



DANCE ACADEMY

Key Parameters

The Series

in total 65x26'

Feature Film

1x97' or 4x25'

Genre

Junior

SubGenre

Live Action

Target Group

10+ / Teens & Twens

Logline

Who are you without your dream?

Awards

Kidscreen Award
AWGIE Award
2x International Emmy Award Nominee
New York Festivals International TV & Film Award

USP's

Feel the rush and buzz of teens determined to dance!
Emotionally gripping series set in the best dance school
in the country.
Young, dynamic and ultra-stylish – a must-see!

PROGRAM INFO

If you thought a dance school was all about pink tutus and pretty pointe shoes you're dead wrong...!

Dance Academy is an exhilarating drama series for children and young adults and anyone, anywhere, who's ever had a dream. The Australian teen series is a global phenomenon, currently screening in over 160 countries. Now comes the feature film, Dance Academy – The Comeback, which follows on from the series. It's through Tara Webster's eyes that we enter the world of the National Academy of Dance, where the best in the country train to become dancers. Dance Academy is a program about a group of ordinary teenagers who are pushing themselves to the limit as they fight to achieve extraordinary things. These teens are sweaty athletes not fragile butterflies; modern kids who constantly bump heads with the rules of an old fashioned world. They want to dance but they're determined to have fun as well.

Over the years, Tara and her friends face the universal challenges of being a teenager and we watch them battle through the minefield of elite dance training. Relationships grow and change as they live side by side in the Boarding House. They each take a different path, but they start to find out who they are and they all dare to chase their dreams.

THE MOVIE

BIG CITY. BIGGER DREAMS.

DANCE ACADEMY THE COMEBACK

Format: 1 x 97' or 4 x 25'

Former ballet student, Tara Webster, was destined to become one of the top dancers of her generation before a devastating injury crippled her career. Over the last eighteen months she has tried to move on but cannot get over her dream of dancing professionally with the National Ballet Company. In her quest to defy the odds in a near impossible comeback, Tara leaves her life and love behind in Sydney and travels to New York, determined to prove she still has what it takes. But as the rejections pile up, and Tara tears herself apart trying to fit the unrelenting ballet mould, she must learn to find, and trust, her own voice before she loses everything that truly matters in the dogged pursuit of who she thought she was, rather than who she has become.



THE SERIES

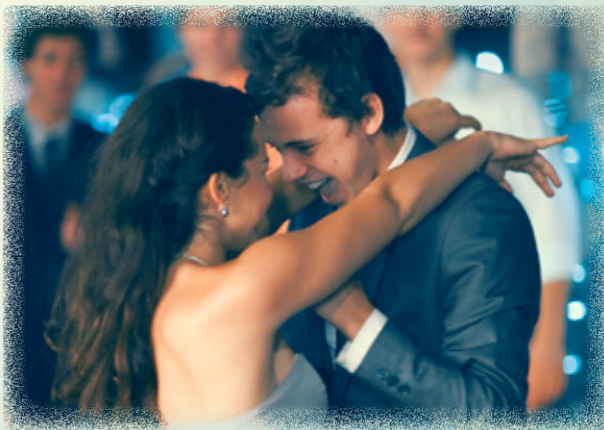


Fifteen-year-old Tara Webster has grown up on a farm in outback Australia and has dreamt of being a dancer ever since she was a little girl.

When she makes it into the National Academy of Dance – the best school in the country – she is sure her life is about to be spectacular. What Tara doesn't realize is how far behind she is in her training, and that there's a whole lot more to surviving the Academy than just dancing ...

Season ONE

Format: 26 x 26'



THE SERIES

Season TWO

Format: 26 x 26'



It's "second year" at the Dance Academy, and time to get serious. What happens over the next twelve months will determine whether Tara and her friends can become professional dancers or not.

Tara, who climbed to the top in her first year at the Academy – in dance, life and love – has a lot to lose if she lets up. She has to train extra hard if she wants to win the prestigious Prix de Fonteyn. And she'll have to do battle with a new rival and an unjust teacher, while developing a crush on a new student ...

THE SERIES



Season THREE

Format: 13 x 26'



In season 3, Tara and her friends are now seniors at the Academy and no one can forget for a second that the Company is watching. It will be a nail-biting chase to the finish line to see who will be offered a contract and finally achieve what they have been working towards for so long ... and who will have to find a new dream.

If Second Year broke your heart, this is the year that will lift you up and prove it is in risking everything, failing spectacularly and then starting again, that you will become extraordinary. Tara and her friends began their training as kids with a lot to learn about dancing, about life and most of all about themselves. This year will prepare them to say goodbye to their school days forever and go out into the world as resilient, courageous dancers and young adults. Who are ready for anything.



THE CHARACTERS



Tara Webster

The Movie / The Series Season 1–3
Played by Xenia Goodwin

Country-girl Tara Webster has dreamed of becoming a dancer since before she can remember.

At fifteen, when Tara was accepted into Australia's most prestigious ballet school, the National Academy of Dance, she was convinced her life was about to become spectacular. She was totally unprepared for the challenges that lay in store.

Tara began her training as the underdog, the very worst in the class, however her mentor Miss Raine predicted there were seeds of great artistic potential – if only Tara could forget about friends/boys/life long enough to commit herself wholeheartedly to her training. As if the cutthroat politics of the ballet world weren't enough, Tara also had to contend with the highs and lows of being a teenager.

While sensitive and imaginative, Tara is also fiercely determined. She is stronger than she knows and can draw on reserves she never thought she had. She might be naïve, but she's nobody's doormat. She'll be pushed to a point and then come back fighting.

THE CHARACTERS



Kat Karamakov

The Movie / The Series Season 1–3
Played by Alicia Banit

Born to self-absorbed ballet royalty parents, Kat's natural inclination is to rebel. Kat's energy is infectious and her flair for mischief, legendary. She's one of those people who can convince you to do anything – and when you end up in the Principal's office she'll just grin and roll her eyes.

Kat is the life of every party and a born storyteller. Kat is a very private person, despite how extroverted she seems. She makes friends easily but only keeps a few close. Unlike Tara who wears her heart on her sleeve, Kat is much more difficult to read and keeps a lot bottled inside. No one would ever guess how insecure she often feels.

Effervescent, irreverent and programmed to see the fun side, Kat has been best friends with Tara ever since they first arrived at the Academy, although they couldn't be more different.

Kat has retired from ballet and moved to New York with the new goal of becoming a serious actress. She can't believe her luck now that she's landed a starring role in a new break-out teen series. Kat's determined to enjoy her D-List (possibly approaching C-List) celebrity status, living it up as only Kat can.



THE CHARACTERS



Christian Reed

The Movie / The Series Season 1–3

Played by Jordan Rodrigues

When Christian arrived at the Academy he was the kind of boy most teenage girls dream of – gorgeous, mysterious and angry at the world.

Christian's childhood was tough and he was often called upon to be the adult, particularly when his mother was diagnosed with cancer. At the academy, he assumed he would have nothing in common with the other students and rejected all attempts of friendship, but over time, let down his defenses revealing a complicated person underneath – but who is deeply caring and providing the love interest for Tara in a relationship with more than its share of drama.

Christian is a naturally talented dancer. Dancing has always come easily to him, probably too easily, but he's much more connected to hip hop than to ballet.

It was a risky decision when he turned down a contract with the National Ballet Company but Christian trusted his instincts and it's definitely paid off. He's finally letting go of the demons – immersed in mentoring and teaching at a drop-in dance center for disadvantaged young dancers (built in honor of Christian's best friend Sammy Lieberman).



THE CHARACTERS

Ben Tickle

The Movie / The Series Season 1–3

Played by Thomas Lacey

Benjamin Tickle is like a puppy – boundless energy, a short attention span and the potential to lick you if he likes you enough. Ben could be considered a normal male – cheeky, scruffy and more than slightly hopeless. He loves his cricket and footie as much as he loves his ballet.

While relaxed about most things, Ben has always been intense about his dance training. He pushes himself every day, determined to make the most of his natural talent. He's got a big heart and doesn't like to dwell too much on the dark side. He's also hot in a Hugh Jackman kind of way. All contributing reasons to why Tara dated him on-and-off during their time together at the Academy, before they figured out they work better as friends.

For a long time he kept it a secret that he'd spent his childhood in and out of hospital with leukemia. He didn't want his classmates to see him as a sick person, but that early lack of control over his body is always going to be one of his big drivers to succeed. Ben can never coast and take his good fortune for granted. But Ben was born to dance!



THE CHARACTERS

Abigail Armstrong

The Movie / The Series Season 1–3

Played by Dena Kaplan

Startlingly beautiful, people are drawn to Abigail with a kind of morbid fascination and she learnt long ago how to use her charisma to manipulate others.

All her life Abigail has worked hard to prove she is something special. But her deepest, darkest fear is that she isn't. As we get to know Abigail we find more and more humour in her ruthlessness. Abigail has been dancing since birth and was always considered the best student in the class. It's not a title she was prepared to give up easily.

When Abigail arrived at the National Academy of Dance she had high hopes for complete annihilation of the competition and was furious when puberty betrayed her, changing her body from the image of the perfect ballerina. To counteract this, Abigail has pushed herself to work harder than anyone with a determination that even her enemies had to respect. Deep down, Abigail never truly believed it was possible and yet, after every knockback, she still picked herself up again and kept on fighting.

But it's also why her relationship with Tara has always been so complicated. If they weren't in competition, they would be best friends but Abigail can't stop herself from being jealous of Tara's natural ballet physique and prodigious talent. Tara just doesn't deserve it as much as she does. Throughout her time at the Academy, Abigail evolved from the bitchy class queen bee to a devoted (if prickly) friend.



THE CHARACTERS

Ollie Lloyd

The Movie / The Series Season 2–3
Played by Keiynan Lonsdale

Ollie's background is comfortably middle-class, with parents who want to give him everything they possibly can (and who didn't bat an eyelid when he came out). Ollie has been brought up to believe he's meant to be someone special.

However, his desperation to get to the top has often been his downfall. He is a guy of many impressive talents. Humility has just never been one of them. He's a freakishly talented dancer – versatile across all styles. He can sing and write songs. He should've been a shoe-in for a Company contract but he's just never been any good at playing the political game. At the Academy, Ollie got kicked off the regional tour (twice), only turned up to the classes he was interested in and threw a chair at a wall when they told him he wasn't receiving a contract.

It took the death of his boyfriend Sammy to force Ollie to re-evaluate his choices. He swallowed his pride and went back to repeat Third Year for another shot at the Company!

He finally figures out that his motivation to dance is because he can't imagine life without dancing, and not because of the fame.



THE CHARACTERS

Sammy Liebermann

The Series Season 1-2
Played by Tom Green

When his father refuses to continue paying the Academy fees, Sammy is left with no choice but to work long hours as a kitchen-hand. With his gruelling schedule, Sammy soon finds himself zombie-like and fails the midsemester assessments. Enter Oliver, a third year student assigned to help him retake his exams. But when Sammy learns Oliver is gay and likes him, will Sammy be able to accept he might feel the same way?

Ethan Karamakov

The Series Season 1-2
Played by Tim Pocock

After turning down a contract with the National Ballet Company Ethan graduated from Third Year with lots of plans but no firm prospects. When his father offers him a job choreographing with the Academy, he takes it. He could learn a lot if he could just swallow his pride... The break-up with Tara still stings, but he makes a surprising new ally in Abigail, whom he discovers is a much deeper, more passionate person than he ever suspected.

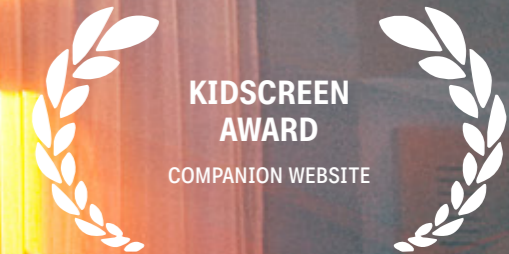
THE CHARACTERS

Grace Whitney

The Series Season 2–3
Played by Issi Durant

Grace is an Australian girl who has been training at the Royal Ballet School in London for the last few years. Although “training” is the wrong word for Grace; it all comes so easily that it doesn’t seem like work. The moment Grace enters the studio everyone can see that the barre for excellence has been raised. But Grace is manipulative and charms everyone around her to get what she wants – especially her godmother Miss Raine.

THE CREW



**KIDSREEN
AWARD**

COMPANION WEBSITE



**TV WEEK LOGIE
AWARD**

MOST OUTSTANDING
CHILDRENS' PROGRAMM



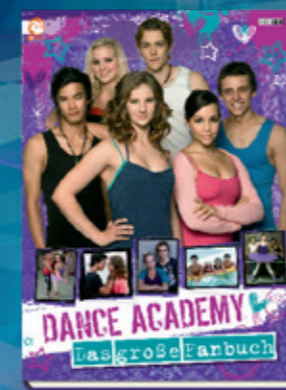
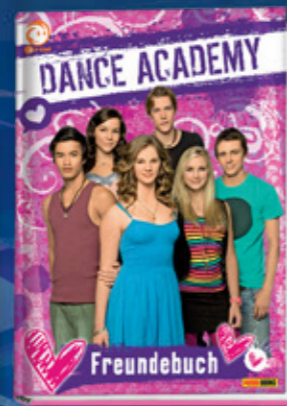
**HUGO TELEVISION
AWARD**

CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL



**NEW YORK
INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL**

BRONZE WORLD MEDAL
CHILDRENS/YOUTH
PROGRAMM



Credits

Produced by

Werner Film Productions

Producer

Joana Werner & Bernadette O'Mahony

Coproducers

ZDF, ZDF Studios, ABC, ACTF

Creator and Writer

Samantha Strauss

Director

Jeffrey Walker

Distributed by

ZDF Studios

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