



The Fine Arts Association Elevates its Dance Program Hiring Creative Director and Additional Dance Faculty

WILLOUGHBY OH---The Fine Arts Association (FAA) is rolling out a revitalized dance program for the 2020-2021 season. Reenergized by the arrival of Creative Director, Howard Washington and refocused by a realigned curriculum, the program is positioned to offer exciting opportunities for the area's dancers and dancers-to-be. "Our main focus is always to provide the best possible opportunities for students of all ages, backgrounds, and experiences to grow-to become their best selves-through all our art forms" states Director of Education, Michael Lund Ziegler. "We're so excited for our realigned dance curriculum and especially thrilled by the energy, passion, and focus of our incredible dance faculty."

Creative Director, Howard Washington brings to Fine Arts more than 5 years in public education and over 15 years in the Cleveland dance community. He is the Founder and Director of ELEVATED and an Akron native. A Crain 40 under 40, Washington could not be more excited for the future of Fine Arts. "Fine Arts Association has all the arts. With the endless possibilities and creativity in dance, FAA has the tools and passion to ignite northeast Ohio young creatives in all aspects. Do you need production, singers, musicians, lighting, costuming, acting, dancing and a stage? No problem! FAA can utilize its entire faculty and the resources/opportunities to take dance and the arts in Northeast to the next level. Creatively, the possibilities are endless."

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Lund Ziegler cites the efforts of Washington along with lead Ballet instructor and long-time Fine Arts Faculty, Jan Smith, as paramount in refocusing the program to ensure pathways for all students. “Mrs. Smith has been a stalwart member of the Fine Arts dance faculty for nearly 50 years. Her guidance and leadership have been pivotal in shaping the future of our program.” Mr. Washington cited the ballet instruction at Fine Arts as the foundation of their current and future success. “It is imperative to start dancers with a strong ballet training. Working with a ballet teacher (Jan Smith) that shares and delivers the passion for dance like you do seems to be a great fit. We can learn so much from each simply through the unspoken. The unspoken is that we love our dancers, we want them to be good at dance but more importantly, better people!”

Beginning this fall, dance families at FAA will see clearly delineated pathways for their dancers. From age 3 to adult, dance students have the opportunity to pursue multiple areas of dance including ballet, tap, jazz, hip hop, and contemporary. Pathways exist for students to pursue dance recreationally or intensively. Middle and high school students excited about performing can audition to join one of Fine Arts’ six hip hop or contemporary performing dance company groups.

Along with Jan Smith, Mr. Washington joins Fine Arts’ dance faculty Bea Parker and Lisa-Marie French, along with newcomers Lindsay DePenti, London Fulton, Ariana King, and Alexia Rodriguez who joined the dance faculty in January.

To learn more about the dance program at The Fine Arts Association, please visit www.fineartsassociation.org/dance

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