

CHRIS ZARATE
DIRECTOR AND CO-FOUNDER OF THE CITY NATION
BIOGRAPHY



CHRIS ZARATE began dancing at the age of three. Inspired by a Michael Jackson performance captured on VHS tape, he would play the tape, imitate and rewind almost every day, trying to perfect The King Of Pop's moves. Chris continued his dance education learning all he could by watching and emulating dancers on MTV music videos.

His love of dance and tireless work ethic paved the way for opportunity. At the age of 12, he was invited to be a performer for Chicago House Dj Too Kool Chris. For three consecutive years, he and his friends were the opening act for the B96 BBash - twice for TKC at Static and once at Zero Gravity.

In 2002, he was privileged to be introduced to Suave, the director of Hip Hop Connxion (HHC). He spent five years further honing his performance skills and training under Karlo Familiarara and Suave. A few short years into HHC, Chris and the team flew to Hip Hop International dance competition and took 4th place in the world for 2007.

Later, after leaving HHC, he was invited to be a member for dance performance/competition company, Design. Under the leadership and training of Angelina Grima and one of his first mentors, Karlo Familiarara, he dove deeper into dance, focusing more on the foundations, while also exploring new ideas and concepts. Design went on to become 2010 and 2011 Prelude Midwest Champions. During this same time period, Chris began experimenting with a new group and concept. He founded Work In Progress with the intent to spread a message that he continues to believe and share to this day: Dancers should never forget the reason why they started doing their art form in the first place, "Happiness and Joy".

Chris would later join the fierce and energetic Chicago performance company, "The Puzzle League". This new group grabbed first place at World Of Dance 2013. That year, Chris and teammates Matt Pumanes, Dee Moore and Trae Turner made history and directed the very first Chicago Mega Crew to ever compete at Hip Hop International. A few short years later, he joined and trained with CODA (Chicago Onyx Dance Alliance) to advance his learning experience with different choreographers.

Currently, Chris continues to spread his knowledge to the youth by teaching at several studios in the Chicago suburbs and by directing his own studio-within-a-studio, The City Nation. His dream is to one day own his very own studio, and promote all the training, wisdom and purpose he has learned along the way working with the many teachers and dancers that have inspired him.

###