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A STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY Musical Theatre Dance, Tap and Jazz

My dance philosophy is a true reflection of my life as a dancer: A foundation of strong technique and discipline, enhanced by utilizing that technique and discipline to grow as a performer, and finally my philosophy was solidified during the pursuit of my Masters Degree and the development of my dance pedagogy. These three stages of my career have given me the chance to offer a well-rounded perspective of dance education.

Extraordinary teachers in Buffalo, New York were the foundation of my early dance training. I studied under Beverly Fletcher, author of Tap Works, Thomas Ralabate, Assistant Chair of the Dance Department of the University of Buffalo, Sam Viverito, New York Director/Choreographer, and Barbara Denny, Master Teacher of Dance Masters of America. Tap and jazz were the styles that sparked my passion for dance. Of course, neither can be fully executed without a solid ballet base. These teachers demanded discipline and I in turn demand it of my students.

My performing career took my love for dance to the next level. Musical theatre dance then became my focus. Adding the dramatic and vocal elements to the dance opened up a whole new world: working with the Tony Award-winning director/choreographers Susan Stroman and Joe Layton, Tony nominated directors and choreographers Robert Longbottom, Randy Skinner, along with Bob Fosse protégé's Linda Haberman, and Chet Walker. These professionals established the next layer of my philosophy: performance expertise and a passion for professional dance. Through sharing my personal experiences with my students, they can learn first hand how the professional dance world works. Passion for dance sets you apart from others. As their mentor, my passion ignites my student's enthusiasm for dance and nurtures it as well.

The final philosophical layer was added while pursuing my Masters Degree at Skidmore College. My thesis, "Becoming a Dance Star: How the art of dance teaches valuable life skills," reflected on how dance developed the following life skills: Diligence, Agility, Nutrition, Conflict Resolution, Excellence, Self-Confidence, Teamwork, Accountability, and Rhythm. These skills have not only helped me succeed in the dance world but in the real world as well. While following my passion for dance these skills developed simultaneously.

Finally, dancers often define themselves by their art. The dance world is a hard world in which many do not succeed. This is a hard reality to accept, but if students simultaneously learn life skills along with their dance skills, facing the "real world" can become easier. "The show must go on," as they say. It just doesn't matter what the "show" is.

In sum, over the past twenty years I have been teaching my strengths: musical theatre dance, tap, and jazz to beginners and professionals. My study of modern, ballet, ballroom and African dance styles have influenced me as well. However, most beneficial to my students is that I use material of today's top Broadway choreographers to inspire my own choreography.