

MÁIRE CLERKIN

Write-Move Dance 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).

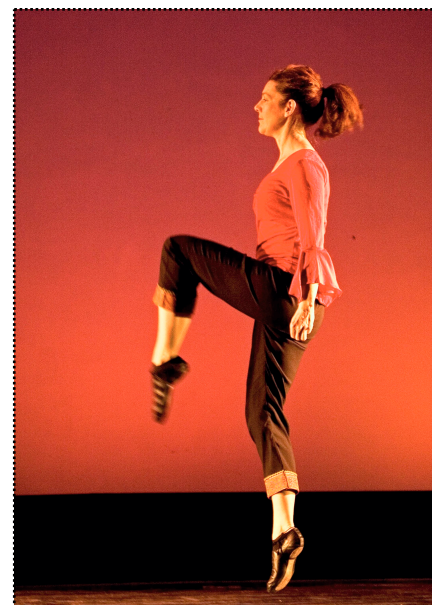


ABOUT THE WORKSHOPS:

In Máire Clerkin's *Write-Move* workshops, half an hour of dance is followed by half an hour of writing. Irish Dance is a dynamic, engaging art form made famous globally by shows such as *Riverdance*. The fast footwork, group social dances and upbeat music make it ideal for class work. It fosters a sense of community, as well as featuring physical exercise, rhythmic vitality, and teamwork.

Through observation, discussion and participation in Irish Dance, students acquire the ability to reflect their thoughts via the written word. Students learn new strategies in writing, as they write up their experience of Irish Dance. This helps improve literacy while engaging them in thoughtful self-expression. They also develop new skills in creative description, documentation, editing, structure, grammar, vocabulary, and storytelling.

This workshop also covers news reporting and the ability to distinguish fact from opinion. Students learn to craft an instructional document, which includes guidance in the proper use of paragraph structure, figurative language and fantastical styles, as well as editing and refining text. Adaptable to different grade levels.



BEFORE THE WORKSHOP:

- Please have the students wear nametags. It saves time if they are made beforehand.
- Review the importance of listening and observing. Review the importance of group discussion; contributing and allowing others to voice their opinion.
- Encourage the students to dress in clothes and shoes that allow them to move comfortably and safely.
- Have a VCR/DVD and monitor, chalkboard or whiteboard and markers.
- Ensure each student has own notebook specifically for Write-Move and a pen.
- Review students' ideas about dance, underscoring that it is both personal and universal, and that everyone's ideas will be both different and related. Raise health and fitness issues relating to dance. Discuss the importance of being able to express oneself through movement and dance and via the written and spoken word.
- 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).
- Discuss how the work of writers is present in our daily lives e.g. TV shows, movies, computer games, internet sites, books, newspapers, magazines, news reports, instruction manuals, comedy routines, songs.

AFTER THE WORKSHOP:

- Review the major points presented in the workshops. What were the most important ideas? What did the students like best? What did they learn about dance and about themselves?
- Practice the warm-ups and skills done in class so students are more adept and comfortable.
- Start to think about which kind of writing interests you e.g. sci-fi or supernatural stories, history books, blogs, sports articles, performance poetry?
- Read something different e.g. a particular newspaper, autobiography of a well-known person, recipes, weather reports. Find out who wrote the screenplay of your favorite movie.