

OUR DANCE FACULTY

About the Coordinator



Cynthia Marafino is the artistic director and head instructor of The Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation Dance Program. She is one of the founders and co-directors of Blue Crew Dance. Cynthia has taught dance throughout the community for thirty years and has over thirty years of experience dancing, choreographing, and performing. Cynthia holds Bachelor's degrees from James Madison University in Dance and English. While in college, she received training from Cynthia Thompson, Kate Trammell, Suzanne Miller Corso, and Shane O'Hara. She has taken intensives and performed professional works by artists Crystalyn Wright, Paul Santy, and Shannon Hummel. She has taken master classes with Finis Jhung (Joffrey Ballet), Tara Pennick, Malcomb Bernum, Brandon Becker (Richmond Ballet), Linden Herrick (Nevada Ballet), and Jane Franklin (Jane Franklin Company). Cynthia has also participated in dance-teaching master classes by Sabirjan Yapparov (Kirov Academy), The Liz Lerman Dance Exchange, and Up with People. Cynthia is a former member of several community-based dance companies including the Harrisonburg Ballet, Shenandoah Contemporary Dance Theatre, The Harrisonburg Dance Cooperative, and The James Madison University Contemporary Dance Ensemble. Cynthia has choreographed for several dance companies in the area: The Rockingham Ballet Theatre, Shenandoah Contemporary Dance Theatre, Blue Crew Dance, The JMU Contemporary Dance Ensemble, and The Harrisonburg Dance Cooperative. Several of Cynthia's students have studied dance and musical theatre in college including JMU and VCU, participate in professional workshops, and train professionally in California and New York City, including Peridance, Joffrey, ABT, Boston Ballet, Charlottesville Ballet, and Eglevsky Ballet. Cynthia's choreography received national honors at the American College Dance Festival, her choreography won the gold at Dance Educators of America, and she has presented her choreography at Dogwood Dance Festival (Richmond), Court Square Theatre, and Blue Ridge Community College. Cynthia teaches pre-school children through Harrisonburg City Public Schools.

About the Instructors



James M. Marafino has taught dance for Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation for sixteen years and is one of the founders and co-directors of Blue Crew Dance. He has danced for over twenty-three years and has taught for the past nineteen years. James has studied with Tara Pennick (Richmond Ballet), Suzanne McCahill-Perrine, Suzanne Miller-Corso, Shane O'Hara, Paul Taylor, Ric Rose, Derrick Alfonso Evans, and Finis Jhung (Joffrey Ballet), and has also taken classes in the Simonson Technique. James has attended classes at Steps on Broadway in New York City. He is a former member of the youth dance company Shenandoah Contemporary Dance Theatre, where he performed around the area and east coast for three years. James has choreographed for several dance companies in the area including, The Rockingham Ballet Theatre and Blue Crew Dance. James has served as stage manager for Rockingham Ballet Theater's *The Nutcracker* and *Ballet in the Valley* (2007). Several of James's students have studied dance and musical theatre in college including JMU and VCU, participated in professional workshops, and trained professionally in California and New York City, including Peridance, Joffrey, ABT, Boston Ballet, Charlottesville Ballet, and Eglevsky Ballet. James graduated from James Madison University with a Bachelor's and Master's degrees in English. James teaches critical reading and writing in the Writing, Rhetoric and Technical Communication Program at James Madison University.



Zilda Baker is a graduate of the dance program at James Madison University where she studied under Kate Trammell, Cynthia Thompson, Shane O'Hara, and Suzanne Miller-Corso. During her time at JMU, she was a member of the Contemporary Dance Ensemble and Associate Dance Ensemble. She performed works choreographed by Christalyn Wright, Shane O' Hara, and Roxann Morgan Rowley. She also choreographed work for several JMU ensembles. While at JMU, she also attended the American College Dance Festival where she took classes with choreographers from across the country. After JMU, Zilda was an intern with the American Dance Festival in Durham, N.C., where she worked with choreographers Gerri Houlihan of Florida State University, former Pilobolus dancer Jesse Zaritt, and many others. Zilda has trained extensively in Modern, Ballet, Jazz, Tap, Cheer, and Hip-Hop. Zilda is a dancer and choreographer with the Harrisonburg Dance Cooperative. She has directed the dance team at Bridgewater College and has choreographed for Blue Crew Dance and Rockingham Ballet Theatre.