

ROCHELLE MAPES

Rochelle Mapes is often described as a 'true dance educator' and has trained thousands of dancers in contemporary dance and jazz technique. While her career has always been comprised of equal parts educator, choreographer, and dancer, she is most fulfilled in fostering talent and training dancers to reach their fullest potential. Rochelle grew up in the Bay Area before moving to Southern California to pursue dance. As a performer, she has danced with such musical artists as Gladys Knight and Wayne Brady and performed on the FX television show *Nip/Tuck*.

She continues to dance with the bi-coastal (NY/CA) contemporary BARE Dance Company under the direction of Mike Esperanza and spent almost a decade as a dancer, choreographer, and rehearsal director for Long Beach-based Rhet Oracle Dance Company with Nate Hodges. Rochelle is on faculty at the American Ballet Theater Gillespie School and spent nearly two decades training elite dancers at the Orange County School of the Arts, Commercial Dance Conservatory.

She thrives in a master class setting; an expert in teaching multiple levels, managing large groups, and creating an inspired energy in the space. Master class opportunities have taken her as far as Japan and include notable events like the Dizzy Feet Foundation's National Dance Day, Dance aTAK conventions, KAR conventions, Texas Dance Educator Association convention, and numerous elite dance team camps for the United Spirit Association. With a lifelong desire to learn, she earned both a Master of Arts and a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance from Cal State University, Long Beach. Her strong academic background influences her pedagogical practice, rooting her classes in the kinesiology of movement mechanics, the history of various dance forms, and a plethora of techniques and philosophies.

As an educator, Rochelle is articulate in her instruction, clear with movement intentions, challenging in her expectations and physicality, and a little witty in her delivery. She helps dancers of all ages and levels take their dancing to the next level. Her technical foundation is clear in both her jazz technique across the floor progressions and her contemporary combinations that are rhythmically-driven with nuanced musicality.

Beyond the physical challenge, dancers often connect to Rochelle's class for the life lessons woven into dance lessons that inherently express the humanity of dance.