

Judges

Lafayette LA | April 10-12, 2026

Kiana is a Dance educator, adjudicator and coach Kiana Renae is from a small town in Southern New Hampshire, where she began dancing and making music young. At 18, Kiana joined Saving Grace Dance Ensemble, training in Ballet and Modern, then later joined Boston Community Dance Project for commercial dance. She performed in NYC Carnival: Choreographers Ball, Brickhouse, Times Square, Alvin Ailey Studios and Boston Ballet Studios, NYC Dance Parade, and RAW Artists. After touring and teaching at dance studios and workshops all across the Northeast, Kiana managed events for Step Up 2 Dance competitions also teaching at their conventions as well as teaching at Sheer Elite conventions and currently adjudicates for KAR, Nexstar, and Sheer Elite. She relocated to Nashville in 2022 and joined Fresh Talent Group. She is currently Artistic Director of Elite Dance Nolensville. Kiana is also a certified ICF life coach/youth mentor, performing musician/singer songwriter and board member of non-profit music school, Satellite School of The Arts. Her utmost passion is to educate and inspire through music, dance and storytelling.

Mx. Lingo Kelleher (they/them/theirs) is an autistic and nonbinary dancer, choreographer, and visual artist. They are Acrobatic Arts certified and hold a BFA in Dance with a concentration in Choreography from Dean College. A self-proclaimed “swarm of excited bees”, Lingo loves to spread their joy for dance, accessibility, and the arts wherever they go! They have been dancing for over fifteen years and have a robust background in acrobatics, ballet, tap, jazz, modern, improvisations, and contemporary dance styles. Lingo has self-produced several dance films and has had their work presented at dance festivals, film festivals, and multiple dance productions/performances. Some of the most notable works Lingo has choreographed include Ruminant, Hypnopompia, and Paranoia. As their thesis in their final year of their BFA program, Lingo was given the opportunity to create a choreographed work entitled Ever Yours, Vincent. Mentoring under Kristina Berger (Erick Hawkins Dance Company Principal Member) and Stephen Tracy-Ursprung MFA (Dean to the School of the Arts at Dean College; Little Women, 2019, Principal Dancer), they conducted extensive research on the life and art of Vincent van Gogh; their choreography and writings combined primary sources with historical documents into an immersive exploration of how movement in one artistic medium could be transferred into others. Currently, Lingo is a faculty member and choreographer at multiple dance studios in the greater- Boston area, teaching classes in acrobatics, contemporary, and improvisations.

With a lifelong passion for movement and a deep dedication to the art of dance—particularly ballet—Lynette has been inspiring and educating students for over 37 years. As an accomplished dance instructor and choreographer, she has worked with dancers of all levels, from beginners to advanced performers, across multiple genres while emphasizing personal expression, discipline, and strong technical foundations.

Throughout her career, Lynette has earned numerous regional and national awards recognizing her excellence in choreography, entertainment, and costuming, along with multiple national championships and Victory Cup honors.

For the past 20 years, Lynette has served as a judge with Nexstar National Dance Competition, including roles as a head judge at both regional and national events. She has also judged pageants and talent competitions throughout the Midwest.

Lynette holds a dance minor degree and is certified through the Cecchetti Council of America as well as Acrobatic Arts. She is also a certified pointe shoe fitter and currently serves as a manager at Standing Ovation Performance Apparel in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

An active and dedicated member of the dance community, Lynette regularly participates in workshops and conferences and continues to further her own training through ongoing study, including classes at the Joffrey Ballet in Chicago, Illinois.