

Press Kit

DANCE.
ENTERTAIN.
INSPIRE.



VITACCA PRODUCTIONS & COMPANY

For more information, interviews and/or access to high resolution images please contact the Press Department at PR@vitacca.org
vitacca.org



Dance. Entertain. Inspire.

Vitacca Productions & Company (Vitacca P&C) is a dance development organization that provides advance dance coaching, outreach programs, professional performances and production/creative management services which bridge the gap between dance artists, career opportunities and the community.

Vitacca Productions & Company Mission

Vitacca Productions & Company is committed to the intellectual vitality of the community by providing a foundation for development of the art of dance throughout Texas and surrounding states. Vitacca P&C fosters emerging dancers, choreographers and educators through world-class coaching, artistic collaborations, mentorships and professional performances which advance dance as a medium and provokes thought.

Vitacca Productions & Company Programs

Vitacca Dance Project

Vitacca Dance Project is designed for aspiring dancers, emerging choreographers and avid professional artists. Our programming guides artists on innovative and collaborative paths, supporting independent artistic thought and growth.

Utilizing classical ballet as a foundation, alongside contemporary movement, we give artists the opportunity to participate in:

- Solid Technical Coaching
- Choreographic Laboratories
- Master Classes
- Career Mentorship Programs
- Professional Performances



Each program is developed to launch the dancer and choreographer into their next level of artistry, surpassing their preconceived limitations. Our goal is to fuel the artistic process and build industry relationships, which supports the advancement of educated, powerful dance artists, and their careers.

Pre-Professional Company

Vitacca Dance Project Pre-Professional Company is an audition only, non-profit company offered to 10-15 pre-professional dancers, ages 12-18. The 36-week program provides advanced ballet technique and contemporary movement coaching which acts as the

foundation for professional dance careers. Company members work with a world-class faculty, notable local artists and renowned national artists including:

- Kelly Ann Vitacca, Artistic Director
- Phillip Broomhead, Artistic Advisor / Ballet Master

Guest Choreographers:

- Autumn Eckman, Artistic Associate from Giordano Jazz Dance Chicago
- Andy Noble, Co-Artistic Director - Noble Motion / Assistant Dance Professor - Sam Houston State University
- Dionne Noble, Co-Artistic Director - Noble Motion / Assistant Dance Professor - Sam Houston State University
- Joseph Walsh, Houston Ballet Principal Dancer

Due to the company's limited acceptance rate, the dancers receive personal focus and coaching from the faculty and guest artists. Through the creation of advanced repertoire, the 36-week season educates the pre-professional dancer on the artistic process, a disciplined work ethic and dance industry standards. Vitacca Dance Project performance opportunities take place in professional venues such as: Dance Chicago, Vitacca P&C's Annual Gala, national festivals and showcases.

The company's structure is constructed to push each dancer beyond their technical and artistic abilities and offer the education needed to pursue a long, healthy and professional career. This program is offered as a unique cross-training option in addition to the dancers home studio.

Vitacca Commercial Project

Vitacca P&C helps national associations, world class companies and non-profit agencies integrate their vision with high production dance entertainment. We specialize in onsite production management, entertainment creative direction and award winning choreography.

We take pride in providing innovative show concepts that come alive with leading dance professionals across Texas and surrounding states. Vitacca P&C is pleased to offer personalized attention to each performance and strives to be on the cutting edge of dance entertainment.

Our industry expertise will make your up-coming conference, gala, fundraiser or launch party a unique experience and an event to remember.

We look forward to creating a high caliber, imaginative and motivating show specifically designed for your audience base. By selecting Vitacca P&C, a nonprofit organization, for your needs you help sustain the dance art form. Please contact us to receive a personalized quote.



Vitacca Community Project

Choreographic Fellowship

The Choreographer Fellowship is unique for ambitious choreographers ages 16-25, offering a laboratory for new artistic talent to thrive. The program allows emerging choreographers (Choreographic Apprentices) the guidance and resources needed to enhance their creative skill set, while working closely under a professional choreographer (Choreographic Mentors). The Apprentice is given the opportunity to document the artistic process with Mentor pre/post interviews, an informative rehearsal reel or photos, and a dance work storyboard. This program allows the Choreographic Apprentice a professional and creative environment to:



- Study choreography composition
- Expand creative vocabulary
- Network with industry professionals
- Build a personal resume
- Propose new work for review and possible selection

At the completion of the choreographic process, the Apprentice takes the platform to present their choreographic research for review and feedback from Artistic Staff and Vitacca Dance Project panel. In addition, the Apprentice is awarded the chance to propose his/her own work for possible repertoire selection for Vitacca P&C's annual gala held in May.

All Apprentice Choreographic Fellowship projects and gala piece proposals will be presented at the Vitacca Dance Project Preview Event in October for the community at large to view.

2012-2013 Choreographic Mentors:

- Autumn Eckman, Artistic Associate from Giordano Jazz Dance Chicago
- Andy Noble, Co-Artistic Director - Noble Motion / Assistant Dance Professor - Sam Houston State University
- Dionne Noble, Co-Artistic Director - Noble Motion / Assistant Dance Professor - Sam Houston State University
- Kelly Ann Vitacca, Artistic Director – Vitacca Dance Project
- Joseph Walsh, Houston Ballet Principal Dancer

Community Performances

Vitacca P&C welcomes and encourages the community to engage in the artistic building process through open events, dance performances and outreach programs. These project platforms stimulate deeper dialogue between the artist and dance aficionados, curious patrons and intrigued youth.

We are eager to contribute our artistic energy to the Texas community. Please contact us to learn more about how Vitacca P&C can serve your organization or be a part of your next community event.

Dance performances range from 10-45 minutes and can be programmed to fit the client's needs.

Vitacca Productions & Company Artistic Staff



Kelly Ann Vitacca, Artistic Director & Contemporary Coach

Kelly Ann Vitacca is a native of Chicago, Illinois. She received her Bachelor's in Performing Arts in Dance Performance at Oklahoma City University and extended Arts Management master studies at Columbia College, Chicago. Vitacca currently teaches master classes nationally while teaching on the dance faculty at West University Dance Centre and Center Stage Dance. She served on the dance faculty at Joel Hall Dance Center, State Street Dance Studio and the Wright College Dance Program, while acting as Founding Artistic Director for Inaside Chicago Dance. In 2003 Vitacca founded the professional contemporary jazz company Inaside Chicago Dance and received invitations to perform her work in Dance Chicago, Espacio Cultural Metropolitano, International Choreographers Showcase (Madrid, Spain),

Duets For My Valentine; as well as guest performances with NorthWest Ballet, Evanston Art's and the Dance Chicago Tour. Vitacca was awarded a Leo's International Choreography Award at Jazz Dance World Congress (Monterrey, Mexico) and was recognized as a Dance Chicago Outstanding Choreographer in 2005. She has served as a guest choreographer for Cedar Lake II, Forum Jazz Dance Theater, Equity Fights Aids Events, Evanston Dance Ensemble, Copeland Dance Company, and Dance Houston to name a few.

Vitacca's extensive training on scholarship at Giordano Jazz Dance Chicago, Steps on Broadway and the Kirov Ballet Intensive afforded her guest artist roles with Instruments of Movement, Cirque Rivera Dance Theatre, LA Jazz Dance Company and lead soloist at Espacio Cultural Metropolitano (Tampico, Mexico). In 2003 Vitacca utilized her artistic strengths in a new direction and joined the national Equity, Broadway Tour of *42nd Street* the musical. Vitacca was invited to return to complete the national tour run in 2005.

In 2006, Vitacca received the Illinois Artist Fellowship Award, which led to the launch and production of *Inaside Dance Project* and *For The Cause* (a benefit performance for Gilda's Club Chicago cancer support community). As Inaside Chicago Dance Founding Artistic Director, Vitacca conceptualized, co-choreographed and produced the Jackson Pollock inspired evening length *In the Painting*, which received the acclaim "Shows technical moxie" by Chicago Tribune critic Sid Smith. In addition Vitacca spearheaded the Youth Trainee Program (YTP), offering an advanced training and performance program for emerging dancers, which supports their professional career goals and future education.

In 2008 Vitacca joined Houston Ballet's artistic staff as Artistic Coordinator and Chaired the Dance/USA Host Programming Committee. With the support of Dance Source Houston and fellow Committee members Vitacca curated and produced the Dance/USA Annual Conference opening program, *Houston Dance Inside Out*, at Discovery Green on June 3, 2009. On behalf of the committee, Vitacca had the honor of receiving the official Houston Dance Day certificate from Ms. Minnette Boesel, Mayor's Assistant for Cultural Affairs. In 2010 Vitacca was appointed Dance Houston Director of Programming where she developed the *Dance Houston Spotlight Tour*, *Houston Youth Showcase* (Jones Plaza), *H-Town Get Down* (Warehouse Live) and *Dance Houston Youth Festival* (formerly known as *No Limits*) (Wortham Theater). Vitacca also acted as the educational programs liaison, supporting dance educators and filling the dance class needs within Houston Independent School District (HISD) schools and at-risk facilities. She recently served as Production Manager for the professional festival, *Dance Houston 2012* (Wortham Theater); served as programming panelist for the *Texas Weekend of Contemporary Dance* (Miller Theater); acted as Choreographic Adjudicator for *Houston Royal Academy of Fine Arts*; and was cast as an expert ballet coach on MTV's *MADE* television series, which continues to air nationwide.

Currently Vitacca assists as Dance Houston's Creative Director. As contract Choreographer/Creative Director Vitacca works on high production commercial events such as: Carpet One's Annual Conference, Annual Halloween Expo Fashion Show, and Microsoft Convergence 2012 keynote opening show for Colin Powell.

Vitacca's vast artistic achievements, arts management experience, industry networks and dedication to advance the dance art form allows her to pioneer Vitacca Productions & Company, which will be home to artistic, commercial and community dance projects.



Phillip Broomhead, Artistic Advisor & Ballet Master

Phillip Broomhead was born in London, England, trained at the Royal Ballet School, and joined The Royal Ballet in 1981. He was promoted to Soloist in 1983 and to Principal in 1986. Several roles were created specifically for Broomhead, including The Southern Cape Zebra in *Still Life at the Penguin Café* and roles in *Varii Capricci*, *Isadora*, *Pursuit*, *Number One*, *Enclosure*, and *L'Invitation au Voyage*. He performed numerous times in the presence of Her Majesty the Queen, the Queen Mother, and at many other royal galas. Broomhead joined Houston Ballet as a Principal dancer in January 1991. In March 1991, while on vacation in Washington, D.C., he attended The Royal Ballet performance of *Swan Lake*. During Act I, their Principal dancer sustained a serious injury and Broomhead found himself thrust onto The

Kennedy Center stage as Prince Siegfried; his performance won him worldwide critical acclaim. Broomhead has also created roles numerous world premieres including Glen Tetley's *Lux in Tenebris*, Ben Stevenson's *Eclipse*, and Trey McIntyre's *Peter Pan*. He retired from Houston Ballet as a dancer in June 2004 after performing with the company for 13 years at which time he joined the artistic staff as Ballet Master, a position he held until 2011. In 2012 Broomhead joined Vitacca Productions & Company as Artistic Advisor and Ballet Master.

Guest Choreographers:



Autumn Eckman, Artistic Associate from Giordano Jazz Dance Chicago

Autumn Eckman, an Atlanta native, received her classical training from Houston Ballet Academy under Clara Cravey and Steve Brulee. In 2000, Eckman relocated to Chicago to join Giordano Jazz Dance Chicago, where she is currently serving as Artistic Associate and Director of Giordano II. She has also been a dancer with State Street Ballet (Santa Barbara), Cangelosi Dance Project, Lucky Plush Productions, Luna Negra Dance Theater, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Ron De Jesus Dance, and Collective Body Dance Lab. Eckman has created five works for the Giordano company and has been commissioned by several companies, universities, and schools including Western Michigan University, KRESA, Missouri Contemporary Ballet,

State Street Ballet Young Dancers, and Contemporary Dance South. In 2010, she was named as a "standout choreographer" in the [Chicago Tribune](#). In addition, Eckman is a full-time instructor at Northern Illinois University where she enjoys teaching all disciplines of dance and is a teacher at the Lou Conte Dance Studio and Visceral Dance Chicago.



Andy Noble, Co-Artistic Director of NobleMotion Dance & Assistant Dance Professor at Sam Houston State University

Andy Noble is Co-Artistic Director of NobleMotion Dance and an Assistant Dance Professor at Sam Houston State University. He is also a Co-Founding member of Houston Dance Festival and the Associate Artistic Director of Dance Gallery Festival. [Houston Press](#) recently recognized Noble as one of Houston's 100 Most Creative.

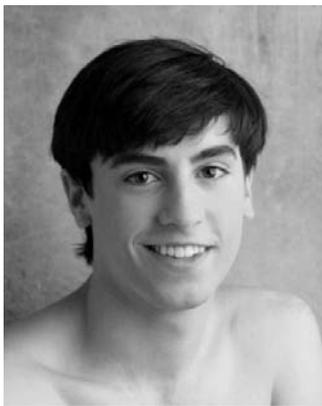
Additionally, he has served as faculty at the University of South Florida and Western Washington University as well as been a guest artist at numerous other universities across the country. His performing career includes six years with Repertory Dance Theatre (RDT), where he performed in over 40 choreographic works by such noted masters as Martha Graham, Merce Cunningham and Jose Limon. He also had the honor of working first-hand with many

cutting edge contemporary and international artists such as Gideon Obarzanek (Chunky Move), Jø Strømgren and Zvi Gotheiner. Noble's choreographic work has been presented nationally by organizations such as Florida's Moving Current Dance Company, Utah's Repertory Dance Theatre and Seattle's *Northwest New Works Series*.



Dionne Sparkman Noble, Co-Artistic Director of NobleMotion Dance & Assistant Dance Professor at Sam Houston State University

Dionne Sparkman Noble is Co-Artistic Director of NobleMotion Dance and an Assistant Dance Professor of Dance at Sam Houston State University. She has also served as faculty at Florida State University, University of South Florida and Western Washington University. Sparkman Noble has performed with Demetrius Klein Dance Company, Repertory Dance Theatre (RDT), and Moving Current Dance Collective. Her choreographic work has been produced by such organizations as New York's *University Settlement*, Seattle's *Northwest New Works Series*, The A.W.A.R.D. Show!, Moving Current Dance Company and Tallahassee Ballet.



Joseph Walsh, Houston Ballet Principal Dancer

Originally from Pennsylvania, Joseph Walsh trained at Walnut Hill School for the Performing Arts, American Ballet Theatre and Houston Ballet's Ben Stevenson Academy. Walsh was a member of Houston Ballet II prior to joining the professional company in 2007.

Since then, Walsh has been featured in a variety of roles, both contemporary and classical, including Lensky in John Cranko's *Onegin*, Hans van Manen's *Solo*, the Prince in Ben Stevenson's *The Nutcracker*, Charles d'Artoise in Stanton Welch's *Marie*, first pas de deux in Antony Tudor's *The Leaves are Fading*, William Forsythe's *The Vertiginous Thrill of Exactitude*, Jiří Kylián's *Soldiers' Mass* the first and seventh pas de deux in Stanton Welch's *Nosotros*, Des Grieux Sir Kenneth MacMillan's *Manon*, and Garuda in Welch's *La Bayadère*. In August 2009 Walsh was awarded a prestigious Princess Grace Award by the Princess Grace Foundation-USA. In 2012 he was promoted to Principal dancer at Houston Ballet. Walsh has also choreographed works for Houston Ballet and Walnut Hill School for the Performing Arts.

Press on Artistic Director Kelly Ann Vitacca:

Chicago Tribune

Breaking News, Since 1847

DANCE CARD

Inside Chicago Dance performs Jackson Pollock-inspired piece

May 02, 2008 | By Sid Smith, TRIBUNE CRITIC

A major magazine nicknamed him "Jack the Dripper."

Kidding aside, Jackson Pollock, a major painter of the 20th Century, developed his own trademark technique, dribbling liquid paint on canvases laid out flat.

"People who saw him work often said he was very dancelike, that he moved and darted about the canvas like a performer," says Kelly Ann Vitacca, artistic director of Inside Chicago Dance. Pollock is a painter uniquely tied to dancers in another respect: They basically share the same canvas, the floor.

That and other Pollock qualities inspired Vitacca to adopt the artist as the central figure of a program of works by various choreographers called "In the Painting," playing this weekend at the Ruth Page Center for the Arts.

"Every spring we have a project that takes on a special theme," she explains. "This year, I wanted to choose a new medium and alter the environment for the audience. In addition to movement on stage, I wanted to inject movement elsewhere into the space."

She soon settled on Pollock after researching various visual artists. "Two things he said really struck me," she says and then quotes him: "The painting has a life of its own. I try to let it come through." She also cites his comments that the unconscious is a source of art.

"The latter was especially important because when we create, whether it's dance or a painting, typically the artist allows the shapes and movements in his or her head to come out," Vitacca says. "Only at the end of the day, do you step back and see what you've created. Pollock always insisted his work is no accident, that he controlled the flow of the paint.

"But the work ultimately came from his unconscious, it's not as if he walked into the studio planning to paint a certain image, such as a house," she adds. "There's a parallel to how choreographers work. We don't know exactly what we're going to do when we walk into the studio, either. Inspiration plays a big role."

She enlisted documentary filmmaker Pedro Brenner, who reproduced various portions of actual Pollock works on glass and filmed the process from underneath. His clips of a Pollock unfolding before your eyes, as it were, will be projected onto the performance space as the various new dance works unfold.

In each case, the choreographers -- Vitacca, Mary Baumgardner, Lizzie MacKenzie and Noel Powers -- chose the Pollock work displayed. For the finale, the troupe will perform an existing piece by Autumn

Eckman called "At Face Value," newly enhanced by a cinematic montage from Brenner including images from more art pieces and shots of Pollock actually at work.

"IN THE PAINTING"

An abstract Expressionist inspires

When: 8 p.m. Friday; 2 and 8 p.m. Saturday

Where: Ruth Page Center for the Arts, 1016 N. Dearborn St.

Price: \$20; 312-337-6543 or www.ruthpage.org.

Chicago Tribune

Breaking News, Since 1847

DANCE CARD

Inside's 'For the Cause' mixes art, community spirit

September 28, 2007 | By Sid Smith, Tribune arts critic

Dance is by nature abstract, often unreal and detached, an art of shapes, forms and spatial constructs.

But dancers are people, too, and share the same social concerns as the rest of us -- small wonder Dance for Life, the annual benefit that raises money to fight AIDS, is a rallying point for community spirit.

Coming up is another worthy endeavor, a program called "For the Cause," a venture from the 5-year-old Inside Dance Chicago designed to battle cancer and help support Gilda's Club Chicago.

"The idea is to allow those of us blessed with a talent to give back," says Kelly Ann Vitacca, Inside's artistic director, initially drawn to the cause after losing a family member to the disease. "We did research and looked around and felt Gilda's Club was a natural fit, since Gilda Radner was an entertainer herself." Gilda's Club is named for Radner, the gifted "Saturday Night Live" comic and actress who died of ovarian cancer in 1989.

Now in its second year, Inside's "For the Cause" includes a benefit in August and the concerts this weekend that boast new works created by various choreographers, some imported from elsewhere in the Midwest. "We like to pull in a lot of energy to the project and involve as many people as possible," Vitacca explains.

Four premieres this year include pieces by Vitacca, St. Louis choreographer Tanya Shea (involving rolling office chairs), Alison Woerner of Royal Oak, Mich., and Giordano Jazz Dance Chicago dancer Lindsey Leduc-Brenner. Inside member Josette Salvatore is creating a piece for the troupe's youth trainee group of dancers ages 12 to 17.

The program concludes with a revival of Vitacca's work with a fetching title intimating tentative hope: "Tiny Smiles."

"For the Cause" plays Saturday and Sunday at the Vittum Theater, 1012 N. Noble St. Tickets are \$15-\$18; 773-342-4141, www.seechicagodance.com.

Also, Deeply Rooted Productions' new staging of a 1970s musical, "Nefertiti: A Concert of Music and Dance," about the ancient Egyptian queen and the pharaoh Akhenaton, plays Thursday through Oct. 7 at the Athenaeum Theatre, 2936 N. Southport Ave. Tickets are \$25-\$45 ; 312-902-1500, 773-935-6860.

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Photo credit(s): Phillip Broomhead & Joseph Walsh, Photo: Pam Francis; Autumn Eckman, Photo: Gorman Cook; Kelly Ann Vitacca, Andy & Dionne Noble: photo courtesy of artists; Dance photos by Amitava Sarkar, Dancers (in alpha order): Joshua Bolden (DanceZone), Ashley Garcia-Rameau, Madelyn Lalonde (Allegro West Academy), Melissa Ludwig, & Nick Nesmith.

FACES IN THE CROWD

Dancer's ability to teach reaches MTV show

■ Kelly Ann Vitacca is Made for the stage on MTV episode

By VALERIE SWEETEN
CHRONICLE CORRESPONDENT

KELLY Ann Vitacca's love for dance has driven her career to a point where nationwide recognition is a possibility.

Vitacca, a Montrose resident, found her niche on television on an episode of the MTV's series, *Made*, which aired July 25. Her challenge was to transform 17-year-old, Tarayn, a Denton, Texas resident, from a volleyball player to a ballerina.

The chance to transform girls into dancers has been part of Vitacca's life since 2001 when she first began her career in Chicago after graduating from Oklahoma City University with a degree in performing arts.

Her skills have consistently helped girls reach their dreams.

She is currently the director of programming at Dance Houston and longtime coach for the West University Dance Centre's competitive dance team, Sole Discretion.

Her talent and dedication to the art hasn't gone unrecognized in professional circuits.

Vitacca's honors include a bronze medal at the International Choreography Competition at the 2001 Jazz Dance World Congress, the 2001 Chicago Outstanding Choreography Award from Dance Chicago and a Choreography Fellowship Grant from the Illinois Arts Council.

Evelyn Treton, owner of West University Dance Centre, is in awe in Vitacca's ability to communicate with



PHOTO COURTESY DANCE HOUSTON

IN STEP: Kelly Ann Vitacca, director of programming at Dance Houston, 406 W. Clay, was featured in the MTV show *Made*.

her dancers.

She credits her attitude with making the difference and getting the girls to perform at their peak.

"She's always positive with great energy. She sees abilities other teachers might not. You have to have a love for dance and be passionate. She has that. She can hit an

emotional chord with her dances," said Treton.

Vitacca, the youngest of six children and raised in Algonquin, Ill., came to Houston in 2008 as the artistic coordinator for the Houston Ballet.

In the management sector, Vitacca garnered experience behind the scenes and in

casting, scheduling and costuming during the two years she was there.

Shauna Tysor, Houston Ballet public relations manager, recommended her for the MTV series after she witnessed Vitacca's encouraging and motivational personality.

"She's very caring especially with teenagers. She's really an inspiration. She teaches all ages at Dance Houston. Her personality is geared toward making kids achieve their dream. That is definitely a passion of hers. She's committed to her dancers," Tysor said.

The MTV experience, which was one of her memorable dance moments, will be added to the long list in Vitacca's repertoire.

"I never in a million years thought I would be on TV. I felt extremely blessed to be selected and be part of this. The icing on the cake was teaching Tarayn to dance and help her grow. It was an amazing experience," said Vitacca.

KELLY ANN VITACCA

■ **AGE:** 33

■ **COMMUNITY CONNECTION:** Montrose resident

■ **FAST FACT:** Has choreographed Cedar Lake Ballet Ensemble II in New York and Illinois based, Forum Jazz Dance Theater and Evanston Dance Ensemble; Was an ensemble member of the 42nd Street musical national tour

■ **QUICK QUOTE:** "I felt extremely blessed to be selected and be part of this. The icing on the cake was teaching Tarayn to dance and help her grow. I never in a million years thought I would be on TV."