

Judges

Sparta, NJ | May 15-17, 2026

Aileen Bjelland

Aileen started dancing when she was 3 ½ years old and is currently a dance instructor and has been the Assistant Director at the studio she grew up in for the last 20 years . She has also studied dance at Broadway Dance Center in NYC.

During her dancing days, Aileen has won many titles including Miss Road to Broadway, Miss Dance of Long Island, and 2nd Runner-up Miss Dance of the United States. She has been in Nickelodeon and MTV commercials and danced professionally at Hershey Park. Besides dance, Aileen also has a background in theatre and performing arts. Professional credits include: A Chorus Line (Connie), Crazy for You (Tess), Singing in the Rain (Ensemble) and West Side Story (Anita).

Many of Aileen's students have won local, regional, and national dance competitions, performed in Broadway shows, theme parks, appeared in various television commercials, attended many intensive dance schools and programs and most recently two of her students became a Radio City Rockette and Dallas Stars Ice Girl. Her studio has won the title of Best Dance School and Best Musical Theatre School and has won the Broadway Cup several times over the past 22 years. They have also been named the ADDC Studio of Excellence 2025.

Aileen has been recognized for her creative choreography and winning many awards at every competition her students attend including Best Choreography, Most Entertaining and Overall High Score.

Aside from teaching dance, Aileen is a Teacher Assistant for Pre-K and in charge of their Music and Movement department. She really enjoys working with children of all ages and looks forward every year to coming up with new and creative routines. Dance has always been her life and is grateful to have met her husband through dance and now have three beautiful daughters who enjoy it and are passionate about it just as much as she is.

Aileen is very excited to be judging at Imagine National Dance Challenge and cannot wait to see the amazing talent on stage!

Amanda Kurey

Amanda grew up in Central New York, where she began dancing at the age of 3. Amanda was a top class dancer winning countless awards at both regional and national competitions. Upon graduating, she attended Fredonia State University where she studied both dance and musical theatre. In 2012 she was awarded the prestigious Carol Prevett Scholarship for dance. During her time there she was voted Vice President of the student run dance company, Orchesis. Amanda both choreographed and performed in many numbers throughout her association with the company. She performed with the Fredonia State Dance Ensemble, Fredonia State Dance Team, and Fredonia's Performing Arts Company. She also had the privilege of working with numerous professional choreographers such as John Lehrer, Tokyo, and Chris Todar. After graduating Amanda started teaching and choreographing professionally. Since then she has won numerous top choreography and top technique awards including "Choreographer of The Year" in 2019 and 2021 for Imagine Dance Challenge as well as "Excellence in Choreography" at the Star Dance Alliance's Circle of Excellence awards. Amanda works for a regional theater as well as Syracuse University, teaching and assistant choreographing. She also choreographs for local high school musicals, as well as teaching master classes, and choreographing and performing with Syracuse Contemporary Dance Company.

Shane Farrell

Shane Farrell is a choreographer, dancer, and educator from Providence, Rhode Island. His diverse dance training started at a family-owned dance school in North Providence, RI and continued at the Brae Crest School of Ballet.

In 2009, Shane joined Newport Contemporary Ballet (formerly Island Moving

Company), a classically trained contemporary ballet company in Newport, RI. During his decade at Newport Contemporary Ballet (NCB), he performed in several national tours and two international tours to Kazakhstan. Shane performed in many amazing venues with NCB's site-specific repertoire: *Newport Nutcracker* at Rosecliff Mansion, *Dracula* at Belcourt Castle, and *Second Star To The Right: A Tale of Hook and Pan* aboard the Oliver Hazard Perry tall ship. He has performed works by José Limón, Stephanie Martinez, Colin Connor, Maurice Causey, Kevin Jenkins, and Staycee Pearl. Shane has also performed in collaboration with Pasadena Dance Theatre (CA), Missouri Contemporary Ballet (MO), Owen/Cox Dance (MO), Surfscapes Contemporary Dance Theatre (FL), Staycee Pearl Dance Project (PA), Houston Contemporary Dance (TX), and Samruk Dance (Almaty, Kazakhstan), and danced as a guest artist with companies throughout the northeast. Outside of the concert dance world, Shane has appeared on MTV's *Made*, Fox's *So You Think You Can Dance*, and the 2010 film *Hachi* starring Richard Gere.

As a choreographer, Shane's work has been presented nationally and internationally, most notably at the Abay Opera House in Almaty, Kazakhstan. He has choreographed seven world premieres for Newport Contemporary Ballet (RI) and three original works for their Newport Dance Festival summer intensive program to critical review. Writing for Motif Magazine, Mark Morin described *Luminous* (2013) as "raw...and passionately graceful...The suggestiveness and the musicality of Farrell's choreography...make this piece a guilty sensual delight." He has additionally choreographed original works commissioned by Wheaton College (MA), Salve Regina University (RI), Sacred Heart University (CT) and has most recently served on faculty in the dance department at Dean College (MA).

Shane is a master teacher with educational experience at universities, ballet schools, and elementary schools. Using a variety of pedagogical approaches, he has helped dancers of diverse backgrounds understand movement education. Please visit www.shanefarrell.org for additional information and up-to-date news on Shane Farrell.