

News

From Dancer to Dance Professor

By Emma Hummer



Photo by Steve Wolkind

After being fed up with harsh Northeast winters, Chicago native James Morrow, assistant professor of dance at Old Dominion University, decided it was time to move to a warmer climate. When he was ready to move, ODU made him an offer that he was thrilled to take.

"The dance program is filled with amazing students, a killer staff and very supportive colleagues," Morrow says. "I feel very lucky to have been chosen to join the team."

Morrow was introduced to dance at 10 years old and realized he had a passion for it. While playing Division 1 baseball in college, Morrow had to take dance classes to increase his agility. He dropped his scholarship and took a dance talent waiver and never looked back.

Morrow feels that he was always a "social dancer." He discovered he enjoyed many different types of music to dance to, such as breakbeats, jungle house, drum and bass and many others.

"Getting classically trained in college really just added to the mix of my love for movement and I began dancing in companies and tour the U.S." said Morrow. Touring the country was a great experience which opened his eyes to new possibilities, he said.



Contact

**Department of
Communication &
Theatre Arts**
(/commtheatre)

3000 Batten Arts &
Letters

Norfolk, VA 23529
757-683-3828 (office)
757-683-4700 (fax)

(mailto:)

(<https://www.odu.edu/commtheatre/advice/top-ten-college-majors>)

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Morrow created a dance company, THE MOVEMENT, because he was "interested in creating powerful yet accessible mediums to communicate to multiple generations, ethnicities, abilities," and to show dance as an artistic alternative to audiences feeling left out by the commercialization of mainstream media and entertainment.

While he primarily does solo work in the company, Morrow has also collaborated with other dancers and choreographers, graffiti artists, musicians, poets and visual artists.

THE MOVEMENT has allowed Morrow the opportunity to tour all over the world; teaching, choreographing and performing. Morrow says live experiences are important. He goes to dance classes in different places and sees dance performance and other forms of art any time he can.

He said his favorite place to perform has been Mumbai, India. "I enjoy the people, the culture, everyone is very open and excited to learn there," said Morrow, who will return to India with his family this fall. "I am extremely excited to go back."

Morrow says his goal as a dancer and professor is to "demonstrate to my students the need for a sustainable dancer career." His unique take on teaching is a way to show his students that reading a textbook isn't the only way to learn.

He feels it is important to take the opportunity to perform, and to see dance or any kind of art at any time. "Live experiences are just as important," he said. And Morrow said he takes "every residence, tour, or performance - all the connections and things I learned along the way - into the classroom."

Dance Research Methods



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James Morrow shares the critical response process developed by Liz Lerman in the Old Dominion University dance program.

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