

# About SHAPESHIFT



**SHAPESHIFT**, a Minneapolis dance collective, whose founder performed with Prince's band 3rdEyeGirl, and which has danced in front of 20,000 strong at Xcel Energy Center, was created on the fly.

Nine years ago, Creative Director, Ashley Selmer and a collective of then nine dancers, joined together to create a one time show for their generation - something fresh and innovative that would feature all types of dancers from various socio-economic backgrounds, trained in dance styles from hip-hop, contemporary, to modern and Ballet.

**SHAPESHIFT's** November 2013 self

-titled production at the New Century Theatre in Minneapolis, sold out to rousing applause and standing ovations, moving their audience to tears. That got the attention of presenters and audiences, which began to build. Thereafter, they continued their sold-out performances at The Lab Theater in September 2014, with their production "The Awakening" and again with their production "Awakening XI XI" at the Cowles Center for Performing Arts in Minneapolis in February 2015. The company again follow-up with more sold-out performances with their debut of "**Grey Skies Blue**" at the Cowles Center in February 2016. In April 2016, Ordway Center for Performing Arts, St. Paul Minnesota asked them to headline their Annual Spring Fete and to perform at their Flint Hill Festival in May that same year. SHAPESHIFT also has received national exposure and recognition, when they were approached by the Canadian based organization "Feed the Children" aka We Day, to perform with National Recording Artist, **Natalie La Rose** at the Xcel Energy Center in front of 20,000 screaming young fans in 2015, followed up by another smashing performance with International Recording Artist, **OMI** at Xcel in September 2016. During this amazing event, SHAPESHIFT also choreographed and performed an original piece, in response to a performance challenge from international star, **Paula Abdul**. SHAPESHIFT then closed out a banner 2016 with a performance with Capitol Records Recording Artist, **Tori Kelly** at **Prince's Tribute Concert** in October at the Xcel Energy Center in front of another packed house!

# About SHAPESHIFT

In September 2016, SHAPESHIFT was nominated for a **SAGE Award** for the “Most Outstanding Performance” in the State of Minnesota for their production of “Grey Skies Blue” (“GSB”). In the fall of 2016, SHAPESHIFT was selected as one of sixteen artists from around the world by The International Performing Arts for Youth Organization, to showcase its production of GSB at IPAY’s Annual Showcase in Madison Wisconsin. That performance again was met with rousing applause by its audience of international presenters. Soon thereafter, The Kennedy Center booked SHAPESHIFT’s production of GSB for a successful eleven show run in October 2017. GSB tells the story of a summer of friendships, tackling complex themes of family dysfunction, sexual orientation, love, and betrayal. In Spring of 2018, SHAPESHIFT was selected to showcase GSB at the **Arts Midwest Showcase** in Indianapolis, Indiana. Since that performance the company has been in constant demand booking performances at Jazz at Lincoln Center in NYC, throughout Minnesota, as well as performances with Jennifer Lopez and Justin Timberlake as part of Super Bowl LII; and community-based events in the Twin Cities and in outstate communities such as Hormel 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, St. Paul Minnesota Foundation Gala, Ordway Spring Fete, MLK Annual Breakfast, PFund Foundation Gala, Flint Hills Family Festival, Sanneh Foundation Gala for Goals, Social Enterprise Minneapolis, GRRRL Scout, Evolve Adoption Family Service-UMOJA Minn., University of St Thomas - Fowler Global Finals, Affinity Plus All Employee Day, [Greenwich School for Music \(NY\)](#), and more.

Among other notable social media and news publications and outlets, SHAPESHIFT recently has been the spotlight featured on TPT Originals on PBS, the Cover Feature of Lavender Magazine, and spotlight artist in Mpls. St Paul Magazine.

SHAPESHIFT dance collective, a 501(C) 3 non-profit, was formed to create a fresh new innovative dance style which combines the lyricism of contemporary dance and hip-hop with other dance styles to illuminate the human experience and fuel social change.

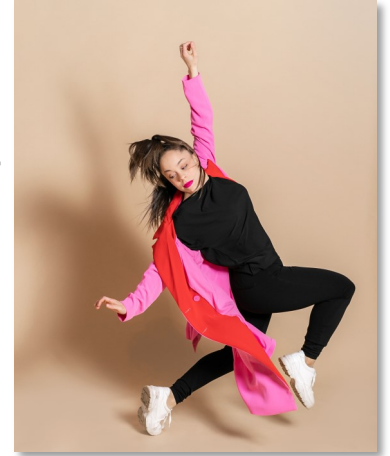


SHAPESHIFT’s powerful productions boldly tackle current issues of social justice, loss, love, and human emotions. SHAPESHIFT’s patented hybrid storytelling productions include full and small ensembles and solo pieces, combined with hip-hop/contemporary movement and other dances styles, fused with popular and old school music, dialog, acting and props.

# About the Dancers

## **Ashley Selmer (Founder and Creative Director of SHAPESHIFT) — Orange superhero**

Ashley is trained in Jazz, contemporary, ballet, hip-hop and African. Ashley's credits include SHAPESHIFT productions: *Grey Skies Blue*, *XI:XI*, and *XI:XI: The Awakening*, and SHAPESHIFT's self-titled work ; Choreographer hip-hop musical *Last Stop On Market Street* (Children's Theatre Company); Associate Choreographer *In The Heights*, *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Ordway Center for Performing Arts); Ensemble *West Side Story*, 2nd Assistant Director *Irving Berlin's White Christmas* (Ordway); Ensemble *The Amen Corner* (Guthrie/Penumbra Theater). In the studio, Ashley draws from life's real and imaginary experiences to craft stories that emote feelings and reflect diversity & inclusion. She emphasizes technique while utilizing each dancer's unique and beautiful movements as tools for telling, moving, and interwoven narratives. Ashley encourages SHAPESHIFT dancers to openly share their personal experiences, and together they design choreography that captures common elements that make us the same, in so many ways, despite our socioeconomic or racial differences. Ashley is a Rom-com collector, lover of overpriced latte's and vintage furniture. She is annoyingly organized (as her friends and family tell us). Ashley earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts (emphasis in choreography and performance) from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



## **Alan Mure—Green superhero**

Alan is a two-time Minnesota Sage Award Nominee. His passion and purpose is rooted in both performance and choreography. Born and raised in the Twin Cities, Alan has performed professionally for Thirteen years, while sculpting his craft as an all-around dancer/performer. He is a significant contributor to SHAPESHIFT's Creative Team. Alan's additional credits include Immortal Dance Team, Lead Choreographer for LegacyLiveEnt and Co-Founder of Rebirth of Quality Art.



## **Gabriel Blackburn—Blue superhero**

Gabriel has trained in dance since age 5. He graduated from the Saint Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists in 2015 and received a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance from the University of Minnesota in 2019. He is the founder and Artistic Director of PBC Nation LLC (Pulling Back the Curtain). He has trained in many disciplines of concert and urban movement, including training with Carl Flink, Toni Pierce-Sands, Erin Thompson, Jason Noer, and Andy Mor. In addition to his critical role as a member of SHAPESHIFT, he has performed with other Twin Cities artists: Sidra Bell, Kjara Wurst, and Marcus Willis, Drop the Mic 2017-18, I'm From: Vol 2, and the 2018-19 Fringe Festivals.





# About the Dancers

## **Nate Kay—Pink superhero**

Nate, born and raised in South Minneapolis, is a humble student of dance and hip hop. He describes his style as unorthodox like Prince, not wanting to be limited by anything or predictable in any narrowly defined dance style. Nate enjoys cooking, hanging with friends, and working out at the gym. He is embracing his role in SHAPESHIFT and looking forward to continued self-exploration in this journey.



## **Nate Malisceke—Red superhero**

Nate started Breaking in 2012 and has taken his passion global. He has competed in some of the largest breaking events in the world: Outbreak Europe, Silverback Open Championships, and Freestyle Session. He has traveled and performed in 6 different countries with Break Free Ministries and IMPACT Spain, performing at large-scale stadium events to small charity events. Nate has performed at various Twin Cities theaters including the Cowles Center, the Barbara Barker Center and the Ordway. Today Nate is actively continuing to spread light to others through his gift of dance.

## **Sophia Meza—Red superhero**

Sophia, a Minneapolis native, has been dancing since she was 3 years old. Sophia has performed in and created various works around the Twin Cities and has recently performed at the Indonesia Institute of The Arts of Yogyakarta (ISI). She is currently an undergraduate student at the University of Minnesota studying Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies and Global Studies.



# About the Dancers

## Rachel Miller—Purple superhero

Rachel has been dancing since the tender age of 5 at dance studios throughout Minnesota. She is trained in ballet, contemporary, lyrical, modern, hip-hop, jazz, musical theatre, pointe, and tap. She has worked with artists from New York, Los Angeles, and the Twin Cities including artists Gregory Dolbashian, Wynn Fricke, and Gerald Casel. She also has trained in intensives in Italy and LA, performed backup for Tori Kelly at Prince's Tribute Concert at Xcel Energy Center in 2016, and more. Rachel pays it forward as she teaches/choreographs movement/technique in contemporary, hip hop, lyrical and ballet at Studio 4 Dance. Rachel received her BFA in Dance from the University of Minnesota.

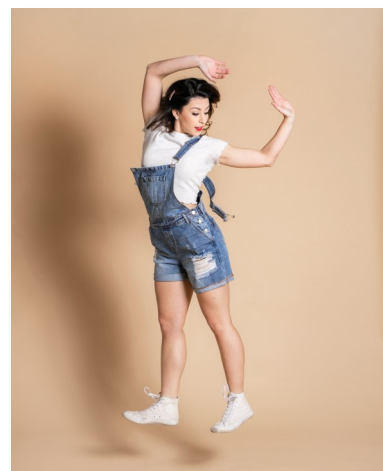


## James Gavins—Teacher

James, born and raised in Chicago, graduated from the University of Wisconsin with a B.A. in Theater & Drama. In 2008, James received the First Wave Hip Hop & Urban Arts Scholarship. He started off as a bboy (breakdancing) in his early teens, which led into popping (funkstyles). He then took a two-year sabbatical from college to dance professionally with GForce Entertainment on Carnival CruiseLine. James also was a Practicing Professional Teaching Artist with the Wallace Foundation/Youth Arts Initiatives/Boys & Girls Club of America. He also is the Creative Director of the Office of Multicultural Arts Initiatives/ First Wave Hip Hop & Urban Arts Scholarship Program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

## Hannah Herrig—Orange superhero

Hannah has been dancing since age 7. She is trained in all styles from hip hop to contemporary, jazz to ballet, and more. Hannah also is Captain of the Minnesota Timberwolves Dancers. Traveling internationally with the Minnesota Timberwolves and NBA to Mexico and China throughout her dance career, she has performed with artists such as G-Eazy, Lil Jon, and Coolio.



# About *Be Your Own Superhero*

You don't need to be superhuman to save the world. Be yourself. Find the magic and power from within!

*Be Your Own Superhero* is a theatrical dance production that tells the story of 9 friends discovering what it takes to be heroes in their own community. Against the backdrop of a vibrant city, these close-knit friends encounter challenges that only make them stronger. Together, they quickly learn empowering life lessons that: being kind and gentle with the earth breathes a healthier life for others; hard work takes effort-and passion, and love of the arts is meaningful and beautiful. They don't need to be faster than a speeding bullet, more powerful than the next person, or able to leap tall buildings in a single jump to be a changemaker - the Superhero has always been them and you!

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. What weakness within yourself would you to transform into your own Superpower?
2. How do you support others in identifying, learning, and embodying their Superpowers?
3. Who is your real-life Superhero and why?

**Match the weaknesses listed left column below with the Superpowers listed to the right column that you believe would help you overcome that weakness.**

Fearful	Hard work & Hustle
Insensitive	Go Green
Anxiety	Volunteer
Selfishness	Mindfulness
Litter	Empathetic
Unmotivated	Bravery

**Find SHAPESHIFT online!**

[SHAPESHIFTMPLS.com/home](https://shapeshiftmpls.com/home)

Instagram: @shapeshiftmpls

# Meet the Superheroes

