

BIOGRAPHY - Tasha Lawson

Tasha Lawson is an established International dance artist with 25 plus years experience spanning festival producer, educator, choreographer, artistic director and performer.

Ms. Lawson is the founder, producer and artistic director of the Tri-Tone Rhythm Society and Calgary's Rhythm, Body and Soul Festival, an annual four day event that celebrates, preserves and promotes tap dance and percussive arts through education and presentation. The festival welcomes a diverse range of International artists and students, and recently celebrated it's 10th anniversary with on-line events, including panel discussions and film screenings.

In her 9th season, as Artistic Director of the Tri-Tone Rhythm Ensemble, Ms. Lawson is respected for her values as an educator and ability to affect positive growth in youth. She is recognized for developing well rounded dancers, providing the foundation needed to pursue a professional career. Students have been accepted into prestigious schools including Jacob's Pillow in Massachusetts and Escola Luthier in Barcelona, and performed with acclaimed companies such as STOMP and Dorrance Dance.

Understanding the versatility required as a working artist, in 2015 Tasha developed Tri-Tone Teacher Training Program's in Rhythm Tap and Pre-School Creative Dance, sharing methodologies that integrate technique, musicality, artistry and history while inspiring creativity and self discipline in students.

Driven by curiosity of varied cultures and their influence on rhythm, music, and movement, Tasha has travelled abroad and studied with body percussion masters, Keith Terry (USA) and Fernando Barba (Brazil), as well as other leaders in the field. She has since developed a technique which transcribes tap vocabulary and repertoire to the body, and has been presented at the International Body Music Festival's in San Francisco and Paris, France, and Festival Danse Encore, Quebec. Tasha has delivered body percussion workshops for casts of Cirque Du Soleil in Las Vegas, and toured the US and Japan as Assistant Artistic Director of Big Top Show, KOOZA.

From 2002-2008, Tasha performed and toured with Tapestry Dance Company in Austin, Texas, under the direction of Acia Gray. Ms Lawson was nominated for *Dancer of the Year* by the Austin Critics Table Awards, for her performance in "The Souls of Our Feet; A Tribute to American Tap Dance". During this time, Tasha also served as Artistic Director of Tapestry's apprentice company, Visions In Rhythm, developing as a choreographer and director in the creation of six full-length concert presentations.

In 2010, Tasha was invited by tap master, Dianne Walker, to join the faculty of Jacobs Pillow for its inaugural Professional Tap program. She has since been working closely with Dianne, in the preservation the Late Leon Collins' body of work. Additional residencies and workshops include Capilano University, University of Calgary, University of Texas, Decidedly Jazz Dancework's Professional Training Program, Harbour Dance Center, Vancouver's, ITP Program, Peggy Peat School of Dance, Spectrum City Dance, and Dansko Studios among others.

Tasha has been invited to guest at International Festivals; Chicago Human Rhythm Project, Vancouver International Tap Festival, Third Coast Rhythm Project, Sole to Soul, Tap into a Cure, Toronto Rhythm Initiative, MADD Rhythms Canada, Festival Danse Encore, Brazil's Le Biennale De Dance, Germany's Tanzhaus Festival, and Calgary's Rhythm Body and Soul Festival.

Graduating with advanced standing in Dance Teacher Training and Dance Performance, from Grant MacEwan University, under the mentorship of the Charlene Tarver and Brian Webb, she then attended Simon Fraser University, while choreographing and performing in festival's, Dancing on the Edge and Women In View in Vancouver, Canada. She later relocated to New York, immersing in rhythm tap and music studies. Tasha has had the privilege of sharing creative spaces, with tap masters, Roxanne Butterfly, Heather Cornell, Dianne Walker, Brenda Bufalino, Max Pollak, Sarah Petronio, Derick Grant, Katherine Kramer, Dr. Arthur Duncan, Dr. Harold Cromer, Dr. Jeni Legon, Dr. Jimmy Slyde, Dr. Fayard Nicholas, among others.

Tasha is grateful for the mentorship and opportunities provided by many versatile artists, collaborators, colleagues, students, and tap masters who support and inspire her journey.

Continuously expanding, she is currently freelancing as a guest artist, teacher, choreographer and program consultant, and recently launched Lawson Percussive Dance Arts Company. Supported in part by the Calgary Arts Development Authority. For more information visit www.rhythmbodyandsoul.com or www.tashalawson.com