



Maria Shanks

Maria has almost 40 years' experience in the dance industry & is thrilled to be one of the adjudicators at this year's eisteddfod.

Born into a dance family Maria began dancing from a very early age. During her dance training she was fortunate enough to study under the very best teachers in Australia in all facets of dance. Her family, especially, her Aunt, Jan Conroy OAM (services to dance), was the driving force in her dance career and with a certain amount of talent was encouraged and easily gained all dance qualifications. Teaching dance was Maria's career path & by the age of 21 years was fully qualified with the CSTD (4 Diplomas), the RAD (Registered Teacher), and was the principal of her own dance studio on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland, which successfully operated for 35 years. Many students have been successful in the dance industry under her tutorage.

Such was her passion to be the very best dance teacher, she was encouraged to train to become a "Dance Examiner" for the CSTD which is an examination syllabus that covers Classical Ballet, Jazz, Hip Hop, Tap, Musical Theatre, Contemporary & Acrobatics, and by the age of 30 years she was successful and invited to be a member of the CSTD Examination Board.

Adjudication was a natural progression; her knowledge of dance is current in all facets. Maria has been actively involved in the competition scene and has been on the committee for one of the largest dance competitions in Queensland for over 25 years. Competitions develop student's confidence and performance skills and are beneficial to the overall dancer, not to mention they are so much "fun" for those who love the social aspects of dancing with friends and meeting new people with similar interests. Maria has been lucky enough to adjudicate twice in Hong Kong recently & has several invitations to adjudicate in 2018.

Maria still teaches periodically at the Conroy Dance Centre in Brisbane. Recently she has been the Tutor for many Dancers/Teachers Workshops in Indonesia, East & West Malaysia, Singapore, China, Brunei and in the United Kingdom. She is very proud to be working with a group of Australian Teachers on teaching contracts in Singapore and has been instrumental in the development and mentoring of the first CSTD Dance Studio in the UK.

Maria feels very fortunate to have had a long and successful dance career and loves passing on her knowledge.

"It's time to give back to an industry that has been so close to my heart and given me so much joy!"