

# VIP Judges & Convention Instructors



Monyett Crump first discovered his love for dance at the age of 15 after being inspired by dance icons such as Michael Jackson and the Jabbawockeez. Since then, he has trained in Urban Movement with some of the top instructors and professional dance studios all over the country. He has also been a part of some of Chicago and Los Angeles's main urban companies including The Puzzle League, The Young Lions, immaBEAST, and CODA to name a few. Monyett has had the honor of working with artists including Jennifer Hudson, Ciara, Chance the Rapper, DLOW, Jody Watley, and Keke Palmer. In addition to dancing, Monyett has choreographed and taught across the country and in the United Kingdom. Monyett hopes to inspire dancers around the world, especially the next generation of dancers, and hopes to promote hard work and commitment.

Marcus Hardy is a multi-disciplined dancer/choreographer from North Carolina, who began his training at the age of 19. His passion for dance erupted after watching a local hip hop group perform at East Carolina University. Marcus spent many hours honing his skills as a hip hop dancer, joining a local Hip Hop Crew, Nubiance Dance Team, and eventually starting his own Dance Crew. During his time in the program, he cultivated his skills not only as a dancer, but as a choreographer as well, where his choreography had been seen at various professional venues. After graduating in 2012, with a BFA in Dance Performance, Marcus moved to Chicago to dance professionally with Inside Chicago Dance under the direction of Richard Smith, as a performing apprentice. He is going into his third year in the company, where he has been promoted to full company member. Marcus has also been a guest artist with SueMo Dance Company and Chicago Dance Crash and has had the opportunity to work with many established choreographers in the midwest.



Sarah Ford-Hardy is originally from Louisville, Kentucky and is a graduate of the Youth Performing Arts School. While attending YPAS, she received her training in ballet, modern and jazz, as well as lyrical, tap and hip-hop at other local studios. Sarah has also trained at the Joel Hall Dance Center and Columbia College in Chicago IL, the Edge Performing Arts Center in Hollywood, CA and Millennium Dance Complex in Los Angeles. She has performed with numerous dance companies such as Inside Chicago Dance, Midwest Dance Collective, DanceWerks Dance Productions, The Joel Hall Dancers and The JADD Co. Sarah has had the pleasure of sharing the stage with artists such as Weird Al Yankovic, Soulja Boy, Hannah Ford Welton and Joshua Welton of Counter Culture, 3rd Eye Girl and Prince. Sarah was a member of the Joseph Allen Decker Dance Company where she assisted Mr. Decker for two seasons. She was a featured dancer in the movie Dreams and is the choreographer and a dancer for The Prince Experience out of Milwaukee, WI. She is currently residing in Illinois where she is training, teaching and choreographing all over the Chicagoland area.

Robert Mckee attended Point Park University and is a former company member of Giordano Jazz Dance Chicago. He has been a guest dancer and choreographer most recently with Chicago Dance Crash, Cerqua Rivera, and other Independent projects. Robert began an interest in teaching and choreography at a very young age. Influenced by percussive rhythms and dynamic shapes, he finds himself always inspired to create. Robert is the Artistic Director of Inside ChicagoDance, has been on faculty at the Dance Center of Columbia College Chicago, a teacher for Chicago National Association of Dance Masters, and teaches throughout the Chicagoland area. He has worked with Rockford Dance Company, The Giordano Project, Giordano Juniors, McDonald Dance Academy, Barrington High School, Northshore School of Dance Performing Ensemble, the Giordano on Giordano



Debra Nanni is native of Buffalo, NY, living in Chicago, Debra started her performing career at Gus Giordano's Jazz Dance Chicago. She was privileged to be a soloist and company member for The Chicago Dance Medium as well as an independent performer with many affluent dancers from companies in Chicago and abroad. Currently, she teaches and choreographs at various private studios and with professional companies in Chicago and throughout the Midwest. She is proudly in her 12th year of teaching in Austria and Italy for Balletshule Zechner with creating two international works on ballet company F.V.G Neu Space in Udine Italy, which has been seen on international television. With her extensive knowledge in all areas of dance, Debra is in her 20th year as an adjudicator for various national dance and talent competitions and her 5th year as a teacher on the national convention circuit. Through Debra's teachings, her students have received many college scholarships, employment in the entertainment and television industry, professional companies and performances with nationally and internationally known recording artists.

Ellen Werksman Smith began her professional career in dance at the age of 16 when she performed with Illinois Regional Ballet in their production of Nutcracker.

She has worked and trained with Robert Joffrey (scholarship recipient), Lou Conte (Hubbard Street Dance Company), Gus Giordano, Rosemary Doolas, (Chicago Dance Medium), Nana Shineflug (Chicago Moving Company), Leona Bataille, and the American Ballet Theater. She was a company member of Chicago Dance Medium for 8 years, and a frequent guest artist of the Chicago Repertory Dance Ensemble. As a choreographer, she has created hundreds of entertainment performances for the Dancewerks Production Company. She has also choreographed extensively for the Chicago dance community. She has also collaborated with Dance for Life, and worked with soloists from the popular So You Think You Can Dance television series. As an instructor, Ms. Werksman has taught across the country. Ms. Werksman founded and directed Applause Talent Presentations Scholarship and Workshop Program, where she was a National Adjudicator and Director of the Workshop series across the United States. Ms. Werksman continues to provide scholarships to aspiring dancers across the country through Dancewerks.



Mark Yonally is the founder and Artistic Director of Chicago Tap Theatre, one of the most critically well-regarded dance companies in Chicago. They perform an annual three-show season in Chicago and tour both throughout America and Europe. Mark has developed a national and international reputation as a performer, with solo performances in Chicago, Helsinki, Barcelona, New York, Amsterdam and Paris. Furthermore, Mark has gained the plaudits of major dance critics for his innovative approach to tap choreography. His works have been commissioned and performed by the Bill Evans Dance Company, ETC and Hope College, among others. Mark also maintains a longstanding professional relationship with Valérie Lussac, Artistic Director of Tapage of Toulouse, France. He teaches and judges at conventions and competitions throughout the US, including Ovation Competitions and Mark Goodmans'. Mark is also a published author, with pieces appearing in Dance Spirit, Dance Teacher and Dance Magazine.