

Workshop Quotes

“We loved having you here and so did our students. They were buzzing for the next week ;) It was such an amazing workshop and you were a real inspiration to them and us! ... what you bring to Australian dancers is AMAZING. You are AMAZING!”

-Kristin Agnoli, Jason Coleman's Ministry of Dance - Melbourne

“Thanks for teaching our UDC full-timers today, they loved it!!!”

-Juliette Verne, Urban Dance Center – Sydney

“Michael you have such an amazing energy and enthusiasm for dance that it enlivens everyone that is a part of the class! Thank you for another wonderful workshop.....LOVED IT!!!!!!”

-Renee Hallahan, Canberra Dance Development Centre – Canberra

“I just wanted to let you know how truly privileged we are to have you visit us year in and year out! Yet again and as expected, your classes were PHENOMENAL and my Students cannot speak more highly of you and I cannot THANK YOU enough for your time, expertise, encouragement, dedication, motivation, inspiration...”

-Raquel Muia, The Performance Co. – Perth

“The kids just love him...he's inspiring. He's so much fun to be around in class! The kids can really relate to him...his stuff's really current and fresh.”

-Maria Slape, MJ Dance – Mt. Gambier

“Your choreography to weightless embodies joy. thank you so much for sharing it with me and the others. You're phenomenal :)”

-Megan Rollins, The Dance Collective – Perth

“Thanks for coming to The Star Factory today everyone had a ball and your dances were brilliant xxx”

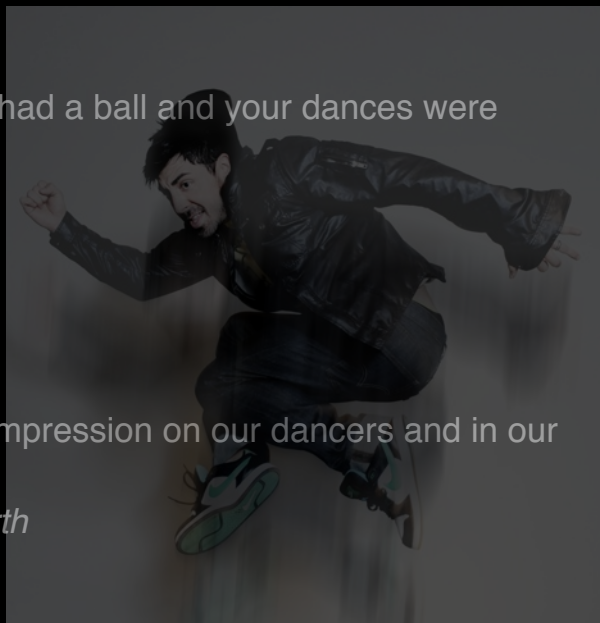
-Emma Nickoll, Star Factory – Perth

“Thank you so much for your outstanding work xxx”

-Jo Cotterill, Lee Academy - Central Coast

“Workshops were just amazing. He has left a beautiful impression on our dancers and in our studio!”

-Charisse Parnell, The Dance Collective – Perth





“What an amazing few days it has been to dance with the inspiring Michael Schwandt! Thank you so much!!

-Ellie Haines, Student – Perth

“He was so amazing!!!! I loved it!”

-Kate McNamara, Student – Sydney

“Thank you so much for coming to our studio. I have literally never been so happy. And i just love celebrating dance with you.”

-Safiya Karolia, Student - Perth

“AWESOME AWESOME class!”

-Laura Scarfo, Student - Sydney

“Thank you for such an amazing workshop Michael! It was so hard but enjoyed every single minute of it. Definitely want to see you back here next year! ♥ ♥”

-Mollie Beck, Student - Adelaide

“so awesome! loved it”

-Blandon Moriarty, Student - Sydney

“that was the funest dance workshop I've ever had. Thank you michael :)”

-Kristy Molloy, Student - Central Coast

“thanks for once again killing us in your work shop! really enjoyed it, your such a great choreographer :)”

-Jessica Bloxham, Student - Perth Australia

“Class was amazing thanks for giving your time and talent to come and teach us really appreciate it”

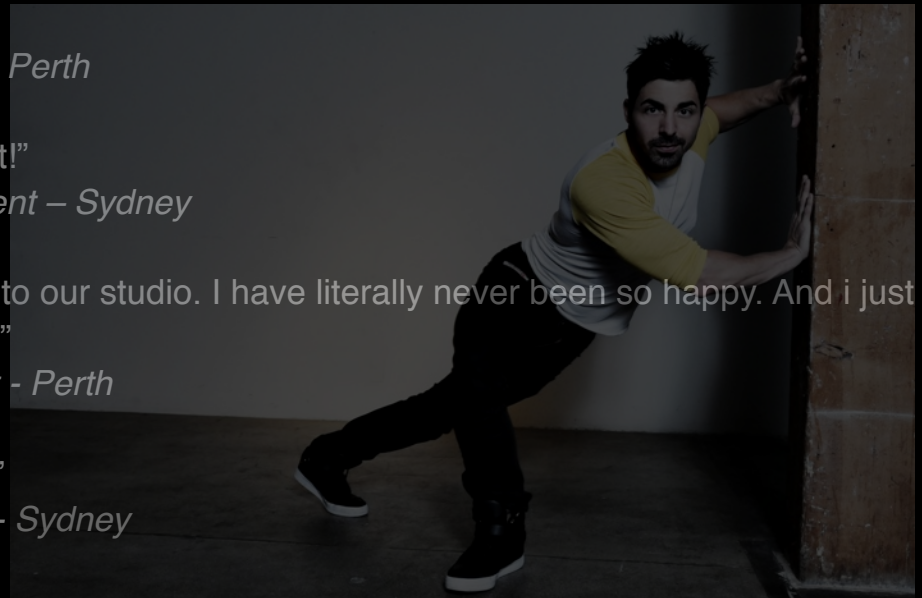
-Michael Stone, Student - Central Coast

“What a weekend...AMAZING workshops with Michael Schwandt”

-Janelle Vacarro, Student –Perth

“So good to see Michael again. Kids just love him and what he brings to our studio!!!!

-Alice Doidge, Dance Mom – Mt. Gambier



Australian Press

GREENER?

Are there more career opportunities overseas? *Angela Gilltrap* writes from her new home in New York.



Michael Schwandt: The US is a great option for commercial dancers.

IF THE grass always grows on the other side? Whether it's musical theatre, classical or commercial dance, many Australians are venturing overseas to the epitome of the entertainment world for a variety of reasons - with varying results. Here, we talk to some of those who made the leap to find out just what to expect when looking for work overseas.

American choreographer MICHAEL SCHWANDT regularly holds workshops throughout Australia and is always on the look-out for local talent. He believes the consistent work opportunities and competitive pay make life in the US a great option for commercial dancers.

"I find that Australian dancers usually fall into two categories," he explains. "Many that I have encountered are hungry and eager to learn. When I've encountered them in the States, they are so focused in class. There are the ones that want the greatest chance of working. I have also encountered more that fall into the 'big fish in a little pond' syndrome... particularly in Sydney."

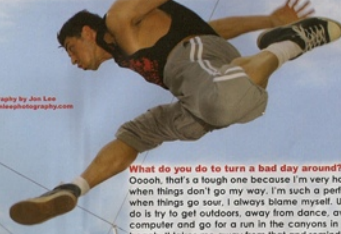
Resilience and hard work are two of the most important attributes for any commercial dancer, according to Schwandt, particularly someone looking to conquer the competitive US dance scene. "I find in my art for three months and hustled like crazy until I finally got a dance agent and set up for choreographic work. I believe anything is possible. So don't give up if you have a dream."

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Can you talk us through your choreographic process from the moment you receive the music?

The first thing I do is put the music on at my iPod, laptop, desktop and I will literally listen to it 100 times if not more...on repeat, in the car, at the gym. I need to know the musically every which way, and somewhere along the way I begin to visualize. I can't start choreographing right away because I need to think out staging, formations, shapes and then the steps come last. I will then always chart the music, as in break it down by verses/choruses/bridges, time codes and eight counts along with my general descriptions of what I have visualized off to the side. This is really important because I need to be able to communicate to people who aren't dancers-musicians and musical directors find my charting helpful because they don't work in eight counts, only dancers do. I then use the charting as a roadmap for the choreography. The last step is the steps themselves, and to this day, I still choreograph in my bedroom with the door closed and the music blasting. The process can happen very easily in a few hours or has been known to stretch over an 8-hour period or over multiple days.

Photography by Jen Lee
www.jenleephoto.com



What do you do to turn a bad day around?

Ooooh, that's a tough one because I'm very hard on myself when things don't go my way. I'm such a perfectionist that when things go sour, I always blame myself. Usually what I do is try to get outdoors, away from dance, away from my computer and go for a run in the canyons in LA or on the beach. It takes me away from that and reminds me that the world continues to turn no matter what.

What do you look for in a dancer?

Depends on the project as to whether or not I'm really looking for an individual style or not. Definitely I look for people who know how to "dance" when they haven't been instructed. What I mean by that is free styling at the end of the combo in an audition, free styling is not limited to just hip-hop. I am looking to see if the person has good musicality and can really just dance - and that doesn't mean do 5 pirouettes or other compellion ticks, because chances are I won't include such things in my choreography, but rather who is a dancer down to their soul. Also, I look at hardiness very closely. I cut off all my auditions on the hour it's scheduled. If you late you don't get in. I look at who shows up early and prepares by stretching and warming up. I look at their behaviour towards other dancers in the audition process: are they courteous or do they only care about themselves - these are things that both myself and my assistants take note of and in all honesty, these factors and notes have been the deal breakers on who we hire. The last thing I want to deal with in rehearsal is a bad work ethic and divas. I want people in rehearsal that I will genuinely like to be around.

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informa

A dynamic visionary leaves an impression on our shores...



Australia was graced with the presence of one of the most dynamic visionaries in the entertainment industry today, Michael Schwandt, direct from the United States not only taught a series of energetic and challenging workshops, but

remained that dance was readily accessible to everyone not matter what standard or region.

Both the aspiring professional dancer or casual dancer had the opportunity to choose between a wide array of dance workshops specializing in either Just Funk and Hip or lyrical pieces. The success of this tour was not solely based on the choreography, but rather the locations as well. Michael was not only guest faculty at elite institutions including Sydney Dance Company, Urban Dance Centre, Mega Dance Studios and Ministry of Dance in Melbourne, but also at local dance studios throughout Canberra and Perth.

Michael Schwandt is more than just a choreographer or creative consultant, but rather a role model for dancers worldwide. Not only does he support the working rights of industry professionals, Michael goes above and beyond by speaking to dancers one on one and giving honest and realistic advice regarding career choices and the attributes required to succeed within the national and international dance industries.

With the dance industry requiring a dancer to be equally strong both physically and mentally in order to overcome any obstacle that may be thrown in their way, Michael stays true to himself and simply is a prime example of how above determination and passion towards this art form will result in success both on stage and behind the scenes.

To learn more about this creative genius visit his website at <http://www.michaelschwandt.com>

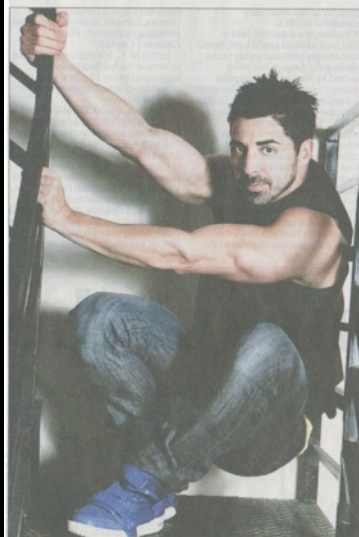
Dance Australia

DanceTrain

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POWERFUL CONNECTIONS: MJ Dance Studios director Maria Slape hosted international choreographer Michael Schwandt for the fourth year this week. Pictures: CLARE RAWLINSON



MUSCLE MAN: American choreographer Michael Schwandt.

US dancer steps in to help ACT youth

The dancers of Canberra Dance Development Centre had a kind of brush with fame yesterday. They had a class with American choreographer Michael Schwandt, who has worked with the likes of Lady Gaga, Aerosmith, Katy Perry, The Veronicas and The Beach Boys.

The Los Angeles-based, Texas-trained Schwandt was on a teaching tour and also shared his expertise with Capital Dance Studios and Legs in Canberra.

His message to up-and-coming dance students was "tenacity is the main thing".

"Whatever it is - dance or whatever you're passionate about - the main thing is believing in it and following through," he said.

Working with the rich and famous sometimes involved "a bigger-than-life personality", but often felt like working with any other dancer.

"The main thing when working with celebrities is to not treat them like one, you know, to treat them like anyone else. That seems to be what most of them really want."

He said he helped get Lady Gaga booked for her first television appearance after taking a shine to her song *Just Dance*. He directed and choreographed her performance.

"She's extremely focused," he said. "She's in control of everything you see, in control of the imagery she wants to portray and how she wants to do it."

"The interesting thing about her is she's always in character." Canberra Dance Development Centre



BIG FAN: Michael Schwandt with Lady Gaga, who he says is extremely focused.

director Jacqui Hallahan said having an international choreographer leading her students in jazz funk was inspiring for them.

"It's a great opportunity. The kids get an international experience right here in Canberra."

Student Kolby Upton, 16, of Latham, was a fan of Schwandt.

"His style is up my alley, my favourite genre."

"It's good to see a different perspective of the style. He pushed us a lot," she said.

"In Canberra the dance experience is quite limited. It's good to see what major dancers in the rest of the world do."

Newspapers

International Choreographer

Michael Schwandt



Artists:

Lady Gaga
Katy Perry
David Guetta
Kelly Rowland
Flo Rida
The Veronicas
Boys Like Girls
Kevin Rudolph
Finger Eleven
Heidi Montag
Sheryl Crow
John Legend
Beach Boys
Ninel Conde

TV:

So You Think You Can Dance
Your Chance To Dance
Cirque du Soleil
Miss Universe
Miss USA

Australian Bookings:

Christine Duncan
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