

Tom Ralabate

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Tom Ralabate is Professor Emeritus, Dance and a Past Chair of the Department of Theatre & Dance at the University at Buffalo/SUNY. Ralabate has taught for all significant dance organizations throughout the United States, Canada, and Mexico. As a dance team, with his sister Kip, he was an undefeated Junior Latin Dance Champion, United States and North American Latin Ballroom Dance Champion, and American representatives to the World Latin Dance Championships. His research interests include the rich multicultural, multiethnic traditions and histories that inform jazz dance, examining the comparative study of jazz dance techniques and styles, and the comparative socialization of jazz dance movement through vernacular periods.

He is currently the National Chair of Education Strategy for Dance Masters of America Inc. Honored for his contributions to dance by raising national dance standards, Ralabate is the third recipient of the prestigious *Ivy Hall Foundation Award*, first awarded to Gene Kelly and presented by Dance Masters of America Other professional awards include: *Artistic Achievement Award* presented by CNADM; the *Jazz Dance World Congress Angel Award*; first recipient of the *College of Arts & Sciences Award for Excellence in Teaching in the Area of Arts* at University at Buffalo, and awarded The Julian Park Award, the highest honor awarded by the UB CAS Dean for meritorious and notable contributions to the University. Awarded scholarships in his name are presented yearly by DMA, DTCB, and the *Mr. Tom UB Dance Jazz Award* at SUNY/Buffalo through his university endowment.

Ralabate received a *2006 SUNY Chancellor's Award for Scholarship and Creative Activities*. In 2007, Dance Teacher Magazine honored him in New York City at their annual summer conference for distinguishing himself as an outstanding educator in higher education and advocate for dance. In 2013, the Dance Teachers' Club of Boston and the American Society honored him with the *Honorary Lifetime Membership Award*. In 2020, his hometown of Amherst, NY, honored him with the Behind-the-Scenes Individual Artist Award, presented by the Amherst Arts and Culture in Public Places Board. Ralabate was honored to appear in 2009, Pedro Brenner's film documentary *Gus an American Icon*, based on the life of jazz dance legendary Gus Giordano.

Ralabate appears in the HBO Max award-winning documentary film, *UPROOTED The Journey of Jazz Dance*, directed by Khadifa Wong, about the history and celebration of jazz dance. Streaming on HBO MAX, the cinematic exploration of jazz dance aims to open up conversations within the dance community, challenging established thoughts and opinions about this controversial art form. Ralabate, instrumental in establishing the jazz dance track at UB, was one of 60 international artists/ practitioners/scholars interviewed contributors for *UPROOTED The History of Jazz Dance*