



Demi Agaiby is a mental performance consultant and director of Beyond Horizons Performance (BHP). With a background in Dance and Psychology from Loyola University Chicago, she became passionate about the mind-body connection through her struggles with injuries, burnout, and performance anxiety. This led her to earn an M.S. in Sport and Exercise Psychology from California State University, Long Beach. Demi founded BHP to support athletes and performers in enhancing their mindset through evidence-based strategies. She has worked with hundreds nationwide and presented at leading organizations, including NDEO, NDCA, CNADM, and YPAD and is currently a doctoral candidate for an Ed.D in Sport and Performance Psychology. Demi believes in empowering overlooked performers by helping them build confidence, resilience, and mental strength throughout their journey.



Sean Aaron Carmon, a graduate of the Ailey/Fordham BFA Dance program, was a member of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, performing principal roles including Mikhail Baryshnikov's original role in *Pas de Duke* and featured works by Judith Jamison, Ulysses Dove, Wayne McGregor, Robert Battle, and more. He has danced as a guest artist with companies worldwide and appeared on *Conan*, *Good Morning America*, *LIVE with Regis and Kelly*, and PBS's *Lincoln Center at the Movies*. He has performed in *La Cage aux Folles*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, *The Lion King*, *Kinky Boots*, and *Ragtime* on Broadway and national tours. A celebrated choreographer, he has received awards from the Palm Desert Choreography Festival, YAGP, and Joffrey Ballet's *Winning Works*. Formerly directing Vitacca Ballet Studio Company, he is now Rehearsal Director for Dance Kaleidoscope in Indianapolis while continuing to choreograph and teach globally.



Krista Ellensohn is the Artistic Director of BANG BANG Dance Company and a long-standing Director, Choreographer, and Performer with BOOM CRACK! Dance Company. She has choreographed for Booker T. Washington HSPVA, Dreyfoos School of the Arts, Hubbard Street's HSPRO, Hubbard Street's Create Intensives, and the Chicago Luvabulls, among others. A sought-after educator, Krista teaches annually for Hubbard Street's Intensives and has led workshops across the Midwest. Her diverse training includes hip-hop, contemporary, modern, ballet, jazz, musical theater, and tap. As a performer, she has appeared at Dance Chicago, Dance for Life, Hip Hop International Championships, World of Dance Live, and more. Krista holds a degree in Business Management with a Performing Arts Entrepreneurship Certificate from the University of Iowa. She recently earned her Master of Business from the University of Iowa, with Certificates in Leadership and Marketing.



Jay Fagan, a Chicago native, is one of today's most sought-after tap masters, with nearly four decades of international experience as a performer, teacher, and choreographer. Trained by legends like Gregory Hines and Savion Glover, he's performed worldwide—from Las Vegas to Finland—and shared the stage with icons such as Dianne Walker and Derick Grant. Known for his energetic teaching style and rhythmic precision, Jay has also served as artist-in-residence at Oklahoma City University. He directs Jo's Footwork Studio and teaches all dance styles, with award-winning choreography featured at top national competitions. Jay has worked with Dance Masters of America, British Association of Teachers of Dancing (honorary member), and many others. A Presidential Scholar and American Dance Award recipient, he's danced with Especially Tap Chicago, the Jay Fagan/Sarah Savelli Project, and Sibling Rivalry with his sister Connie Fagan Sweeney.



Jacqueline Farina started her classical ballet training in Mexico City, Mexico. She studied the RAD (Royal Academy of Dance) method with Andrea de Andraca, presenting all the exam levels, including Solo Seal. She then pursued her studies in London with Andrew Hardie and Maria Fay. She has performed in Germany and France. In Mexico, she danced with the Compania Nacional de Danza Clasica de Mexico (sponsored at the time by Ballet Nacional de Cuba). She performed in Chicago with Venetia Stifler and Concert Dance Inc. and Soul & Duende Spanish American Dance Theater. Jacqueline is a Cecchetti DFCCA Diploma Certified Teacher with the Cecchetti Council of America. She presently teaches Ballet and Character Dance at Northwest Ballet Academy and Character Dance at Joffrey Academy of Dance.



Matthew Farmer is the Dorothy Wiley DeLong Endowed Chair of Dance at Hope College, Co-Artistic Director of R.G. Dance Productions, and Co-Artistic Director of H2 Dance Co. A director, educator, choreographer, performer, and author; he co-authored Introductory Modern Dance: A Teaching Manual and recently authored Teaching Dance Improvisation: A Beginner's Guide. He previously directed dance at Anderson University and danced with LehrerDance and The Peter Sparling Dance Co. Farmer holds an MFA in Dance from the University of Michigan and a BA in Theatre and Dance from Hope College. Specializing in Modern, Contemporary, Improvisation, and Jazz, he has taught at universities, conventions, and festivals worldwide. His choreography has been showcased on college campuses, professional companies, and theaters across the U.S., Germany, the U.K., Mexico, France, and Ecuador.



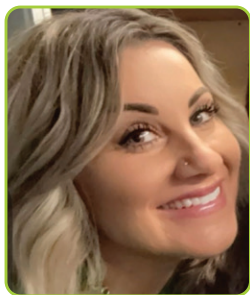
Annie Jo Fischer is a Chicago-based teaching artist, adjudicator, performer, director, and Broadway World award-winning choreographer. She has collaborated on 100+ musicals across the Midwest, most recently the Jebby Award-nominated "Ride the Cyclone" at the Contemporary in Columbus, OH, and the upcoming Paramount Theatre's "White Christmas." As a member of Actor's Equity, Annie Jo has performed with the Marriott, Paramount, Drury Lane, Ordway, and Fireside theatres alongside such great creatives as Jared Grimes, Denis Jones, and Stephanie Klemons. She is currently on faculty at the Chicago College of the Performing Arts (Roosevelt University), Visceral Dance, and Lincolnshire Academy of Dance, specializing in tap and musical theatre. Annie Jo continues to perform as a Honey Tap and frequently travels nationwide with Impact Dance Adjudicators.



Asha Gangolli, a native of Evanston, IL, trained locally with Kerry Hubata and Bea Rashid before studying with Houston Ballet and Boston Ballet and as a trainee with The Joffrey Ballet under Alexei Kremnev and Anna Reznik. She performed in The Nutcracker, La Bayadere, and Romeo and Juliet with the company. In 2014, Asha joined Alabama Ballet and was promoted to company dancer in 2017. She has since performed principal roles, including Sugar Plum Fairy and Coffee in The Nutcracker, Lilac Fairy in The Sleeping Beauty, Fairy Godmother in Cinderella, Myrtha in Giselle, and featured roles in works by Balanchine, De Mille, Nahat, Bruce, and Tharp. Asha is also on faculty at the Alabama Ballet School and teaches classical Pilates in Birmingham.



Jonathan Godfrey The Godfrey Method, founded by Jonathan and Chelsea Godfrey in 2020, is a groundbreaking approach to dance education. Born from years of hands-on experience and research, it prioritizes injury prevention, strength training, and career longevity. This method goes beyond technique, helping dancers understand body mechanics to move smarter and stronger. It's a shift from traditional training—designed to build versatile, resilient dancers and athletes. The Godfrey Method empowers teachers and dancers with proven, effective practices for long-term success. At its heart is a growing, passionate community committed to excellence and innovation in the dance world.



Sheila Healy began dancing when she was just four years old, following in the “steps” of her two older sisters. Her father is from County Cork, and the spirit of Irish music and culture was always present in the large Healy family of 9. Sheila competed in a dozen Regional Championships during her competitive career, always taking the podium and winning the Midwest title. She has also competed in numerous National and World competitions with high placements. Sheila is known for her dedication to her students, her proven track record, and her spirited, contagious, and energetic personality. As a former competitive dancer, she knows what it takes to help dancers reach their goals and, more importantly, the lessons that can be learned along the way.



Stacy Joy Keller, originally from Lutz, Florida, trained at the Classical Ballet Center of Tampa under Haydee Gutierrez. She attended prestigious summer intensives on scholarship, including San Francisco Ballet and School of American Ballet. At 16, she received the Ruth Eckerd Hall Youth Scholarship Award, presented by David Parsons. Stacy was a principal dancer with The Sarasota Ballet, performing roles such as Sugar Plum Fairy, Cinderella, and in Balanchine’s Apollo. She later joined The Joffrey Ballet, enjoying a 12-year career with standout roles in The Nutcracker, Pas Des Déesses, Suite Saint Saëns, and Parade. She also appeared in Robert Altman’s The Company. Now the owner and director of Dancenter North, Stacy has led The Magic of the Nutcracker since 2014. A master instructor for CNADM since 2008, she is also a dedicated wife and mother of two sons,



Lizzie Mackenzie has spent 21 years dancing, teaching, choreographing, and mentoring in Chicago. She co-founded Extensions Dance Company (15 years) and Extensions Dance Center (10 years). Her performance credits include River North Dance Company, Giordano Dance Chicago, Elements Contemporary Ballet, Chicago Repertory Ballet, The Cambrians, and C5 Aerial Arts. Lizzie has taught worldwide with organizations like Jazz Dance World Congress, Dance Masters of America, and RDA. She’s been an artist in residence at top universities including Northwestern, U of I, and Western Michigan. Known for her passionate, high-expectation teaching style, she fosters confidence, artistry, and self-belief in her students. Her feature “Dance and Confidence” has inspired both corporate leaders and dance educators. Lizzie’s ability to connect with dancers of all ages and levels is rooted in deep knowledge, empathy, and a lifelong dedication to the art form.



Eilleen Mallary is the Executive Director of Culture Shock® Chicago and has been a company dancer for 19 years. She trained at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts and performed with Clear Lake Metropolitan Ballet in The Nutcracker, Sleeping Beauty, Cinderella, Dracula, and Coppélia. She assisted prima ballerina Janie Parker, the first American to win gold at the USA IBC. She has toured the U.S. and Canada with Culture Shock and together produced the first all-hip-hop showcase at Chicago’s prestigious Harris Theater. Her commercial credits include flash mobs for Bacardi, The Thrillist, and Fresh Thyme, plus performances for Adidas-Lollapalooza, Coca-Cola, and Nike’s “Let’s Move” campaign with Michelle Obama. She also appeared in a Pillsbury flash mob with gospel duo Mary Mary. A passionate teacher and choreographer, her students have won national titles and gone on to a multitude of careers in the performing arts.



Alison McClean, PT, DPT, is a physical therapist at PERFORM Active Wellness + Dance Medicine in Lisle, IL. She is thrilled to return to CNADM, where she once attended intensives as a dancer. She earned her B.S. in Exercise and Movement Science with a Dance minor from Missouri State University and her Doctor of Physical Therapy degree from the University of Illinois at Chicago. Dr. Ali blends evidence-based care with personalized treatment, focusing on the needs of artistic athletes. She is a member of the International Association of Dance Medicine & Science and supports the Loyola University Chicago Dance Program through workshops and backstage coverage. Dr. Ali is dedicated to helping young performers understand their bodies and make informed choices for healthy, lasting careers. Outside of work, she enjoys life with her husband and two cats, Spot and Roscoe.



Maeghan McHale, named one of Dance Magazine's Top 25 to Watch in 2010, is a celebrated performer, choreographer, and educator. She trained at Baltimore School for the Arts, Dance Theatre of Harlem, and Giordano Dance School, later dancing 13 seasons with Giordano Dance Chicago across the U.S. and internationally. Maeghan has performed Off-Broadway and at major events like the Chicago Dancing Festival and Jazz Dance World Congress. Her choreography has earned national recognition, including awards from YAGP and Central Park Summer Stage performances. She has set works for companies like First State Ballet Theatre and served on faculty at institutions including The SC Governor's School and USA IBC. Currently, she teaches at Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre School and judges for YAGP and DC Grand Prix, continuing to inspire dancers nationwide through her teaching.



Nick Pupillo, Founder and Artistic Director of Visceral Dance Chicago, is an award-winning choreographer known for his powerful and versatile work. A graduate of Indiana University and former Giordano Dance Chicago dancer, his passion focused on teaching and choreography. In 2006, he launched the pre-professional Visceral Studio Company, followed by Visceral Dance Center in 2007, a Chicago dance landmark recognized by TimeOut Chicago. In 2013, he founded Visceral Dance Chicago, a dynamic repertory company praised for its bold contemporary movement and acclaimed by Dance Magazine as one of its "25 to Watch." Pupillo has created over 20 signature works and collaborated with The Chicago Philharmonic. He teaches master classes worldwide and received the 2018 Artistic Achievement Award from the Chicago National Association of Dance Masters. Pupillo was recently honored with the 2024 Meier Achievement Award.



Becca Retter is a dynamic dancer, teacher, and choreographer known as a leader in preschool dance education. An Al Gilbert Tap Technique expert, she creates age-appropriate music and choreography through her Dance Advantage series with MusicWorks Unlimited. Her programs Dance Adventure and Dance Creation combine technique and imagination for young dancers. Since 2006, she has led Camp Dance with DanceMakers and taught for major organizations like DMA, DEA, and Rhee Gold's DanceLife. Becca co-owns Retter Entertainment with her husband, Thommie, producing Broadway workshops and directing the NYC Tap Crew. She teaches at Miller Street Dance Academy in Charlotte, NC, and has previously taught in NY and LA. With performances on MTV and internationally, Becca's passion, creativity, and love for teaching make her a favorite among students and educators alike.



Suavé is the founder of Hip Hop ConnXion, a nationally recognized dance company. His company has previously earned 1st in the U.S. and 2nd in the world at Hip Hop International, the only Midwest group to medal since the competition began in 2002. As a performer and choreographer, Suavé has appeared in *Save the Last Dance*, Disney's *Just Visited*, and the movie *Dreams*. He has worked with artists such as P-Diddy, Chris Brown, Roshon Fegan, and Jessy Schram, and has taught hip-hop globally. Suavé is a faculty member for MDP and guest teaches around the country. He is also the creator of *The ConnXion Experience*, and founder of *THE ONE Street Dance Showcase*. Suavé is also a Motivational Speaker at schools and universities, and is a passionate youth mentor, partners with DEA programs promoting positivity & drug-free living, and advocates for creating opportunities for underserved communities.



Connie Sweeney has over 35 years of experience in tap, jazz, ballet, and modern dance. She teaches at Jo's Footwork Studio in Western Springs and Dance Workshop/City Nation in Orland Park, IL. She trained at the NFAA in Madison, WI, earning a "platinum" in tap and an "honorable mention" in jazz. Connie has taught at CNADM, CDC, DMW, and STARQUEST conventions. She has performed with Matrix Dance Improv, Kirby Reed Ascension Project, Instruments of Movement, and Rhythm ISS, an all-female tap ensemble. She appeared in "Sibling Rivalry" with her brother, Jay Fagan, and danced nine years with Same Planet Different World. As artistic director of Footwork Dance Ensemble for five years, she helped shape a multidisciplinary company. Connie now choreographs for youth dance groups throughout Chicagoland, continuing to share her passion and expertise with the next generation of dancers.