



“Memphis, Tennessee native, *Samantha Long*, is J Balvin’s Dance Captain and one of LA’s hottest professional choreographers, dancers & artist development professionals today. Famous for her trademark signature hip-hop choreography in heels, Samantha has impacted tens of millions worldwide through features in motion pictures, television, music projects, mega-brand partnerships and many, many viral videos.

Dance Mogul Magazine Exclusive Interview...

# SAMANTHA LONG

Founder of A THREAT

**Dance Mogul:** What inspired you to start dancing?

**Samantha:** Growing up I loved entertaining & always had so much energy I didn’t know what to do with. I started dancing when I was 4 years old around my house and in public (grocery stores etc.) to where my parents had no other option but to put me in a dance class! From there my passion for dance grew stronger, and I knew it was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. I remember watching my mom’s favorite movie “White Christmas” on repeat growing up in awe of the choreography and how they could move. The feeling I got watching that movie is what I hoped others would feel one day watching me dance. I also think my passion for dance came from my grandma who was a Rocket as a teenager & would talk about how much she enjoyed the stage! Dance has always been and still is my therapy and outlet to share what my soul needs to let out. I hope to inspire people from all over the world to start dancing and fall in love with it the way I did.

**Dance Mogul:** What were some of your favorite choreography in videos growing up?

**Samantha:** Wow, where do I even begin... There have been so many music videos and performances that have shaped me to be who I am today, and want to become a choreographer. I remember watching Mia Michaels’ Addiction piece with Kayla and Kuponon on SYTYCD at 12 years old being brought to tears. I was so moved I spent all day watching their performance on my DVR and learned from my tv (this was before Youtube was a thing). I was obsessed with all Britney Spears’ music videos especially Brian Friedman’s choreography to “I’m a Slave 4 U”. I’m honored to have assisted my biggest inspirations I just listed above Brian and Kayla growing up as a teenager. And I mean come on I have to mention Kenny Ortega’s iconic choreography for ALL the High School Musical movies. When I was 10 I used to host sleepover parties with my friends to teach them all the choreography breakdowns. I’d be lying if I told you I couldn’t whip out the “We’re All in This Together” breakdown right now ha ha!

**Dance Mogul:** How did you go about developing your craft?

**Samantha:** Up until 7th grade I was home-schooled so I could be full time at the dance studio I was training at. When I wasn’t at the studio, I was in my room free-styling. I then decided I wanted to try this whole public school thing out, but it didn’t last long until I was missing a lot of days for dance conventions/competitions. When I was 14 years old I was brought on as a professional assistant for a convention, and then became an assistant for different conventions in years to follow. I would then spend every weekend traveling from my hometown of Memphis, Tennessee to a new city. My training was so much fun for me I didn’t even really see it as “work”. Then at 16, I convinced my dad that I might as well make the move now to Los Angeles since I was already missing so much school & knew that dance was what I wanted as a career. I then took the CHSPE test in California and passed meaning I could work as a legal adult! I then signed to an Agency and made the move that year to begin my journey as a professional dancer! From that point on I trained every day at studios and would fly out to conventions on the weekend to assist choreographers such as Tyce Diorio, Tricia Miranda, and more. I then started booking jobs and began teaching as a faculty member at 18. From then on my passion for dance grew into choreography, and I started to put all my energy into that! From there on I have been progressing in my journey as a choreographer and have started my brand “A THREAT” and Artist Development Studio “A THREAT Studio”. Every day I get inspired to train/work harder than the day before to get better. I will always be a student.

**Dance Mogul:** Did you have a support system?

**Samantha:** My family was my support system growing up. Without their support, I wouldn’t have been able to access the training I had as a kid and move to Los Angeles to pursue my dreams at such a young age. My mom passed away from breast cancer when I was nine, and my dad stepped up to the plate to be the best dance dad in the game. Starting off in the convention world he would drive me from Memphis to a different city every week with no complaints. My three older siblings would drive me to all my rehearsals, and hype me up consistently. When I got to LA, I was very much so on my own and I’m proud to say that both the wins and losses of my business are completely mine. I find it extremely important to have a community of people who support you, and wanna see you win doing the things that you love! I created my brand A THREAT to be just that for people who don’t have one or are just seeking a home in this crazy industry.

**Dance Mogul:** What was your big break?

**Samantha:** To be honest, in my eyes I’ve never seen one specific moment as my “Big Break”. Every job or opportunity has just been one step closer to something bigger I wanted to accomplish. Nothing in this industry has ever been handed to me. I’ve had to become an entrepreneur and create my opportunities from scratch. Every moment is a milestone that I cherish. Some highlights this past year have been getting to work with J Balvin on his latest World Tour and starting my brand A THREAT.

**Dance Mogul:** As a woman how to do maneuver during a male-dominated industry?

**Samantha:** Being a young female entrepreneur is anything but easy in the entertainment industry. Having to navigate if people want to work with you based on your looks over your talent is something I’ve had to face countless times and continue to deal with. What I’ve learned is as a woman you have to hold your ground and be passionate about what you’re chasing. However, I am addicted to breaking glass ceilings no matter the situation. Bring it on.

**Dance Mogul:** How has the current pandemic affected you and your business?

**Samantha:** As an entertainer who also owns a business around the art of entertaining people in person, this pandemic has been devastating. My business model has been completely shifted. I have moved all that I possibly can online for people to access all over the world, but I am limited to the services I can offer without being in person. All classes at the A THREAT Studio have been moved online as well as tutorials and privates! I love staying connected to all my Artists, students, and customers this way, but I am looking forward to COVID-19 to go away so we can go back to normal!

**Dance Mogul:** Where do you see dance going from here?

**Samantha:** I hope to see dance do nothing but expand bigger and greater into the world. I am a huge advocate for social media since it has become being such a helpful tool in bringing dance into the mainstream world. People are now seeing dancers as stars instead of just “backup dancers”. Dancers are taking over the world with TikTok now, and dance challenges are now a prime reason why singers /rappers are getting discovered in the first place. I will continue to be an advocate for dancers to get paid as well as getting treated properly for as long as I live. I hope to see the dance community as a whole stand together more and fight for our rights so we can see a change in generations to come! Let’s make being a professional dancer/choreographer a substantial living.

**Dance Mogul:** What advice do you have for up and coming dancers and entrepreneurs?

**Samantha:** The best advice I have for up and coming dancers/entrepreneurs is to never give up and be consistent. If I had a dollar for every time I was told no or “that’s not gonna work” I’d be a millionaire. When I launched A THREAT at 21 years old I had countless haters saying I was too young to do what I was doing. I’ve never listened because I don’t see age as a limitation, and know what I am capable of. You have to trust your gut and work your ass off to get to your dream. It will NEVER be easy & you will always have problems that arise, but it’s how you handle them and learn from them that makes you a winner. I have only been able to live out my dreams solely from these things. My brand was built on this foundation/mindset of not letting anyone or anything stop you in your pursuit of happiness.

**Dance Mogul:** Is there anyone you’d like to thank for helping you on your journey?

**Samantha:** I would like to thank my manager Aaron Tropf at Tropf Management for helping me build A THREAT from the ground up and supporting me through everything I do. He believed in me when nobody else did and has encouraged me to keep fighting when times would get rough. His vision for my career is bigger than mine sometimes and that says a lot because I am a big dreamer. On top of managing me, he has also fought endlessly for all dancers and choreographers in the music industry. Educating music artists, executives, managers & labels what dancers/choreographers are truly worth! I would also like to thank my followers/supporters for showing me so much love and supporting A THREAT in every way! Last but not least I would like to thank my family for the endless support they have given me my entire life to get to where I am today.