that Avery developed a profound appreciation for dance as a bridge between the mind and body.

After graduation, Avery discovered her passion for dance pedagogy and found joy in helping young dancers express their own creative voices. Her teaching approach is significantly shaped by rhythm, breath, and anatomical awareness.

This is Avery's fifth year with the Rise family, including three years as Assistant Director, and she is now entering her second year as Co-Director. She is eager to continue guiding dancers as they explore their unique movement identities. Avery looks forward to encouraging dancers to think creatively in all aspects of their lives and is excited to support Rise dancers in their technical, professional, and artistic growth.

Melissa has devoted over 25 years to sharing her passion for dance. She has trained in child development, yoga, and progressing ballet technique, and has honed unique skills under the guidance of contemporary and improvisational masters worldwide. Although her studies have taken her from Germany to New York, Melissa is a proud native of Austin, Texas, where she has rooted herself in the local dance community alongside her supportive family. From 2013 to 2020, she co-owned Evolution Dance Center, where she fostered a nurturing environment for aspiring professional dancers through the award-winning EVOLVE Dance Company. In 2020, she assumed the role of director at Rise Dance Collective.

Melissa is deeply committed to cultivating a safe and exploratory atmosphere for all dancers, encouraging them to set goals, embrace challenges, and emerge as creative leaders. Under her guidance, her dancers have received national awards, scholarships, and numerous accolades. She is passionate about empowering them with the confidence to pursue their dreams, with her students now thriving across the globe, from San Francisco to New York City, and even in Europe and Canada. As a military wife and mother of four, Melissa is well-prepared to tackle any challenges life may present.

She is dedicated to nurturing a future generation of confident, powerful, fearless, and creative leaders. Her objective is to foster a familial dynamic within Rise, instilling values of support, love, encouragement, and determination. Committed to providing a personalized dance experience tailored to each dancer's unique needs and goals, Melissa works tirelessly to create a safe space for personal growth, offering one-on-one mentorship as dancers discover their voices and prepare to become confident and compassionate leaders and humans.



MENTORS & INDUSTRY PROS



Rise has the unique advantage of having close relationships with many influential and important teachers, directors, and choreographers in the professional dance world. These mentors are passionate about the growth of Rise and their success in the professional world after graduating from Rise. They are working as mentors behind the scenes with your directors as well as coming in throughout the season to continue to work with Rise and help cultivate their potential and growth.

Some of our mentors include Ali Pflieger, Holly Ryder, Brie Underwood, Mary Grace McNally, Aaron Medina, Katie Hazard, Kelsey Oliver, Jak Michael Ryan, Amara Barner, Kennedy Phelps, Melinda Hazboun Shukha, and George Bohn. We are also proud to have a strong and growing network of alumni who return to share the knowledge and experience they've gained since graduating from Rise. Our alumni have gone on to pursue professional dance careers and advanced training at esteemed colleges and programs such as SUNY Purchase, Marymount Manhattan College, Montclair State University, the University of Arizona, Nuova Officina della Danza, and NUOVA X, in addition to Convention Assistant programs and a variety of professional performance opportunities. Their continued success reflects the depth of mentorship, training, and community that defines Rise Dance Collective.



MORE THAN DANCE



Being a part of Rise is more than dance. We prioritize incorporating the **WHOLE** person in our training, not just the dancer.

We believe that, in being well-rounded in all facets of your life, dancers will develop skills that will last a lifetime such as:

INCLUSIVITY
EMPATHY AND TEAMWORK
TIME MANAGEMENT
INJURY PREVENTION
STRESS MANAGEMENT
YOGA/MEDITATION
CREATIVITY
SELF EXPLORATION
CONFIDENCE
ACCEPTANCE TO FEEDBACK
DESIRE FOR PERSONAL
GROWTH
STEPPING OUTSIDE
COMFORT ZONES
SELF RELIANCE
INTERVIEW/AUDITION
SKILLS
PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY
COMMUNICATION SKILLS
RESILIENCE



COMPANY PERKS

Training from Local, National, and International Choreographers

Unique Mentorship

Multi-Disciplined Education, Resulting in Versatile Dancers

Competitive Growth Opportunities

Exclusive Training with High Caliber Instructors

Student Choreography Creative Process and Showcase

Professional Photoshoots

Conceptual Video Shoots and Videography Projects

Creative Exploration and Guidance

Curated Master Class Series

Preparation for Professional Auditions and Industry Opportunities

Team Bonding Experiences

Networking within the Dance Industry

Customized Training and Choreography

Discounted Studio Rentals

Multi-TDS Company Discount

& More!

RISE UP

EXPLORE YOUR POTENTIAL



PARENT TESTIMONIALS

“ What is it like to have a dancer on RISE? For the last 10 years, my dancer has belonged and trained under Melissa. If you are looking for growth, creativity, artistry, opportunity, kindness, inclusiveness, fellowship, community, and family, then welcome home! These people are special humans and dancers, and to be part of this experience year after year is a blessing!

—Julie B.

“ We couldn't be more grateful for the transformative impact that Rise Dance Collective has had on our daughter's life. Beyond mastering dance techniques, our daughter has learned invaluable life skills through her involvement with Rise Dance Collective. She's discovered the importance of discipline, perseverance, and teamwork, traits that will undoubtedly serve her well in any endeavor she pursues. What sets Rise Dance Collective apart is not just the exceptional quality of instruction, but also the nurturing environment they provide for their students. The instructors genuinely care about each dancer's growth, both on and off the dance floor. Our daughter has found a second family in her fellow dancers, teachers, and directors, and the friendships she's formed here are ones that we know will last a lifetime.

—Michelle H.

“ We are incredibly thankful to be part of this dance team. From day one, the environment has been supportive, motivating, and welcoming. The directors truly see each dancer as an individual and consistently encourage growth, confidence, and a love for dance. The growth we have witnessed in our daughter has been remarkable—both technically and personally. She feels seen, valued, and motivated, which has made a lasting impact on her confidence and passion. Beyond dance, this team offers a strong sense of community and belonging. It is more than a dance program; it is a place where dancers are supported, inspired, and empowered to thrive.

—Jess D.

FLEXIBLE PATHWAYS

For the 2026-2027 season, we are excited to offer 3-day and 4-day training options.



The 3-Day Pathway gives dancers the opportunity to take an evening off for rest, school commitments, or simply to spend time with their families. If dancers choose this option, they will be cast only in larger groups.

Dancers opting for the 4-Day Pathway will have the chance to participate in small group dances and benefit from an extra day of classes and rehearsals. Dancers in this pathway will also have additional performance opportunities as well as student choreography experiences.



FALL & SPRING

WEEKLY TRAINING AND TUITION

JUNIORS ages 9-11

WEEKLY TRAINING

- Technique Classes: 2 Ballet, Technique
- Style Classes: Jazz, Contemporary, Tap, Hip Hop
- Weekly Monday & Occasional Saturday Rehearsals

9.25 hours

\$405

*both hours and tuition are approximate

TEENS ages 12-14

WEEKLY TRAINING

- Technique Classes: 2 Ballet/pointe, Technique
- Style Classes: Jazz, Contemporary, Ballroom, Hip Hop
- Weekly Monday & Occasional Saturday Rehearsals

10.5 hours

\$449

*both hours and tuition are approximate

SENIORS ages 15-18

WEEKLY TRAINING

- Technique Classes: 3 Ballet/Pointe
- Style Classes: Jazz, Contemporary, Ballroom, Hip Hop
- Weekly Monday & Occasional Saturday Rehearsals

12.5 hours

\$472

*both hours and tuition are approximate

JUNIOR SMALL GROUP ADD:

- Ballet
- Acro
- Ballroom
- Optional AYCB

12.75+ hours

\$479

*both hours and tuition are approximate

Private Lessons Required for Soloists
August - November 2x per month
December - May 1x per month
*may require more on a case by case basis

TEEN SMALL GROUP ADD:

- Tap
- Ballet
- Additional Thursday Rehearsal Block

14.75 hours

\$517

*both hours and tuition are approximate

Private Lessons Required For Soloists
August - November 2x per month
January - May 1x per month
*may require more on a case by case basis

SENIOR SMALL GROUP ADD:

- Tap
- Ballet
- Additional Thursday Rehearsal Block

16.25 hours

\$530

*both hours and tuition are approximate

Private Lessons Required For Soloists
August - November 2x per month
January - May 1x per month
*may require more on a case by case basis

REHEARSALS & CASTING

WEEKLY REHEARSALS

Rise will rehearse our LARGE GROUPS on Monday evenings, and SMALL GROUPS on Thursday evenings (optional day if not cast in Small Groups), We will rehearse all Saturdays in September-Early December preparing for our show and first competition mid-December. It is our goal to rehearse 1-2 Saturday a month after our first competition, leaving the remaining weekends free for family time/balance.

CASTING

Rise Dance Collective members are expected to uphold a pretty rigorous weekly dance schedule, however we understand this isn't possible for every dancer on Rise due to school, family, or work conflicts. All dancers are expected to train 3 days a week to participate in Large Groups (more than 9 dancers). To participate in our Small Groups (Less than 10 dancers), dancers must train a 4th day to sustain the higher expectations of Small Group dances. Solos and duets are cast by directors and are expected to uphold additional requirements. Some may need multiple private lessons a month, some may need an additional ballet class, and some may not need additional training. These are all at the decision of your Directors. Casting will be sent out via email on May 31st, by noon, at the latest.



Professional Show

CHOREOGRAPHED BY
ALI PFLEGER

Exciting News for This Season!

This year, Rise will present three full-length professional performances, expertly choreographed by the incredible Ali Pfleger!

The shows will take place in our blackbox theater, Luxora theater, and for those that opt in, a performance in New York City!

Excerpts from this show will be taken to competition throughout the season for selected dancers. These additional competition costs will be added after our first show in September. Dancers wanting a limited commitment can choose to only participate in this show and not compete or participate in conventions. Dancers who choose this path will follow our Large Group track to maintain weekly training with Rise.

Commitment to Professional Training

Our passion lies in providing our dancers with as many pre-professional experiences as possible preparing them for all facets of the professional world post graduation . This year's addition will better prepare them for the professional concert scene, alongside the versatile training and competitive opportunities that equip them for the commercial dance industry.

COMPETITIONS CONVENTIONS PERFORMANCES

As a company, we attend conventions and competitions throughout Texas. These are large events that happen throughout our season, typically Friday-Sunday, with occasional Thursday travel/competition. These push our dancers outside of their comfort zone, promotes accelerated growth, and allows for dancers to learn from and connect with industry professionals from around the nation.

Many conventions also have assistant programs that provide dancers with opportunities and connections with current industry professionals. Many of the conventions we go to also give out scholarships for continued training, and even college and agency acceptances.

We are adding more performances for Rise that are non-competitive this season as well to help balance the commercial and concert expectations in the professional dance world.

There are always extra opportunities for dancers wishing to push further than the base requirements. Dancers are allowed to attend events without an instructor under the Rise Dance Collective name, when approved by a director and not conflicting with Rise required events.

2026-2027 DATES

*** DATES TENTATIVE**

SEPTEMBER

-Ali Show @ Blackbox-
3 week process & performance

DECEMBER 11-13

-Dancemakers San Antonio-
convention and competition

JANUARY 22-24

-Revel San Marcos-
convention and competition

FEBRUARY

-Spurs Performance-
performance

MARCH (SPRING BREAK)

-Ali Show in NYC-
optional performance & training

APRIL 2-4

-Streetz San Marcos-
convention and competition

-Ali Show @ Luxora-
performance

MAY

-Rise Showcase @ Luxora-
performance

RISE MINIS

AGES 6 - 9

Our Rise minis program is designed for young dancers ready to take the stage in a supportive, growth-focused environment. This group will have modified training requirements to match their age and development, while still building strong technique, confidence, and performance skills. Minis will attend and compete at the three conventions/competitions listed on the previous page with the option to add local competitions, performing both a lyrical and jazz routine.

This group will not participate in the Ali Show, Spurs performance or NYC Spring Break Trip, allowing for a more balanced and age-appropriate schedule.

Dancers may choose to perform a solo if they are ready for the commitment. At least 2 private lessons a month with a director are required for soloists.

This team is perfect for dancers who are eager to grow, gain stage experience, and build a strong foundation—all while keeping the joy of dance at the center.



WEEKLY TRAINING

Technique: 3 ballet

Style: contemporary, jazz, tap

Optional: hip hop, technique, acro

Weekly Monday & Occasional Saturday Rehearsals

Some schedules may be altered to fit specific needs of dancers

8.5 hours | \$395

**both hours and tuition are approximate*



2026-27

AUDITIONS



WHAT TO EXPECT:

Dancers will begin with ballet, wearing any color leotard, pink tights and ballet shoes. Boys should wear any color ballet attire. After ballet portion, dancers will be able to quickly change into dance wear of their choice. Any color dance wear is acceptable as long as it is form fitting. Dancers should have ballet shoes, ballroom shoes (if trained in ballroom previously), tap shoes, tennis shoes and socks that they can dance in. Hair should be in a professional bun. No jewelry or accessories.

EVALUATION:

The Dance Spot faculty will evaluate dancers in Ballet, Tap, Hip Hop, Ballroom, Contemporary/Improv, Jazz/Technique and through an interview. Faculty will provide objective feedback to help determine class placement and competition choreography cast assignments. In addition, director input will be considered, along with past attendance, work ethic, attitude, and performance quality (for returning company members).

Judges and directors will share feedback after auditions and collaborate to determine the decision best suited to dancers' abilities, commitment level (time, attitude and financial), and dancers' expressed goals (per their application).

RESULTS:

Results will be posted on our website by **2pm, May 29th**. Dancers who make the company will receive an email with the contract, casting list, and details for the season to be signed digitally on **May 31**. We will have an open house to answer any questions regarding the contract on **May 31st** from 5-7.

If dancers do not make Rise, they are encouraged to audition for Envision on June 1st, 4-9pm, with no additional audition fee.

Dancers and one parent/guardian who have signed their contracts digitally will be required to attend a company welcome meeting on **Sunday, June 7th, from 5-7pm**.

Dancers will take headshots at this meeting and are required to wear **any color/style bottoms and a neutral brown/beige top with no logos, patterns, or words**, with hair down and natural makeup (if desired).

AUDITION DEADLINE IS 5/25

FEE IS \$50

AGES 6-9

MAY 26TH

4:30-6PM

*AGE AS OF 1/1/2027

AGES 10-13

MAY 27TH

5-9PM

*AGE AS OF 1/1/2027

AGES 14-18

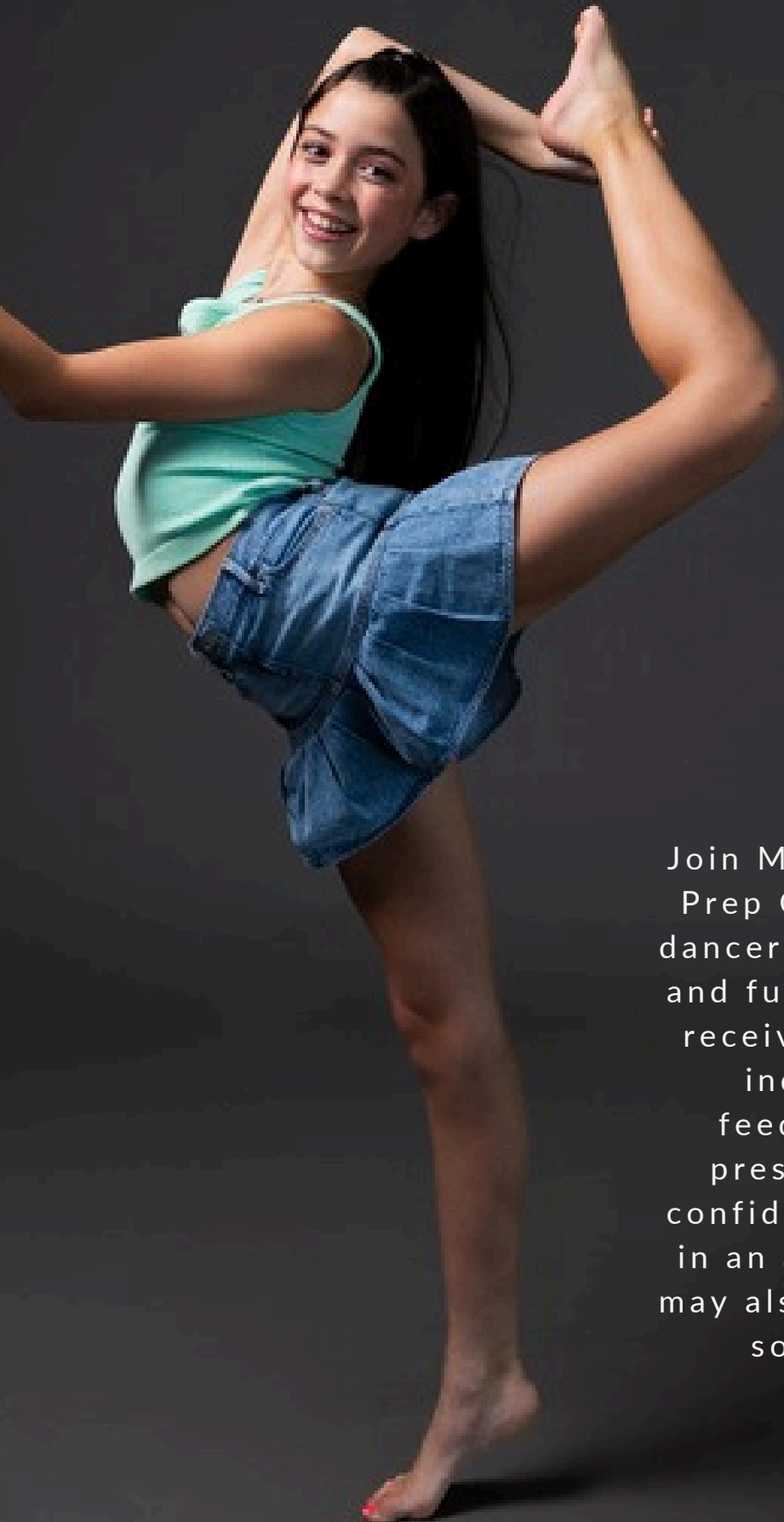
MAY 28TH

5:30-9:30PM

*AGE AS OF 1/1/2027

AUDITION APPLICATIONS OPEN APRIL 13TH
WWW.DANCESPOTX.COM/RISE-COMPANY-INFO

AUDITION PREP CLASSES



AGES 10-13

MAY 26TH

6:30-8PM

*AGE AS OF 1/1/2027



AGES 14-18

MAY 26TH

8-9:30PM

*AGE AS OF 1/1/2027

Join Mel & Ave for our Audition Prep Classes, designed to help dancers feel confident, polished, and fully prepared. Dancers will receive valuable audition tips, individualized technical feedback, and guidance on presenting themselves with confidence and professionalism, in an audition setting. Dancers may also receive a sneak peek of some audition content!

REGISTER AT
WWW.DANCESPOTX.COM/RISE-COMPANY-INFO



FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITIES

For dancers and families seeking financial assistance, we are happy to include fundraising opportunities through the following avenues:

- Bestow
- Snack Bar Shifts
- Amplify Austin
- Gala
- Silent Auction
- Dance-A-Thon
- Holiday Gift Wrapping
- & More!

**Fundraising Committee will be put together after auditions for parents interested.*

IMPORTANT DATES

5.8 & 5.9 | 2025-2026 Rise Showcase

5.26 | Audition Prep Classes

5.26 | Rise Mini Auditions (ages 6-9)

5.27 | Ages 10-13 Auditions

5.28 | Ages 14+ Auditions

5.31 | Casting Results and Contract Sent Out/Open House

6.7 | New Season Welcome Meeting (*One Parent and Dancer REQUIRED*) *Headshot taken

6.8 | Summer Classes Begin

6.9-6.12 | Rise Kick Off Bootcamp/Beginning of Choreo

6.16-6.19 | Ballet Intensive

7.27-8.7 | Choreo Camp (*specific dates released 2 weeks prior*)

7.31-8.2 | Discovery Intensive

8.8 | Retreat @ Dupuy Ranch

8.17 | Start of Fall Session

8.29-8.30 | Sarah Annie Photoshoot

9.5-9.26 | Show Choreo & Rehearsals with Ali

9.7 | Full Day Labor Day Rehearsal (*no evening classes*)

9.26 | Ali Show @ TDS Blackbox

9.6 | Start of Saturday Rehearsals Through DanceMakers

10.23 | Trunk or Treat

10.31 | Halloween (*no Saturday rehearsal*)

11.20-11.29 | Thanksgiving Break (*no dance*)

12.4-12.5 | Nutcracker Dress Rehearsal & Shows

12.6 | DanceMakers Dress Rehearsal

12.11-12.13 | DanceMakers San Antonio

January/February | Rise Saturday Rehearsals & Mini Local Drill Team Competition *Dates TBD

1.29-31 | Revel San Marcos

February | Student Choreo Begins/Spurs Performance *Dates TBD

3.15-3.21 | Spring Break (TDS Closed) *Optional NYC Trip & Performance!

4.2-4.4 | The Streetz San Marcos

4.9-4.11 | Rise Lock-In, Rehearsal weekend at TDS (*show prep*)

4.18 | Ali Show @ Luxora Theater

5.7-5.8 | Dress Rehearsal & Showcase @Luxora Theater *Dates TBD

5.16 | TDS Recital @Luxora Theater *Dates TBD



COME SEE WHAT WE'RE ABOUT

MONDAY, APRIL 13TH

7:30-8:30pm Rehearsal Observation

8:30-9pm Director Q&A

Interested in learning more about Rise and what we're all about?
Come see for yourself for an informal observation of our
rehearsal! **PARENTS & DANCERS ARE WELCOME!**

Come meet Melissa & Avery for a Q&A after if you have any
questions or want any facetime with the directors!

Still have questions and can't
make it to the Q&A?
Shoot us an email!



CONNECT WITH US!

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