



Swing Riot Dunedin Incorporated Annual Report April 2024 - March 2025

“Stretching our influence to build community”

Thanks Come First

Here in my second Annual Report as Chair, I'll start with a brief thank you to everyone who helped make Swing Riot's year a success! From our class teachers and the students who come to learn, to our community of musicians and venues, from those that allocate community grants, to our Executive Committee itself (being smaller in size this year, with everyone on Committee holding a portfolio position), and our legendary Festival Committee for programming the big 10th Anniversary!

I also wish to specifically thank our outgoing Treasurer Morgan Lieshout, whose careful and meticulous work in making and updating our financial map, has kept us on the road to taking sustainable risks as we aim to expand what Swing Riot offers in building a community that loves the dancing, culture, and music that we highlight. Morgan plans to step down from the Committee role of Treasurer, but plans to assist a newly elected Treasurer during a portfolio handover period.

And now, wasting no time...

Class Changeups

As we approached the end of 2024 with class attendance numbers looking consistently strong, our teaching structure changed to help us build for the future. In October '24, the single weekly Tuesday evening “drop in” or open level classes at Stuart Hall, Knox Church turned into two separate weekly Tuesday evening classes: an open level “Level 1” class, and a “Level 2” class (with additional time dedicated to solo dancing and “fundamental dynamics” of the dance) for those with a bit more experience. Monthly Intermediate Classes continued through the end of 2024 but were put on hold while we look to build up the number of “intermediate dancers”. Taster classes with our Swing Riot teachers at Toitū's Sunday “Dancing with Josephine” events were also put on hold. We also saw the welcome return of Charlotte and Clare to our regular teaching roster last year. Onwards and upwards!

Teacher Development

To help with this onwards and upwards, and also as recognition for the time and effort our teachers put into the weekly classes, the Committee has implemented a modest Teacher Development allowance for our regular teachers, subject to Committee approval on a per-case basis, to assist with their development and continued learning. Able to be used once per calendar month, per teacher, it looks to assist with a small portion of costs related to travel, accommodation, registration, etc for dance events, or private lessons, etc - and replaces an old offer for teachers to have a private lesson with visiting Dunedin Swing Festival teachers, which became difficult to actually arrange successfully. We saw some teachers use this to attend the “Swing Dance Weekend With: Jo Hoffberg” in August 2024, bringing fantastic knowledge and inspiration back to our local scene. We’re also looking to help our community continue to learn and grow through different opportunities, one being registering our scene for Auckland Blues Dance online “Sunday Seminars” with Volume 1 this weekend covering “DJing for Blues Dancers” hosted by Julie Brown (USA).

Seen About Town (and in other towns!)

People in our Swing Riot community have always been keen to get out and about, dancing locally in Ōtepoti Dunedin to live music, and also making journeys out of town to other swing/lindy-hop/blues events! In addition to trying to make it out to as much local live music as we can, over the last year we’ve seen our dancers at Ōamaru’s Harbour Street Jazz & Blues Festival, Microcosm! and the 2024 South Island Swing Dance Competitions organized by Swingtown Rebels in Christchurch, and other events. We’ve also lined up opportunities to dance at Move for MS (a fundraising event for MS Otago) and at the South Dunedin Street Festival, and even made regular attempts to move our monthly social dances into public view by dancing out on the St. Clair Esplanade in fair weather. The aim is to continue being visible by attending live jazz and blues music events and to continue preparing for public dance performances to share the joy of our dancing with the community!

Our Events

Some of our more significant local dance events over the past year included Swing Riot’s Jingle Jangle Christmas Workshops and Farewell Social in December ‘24 held at Ravensbourne Hall. It was an event that I missed personally, but encompassing a full day of dance workshops for all dance abilities, an evening social dance with Skin & Bone with a taster class held beforehand, it made for a right festive and celebratory end to a fantastic year.

Ōtepoti Blues Sessions: Vol. 3.0 also took place in early March ‘25, featuring visiting teachers Rebecca & Coco leading workshops at Te Whare O Rukutia and an evening of dancing to live music from The Little Eddies Blues Band at the New Athenaeum Theatre. Our teachers and experienced dancers also had an opportunity to attend a “Blues upskilling” talk with Rebecca & Coco on the Friday before the big Saturday event to grow our local understanding and perspectives of the history and culture and pedagogy of what we call Blues!

**And then there was the little thing called the...
Dunedin Swing Festival 2024 - 10th Anniversary**



This year took the cake (on multiple tiers)!

A massive congratulations to the Festival Committee for the biggest and baddest (bestest?) Dunedin Swing Festival that we've ever had the joy of attending! With excellent teachers from both Aotearoa New Zealand and overseas (some returning legends, and some legends new to our event including renowned Evita Arce and Michael Jagger), special dance venues with gorgeous floors like the Dunedin Town Hall, an extended King's Birthday weekend with time dedicated to learning more about the history of this living dance form with a documentary screening of *Lady Be Good*; *Instrumental Women in Jazz*, plus a 'Queens of the Blues' talk by Shobhana Nambiar, plus a special Thursday night of Blues to kick things off, the five-day weekend was one nobody will soon forget.

The Committee aimed high, budgets were large with ticket prices kept reasonable, and our Treasurer's nails weren't bitten too short - but in the end, the reputation of the Dunedin Swing Festival and of the organizers who put the event together each year, brought smiling faces, both familiar and new, from our shores and from other shores, to attend. Thanks to the organizers, teachers, volunteers, attendees, venues, and the Ōtepoti for making everything possible!

If you've made it this far, congratulations! Do yourself a favor and make a note that DSF early bird registrations for the 2025 festival open on Friday 4th April.

Your Executive Committee

This year your Committee were:

Jon Bakos (Chair), Anna Bryan (Teaching), Sibby Dillon (Large Events, Communications & Marketing), Kieran Ford (Small Events), Lorraine Johnston (Secretary), Morgan Lieshout (Treasurer).

Thanks to everyone who pitched in this year!

Ngā mihi nui

Jon

Chair 2024-25