



# Ready for Anything

Nick Pupillo adds this musical mix to his jazz warm-up.

BY RACHEL ZAR

“I’m kind of doing it all,” says Nick Pupillo, and he’s not lying. In the last couple of years the performer, teacher and choreographer has added studio owner and company director to his list of roles, and the Visceral name, which he created, is taking Chicago’s dance scene by storm.

It started with the Visceral Studio Company, a teen performance and competition group, which is now beginning its fourth season. To house these talented teens, Pupillo founded the Visceral Dance Center in 2007, and, with huge warehouse-like studios and an impressive roster of teachers, it quickly grew to one of the Windy City’s most popular destinations for dance. Pupillo isn’t slowing down, and a professional company, Visceral Dance Chicago, is set to launch this spring. In addition to the behind-the-scenes work, Pupillo remains the studio’s star teacher and brings in throngs of faithful students.

“I like to make sure that when my students come into class, they don’t know what to expect,” Pupillo says. His intricate choreography varies from hard-hitting jazz to smooth lyrical. But his warm-up stays relatively consistent.

“Having a formula is beneficial to properly warming up,” says Pupillo. “Dynamics are important. A warm-up should have extreme highs and lows to energize the body, but also be calm and stretch the muscles.” Pupillo’s range of familiar movements are paired with these carefully chosen songs, making his warm-up feel less like a series of exercises and more like a dance. **DT**

	<p><b>Artist:</b> Sigur Rós  <b>Album/Song:</b> <i>Takk . . .</i>          “Saeglópur”          “Sigur Rós is an Icelandic group that is very unique. They mix harmonies in an interesting and intriguing way. Starting my warm-up with this calm yet energetic song introduces the basic feel of my class.”</p>		<p><b>Artist:</b> Sia  <b>Album:</b> <i>Some People Have Real Problems</i>          “I’ve used every song on this album. I like that Sia doesn’t always play in straight eights. I think it’s nice to break it up a little bit, so students get into the dynamics of what a six requires.”</p>
	<p><b>Artist:</b> Ingrid Michaelson  <b>Album/Song:</b> <i>Be OK</i>,          “Keep Breathing”          “I use this song for stretching. Ingrid Michaelson’s harmonies are beautiful and the song has a very happy, peaceful mood. She has a very unique voice and that’s something that’s very important to me in all the music I use.”</p>		<p><b>Artist:</b> Portishead  <b>Album/Song:</b> <i>Dummy</i>,          “Numb”          “I use this song for development. It has a tense, rich tone, which calms things down but keeps up the intensity. This whole album has an energy that keeps students pushing along, and her voice is haunting yet beautiful.”</p>
	<p><b>Artist:</b> Regina Spektor  <b>Album:</b> <i>Far</i>          “I’ve found that students respond to Regina Spektor and get excited when the music comes on. She has a hopeful sound, but also a darker, deeper feeling that works for so many aspects of class.”</p>		<p><b>Artist:</b> The Rapture  <b>Album/Song:</b> <i>Pieces of the People We Love</i>, “Who! Alright–Yeah . . . Uh Huh.”          “This punk rock band is just fun. They play exciting music that I use for battements or sit-ups. The beats are deep and clear, so it’s easy to experiment with repetition and progressions. Its upbeat energy is very aggressive.”</p>

Photo by Cheryl Mann, courtesy of Nick Pupillo