



## DANCE TODAY TEACHER OF THE YEAR 2013: THE RESULTS



Pauline Mason celebrates with her students at Danceworks Devon

### Marianka Swain shares the results of our debut competition

Congratulations to Pauline Mason of Danceworks in Devon ([www.danceworksdevon.com](http://www.danceworksdevon.com)), who was overwhelmingly voted *Dance Today* Teacher of the Year in its very first year. The worthy runners-up were Suzanne Hancock and Julie Tucker of Keep Dancing in Bournemouth ([www.keep-dancing.co.uk](http://www.keep-dancing.co.uk)), who win a year's free subscription to *Dance Today* and we had so many wonderful nominations that we've also created a shortlist of your top teachers.

We'd like to thank our readers for voting and the UK's dance teachers for inspiring

such devotion and joy in their students. Gold stars all round!

#### PAULINE MASON, DANCE TODAY TEACHER OF THE YEAR

"I'm very, very shocked," admits Pauline Mason. "One or two people told me they'd nominated me, and I was extremely flattered, but I didn't think for a moment I'd win – there are so many big-name teachers out there."

However, Pauline, who has been teaching dance since 1969, was simply unbeatable. She offers styles as diverse as hip hop and belly dance alongside ballroom and Latin

at her successful studio, and she responds to people's needs, for example running classes for those who have lost their spouses or partners.

Above all, Pauline's created a real community. Danceworks has a thriving coffee bar and she offers themed social nights, dance holidays and invaluable support. After more than 40 years of teaching, she shows no sign of slowing down.

Pauline Mason wins a specially created *Dance Today* trophy – a cover of the magazine starring her, a year's free subscription to *Dance Today* and sister magazine, *Dancing Times*, as well as a year's free subscription to DSI-TV, a pair of tickets to *West Side Story* at Sadler's Wells (see page 36 for more on the show) and a selection of CDs from Maestro Direct. Among Pauline's prizes is also a feature about her and her studio, which will appear in our September issue, but for now, here is our winning teacher in the words of her students...

"My wife and I enrolled as complete beginners and were delighted by how welcome Pauline made us feel. Her instruction is very patient, delivered with great professionalism and humour, and, even in a class, she tailors it to each of us. I'm now fully smitten and eager to learn more and more. If only I'd had such inspirational teachers at school!"  
**Peter and Wendy Giles**

"Pauline has something to offer an old-timer like me and also a titchy street dancer like my granddaughter. Her studio is

a refuge to newcomers to the town, to those who have lost their partners, to people with special needs. We socialise with tea and a bun, exercise and learn to love dance."  
**Carol Kuhlmann**

"The biggest plus about Pauline's lessons is that they give me a confidence on the dancefloor that filters out into the rest of my life."  
**Geoff Martin**

"Pauline has an eye for detail – she quickly identifies problems and resolves them with patience and encouragement. Working six days a week, plus the time she spends on programming, organising and lesson content... I don't know where she gets the energy!"  
**Allan Martin**

"My husband and I recently retired and found a huge void in our lives. We went along to Pauline's lessons and absolutely love them. We've not only made wonderful new friends in Pauline, her husband and her daughter, but she's brought together a group of people of all ages with a love of ballroom."  
**Karen and Jim Swanson**

"I am a 63-year-old man with two left feet and she is exceptional."  
**Alan Pope**

**Our star reader nomination wins a year's subscription to *Dance Today*** "Although I'm married and an experienced sequence dancer, I can no longer dance with my wife, who has advanced

Alzheimer's and is in a care home. So, in October 2011, I joined Pauline's line dance class and it's proved to be a godsend. As well as being excellent exercise and good mental therapy, it's very social and takes my mind off the horrors of my wife's illness."  
**John Adams**

"My ten-year-old son Nathan began street dance at Pauline's school last year. She asked if he'd like to try ballroom, as they had a girl who needed a partner, and he really enjoyed it, which surprised me as he's very much the sporty boy! They entered their first competition in February and haven't looked back. Pauline's helped them gain confidence and she really goes the extra mile. I've seen a completely new side of my son – he's transforming into a confident and happy dancer, and he couldn't have done it without her."  
**Letitia Wills**

"Danceworks has become the most popular place to dance in the South-West, whether you're two or 92. Pauline's made a huge impact,

from improving people's health and helping us achieve our goals to the odd matchmaking success!"  
**Alexandra Truman**

"Her lessons are full of laughter and joy."  
**Jack Ferrett**

"She's one of those rare, gifted teachers who can explain complex dance moves in easy-to-understand terms. Her dedication has sown the seeds for many generations to come. No teacher could do more, no teacher could work harder, no teacher could be more passionate."  
**David and Kathy Moore**

#### SUZANNE HANCOCK AND JULIE TUCKER, RUNNERS-UP

Sisters Suzanne and Julie run their thriving Keep Dancing school in Bournemouth. Here's what their students say...

"Suzanne and Julie are a great team, combining clear instructions with a cheerful disposition, and they make sure no one feels left out."  
**Duncan and Susan Yandell** ▶



Celebrations at the Danceworks bar

## DANCE TEACHERS

Photograph courtesy of Suzanne and Julie



Runners-up sisters Suzanne Hancock (left) and Julie Tucker of Keep Dancing in Bournemouth

"The number and diversity [of dancers] who have been coming to their classes for more

than 15 years is testament to their ability to deliver excellent teaching, to everyone from

the struggling beginner to the highly talented enthusiast."

**Norman Mackel**

"Julie teaches with an honest desire to share her knowledge, and taking lessons with her is a delight because her smiling personality is so genuine. Technique imparted with aplomb."

**John Hodder**

"These two talented sisters...bring out the best in all their pupils. They also organise special events and dance holidays abroad – this year, 64 of us went to Portugal! They are simply the BEST."

**Teresa Wright ●**

### TOP TEACHERS: OUR SHORTLIST

Congratulations to:

**T DAMIEN ANYASI, DIRECTOR OF B-BETTER**  
([WWW.B-BETTER.CO.UK](http://WWW.B-BETTER.CO.UK)), LONDON

"I was lucky enough to be cast as a volunteer performer in the 2012 Olympics when I first met Damien. I will always remember my second rehearsal when Damien was leading my group. He re-cut the group and I ended up at the front. I was mortified. Damien stopped the lesson, came and shook my hand and told me I would be great... I have never looked back. Following the Olympics I joined Damien's weekend class, which uniquely mixes professional dancers and complete amateurs of all ages. Damien makes the class fun, engages everybody equally – and everybody leaves learning something. He's fantastic."

**Graeme Caul**

**KIERAN KELLY, PRINCIPAL OF KDEEK**  
([WWW.KDEEKDANCEWORKS.CO.UK](http://WWW.KDEEKDANCEWORKS.CO.UK)),  
STOKE-ON-TRENT

"I'm an overweight 46-year-old punk and if someone had told me two years ago that I'd be hit by the dancing bug (despite being addicted

to *Strictly*), I would have laughed and never, ever believed it, but I've now completed Intro Level 6 as a medallist and been placed in my first serious competition, fourth in ballroom for a quickstep and second in Latin for a cha cha cha. And this is down to all at KDeek, but mostly Kieran with his undying and unerring support and patience. My confidence has soared along with my fitness and fun levels."

**Suzie Box**

**NEFELI TSIOUT, FREELANCE**  
**CHOREOGRAPHER, LONDON**

"In addition to starting from the basics of the technical movements, Nefeli explains the history of the dance and where it came from. Instead of just learning choreography I learned the foundations that allow me to be experimental and use my own creativity to explore new movements... Because breakdancing is not taught in the same way as ballet, jazz and so on, there is not a lot of focus on injury prevention and how to properly warm up. Nefeli incorporates this into her classes for safety, which is appreciated. Above all, Nefeli is a genuine, good person who exudes positivity and possibility."

**Deann Frost**