



**UNITED  
DANCE.**

**UNITED  
DANCE**

**DANCE**

FOR SPECIALIZED POPULATIONS

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# WELCOME

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Founded in 2017, United Dance quickly established itself as a leader in specialized dance education on an international level.

## TRULY UNIQUE

I want to give youth and young adults with Down syndrome the experience of a lifetime. I have experienced the joys of a professional dancing career, and I am passionate about bringing that joy to the participants of United Dance.

I strive to share my love of the arts with our budding artists with Down syndrome; I want to give them a moment of pride, empowerment, and confidence through self-expression.

I truly believe that when you give someone the right tools in a nurturing and safe environment, they can surpass their limits no matter their physical or mental abilities.

It brings me immeasurable joy to see parents, friends, family, and audience members marvel at the progress of each participant. However, my greatest joy comes from seeing each participant's personal evolution. Our participants leave the program feeling empowered and deserving of respect as artists.

Our performing company of professional dancers create unique experiences for sold out audiences, united through their artistic excellence.

Through United Dance, we have the power of making a difference in someone's life.

We believe that the very best is only a start.

BORIS RICHIR  
Founder & Director





**The very best is only  
a start.**

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BORIS RICHIR



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# ABOUT



## OUR STORY

Founded in 2017 by Boris Richir in Antwerp, Belgium, United Dance has quickly established itself as a leader in specialized dance and art education for youth and young adults with Down syndrome in Europe and North America.

Inspired by specialized dance programs in the USA, Boris Richir created United Dance with the aim of working internationally with students with Down syndrome.

United Dance has established partnerships with national and international Down syndrome organizations, healthcare institutions and art institutions such as the Dutch National Opera and Ballet and the Paris Opera Ballet School.

Recognizing the artistic talent of their participants, United Dance launched a professional, inclusive dance company based in the USA.

## OUR PEOPLE

The United Dance team consists of renowned professionals in their respective fields (professional ballet dancers, musicians, and physiotherapists) who have been trained in inclusive dance.

Furthermore, the team is supported by a group of healthcare professionals, dance teachers, and specialists in inclusive dance in order to constantly improve their classes and continue to offer dance education at the highest possible level.

The team includes teachers from the world's leading dance companies such as the Paris Opera Ballet, Dutch National Ballet and Boston Ballet, musicians and composers of international recognition, and physiotherapists specialized in dance and youth development.

United Dance regularly invites guest personalities (such as principal dancers from major companies, fashion designers, etc.) from the art world to share their knowledge and experience with participants.





**I loved it and I can't  
wait to go back!**

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ANTWERP PARTICIPANT, AMY



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# EDUCATION



## UNIQUE COURSES

United Dance aims to share the love of dance and foster creativity by providing high-quality, engaging, and thoughtfully designed programming in a structured, safe environment where individuals with Down syndrome and their families can be unequivocally themselves and experience the joy of dance to the fullest!

All of our classes are fully accessible and enjoyable for students with Down syndrome, with a specialized curriculum that promotes the development of physical, cognitive, social-emotional, and artistic skills. While the goal of United Dance is not to replace physical therapy or medical assistance, participants typically experience benefits that support their development outside of the studio.

Thanks to a team of seasoned professional artists, a caring healthcare team, and a thoughtfully designed curriculum, United Dance offers courses at the highest possible level. Every teacher is assisted by associate teachers, musicians, and a healthcare specialist.

## MADE TO MEASURE PROGRAMMING

In addition to our scheduled courses all over the world, United Dance offers customized programming upon request.

From class size and frequency, to duration, educational content and more, we can accommodate the needs of people from all backgrounds. Made-to-Measure is the ultimate tailor-made programming. To learn more, please email Kay Tien at [ktien@uniteddance.org](mailto:ktien@uniteddance.org).

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United Dance has been a positive force in the life of their participants, some of them went on to dance full-time in the United Dance Company or other professional dance companies!

*Photo: United Dance participant in Amsterdam*



# OUR COURSES

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## 01

### DANCE COURSE

Over the course of one week, participants dance to live music under the direction of a United Dance teacher and their team. The progress in confidence, movement, and creativity shown by the dancers is a joy to observe!

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## 02

### ART COURSE

During a two-day art course, youth and young adults with Down syndrome have the unique opportunity to dance, play music, and create art in made to measure classes taught by leading artists in their respective fields.

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## 03

### CHOREOGRAPHIC WORKSHOP

As an ad-on to our dance course or as a stand alone course, the choreographic workshop gives participants the experience of creating, rehearsing, and performing their very own choreography with a performance at the end of the week.

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## 04

### VIRTUAL

The virtual platform offers both recorded and live classes in dance, music, and art. Live classes are specifically designed for this format in order to have maximum interaction between the teacher and student, as well as among students themselves. All virtual classes feature a live musician.

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A young girl with Down syndrome is the central figure, standing in a grand, classical-style interior. She is wearing a white, sleeveless, knee-length dress with a subtle textured pattern and a thin white belt at the waist. Her hands are resting on a wide, dark stone ledge. She is looking upwards and to the right with a thoughtful expression. The background features large, light-colored columns and a dark wooden door, creating a sense of depth and architectural grandeur. The lighting is soft and even, highlighting the girl's features and the texture of her dress.

**I can't thank United  
Dance enough for all  
they do.**

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MARIA, PARENT OF JULIANA



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# COMPANY



## UNITED DANCE COMPANY

In championing inclusion and working with the Down syndrome population, founder and director Boris Richir and choreographer Gianni Di Marco saw the need to create a performing company that reflected United Dance's mission, representing artists of diverse abilities united in the pursuit of excellence in dance.

Founded in June 2022, the United Dance Company brings together professional dancers, choreographers, and students from United Dance's course programming. Like its parent organization, United Dance Company is a company like no other and shares the core values of inclusion, respect, and excellence.

The company is based in Boston, Massachusetts, USA.

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Performances of the United Dance Company are fully sensory friendly and provide an answer to the need of more representation of dancers of all abilities. Audience members saw themselves represented on stage, and in many cases the experience gave them the confidence to pursue their own aspirations.

*Photo: United Dance Company at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston*





**I loved dancing with  
professional dancers!**

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BOSTON PARTICIPANT ALFIE

# LOCATIONS



## EXCEPTIONAL LOCATIONS

### **AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS**

Dutch National Ballet & Opera

### **ANTWERP, BELGIUM**

Royal Art Conservatory

### **ATLANTA, USA**

Moving in the Spirit

### **BOSTON, USA**

The Brookline Ballet School

### **BURLINGTON VT, USA**

Lines

### **GENVAL, BELGIUM**

Dance Center La Papeterie

### **PARIS, FRANCE**

Paris Opera Ballet School

### **NEW YORK CITY, USA**

New York City Center

### **TOKYO, JAPAN**

Architanz

United Dance wants to give their participants the experience of a lifetime in an environment that is usually not accessible to them. All United Dance courses are given in exceptional locations, typically only reserved for professional dancers in such historic locations as the Dutch National Opera House, New York City Center, and the Paris Opera Ballet School.

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The self-esteem of participants is immediately boosted when they step foot into high-end course locations.

*Photo: United Dance participant in Amsterdam*



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# COMMUNITY



## **MORE THAN A COURSE**

United Dance makes sure that every aspect of their courses gives participants and their parents a pleasant and memorable experience.

### **A Supportive Environment for Caregivers**

Parents and caregivers are encouraged to relax in a welcoming and lighthearted environment. During the courses, parents connect with each other and create bonds, share their experiences and enjoy a welcome rest.

### **Time to Shine**

Every United Dance course ends with a showcase of all participants during which they share their skills and achievements with their parents, caregivers, families, and friends. They each receive a diploma and celebrate the end of the course with a party.

### **Excursions**

During their courses, United Dance organizes visits to museums and theaters where their participants receive tailor-made interactive workshops and backstage tours.

### **Friends for Life!**

United Dance brings together communities of students who, from the very first day of the course, build friendships that will last a lifetime.

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At United Dance, we adapt to our participants and not the other way around.

*Photo: United Dance participant in Paris*





**The team was  
passionate, caring and  
highly professional.**

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JULIE, PARENT OF GEORGE



# LEADERSHIP

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## **BORIS RICHIR**

FOUNDER & DIRECTOR

Boris Richir, originally from Antwerp, Belgium, received his dance education at the Paris Opera Ballet School.

He started his professional career in 2009 when he joined the Semperoper Ballet in Dresden, Germany, followed by the Boston Ballet, USA in 2014.

In 2011 he became the assistant director of ARTof Dance Courses. In 2017 he founded United Dance, a company providing dance education to specialized populations in Europe and North America.

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## **FRASER CAMPBELL**

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Composer and Saxophonist Fraser Campbell is a graduate of Berklee College of Music (BB) and William Paterson University (MM), he has written original music and performed with many music groups. Fraser is a writer and has written cues for various tv shows, branded content and libraries. He is an in demand educator, teaching woodwinds, piano, music theory and ear training. He has designed and is responsible for the musical curriculum taught to all participants in United Dance's activities.

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## **PORTIA ABERNATHY**

PRINCIPAL ADVISOR

M.A., M.Ed., is the Director of Programs of Open Door. She previously was the Assistant Director of Education and Community Initiatives at Boston Ballet. Portia also serves as an advisor on institutional issues of accessibility and inclusion.

Portia earned her Master of Education in Prevention Science and Practice from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, her Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction from The University of Colorado and graduated Cum Laude from Colorado College.

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## **GIANNI DI MARCO**

COMPANY ARTISTIC CURATOR

Di Marco began his dance career with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, where he was promoted to first soloist. He has also performed with Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montreal, Opera Leipzig Ballet, Boston Ballet, Festival Ballet Providence, and Tony Williams Dance Company. He has created ballets for the Boston Ballet, Festival Ballet Providence, among others. He is the co-founder of the Boston Ballet adaptive dance program. In 2022, he became the house choreographer and artistic curator of the United Dance Company.

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# HIGHLIGHTS

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## 2017

Inaugural dance course in Antwerp, Belgium.

The United Dance non-profit is founded.

## 2018



United Dance expands to 6 new locations: Amsterdam, Paris, Atlanta, Boston, Genval, and Burlington.

## 2019

Course partnerships established with Dutch National Ballet and Paris Opera Ballet School.



Launch of the 2 day Art Course.

United Dance has catered to over 200 participants during the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic and many more after.

## 2020

Launch of virtual programming reaching students from 4 continents.

## 2022

5 year anniversary celebrations.



Inaugural performance of the United Dance Company

## 2023

Launch of United Dance Asia with a first course in Tokyo, Japan.



A man with glasses, wearing a light blue t-shirt and black pants, is captured in a side profile on a stage. He is looking upwards and to the right, with his arms extended forward and slightly to the right, palms facing down. He is wearing light-colored dance shoes. The background consists of a white, draped curtain. The floor is dark and reflective.

**Touching, elegant,  
passionate.  
Art in its purest form.**

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UNITED DANCE COMPANY  
AUDIENCE MEMBER



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# DONATE



## DONATE

Your Donation Makes Our Work Possible

In order to fulfill our mission to the international community of individuals with Down syndrome, we rely on your support and tax-deductible donations.

Thanks to your generosity, your donations have helped us:

- Offer participants affordable application fees
- Provide a scholarship fund and offer financial assistance to those in need
- Continue to work with a team of renowned teachers, musicians, and healthcare professionals
- Hold our courses in state-of-the-art facilities usually only reserved for professional artists
- Make our unique courses available to as many people as possible
- Give our extraordinary participants the experience of a lifetime with the level of expertise they deserve
- Expand our programming and reach, such as the founding of the United Dance Company

Donate online at [www.uniteddance.org/donate](http://www.uniteddance.org/donate) or by check. [Please see below for information regarding checks.](#)

Please make all checks out to the "Foundation for Independent Artists" with mention of "United Dance" in the memo.

Send to: United Dance, 42 West Newton St (Suite 1-8), Boston MA 02118, USA

Tax-deductible donations in the USA go directly toward United Dance through their fiscal sponsor, The Foundation for Independent Artists administered by Pentacle.





## CONTACT

[uniteddance.org](http://uniteddance.org)

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