

MAIRE CLERKIN

Irish Dance and Drama Workshops

MEET THE ARTIST:

Máire Clerkin is an Irish Dancer from London. She achieved teacher and adjudicator certifications from the Irish Dancing Commission in Dublin and graduated in Performing Arts at Middlesex University. Co-founding Irish Dance theatre companies, Clerkinworks, and The Hairy Marys, she toured extensively, bringing Irish dance to new audiences, demonstrating rhythmic virtuosity and developing innovative expression within a traditional art form. She performed in tandem with her Inner London Education Authority schools program. Máire has choreographed productions for The Royal Festival Hall, Place Theatre, BBC TV and the Royal Opera House with Arts Council funding.

After qualifying as a broadcast journalist and presenting for BBC radio, Máire moved to California and gained a professional designation in arts education. Her popular storytelling engagements (*Legs & Legends*) include the LA Irish Film Festival children's workshop. Máire's Irish Music & Dance ensemble *A Gaelic Gathering* conducts school assemblies and has twice performed at Walt Disney Concert Hall, World City series.

Máire has choreographed seven award-winning dance dramas for Irish Dance academies nationwide. She adjudicates and coaches dancers internationally. Máire has written and performed a one-woman show, *The Bad Arm – Confessions of a Dodgy Irish Dancer*, directed by Dan O'Connor. Following wide acclaim for the show in Chicago, New York, Dublin and L.A., she is currently developing a tour.

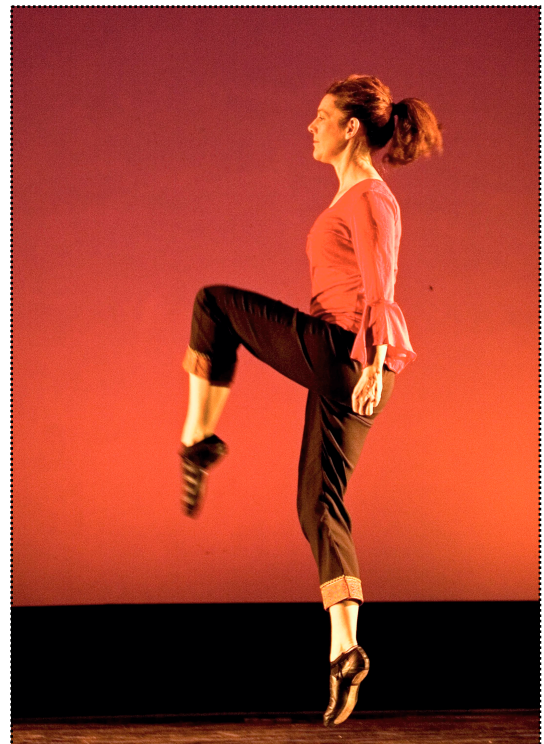
Máire Clerkin's choreography credits include prestigious institutions (University of Limerick, Loyola Marymount University, California Dance Educators Association, Santa Monica College), TV commercials (*Harp lager, Pergo floors*), and West End shows (*Dancing on Dangerous Ground*, Theatre Royal, Radio City Music Hall).



ABOUT THE WORKSHOPS:

Irish Dance Drama

Students discover how to create a theater performance from Celtic folk tales, involving movement skills, ensemble speech, improvisation, role-play, teamwork, imagination and Irish Dancing. Irish Dance Drama is typically a 10-session residency that enables students to experience the power of the written word, raise literacy, discover cultural traditions and build physical coordination and musical awareness. Students will gain a basic knowledge of Irish Dance, which they can apply to the dramatic reenactment of magical folk tales from Ireland. Ideally suited to support the curriculum in Language Arts, Irish Dance Drama focuses on interpreting text through participatory movement, rhythm games, partner work, character creation and traditional Irish Dance steps. Each class gets the opportunity to enact a scene from the story in a culminating performance. Adaptable to different grade levels.



BEFORE THE WORKSHOP:

- Please have the students wear nametags for the workshop. It saves time if they are made beforehand!
- Review the importance of listening and observing. Ask the students what it means to be a good listener. What does it mean to be a good observer? Why is it important in daily life? Why is it important when the artist is here?
- Please encourage the students to dress appropriately -- in clothes that allow them to move comfortably.
- Have a VCR and monitor, as well as a chalkboard and chalk or a paper pad and marker ready for her workshops.
- Review students' ideas about dance, underscoring the idea that it is both personal and universal, and that everyone's ideas will be both different and related. Discuss the importance of being able to express oneself through movement and dance. Where can they use this skill in their lives?
- Discuss the professions that utilize the skills learned in a dance class (e.g., focus, discipline, creative problem-solving, controlling the body and challenging energy into expressive communication, etc.).

AFTER THE WORKSHOP:

- Review the major points presented in the workshops. What were the most important ideas? What parts of the workshop did the students like best? What did they learn about dance? What did they learn about themselves?
- Practice the warm-ups, skills and creative explorations done in class so students can attain more comfort, ability and involvement in movement and dance.
- Apply the techniques and strategies for making dances, presented by the artist, to other poems, books, music, painting and areas of the curriculum.