

GRAND PRIX Dance Open AMERICA

Grand Prix Dance Open America – Taiwan Regionals



Radina Dace

*Ballet Master & Artistic Director
Hungarian National Ballet Institute*

Radina Dace is an accomplished ballet professional with an extensive career as a principal dancer, ballet master, educator, and artistic director. She has been the Artistic Director of the Hungarian National Ballet Institute since 2018 and has served as Ballet Master of the Hungarian State Opera and Hungarian National Ballet, as well as the Hungarian National Ballet Institute, since 2016.

Before dedicating herself to teaching and artistic leadership, Radina Dace enjoyed a distinguished career as a professional dancer. From 1998 to 2020, she was a Principal Dancer with the Hungarian State Opera, following her career as a Solo Dancer with the Latvian National Opera and Ballet from 1996 to 1998. She received her professional ballet education at the Riga Ballet Academy, where she studied from 1988 to 1996.

Throughout her career, Radina Dace has received numerous prestigious awards and honours in recognition of her artistic and educational contributions. Her distinctions include the Pro Art Lyrica Prize in 2003, the Teriné Horváth Margit Prize in 2004, the Gyula Harangozó Prize in 2009, and the Hungarian Gold Cross of Merit in 2018.

As a teacher and mentor, Radina Dace has achieved remarkable results with students of the Hungarian National Ballet Institute at major international ballet competitions. Her students have received the Best Ballet Master Award at the SPERA International Ballet Competition in 2026, as well as numerous Gold, Silver, and Bronze medals and special distinctions at competitions including Dance Open America, the Domenico Modugno Competition in Italy, VIBE International Ballet in Vienna, Tanz Olymp Berlin, and YAGP. Her students have also earned Outstanding School Awards, Hope Awards, and individual recognitions such as Best Female Dancer. In addition, students under her guidance have reached the finals of the Helsinki International Ballet Competition and received a Special Prize at the IBBC Riga.

Her students' achievements at Dance Open America in 2025 included an Outstanding School Award, a Hope Award, and Gold and Silver medals, further demonstrating the high level of training and artistic preparation provided under her direction.

Beyond competition training, Radina Dace is also dedicated to introducing young dancers to the art of classical ballet through full-length productions. She is the director of *Little Swans*, *Little Sleeping Beauty*, and *Little Coppélia*, productions that are staged every season by students of the Hungarian National Ballet Institute.

With decades of experience as a performer, educator, mentor, and artistic leader, Radina Dace continues to play an important role in developing the next generation of ballet dancers and preparing young artists for international careers.

Victor Alexander

*Director
Ruth Page School of Dance
Ruth Page Professional Dance Training Program*

Victor Alexander joined the artistic and administrative team of the Ruth Page Center for the Arts in the summer of 2013. As both the Director of the Ruth Page School of Dance and of the Ruth Page Civic Ballet, he continues a nearly 50-year tradition of exceptional training and mentoring of the next generation of the nation's best young dancers. Through the development of international partnerships and networks, Alexander has also expanded the School's reach with important collaborations and exchanges with other leading dance institutions through the development of the Ruth Page School of Dance's International Sister Schools program. Significant among these is the historic relationship with Cuba's National School of Ballet (Escuela Nacional de Ballet) begun in 2015, and the placement of a Ruth Page School of Dance student, Catherine Conley, in the prestigious Cuban training program—the first American student to be invited since the normalization of relations between the two countries. She consequently was invited to dance with the National Ballet School of Cuba, another first for an American ballerina.

Our International Sister School partners include: Escuela Nacional de Ballet de Cuba (Havana, Cuba since 2015); Profesion Dance & Mandala Dance Company (Rome, Italy since 2015); Conservatorio Profesional de Danza A Coruña (Coruña, Spain since 2016); Ironi Aleph High School of Arts (Tel Aviv, Israel since 2016); Escuela Superior de Música y Danza de Monterrey (Monterrey, Mexico since 2018); Instituto Colombiano de Ballet Clásico (IncolBallet) (Cali, Colombia since 2018).

Alexander's keen insight, experience and a dedication to the craft come from an international dancing, choreographic and teaching career. A native of Pinar del Rio, Cuba, he was trained



at the prestigious Escuela Nacional de Arte (ENA) in Havana, graduating in 1992 with a degree in Modern and Cuban folkloric dance. As a student, his exceptional talents were recognized in 1992 when he won first place for dance in the 4th National Union of Writers and Artists in Havana. He went on to be a principal dancer for the prominent Danza Contemporánea de Cuba from 1992 to 2002, where both his technical talent and expressive dance style gained national prominence. Alexander has studied with distinguished teachers such as Donald McKayle, Chuck Davis, and Jeffrey Bullock and has performed throughout Europe, Asia, the Caribbean and the United States. Since relocating from Cuba to Chicago in 2002, Alexander has performed with Lyric Opera of Chicago, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, Hedwig Dances, CDI/Concert Dance Inc, and Luna Negra Dance Theater. While with CDI, Alexander was a featured artist in the 2008 Emmy Award-nominated production of the re-envisioned Ruth Page's Billy Sunday on PBS. While with Hedwig, Alexander was a dance artist in the 2016 Emmy-nominated film Arch of Repose.

His teaching experience is extensive, encompassing local, national and international dance institutions. Of particular importance to Alexander is teaching in outreach programs that bring dance to youth. Recent outreach programs include Dance Art (2007–2010) and the Elementary Dance Scholarship Program (2010–2011) within the Chicago Public Schools. Included in Dance Magazine's prestigious "25 to Watch in 2013" list, Alexander is known for his riveting stage presence as he mixes formidable technique he gained in the rigorous training ground of Cuban dance schools with facility at theatrical interpretation. In 2012, he was one of four choreographers selected for the Lab Artists Program, a one-year program of the Chicago Dancemakers Forum that focuses on the development of new choreography. In addition to the Chicago Dancemakers Forum grant, he has also received a fellowship from the Illinois Arts Council for his work, Line of Sighs and was selected as one of the 2013 Novel Affair Artists selected by The Ragdale Curatorial Board. In December of 2013, Line of Sighs was highlighted in the Chicago Tribune's "Top 10 Best Dance Performances of 2013."

Alexander was one of the choreographers chosen to participate in Chicago's Afro-Latino Festival 2014 with his work Among us. Additionally in 2014, he was selected to participate in Hubbard Street Dance Chicago's choreographic initiative, The International Commissioning Project, which provides residencies to choreographers, offering them the opportunity to create original works for HS2's dancers and to conduct master classes. In 2022 Alexander received a Dance Leadership Hedwig Dance Award . In 2023, he was nominated Co-Chair of Dance for Life, a one-of-a-kind annual benefit event that has showcased more than 50 Chicago-based dance companies for the past 32 years. Honored this year with the Ruth Page Legacy Award.



Miwa Horikawa

Director of the Sensational Ballet Company

Miwa Horikawa, a Japanese dance artist and choreographer, has garnered international recognition for her innovative, emotionally resonant, and technically precise choreography. Her work is showcased in prestigious dance institutions and schools globally and frequently chosen by dancers for international competitions, where it has garnered numerous awards. Miwa is also a sought-

after guest coach and choreographer at dance institutions worldwide, where she shares her expertise and inspires aspiring dancers.

Miwa's exceptional talent manifested early in her life. At the tender age of 13, she received the prestigious Minister of Education Encouragement Award at the National Dance Competition of Japan, a clear indication of her prodigious abilities and future potential. Her formal training culminated in her graduation from the esteemed Beijing Dance Academy in 1989. Following her graduation, she embarked on a professional career that led her to join the Hong Kong Ballet and Singapore Dance Theatre, where she quickly rose to prominence, playing a leading role in the majority of their performances and captivating audiences with her technical prowess and artistic expression.

In 1995, Miwa returned to her native Japan to further develop her artistic voice and explore new creative avenues. She dedicated her talents to the "Art Ballet Naniwazu" in Osaka, where she honed her skills as both a performer and choreographer until 2001. Driven by her entrepreneurial spirit and artistic vision, she founded her own companies, "Kansai Dance Art" and "Miwa Horikawa Ballet Studio," platforms that allowed her to fully realize her creative vision and nurture emerging talent. Her expertise and leadership also led her to serve as a ballet master at the renowned Takarazuka Musical Theatre from 2003 to 2011. Subsequently, she took on the roles of ballet master and choreographer for two prominent dance art institutions in Hong Kong from 2011 to 2015, further solidifying her reputation as a leading figure in the dance world.

In 2019, Miwa's commitment to fostering dance excellence led her to establish a dance competition in partnership with the Sensational Ballet Company. This initiative reflects her deep-seated desire to contribute her vast experience and knowledge to the local dance community, promoting performance, creativity, and education, and ensuring the continued vitality and evolution of the art form to which she has dedicated her life.

Deborah Marquez

Founder & Artistic Director
Grand Prix Dance Open America



Deborah Marquez is the Founder and Artistic Director of Grand Prix Dance Open America and the Founding Director of Ballet Arts Dance Company, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization established in 2011.

Born in Havana, Cuba, Deborah began her ballet training at the Provincial Ballet School Alejo Carpentier and continued her studies at the National Ballet School in Havana under the direction of the renowned teacher Ramona de Saá. In 1994 Deborah joined Centro Pro-Danza as a Principal Dancer, led by the distinguished maître Laura Alonso. During this period, she performed numerous leading roles, including the Sugar Plum Fairy in *The Nutcracker*, La Sylphide, Swanilda in *Coppélia*, Kitri and Mercedes in *Don Quixote*, Teresita in *Napoli*, Lucy in *Dracula*, Constanza in *The Three Musketeers*, and Gamsatti in *La Bayadère*, among others. In 2000, she joined the National Ballet of Cuba, under the artistic direction of Alicia Alonso, where she performed the major classical repertoire as well as contemporary works, including *Rara Avis* by Alberto Méndez. She toured extensively throughout Europe and South America, working under the guidance of celebrated ballet masters and artists including Alicia Alonso, Joaquín Banegas, Lázaro Araujo, Josefina Méndez, Fernando Alonso, and others.

In 2002, Deborah moved to the United States and joined Ballet Florida, under the direction of Marie Hale, beginning a new chapter in her professional career. During her years with the company, she had the opportunity to work with some of the most distinguished choreographers in the world, including Ben Stevenson, Mauricio Wainrot, Twyla Tharp, Vicente Nebrada, Trey McIntyre, Val Caniparoli, Norbert Vesak, Thierry Malandain, David Parsons, and Marie Hale. Her repertoire included works such as *Dracula*, *Cleopatra*, *Esmeralda*, *Five Poems*, *Bartók Concerto*, *Four Last Songs*, *Three Preludes*, *Libertango*, *The Rite of Spring*, *From Far Away*, *Anne Frank*, *Baker's Dozen*, *Our Waltzes*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Cinderella*, *Second Before the Ground*, *Lambarena*, *Lady of the Camellias*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Stone Flower*, and *The Envelope*, among many others.

While performing with Ballet Florida, Deborah also danced works by George Balanchine, including *Allegro Brillante*, *Classical Symphony*, and *Il Ballo Della Regina*. Her professional career in the U.S. continued for more than two decades, encompassing performance, teaching, choreography, artistic direction, and the development of young dancers.

Her achievements as a dancer include the First Prize for Best Choreography – Song to the Movement at the National Arts School Festival in Havana in 1989; the First Prize for Best Performance and Technique at the National Art Schools Festival in Havana in 1990; a Bronze Medal at the Second International Ballet Competition “Alicia Alonso” in Havana in 1997; and

a Silver Medal at the International Ballet Competition of Belo Horizonte, Brazil, in 1998. In 1999, she was invited to perform *The Nutcracker* with the Ontario Ballet Theatre in Toronto.

In 2010, Deborah founded the School of Ballet Arts in Palm Beach County, Florida. Since then, she has trained and coached thousands of young dancers, many of whom have continued their education at prestigious university dance programs and pursued professional careers with leading dance companies. Each year, Ballet Arts alumni continue to join major American dance companies, reflecting Deborah's long-standing commitment to developing and preparing the next generation of professional dancers.

In 2011, she founded Ballet Arts Dance Company, for which she has choreographed, directed, and staged numerous full-length classical ballet productions. These productions have included the annual *The Nutcracker*, as well as *Dracula*, *Coppélia*, *Don Quixote*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, and *Paquita*, among others.

In 2016, Deborah brought CUBALLET USA, the International Ballet Summer Intensive founded by Laura Alonso, to the United States, creating an important opportunity for American students to experience and study the Cuban ballet methodology directly with leading Cuban ballet teachers and artists. That same year, she received the Palm Beach County Randolph A. Frank Award for Outstanding Arts Educator, recognizing her significant contribution to arts education and her dedication to providing young dancers with exceptional training and opportunities to pursue professional careers.

Also in 2020, Deborah co-founded Dance Open America, an international ballet competition initially developed through a digital platform. Over the years, Grand Prix Dance Open America has experienced remarkable international growth, expanding its presence through regional competitions and events across the United States, Puerto Rico, Spain, Sri Lanka, Japan, and Taiwan, while welcoming dancers and studios from countries around the world.

Grand Prix Dance Open America has evolved into a growing international platform that provides dancers with opportunities to compete, receive professional feedback, train with internationally recognized teachers, and connect with prestigious institutions and artists. Throughout its development, the organization has awarded more than \$1 million in scholarship certificates, further strengthening its commitment to supporting the next generation of dancers and their continued artistic education. Each season has brought new opportunities to connect with dancers, teachers, studios, and leading figures in the international dance community.

Today, Deborah Marquez combines her experience as a former professional dancer with more than two decades of teaching, coaching, choreography, artistic direction, and arts leadership. Through Grand Prix Dance Open America, Ballet Arts Dance Company, and the School of Ballet Arts, she remains dedicated to creating opportunities for young dancers; helping them develop the technical, artistic, and professional skills to pursue careers in dance.