



University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, dancers in rehearsal (left) and performance (right)

In Short Supply

Where to find male dancers for your college or university dance performances



RAY HALE/COURTESY OF SANTA FE COMMUNITY COLLEGE



Dancers from Santa Fe Community College rehearse Moves by guest choreographer David Palmer of the Maximum Dance Company.

If you're constantly struggling to add male dancers to your department's performances, you may be able to find willing participants in a few unconventional places. While these fellows may not all have extensive dance experience, their various talents can contribute to innovative performances and exciting choreography. Some of these in-a-pinch dancers may be ready to execute most dance moves, while others may be used for their strength or star factor.

1. Local studios. Post flyers in local studios or ask owners to include an advertisement in their newsletters to entice these young, but experienced, dancers to join you. At the studio, don't forget to speak to the teachers and their teaching assistants

who might be interested in getting some stage time.

2. Cheerleading squads and gymnastics and dance teams. If the piece that you're trying to cast calls for tumbling or acrobatic moves, seek out these boys who are already accustomed to partnering girls

and are familiar with performing and learning choreography. Get in touch with coaches to help you recruit them. Offer non-credit admission to your dance classes as an incentive.

3. Boyfriends, friends and family members. With a little persuasion, devoted friends,

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brothers, cousins and boyfriends of dancers you've already cast may be happy to spend some quality time at rehearsal. As a choreographer, you can use these comfortable, friendly relationships to your advantage and explore the closeness in your work. While most of your dancers' families may live far away, if you teach at a community college you might have a good shot at enlisting fathers and uncles for an onstage family affair.

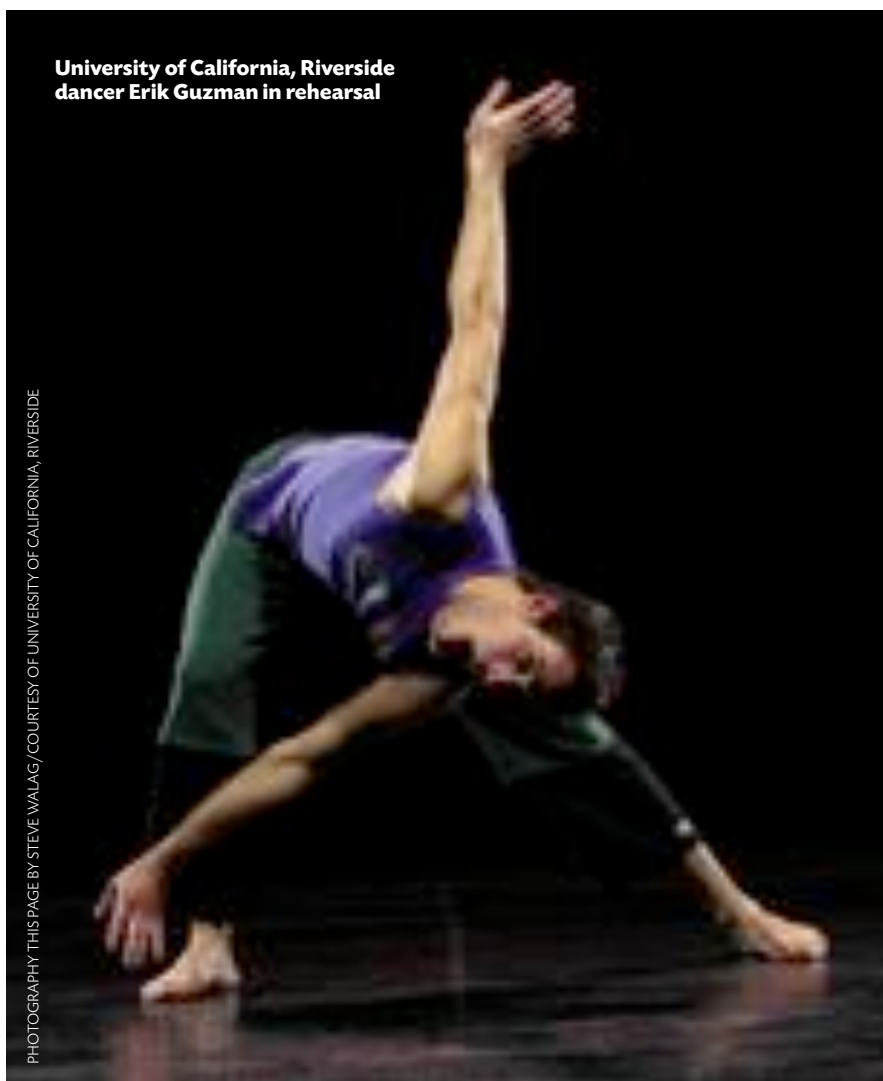
4. At the gym or YMCA. Get in touch with Pilates, yoga and aerobics instructors who teach at nearby facilities. These physically fit men may turn out to be capable movers and enjoy the challenge of dance. Allow them to use the opportunity to market to your students as potential clients.

5. Athletic teams. "In ancient times, the best male dancers were the best warriors," says College of Marin's dance professor David Jones. "Professional football players demonstrate the connection between dance and athletic ability quite often by dancing in the end zone after a touchdown." Soccer, basketball, tennis and other sports require coordination just like dance. While you can't expect experienced team players to perform a classical pas de deux, they can add an athletic component to your troupe. Coaches may be on your side and encourage players to participate to improve agility.

6. Faculty. You never know where former dancers may be hiding: in the English department or the chemistry lab. Send out an e-mail to your colleagues who may have secret dance roots that they are ready to dig up.

7. In the orchestra pit or backstage. Whether they march in the band or play in the symphony, these musicians have been accompanying dance performances for years. Certainly some of them have been yearning to take center stage. For a striking visual effect, you can even include the musical instruments in the choreography.

The theater tech crew has also been on the sidelines hanging lights and building sets for your performances year after year. It would be no surprise if these men have picked up a few moves.



University of California, Riverside dancer Erik Guzman in rehearsal

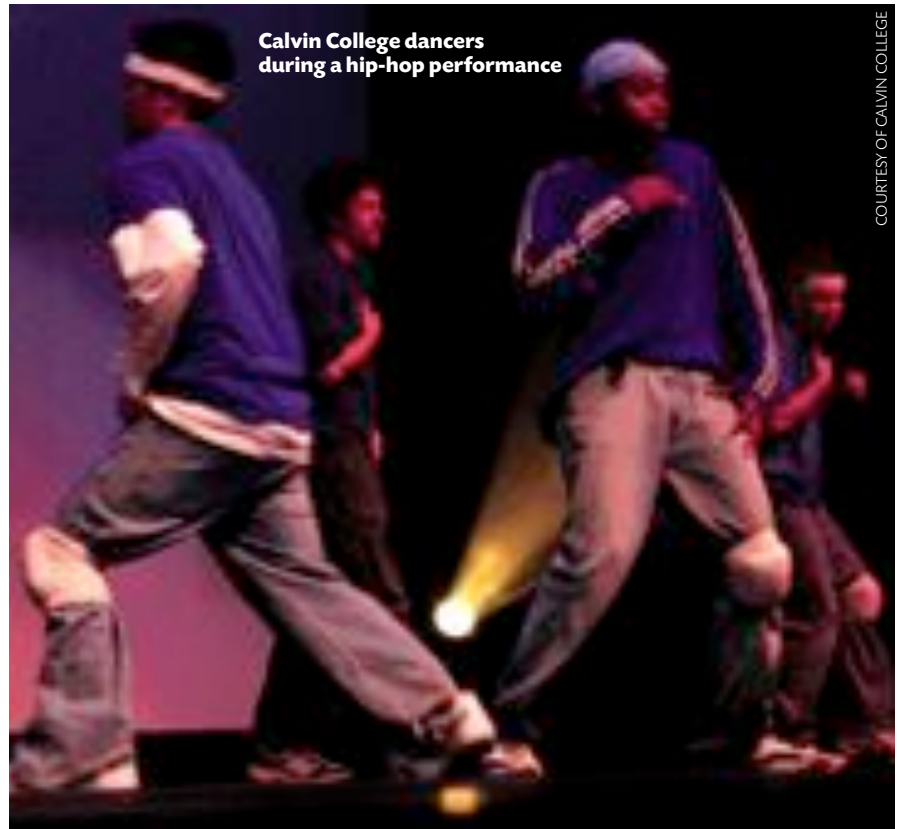
PHOTOGRAPHY THIS PAGE BY STEVE WALAG/COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, RIVERSIDE

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8. Local K-12 schools. Your local public and private schools may have dance or drama classes and clubs whose boys would be excited to add a collegiate-level performance to their college applications. Be sure to get parents involved with the planning to make sure that transportation and scheduling run smoothly.

9. Local police or fire departments. Everyone loves men in uniform, so why not put them onstage? Organize a fundraiser for the firehouse or police athletic league and get these protectors of the peace dancing. Just be sure to avoid clichéd Village People references.

10. Prominent university or town figures. Getting onstage for a potentially embarrassing performance could be the ultimate public relations stunt. The mayor of your town or the dean of the college would not only draw a large crowd for your show, but he might also be itching to show off his kickline skills. **DT**



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