

# DANCE

## Mogul Magazine™

MAY 2015

Inspiring Self Empowerment



**DANCE  
MOGUL  
EXCLUSIVE**



**The QUEEN  
of DANCE...**

*Laurieann*  
**Harlee Gibson**

CELEBRATING KINGS & QUEENS 2015



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# DANCE MOGUL

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Sincerely,  
Basil Harris  
CEO/Founder



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Poverty affects life in so many ways in our community. It is difficult for students to pursue dance outside of school, because they cannot afford to pay for classes, their families struggle to transport them regularly to classes and other events, and purchasing special dance equipment is beyond the reach of many.

One of the greatest challenges I have met is addressing the attitudes of people in the students' support networks who don't understand or appreciate the value of pursuing a life in the arts. Many parents stonewall their children and prevent them from continuing their studies at our performing/visual arts high school (the only one like it in our state) and instead redirect their children to a vocational high school, where they learn a trade so they can begin working upon graduation. I find that generally, there is a misconception about what it means to be a "successful artist", and that many put that title in the same category as "NBA/NFL star" or "pop superstar", decide that is too risky and out-of-reach to pursue, and call it a pipe dream. Success and wealth are linked in our culture (at least in the minds of the masses, it seems), and teaching children and their families that these 2 ideas can be mutually exclusive is a great task, particularly in terms of dance, which is very much underrepresented as an art form in general.

This is why I love to expose my students to artists who are also entrepreneurs, so they can see how an artist's lifestyle is as creative as the art they make...that it is all part of the same process: trial, failure, success, feedback, redesign, performance...and always there are elements of luck and tragedy.

Nikki Carrara

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# Welcome! to Dance Mogul Magazine™

*Inspiring Self-Empowerment*



*Basil Harris*  
Basil Harris/CEO & Founder



*Anthony Harris*  
Anthony Harris/Co-Founder

**D**ance Mogul Magazine was founded by father and son team, Basil Harris and Anthony Harris. In an effort to help support and promote the importance of Arts and education, Dance Mogul Magazine was birthed. Since Dance Mogul Magazine's conception in 2010, we have been sharing stories of dancers all over the world. We're aware that far too many talented and hard-working street dancers, contemporary dancers and professional dancers in general, have not gotten due credit for their work; as a result, we've set out on a mission to help change that by inspiring and promoting Self-Empowerment through the pages of our publication. With this inspiring *multi-culture issue*, we invite you on an exciting adventure... ***an exploration into the many forms of cultural expressions of dance!*** For 2015, our intent is to bridge the gap between dance cultures, bringing awareness to the vast art of dance and movement worldwide. In this issue, we celebrate *Laurieann Harlee Gibson* as she continues to create opportunities for future generations of dancers to come. Her ability as a natural born leader, coupled with her passion to help develop other dancers, caught the attention of *Dance Mogul Magazine*. Our tag line of *Self-Empowerment* can be seen through the photo stylings of C. Michael Sykes as he embraces the Art of *Self-Empowerment* through his lens. As you turn through the pages of his work you will see very humble dance artist embrace the concept of *Self-Empowerment* through their poses.

***"The Arts is a gift from the Universe to celebrate our individuality." --Dance Mogul***



# Dance Mogul Magazine

INSPIRING SELF-EMPOWERMENT

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**EDITOR**  
DORINE FRANCIS



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# Welcome! to Dance Mogul Magazine™

*Inspiring Self-Empowerment*





*Lauriann*  
**Harlee Gibson**

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# Laurieann Gibson



## The exclusive

Laurieann Gibson's choreography and creative direction has helped define the image and aesthetic of several artists including Lady Gaga, Nicki Minaj, Keri Hilson, the Dixie Chicks, Alicia Keys, Katy Perry, Sean "Diddy" Combs, and Mary J. Blige. She gained special notice as Lady Gaga's choreographer and creative director. Laurieann and Gaga have completed over 10 videos together, including "Bad Romance," which earned Laurieann an MTV VMA in 2010.

Audiences grew to love Laurieann as Diddy's go-to choreographer on MTV's *Making the Band*. After years of ceding the spotlight, Ms. Gibson took center stage in *The Dance Scene* on E! (averaging more than 1 million viewers an episode) following her life and work, and as Director and Executive Producer of her #1 BET reality competition, *Born to Dance: Laurieann Gibson*, which focused on empowering young women to pursue their dreams.

In 2011, Laurieann was nominated for EMMY, MTV VMA, Much Music, and Teen Choice awards. In addition to an EMMY nomination for Outstanding Directing for a Variety, Music Or Comedy Special for "The Monster Ball" Lady Gaga HBO Special, Laurieann was nominated for an MTV VMA for Best Choreography for Lady Gaga's "Judas" music video, as well as a TEEN CHOICE nomination for Choice TV Reality Star.

Laurieann continues working with established and emerging artists. She first worked with Nicki Minaj on one of her first major TV performances at the 2010 MTV Video Music Awards, and worked with her again for her 2012 GRAMMY performance. Katy Perry's performance at the 2012 Kids' Choice Awards was also choreographed and creative directed by Laurieann. Laurieann also directed and choreographed international K-pop phenomenon Big Bang's "Alive Tour 2012." Laurieann appeared as a judge on the 2<sup>nd</sup> season of *Canada Sings!* on Global, and is now working on her own album "...as Harlee. She introduced the world to the apocalyptic anthem, "Dream Warriors", last year. Later this year, she will be making the world dance with additional new and innovate music."



# L

# E

*Preparing to Leave*

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**When it comes to selecting Dance Mogul Magazine’s “Kings” and “Queens” of Dance,** we purposefully focus on the character of the candidate in addition to their notable credentials and contributions to the dance industry. It was clear from the very beginning of the selection process, however, that one visionary Creative Director, Choreographer and Artist would be chosen: Laurieann Gibson.





# L

## *Working with Elite Professionals*



**Laurieann's "Gaga" story is reflective of our own core beliefs here at Dance Mogul as well.** It's paramount for the "teacher" to pay it forward to the "student", but equally important that the "teacher" herself keeps experiencing and growing. Enter "Harlee". After years of developing other artists, Gibson decided it was time to invest in her own brand and image in a new way. Once cocooned, the caterpillar that is "Harlee" has transformed into a beautiful butterfly. Combining her own experience as a creative visionary and choreographer with her musical background, the artist, "Harlee", is Gibson's musical persona. She warns us not to get it twisted though... Harlee is no alter-ego, just the expression of this particular aspect of Gibson. She continues to develop artists and creative direct. Gibson takes pride in developing artists and helping them actualize their potential.





# L

## Training at Alvin Ailey

**From her first major gig as a “Fly Girl” on *In Living Color*, to starring on MTV’s pop culture phenom, *Making The Band*, Gibson has poured her heart into every engagement or opportunity—forever realizing and developing her purpose. Gibson is very well known as a Creative Director and Choreographer to many household names including Lady Gaga, Nicki Minaj, Alicia Keys and Big Bang (seriously, we could go on for pages), and her approach with these clients is a unique culmination of her own experience. It’s not just about teaching, singing, and dancing techniques to the aforementioned, it’s more about how to deliver personal self-expression through the music that the artists are producing.**





It was December 8, 2014, on a calm afternoon, and clearly Gibson had no speaking voice. Immediately noting that the frog in her throat was due to the previous day's back-to-back rehearsal schedule, she apologized and expressed how adamant she was about completing the interview. Here I'm thinking that I'm the lucky one, but Gibson let me know it was the other way around by stating how blessed she felt to have her hard work recognized. This positive energy instantly vindicated our selection to crown Gibson, "Queen".



# Harlee

**H**arlee primed us with her hit “Dream Warriors” last year and is now poised to capture the world’s attention with follow up material due out soon. Though it’s not common for a dancer to rise through the ranks and become an established artist (we can only think of a few names), if ANYONE is going to make it happen, it’s Laurieann Gibson. As a bold and unflinching female in a male-dominated entertainment business, Gibson serves as a shining example to young girls anywhere that they can shatter the glass ceiling and make the world dance! The planet would be better off if each of us embraced the brand of inspiration that Gibson instills. And because of that, let us all take a humble bow and honor THE Queen of Dance, Laurieann Gibson.





# C. Michael Sykes

Sykes Photography, LLC

## *Photographic Brilliance*



C. Michael Sykes first picked up a camera as a hobby in 2008, and has since then, embarked upon a journey to create photographic brilliance. In just a few years, C. Michael Sykes has quickly become a recognized photographer of considerable expertise. He has honed his skills while diversifying into several areas of photography, achieving technical skill and artistic merit in each one. C. Michael Sykes has skillfully brought creativity and passion to each project, but of his

many photographic talents, the depth and artistry that is created as he captures the art of dance is particularly outstanding and notable.

Through his signature dance photography, C. Michael Sykes creates a masterful blend of environment and movement. Specializing in the capture of movers in natural settings, the essence and genius of his work is the balance of the dancers' technical prowess and the rich texture of the environment surrounding the dancer.

Sykes Photography, LLC is the brand that C. Michael Sykes envisioned to serve as the platform for his work. The mission of Sykes Photography, LLC is simply to provide quality photographic services, and to produce photographic works of art. Sykes Photography, LLC is nurtured and sustained through the combination of the technical skill of C. Michael Sykes and the creative direction of his wife, Tianna Pourciau Sykes.

From his studio work to his photography in unconventional places, C. Michael Sykes is eager, well poised and on his way to creating his legacy and contributing his photographic voice one image at a time.





# *Sykes Photography*



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## *Lauren Simon*

Theo “Lala” Simón, 27, is a commercial dancer and dance choreographer from Atlanta, Georgia.

Over her professional career, she has worked with artists such as Sleepy Brown, Brooklynn Dossey, Norwood, and Athena Skye. She has worked as a creative consultant and creative director for production companies as well as nightlife venues.

A natural entertainer since the age of four, she has always been fascinated by literature, creative writing, theatre, music, and, of course, many disciplines of dance. “My favorites are contemporary and jazz, but I want to do it all!”

“When I was young, I would listen to music and I would create the most vivid performances in my mind. From the dancers’ steps to the way the lighting hit the stage--it was all there. To be honest, it could be a pretty overwhelming experience if I didn’t create an outlet for it!”

### **Her style:**

“I am a free spirit and rebel. I think that part shines through most in my work. I want to place emphasis on femininity, fierceness, power, and rebelliousness.”

### **What motivates her:**

“It’s both a job I think is really fun, yet, at the same, time it is also very sacred to me.

“I believe we are in the age where the female choreographer gets a bigger voice and a chance to really shine creatively. It’s really exciting!

“I love making my audience feel something. I love to make them think, laugh or cry--inspire or surprise them. I love giving them something totally unexpected, and in the process, breaking a rule or two. Because, why not?”



# *Heather Hatzenbuhler*



Heather Hatzenbuhler began her dance career at Sugarloaf Performing Arts Studio (SPA) during high school after nine years as a competitive figure skater. As a result of the intensive, professional training she received from Lori Zamzow-Wire and Kara Hill-Protos, Heather progressed quickly to become a member of the Senior Company, performing many feature roles and winning numerous awards for her solos at dance competitions throughout the state. She went on to attend the University of Georgia where she was in the Honors Program and graduated Summa Cum Laude with a degree in Environmental Economics and Management. She is on the faculty at SPA and works as an Environmental Analyst whenever she isn't in the studio.

**DMM: What words of encouragement do they have for the youth?**

Pursue your passions and never give up. In life there are always struggles, but how you respond to these challenges is what determines your path.

**DMM: What was it like working with Michael/Sykes Photography as a photographer/during your photo session?**

It was really easy. Michael got the shots very quickly and helped make all of the dancers look great.





## *Sara McKenna*

Sara McKenna began dance classes at the age of five in New Jersey and continued her training in Georgia. It was in high school when she took dance more seriously after performing her biggest role of Peter in *Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* ballet under the Trinity Christian Fellowship: The Studio. She studied under Lori Zamzow-Wire at Sugarloaf Performing Arts in the Sugarloaf Ballet Company, where she performed in the ballets *Snow White*, *Aladdin*, and *Sleeping Beauty*. After graduating from Collins Hill High School, Sara obtained her Bachelor's degree in dance at Kennesaw State University with a concentration in ballet, even though she performed more modern. While dancing with the Kennesaw Dance Company, Sara performed at the American College Dance Festival and at the Kennedy Center. Since graduating, Sara has danced with SIDEWAYS Contemporary dance company and is currently with Full Radius Dance while also teaching dance at Peachtree Presbyterian Church. She hopes to continue dancing as long as she can.





## *Ursula Kendall Johnson*

A native Atlantan choreographer and performer, Ursula Kendall has been inspired by the african diaspora communities and modern dance history. She graduated from Tri-Cities High School in East Point and attended Dillard University in New Orleans. That is where she began grooming and sharpening her skillset of becoming a sought after talent, and has set her unique repertory at Wake Forest University, University of North Carolina School of the Arts, University of North Carolina Charlotte and Greensboro, New Style Motherlode in Oakland, California, along with some international traveling companies, such as Tekrema Center for the arts in New Orleans, and St. Mary's Youth Companies in Islington, London.





## *Josh Schadl*

Josh Schadl is a native of Atlanta, GA who began his dance training at the age of 10 at the Conservatory of Dance and Fine Arts. At the age of 14, his curiosity in ballet peaked and he began taking classes at the Atlanta Ballet under the direction of Armando Luna. Seeing his potential, Luna invited Josh to join the Pre-Professional division of the Atlanta Ballet where he gained a wealth of knowledge and confidence. Through a partnership between the Atlanta Ballet and Kennesaw State University, Josh furthered his training under teachers such as Momchil Mladenov, Ivan Pulinkala, and Reiko Kimura. During his time at Kennesaw, Josh has performed with the Atlanta Ballet, the Georgia Ballet, the Georgia Youth Ballet, and Ballet Mississippi and Tampa Bay Dance Theatre as well as winning two national titles at the American College Dance Festival with a performance at the Kennedy Center in May of 2012 and June of 2014. Josh, an alumnus of Kennesaw State University, is a double major in Spanish and Dance. He also studied in Taipei, Taiwan at the National Taiwan University of the Arts as an exchange student. Josh is in his first season with Ballethnic Dance Company in East Point, GA where he made his debut as the Leopard in Ballethnic's production of "The Leopard Tale".





# *Carrie Petrak*

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Carrie Petrak is originally from Augusta, Georgia, and began her formal dance training under Ron and Kathleen Jones. Throughout her childhood, she was invited to attend many summer intensives including The Atlanta Ballet, The University of North Carolina School of the Arts, Kaatsbaan, and Hubbard Street Dance Chicago. When Carrie was fifteen, she decided to leave home to attend the University of North Carolina School of the Arts as a full time high school ballet student. While at UNCSCA, she had the privilege of studying under Ethan Stiefel, Nigel Burley, and Warren Conover. Upon graduation, Carrie became a trainee for Nashville Ballet, but found herself wanting to pursue a college education. She is currently studying Dance at Kennesaw State University where she has had the privilege of dancing many exciting roles, such as a soloist role in “Paquita”, the lead in Sandra Parks’ “Rebuild”, and the lead in Christen Weimer’s “Sablon”. Carrie is also very active in the Atlanta dance community. This will be her first season with The Georgia Ballet. She also dances professionally with other Atlanta area dance projects, including Blue Bird: Uncaged, and the Lume Foundation.

*-Photographic Stylings of C. Michael Sykes-*



## *Morgan Hairston*

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Morgan Hairston is a native of Stone Mountain, Georgia where she began her dance training in Ballet, Modern and Jazz under Dawn Axam at DeKalb School of the Arts. She later continued her training in Modern, Gaga, Ballet and Jazz at Kennesaw State University under director Ivan Pulinkala, graduating cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts in Dance in May of 2013. Throughout her training, she has had the pleasure to work with Jennifer Archibald, Angela Harris, Sandra Parks, Lauri Stallings, Nicole Johnson and Daryl Foster. She has also participated in summer programs such as Deeply Rooted Dance Theater summer intensive as well as Bates Dance Festival and American College Dance Festival. She is currently performing in her first season with the Atlanta Dance Connection under Allyne Gartrell and most recently was awarded a scholarship to study at Lula Washington Dance Theatre.

*-Photographic Stylings of C. Michael Sykes-*







# *Apollo Levine*

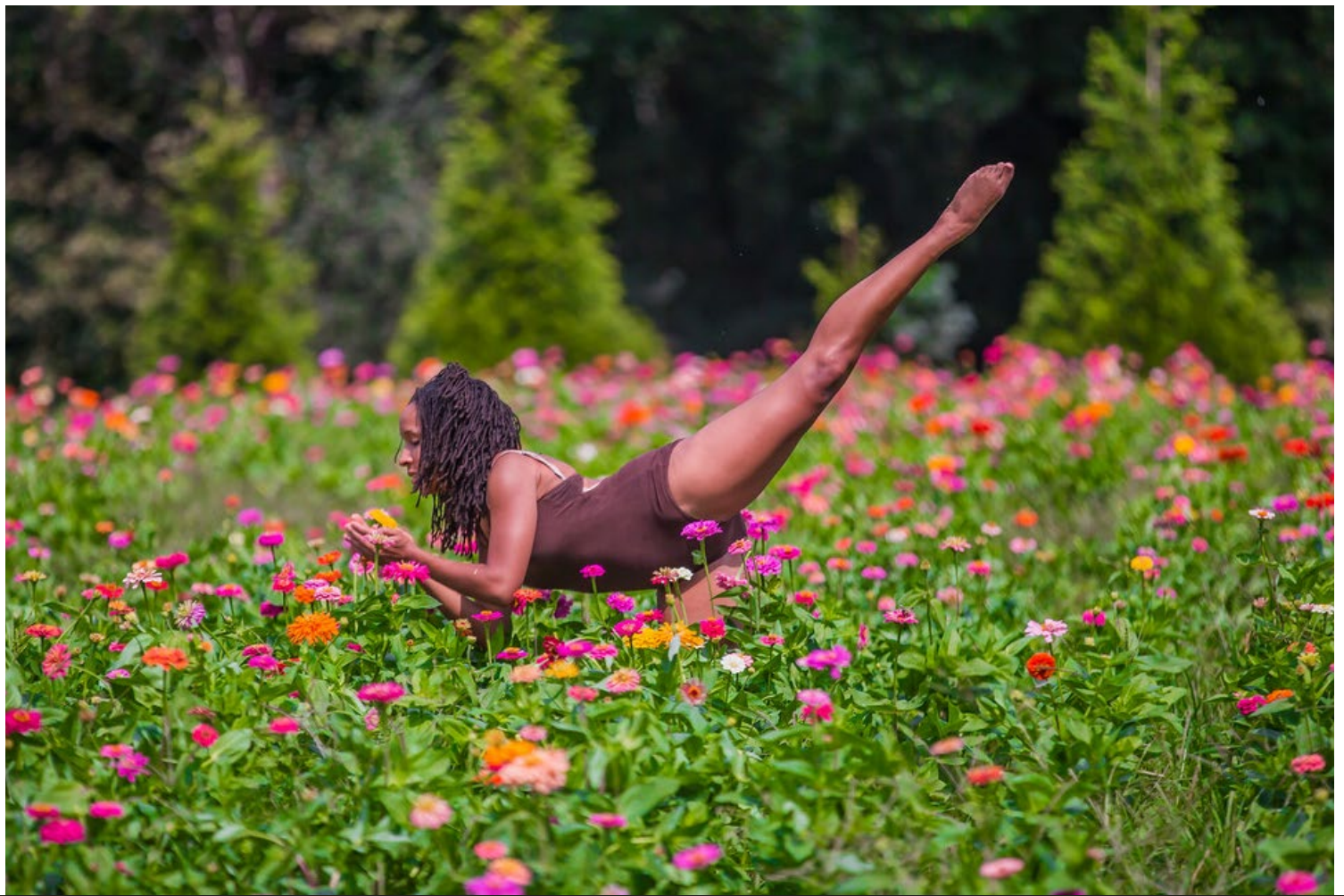
Apollo Levine is an Abbeville, LA native, although he was raised in South Bend, IN. Apollo likes to think of his early transitions as giving him a Midwestern-Southern charm! At the tender age of ten, Apollo graced the stage for the first time with his fourth grade show choir and never looked back. Being the youngest of four of a Baptist pastor, Apollo always kept his faith and ambition to the forefront of his career. After leaving home, Apollo found himself on national and international stages all around the world using acting, singing, and dance as a platform for career, mentoring, and ministry. He has been able to use his gifts to choreograph and work with major music artist in developing stage shows and video concepts, foster up-and-coming R&B/pop artists, choreograph for NBA dance teams, and also become the face of a dance workout video called “Shazzy Fitness”.

While helping forge the pathway and build brands for others, Apollo has never left his own dream. He’s the former front man for the rock band SteppHeavy and has now stepped out on his own as a solo artist. When it comes to theater, “Sister Act”, “Ragtime”, “Dreamgirls”, “Smokey Joe’s Cafe”, “The Odd couple”, “School House Rock”, “Crazy For You”, and “Hair” are just a few of Mr. Levine’s credits. In tv and film, Apollo has had a recurring stint on the BET original *Let’s Stay Together*. Other film credits include, *I Thought You Knew*, *Bolden*, and *College Boys*.

Most recently, Apollo became the first African-American to originate the role of the historic Chinese legend, “The Monkey King”, in the Broadway-styled Chinese musical, *The Monkey King*, premiering in Beijing, China. While playing the “Monkey King,” Apollo made the transition into directing and choreographing the piece while maintaining the lead role. Currently, Apollo has made a move into NYC to continue his artistry and further the vision he’s had as a child to share his gifts across the world.

*-Photographic Stylings of C. Michael Sykes-*





*-Photographic Stylings of C. Michael Sykes-*

# *Taylor Ferguson*

Taylor SaNise Ferguson began dancing with Ballethnic Academy of Dance and later with the Georgia Ballet. She spent summers training with Orlando Ballet, Georgia Governors Honors Program and Dance Theatre of Harlem. Taylor attended the University of South Carolina on a dance merit scholarship. She graduated cum laude with a B.A. in Dance Education and a B.S. in Exercise Science. Taylor was a member of the USC Dance Company, performing many works including Balanchine's "Stars and Strips", Twyla Tharp's "Duece Coupe", Lila York's "Celts". After graduation, Taylor spent a year with Dayton Contemporary Dance Company 2nd company, directed by Shonna Hickman-Matlock. She has also worked with Dance Canvas and is a company member with Ballethnic Dance Company.





*-Photographic Stylings of C. Michael Sykes-*

# *Kim* *Linenkohl*

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Kim Linenkohl has danced for over 30 years, beginning in ballet at the age of six at the Joni Messler Studio in Gainesville, Florida. She later trained in jazz, modern, tap, hip-hop, pointe, partnering and every style offered at Burklyn Ballet Theatre, Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre School, Boston Ballet School, Contemporary Ballet Theatre, Joffrey Ballet School, and Santa Fe Community College. Professionally, Kim has performed with the Big Apple Circus, Staten Island Ballet, Dance Canvas, Physix Urban Dance Theatre, Paideia Arts, and spent seven seasons with the Georgia Ballet. Her love of performing, choreographing, and teaching remain strong, while balancing her role as a mother of two young children. This journey has been fulfilling already, but the best is yet to come.





# *Indya Childs*

Born in Atlanta, GA, Indya Childs began her formal dance training at the Atlanta Ballet. She also attended summer programs at the Atlanta Ballet and Alonzo King's Lines Ballet on scholarship. Childs holds a B.A. in Dance from Kennesaw State University. At KSU, she was a member of the Nu Delta Alpha Dance Honor Society and awarded the Outstanding Senior Scholarship in Dance in 2013. She currently dances professionally with Ballethnic Dance Company and T. Lang Dance. Childs recently landed a spot as one of the "Top 25 to Watch in 2015" in the January issue of *Dance Magazine*.

*-Photographic Stylings of C. Michael Sykes-*





# *Jessica Guda*

Jessica is an Atlanta native who began her formal dance training at the age of ten in Cartersville. After attending summer intensives both at Ballet Magnificat! and Alonzo King Lines Ballet, she continued to pursue classical ballet at The Atlanta Ballet on a full merit scholarship. During her senior year of high school and first year at Georgia State University, Jessica was part of the Fellowship division with the Atlanta Ballet. She performed in such productions as *Four Seasons*, *Celts*, *Pinocchio*, *Snow White*, *Big*, *Nutcracker*, *Cinderella*, *Don Quixote*, and *Swan Lake*. She then continued her training for a year with the Alonzo King Lines Ballet BFA program where she performed new works with choreographers such as Gregory Dawson of Dawson Dance SF, Carmen Rozenstraten, and Kara Davis. Jessica was also in the HBO feature film, *Hemmingway and Gelhorn*, which premiered in 2012. Since returning to Atlanta, Jessica has performed works by Robert and Jennifer Mason, Kassandra Newberry Taylor, and Rachel Truitt with the Gotta Dance Contemporary Company. After this, she returned to the Atlanta Ballet Fellowship division for their 2013/2014 season and performed a soloist role in John McFall's world premiere, entitled "Three". She is currently free lancing and completing her final year at Georgia State University in order to achieve an undergraduate degree in Rhetoric and Composition.

*-Photographic Stylings of C. Michael Sykes-*







## *Allen AJ Paug*

AJ Paug is from Acworth, GA where he started his training in dance and theatre at Woodland High School for the performing arts. AJ received his classical dance and choreography training at Kennesaw State University under the direction of Ivan Pulinkala. He has been choreographing and teaching for seven years and is in high demand for his creativity and unique use of fusing both genres of contemporary and hip-hop dance. AJ has taught and choreographed award-winning competition and concert dances at studios such as Dan and Co., Georgia Dance Conservatory, Gotta Dance Atlanta, Great Gig Dance Co., and The Royal Dance Academy. For the past four years, he has choreographed citywide events and festivals including Flashmobs, Blacklight Shows and Ariel Silks for the city of Suwanee. For

the past four years he has managed and led his own after school dance program in Fulton County for the Royal Dance Academy, under the direction of Sarah Haslock-Johnson. AJ is the lead choreographer of the KINGSMEN, the official hip-hop crew for the RDA, and is now the Hip-Hop director at the Royal Dance Academy and is part of Kollektive dance crew. In addition, he is part of Gotta Dance Contemporary where he was a featured performer in their latest show, "Surface," at the Westside Cultural Art Center. AJ is also skilled in music and video editing and is a part of Bush Jumping and the Why Not Production team that has provided countless promotional/concept videos for Atlanta-based artists including CiCi Kelly, Stephan Reynolds, Rachel Truitt, Codie Wiggins and The Mad Violinist.

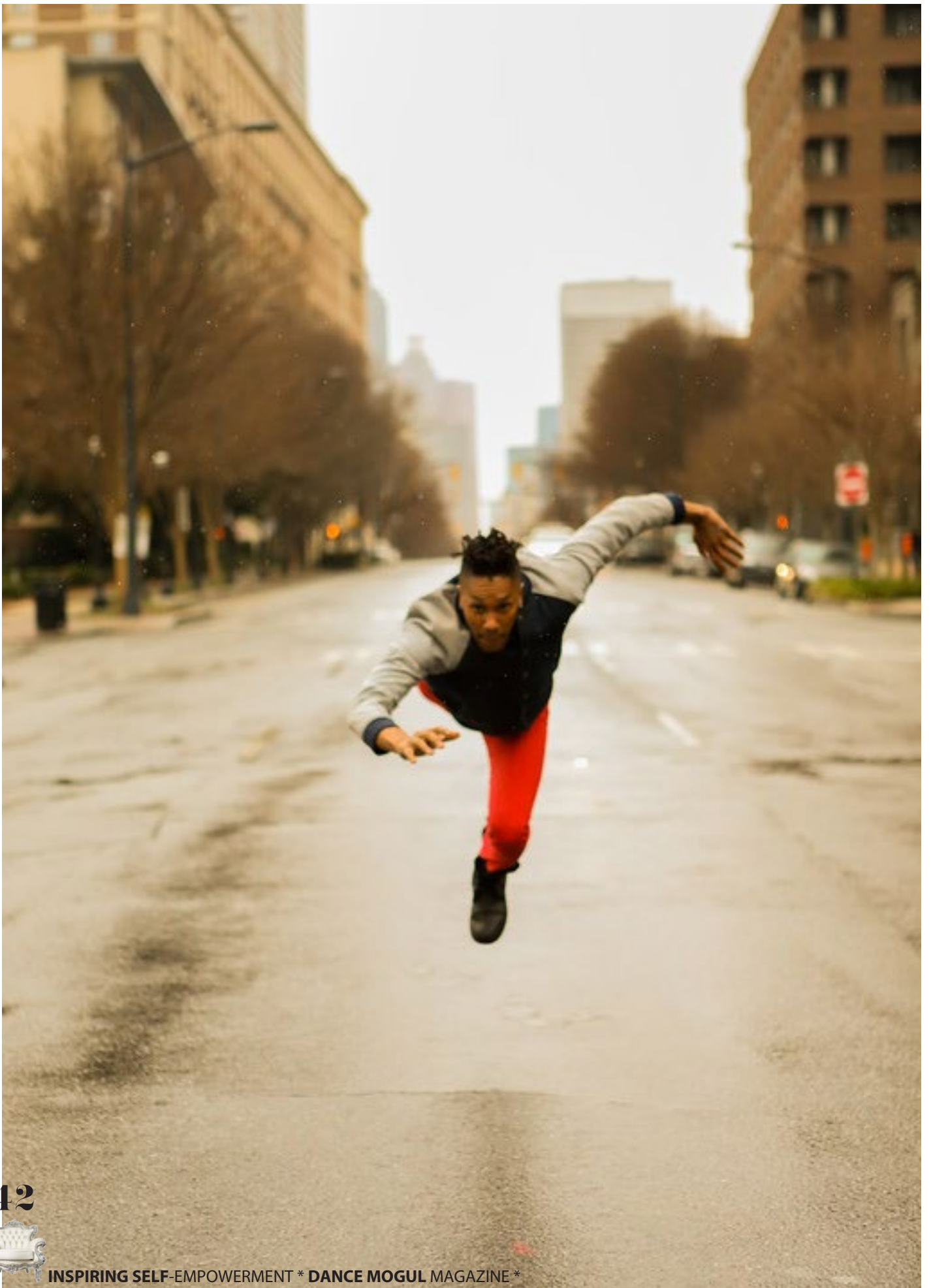




## *Susanna Barger*

Susanna Barger is a professional dancer in Atlanta Georgia. She started dance at the age of 3 at a small studio in Canton, Georgia and has been growing and performing her art ever since. She was a member of SIDEWAYS contemporary dance company for three years where she performed in several original works by artistic director, Charlotte Foster. Susanna has also had fun dancing for Krazy Boyz Inc. and Atlanta Fever Entertainment, two of the best private entertainment companies in Atlanta. In 2012, she attended American Dance Festival where she had the opportunity to perform in a reproduction of Robert Battles "Primate" as well as perform in the American Dance Festival ribbon cutting ceremony.





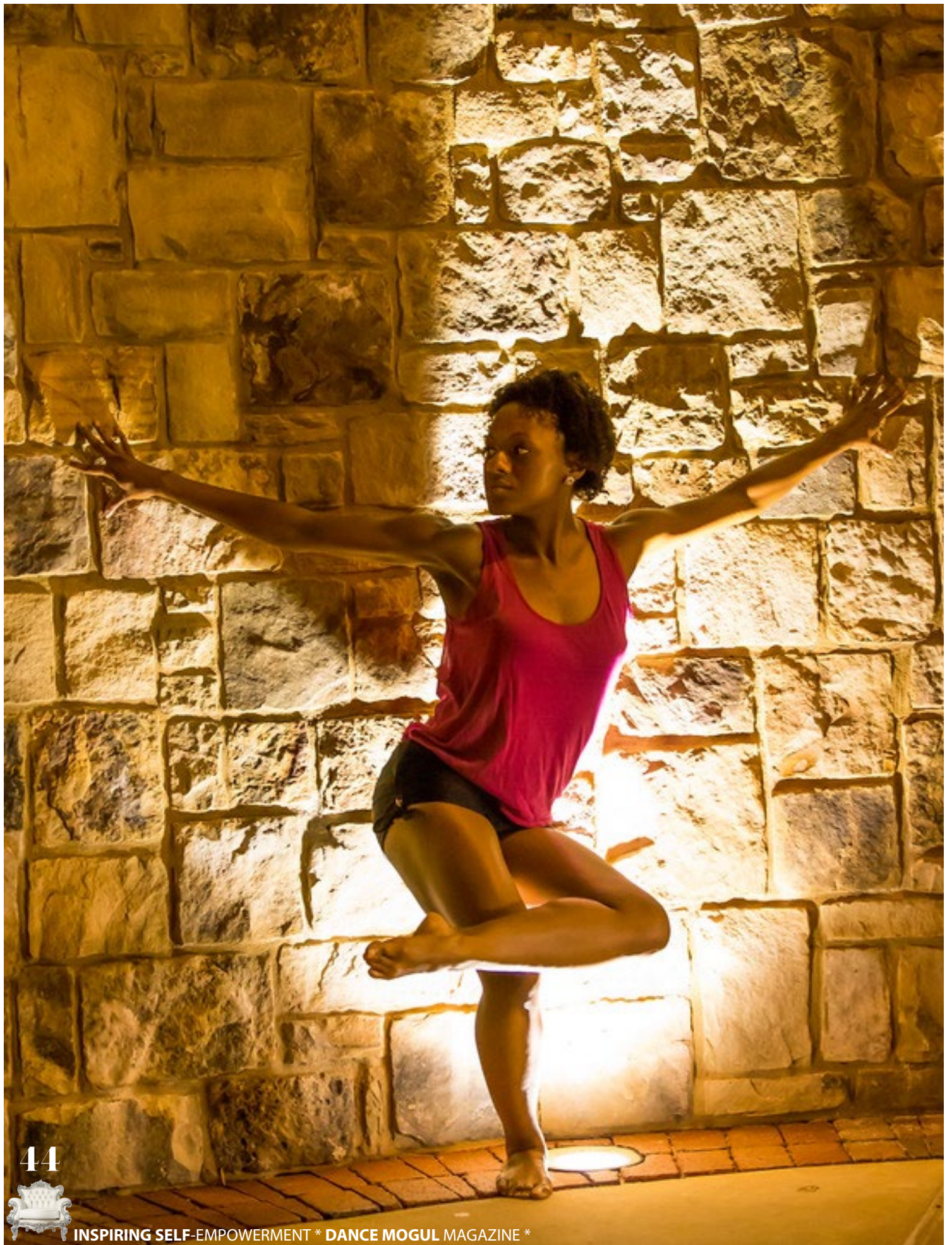
# *Juel Lane*

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JUEL D. LANE is an artist from Atlanta, GA. He is a graduate of Tri-Cities High School, former member of The Youth Ensemble of Atlanta, and holds a BFA from the University of North Carolina of the Arts. Alliance Theatre Credits: C.A. Lyons Project, I DREAM (Assistant Choreographer). Regional: SPUNK (True Colors Theatre-Choreographer), Rob Jackson's, Rebirth (The Fox Theater, Atlanta-Choreographer), STAGGER LEE, Dallas Theater Center, Associate-Choreographer) Mentions: *Dance Magazine* "25 to Watch" (2013), Creative Loafing, Arts At( Atlanta) Professional Dance Companies: Ronald K. Brown Evidence, Helen Simoneau Danse, and currently with Camille A. Brown & Dancers, Commissions: Atlanta Ballet, North Carolina School of the Arts, Wake Forest University. Dance films: *Just Another Day* and *How to Kill a Ghost*.

*-Photographic Stylings of C. Michael Sykes-*





# Larae Phillips

Larae Phillips, who also goes by Simone Rae, has been dancing her whole life. At 27 years old, she reigns from Decatur, GA. She trained with Michelle Douglass at the Conservatory of Dance and Fine Arts and Andrea Price of Price Performing Arts Center, both located in Atlanta, GA. She attended Southwest DeKalb, where she was a proud dancing diva. After high school, she attended Valdosta State University where she received training with Catherine Schaeffer, Eric Nielson, Kimberly Holt, and ballet instructor Jamie, and was featured in the *Valdosta Daily Times*.

She then went on to train with Zoetic Dance Ensemble, before joining Rhythmix Dance, now known as Paideia Arts, founded by Tianna Pourciau Sykes. Larae was the first company member, after its relocation from New Orleans, and has done several performances with Paideia, including Dance Canvas's Party for Art, Ursula Inc's SHE Created It, MAD Atlanta Dance Festival, and Paideia Arts' Art in the Park.

Other performances from Larae include the American College Dance Festival, including a solo piece entitled "Crossing Temptation", which was adjudicated and received rave reviews from renowned dancers and choreographers, including Jawole Zolar of Urban Bush Women. She has also been featured in the plays *Unacceptable Truths*, directed by Lynn Hesse and *The Almighty* stage play, directed by Melony Samuels, which is later slated for film release. She has also performed in New York's Centennial Olympic Park, for CORE Performing Arts in Decatur, GA, and also performs as a freelance dancer throughout the city of Atlanta.

Larae is a dance instructor for Fayetteville, GA's youth at Reigning Victory Dance Studio, owned by Felecia Thomas. An active member of Atlanta's art community, she has worked with artists Tianna Pourciau Sykes and Micheal C. Sykes of Sykes Photography whose work has been featured in Dance Magazine, Corey Whitehead, whose work can be seen on Tyler Perry shows, such as Meet the Browns as well as Tiffanie Williams, owner of Create A Canvas located in Lithonia, GA, where Larae taught painting lessons to all ages.

Larae was a featured dancer and muse for Corey C. Whitehead's acclaimed "Dark Dance" painting series, which was featured in Atlanta's Apache Café as well as other locations throughout the city. She has also worked with Ursula Kendall and T. Lang. Alongside dancing, she works with Beat Break Radio and AWARE Multicomm Inc, as a photographer and videographer. Larae is also a freelance painter and poet, and enjoys giving back to the community through volunteer work for Decatur's award winning non-profit organization, Wonder Root.

"I do not like to think of myself as just one thing. I believe that as an artist, I can use all of the gifts I have been blessed with to create a positive impact on society. Art is essential and timeless. I like to incorporate as many art forms as I can in my work. I also believe in collaboration with other artists of the same and/or different elements. Art is art and art can change the world." –Larae Phillips

*-Photographic Stylings of C. Michael Sykes-*



# *Pablina Lopez*

Pablina Lopez is a native of Atlanta and a proud Alumna of the Kennesaw State University Dance Company. She has had the honor of performing with the KSU Dance Company for four consecutive seasons in venues such as The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre, and Rialto Center for the Arts. Her original love for dance began as a child growing up as a Mexican folk dancer in The Mexican Ballet Folklore Azteca, directed by her father, Rolando Lopez. Pablina then continued dancing and trained in programs with The Gwinnett Ballet Theatre, Atlanta Ballet, and El Ballet Municipal de Santiago in Chile. She is currently in the process of receiving her Bachelor of Arts in Dance and Bachelor of Science in Communications from Kennesaw State University in Spring of 2015. Pablina is currently dancing for the Atlanta Lyric Theatre in their 2015 season.

*-Photographic Stylings of C. Michael Sykes-*





## *Robert & Jennifer Mason*

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Robert & Jennifer Mason are the Co-Artistic Directors of City Gate Dance Theater Company Inc. in Atlanta, GA. A husband and wife team, Robert and Jennifer created City Gate with the idea to Change the Expectations of Ballet and broaden the platform in which it is presented. Both directors formerly trained at the Atlanta Ballet and The Alvin Ailey School. Robert and Jennifer have combined their Classical Ballet and Horton training to create innovative contemporary works that are relative and thought-provoking.

*-Photographic Stylings of C. Michael Sykes-*





# *Reid Newton*

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Reid Newton began her formal dance training at Atlanta Ballet, and went on to intensively study Ballet and Horton with Jennifer and Robert Mason at City Gate Dance Theater. She attended The Governors' Honors Program in Georgia as a dance major and a music minor. After summer 2015, Dawn Axam asked her to perform as an apprentice with her company, Axam Dance Theater. Reid focuses on being a versatile and strong dancer, and also devotes a lot of her time to creating original choreographic works. She is now a first year BFA student at The Ailey School and Fordham University where she is a dancer performance major and a business administration minor. In the Ailey Fall BFA Concert, Reid performed in a piece choreographed by Hope Boykin. This summer, she will return to City Gate Dance Theater as a part time Horton and choreography teacher during their summer intensive. She is also a well-versed hip hop dancer, and has a trained voice after studying at Jan Smith Studios in Atlanta. Reid's ultimate goal is to hold the position of Artistic Director of her own choreographic company that will not only focus on performance and innovative movement, but also on impacting important world issues through outreach programs.

*-Photographic Stylings of C. Michael Sykes-*





*Tianna*

*Pourciau Sykes*

Tianna Pourciau Sykes is a dance artist with experience spanning 20 years. A cum laude graduate of Kennesaw State University's Program in Dance, she has trained with quality dancers, professors and choreographers of the dance communities in Atlanta, Houston and New Orleans. Tianna has performed in productions of *The Nutcracker* and *The Jungle Book* with the Atlanta Festival Ballet, and in Flux 2011 with Atlanta's Zoetic Dance Ensemble.

She has also participated in Dance Olympus, Dance America, Dance USA and the American College Dance Festival. Tianna's choreographic works have been featured in "SHE" Created IT 2011 and 2013, the Modern Atlanta Dance Festival 2012, Dance Canvas' 2012 pARTy 4 Art, and 2013 Performance Series at 14th St. Playhouse in Atlanta. As an instructor, Tianna has taught at the Contemporary Arts Center in New Orleans, Houston Independent Schools in Houston, TX, and various public and private elementary schools across metro-Atlanta.

Tianna has also taught for the City of Atlanta Office of Cultural Affairs' afterschool and summer arts programs, as well as with the Tupac Amaru Shakur Center for the Arts summer leadership and arts camp in Atlanta. Tianna Pourciau Sykes was the founder and Artistic Director of Rhythmix Dance & Performing Arts Company, and is currently executive Director of Paideia Arts, Inc. She is also a professional member of the UNESCO International Council of Dance (CID), the National Dance Education Association (NDEO), and the National Dance Association (NDA), along with the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, and the American Association for Physical Activity and Recreation.



