

# Raymond James presents: Middle School Arts



## ARTWORKS FOR SCHOOLTIME

### TEACHER AND STUDENT RESOURCE

to accompany the Van Wezel **Schooltime** Performance of



**HISTORY & CULTURE • SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL LEARNING • DANCE**



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# THE DISABLED BODY...

“The disabled body comes in endless forms and varieties of capabilities. Some that are easily seen and others that are less obvious. While two people using wheelchairs may appear to be functionally identical, it’s very possible, in fact it is likely, that they are vastly different in how they move and how they navigate the world around them and the stage beneath them. For me, years of dance training and performing have allowed me to create an illusion. When audiences see me reach across my body, give and share weight with another dancer, flip my wheelchair on its back and return it to its wheels, they imagine a person using superior upper body strength and core muscles. The reality is, I have limited function in my hand, and my core is as limp and paralyzed as my legs. Dance, for a performer with a disability, opens the door to a more complete understanding of their own body and its interesting and unique abilities. I seek to invite others into understanding the complexities and beauty of the disabled body. Through conversation and performance.”

~ *Dwayne Scheuneman*



## ABOUT DWAYNE SCHEUNEMAN:

Dwayne Scheuneman is Co-Founder, Artistic Director, Inclusive Dance Educator, and Dancer with *REVolutions Dance*.

Shortly after becoming paralyzed in a diving accident in 1995, Dwayne began competing in wheelchair track and field. In 2002 he was looking for some sort of cross-training activity when a friend suggested he try taking a dance class. He started taking classes and was invited to perform and, from there, the rest is history. While dancing, he discovered two things that he had not otherwise experienced in sports, a broader range of physical challenges and a deeper and more meaningful connection with his fellow dancers.

“Dance, specifically the creative process involved in dance, has led me to a deeper understanding of myself and my perspectives. Connecting and creating with other people has encouraged me to consider and formulate my place in the world and what impact I want to have on it. Physically speaking, managing my disabilities is never-ending, and dance is always helping me in developing my ability to move through the world.”



Dwayne received his BA in special education from the University of South Florida. He has been a professional dancer since 2002 and has conducted workshops around the US and the world having completed eight tours in six countries.

Being a former wheelchair athlete and having strong connections to the disabled community, Dwayne began reaching out to his disabled peers and inviting them to participate in different dance activities. In 2005, Dwayne along with his colleague Amie West decided to make it official and together they formed the nonprofit organization, *REVolutions Dance*.

*REVolutions Dance* believes in creating a safe learning environment that provides opportunity for all students to grow at their own pace. *REVolutions Dance* draws from research-based teaching practices such as student-centered teaching and differentiated instruction to highlight and draw upon the interests and individuality of the students. *REVolutions Dance* strives to create opportunities for collaboration between students as well as collaboration between students and teachers.

“Dance is important to our community because it has the ability to help people understand each other beyond the restrictions of language and personal biases. It provides a tool for people to find similarities in their cultures, experiences, and lives in a creative and energizing experience and allows us to expand our humanity.”

## PODCAST WITH DWAYNE



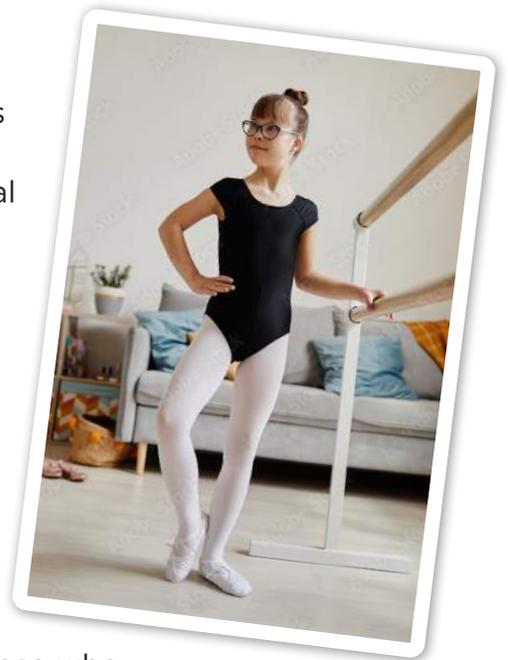
Scan the code or visit:  
<http://stanceondance.com/2018/08/09/expanding-the-integrated-dance-community/>



## VOCABULARY

**Translation:** The adjustment of choreography to another dancer's ability. This can be from non-disabled to disabled and vice-versa. The adjustment should maintain the spirit and shape of the original movement.

**Physically Integrated Dance Company:** Dance company where physically disabled and non-disabled dancers move together. The goal of physically integrated dance is to bring disabled people into the norms of concert dance by expanding the movement vocabulary to include the skillsets of people with various disabilities that may affect their mobility or balance or who are missing limbs. Directors and choreographers of physically integrated dance tend to approach the work by looking at the abilities of disabled dancers as additive rather than focusing on what they cannot do. Due to the nature of being integrated, those who choreograph for physical integrated companies may themselves be disabled or not, or works may be created collaboratively with the dancers through improvisation. Judith Smith, former Artistic Director of AXIS Dance Company, has said that outside choreographers who set work on the company approach creating the work the same way they would for a company that is not physically integrated.



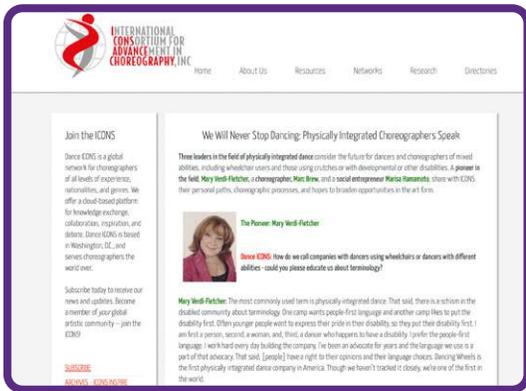
**Integrated Dance** is a derivative of Physically Integrated Dance. When companies like AXIS and Dancing Wheels started, they called themselves simply, Integrated Dance. As Physically Integrated Dance became popular, many dancers and teachers wanted to open up opportunities to people with other types of disabilities, many of which were not physical disabilities, such as Autism or Blindness.

The term **Inclusive Dance** emerged to describe companies, classes and organizations that included other types of disabilities in their programming, not just physical disability. The term mixed ability also came into being and while still used by many, it has been mostly replaced with inclusive.

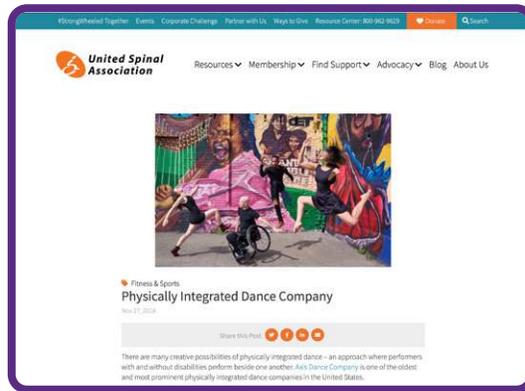
**Adaptive Dance** simply means adapting a dance class to a specific population of disability without the integration of non-disabled dancers. One example of this would be a dance class for kids with Downs Syndrome.



**LINKS:** Scan the codes or visit the websites below for related materials



<http://www.danceicons.org/pages/index.php?p=190330131940>



<https://unitedspinal.org/physically-integrated-dance-company/>



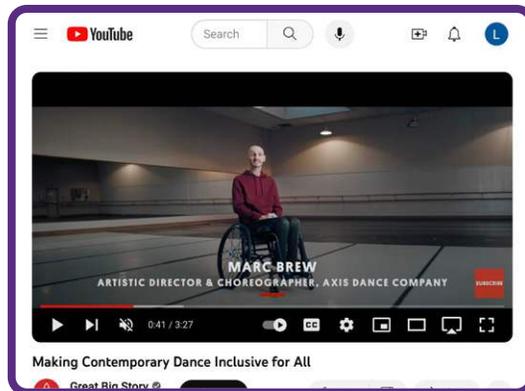
<https://www.borndancing.org/our-blog/2018/5/7/breaking-through-stereotypes-with-integrated-dance>



<https://www.allbodiesdance.ca/>



<https://www.edutopia.org/blog/mixed-ability-dance-special-needs-karen-peterson>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZwOb0cP6VCY>

# EMBRACING DIVERSITY AND HARMONY: THE WORLD OF PHYSICALLY INTEGRATED DANCE

## INTRODUCTION

In a world that thrives on diversity and inclusivity, physically integrated dance stands as a powerful testament to the strength and beauty of human movement. This unique form of artistic expression seamlessly combines dancers with and without disabilities, creating performances that transcend barriers and challenge preconceived notions. Let's delve into the rich history of integrated dance and explore some of the pioneering companies that continue to redefine the boundaries of this art form.

## A BRIEF HISTORY

Physically integrated dance emerged in the late 20th century as a response to the need for greater inclusivity within the dance world. The movement gained momentum in the 1970s, led by trailblazing artists like Alito Alessi, who founded the DanceAbility method, and Adam Benjamin, a prominent figure in the UK integrated dance scene.

These pioneers recognized that dance had the potential to be a medium for empowerment, communication, and self-expression for individuals of all abilities. By breaking free from traditional norms and embracing a more inclusive approach, they paved the way for a movement that celebrates the beauty of diversity.

## THE GROWTH OF REPRESENTATION

In the beginning, integrated dance mostly relied on dancing allies of the disabled community to break through the barriers that separated disabled dancers from the larger dance community. In these early stages of physically integrated dance, what was then known only as integrated dance, there were few companies that were directed by dancers with disabilities. As the field gained more recognition, along with the rise of disability activism, the dance community saw new leaders with disabilities begin to emerge. These include Judith Smith who started AXIS Dance Company in 1987, Meri Verdi Fletcher who founded Dancing Wheels, and Kitty Lund who created Infinity Dance.



## NOTABLE COMPANIES IN INTEGRATED DANCE

**AXIS Dance Company (USA):** Established in 1987, AXIS Dance Company is a cornerstone of the integrated dance movement. Based in Oakland, California, the company has collaborated with world-renowned choreographers and continuously challenges perceptions of what is possible in dance. Through workshops, performances, and educational programs, AXIS continues to be a driving force in the promotion of inclusivity.

**Candoco Dance Company (UK):** Founded in 1991, Candoco Dance Company has been a driving force in the global integrated dance scene. Based in London, the company has worked with acclaimed choreographers and artists, blending virtuoso dance with innovative inclusive practice. Candoco's performances are known for their striking visual impact and emotional resonance.

**Stopgap Dance Company (UK):** Stopgap Dance Company, founded in 1997, is a dynamic force in the integrated dance community. Known for their powerful and visually stunning performances, Stopgap challenges audiences to reconsider their perceptions of dance and disability. The company has a strong educational arm, conducting workshops and residencies around the world.

**Touretteshero (UK):** While not a traditional dance company, Touretteshero is an important advocate for integrated dance. Led by artist and performer Jess Thom, Touretteshero challenges societal norms and celebrates neurodiversity through a range of artistic projects, including dance performances. Their work is a testament to the power of creativity in dismantling barriers.



## FLORIDA'S INTEGRATED DANCE LANDSCAPE

In Florida, the integrated dance scene is alive and thriving. The state boasts several organizations and companies dedicated to promoting inclusivity in the world of dance.

**REVolutions Dance Company:** Founded by Dwayne Scheuneman and Amie West in 2005, *REVolutions Dance* is a cornerstone of the Tampa Bay arts community. REV Dance performs locally, nationally, and internationally and its education and community building efforts extend beyond the stage into the lives of both disabled and non-disabled dancers.

**Karen Peterson Dancers:** Since 1990, Karen Peterson has worked with hundreds of dancers and serves as a role model to the creative and disability communities in Miami Dade County. KPD is the first full-time dance company in Florida that performs choreography by dancers with and without disabilities. Under the dedicated direction of Artistic Director Karen Peterson, the company provides educational programming for students with special needs and provides inclusive rehearsal, performance and touring opportunities for adult professional dancers and choreographers with diverse abilities.

**VSA Florida:** As the state organization on arts and disability, VSA Florida plays a crucial role in advocating for and supporting integrated dance initiatives across the state. They offer programs and workshops designed to make dance accessible to everyone.

**Dancing Wheels Company (DWC):** While based in Ohio, DWC often collaborates with organizations in Florida, bringing their unique approach to integrated dance to communities in the state. DWC is renowned for their powerful performances that seamlessly blend dancers with and without disabilities.

**Dancing Dreams:** This Florida-based nonprofit organization provides dance classes for children with special needs. Their programs are designed to foster creativity, build confidence, and provide a supportive community for young dancers.



## STARTING THE DANCE JOURNEY: A GUIDE FOR YOUNG DANCERS WITH DISABILITIES

Embarking on a dance journey as a young person with a disability in Florida is an exciting and rewarding endeavor. Here are some steps to get started:

**Explore Local Resources:** Begin by researching local organizations and dance schools that offer integrated or inclusive dance classes. VSA Florida and community centers may be excellent starting points.

**Connect with Dance Instructors:** Reach out to experienced dance instructors who have a background in teaching integrated dance. They can provide guidance on suitable classes and techniques tailored to individual abilities.



**Attend Workshops and Events:** Participating in workshops and events focused on integrated dance can provide valuable exposure to the art form and connect young dancers with like-minded individuals.

**Embrace the Journey:** Remember that dance is a journey, and progress may come at different paces for different individuals. Celebrate every achievement, no matter how small, and keep a positive attitude towards the learning process.



## CONCLUSION

Physically integrated dance stands at the forefront of a movement that champions inclusivity, diversity, and artistic excellence. Through the efforts of pioneering artists and companies, this art form continues to evolve, pushing boundaries and challenging societal norms. As integrated dance gains recognition and support worldwide, it serves as a beacon of hope, proving that the language of movement transcends all barriers, and that every body has the potential to dance.

