

MAIRE CLERKIN

Irish Dance Workshops

MEET THE ARTIST:

A certified teacher and adjudicator with the Irish Dancing Commission, Dublin, **Máire Clerkin** has taught at Limerick University, run courses in Scandinavia and led her own Clerkin School of Irish Dancing in London before moving to California. She has been guest a tutor at Scripps College, California Dance Educators Association, Long Beach Ballet, Peninsula Performing Arts, Stockton and Los Angeles Unified Schools Districts, and is an instructor in Irish Dance at UCLA's World Arts and Cultures program. She regularly judges competitions across the U.S. and in Ireland, and will adjudicate at the 2005 North American Championships in Tennessee.

With a background in drama and the performing arts, Maire Clerkin was recently appointed Director of Cadence Irish Dance Theater in Arizona. She performs with Fonn Irish Music Ensemble in Los Angeles. Choreographic credits include *Dancing on Dangerous Ground* in New York's Radio City Music Hall, and *A Celtic Christmas* by Tomaseen Foley, which toured the U.S. in 2003 and 2004. Her own company *Clerkinworks*, later KICK, appeared at the Royal Festival Hall, the Royal Opera House in England and on national tour, courtesy of the Arts Council of England.



ABOUT THE WORKSHOPS:

Students will find Irish Dance accessible, relevant and fun. Through participation and collaboration, they will discover a cultural tradition, as well as being challenged creatively. They will be able to demonstrate basic steps and a traditional 'Ceili' dance; create a Reel step with a partner; identify key technique points; work collaboratively; recognize Irish music and name featured instruments; cite health benefits of dancing; describe the context of Irish immigration to America; locate Ireland on a world map; identify uses of technology in dance, and critique Irish Dance performance using appropriate vocabulary. The program enables students to develop social skills through teamwork, raise rhythmic and musical awareness, gain insight into a

people that have had an historic impact on American society and acquire skill in a unique footwork discipline. Students will learn of the Irish connection to American Tap and Appalachian Dance and will discuss of career opportunities for dancers and dance enthusiasts.

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.