

Lorraine Jones

Director of the Dance Course and Head of Dance

LISTD (MTH, TAP) AISTD (CB, NB)

Lorraine trained at Doreen Bird College where she gained her teaching qualifications and danced professionally for many years in the UK and abroad until joining Tring Park in 1990. In 2006 she was appointed Head of Modern Dance, then the Deputy Director of Dance in 2017. Lorraine is currently Director of the Dance Course and Head of Dance and is also part of the team of Senior Assessors in lesson observations.

As well-known choreographer and innovative teacher, Lorraine has worked alongside many other professional choreographers throughout her career and is in much demand by the industry; having worked on many productions including Moby Dick, Chicago, Half a Sixpence and Sweet Charity.

Antony Dowson

Artistic Director and Head of Graduate Programmes

ARAD PDTC Dip

Antony Dowson trained at The Royal Ballet School and graduated into The Royal Ballet Company. In 1984 he was promoted to Principal Dancer and danced most of the leading roles of the repertoire.

He graduated from the Royal Academy of Dance Professional Dancers Teaching Course with distinction. Antony has also taught at English National Ballet School and then became Ballet Master for the English National Ballet Company.

Antony works internationally as Guest Ballet Master where he reproduces the work of Sir Kenneth MacMillan, amongst others. He has choreographed The Royal Ballet and English National Ballet Company's end of year performances and several short ballets for schools.

Since 2012, Antony has been at Tring Park School for the Performing Arts; currently as the Artistic Director of Encore and Head of Graduate Programmes.

Sarah McIlroy

Head of Classical Ballet

ARAD PDTC Dip

Sarah trained at the Royal Ballet School and graduated into the English National Ballet in 1992. She worked her way through the ranks and was promoted to Principal

in 2002. Sarah has performed a variety of roles in the classical repertoire; from corps de ballet through to principal, and has created roles for Christopher Hampson, Cathy Marston and Mauro Bigonzetti.

After her 18-year career with English National Ballet, Sarah went on to study at the Royal Academy of Dance and gained the Professional Dancers Teaching Diploma before joining the teaching staff at English National Ballet School.

In 2017 she became a freelance teacher and has worked with Scottish Ballet and Ballet Black. In the September of 2017 Sarah joined Tring Park School for the Performing Arts as Encore Ballet Mistress and is now Head of Classical Ballet.

Eva Blanco

Jazz, Modern, Tap & GCSE Dance Teacher

LISTD

Eva is a graduate of The Arts Educational School and Licentiate member of the ISTD. She worked as a professional dancer upon graduating; specialising in musical theatre and commercial dance in the UK and Internationally.

Throughout her career Eva has performed in Tommy Steele's What a Show!, Gaudi das Musical, Boogie Nights, The Millennium Dome and the closing ceremony of London 2012 Olympics.

She joined Tring Park School for the Performing Arts in September 2013 as a modern, jazz and tap teacher, choreographer and mentor.

Morgan Cloud

Contemporary Teacher and Coordinator of Professional Studies

MA

Morgan holds a Master of Arts from London Contemporary Dance School and a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance Theatre from the University of Hawai'i at Manoa.

Throughout his career he has performed across the UK, USA, and Europe in contemporary and dance-theatre works by companies including Made by Katie Green, Troika Ranch, Nigel Charnock + Company, Smallpetitklein, and the Rosie Kay Dance Company.

He has been teaching at Tring Park School for the Performing Arts since 2014 and has also held teaching and lecturing posts at University Campus Suffolk, the Royal Academy of Dance, and Performers College.

Jeremy Kerridge

Classical Ballet Teacher

AISTD

Jeremy trained at White Lodge and The Royal Ballet Upper School for eight years.

In 1981 he joined Northern Ballet where he remained for his entire 23 year career. He danced many leading roles in the classical repertoire and had many roles created for him including Mercutio (Romeo and Juliet) Scrooge (Christmas Carol) and Renfield (Dracula).

After retiring, he taught at various schools and joined Tring Park School for the Performing Arts in 2005 as a full time teacher.

In 2014 Jeremy assisted Gillian Lynne while she was creating *Miracle in the Gorbals* for Birmingham Royal Ballet.

Desire Samaai

Classical Ballet Teacher

RAD PTDT (Dist)

Desire was a principal dancer with Cape Town City Ballet, London City Ballet and Northern Ballet Theatre.

She retired from the stage in 2007 and was appointed Ballet Mistress with Alberta Ballet Company in Canada and was a guest teacher at Alberta Ballet School.

On her return to the UK, Desire taught for Central School of Ballet's R.A.D Vocational Program and was a guest teacher at Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance.

In 2011 she joined Tring Park School for the Performing Arts as a full-time ballet teacher and was also Head of the Classical Ballet Academy from 2015–2021.

Melanie Booth

Jazz Modern and Tap Teacher

Melanie graduated from The Arts Educational School, Tring, and holds IDTA Fellowship, IDTA licentiate for Modern Jazz and an ISTD DDI for Tap.

She danced with English Bach Festival Trust in both Athens and Whitehall under the direction of Chris Tudor.

In September 2007, she joined Vienna Festival Ballet and performed soloist and principal roles touring the UK, Dubai and Kenya.

Melanie has danced principal roles with Kent Youth Dance Company since 2008 and currently dances with Let's All Dance in their Alice in Wonderland production and also all over the world in productions with Divine Company.

Melanie joined Tring Park School for the Performing Arts in 2018.

David Rhys

Classical Ballet Teacher and Fitness

RAD PDTD (Dist)

David trained at the Royal Ballet Upper School and danced with both The Royal Ballet and Birmingham Royal Ballet before joining Matthew Bourne's New Adventures performing in his acclaimed production of Swan Lake.

He has multiple West End musical credits, has danced with opera companies and worked on cabarets, TV and pantomimes. David has directed and choreographed many award winning musicals and is also a qualified RFU referee and Personal Trainer.

David retrained as a teacher with the RAD and gained a Distinction, and has since taught on many of their Teaching and Summer Courses.

David has been teaching at Tring Park School for the Performing Arts since 2008 and is also the Coordinator of KickStart.

Tim Blowfield

Curriculum Leader in Contemporary Dance and Head of A Level Dance

MA

Tim trained at Bird College and London Contemporary Dance School. He completed his MA at London Contemporary Dance School in 2016.

He has danced with National Dance Company Wales and has performed in Matthew Bourne's 'Swan Lake' and 'The Car-Man'.

Throughout his career, Tim has danced for choreographers including Ben Wright, Kerry Nicholls, Lisa Torun & Jia-Yu Chang. He choreographed 'Much Ado About

Nothing' for Bedouin Shakespeare Company, which was performed at The Globe Theatre in Rome and in London.

Tim presented his own choreography independently, including 'Left', 'Traces' and 'Unfolding Layers' on tour, which was supported by grants from Arts Council England.

He has taught as part of the faculty of GSA/University of Surrey and currently teaches a company class for Matthew Bourne's New Adventures; whilst also working as part of the Academic Studies department on the BA Degree programme at Performers College.

In 2004 he joined Tring Park School for the Performing Arts and is also an A Level Dance Examiner.

Adam Cooper

Classical Ballet Teacher

Adam Trained at the Arts Educational School and the Royal Ballet School. He has worked with the school since 2018.

He was a Principal Dancer with The Royal Ballet before becoming freelance and has won numerous awards as a performer; mainly for the role of The Swan/Stranger in Matthew Bourne's Swan Lake. He also appeared in the film Billy Elliot.

His recent choreography includes Drei Männer im Schnee (Munich), On the Town (Theater St Gallen and Munich), The Merry Widow (Munich), Sunny Afternoon the 5 time Olivier Award Winning Show including Best New Musical (Hampstead Theatre, West End and U.K Tour).

Recent performances include The Merry Widow, Singin' in the Rain and Soldiers Tale.

Jenny Hale

RAD Teacher

Jenny completed her vocational training at the College of the Royal Academy of Dance, London.

In 2006 she was appointed to the RAD Panel of Examiners and became a Solo Seal Examiner and Standardisation Examiner in 2016. In September 2017 she was appointed as Chief Examiner.

Jenny has worked as a ballet teacher for many schools in the greater London area and tutored for the RAD on various teacher training programmes and has worked with teachers internationally through her role as a CPD tutor.

She has been coaching the RAD vocational syllabus at Tring Park School for the Performing Arts since 2009.

Gillian Toogood

Cecchetti Ballet Teacher

FISTD

Gillian's professional career progressed from Malmö State Ballet to completing six years at the Royal Swedish Ballet. During this time she worked with, amongst others, Erik Bruhn and Sir Kenneth Macmillan.

Throughout her career she has toured extensively - having performed at the Bolshoi and danced in Ashton, Balanchine, Bournonville and Cranko ballets. After returning home she joined London City Ballet.

Since professional retirement, Gillian taught the Cecchetti Associates, choreographed and taught the Cecchetti Scholars and in 2010 became the chairperson of the Cecchetti Scholars Committee.

Gillian has choreographed for Chelmsford Ballet Company and spent 11 years as Artistic Director.

She is an ISTD Fellow and a Cecchetti Ballet Examiner. She joined Tring Park School for the Performing Arts in 2013.

Rachel Muldoon

Pilates Teacher

Rachel trained with the Royal Ballet School, Laine Theatre Arts and Body Control Pilates.

Her career spans over musical theatre, dance, TV and film; with credits including Wicked, Chicago, Grease, Cats, Notre Dame de Paris, Kylie, Robbie Williams, Little Mix, Principal Dancer with McOnie Company, X Factor, Strictly Come Dancing, Mamma Mia 2, Mary Poppins Returns, Ready Player One and 'Kiki Dee' in Rocketman.

Rachel joined Tring Park School for the Performing Arts in 2018 and has been teaching Pilates for six years. She believes that every dancer should practice this

technique for their own maintenance, rehabilitation and an understanding of the body to enjoy a long and successful career.

Kate Mackie

Jazz Modern and Tap Teacher

FISTD (MTH) AISTD (TAP CB NB) RAD Cert Ed

Kate trained at the Hammond School in Chester. Upon graduating she went on to run two branches of 'Escola de Bailado da Regua' schools in the north of Portugal.

She returned to the UK and worked as a freelance teacher for a number of years at schools including The Hammond School, Kate Simmons Dance, Elliott-Clarke Theatre Schools, North Liverpool Dance College and West Cheshire College. During this time her work included various choreographic work and community projects including Gallery 69 alongside Sharon Watson.

With a keen interest in teaching, Kate completed her Cert Ed with Manchester Metropolitan University. After relocating to London she continued to work freelance around London and at The Centre. Her desire to improve and develop her teaching inspired her to work towards her Fellowship Modern and it was during this time that she was invited by the ISTD to take the classes at the prestigious Janet Cram awards.

Kate began teaching at Tring Park School for the Performing Arts in 2013 and continues to thoroughly enjoy all the school has to offer.

Patricia Okenwa

Contemporary Teacher

Patricia is a German Nigerian choreographer and dance artist who trained at John Neumeier School of Hamburg Ballet and at Rambert School. She was a dancer for Rambert Dance Company for 12 years and was invited to choreograph for the company in 2016 where she choreographed 'Hydrargyrum' which toured the UK and had its London premiere at Sadler's Wells Theatre.

She was also part of the second cohort of Sadler's Wells Summer University 2015-18. During that time she developed 'Stabat Mater' for B-Motion Festival, Italy (2017) and TheaterFestival Boulevard, The Netherlands in 2018.

Her choreographic projects include 'Glitch' for Renaud Wisser Company (2018), 'Becoming' for Northern School of Contemporary Dance, 'Touch Each Feel Other' for Edge Dance Company (2017), 'Scenes from Daphnis and Chloe' for MusicArt

London (2017), and 'Ride' for BBC Young Dancer winner Connor Scott's grand final performance in 2015.

Patricia collaborated on VR experiences 'DUST' (2017) and 'Camouflage' (2018) and with digital artists Maria Júdová and Andrej Boleslavsky which explored the possibilities of performance and digital art.

As a movement director, Patricia worked on 'Marty and the Party' by Leo Skilbeck at Derby Theatre (2020), 'Torn' by Nathaniel Pierre-White at the Royal Court Theatre in 2016 and the EE BAFTAs (2021) world-first live Augmented Reality performance with The Round.

In 2021, Patricia directed and choreographed opera short film Ariadne by Elena Langer and Glyn Maxwell for English Touring Opera digital season 2021. She participated in the Doorway Project 2021 led by Kate Flatt and Elufowoju Jr. She is a founding member of New Movement Collective.

Patricia has been working with Tring Park School for the Performing Arts since 2021.

Olivia Pickford

AISTD RAD Dip

Olivia trained at Tring Park and then went onto work in Melbourne, Australia with the contemporary company Dikosmos and in Tokyo, Japan for Tetsuya Kumakawa at K Ballet. She was ballet mistress for former Principal of the Bolshoi Ballet and The Royal Ballet, Irek Mukhamedov MBE.

Olivia was choreographer for the Star Wars film 'Solo' and has worked with the directors from 22 Jump Street, Lego Movie and the Oscar winning director Ron Howard. She also choreographed for the film 47 Ronin which starred Keanu Reeves and worked with the producers from The Pirates of the Caribbean.

Olivia is Artistic Director of the professional classical ballet course Malvern Ballet Seminars and is fully a qualified teacher in RAD, Cecchetti, ISTD Modern and of the Release Technique.

She has been teaching for Tring Park School for the Performing Arts since 2020 and also worked at Elmhurst Ballet School, Bird College, The Royal Ballet Associates, and Birmingham Royal Ballet and has also been guest company teacher for Matthew Bourne Swan Lake Company.

Montana Darby

Commercial Teacher

Montana Darby is a professional commercial dancer, model, choreographer and teacher. Montana trained at Stella Mann College of Performing Arts where she graduated with a National Diploma in Musical Theatre and Dance.

Previous to her vocational training, Montana trained with Street and Hip-Hop crew Urban Strides where she gained lots of professional performance experience including three arena tours and live UK theatre performances.

Montana has been working successfully in the industry and has danced for various artists, featured on primetime television shows and worked on many commercials, events and campaigns. Credits include appearances on Channel 4's Alan Carr Chatty Man, The Last Leg and Party House as well as commercials for ITV's Britain's got Talent and various other shows.

She has also featured on photographic campaigns for surf and skate brands, O'Neill and Roxy, and has been featured in music promos for artists such as Alexandra Burke, Leona Lewis, Skepta and many more.

More recently, Montana has been given the opportunity to travel and work internationally in Dubai where she performed for the Prince of Dubai at the NAS Sports Awards Ceremony. She has also performed across Europe at various concerts and festivals, including the 3Valley Ski Festival – France, Creamfields – Malta and various other live performances and events across Europe.

Other credits include Betway Premier League Darts UK and European Tour, Ministry of Sound, Nick Helm Heavy Entertainment, Robin Schulz, Barclaycard, Hasselblad, Oliver Heldens, Ferrero Rocher, Young Voices Concert UK Arena Tour, Hilton Hotels, Kolsch and Breakin' Convention.

She has been working with Tring Park School for the Performing Arts since 2020.

Paul Farrell

Classical Ballet Teacher

DDTAL (Dist), RBS DDT, ARAD (Solo Seal), AISTD

Glasgow born Paul trained at The Dance School of Scotland and Doreen Bird College of Performing Arts, graduating with distinction and attaining the RAD Solo Seal.

He danced with Scottish Ballet from 1998 to 2003 performing many leading roles including Romeo in Romeo & Juliet, the title role in Aladdin and in works by Kenneth MacMillan, Frederick Ashton, Peter Darrell, Hans Van Manen and Robert North. During this time he was profiled as Dancer of the month in the Dancing Times.

Paul subsequently moved into West End and toured musicals including Cats, Mary Poppins, Top Hat, Love Never Dies and Oliver.

Paul gained the Level 6 Diploma in Dance Teaching and Learning from Trinity College London (DDTAL) with distinction and the Diploma of Dance Teaching (Vocational) from the Royal Ballet School. Previous teaching work has included the Royal Ballet School's White Lodge Summer Intensive, English National Ballet School, The Urdang Academy, & London Studio Centre.

Other notable engagements include RAD Scotland Awards Day, Scottish Ballet's Junior & Senior Associates, open classes at Pineapple Dance Studios, Central School of Ballet, and BalletBoyz. Paul has also been an adjudicator for the Janet Cram awards for the ISTD.

Paul has been working with the school since 2018 but joined full time in 2021. Paul also runs Classical Ballet Academy.

Caroline Winter BA (Hons)

Head of Dance Pianists

Caroline gained her degree in music at Canterbury Christ Church University studying with the late David Pickup (piano) and Jean Phillips (harpsichord), the latter of whom awarded Caroline a prize in recognition for her contributions to chamber music. She also had masterclasses with Ronald Smith and was awarded second place in the prestigious Kent Piano Festival for her composition "Margin". She played for several dance schools before joining Tring Park in September 2003.

Whilst at Tring Caroline has composed and performed music for various shows and awards. Caroline also worked with Robert Cohan in an intensive reconstruction of his classwork for film and archive.

Outside of Tring Caroline guests on keys in a punk rock covers band, gigging locally and at festivals.

Richard Norriss BMus (Hons)

Deputy Head of Dance Pianists

Richard trained at the Royal College of Music, studying with John Barstow. Before joining Tring Park in 2002 he worked in Cape Town, London Studio Centre, Bird

College, and at the R.A.D. headquarters, London. After spending two years in Japan where he was Director of Music at the A.I.S. Ballet School in Osaka, he returned to Tring Park in 2007 and has worked here since then.

At the RAD he played for several performance courses, made the official recording of the music for the Phyllis Bedells Bursary, and has played four times for the International Genee (now Fonteyn) competition; in 2010 (London), 2011 (Cape Town), 2014 (Antwerp) and 2017 (Lisbon).

While at Tring he has written and performed music for many events and shows, including original music for four of Eve Pettinger's Young Dancers' Show pieces, arrangements of Rachmaninov's Variations on a Theme of Paganini, J.S.Bach's Chorale Preludes for Richard Alston's "Beyond Measure", Samuel Barber's "Souvenirs", the 2nd movement from Tchaikovsky's 5th Symphony for "Per Astra Ad Aspera" (2016) and Dave Brubeck's "Pointes On Jazz". In addition, he has also written several Tring Park Dance Cup variations, port de bras and codas for the school.

Having sparked an interest in composition, these opportunities for writing music at Tring led to commissions with the London Children's Ballet. The first, "Snow White" (2009), choreographed by Olivia Pickford, was revived in 2016 with new choreography by Jenna Lee. The following year Richard collaborated with Lee for LCB's next production, "Little Lord Fauntleroy". Following that, Richard and Jenna continued their collaboration with "Puss In Boots" (2018) for Northern Ballet Theatre, which was televised on CBeebies.

Since 2014, Richard has played regularly for the Yorkshire Ballet Seminars, and since 2019 for the Malvern Ballet Seminars.

Maria Milanova M.A.

Associate and Holiday Course Pianist Coordinator

Maria first studied piano with Alexander Vassilenko and then completed an MA in Piano Performance at the National Academy of Music in Sofia, Bulgaria. She has won several prizes in national competitions and has performed solo and as an accompanist for chamber ensembles and choirs across Bulgaria and the UK. Maria has also performed in dance and theatre productions in London and the South East.

In 2010 Maria took the position of Dance Pianist at Tring Park and since then has collaborated with Yorkshire Ballet Seminars, LCB, ENB and Cecchetti among others and has accompanied masterclasses with Zenaida Yanowsky, Edward Watson, Anthony Dowell CBE and many others.

Sef Hill Dip.R.C.M

Sef studied at the Royal College of Music where he won the Kaye Wheeler prize for piano accompaniment and was awarded Dip.R.C.M in both performance and teaching. After leaving the RCM he spent a year with the Bush Davies School of Theatre Arts as a full time pianist. There he was introduced to West End musical director Anthony Bowles, and went on to play for musicals in the West End, Sheffield and Birmingham, and toured Germany as musical director for A Slice Of Saturday Night.

He eventually decided to return to dance accompaniment, spending six months as a company pianist for Birmingham Royal Ballet before returning to live and work in London. Sef has accompanied class for Ballet Rambert, Matthew Bourne's New Adventures, Michael Clark Company, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and Phoenix Dance Theatre as well as playing for classes at the Royal Opera House (with Romaine Grigorova), Central School of Ballet, Trinity Laban, Urdang Academy, Pineapple Dance Studios, London Studio Centre and many ballet schools in the London area. Having previously worked at Tring from 2019 – 2020, he now returns on a permanent basis from September 2023.

Chris Hotson MMus

Chris studied piano at The Royal Birmingham Conservatoire and The Crane School of Music (upstate NY, USA). During his time there, he won prizes for his solo and concerto performances and took part in masterclasses with Peter Donohoe and Martin Jones, among others. He also represented the Conservatoire at festivals for visiting composers Louis Andriessen and Frederic Rzewski.

Following his studies, Chris spent a year teaching music at a British international school in Penang, Malaysia and on his return to England, he taught piano in three London schools and had a busy life as a chamber musician. Highlights from this period include a Linbury Theatre concert at the Royal Opera House, a duo recital with an Oscar-nominated film composer, and even working with a puppeteer!

It was then that Chris realised an interest in dance accompaniment, and started playing mostly at the Royal Academy of Dance in London, but also at Rambert School, freelancing at Tring and Malvern Ballet Seminars. At the RAD he played for classes, courses, the degree programme, summer schools, and examinations. He joined Tring permanently in 2023.

Valerie Jonikic MMus

Valerie graduated from St Petersburg State Conservatory as a composer and pianist with a Masters in 2009, where she was awarded the Shostakovich Scholarship. She completed her studies in Sweden. Since 2008 she worked professionally as a choir accompanist, opera pianist and ensemble pianist. As a freelance composer she has written a large number of symphonic and chamber works.

She gained a full time dance pianist position at the northern department of The Swedish Ballet School, playing for ballet, contemporary and character dance. She joined Tring Park in September 2008, playing for the main school full time as well as for Tring Park Associates, Classical Ballet Academy and holiday courses. She also works at Central School of Ballet, and plays for several holiday courses including Royal Ballet School, Central School of Ballet, Malvern Ballet Seminars, Raw Talent Ballet Coaching, Rambert, Cecchetti Summer School and The BBOdance Scholar Scheme for Ballet.

Rob Thomas DipABRSM

Rob studied music at Kingston University and has since built up a varied career of accompanying dance schools, choirs and other musical groups. In 2014 he achieved a DipABRSM in Piano Performance.

He joined the team of pianists at Tring Park in 2016, initially playing for Classical Ballet Academy, Kickstart and Tring Park Associates; he now works two and a half days per week in the main school, accompanying ballet, contemporary and tap.

Rob also plays regularly for the Oxford School of Ballet. He previously worked with the Susan Handy School of Dance in Berkshire and has played for RAD exam sessions for many smaller local ballet schools.

He accompanies several choirs in Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire and has been the repetiteur for Oxfordshire Youth Musical Theatre for many of their recent productions including Godspell, Oklahoma! and 42nd Street.

Michelle Underwood BA(Hons)

Since graduating from Middlesex University, Michelle has been working as a freelance dance accompanist alongside teaching piano in schools. Michelle joined Tring Park in April 2009 and has since become an accomplished percussionist for contemporary dance. Michelle also plays for Tring Park Associates and holiday courses.