



LEFT: ELA, LOUISE, MIAH AND JARRAH LIMBER UP AT BRAG. ABOVE: 'I'M A WIZARD' BY RIGHT SAID FRED AT THE PERFORMANCE OF THE 'GROOVE ON DOWN THE ROAD' SHOW LAST YEAR.

Dancing for joy

Emma Campbell tells us to dance for fitness and fun.

Dance is the only thing available in Braidwood that is not competitive. It's important for the kids to be able to do a physical activity where you are not racing against somebody else, you don't have to try and be better, or a winner. It's every-

one working together to do the routines. I see everyone's confidence and their self esteem growing so much as they work together as a group. I try to do a group game at the end of every lesson. I put them in little groups, and they

have to work together to make a little routine, and they love it. I give them all five minutes and they come up with amazing things.

I had one girl last term, she was so shy when she first came, to the point where she would just stand throughout the lesson because she was too shy to move. This term, all of a sudden, she's smiling, she is confident and she is doing it. The change in her was amazing.

I cater for all abilities and I encourage them, even if they are not getting the moves. It doesn't matter; they are doing it and they are trying and they are moving and they are enjoying it and having fun and that's what it is about. I don't want it to be strict and rigid and too disciplined because then it becomes boring for them.

Last year's show was for everyone who did a class with me. So basically it's 87 kids ranging from four-year-olds up to 13-year-olds.

When I started working on it, it took me forever to choose the right songs for each part of the story that I wanted to portray. I then had to assign each song to the right age group and lesson, like, "oh this is good for a ballet and this is good for hip-hop," or, "I'll do a bit of contemporary on that one. It

took a lot of planning to get it right. Then in term three and term four I taught the dances to the children. So it was half a year's work into two shows. The hard thing was getting the right music and getting it all to fit together so it would tell a story for the audience so they weren't just watching kids dancing, they were actually seeing a story with a bit of theatre in there as well. That's important.

I have already started working on this year's show, to get a head start so it's not so rushed at the end of the year. It's a lot of planning, especially now I have even more kids. Already this year, and it's only term one, every week I'm still getting a new child. It's just outstanding.

There's a lot of interest in the dancing.

The word's getting out there that everyone is welcome to come and join in and, you know, the kids feel comfortable with me and I put a lot of time and effort into the children. It's just like being a big kid still, yes. But I just love it, I put my heart and soul into it. It's because I know it is a small country town, there is not a lot going



ABOVE: PRE-SCHOOL BALLET PARENTS WAITING FOR CLASS TO FINISH. BELOW: ELSA, ROSE, STELLA AND ANNEISE.



Braidwood Dance Studio

Emma explains what it does

I am offering ballet, from preschool ballet through to grade four — that is a dance syllabus. I am offering jazz hip-hop from four year-olds up to high school age, and I also do a Tiny Tots class which is based around an educational theme so the kids are learning. We use props and music to dance and learn, and I also do Zumba, for the adults, and Pilates as well.

Zumba is dance fitness, so we dance for an hour, and it's music from all around the world with different dance styles. We do salsa tracks, we do Zumba Styles — Merengue, Reggaeton, hip-hop and so it is nonstop dance. It is fitness basically — the music is really uplifting and everybody just smiles the whole way through, and I make them do funny moves, which makes them laugh.

It's \$13 per adult, and then if they have to bring their children the child can come for free — because a lot of parents cannot go out for an hour when they've got children. So children can come for free and join in. I don't mind as long as it gets mum there working out. And a lot of my kids that do dancing come to zumba and they love it.

I also have had a few men do it and they have come back once or twice but I think they are intimidated by all the women shaking their 'things'. Actually, the person who invented Zumba is a male. He was a fitness instructor and one day he forgot to bring his CDs to class so the only thing he had in his car was salsa music so he put it on and just danced salsa for an hour and people said 'Gawd, this is great' and now he has made it into this worldwide fitness program. It doesn't feel like you are working out because you are smiling all the time, and laughing. It's just fun. I stand up on the stage and they just follow me.

Classes are Tuesdays from 6pm at the Servicemens Club and it goes for an hour, and then I do three extra tracks at the end for ab and bum workout on the floor, and that's kind of like a bonus. Three bonus tracks for free, with press-ups and sit-ups and all that kind of thing. The ladies love that.