

Laura gets Zoom power to make sure dance kids stay in step



TEACHER USED ONLINE CLASSES SO CHILDREN DIDN'T MISS OUT

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A DANCE teacher has made sure the show has gone on for her pupils during lockdown by holding more than 340 online classes.

Laura Carnaby, 32, from Brighouse, runs Carnaby School of Dance with up to 35 weekly lessons in ballet, tap, jazz and others for youngsters from the age of 18 months through to adults.

She closed her dance school on March 17 before full lockdown was brought in by the government in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

But the following day she launched her first online Zoom lessons and has kept it going throughout lockdown delivering a total of 346 classes over the last 14 weeks.

Laura, whose dance school is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, was determined to keep the classes going for the children and despite its challenges she continued with rehearsals for the annual dance show which had been planned for July but has now been rescheduled for September.

She said: "When we went into lockdown, we were three weeks away from show rehearsals commencing, so we knew that if we wanted the show to go ahead, we were going to have to commence rehearsals online.

"We also knew that pre-recording choreography alongside expecting the students to attend weekly online show rehearsals was a big time investment from us, and a big ask on the children too - but we genuinely believed that they could do it, and they did!

"We pre-recorded 88 choreography videos across a 10-week period, and added them to Google Drive bit-by-bit each week to enable the children to practise the choreography at home, and then we would see them dance the applicable week's choreography live on Zoom within online show rehearsals later that same week."

And to celebrate the original show date of July 4 Laura, who trained at the Royal Academy of Dance, compiled a video showcasing snippets from the dance rehearsals.

Each child filmed a 10-second clip of themselves dancing some of the show choreography and Laura then edited it together.

She added: "All of the children loved it and it made them feel together again - a really nice keepsake of lockdown to look back on."

Laura has now ended classes for the school summer holiday so they can restart early and continue with preparations in the hope that the rescheduled show happens on September 26.

Laura said: "The children have been amazing! It's crazy how good young children are on Zoom in terms of using its functionalities, but it has also been incredibly hard for them.

"I don't think some people understand the social pressures that children

of today are under, even at a young age, and I'm not sure how I would've coped as a child."

And although she said it is now clear everyone needs a break from online classes and can hopefully return to the studio when sessions restart, she added that she has had so many messages of thanks.

Laura added: "Everybody has been so appreciative of the continuity. We have been inundated with messages from parents and our adult dancers thanking us for the routine, it has been so touching. We ended up working three times as hard because when you take a physical, in-person service and turn it in to a virtual, online service, your admin and screen time increases exponentially."



Laura Carnaby, and above, at a previous show

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