



OUR DANCE FACULTY

About The Coordinator

Cynthia Marafino is the artistic director of The Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation Dance Program and is one of the founders and co-directors of *Blue Crew Dance*; the recreation Centers Youth dance company. Cynthia is an accomplished dancer who has been teaching dance throughout the Harrisonburg and Rockingham community for over eighteen years and has over twenty six years of experience dancing, choreographing, and performing. Cynthia holds a Bachelor's degree from James Madison University within Dance and English. While in college, she received training from professional instructors Cynthia Thompson, Kate Trammell, Suzanne Miller Corso, and Shane O'Hara. She has taken intensives and performed professional works by New York artists' Crystalyn Wright and Paul Santy. She has taken master classes with professionals such as 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 had the opportunity to attend classes at *Dance Space* in New York City. Cynthia has observed master classes by Sabirjan Yapparov (*Kirov Academy*), *The Liz Lerman Dance Exchange*, and *Up with People*. Cynthia is a former rehearsal & performance director for a youth company that had the opportunity to perform in New York City. She is also a former member of several community based dance companies including the former *Harrisonburg Ballet*, *Shenandoah Contemporary Dance Theatre*, and *The James Madison University Contemporary Dance Ensemble*. Cynthia has been involved with community events such as The Harrisonburg Children's Museum, First Night Celebrations, Burg's Got Talent, and choreography for local school musicals. Cynthia has choreographed for several dance companies in the area including, *The Rockingham Ballet Theatre*, *Shenandoah Contemporary Dance Theatre*, *Blue Crew Dance*, and *The JMU Contemporary Dance Ensemble*. Several of Cynthia's students have gone on to study dance and musical theatre in college and train professionally in New York City (including Peridance) and in Berkeley California. In addition, Cynthia's choreography received national honors at the American College Dance Festival, and her choreography won the gold at Dance Educators of America. Cynthia also works with pre-school children through Harrisonburg City Public Schools.

About The Instructors

James M. Marafino is a highly skilled teacher and choreographer who has been teaching dance for the Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation for over ten years and is one of the founders and co-directors of *Blue Crew Dance*. He has been dancing for twenty years and teaching for the past sixteen years. James has taken master classes with professional artists such as 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 of 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* for several years and *Ballet in the Valley* (2007). Several of Jimmy's students have gone on to study dance in college and train professionally in New York City (including Peridance) and in Berkeley California. James graduated from James Madison University where he received his Bachelor's degree and his Master's degree in English. James teaches critical reading and writing in the Writing, Rhetoric and Technical Communication Program at JMU.

Sarah Long is currently pursuing musical theatre at James Madison University. While at JMU, Sarah has been in several of the universities productions including *Sweet Charity* and *La Boheme*. Sarah has also performed in the Signal Mountain Playhouse production of *The King and I*. Sarah has trained in professional and serious ballet, jazz, modern, and contemporary technique. Sarah studied dance at the *Ballet Tennessee and Vancura Ballet Conservatory* where she performed lead roles for several years in the Nutcracker including the Snow Queen, Arabian Soloist, Rose Fairy, Spanish, and the Sugar Plum Fairy understudy. While at *Ballet Tennessee*, Sarah performed the Four Swans' Variation and the Princess in *Swan Lake*. Sarah also participated in the Ballet Tennessee's summer intensive program. Sarah also studied dance and voice at the Baylor School. Sarah won the Baylor School Fine Arts Award and Alexander Guerry Award. Her choreography has won first place at the Tennessee Association of Dance. We are excited to have Sarah share her talents and expertise with us.

Tara See is a native of Harrisonburg and started taking ballet at the age of 5 training at a local dance studio. Upon graduating from high school, she pursued her dance training at James Madison University studying with professional instructors and guest choreographers. While at JMU she received a BS in Dance and a minor in paralegal studies. Tara is a former member of the *JMU Contemporary Dance Ensemble* where she had the opportunity to perform professional works by local and guest choreographers. While in college, Tara trained under the direction of Shane O'Hara, Kate Trammell and Cynthia Thompson. Tara has also had the opportunity to choreograph for our youth company *Blue Crew Dance*. Currently, Tara works in Harrisonburg at a local law firm as a paralegal.

Mandy Ruckman is a graduate from Spotswood High School where she had the opportunity to perform in several of the High Schools musical productions including *Grease* in which she had the lead role of Sandy. Mandy has had the opportunity to perform in the musical *Big Fish* and *Mary Poppins* through ShenanArts. Mandy is a former member of *Rockingham Ballet Theatre* where she performed lead roles for several years including Clara in the *Nutcracker*. She has had the opportunity to work with several professional artists' including Phillip Skaggs and Maggie Small (*Richmond Ballet*), and Madison McPhail (*Peridance*). Mandy is currently attending Blue Ridge Community College. We are happy to have Mandy's energetic personality with us!

