

Meet the Faculty



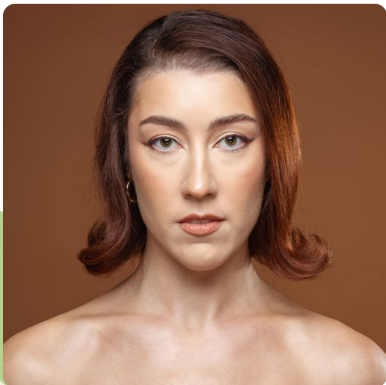
Caitlin Abraham is a Broadway performer, professional dancer, choreographer, and educator whose career spans musical theatre and concert dance. Her Broadway credits include the original casts of *An American in Paris* and *La Cage aux Folles*, as well as the national tour of Chicago. A former soloist with Carolina Ballet, Caitlin has performed works by George Balanchine, José Limón, Jerome Robbins, Lynne Taylor-Corbett, and Robert Weiss. Caitlin's extensive teaching career includes faculty positions at NYU Tisch Drama, Marymount Manhattan College, Broadway Dance Center, Joffrey Ballet School, and Joffrey Jazz & Contemporary. She has also taught and adjudicated for Youth America Grand Prix, NYCDA, Dance Masters of America, and other programs nationwide. Caitlin has worked with the Verdon/Fosse Legacy and coached professional performers, including Ariana DeBose. Drawing from her diverse professional experience, she brings a unique blend of ballet, jazz, musical theatre, and Broadway performance expertise to the classroom. Follow Caitlin on Instagram: [@caitlin.abraham](https://www.instagram.com/caitlin.abraham)



Michael Deeb Weaver is the Co-Director of Zodiaque Dance Company and a Clinical Assistant Professor of Dance at the University at Buffalo, where he teaches jazz, tap, and musical theatre dance. An accomplished dancer, actor, instructor, and choreographer, Michael's performance career has taken him around the world and includes national tours of *A Chorus Line* and *Young Frankenstein*, along with regional productions of *Kinky Boots*, *West Side Story*, *Singin' in the Rain*, and *Hello, Dolly*. Michael's choreography has been recognized twice as a finalist at the Industry Dance Awards in Los Angeles, with recent projects including *Mamma Mia!*, *Sweet Charity*, *Merrily We Roll Along*, and *Sister Act*. He has served on faculty at Nazareth College and as a guest instructor at Montclair State University, and has taught for Dance Masters of America, Chautauqua Institution, and Steps on Broadway. Michael is a member of Actors' Equity Association and holds a BFA in Dance from the University at Buffalo.



Maray Gutierrez is Artistic Associate of the Ruth Page Professional Dance Training Program. A Havana native and graduate of Cuba's Escuela Nacional de Arte, she spent a decade as a principal dancer with Danza Contemporánea de Cuba. In Chicago, Gutierrez performed with Luna Negra Dance Theater, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Hedwig Dances, where she served as Artistic Associate for 14 years. She was featured as a performer and assistant choreographer in Hedwig Dances' Emmy-nominated film *Arch of Repose* and earned an Emmy nomination for performing in the PBS documentary of Ruth Page's ballet *Billy Sunday*. Gutierrez was named one of "See Chicago Dance's Top 10 Women of 2006" for her choreography with Luna Negra Dance Theater. An educator and mentor, she has taught nationally and internationally. Her honors include 2021 3Arts Make a Wave and 2022 Hedwig Dances Dance Leadership awards. She co-chaired Chicago's Dance for Life in 2023.

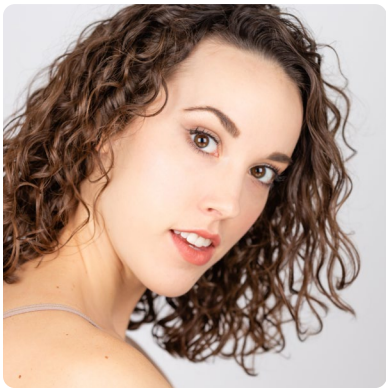


Belle Jessen is a performing artist, choreographer, and educator from Elgin, Illinois. She earned her BFA in Jazz Dance from Point Park University and has built a versatile, bicoastal career across concert and commercial dance, and theater. Her commercial credits span music videos, television, and film, including work with Dua Lipa, Katy Perry, Charli XCX, Troye Sivan, Banks, and Moby, as well as appearances on *The Voice*, *Zoey's Extraordinary Playlist*, and at Disney's D23. Belle has also performed with Visceral Dance Chicago and Arrogant Elbow and contributed to the development of new theatrical productions with choreographers Dominique Kelley, Ellenore Scott, and Ahmad Simmons. Her choreography includes a national KitchenAid commercial, music videos, professional companies, and award-winning competitive studios. An educator for 20 years, Belle is also the creator of *The Artist Workbook*, a guided journal for dancers. She is thrilled to be home and connect with the CNADM community!

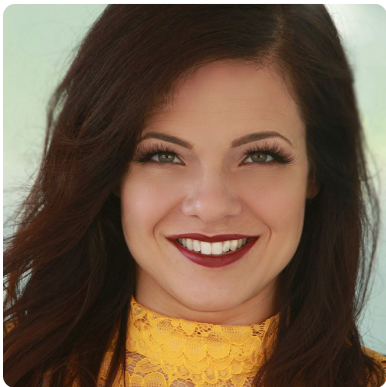
Meet the Faculty



Angel Kaba is an International artistic director and award-winning choreographer based in Brooklyn, New York. Currently, she is a professor at Rider University and a faculty member at Broadway Dance Center, Alvin Ailey Extension, and Steps on Broadway. Her artistic career began with ballet at the tender age of 6, which she pursued for more than 15 years. Throughout her career, Angel has shared the stage with artists like Coolio, Orishas, Kaye Styles, Rihanna, Kayne West, Taye Diggs, TrackDilla, Burna Boy, Salif Keita, Eddy Kenzo, Diamond Platinumz and others. Further notable experiences involved stage/television/commercial performances and dancing for world-renowned brands like Coca Cola, Levi's, Fructis by Garnier, Nutella, Universal, RocNation, MTV, NBC, Essence Festival, Madison Square Garden and SNAPCHAT.



Shelby Moran Amarantos is a Chicago-area native who trained at Dance Center Evanston and earned her BFA from The Juilliard School in 2015. Her professional performance career includes Thodos Dance Chicago, Visceral Dance Chicago, and Cerqua Rivera Dance Theatre, where she performed works by renowned choreographers and participated in numerous world premieres. Currently a freelance performer and educator in Chicago, Shelby continues to collaborate with C5: Create with no Limits, AJA Talent, and Stage Factor. She has also appeared as a guest artist with Moonwater Dance Project and independent choreographers. Shelby has extensive teaching experience throughout the Chicagoland area and currently serves on the faculty at Dance Center Evanston and Northwest Ballet Academy in Schaumburg, Illinois. She is a Licentiate Member (LCCA) of the Cecchetti Council of America and holds her Teacher Intermediate (Grade VI) Certificate.



Kelsey Nelson is a dance educator, choreographer, and adjudicator with more than 20 years of experience training dancers and educators. A graduate of Oklahoma City University in Dance Management, she has traveled throughout North America since 2016, combining intentional technique, mental focus, and personal expression to develop complete artists. Kelsey has served as a UDA Educator and Choreographer, Dance Masters of America Master Instructor, guest educator and choreographer, and competition adjudicator. She regularly leads teacher trainings and workshops and is the creator of a cross-training and teaching method designed to optimize performance, prevent injury, and build strength and longevity. She is also a contributing writer for Inside Dance Magazine. Her professional performance credits include Rock of Ages, Anchorman II: The Legend Continues, Disney's Million Dollar Arm, and an international tour with Royal Caribbean. Kelsey is passionate about blending technical precision with personal connection to create lasting impact in the studio.



Dr. Carrie Skony is a Certified Chiropractic Sports Physician® and Dance Medicine Specialist dedicated to helping dancers feel better, move better, and perform their best. She is the owner of PERFORM Active Wellness + Dance Medicine in Lisle, IL, specializing in dance injury assessment, dance-specific rehabilitation, performance optimization, and injury prevention. With over 20 years of experience in Dance Medicine, Dr. Skony has served as a consulting physician, guest teacher, and trusted resource for more than 30 dance studios and companies throughout Chicagoland. She is passionate about educating and empowering dance educators, parents, and dancers to learn how to care for their whole bodies well. Known for her compassionate communication, individualized care, and ability to make dancers feel understood and supported in every stage of their career, she aims to inspire long term health and reduce the risk for injuries so dancers can dance safer, stronger, longer.

Meet the Faculty



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.



Sarah Wilcoxon is a dance educator, choreographer, and Progressing Ballet Technique instructor with an MFA in Dance from Florida State University, comprehensive STOTT Pilates certification, and a 200-hour yoga certification. She previously served as a tenured professor of dance at Missouri State University, where she developed a nationally recognized dancer wellness program featured in *Dance Teacher Magazine*. A 2020 nominee for the International Association of Dance Medicine & Science (IADMS) Dance Educator of the Year Award, Sarah has published research on safe dance practices and dancer wellness in *The Journal of Dance Medicine & Science*. She has presented at numerous professional conferences, including IADMS, Pilates Method Alliance, and Dance Science and Somatics Educators. As an accomplished choreographer and director, she has screened award-winning dance films internationally, and her choreography has appeared in musical theatre productions nationwide. Sarah currently teaches Level 1 and Level 2 Progressing Ballet Technique (PBT) teacher certification workshops throughout the United States and Canada.



Mark Yonally is the founder and Artistic Director of Chicago Tap Theatre and the 2026 recipient of the American Tap Dance Foundation's Hooper Award. An internationally recognized performer, choreographer, and educator, Mark has performed and taught throughout the United States and Europe, with annual teaching residencies in Toulouse, France, and Barcelona, Spain. Mark teaches and adjudicates at conventions nationwide and has served on faculty at Oklahoma City University, where he developed the school's first Rhythm Tap syllabus, and frequently teaches at Hope College. His engaging approach to tap education combines technique, music theory, history, and choreography while keeping joy at the center of the learning experience. In 2006, Mark developed *Feel the Rhythm*, a program bringing tap dance education to children who are deaf and hard of hearing. He has also contributed to *Dance Spirit*, *Dance Teacher*, and *Dance Magazine* and hosts *The Tea on Tap*, featuring conversations with noted tap artists.