



University at Buffalo

The State University of New York

Dance Masters of America, Inc.

2023 Report - Chairperson Education Strategy

Activities during 2022

Submitted by Tom Ralabate

June 25, 2023

Dear Madam President:

It has been my distinct pleasure to serve my 17th term as Chairperson for Education Strategy for Dance Masters of America, Inc. (DMA). My responsibilities are introducing and implementing initiatives to advance educational standards and promote institutional integrity by advocating DMA's mission to include high standards of ethics within our prestigious organization and the dance profession.

TTS and SHIP

Due to the challenges of COVID-19 and the protocols set forward by the State of New York and SUNY Buffalo, SHIP and TTS for a second year were canceled at SUNY Buffalo. TTS resumed in 2022 and was held at Spezio's Dance Dynamics in Getzville, NY, directed and owned by DMA Chapter 8 member Michelle Spezio Ferm. DMA is thankful to member Michelle for the beautiful and adequate spaces provided at her establishment. Post-COVID SHIP took place for the first time at the Buffalo Marriott Marquis, adjacent to the University at Buffalo.

TTS Enrollment

Seventy registrants gathered for TTS at Spezio's Dance Dynamics location:

- 21 registrants in Level One;
- 14 registrants in Level Two;
- 8 registrants in Level Three;
- 9 registrants testing out in Level Four;
- 18 registrants in the post-graduate/advanced classes;
- 3 Test-outs in Tier 5, Tap took place.

I have yet to determine the exact number of exams administered; however, nine in the Level Four cohort prepared for test-outs, and three test-outs in Tier 5 Tap took place.

The new core Modern faculty team of Danielle Sheather, Assistant Professor of Dance at Southern Utah University, and Christie Zimmerman, Professor of Dance and Associate Dean of the College of Fine Arts at Ball State University, Indiana, were well received, along with TTS Advanced/PG faculty, Michael Deeb Weaver, Clinical Assistant Professor of Dance at UB. DMA introduced Halley Sullivan for the first time in morning Pilates classes.

TTS Core Faculty and the National Executive Committee continually monitor the DMA Study Guides, DMA Syllabi, learning outcomes, and level assessments. TTS is proud to boast a balanced breadth and depth of curriculum, faculty, and levels of certification.

SHIP Enrollment (10)

Ten talented students participated in the five-day choreographic camp, and presented short works in Ballet, Modern, Lyrical, Jazz, and Music Theatre. Parents, family, friends, and the Western NY community enjoyed a

final showing of works in a lecture demonstration format, in which faculty/choreographers talked about the choreographic process of their work, and fielded questions from the audience. Faculty/choreographers included: Ballet - Michael Lamb, Modern - Jenna DelMonte Zavrel, Lyrical - Tracy Navarro, Jazz - Tom Ralabate, and Music Theatre - Michael Deeb Weaver. The lecture demo format was well received, and I highly recommend continuing this educational format and model for SHIP. In addition, students and parents participated in a DMA College Preparation Seminar “Dos and Don’ts for Dance Majors” by Tom Ralabate.

Future Recommendations

DMA is constantly striving to maintain excellence in dance education, which is the keystone of the organization. Educational materials are scrutinized and updated to remain current and relevant in the evolving world of dance training and education. As the education strategist for DMA, and as dance educators, we are responsible for examining practices in our field to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion. I have proposed a review of all syllabi. I recommend that written historical information and practice (technique and performance) classes reflect a global application of culturally relevant pedagogy in the dance classroom, allowing instructors to teach and introduce methods that reflect students’ culture and affirm their experiences. With an awareness/adjustment and global approach to teaching methods, DMA will continue to elevate dance standards and celebrate pluralism in dance arts/training/education in America. A History Addendum Jazz Dance Overview draft has been submitted exploring the historical tapestry of American jazz dance.

The Future Home for DMA SHIP and TTS

As the education strategist, I initiated an action plan with UB Dance Chair, Anne Burnidge, and the Dean’s Office to facilitate future DMA educational events back at the University at Buffalo campus. I am pleased that accommodations were made to return DMA summer educational programs to the UB classroom spaces in 2023. However, impediments continued with UB Campus Housing, not guaranteeing the usual Greiner dorms but providing alternative spaces. DMA elected not to use Campus housing in 2023.

Conclusion:

For their educational voices and assistance in making our educational programs the best that they can be during these challenging times, I would like to thank the following: National President, Penny Kosa-Lemanski; National Treasurer, Charlene Locascio; National First Vice-President, Erin Spriggs, National Second Vice-President, Shawn Terenzi; Immediate Past President, Dody Flynn; TTS Administrator, Phyllis Guy; The National Office Coordinator, Ruby Toy; the DMA TTS and SHIP faculty; the UB dance faculty; and our Historian/Photographer Paul Janusz.

Thank you for this opportunity to serve and for your genuine support of DMA’s professional educational programs. Let’s continue to dream big and share the joy of dance often. Thank you, Madam President.

Respectfully submitted,



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