



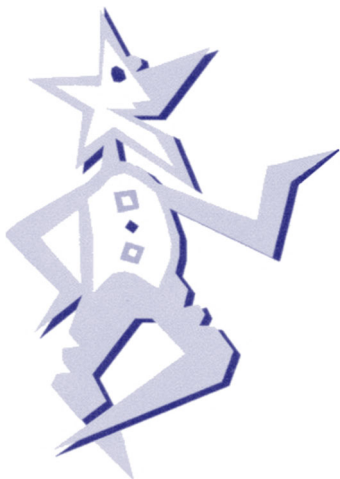
## FEATURES

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by William Hooper

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## NEWS BRIEFS



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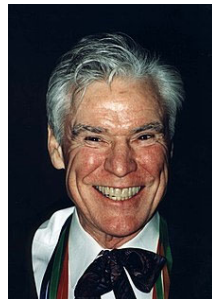
## North Carolina Arts in Action



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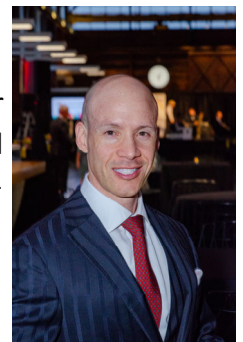
North Carolina Arts in Action (NC AIA), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, is a premier in-school and after-school dance program that helps children develop essential life skills—self-esteem, resilience, critical thinking, and collaboration.

NC AIA is proud to be one of twelve associate programs of the renowned **National Dance Institute (NDI)**, founded in New York City by acclaimed ballet dancer, choreographer, and educator **Jacques d'Amboise** (d'Amboise in 2000 ).



Led by **Executive Director Marlon**

**Torres**, a lifelong professional dancer, NC AIA thrives under his deep passion and unwavering commitment to the program's mission. Recently, NC AIA celebrated 20 years of service, bringing high-quality dance education to children in four central North Carolina counties—Wake, Durham, Orange, and Chatham—reaching some of the region's most underserved communities.



# North Carolina Arts in Action

In 2025, NC AIA expanded to 20 schools, primarily Title I schools serving lower-income families and it now brings its unique pedagogy to approximately 1,800 fourth-grade students during the school day. Additionally, NC AIA is growing its **LEAP (Learning, Excellence, and Perseverance) Team**, a group of dedicated students aged 9–15 from partner schools who wish to continue their NC AIA experience beyond the classroom. LEAP Team members rehearse on Saturday mornings and perform at local events throughout the year, serving as ambassadors for NC AIA's work.

## A Team of Experienced Professionals

NC AIA boasts an exceptional team of teaching artists and music professionals:



**Suzi Landis, Artistic Director**, brings over 20 years of experience teaching ballet, tap, and jazz. A former professional dancer and choreographer, Suzi has also contributed to Dance Teacher Magazine and Dance Spirit Magazine.



**Tiana Sutton, Associate Artistic Director**, is an experienced dancer and the founder of her own production company. Dancing from the age of seven, Tiana is passionate about helping others develop their artistic talents.



**Andrew Crowe, Music Director and Program Manager**, is a professional violinist, multi-instrumentalist, actor, singer, and director with over 20 years of experience. His work has earned critical acclaim.



**Michael Santangelo, Music Associate**, is a seasoned musician, music director, and educator with expertise in voice, choral singing, theater, orchestras, and music technology. Michael brings 25 years of experience in music and theater education to NC AIA.



**Kim Demery, LEAP Team Project Manager**, is a music educator and project manager with a degree from Northwestern University. She brings extensive experience in program development and corporate training to her role at NC AIA. Kim is also a featured presenter for the North Carolina Symphony and has been recognized for her contributions to arts education. Her expertise supports her mission to inspire students through the arts.

## *What Makes NC AIA Unique?*

# North Carolina Arts in Action

## Several key elements set NC AIA apart:

- **National Dance Institute pedagogy:** A structured, inclusive approach that combines high-quality dance instruction, live music, and progressively attainable standards, designed to help students strive for excellence.
- **Inclusive, classroom-based model:** NC AIA serves entire fourth-grade classes, welcoming students of all abilities and backgrounds during the school day—so every child has access.

The results are remarkable. For example: In just a single class, fourth graders went from learning basic movements set to live music to confidently performing a dynamic, theater-style dance routine for teachers, administrators, and community supporters.

## The impact over a full school year is transformative. Research shows that participation in NC AIA:

- **Builds connections to school, teachers, and peers.**
- **Increases motivation: 92%** of students said the program encouraged them to do their best.
- **Boosts confidence: 86%** said it made them more self-assured.
- **Teaches perseverance:** Students reported learning to keep trying after setbacks.
- **Develops strength of mind and body: 69%** said they learned it's okay to ask for help, and about two-thirds said the program improved their self-esteem.
- **Improves focus: 48%** said they pay more attention in class on NC AIA days.

## Looking Ahead

By 2026 and 2027, NC AIA aims to grow its in-school program to 25 schools, expanding its reach to even more children. NC AIA has a strong board overseeing the initiative with a balance of top-notch business, legal, local school administration, and artistic backgrounds. **Katie Heineman, NC AIA's Development Director**, leads efforts to secure broad funding—from school systems, corporations, local businesses, grants, individuals, and bequests.

## Join Us in Making a Difference

We invite you to support this exceptional, high-impact program and help bring dance, music, and life skills to children in North Carolina. You can contribute through several methods, including making online donations via [ncartsinaction.org](https://ncartsinaction.org), sending checks, gifting stock/securities, making Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs) from IRAs, or using Donor Advised Funds.

Please Contact:

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**Development Director**  
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[Katie@ncartsinaction.org](mailto:Katie@ncartsinaction.org)

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NC Arts in Action  
P.O. Box 51277  
Durham, NC 27717  
**Website: <https://www.ncartsinaction.org/>**



**Article by**  
**William Hooper**

# Tri-State Challenge Dancesport Championships



Tri-State Challenge Dancesport Championships

USA - Stamford (CT) March 2025

Tri-State DanceSport Championships

291 West Clay Avenue

Roselle Park, NJ 07204

T. 908.553.5881

E. tristatechallenge1@gmail.com

## About the Organizers:

**Andrei Gavriline and Elena Kryuchkova**

3-time United States National Professional Latin Champions

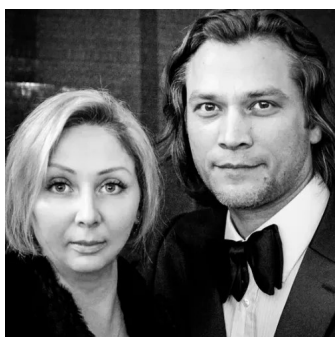
World Professional Latin Grand Finalists

2-time America's Best Professional Champions – televised on PBS

British Open Professional Rising Star Latin Champions – Blackpool, England

British Open Latin American Finalists – Blackpool, England

The next chapter in the history of the Tri-State DanceSport Championships ('TSDSC') started in 2014 under the new organizers, Andrei Gavriline and Elena Kryuchkova, who brought with them a refreshed and exciting energy. TSDSC is Andrei and Elena's second competition follow-



ing their extremely successful Paragon Open DanceSport Championships.

Since 2014, Andrei and Elena organized successful fundraisers at TSDSC for two of dancesport's leading female Latin champion dancers, coaches, and adjudicators: Tone Nyehagen and Beata. Going into 2018 event, they decided to expand their generosity and continue to contribute to worthy causes within the dance world which help people within and outside of the industry.

Continuing with the success of the invigorated vision for the upcoming TSDSC, the competition will further solidify itself as the "Can't Miss" event in the tri-state area and across the country! Competitors, spectators and attendees can look forward to a high-energy competition atmosphere, increased prizes, and a one-of-a-kind competitive experience.

## Chairman of Judges

Cathi Nyemcheck

## Adjudicators

Rita Algarra

Jason Chao Dai

Linda Dean

Katusha Demidova

Steven Dougherty

Tony Dovolani

Nina Estrina



# Tri-State Challenge Dancesport Championships

Marat Gimaev

Ilya Ibraimov

Emil Ioukhnikov

Inna Ivanenko

Colin James

Stephen Knight

Katia Kuznetzova

Igor Litvinov

Maria Manusova

Diana McDonald

Marianne Nicole

Sasha Nissengolts

John Nyemchek

Andre Paramonov

Polina Pilipenchuk

Artem Plakhotnyi

Christiane Primeau

Helle Rusholt-Yi

Irina Sarukhanyan

Nikolay Smodlev

Sam Sodano

Aigars Stolcers

Marina Tarsinov

Elena Tsarev

Other Officials

Matthew Harkins

## Invigilators

Diana McDonald

Marianne Nicole

John Nyemchek

## Awards Coordinator

Tommy Ditommaso

## Musical Director

Justin Deehr

## Deck Captain

## Master of Ceremonies

John DePalma

Gary McDonald

Catherine Jaspersohn

Registrar

Gary Jaspersohn

Scrutineer

Jamie Nyemchek

Scrutineer

Registration

Karen Barboa

Registration Desk

Cathy Cone

Registration Desk

Production & Promotion

Paragon Dance Productions

Floor / Lighting



## World ProAm DanceSport Series

TSDSC is a proud member of the World ProAm DanceSport Series. In its 14th Season, the World ProAm Dancesport Series is comprised of over 75 National competitions, each designed to help the student accumulate points, which then add up towards top regional rankings, and cash prizes for top students and teachers. Winners and participants in the TSDSC World ProAm Dancesport Series will be awarded additional points towards their Series total for increased chances of winning the grand prize!



## Best of the Best DanceSport Challenge

TSDSC is a proud member of the Best of the Best DanceSport Challenge. The Best of the Best DanceSport Challenge is a yearly competition between some of the top Pro/Am couples in the country who are winners at the Bronze, Silver, and Gold levels of dance. The Best of the Best was originally started as a challenge for the Top Competitor between the Atlanta Open, Holiday Classic, and the Ohio Star Ball. The Challenge has now expanded to 23 qualifying events held throughout the calendar year, including representatives from the Dancer's Cup Tour, and culminating with the Grand Finale events at the Ohio Star Ball.