



1617 North Second Street
Minneapolis, MN 55411
lundstrum.org
info@lundstrum.org

P 612.521.2600
F 612.564.4127

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information, contact Ann Benrud at annbenrud@gmail.com or Kerry Casserly at kerry@lundstrum.org

Bridging the Covid Gap with Creativity, Kids, and Cats!



Minneapolis, MN—January 4, 2021—It's been a difficult year for everyone—especially young people with special needs. Lundstrum Performing Arts, in North Minneapolis, has re-invented its long-standing Dancemania! program to keep special needs students engaged, active, and performing—knowing that the show must go on!

Typically, Dancemania! students present their musical theater piece at an end-of-semester showcase performance, and Dancemania! most recently presented a lively performance of **Cats** in full kitty fashion, via Zoom, with full make-up and costumes.

Lundstrum's Dancemania! classes provide an opportunity for young performers to come together—in a socially distant way—to learn song and movement and present a Broadway favorite. Students dress in costume and perform their piece for the camera. Dancemania! is alive thanks to Zoom classes, and a **new semester starts Wednesday, January 13, 2021** and runs for 10 weeks. This is a wonderful opportunity not to be missed. **Register now, online** at: lundstrum.org/performing-artists.

Why is Dancemania! so important right now?

When Dancemania! launched in 2006, the program provided a unique opportunity for students with special needs ranging from Downs Syndrome and Autism to express their unique voice and develop skills through the performing arts. Over the years, the program has forged enduring friendships and allowed these children to develop confidence, verbal skills, movement, and fun. Since Covid-19 altered school and many other gatherings as of March, Dancemania! has allowed these special students to continue their studies in music, dance, voice, and performance in a safe, supportive and fun environment. With a strict Covid-19 preparedness plan in place, all Lundstrum classes adhere to safety guidelines such as face coverings, limited class sizes and social distancing. Many take place via Zoom. Dancemania! allowed the students this fall to come together again to celebrate "**Cats**," to see friends and teachers virtually, and to practice skills on their performing arts journey.

Continued

Why is this a feel-good story?

During the last year, young people have struggled with isolation, lack of routine, and the absence of classes and extracurricular activities that they enjoy and learn from and this is especially true for students with special needs. Lundstrum's Dancemania! allows students the opportunity to continue their studies in dance and performance, to focus on a culminating performance, to connect with friends and caring mentors, and continue to connect with the joy of performing arts.

(Photos and video of students singing, dancing, and performing on Zoom and video footage of the culminating performances are available to the media.)

For more information about Lundstrum classes, contact:

LUNDSTRUM STAFF

612.521.2600

INFO@LUNDSTRUM.ORG

About Lundstrum Performing Arts

Based in North Minneapolis, Lundstrum Performing Arts is Minnesota's premier training program in musical theater: dance, voice and drama. Lundstrum's program combines excellence and accessibility to nurture bright futures through the performing arts.

After successful national performing careers, the five Casserly sisters took up the legacy from founder Dorothy Lundstrum following her death and formed a nonprofit organization in 2000 to be a "mini-Juilliard" offering youth development through the arts. The core of its program is a high-quality and integrated curriculum of dance, voice and drama for students taught by Broadway veterans and professional teaching artists. Lundstrum's rigorous program includes ballet, jazz, tap, acting, solo vocal instruction and ensemble classes.

Lundstrum Performing Arts has become an important springboard to talent—especially diverse talent—for theaters in the Twin Cities and beyond. Lundstrum students have gone on to professional careers on Broadway and as award-winning choreographers in the Twin Cities. They also perform regularly in local theaters ranging from the Guthrie Theater and Children's Theatre Company, as well as Stages Theater, Ordway Center for the Performing Arts and others.

Beyond its training in specific artistic disciplines, Lundstrum's program instills lasting benefits from disciplined instruction and building social emotional skills in a nurturing environment of support from teachers and peers. Some of these life-long skills include: self-confidence and critical thinking, essential confidence in his/her ability to learn and hunger for continued achievement.

###