

# Tasha K. Lawson

*“A Dancer whose inner light shines and makes her memorable.”*

**-Jeannie Hill (Jump Rhythm Jazz Project; Chicago)**

## Overview

Ms. Lawson brings to the performing arts a broad skillset in dance education, artistic direction, choreography, performance, and adjudication. With twenty years of experience as a professional multi-form artist in Tap, Body Percussion and Contemporary Dance, she encompasses the depth of knowledge, creativity, and critical eye required to educate and direct professional artists and diverse performers. As a seasoned educator, creator and performer, she has developed the artistic maturity necessary to educate, critique and advise on the latest concepts in dance. With a true passion for teaching, Ms. Lawson inspires others to achieve their highest goals in technical complexity and artistic expression. Ms. Lawson is continually enriching her knowledge through personal studies and performance experiences, bringing enhanced inspiration the next generation of artists.

Ms. Lawson’s professional career began in Vancouver, B.C. after graduating from Grant MacEwan College’s Dance Teacher Training and Dance Performance Programs. She furthered her studies at Simon Fraser University while teaching, choreographing and producing concerts. Inspired by the roots of her craft, Ms. Lawson relocated to New York City where she deepened her knowledge by studying with a variety of world class artists in Tap, Jazz, Contemporary and Body Percussion.

Ms. Lawson’s experience rewarded her with a contract with internationally acclaimed Tapestry Dance Company where she held the position of Principal Dancer for six years. In addition, Ms. Lawson served as Artistic Director of Tapestry’s apprentice company, Visions in Rhythm, with whom she created six full-length, multi-form concert works. In 2007 Ms. Lawson was nominated for Female Dancer of the Year by the Austin Critics Table Awards for her performance in *The Souls of Our Feet – A Celebration of American Tap Dance*.

Ms. Lawson is the founder and Artistic Director of Tri-Tone Productions and is in high demand as a master class teacher, guest choreographer and adjudicator across Canada and the United States. She has been an artist-in-residence for numerous Universities, dance programs and companies. She frequently delivers guest classes to for Cirque Du Soleil in Las Vegas, and has toured throughout the US and Tokyo as Assistant Artistic Director with Cirque Du Soleil’s, *KOOZA*. Ms. Lawson frequently delivers teacher-training seminars on teaching methodologies and compositional approach. She has received countless awards for her choreography and many of her students have achieved high recognition with thriving professional dance careers. Ms. Lawson is the founder and Artistic Director of The Tri-Tone Rhythm Ensemble, mentoring youth and pre-professional dancers in Calgary. Ms. Lawson and a team of 11 recently formed the Tri-Tone Rhythm Society and are producing the 4th Annual Rhythm Body and Soul Festival in February 2015. The festival features 8 internationally acclaimed tap artists, concert performances, panel discussions and over 40 master classes and workshops open to the community, attracting participants from across North America.

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*“Her work with students in Canada has garnered high recognition at dance festivals across the country for its inventiveness, originality and excellent craft.”* -Santa Aloï, Professor of Dance, Simon Fraser University.

## Career Highlights

### Artistic Direction / Producing:

Producer of Rhythm, Body and Soul Tap Festival - 2011- Present

- Creative vision, theatre and technical bookings, rehearsal direction, casting, hiring, scheduling, communications, publicity, grant writing etc.

Artistic Director of The Tri-Tone Rhythm Ensemble, Youth Ensemble and Adult Rhythm Ensemble.

- Instruction includes: Technique, body music, tap history, historical footage, live musicians
- Touring to conferences for education and performance purposes
- Teacher Training

Assistant Artistic Director for Cirque Du Soleil's touring production KOOZA - 2010-2011

- Maintaining show concept and integrity, integrating new artists
- Managing over 70 artists from 17 countries
- Co-ordination of training with head coaches, physiotherapy team, stage management.
- Calling show from headset
- Liaison between touring show and Montreal head quarters
- Evaluating artists

Tri-Tone Productions Interdisciplinary Dance and Music Professional Company, AD, Austin TX 2006 - 2010

- Creative vision, rehearsal direction, casting, hiring, scheduling, communications, publicity, grant writing

Visions in Rhythm, Multi-form Youth Dance Company, Austin, TX, AD, 2002 – 2008

- Management and direction of Company and Management Team
- Creative vision, rehearsal direction, casting, hiring, scheduling, touring, publicity

### Performance:

Principal Dancer with Tapestry Dance Company, 2002 - 2008

- Nominated for Best Female Dancer of the Year by the 2007 Austin Critics Table
- Original and touring cast member of "The Souls of Our Feet," tribute to the Masters of Tap
- Performed in ten full-length, multi-form concert work creations

Featured Rhythm Tap soloist at international Tap Festivals

- Tanzhaus Festival (Düsseldorf, Germany)
- Bienal De Danse (Fortaleza, Brazil)
- Festival D'estui (Reus, Spain)
- Chicago Human Rhythm Project (Chicago, IL)
- Soul to Sole (Austin, TX)
- Vancouver International Tap Festival (Vancouver, BC)
- Festival Danse Encore (Trois-Rivières, QB)
- Third Coast Rhythm Project (San Antonio, TX)
- MADD Rhythms Canada (Calgary, AB)
- National Tap Dance Day Celebration (Dallas, TX)
- Everything on Tap (Dallas, TX)

Performed in Ensemble works

- Tapestry Dance Company 2002-2008
- *Rhythms 2010*, performer and collaborator with Canadian Tap Artists, AD: Heather Cornell
- New York City Tap Festival

Contemporary works

- Dancing on the Edge Festival - Choreography: Santa Aloï
- Women in View Festival - Choreography: Rhonda Cooper
- Late Night Kiss Projects - Choreography: Tasha Lawson
- Dancers Studio West - Choreography: Tasha Lawson

## Teaching:

- Master class instructor at numerous international festivals (see performance festivals)
- Guest Body Percussion classes for Cirque du Soleil resident shows, Las Vegas: *Mystère*, “*O*”, *The Beatles LOVE*, *Michael Jackson ONE*, *Zarkana*, *Zumanity*
- Guest instructor for professional and youth training programs (see choreography credits)
- 20 years educating; long-term faculty and as a guest artist in multiple disciplines:
  - Decidedly Jazz Danceworks professional training program; 2011- current
  - Guest instructor at University of Calgary
  - Central Memorial High School; 2013, 2014
  - Capilano University, Vancouver, B.C.; Guest Artist in Musical Theatre Program, Tap Jazz, Composition, Body Percussion. First, Second and Third Year Students; 2009
  - Tapestry Dance Academy, Austin, TX; 6 years faculty Tap, Modern, Jazz, Visions in Rhythm Apprentice Company Director; full-time: 2002-2008, returning guest artists: current
  - Peggy Peat School of Dance, Maple Ridge, B.C.; 5 years faculty, 10 years as a returning guest artist for summer programs and guest choreography; 1995- current
  - Shadbolt Center for the Arts, Burnaby, B.C.; 5 years faculty; 1995-2000
  - Spectrum City Dance, Prince Rupert, B.C.; 7 years returning guest artist; 1998-2014
  - Harbour Dance Center, Vancouver, B.C.; 8 years returning guest artist; 1996-current
  - Grand Prairie Regional College, Grand Prairie, A.B.; returning guest artist; 1993-current
- Delivered teacher-training seminars on teaching techniques, injury prevention, and lesson plans (Festival Danse Encore, Trois-Rivières, Quebec, Canada 2006, 2007, 2008, 2013)
- Instrumental in developing the pre-school creative dance program at the Shadbolt Centre for the Arts, Burnaby, B.C.
- Instructed pre-primary through Grade 4 Royal Academy of Dance Ballet syllabus
- Extensive work with youth and adults students in Tap, Jazz, Body Percussion and Contemporary Dance, Beginner through Advanced

## Choreography:

- Creation of a full evening for Tri-Tone Productions, commissioned by Festival Danse Encore.
- Artistic Director of Visions in Rhythm multi-form dance company for 6 years - directed and produced six original full-length concert works.
- Commissioned by Tapestry Dance Company for the creation of new concert works in Modern, Jazz, Tap, and Body Percussion.
- Collaborator with Acia Gray, Anu Nimphally and World Music band ATASH in the creation of “*Footprints*,” a full-length concert work, premiered in Austin, TX, 2007.
- Taught composition in the Musical Theatre Department at Capilano University; focus was phrase development, theatrical intention, exploration of space and time, and creative techniques for the student body to develop the assignment into a full work for performance and grading at the University. Worked with First, Second and Third Year students.
- Guest Choreographer and Guest teacher for “*Legacy Tap Dancers*,” Boston MA, Composition performed at the New York City Tap Festival, 2009.
- Choreographer for “Intensive Training Program,” Harbour Dance Centre, Vancouver, Canada, Movement and Body Percussion Composition for pre-professional dancers, ages 18-28.
- Guest Choreographer for Third Coast Rhythm Project’s “*RPM Youth Ensemble*,” San Antonio TX. Piece Performed at National Tap Day, Soul to Sole Tap Festival, and The Chicago Human Rhythm Project’s “*Rhythm World 2007*.”
- Choreography for the City of San Antonio’s “Inner City Arts Outreach Program.” Worked with a wide range of technical ability in the creation of a Dance Theatre /Body Percussion piece. Performed at numerous events including National Tap Day in San Antonio 2009.
- Choreography in Tap, Jazz and Body Percussion for Elza Calvacante, Annapolis, Brazil, 2008.
- Choreography awards from Surrey Dance Festival, Coquitlam Dance Festival, Footloose Dance Festival, Dance Power, Starlight, B.C. Festival for the Arts and Canadian Nationals.
- Choreographed creative movement scene for a Lynn Elder music video “*Flowers and Things*,” 1998.
- Choreographer/dancer for a CBC’s “*TB Veterans*” commercial “*Happy Feet*”

- Guest Choreography:
  - University of Texas, Austin, TX
  - Capilano University, Vancouver, BC
  - Central Memorial High School, Calgary, AB
  - St. Francis High School, Calgary, AB
  - Dance Spectrum, Calgary, AB
  - Legacy Tap Dancers, Boston, MA
  - Tapestry Dance Company, Austin, TX
  - Third Coast Rhythm Project, San Antonio, TX
  - Peggy Peat School of Dance, Maple Ridge, BC
  - Spectrum City Dance, Prince Rupert, BC
  - Absolute Dance, Calgary, AB
  - Rhythm and Percussion in Motion, San Antonio, TX
  - Dallas Youth Ensemble, Dallas, TX
  - Continuum Dance Company, Burnaby, BC
  - Harbor Dance Center, Vancouver, BC
  - Grand Prairie Regional College, Grand Prairie, AB
  - Numerous other independent commissions

**Television/Film:**

- Happy Feet as a Tap Dancer, commercial (CBC Television)
- Spilled Milk as a Creative Dance Specialist, T.V. children's program
- Flowers and Things as Actor, music video for Lynn Elder (Jump Communications)
- Jerry Lewis Telethon as a Dancer

**Adjudication:**

- Festival Dance Encore, Mediator for Judges, Trios-Rivières, QC (2006 - 2008)
- Festival Dance Encore, Judge, (Contemporary, Jazz, Tap) Trios-Rivières, QC (2001 - 2014)
- North Island Festival for the Arts (all disciplines), Courtney, B.C. (2001)
- Dancing From the Heart (all disciplines), Sherwood Park, A.B. (2002)

**Education:**

Dance Performance Diploma (advanced standing)  
Grant MacEwan, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

Dance Teacher Training Diploma (advanced standing)  
Grant MacEwan, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

**Additional Training:**

- African drum training with Aaron Guidry
- Restaged historical masterpiece works of Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, Dr. Fayard Nicholas, Gene Kelly/ Donald O'Connor, Dr. Jeni Legon /w Tapestry Dance Company
- Voice Training with Shannon Holmes, Vancouver, B.C.
- Acting with Gene Gabriel, New York, New York
- Body percussion training with Keith Terry, Barbatuques, Brazillian Body Band, Max Pollock
- Rhythm Tap studies with Dianne Walker, Roxanne Butterfly, Brenda Buffalino, Heather Cornell, Max Pollak, Acia Gray, Derick Grant, Sarah Petronio, Arthur Duncan, and numerous other masters.
- Conga Drum Training with Russell Shumsky, Vancouver, B.C.

References and previous employment contacts available upon request.