

# The Academy of Performing Arts



**Luanna Luxton Armstrong,**  
B.A.T.D., Director, Choreographer

A lifetime member of the British Association of Teachers of Dance, and a seasoned dancer, actress, singer, choreographer, playwright and director in countless productions, Miss Luanna brings a wealth of experience to the arts and our community.

Miss Luanna was born and raised in Sault, Ontario. She is a graduate of Loretto in Sault, Michigan, alumni of Lake Superior State University, Ryerson University and York University, Ontario. She opened her first school of dancing in Dundas, Ontario in 1969. For 20 years she owned and operated the Luanna Luxton School of Dance and Performing Arts in Bolton, Ontario where she also founded and directed a professional summer theater company. Her school boasted a Barn Theater where countless one of a kind productions, both amateur and professional took place.

In September 2003, Miss Luanna founded the Academy of Performing Arts, on the campus of Lake Superior State University, after being the Director of Dance and Drama at Lake Superior State University for two years. In September 2008, the Academy moved to its beautiful new location, the Chi Mukwa Community Recreation Center. (Big Bear Arena).



**Erika Laitinen-Odbert,**  
Instructor & Choreographer

Erika Laitinen-Odbert has been sharing her commitment to excellence in the dance arts for 15 years with the Academy of Performing Arts, where she teaches Ballet, Pointe, Lyrical, and Jazz. With over 25 years of experience, Erika danced competitively with Trixie Hardy Dance Studio and Studio Dance Arts, both of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario.

She has traveled internationally and within the United States competing, performing, and attending numerous workshops. Erika has undergone extensive B.A.T.D. training, focusing primarily in the study of ballet.

Erika loves to share her passion for dance with her students, her family, and her community. Among her dance experiences, Erika has been able to volunteer for many community events, including Hospice of the EUP Madrigal Dinner for over ten years and is incredibly honored and proud to now be a coach for the Dancing with the Hospice Stars!

She looks forward to continuing her adventure in sharing the art of dance with all for many years to come.



**Kayla Price,**  
Instructor & Choreographer

As a sixth year instructor, Kayla comes to the Academy from a long history with performing. Her love of figure skating and gymnastics at a very early age inspired her to study ballet, where she began dancing at the Sherry Walsh Academy of Dance Arts at the age of 8. Kayla also participated in the Sault Gym Club Gymnastics programs in Sault Sainte Marie, ONT.

She has studied dance at our Academy for many years and has taken part in several of our annual Children's Theatre Productions, both as a dancer and as an actress. Kayla has participated in several dance competitions during her time, performing with the Sault High Pom Pon squad.

She also brings skills learned from participating in those competitions, as well as, performing and dancing in New York City, Disney World in Orlando, Florida, and Puerto Rico. She performed with the LSSU Dance Company, and has taken summer residence near Traverse City, MI. as an employee of Interlochen Center of the Arts. During the summer of 2018, Kayla enjoyed instructing dance to students coming to LSSU from various cities for the EDventures summer camps.

Kayla will be returning in the fall to begin instructing classes again this year. We look forward to having more years with her.



**Ali Brand,**  
Instructor & Choreographer

We welcome Ali Brand as our new Tap Instructor.

A student of dance from the age of three, Ali brings to the Academy years of experience in Tap, Jazz, Ballet and Hip Hop.

She studied at Rapid City Dance Factory in Grand Rapids, MI and Rhythm Dance Center in Belmont, MI.

She has performed multiple times at the Grand Rapids Festival of the Arts with her Dance Company.

She was also part of the Dance Program at LSSU taking classes in Tap, Jazz and Theatre.

She has a love for all types of dance but tap is by far her favorite. She is passionate about dance and is very excited to be teaching Tap at the Academy.