

**STATEWIDE 2019
TEACHER BIOGRAPHIES**



Mihai David

Mihai was born in Bucharest, where he studied dance and performed with various dance ensembles, including Ciocârlia. Mihai defected while on tour and requested political asylum. In the United States he danced with the Boston Ballet, and on stage in Las Vegas before discovering the recreational community of international folk dancers. He taught Romanian dance at the Buffalo Gap Folk Dance Camp in West Virginia, then relocated to California where he was frequently the featured teacher at many folk dance coffeehouses, including Gypsy Camp, the Intersection, Café Danssa, and Zorba's. Mihai has introduced numerous Romanian dances that have become play list favorites of folk dance clubs: Hora Spoitorilor, Sârba pe Loc, Floricică Oltenească , Brâul pe Opt , Cimpoi, and many, many more.



Cesar Garfiaz

Cesar's talent for dance was nurtured in childhood at family celebrations, parties at friends' homes, visits to Guadalajara, and outings with his Aunt Raquel to Steven's Steakhouse, a Salsa hotbed in Los Angeles. In high school he participated performing arts, which led to enrollment in UCLA's Department of World Arts and Cultures to study dance. He was accepted into the university's Repertory Tour Ensemble, and had the opportunity to perform and conduct workshops with high school students throughout Los Angeles. While enrolled he began working and collaborating with Ana Maria Alvarez. The two became co-founders of "Contra-Tiempo," an Urban Latino Dance Theatre Ensemble, which Alvarez directs. Cesar studied in Cuba, Puerto Rico, South America, and Mexico. He currently teaches community building through dance for the LAUSD,

teaches master classes in contemporary Latino social dance, and is creating content for a YouTube channel to provide instruction on line.



Israel Yakovee

Israel's parents relocated from Yemen to Israel before his birth. He began dancing as a high school student while living on a Kibbutz, and was given the opportunity to enroll in a two-year course of study for dance teachers. Certified, he began to teach Israeli dance, and also to perform for professional ensembles. After military service he came to the United States to study for a university degree in physical education and sports medicine. A career in physical therapy was eclipsed when Israel was invited to teach Israeli dance at Blue Star Camp in North Carolina. He became a full time teacher, choreographer, and performer in various ensembles. Israel's choreography honors his Yemenite heritage. Shufni, Shavnu, Abba Shimon, Agadelcha, and Yemenite Rap are among the many dances he has introduced to the recreational dance community.



Petur Iliev

Petur grew up within a family of musicians and dancers in Sofia. He graduated from the Academy for Music, Dance and Fine Arts of Bulgaria and performed with the Philip Kutev State Ensemble. At that time he began to choreograph, research traditional dances in villages, and to direct a children's ensemble. When Petur immigrated to the United States he began to teach at recreational dance workshops and also for ballet companies. He studied in New York with Jacques d'Amboise, who had established a program to use the discipline of dance as a means to improve the lives of underprivileged youth. Currently he directs an intensive dance workshop in Sofia, teaches character dance for the Northwest School of Ballet, choreographs and teaches for Bulgarian Dance ensembles, and teaches traditional dance at numerous recreational camps,

seminars, and festivals.



Sevi Bayraktar

Sevi hales from Bartın, a town on the Black Sea coast of Turkey. As a child she studied music and dance. Sevi completed a university degree in political science and sociology. She chose the field of dance ethnology for graduate studies. Sevi will complete her thesis for a Ph.D. in Culture and Performance at UCLA in June 2019! During her research she has danced with Rom communities in India, Egypt, Greece, Spain, Macedonia ,and Turkey. Sevi’s project, “TerraRoman” is a dance journey along the migration routes of the Roma people. In the United States she has taught dance sessions at Café AMAN and UCLA.