

# Afton Coombs

Dancer · Musician · Developer · Researcher

I am an artist, developer, and data professional with an interest in human-centered technology and preservation of traditional art forms. As a dancer, my background is in American tap and flatfoot and house dance. I also sing and play traditional American and Irish music. My choreographic dance work sometimes involves anti-surveillance techniques, as well as stories of my own experiences with neurodivergence and queerness. As a data scientist and developer, I have worked in analytics, data visualization, and web development. I most enjoy using these technical skills for artists and educators.

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Twitch: [@aftonsteps](https://www.twitch.tv/aftonsteps)

*References upon request*

## EXPERIENCE

### Product Analyst — *Bloomerang, Remote*

September 2022 - PRESENT

Bloomerang provides multiple software platforms to non-profits in areas of volunteer timekeeping, fundraising, web forms, and contact management. As a product analyst, I track how non-profits, donors, and volunteers use these products, and I work with design and engineering teams to provide quantitative answers to their problems.

### Web Designer — *Freelance, Los Angeles*

January 2023 - PRESENT

I create and maintain custom websites and blogs using WordPress or simple front-end, with a focus on serving artists and small businesses. Recent projects include blogs [meatthoughts.com](https://meatthoughts.com) and [snack-rooms.com](https://snack-rooms.com).

### Dancer, Vocalist, Musician— *The Praties, Los Angeles*

June 2014 - PRESENT

I perform step dancing and music (vocal, flute, and autoharp) with Los Angeles Irish trad-fusion band The Praties. We perform regularly at local venues, farmer's markets, and cultural events.

### Dance Teacher & Artist — *Freelance, Los Angeles*

June 2008 - PRESENT

As a dancer of American percussive forms, I perform with various local bands as well as in school assembly shows, retirement homes, adult care centers, and cultural events. I am passionate about sharing this art form and reaching people in a casual face-to-face environment. I also teach dance and fitness to all ages, from young children to adults.

### Researcher in Computer Science — *Georgia Institute of Technology, Remote*

September 2022 - December 2024

While studying computer science with a concentration in interactive intelligence at Georgia Tech, I am engaged in research concerned with student opportunities and outcomes, and specifically if online formats improve these measures for historically excluded students in computer

## SKILLS

Dance: percussive dance | tap dance | flatfoot | house

Music: Irish music | old time music | voice | flute | autoharp

Computing languages: Python | R | HTML | CSS | JavaScript | C# | Java | Matlab

Technology skills: Tableau | DBT | Shiny | Streamlit | Dash | Unity | WordPress | Adobe Photoshop | Adobe Illustrator | Decipher | documentation | unit testing | forecasting | A/B testing | data visualization

## EDUCATION

Georgia Institute of Technology — *M.S. Computer Science* (2025)

Pasadena City College — *A.A., Dance* (2025)

University of Southern California — *M.A., Linguistics* (2015)

University of California, Los Angeles — *B.A. Linguistics, English/Creative Writing* (2011)

science.

## **Tap Dance Instructor – Bloom School of Music, Los Angeles**

July 2024 - September 2024

As a dance teacher within a larger music school, I taught creative dance, early childhood tap and jazz, and beginning through advanced tap dance for all ages.

## **Data Scientist, Spotify – Los Angeles**

June 2021 - August 2023

My team, focused on increased engagement for artists, evaluated new features through A/B testing and inferential modeling as well as maintained UX and crash report guardrails. I helped launch new features that reached millions of users, and also designed an internally-facing analytics database for our product area.

## **Data Scientist, Hulu – Los Angeles**

January 2019 - December 2021

My focus was on forecasting of subscriber and viewership numbers. I built and maintained time series models for forecasting, as well as developed internally-facing web applications to allow business users to self-service models by running their own scenarios.

## **Data Scientist, Magid – Los Angeles**

April 2019 - October 2019

As a part of a small data science team focused on syndicated research around TV viewership, I contributed to data collection design, data engineering, statistical testing, and development of web-based dashboards.

## **Data Scientist, Murphy Research – Los Angeles**

June 2016 - April 2019

Working with various clients in entertainment, packaged goods, and technology, I programmed web-based surveys, performed statistical analyses for research studies, and developed web-based dashboards and simulators.

## **Tap Dance Instructor – One The Edge Dance Studio, Los Angeles**

November 2015 - September 2017

I both taught and subbed for regular tap dance classes for children, from beginner to advanced students.

## **Tap Dance Instructor – Pacific Dance Center, Los Angeles**

August 2015 - September 2017

I taught tap dance from beginner to advanced levels from ages 7 to 18, including choreographing student pieces for performance.

## **CERTIFICATIONS**

Group Fitness (NASM)

Web Development with HTML, CSS, JavaScript (Coursera)

DBT Fundamentals (DBT)

Front-End Web Development (Grow with Google)

Data Science Specialization (Coursera)

SQL Bootcamp (General Assembly)

Early Childhood Education (6 units, Santa Monica College)

Training in Pedagogy (University of Southern California)

Teaching for Early Childhood (Colburn School)

## **SCHOLARSHIPS & GRANTS**

SEED Dance Residency (2024)

María Isabel Fernández Memorial Scholarship (2024)

Dissident Rhythms Percussive Dance Scholarship (2024)

Powered by Bertelsmann Data Science Scholarship (2018)

Grow with Google Front-End Web Bootcamp Scholarship (2017)

Provost Fellowship, University of Southern California (2012)

Member Education Award, SchoolsFirst FCU (2007-2008)

## **Linguistic Consultant— *Freelance, Remote***

May 2014 - June 2016

Working with clients all around the globe, I contributed to data collection, experimentation, and data visualization for speech tech and accessibility.

## **Assistant Lecturer — *University of Southern California, Los Angeles***

August 2013 - May 2014

While teaching college-level writing composition, I designed original lectures and assignments, taught weekly classes, and regularly met with students one-on-one.

## **Dance and Fitness Instructor — *YMCA, Mission Viejo***

April 2012 - August 2012

I taught children's tap, ballet, jazz, and creative dance, as well as adult cardio dance classes of all ages and experience levels.

## **Dance Instructor and Choreographer — *Amna Mazin Dance, Mission Viejo***

February 2012 to August 2012

Working with beginner dancers, I taught jazz movement and choreographed dances for special events such as weddings.

## **Teaching Assistant — *Deano Productions, Orange County***

February 2012 to August 2012

As an assistant, I taught tap, jazz, and gymnastics for children ages 3-6 at schools throughout Orange County, often requiring skillful classroom management of large groups.

## **Engineering Intern, USC— *Los Angeles***

June 2008 - August 2008

As a part of a natural language processing lab, I designed improvements to semantic-based tree bank labeling and assisted in corpus studies of poetry translation using public domain works.

## **Teaching Assistant — *Mission Viejo Dance and Performing Arts Center, Mission Viejo***

February 2012 to August 2012

I assisted in tap, jazz, tumbling and creative dance classes for children ages 3-8, including assisting both on- and off-stage at recitals.

## **VOLUNTEER WORK**

Operations , EyeMHome House Dance Battle (2023)

Operations, Topanga Banjo Fiddle Festival Step Dancing Contest (2018-2023)

Dance & Flute Performance, Labyrinth of Jareth Masquerade Ball (2016-present)

Forum Moderator, Udacity Web Development Program (2018)

Hack for L.A. Mentor (2017)

Child Neurology Foundation Materials Proofreader (2017)

Web Manager, Westwind, UCLA's Journal of the Arts (2009)

## **PROJECTS**

### **{ggalignment} — *Author/Maintainer (R lang), 2022***

A software package for creating D&D alignment charts in the R language, available on [CRAN](#).

## **www.fullmoon.market — Operations & Tech Support, 2024**

An online marketplace for hand-made goods.

## **www.meatthoughts.com — Developer (WordPress), 2023**

A blog for writer M. Lopes da Silva.

## **www.snack-rooms.com — Developer (WordPress), 2023**

A website about comically strange foods.

## **TEACHING & WORKSHOPS**

**ChoCoLA (Choreographer Coalition Los Angeles) — Flatfoot Dance for All Ages — May 2025**

**Santa Barbara Old Time Fiddlers' Festival — Beginning Flatfoot Dance Workshop — October 2024**

**Dance Works Summer Intensive, Laguna Niguel — Tap and Jazz (ages 9-18) — July 2015**

**Layla Dance Summer Camp — Creative Dance (ages 3-6) — July 2015**

**Dan Dance Summer Camp — Tap (ages 6-14) — July 2014**

## **AWARDS & CONTESTS**

**Santa Barbara Old Time Fiddlers' Convention — Misc. Instrument (Flatfoot Dancing) — 2nd place — 2023**

**Santa Barbara Old Time Fiddlers' Convention — Singing — 3rd place (2023)**

**Topanga Banjo Fiddle — Dance Contest — 1st place (3 years) — 2016-2018**

**LA Tap Fest — Cutting Contest — 1st place — 2016**

## **PERFORMANCES**

**LA Dance Festival — “High Five” — *Dancer, Choreographer*, February 2025**

A real-life story created by two trans artists, one a poet (M. Lopes da Silva) and one a dancer/choreographer (Afton Coombs). Through a combination of comedy and intense personal narrative, M. describes his first-person experience some of the more unexpected aspects of transition, and dancers act out the story through visual and percussive dance.

## **Pasadena City College — “Sunshine” — *Computer Visuals Designer, December 2024***

A piece created as a collaboration for an independent study by dancer Eric Schloesser through Pasadena City College. I created computer visuals which were dynamically linked to the levels in the song used for the piece, so that the size and shape of the visuals corresponded to the music. The piece was given a showing in the dance studio facilities at the college at the end of the fall 2024 semester. Dance performance and choreography: Eric Schloesser  
Computer visuals: Afton Coombs (TouchDesigner) and Eric Schloesser (Editing). Music: Sunshine by Kelly Lee Owens.

## **Body and Presence — “Untitled Stim Piece” — *Dancer/Choreographer, September 12-December 11, 2024***

A short dance film, “Untitled Stim Piece,” about my own experiences with neurodivergence and stimming. The work was displayed through Santa Clarita Arts at the Canyon Country Community Center. Music: [Bach’s Cello Suite No. 1 in G Minor](#) (the Prelude) performed and recorded by Ailbhe McDonagh.

## **Business for Artists Conference — “Untitled Stim Piece” — *Dancer/Choreographer, October 19, 2024***

A live version of “Untitled Stim Piece,” a percussive dance piece about my own experiences with neurodivergence and stimming. This solo piece was performed live at the 3rd annual Business for Artists conference through Santa Clarita Arts. [Bach’s Cello Suite No. 1 in G Minor](#) (the Prelude) performed and recorded by Ailbhe McDonagh.

## **Topanga Banjo Fiddle Contest Showcase — *Dancer, 2024***

As a previous three-time winner of the dance contest at Topanga Banjo Fiddle, I performed an showcase demonstration on the dance stage and accompaniment to Water Tower Band on the main stage.

## **Playa Vista Farmers Market — *Dancer/Musician, 2016-present***

Traditional Irish music, occasionally with a twist. For nearly a decade, Irish trad-fusion band the Praties has performed at the Playa Vista Farmers Market on nearly every first Saturday of the month. I perform as a dancer with the band.

## **ORGANIZING AND COMMUNITY WORK**

### **Topanga Banjo Fiddle Contest — *Dance Event Planner, 2024***

I served on the dance subcommittee for planning the Topanga Banjo Fiddle Contest, where I planned site setup, scheduling, and talent for the event, including bringing in Mexican folkloric band Grupo Bella for a workshop and performance.

## **The House with the Good Candy — *Event Planner, October 2023***

Working with San Pedro arts foundation Collage, I organized and curated a queer-centered variety show for Halloween, including live music, drag, poetry, comedy, burlesque, and art vending.

### **RESIDENCIES & GATHERINGS**

## **SEED Dance Residency — *Choreographer, January-June 2024***

A training residency and performance venue for early career dance choreographers.

## **Dissident Rhythms — *Dancer, Instructor January 2024***

An annual self-organized workshop series and creative gathering for queer percussive at the John C. Campbell Folk School in North Carolina.

### **PUBLICATIONS**

## **Dancer — *Author, 2025***

A poem published in the online [Citizen Trans](https://www.newwordspress.com/dancer-by-afton-coombs/) project through {new words} press. The project aims to tell trans stories in a time of rising transphobia.  
<https://www.newwordspress.com/dancer-by-afton-coombs/>

## **Fluid Dynamics — *Author, 2024***

A poem published in the first [Dreaming Queer Futures](https://dreamingqueerfutures.neocities.org/) anthology, facilitated by the Trans/gressive Writers' Workshop in May, 2024.  
<https://dreamingqueerfutures.neocities.org/>

## **{ggalignment} — *Author/Maintainer (R lang), 2022***

A software package for creating D&D alignment charts in the R language, available on [CRAN](https://cran.r-project.org/package=ggalignment). <https://cran.r-project.org/package=ggalignment>