



for Dancers, **Instructors** and the **Parents** who put up with them

ISSUE 1

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**ALWAYS
FEATURING**

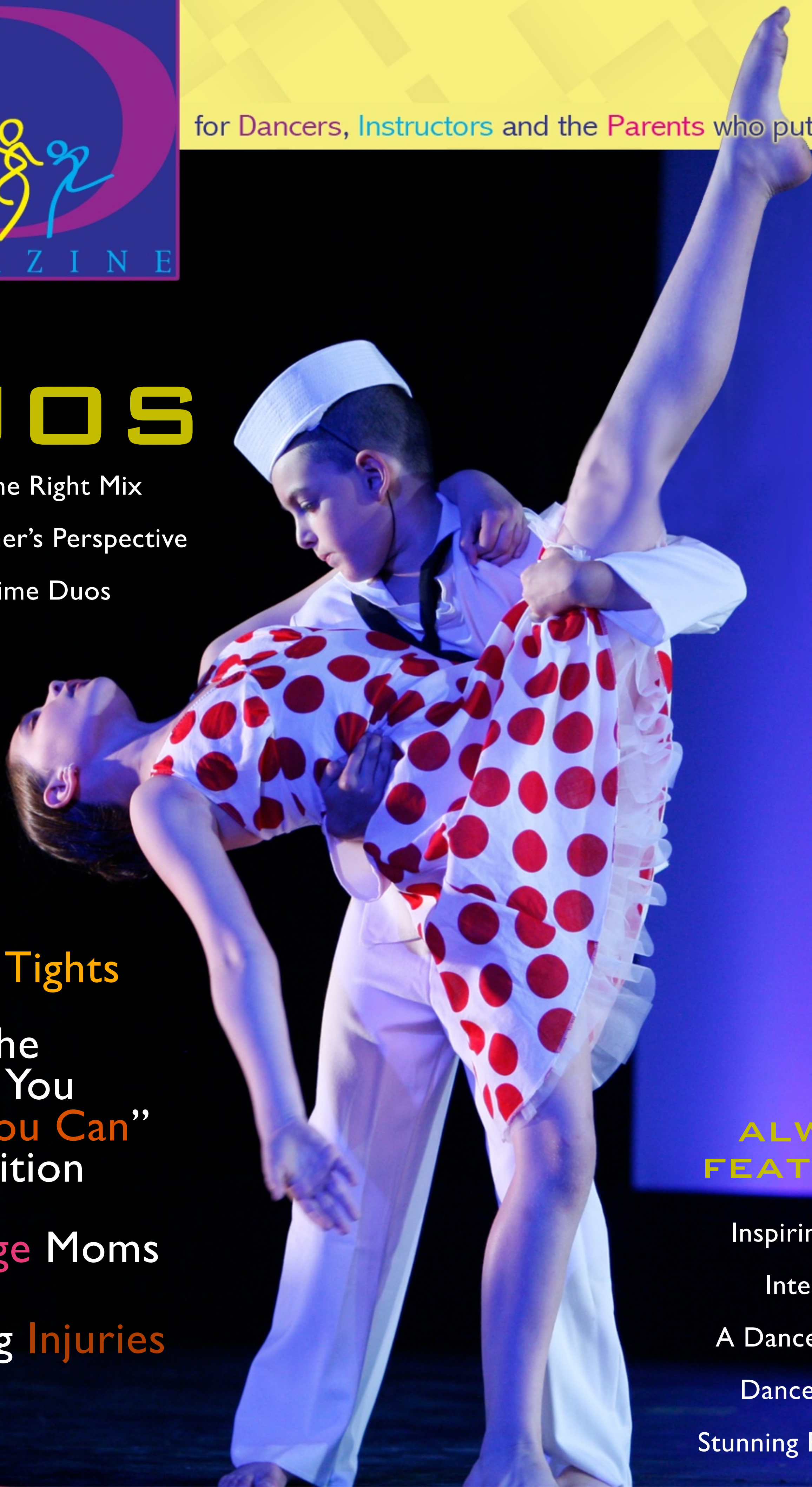
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DANCE FAMILY MAGAZINE

Issue #1

January 2013

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Publishers Page



DANCE FAMILY MAGAZINE

An Enthusiastic Welcome

Dance is a tremendous example of how positive energy can be harnessed. The ability to control the mind and the body has been among the most ancient of practices to obtain strength, dignity and self respect. A business model that can be focused around those positive attributes and can highlight them is something most entrepreneurs would struggle to find in a business plan.

But there has been a great intersection in my life which has brought me to this point in creating Dance Family Magazine. For one, my family has embraced dance- as the activity of choice for my 10 year old daughter, in our socializing with the families and instructors and in my wife's volunteer work with our local studio. There also has been an explosion of the dance world on television. Some of it entertaining and embracing... and some of it, to put it kindly, sensationalized. And finally, there is the point to where I've taken my other business activities as far as I wish to and have been searching for the right opportunity to be creative with my strengths in this new media era.

I recognize that the talented adults I now associate with are a far cry from the sensationalized media element that seems to have captured the young dancer's attention. It makes good drama but from everything I have experienced, a dance studio, the parents and the kids are a family. Sure there's drama and disagreements, but the overwhelming majority of experiences are positive and tight-knit. Many dancers are with the studios, the parents and their dance friends from childhood to teenage years and beyond. In many cases that means they spend more time with their dance family than their relatives.

It's okay to be entertained in serial drama but at the end of the day, dance is about harnessing positive energy and I hope to publish DFM with that same positive energy flowing from it's pages. Positive instruction, positive stories, positive photography, positive examples presented by instructors, parents and dancers of all ages. So welcome to my business model that hopefully brings some equilibrium back to what makes dance families so great.

TOM MODY IS THE PUBLISHER AND DESIGNER OF DANCE FAMILY MAGAZINE. HE'S BEEN A SELF EMPLOYED ENTREPRENEUR FOR OVER 20 YEARS.

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www.modycompany.com



Island of Chances 2nd



Photo submitted by Jessica Walz

Chrissy (far right) with roommates

As told by Chrissy Birkholz,
Devon Bennett and Jessica Walz

devon:

Every time someone told us we needed to buy helmets we would just say, “yeah, yeah– okay we will” and then we would blow it off.

chrissy:

As a junior here at Hawai'i Pacific University I was heading home on my moped in February of 2012 when I was hit head on by a truck.

Devon: Chrissy and I bought our mopeds the same day, same make, same color, same everything.

Jessica: If there are days that are discouraging for her then I allow her time to take a break. I told her I would rather her get herself healthy for the rest of her life than to push too quick just to dance for me now.

Chrissy: At the time, I was not wearing a helmet. When the EMT's arrived, I was unresponsive and had seizure activity. I was intubated on the scene and transported to Queens Medical Center where I stayed in the ICU for several days and was put into an induced coma.

Devon: When I got a call from the school that Chrissy was in ICU, I literally forgot how to breathe. It wasn't until I called her mom that I started sobbing. Having to talk to a parent about their child lying in a hospital bed when they are 4,000 miles away is something that I never want relive again.

Jessica: Teammates Kristin Januszewski, Bethany Au and Devon stayed in the hospital with Chrissy every day. The four of them to this day are the best of friends.

Devon: The doctors weren't even giving Chrissy that long to live. My roommates and I stayed in the ICU room with Chrissy all night. Praying, crying, talking about all the fun memories we had– anything to push away the thought of losing our best friend. I was constantly calling and texting Chrissy's mom with any news that the doctors would give me– but what can you tell a mother to soothe her through something so painful. The next morning, we were expecting Chrissy's parents to arrive, but unfortunately their flight was delayed. So again, they were agonizing over their daughter and receiving information through phone calls and texts. When this family was finally reunited, you could instantly see Chrissy healing.

Chrissy: I suffered a right frontal subdural hematoma with a midline shift– which means my brain literally moved 5mm to the left. I had lacerations on my liver, kidney and spleen, fractures in my nose and face, and many more that I can't even name off to you. I was released from the hospital on February 29th, 6 days after the accident. (continued)



jessica:

The girls wrote weekly journals, so I knew of her daily physical therapy, trips to the doctors, pilates/yoga classes and dance classes. I knew she would stop at nothing to get back to where she was.

Chrissy: I don't remember the accident at all or even the couple days leading up to the accident. I only have one memory from being in the hospital and I have little recollection of the next weeks. So really I'm missing about 2 to 3 weeks from my memory.

Devon: I will never forget how relieved I felt when they took Chrissy off the ventilators, or when she finally ate on her own, or when she shook her head to say yes, and finally when she talked to us. The best is when she took her first steps.

Jessica: She was unable to attend live auditions in April for our upcoming season. I took into consideration her performance and skills and she was placed back onto the team under the condition that she would be cleared to dance when she arrived back on island in August 2012. She was unable to dance with us during Nationals last year, but was cleared to fly and did attend the trip. Having her with us encouraged the team so much.

Chrissy: After 5 months of physical therapy, I was finally cleared to dance and I still can't turn without getting dizzy. I still have follow-up doctors appointments, meetings with lawyers, and I am constantly worrying if something with my body will go wrong.

Jessica: As her coach, I can tell you she just danced an amazing performance at our Halloween FunFest this past October. For her healing process I know that her perseverance is what helped her get back on stage.

Devon: Chrissy's recovery was long and hard. Her head and physical trauma were severe. She will always have reminders of these injuries. Of course, her head trauma would have been less if she was wearing a helmet.

We are not invincible. We were foolish to not wear helmets and assume all would be well.

Take this life lesson that we had to learn the hard way and take necessary precautions to protect yourself.

chrissy:

It's really a blessing to be back dancing again. Especially after some doctors said it probably wouldn't be possible. It's still a struggle daily but working through it has made me appreciate it more. You never know when something you truly love could be taken away from you which is why I appreciate and love dancing even more than I thought I ever could.

To learn more about Hawai'i Pacific University Dance
[visit them on FaceBook](#)



SO THINK YOU CAN YOU

by Travis St. Denny



In the spring of 2012 I auditioned for Season 9 of the hit TV show So You Think You Can Dance. I auditioned for it because I knew the process would be a learning opportunity unlike any other that I had experienced before. The interactions with choreographers and dancers could create so much growth. Also, I think that SYTYCD is a great catapult for getting dancers recognized faster considering how much publicity there is on you- it really boosts your status as a choreographer/ teacher.

I didn't over prepare for the auditions or change any routines. I just made sure I was confident with my solo. I had always done well with competitions and in my schooling I was always at the top of my classes and in high levels so I felt confident in my ability and what I had to offer the show. I had been preparing for things like this my entire life... if that makes sense. I don't think training wise I could have prepared for anything differently. I made it all the way to the Las Vegas show tapings, but in the end, it came down to personality and picking a character for the show. I was apparently not what they wanted. But if you want to undertake this incredible experience, here's what you need to know.

The most overwhelming part of the audition is the immense stress you feel both physical and mental. It's probably going to be unlike any audition process you've ever endured. I made the trip to New York with a couple dancers from my studio. We spent the night with friends and arrived at open auditions at 6:00 AM carrying a backpack of dance clothes and other necessities. Hundreds were already in line. Fortunately, unlike some years, we were eventually brought inside into a huge waiting area where we could watch the other auditions and see their unique styles and different qualities that they offered. Some people did things and moved in ways I had never seen before so that was really inspiring. But still you are completely in the dark about when your number will be called.



I didn't get called to my first audition until 6:00 PM and just like that, after 12 hours, I had to be ready to perform at a high level. At these open auditions you need to have a great solo and be prepared to perform it under mental stresses the likes you may never have felt. Performing a great solo is something most talented dancers can easily do on the spot but they look for so many other factors in your personality and confidence that you may not be able to bring out under the circumstances. I did make the first day's cut along with my travel companions. But there still was two more days of auditions to see who goes on and I even had to go through the New York choreography process before finally getting my "ticket" to Las Vegas.

(continued)

"I MADE IT ALL THE WAY

...TO LAS VEGAS"



Whatever stresses you feel in open auditions expect even more of it at the next level. You can get through open auditions doing what you do best as a dancer and soloist. But in Las Vegas you need to prepare your versatility– ballet, hip hop, all of it. However, you can not prepare for being shuttled in all different directions while trying to be ready to dance. They are making a TV show and expect you to be at different places for filming and you are dragged into all kinds of unfamiliar situations to find your personality for the camera and back story. I tried to give them what I thought they would like from my personality.

One thing you may want to strongly consider before auditioning is to know the show's previous personalities and compare them to your own. In a past season there was another contemporary blonde dancer named Travis who made it past Las Vegas. There were actually other blonde dancers named Travis with me in Las Vegas and we all were cut there. My friend Blake who eventually made it through and got some decent TV time was built more like a football player but moves like a dancer and he had a uniqueness they had not seen before. In the end they need compelling original content as well as stand-out dancing and I believe that helped Blake do well, along with his great talent, of course.

Having gone through the experience was invaluable but I do know it probably is not for me. I tried as best I could to avoid the camera they attempt to stick in your face when you get the news you've been cut. I've had enough success as a dancer to never lose confidence in my career but it still was a blow unlike any other. Why? Because I knew my "dance family" of colleagues and students were watching and I felt like I let them down. That's what hurt the most. But because they are like family their support ultimately is without disappointment. So if you think you can... there is the potential for positive growth in trying.



Travis (standing middle) in Las Vegas

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Dancing to Save the Farm

by Tom Mody



photos submitted by Dorothy Stephenson

“The school bus dropped off my beginner class for their very first practice at the new studio. As they got off the bus, their jaws dropped, their eyes got as big as quarters, and their fingers pointed forward..... "Look at that DEAD COW!"

Though it turns out this was not to be an everyday occurrence at the Monterey, Virginia, Sundance Studios, it certainly was in the realm of possibility at Dorothy Stephenson’s family farm – which are one in the same.

The land was passed down her family line for generations until her parents got married and built the farm. Little Dorothy, likely much a kin to her Wizard of Oz namesake, recalls helping her father gather cattle on horseback, working them up and shipping them out, watching and recording cattle prices, fixing fences, making hay, and learning all about what it takes to run a farm. It was the family’s sole income and center of their life. But also prominent in her life was “Clogging.”

(continued)



Dancing to Save the Farm (cont.)

This Appalachian-style folk dance with tap-like shoes that have a double toe and heel tap is used musically by striking the heel, the toe, or both against a floor or each other creating audible percussive rhythms, introduced Dorothy to dance at the age of five. The Little Switzerland Cloggers, the group she began her clogging career with, performed at local festivals for years. Then into her teens she began performing competitively. She eventually became an instructor for Little Switzerland beside her mentor, Lisa Johnson, and eventually took over the head position in 2003.

But rural Virginia is not the place where pursuing dance is a professional vocation – at least financially. By 2005, Dorothy had attended college, gotten married and was working at her hometown bank. Neither pursuing her dance full-time or her dream of turning her retired family farm back into the working farm it once was. To complicate the matter, her parents had divorced as a teenager and the land was split between the two of them. One day maybe she would inherit the land but in the mean time, life behind a desk was not fulfilling what she felt was a God-given talent that could enrich the lives of others. If it was crazy of her to leave her modest paying job and benefits, it was even crazier for her to open her dance studio in the barn on her dad's half of the farm.

The old barn had a floor and something that resembled walls and that was about it. No bathroom or indoor plumbing– and no heat. The wind could whip so hard it blew snow through the cracks in the walls. But she left that secure bank job to start that very dance studio in that very barn... to four students. But over time she added a few more brave young dancers and decided a downtown location was more suitable. Turns out, it was more of everything, and eventually the downtown studio was too small a space. She now had the reputation to have students follow her to the next move. But where?



The barn studio before renovations

She eventually wanted to make enough money to one day fulfill her farm dream on her family property. But in the midst of this need to move her dance studio, her future with the family land seemed in jeopardy. A disagreement between her parents ended up dividing Dorothy from her father. Now her father was selling his land – her land. She begged him not to but his mind was made up. Out of a sense of nostalgia and a desperate obligation to her mother, her sister, and two nieces she blurted out, “I’ll buy it.” On her meager dance instructors salary that was quite impossible. But she realized she could finance part of it – the part with the old barn where she had shared shivers and a love of dance with those first few students. With the proper renovations, the barn was large enough to grow with her new “stable” of students.

Within six months the structure had life again and two dreams were being fulfilled by the once dilapidated cattle house. The studio is now thriving and paying for her ownership of the family land. Those students that were crazy enough to come to her first classes in the old barn – well, one, Ashley Arbogast, is now her assistant instructor and another, Graham Kershner, is now her dance partner involved with entertaining at local five-diamond resorts, The Homestead and The Greenbrier Resort. And, she still gets to have some cattle plodding around the property to remind her of the simpler days when farming was the way of life there. Of course, her cattlemen may have to keep the dead ones away from the studio front door.

Visit Dorothy's studio web site and learn more about clogging at
www.sundancestudio.org



Two Graduates Look Back and Lean Forward in Dance

Interview and photos submitted by Valerie Pullman



Mary Kate

How do you sum up 15-years in the life of a young dancer? There are countless classes, hundreds of rehearsals, many exciting performances and a few memorable chances to shine. We asked two of Connecticut Dance School's graduating senior dancers, Kelsey Warkentin and Mary Kate Connelly, to do just that.

When did you start dancing and why?

Mary Kate: I began ballet right after I had turned three years old. We had recently moved to Connecticut from New York and besides needing activities, I was a very "tom-boyish" child. I loved climbing fences and trees and playing in the dirt with my brother. My mom wanted to round me out and so she put me into ballet classes at Connecticut Dance School. Never did she think I would still be dancing 15 years later.

Kelsey: I started taking dance class when I was 3 years old. It was every 3-year old girl's dream to become a ballerina so that's why I started.

Why did you stick with it?

Mary Kate: I stuck with ballet because I loved it from the moment I watched the big girls dance. I remember standing in the door of the studio, watching all the older girls kick their legs up and do so many turns I couldn't count them. I knew I wanted to be just like them. In addition, I loved to be on stage and "dance like no one was watching." Being on stage and having all eyes on me has always been part of my dream. It was a perfect fit.

Kelsey: The difference between me and all the other 3-year olds was that my love for ballet was not a phase. Despite being involved in other activities, I stuck with ballet because it was what made me the happiest. It incorporated so many aspects that were vital to my life – discipline, expression and devotion. It taught me so much about myself, it's hard to put it into words. Being in the studio or on stage just felt right to me.

(continued)



What are some of your earliest memories?

Mary Kate: My earliest memories are in the studio when I began at the old Southport studio. I remember that small studio with the pianist and I remember every week we would run up the ramp into the building and I would be wearing a leotard with a nightgown over it, so that it looked like a tutu. I also remember, if we were lucky, that the door would be open to the larger studio and we could watch the big girls dance.

Kelsey: I remember one of my first teachers, Miss Pat, telling me to point my foot as hard as I could. The whole class was watching me and I remember feeling very nervous. I pointed my foot as much as possible and she came up to me and said “if you do just that every time you point your foot, you will become a beautiful dancer.” Fortunately, that vivid memory never left my mind.

What did you learn from Your teachers?

Mary Kate: I’ve had so many great teachers, I don’t think I could pick just one. Miss Moira and Mr. Woodard have taught me the most about ballet, which I’ve been doing the longest and which I love most. But, in addition to teaching me ballet, they also taught me some very valuable life lessons. For example, I was always a very energetic kid. I even had trouble concentrating in school. In ballet class, I learned to focus on just one thing at a time and it has helped me tremendously in school. And that’s just one example. As for my teachers, they taught me everything I need to know to take ballet class anywhere, whether it’s New York or the other side of the world. I’m prepared to take class wherever I go.

Kelsey: My favorite teachers were Miss Moira and Mr. Woodard. I would say that Mr. Woodard easily taught me most. His classes incorporated a variety of steps that I slowly, but surely, mastered. Miss Moira’s classes were a bit different. She taught me expression; how to look, act and perform as a dancer. I always felt with her classes and choreography that I could let go and not over think anything I was doing.

What one thing kept you coming back?

Mary Kate: What kept me coming back was constant challenge. Although it’s a small school, I’ve always been challenged to do better by my teachers and myself. In general, ballet does that for you. In the ballet, perfection is the goal. If you’ve seen the new show, *Breaking Pointe*, all of the dancers constantly strive for perfection. You really have to be single-minded to get anywhere. I want to be perfect. Even if I say I don’t, every time I get into the studio, I want to be perfect. There’s just something about ballet that keeps me coming back.

Kelsey: What keeps me coming back is that I never forget why I’m dancing. There were days when I got a bad grade at school or got in a fight with my parents and I walked into the studio feeling miserable. But ballet does this unique thing for me, where I can forget about everything else going on in my life. On those days, I walk out of the studio feeling good. Ballet is what makes me happy.

(continued)



Name a few of your most memorable experiences?

Mary Kate: I have very funny memories of carpooling with Kelsey. One time we forgot Kelsey at the studio. We were preoccupied. We still have not lived that one down. This year we shared the experience of dancing the role of the Sugar Plum Fairy. Aside from talking up a storm of who would get which part, we've maintained this relationship where we could tell each other anything. We even could correct one other in class and rehearsal. Not many people have someone they can do that with and stay friends. I will always cherish that relationship. When we both got Sugar Plum, we ran outside because we couldn't contain our excitement. And it was a secret for a short time, which made it even more exciting. We celebrated by getting ice cream and, when we came home, we were still shaking from excitement. And, of course, there's coming off the stage and hearing the audience and your friends in the wings react to your performance, those times have been more precious than any others. Those moments on stage, you're in the moment and they last forever.



Kelsey: For me, dancing a solo in Miss Moira's piece "Bizet"— I cried afterwards. I was so in the moment on stage that when I got off, I was overwhelmed with emotion and what I'd accomplished. Also when I found out I was cast as the Sugar Plum Fairy in the Nutcracker. That role had been a goal of mine ever since I arrived at Connecticut Dance School. To know that my hard work finally paid off and dancing the role was truly a dream come true.

How important was performing in your training?

Mary Kate: You can be the most incredible student in the world. You can have the perfect body type, the highest extensions, do the most turns and the highest jumps. But if you can't perform on-stage, you're essentially worthless. You have to know how to shine. You have to be able to draw the audience to you, all the way to the back row. Being able to perform gives you opportunities to practice these important aspects of ballet. In the real world, if you can't perform on stage, you won't get hired. The audience is paying to be entertained. If you're just doing the steps, who would pay for that? Performance is my favorite part. Performance is the dancer's job.



Kelsey: To be honest, I probably would not have pursued ballet if performing wasn't a part of the training. Performing is when I feel at peace with myself. It's the one moment when you show everyone, and most importantly yourself, that all the hard work was worthwhile. People come up to me after performances and say, with surprise, that I'm always filled with joy on stage. I smile and look at those people and simply say, "Well it's because I was."

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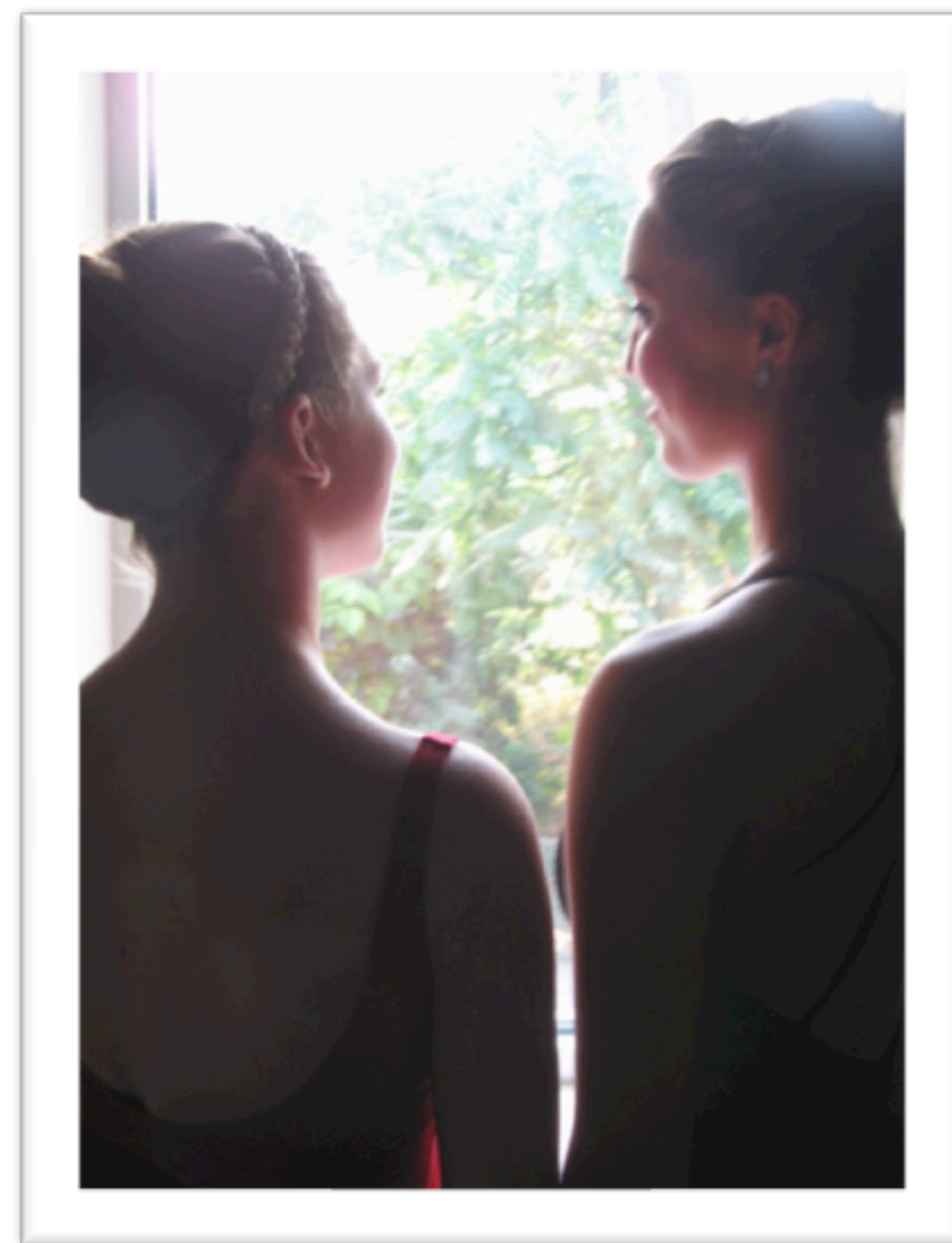
How did your time at Connecticut Dance School impact your life?

Mary Kate: I've made lifelong friends here and I have my greatest memories here. I've studied with teachers who have been mentors to me. Quite simply, I've had it all. Most importantly, I've learned that, whatever I'm doing, if I'm not as happy as I've been dancing at Connecticut Dance School, then I'm wasting my time. I've learned that happiness only comes from hard work and, by doing the hard work, I've found real happiness. I will not only bring my dancing with me, I'll bring life skills that many people walking down the street just haven't learned. Thanks to my years at Connecticut Dance School, I have discipline, strength, happiness, family, and passion. What more could one person want to start a great life.

Kelsey: Connecticut Dance School has impacted my life in many ways. Next year, I'll be attending Connecticut College and working with the famous dance director named David Dorfman. I wouldn't have gotten this opportunity, were it not for CDS showing me how much dancing means to me. I don't believe I would be the person I am today without dance in my life. Dance will be part of me forever.

So there you have it, a look back at the lives in dance of two Connecticut Dance School graduating seniors. We will miss them. They added luster to the school, on-stage and off. We wish them all the joy that a life in dance can bring and look forward to hearing great things about what's next in the lives of these two delicious Sugarplums.

To learn more about Connecticut Dance School
go to: www.ctdanceschool.com





photos submitted by Andrea Hamilton

AIM instructors Samantha Sonoda, Karli Lindeman, Andrea Hamilton, A.J. Johnson



KEY OF

Illumination

by Tom Mody

The key turns– the doors are open– you walk inside. Maybe the chill of winter is still in your bones but you get a warm sensation from seeing your friends and the comforting hello from your favorite instructor. You may not quite feel like stretching or even going to ballet class though it sure beats doing homework. But once the music starts and the energy in the room is in synch and your instructor pushes you to another level, there is no place else you'd rather be. Your dance studio is your second home and your instructors are like family. Still, some days it's just a building– maybe an old brick schoolhouse or in the case of Art In Motion School of Dance, it's a storefront in a local shopping center in Fairfield Township, Ohio. A storefront as common to every small business that simply requires turning a key and flipping on lights to be in business. But to studio owner, Andrea Hamilton, everyday she turns that key it's a reminder of the seemingly impossible journey she took for the love of dance.

When you are raising a new baby at the young age of 21, your boyfriend is away at school and your job as a dance instructor has been terminated, it would seem impossible that dance would ever be a priority in your life again. In fact, any future in dance may have seemed as far away as the days of a young Andrea, with parents in tow, jumping from dance class to dance class to find the best place of growth for her art. The impressionable young dancer investing herself in dance every night and being mentored by the studio owner to learn the business. Now she was just a few years out of college– one that had accepted her for her skills as a dancer, which unfortunately, she was unable to afford after the first year because financial aid dried up.

In college she was living the dream, dancing every day, performing all the time, and learning from the best choreographers around. She even got her first tastes of being an instructor, now merely a job she would continued to do along with being a server to pay the bills. All so she could just carry on with her love of dance.

(continued)

Visit Andrea's studio web site: www.aim-schoolofdance.com



Key of Illumination (cont.)

Then one day she received a sudden horrible phone call. The studio owner was firing her two weeks before the recital— showing little confidence in the young instructor. Feeling she never wanted to dance again, she soon found herself pregnant, only 21 and jobless. Her boyfriend Ryan decided to go back to school while she continued to work in a restaurant. Ryan was putting in over 20 credit hours while she was working over 40 hours a week just to get by. But it was the blessing of her little girl that rekindled her thoughts of dance. Andrea wanted her little girl to dance and she wanted to be involved in teaching her. From a friend's referral she heard of a studio that was hiring and was again teaching dance— even at 9 months along.



The newly engaged couple with Madeline

Baby Madeline was soon born and though she was pursuing her love and passion of dance, it was not paying the bills. She recalls one time being so impoverished that she even looked up a number for a food bank just to help with groceries that month. Burdened with the embarrassment and shame of not personally providing for her family, she chose to call her mother for the grocery money. She was working, Ryan was in school, and they were using every available government assistance just to try and live a normal life— though it wasn't. Even when opportunity seemingly knocked, there was the unexpected obstacles that test one's character. Andrea was told that the studio owner wanted to sell her the business— a seemingly high endorsement of her talent and passion. Of course, she had no way of being able to afford something like that.

Her parents insisted they would take out the loan to get her started. However, during the process this opportunity began to feel like a slap in the face. She was receiving news from different parents that the studio owner was telling everyone they should leave and go to another studio with them and bad mouthing Andrea in every way possible. Confused and hurt she chose to back out of purchasing the studio.

But the key is going to turn, the doors will open, and lights will go on somewhere for somebody, or in Andrea's case, it could have been somebody else. She still had the money, the support and the experience to do this. But did she have the character to overcome yet another reality check? Did being in dance always mean you had to surround yourself with drama and politics? Maybe that was the key ingredient, she realized, that could set her apart from those that doubted and dissed her. When a prime location soon became available in the summer of 2011, she turned that key for the very first time. The area was vibrant, growing, safe and perfect for exposure— features no other local studio could boast. Andrea personally painted everything, laid the flooring down, hung mirrors, website design— all of it.

Starting with 8 competition dancers who had followed her and adding some high school friend's children, she soon had enough income to cover expenses. Within six months she was teaching near 60 students. She was also preparing to continue her life with Ryan, now graduated and employed, and their daughter. The first year was full of promoting, staffing, competitions, first recital and taking advantage of all the festivals and festivities her community offered to showcase her dancers.

A year later, nearly 100 students weekly will walk through the studio doors and take for granted the respite from their "other life". They will pirouette on floors, watch their growth in mirrors and echo laughs off from walls that were paid for by a parent's faith and placed there by hands that once didn't have enough money in them to feed her baby. In fact, when the keys turn and lights illuminate in dance studios far and wide, the struggles that built them will still be hidden from the next generation that must make their way through those very same trials for the love of dance.



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COVER SECTION

All Photos by Dan Padavona

DUOS

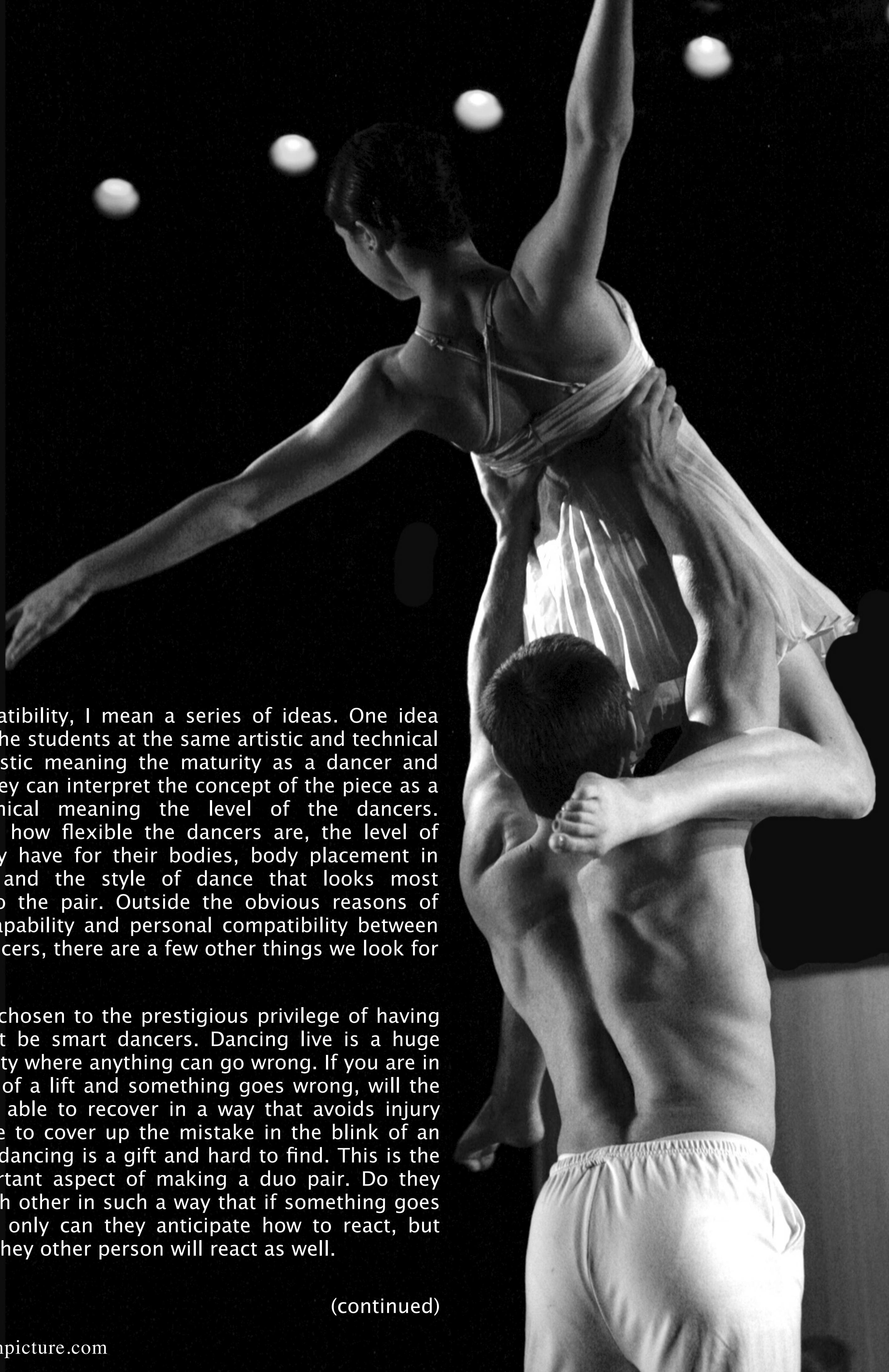
Finding the
Right Mix



by Christina Jensen

Throughout my dance career, I have had dozens of duo partners. Whether the style of dance was ballet, modern, or even tap, a good partner can be few and far between. As a student, I did not have the luxury of always choosing who I wanted to dance with, and sometimes that can make for a difficult experience. There were also many times in my career when I wondered why I was "stuck" with such a difficult partner. There are a lot of factors and responsibility that come into play with having or choosing a duo partner. The method a teacher or choreographer takes in deciding which students would work well together can depend on a series of factors. As a teacher, the first factor I look for in my students is compatibility.

(continued)



In compatibility, I mean a series of ideas. One idea being, are the students at the same artistic and technical ability? Artistic meaning the maturity as a dancer and how well they can interpret the concept of the piece as a pair. Technical meaning the level of the dancers. Specifically, how flexible the dancers are, the level of control they have for their bodies, body placement in movement and the style of dance that looks most flattering to the pair. Outside the obvious reasons of technical capability and personal compatibility between the two dancers, there are a few other things we look for specifically.

Dancers chosen to the prestigious privilege of having a duo must be smart dancers. Dancing live is a huge responsibility where anything can go wrong. If you are in the middle of a lift and something goes wrong, will the dancers be able to recover in a way that avoids injury and be able to cover up the mistake in the blink of an eye. Smart dancing is a gift and hard to find. This is the most important aspect of making a duo pair. Do they trust in each other in such a way that if something goes wrong, not only can they anticipate how to react, but know how they other person will react as well.

(continued)

This trust can be a very hard and sensitive subject to handle for a teacher. Finding the perfect duo combination can be a huge gamble. It can take years before the perfect combination is found. Along with trust, compatibility and skill level, dedication to the work can also play a huge role. Will the dancers dedicate the time needed outside of rehearsals to make the duo its absolute best? A teacher can only hope that when they find that the dancers are ready for this privilege, that they either step up to the plate or do the work they need to make it work.

Each teacher has their own method on what makes a sensible duo combination, and sometimes it can simply be that there is not a successful partner that the teacher feels will be right for the student. In this case, that is when the parents really need to trust their teachers in their decisions. Dancing in a duo is a huge responsibility and privilege. Ultimately there are a dozen reasons why someone may or may not be a good pair for you.



DFM: Do you prefer a particular gender combination?

Travis: I don't prefer a specific gender combination because I find whether it be girl/boy or same sex combos that the chemistry always differs based on the individuals personality and dance abilities.

Mikey: Putting students together can take many forms, boy/girl duos are a completely different mind-set then a same sex duo.

DFM: As the instructor/choreographer how much say do you have in approving a duo combination?

Mikey: I have complete say. As I develop an idea I need to mold that concept to the students I have in front of me

Travis: It isn't a matter of approving a combination or pairing, it is more like they appear in front of your eyes. Randomly and sometimes in the most fascinating ways a pair will just start dancing really well together or develop similar characteristics and that is when the pairing is formed.

DFM: Do you have many conflicts with parents or students over style, music, costumes, etc?

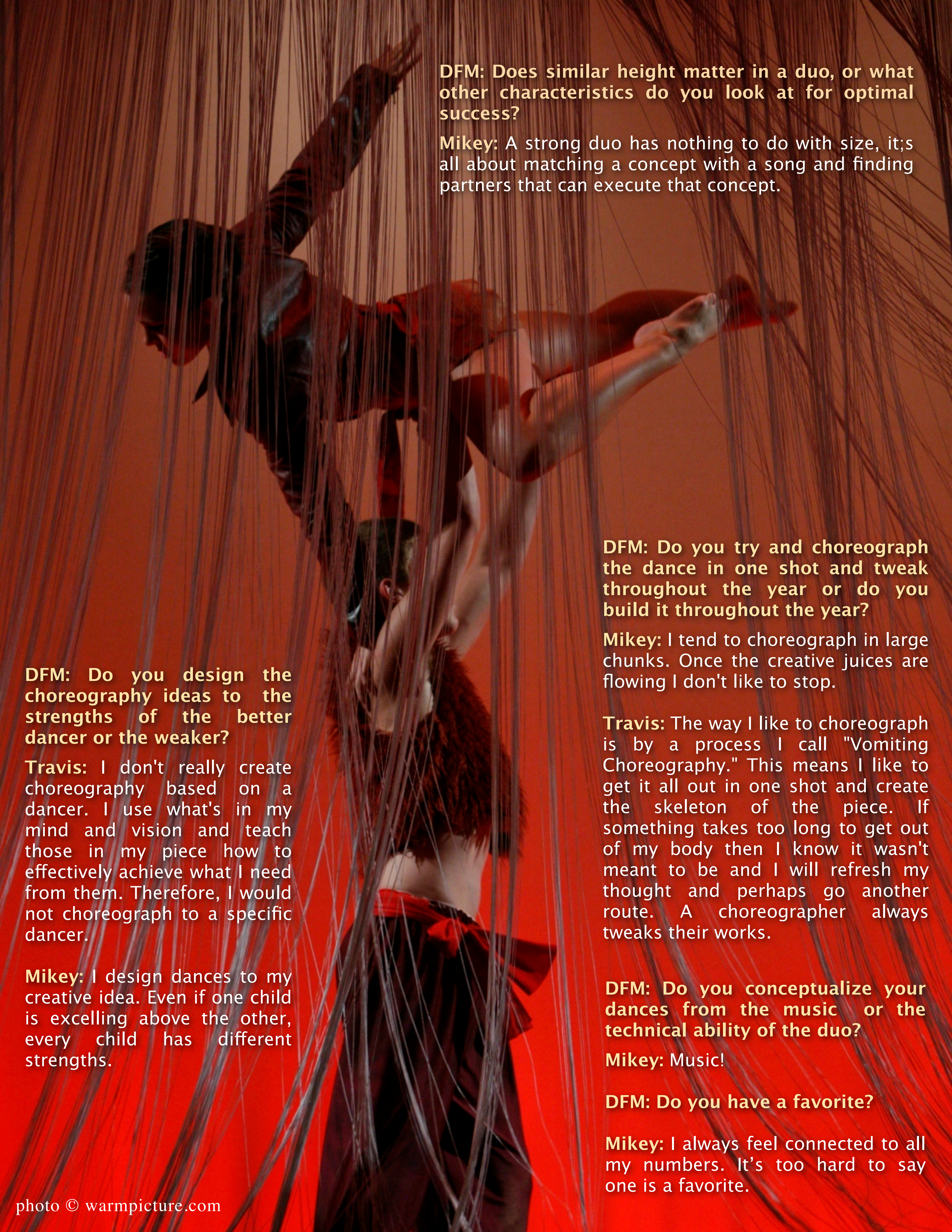
Mikey: No. Parents are not part of the creative process. I will always accept music ideas, but I usually place them in my music archive saved for a rainy day.

Travis: There's never a lasting conflict with the parents because ultimately I know what is best for the student and will have the final say.

DFM: Do you approach differently a first time duo?

Mikey: No. If I choose to place kids together then I pretty much know what I can expect from them.

Travis: I don't really approach a first time pairing differently because if you allow them to feel amateur then they will dance and learn that way as well.



DFM: Does similar height matter in a duo, or what other characteristics do you look at for optimal success?

Mikey: A strong duo has nothing to do with size, it's all about matching a concept with a song and finding partners that can execute that concept.

DFM: Do you design the choreography ideas to the strengths of the better dancer or the weaker?

Travis: I don't really create choreography based on a dancer. I use what's in my mind and vision and teach those in my piece how to effectively achieve what I need from them. Therefore, I would not choreograph to a specific dancer.

Mikey: I design dances to my creative idea. Even if one child is excelling above the other, every child has different strengths.

DFM: Do you try and choreograph the dance in one shot and tweak throughout the year or do you build it throughout the year?

Mikey: I tend to choreograph in large chunks. Once the creative juices are flowing I don't like to stop.

Travis: The way I like to choreograph is by a process I call "Vomiting Choreography." This means I like to get it all out in one shot and create the skeleton of the piece. If something takes too long to get out of my body then I know it wasn't meant to be and I will refresh my thought and perhaps go another route. A choreographer always tweaks their works.

DFM: Do you conceptualize your dances from the music or the technical ability of the duo?

Mikey: Music!

DFM: Do you have a favorite?

Mikey: I always feel connected to all my numbers. It's too hard to say one is a favorite.

To First Time Duos

In Words & Pictures

Innocence

By Christina Jensen

The best way of finding out if your child is ready for a duo is by consulting with their main teacher. The teacher who works with your child the most will have a sense if your child is ready for this kind of responsibility. There are many factors a teacher will look at- technicality and maturity just to name a few. Not to mention if there is another student who will look and work well with your child.

Duos really can be started at any age. Obviously you may not opt for a duo at age two when a child starts dancing, but if the teacher feels it is appropriate then they may go ahead and encourage it within a few years of training. There are various levels of duos just as there are various levels of technique.



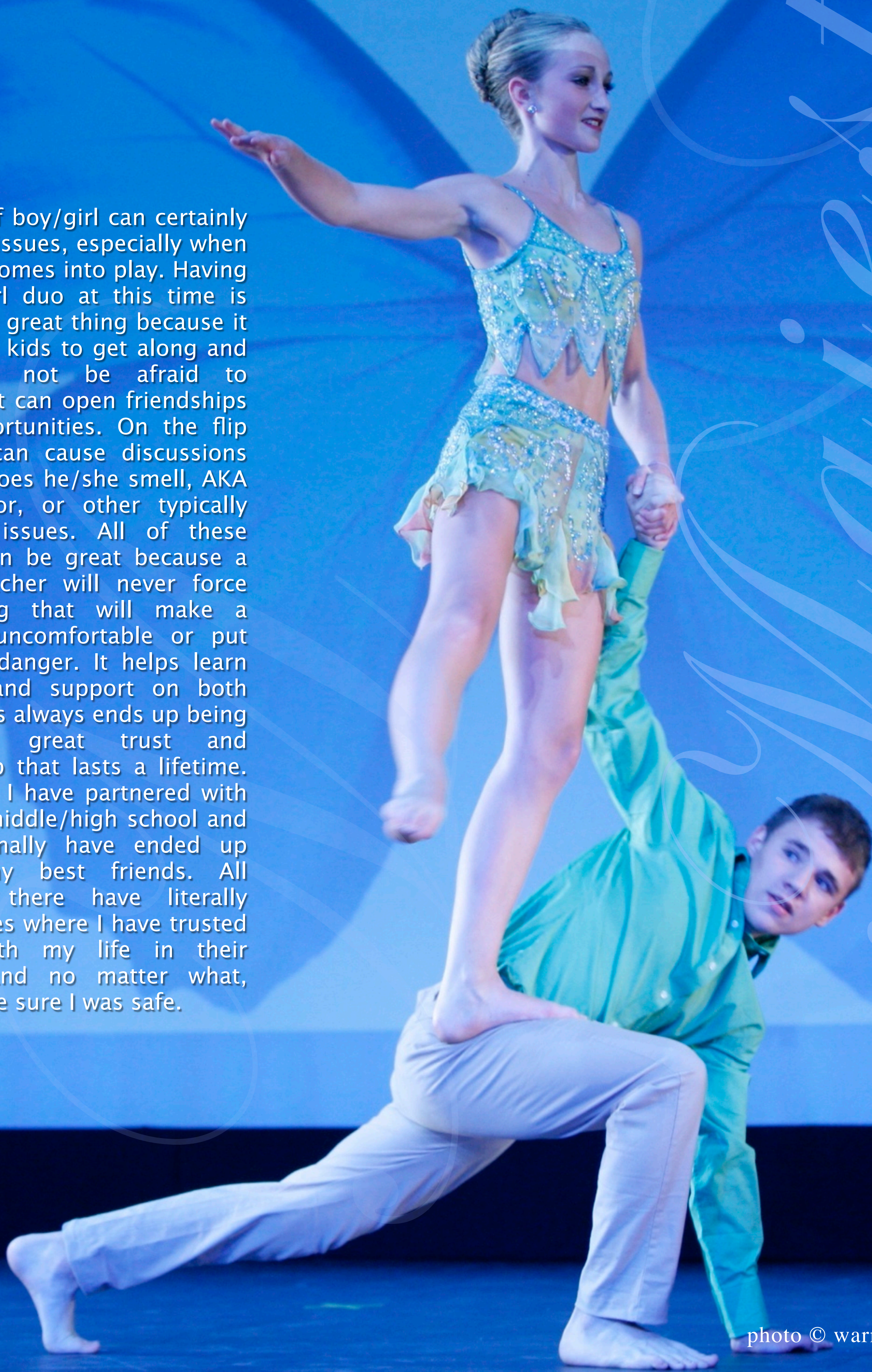
The level at which a child is ready does depend on what kind of duo the child wants to do. For instance, you will not be ready to do a ballet duo if you have never taken a ballet class. You will not be ready for a “partnering” duo if you are not in the partnering classes. Many teachers will make exceptions, but based on ability, maturity, and availability and compatibility of partners, your child may never have the appropriate opportunity. Many times, as in when I was growing up, the studio has boys so they sometimes would have to partner with more than one girl in class settings. When it really comes down to it, there is usually one partner in which the chemistry, and all the elements fit correctly. These two dancers will always be partners, like I did when I was growing up. But it all really depends on many factors. Enroll your child in as many technique and style classes as you can, and this will broaden all of their dance opportunities.

Confidence

If one parent is unhappy with certain aspects of the duo, I think that parent should have open conversations with their teacher. Please always ask the secretary or front desk about what the best way to contact the teacher would be. Do not automatically assume a teacher will sneak out of class for a meeting, you may have to clear some office hours with the teacher to do so. Always approach the situation with the fact that you have chosen the studio for a reason, because you really do trust their expertise. Understand that you should never interrupt class— unless it’s an emergency,



Pairs of boy/girl can certainly have it's issues, especially when puberty comes into play. Having a boy/girl duo at this time is actually a great thing because it helps the kids to get along and learn to not be afraid to partner. It can open friendships and opportunities. On the flip side, it can cause discussions on why does he/she smell, AKA body odor, or other typically boy/girl issues. All of these things can be great because a good teacher will never force something that will make a student uncomfortable or put them in danger. It helps learn respect and support on both ends. This always ends up being such a great trust and friendship that lasts a lifetime. The guys I have partnered with in both middle/high school and professionally have ended up being my best friends. All because there have literally been times where I have trusted them with my life in their hands, and no matter what, they made sure I was safe.



Friendship

There is no set way in who first arranges the partnership. We as teachers always try to make sure everyone is happy and safe, but there have been times where we have had to step in because best friends do not always make for good duo combinations. I have been in situations where I have had to pull parents and their kids aside because of public arguing at competitions that had nothing to do with dance. I would ask your teacher what they thought about a certain student combination, and trust that the teacher will make the best decision and accommodations for the students and the parents.

Conflicts can arise between partners. I have seen issues with partner decisions, to music selection, to whose fault is it that they did not win the dance competition. The best thing to do, is for the parents to keep to themselves and let their children and teachers sort out any issues together.



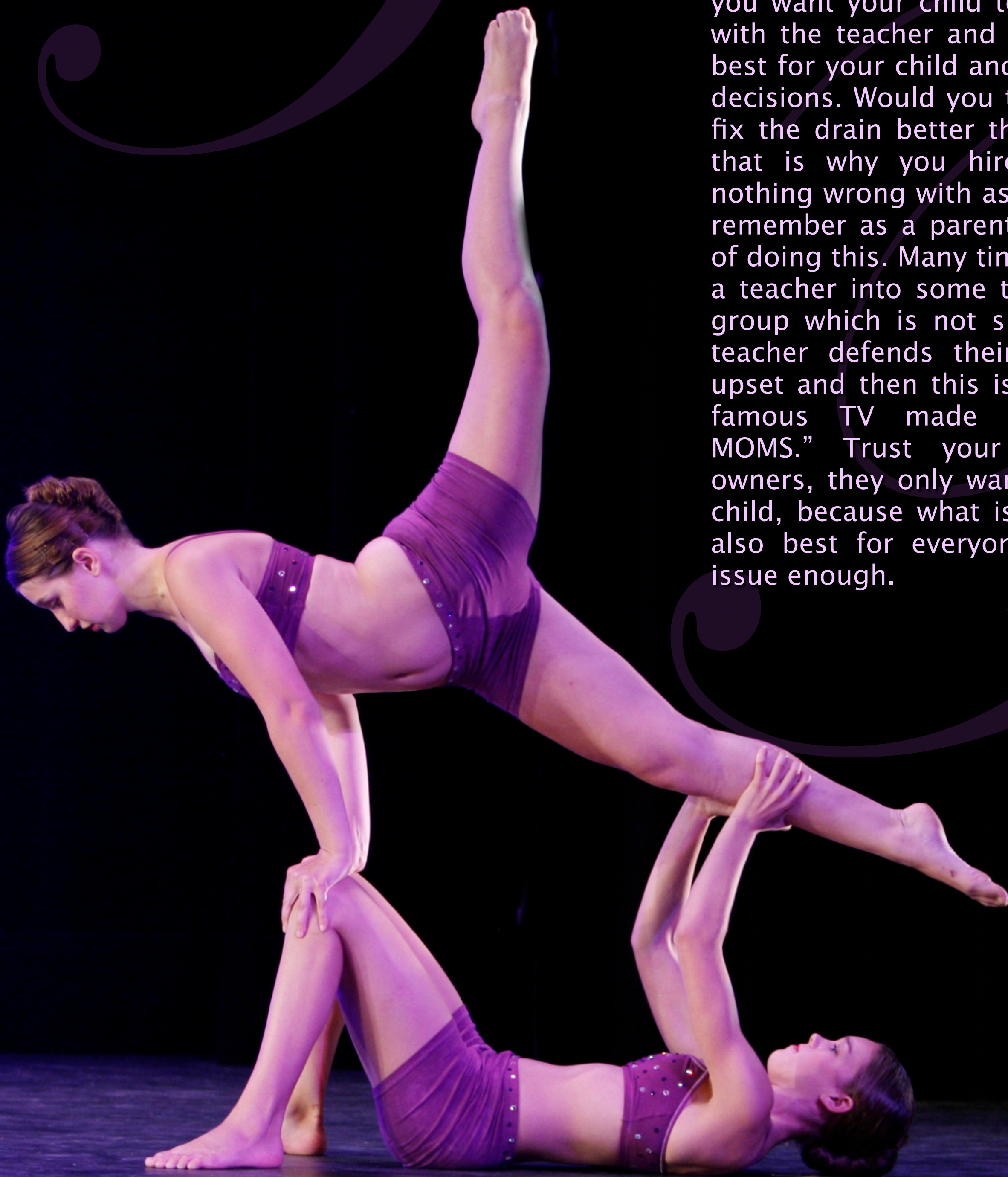
Personality



I'd like to think that first time duo parents are less likely to rock the boat than parents of more experienced dancers but it can really go either way. There is no written law that says this is how it is, although it would be nice.

Trust

Parents that want input on choreography and music must trust the teachers and studio owners– most do this for a living and have had successful careers in the dance business. If you want your child to excel, have a meeting with the teacher and find out what would be best for your child and trust in them and their decisions. Would you trust that a plumber can fix the drain better than you can? Of course, that is why you hire a plumber. There is nothing wrong with asking questions, but also remember as a parent there is a tasteful way of doing this. Many times parents will coheres a teacher into some type of choreography or group which is not suited for them. When a teacher defends their decision, parents get upset and then this is when you hear of that famous TV made drama called “DANCE MOMS.” Trust your teachers and studio owners, they only want what is best for your child, because what is BEST for your child, is also best for everyone! I cannot stress this issue enough.



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Christina Ilisije, dancer with Parsons Dance, unleashes her thoughts on dance and shares her touring experiences through her blog and Facebook page.

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Living-Dance



photo © Eduardo Patino

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 **Christina's Blog**

GROWING through injuries



by Christina Ilisije
writer submitted photos

The dancer mentality is truly a double-edged sword. Most of us are not ones to complain, and we accept minor wear and tear as part of the occupation. We time and time again sacrifice the health of our bodies in the name of the work and those in the wings with us. We act as if pieces of tape on our toes and torn muscles are enough to get through a performance, and the adrenaline rush of the stage conveniently helps us forget these pains. Where's the line between quietly managing through expected minor setbacks and taking personal authority over our bodies which may mean a (gasp!) much needed break?

Sometimes it is better to sit one out and be able to come back full throttle rather than turning a minor injury into something that unnecessarily grows to become a larger problem. In the moment it can seem like it is an absolute must to perform a piece full out, be it for a show, in front of a director, or for an audition. We always have a choice, no matter how high the stakes of the performance. Our bodies must come first, and at the end of the day, we know our bodies best. Everyone has a different threshold for pain, but we need to be smart about pushing ourselves and know when it is going too far. It's unfortunate but true— it sometimes takes a series of brutally depressing, disappointing, disturbing, heartbreaking, twisted, events to find the beauty in those things we take for granted in our daily grind.

In this past summer, I've had three of my dearest friends out of commission from dancing due to major injuries. This was the longest break they've had from dance ever in their lives. Not only are these dancers not able to move their bodies in the extreme ways our profession demands, but they are also unable to walk around and enjoy the mobility of "normal people," something we all forget is a luxury.

(continued)



CHRISTINA ILISIJE
TOURS WITH
PARSONS DANCE,
HAS A B.F.A. IN
DANCE AND
TEACHES MASTER
CLASSES ALONG
WITH DEVELOPING
TEACHING
CURRICULUM.

visit Christina's blog
www.living-dance.com

“Everyone has
different
thresholds

of
pain”



Evan Copeland - 27, was on tour with Sean Curran in Karkol in the Kyrgyz Republic, dancing in the last piece of the final show of a month long tour; he did two little runs on stage followed by a precipitated that did not end as sweetly as inclined. Heard offstage, something snapped loudly. That was just his entrance. He proceeded to finish his duet and even attempted to go back on stage- but he couldn't stand. Evan broke his fifth metatarsal just below the joint, in a place where there is no blood flow, which means an agonizingly slow healing process.

What always impresses me about Evan is his complete level-headedness about his injury. He's not one to waste his energy being unnecessarily upset or stressed about a situation he simply cannot change. His initial concern was letting down his dance family. As much as we dance for the love of the art, we do it endlessly for those beside us - who we sweat with, go on these performative journeys with, who we partner and support.

This time off made him evaluate his life choices; does he want to focus on performing or teaching? How does he want to direct this next chapter in his life and career? He has come back with a broadened perspective. He is not just a Shen Wei dancer but is passionate about outreach and moving in an endless number of ways. And now, talking with Evan is as contagious as ever. He's amped up to start dancing again and dive head first into classes- not too shabby of a place to be. The injury was a blessing in disguise; he was forced to address what he wanted and head back to his passion with this new experience under his belt.

Elena D'amario - 21, a stunning Italian beauty, on and off stage, was dancing with a meniscus tear for 9 months. Yes, that means it was torn all throughout our Joyce season and full 6-week non-stop Italian tour. Her thoughts? It's more psychological work over physical. While not able to dance, something she has clearly done her whole life, the internal struggle comes to identity. "Who am I? Am I interesting still?" We tend to identify ourselves as dancers, and this gift elevates our self worth- "the reason others find me attractive and likable is because of my relationship with dance." Elena piggybacked this personal conundrum with filling her life with other activities she typically doesn't have time for and started taking pride in the things she loves to do beyond dance. There are innumerable facets of our personality that make us beautifully individual and we are so much more than what we do. She now has a new found perspective on how fortunate us dancers are to do what we love, which puts complaining on the petty minutiae of the daily grind completely out of the question.



photo by Javier Baca



photo by Jen DelCastillo

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Another (completely unwarranted) fear? “Everyone is going to be in rehearsal without me.” Being removed from the group and losing touch with the dynamics of the tight family unit and missing out on the progress of the fresh season was a concern. But she could never lose the beautiful connection we have as a group, and in terms of physical material developed, it is nothing she couldn’t pick up and learn in a heartbeat. Her healing process and how much every day she sees the growth of her muscles and diminished swelling serves as a constant inspiration and this new found perspective brings vigor to her dancing.

Sarah Braverman - 26, a talent onstage and stunner in person, tore her lateral meniscus, needed to get an ACL reconstruction with a hamstring autograft (yes, they snipped part of her hamstring and braided it to become her ACL. Amazing huh??), and have the frayed tissue covering her kneecap shaved down. A more severe injury than Elena’s resulting in a 9 to 12 month recovery. Sarah’s meniscus had also been torn throughout the season, but her ACL snapped on-site. For better or worse, Sarah was at an audition, asked to jump hurdles, when she full gusto, swan lake-style jeté and landed all her weight down on her front leg, fearful of allowing her back leg to drop and (god-forbid, in our dancer mindset!) knock over the hurdle. Her foot remained turned out as her knee decided to shoot forward instead. To top it off, the audition was actually something she repeatedly declined, since she was slightly uncomfortable with the demands, until she gradually succumbed to the request.

And some advice she now notices? Know your limits. You will get other jobs. We are trained to say yes. While dancing, we have an amazing capacity thanks to body knowledge to meander through movement artfully even when we land from jumps without perfect technique. Know your body and its imperfect technical tendencies, and work on correcting them. In physical therapy, there is no cheating from doing exercises properly; in dance we get to emote out of a jump that doesn’t go exactly as planned without anyone else noticing, and fooling even ourselves.



Sarah

photo by Evan Guston

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“Know Your Limits”

“You will get
other jobs”

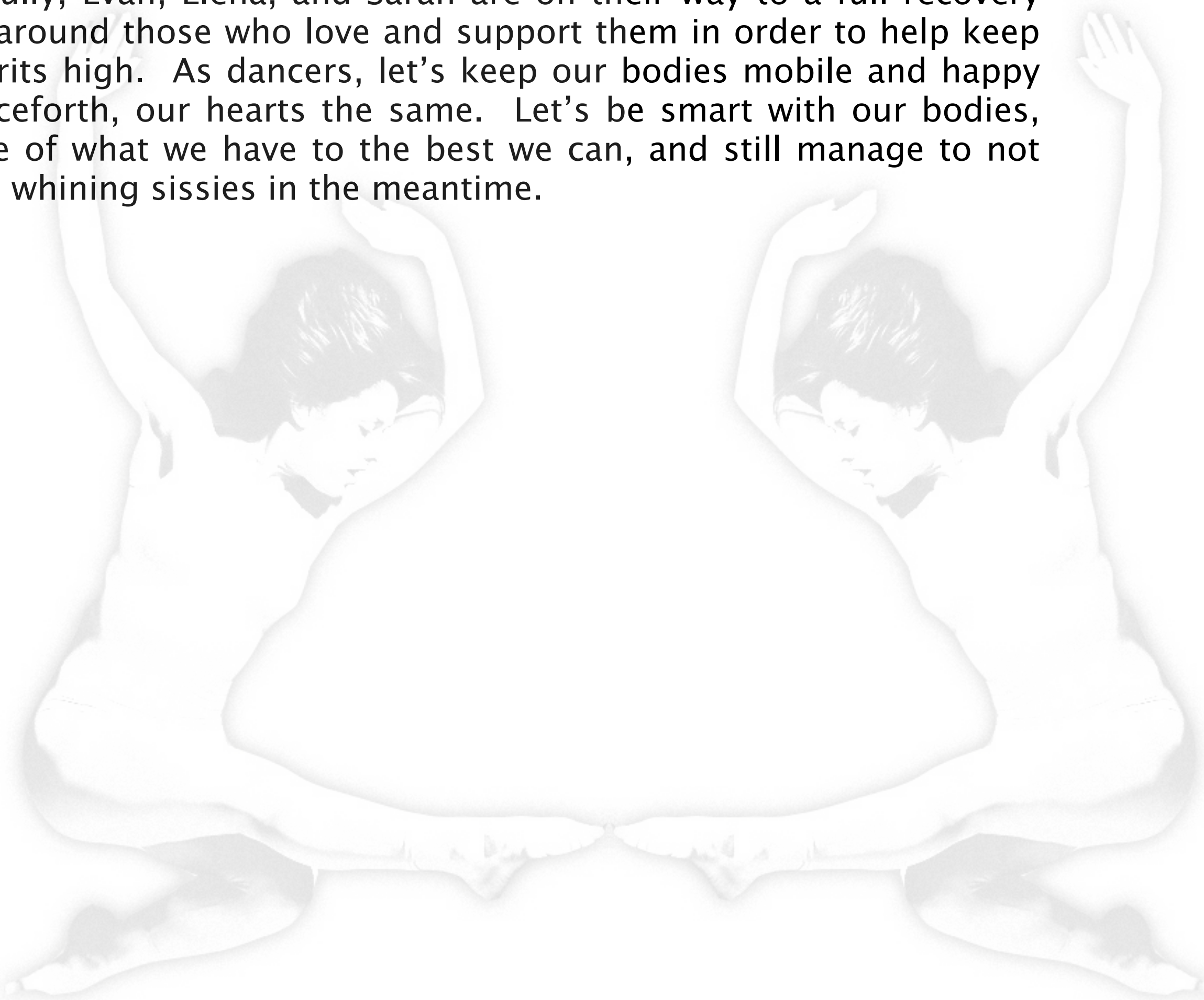


How can I take better care of my body? I am definitely guilty of turning a blind eye to minor injuries and muscular soreness. There are nights when I pass out, exhausted from my day – not icing, not bathing in epsom salts, not getting a massage, and grossly enough, sometimes not even cleaning out cuts on the bottom of my feet before my head collapses on my pillow. I am now reminded these small acts are our insurance plan for the long run. It just takes minutes to prevent injuries from further advancing. Writing this is serving as a vow to myself to take the time. Once the wake of these loved ones' injuries are long settled, it will be easy to slip into old ways and feel the need to take a few more moments in my bed rather than tending to the needs of my instrument. Dancing isn't forever. Nothing is. My ability to dance at this level of intensity is finite. It is an extreme blessing to be capable of moving my body, especially in the high demands dance insists upon. Every day I wake up, I receive the opportunity to dance and reap the joy it brings. This is not a guarantee. But life has its roadblocks and time away from dancing doesn't have to be disastrous; it just means more time devoted to other things you love and enjoy but never seem to have the time to accomplish.

Gratefully, Evan, Elena, and Sarah are on their way to a full recovery and are around those who love and support them in order to help keep their spirits high. As dancers, let's keep our bodies mobile and happy and henceforth, our hearts the same. Let's be smart with our bodies, take care of what we have to the best we can, and still manage to not turn into whining sissies in the meantime.

“Dancing isn't
Forever”

“Nothing is”



BOYS IN A TIGHT SITUATION



by Mikey Perkins

photos © warmpicture.com

Every year come the beginning of August, with the start of school just around the corner, the streets of my hometown become packed with young boys walking to football practice. The site is always the same, whether on a bike or walking in a pack- these boys have their shoulder pads in hand, pants laced up and often times, helmets on. This is their proud moment, walking down the main street in football gear parading their inevitable coolness. They will be the boys that the town will root for on Friday nights. They will be the hope that could lead our small town to a State Championship.

Also around this same time, our studio's boys will be preparing for the upcoming year when they get their new schedules for dance. Almost like clockwork the fear strikes as they read the dress code requirements for ballet that will include black tights. Such embarrassment should anyone find out they wore tights. What would the other girls in the class say... would they laugh? Inevitably the calls come in from the parents...

“Can he wear shorts over the tights?”

“What if we got tight sweatpants?”

(continued)



Boys in a Tight Situation (cont.)

How do boys proudly walk the streets in broad daylight in padded tights and other boys won't even leave the bathroom. I see boys shamed out of the dressing room by covering up as much as possible to hide their attire. When we compare the same age boys in basically the same article of clothing (minus the pads), it almost becomes silly how culturally, we at times, are hypocritical in our selection of stereotypes.

In general, boys in dance tights are demasculinized—made to feel a bit feminine. Yet in football it is a part of a time honored tradition, part of the mystic. A uniform is the unifying entity that brings all the boys together as a team. And as embarrassed as boys feel in dance tights, nothing seems to be worse than a unitard.



Putting a boy in unitard is comparable to public stoning. But go to any gymnasium for a wrestling tournament and not only are boys competing in singlets (which is a shiny unitard), but they parade around as if it were their rite of passage. I feel we as a support system must point out to our young dancers that tights are part of their uniform. Much in the same way a serious cyclist would wear spandex to ride, or runners would wear tights to improve their movement. We need to embrace the idea that tights are normal. Most boys, in fact, end up wearing them whether at football, dance class, or wrestling. You can change the name—tights, singlet, pads, compression shorts, or any other name... but they are basically the same thing.



MIKEY PERKINS IS CO-OWNER OF THE PERKINS SCHOOL OF THE ARTS, AN AWARD WINNING CHOREOGRAPHER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR PHOENIX PROJECT DANCE.

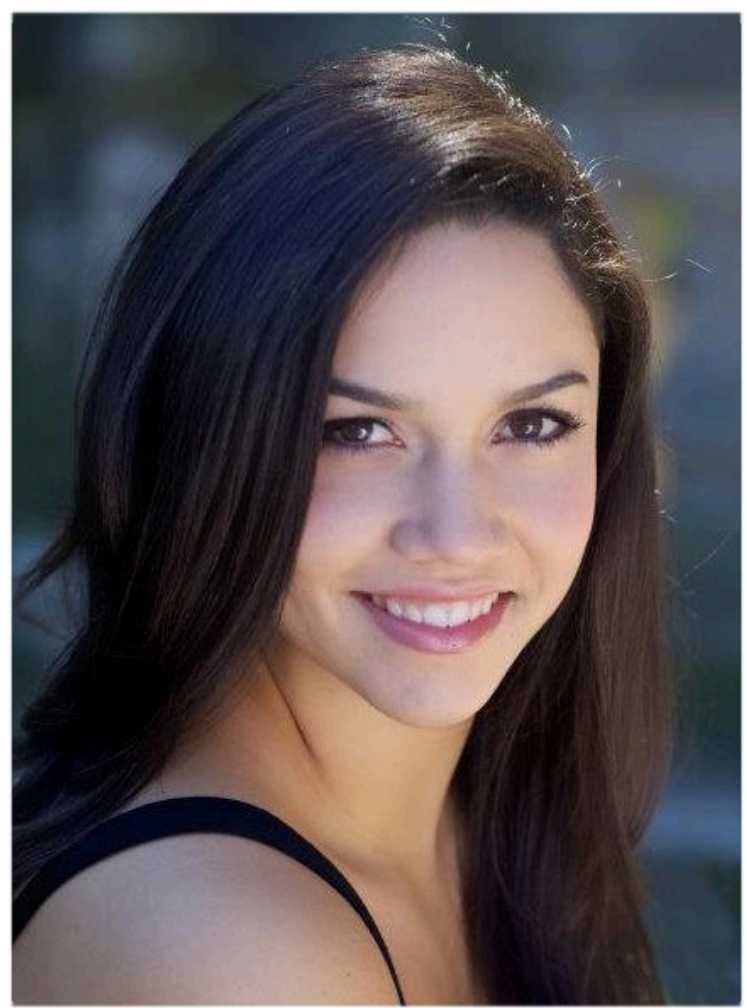
Informing the child and the parent of why tights are the required uniform of dance is key to changing the stigma. The non-obstructed leg aids the teachers in correcting positions, lines and techniques. Tights contour the legs and hip so a teacher can see a student's body for proper evaluation. Tights allow your teachers to view the specific muscles that you need to be working on to properly learn ballet technique. It is also designed to avoid limiting your movement in any way. Other clothing options can be constricting and once you are used to ballet tights, dancing in anything else will feel unnatural. I think boys should be proud that their body will train to move in ways that regular clothes won't allow.

So the next time a boy is terrified to put on a pair of tights for dance class they should feel masculine. They too are part of a tradition. They have a uniform that allows them to perform at the highest level in the activity they have chosen and love.



Katie's Journey

Part 1



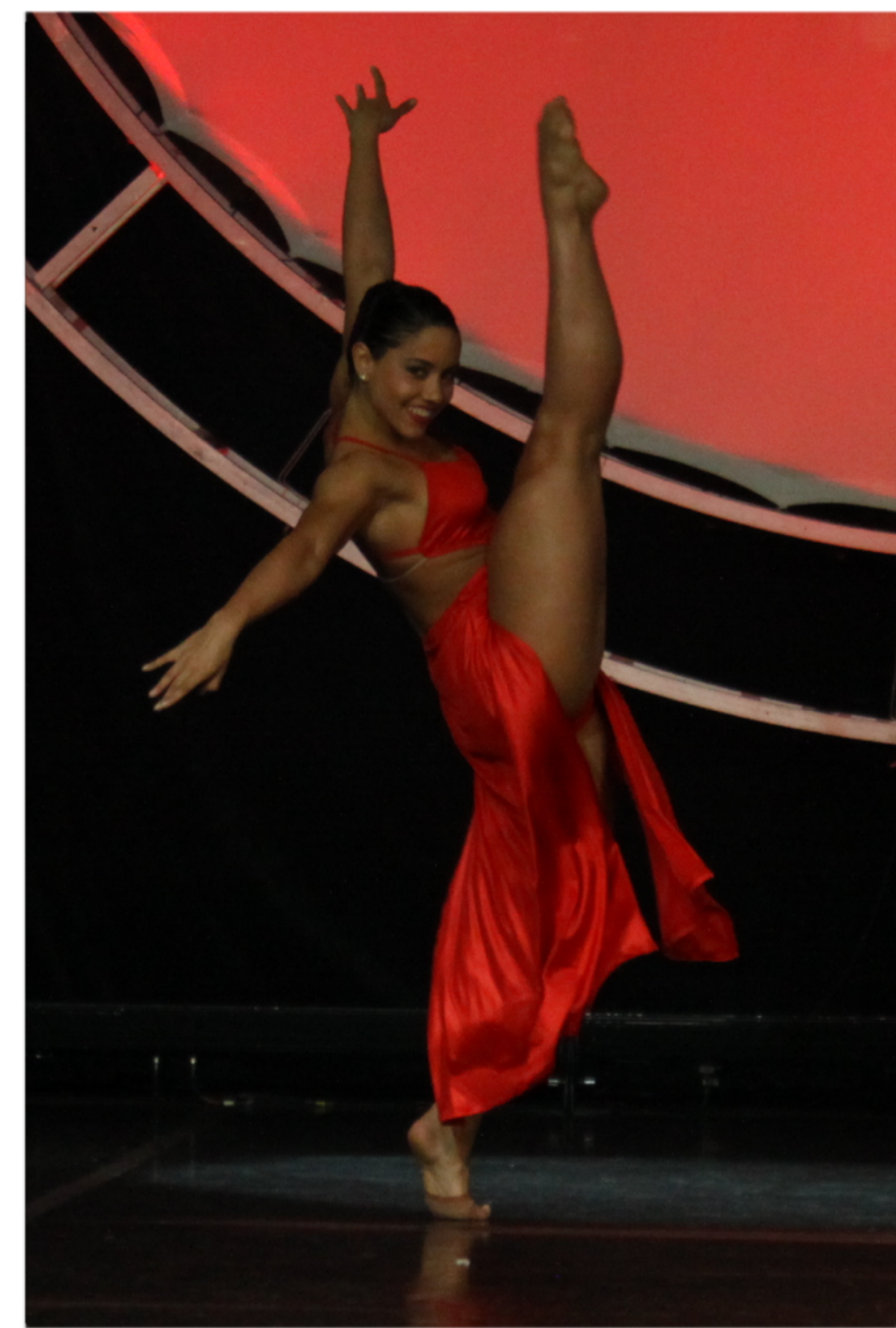
“Never have I seen my dad cry until last year, my first time leaving home.”

Katie Ann Martinez is a 17 year old dancer who has traveled the tough road of personal sacrifice and the even tougher road of inner discovery. But her journey has actually just begun on the toughest road of all... committing herself to be a professional dancer. Into her final year of schooling, she will eventually leave behind the dance family that has shaped her into a multiple award winner. The decisions she will make are those faced by countless aspiring young dancers each year and her continuing journal will follow both the practical process and the emotional influences that lay the road before her. In this first installment she writes about the life experiences that have shaped the girl.

Dancing has always been the number one priority in my life. Everything and anything that would give me the slight possibility of becoming better was done. My parents are, and have always been my number one supporters and have given me every tool in their tool belt in order to be where I am. Many teenagers can't say that they've gotten the chance to attend virtual school instead of high school, move to New York, and dance with a modern company all at the age of sixteen. There were many obstacles on this journey, but all were worth the struggle.

I've been dancing since the age of four and looking back at all the decisions my life is based on, I regret none because of where I've ended up. Growing up with the aspiration to be a professional dancer and the encouragement from my family, gave me the motivation to keep going. There were many times where I felt like giving up or quitting, just because of negativity or frustration, which is a big part of a dancer's life. A big impact that influenced this sort of behavior was when I switched dance studios. I was fourteen years old and leaving people who I called my second home definitely affected me. Mentally and emotionally I wasn't right and the pain and consequences that followed were extremely hard to go through, especially when you were friends with all the people who had grown to hate you. Getting through this made me apathetic towards people, which I wouldn't say was a good thing. Distancing myself from becoming too close to someone was the way I prevented anything like that from happening again; I was too scared to lose people so important to me so I didn't give anyone the chance.

(continued)



Katie in form competing at the highest level



Katie's Journey (cont.)

Things have definitely changed since then— for the better. After leaving my first dance studio, I attended my second. I stayed there for a year and thought I fit in and found something special until I rediscovered Perkins School of the Arts. At the age of sixteen I attended their summer camp. The name 'dance' was an understatement for what they did. They introduced me to not only things beyond what I ever imagined dance could teach me, but how to develop a relationship with people again. Once I attended their summer camp I couldn't get enough, so I came back for more and performed with their professional modern company, Phoenix Project Dance. I became a permanent apprentice and life couldn't get any better.

I'd have to say training to be a dancer is hard. Eating the right foods and exercising not only in your dance classes, but outside, because a dancer's body usually needs more exercise

than just our daily routine. The amount of sweat shed in every class could make up the amount of water in a swimming pool. To be a dancer, dedicating your entire day to this art is required; putting in hours of exercise and dance classes while eating healthy and keeping up with school work can be a little overwhelming. I know that even though I do school online, I have trouble keeping up with it. I also do get a little side tracked on eating healthy, since being away from my parents gives me freedom in that area. But, truth is, if I want to do this for a living, no one else matters. It's your dedication, determination, and drive that is going to move you forward in life. No one else can force you to be the best you can be, and if you're not going to then you might as well quit.

Life is all about seizing moments. Taking a risk is what dance is all about. Getting inspired by a song or picture is the same as getting inspired by movement. Dancers can communicate with their body in a way many people can't— that's what makes us artists. At home, Miami, Florida, I train every day at the gym. I eat small portions and about 3 to 4 meals a day. School is my daily routine and watching TV is usually out of the question, but I can negotiate. The life I expected to have was never this, but I've realized that in order to stay where I am, I have to get through this part of life too.

(continued)

Family time is obviously a must and the main thing I miss when I'm in New York. I do whatever I can to take advantage of those moments where I could spend more time with my dad or mom—even if it's cooking with them, watching a movie, or even sitting down on the couch and watching a game. Family is a significant part of my life and I owe a lot to them. You know you've found the right place when they're the ones who make you feel the most family oriented. My situation is a win win because I come home to my family and leave to one as well.

This experience was without a doubt the icing on the cake. Never had I thought this is where I'd be. Now I live most of my time in Norwich, New York dancing with professionals and living up to my aspirations. None of this would have been possible without my crazy, obsessive and over-protective parents. Going home for two weeks every two months is the most difficult thing I've had to do, but leaving them every two weeks within two months is even harder. Never have I seen my dad cry until last year, my first time leaving home. It's different when your child is eighteen on their way to college, and even then it's hard— but leaving home so young definitely stripped me of my youth. I've not only been learning to dance like an adult, but I've learned and still am to be independent and responsible like an adult— qualities I had to be familiar with before college, if not I wouldn't survive.



photo submitted by Katie Martinez

Katie at her “other” home in Norwich, New York

Katie's Journey (cont.)

Finding the right place for you all depends where you feel your best— being surrounded by people who accept you for who you are and push you to be better. I call my dance studio my second home because I spend most of my time dancing and socializing with my dance family. Feeling like you fit in and feeding off of everyone's energy is the key to growing as a dancer. It definitely makes a difference being in a room where every single person around you wants to be there— working with people who all have the same drive you do to make that unique addition to the dance. Having friends you dance with that only try to make you better rather than putting you down is a big part of finding the right place.

I tried to avoid relationships within my second dance studio because I didn't think it was important for me to make friends— I let my determination over power my passion for dance, which is ironic. I made that mistake by not allowing myself to fit in, but at the same time that mistake led me to where I was the next puzzle piece they needed. A lot of the mistakes you make in life that you regret are the ones that are going to change you and bring you to something new and exciting. They're the ones that you're going to laugh about and thank yourself for making. Everything happens for a reason, so don't waste your time on grief, because there's so much more ahead that one little decision will bring.

Within this journey, I've grown close to people that will be there for me throughout my entire life. The reason why I don't regret any of the impactful decisions I've made in my life, or dance career, is because it's brought me to these people. So why live in remorse over choices that have led me to home?

One person I have grown extremely close to and I can say is my second mom is Amber Perkins. She has changed me into the dancer, artist, and adult I've always hoped I'd be. I've never met anyone so determined, dedicated, and passionate about what they do. At the same time I've never known anyone as crazy and exciting as she is.

(continued)



Katie's Journey (cont.)



We have a lot of fun together and who knows where I'd be without her. She truly made my life and discovered whom I'm supposed to be. Fortunately, I get the privilege of being with her all the time, since she offered her home to me while I get ready for college. Things will definitely be different once I move on to that next step, but I'll always come back to the Perkins School of the Arts because they are truly part of my family.

Crying, muscle cramps, busted toes, a calculated average of 14,625 hours of rehearsals and classes- in short, hard work and preparation have brought me to this point in my life. The well-known line when a child realizes the need for a plan. Goals change over time. However, after 13 years of dancing, I feel confident in what I want and therefore look forward to achieving it. I've planned, well you can say dreamed of, attending a university for dance since I was twelve years old. I was hungry for the stage to a point that it consumed my vision for life.

College is something everyone waits for. Many see it as an escape to a world of opportunities, which is what it ultimately leads to. I plan to absorb every little opportunity I get once I cross that line. Opening my mind and body to new techniques and styles of dance is a goal. I'm eager to learn the things unknown. I'm ready to be taught the materials needed for life after college. I guess you can say that all my ambitions point to one thing, I strive to become a professional dancer who performs and travels with a company. A dancing career lasts a certain amount of time, this I know. So I also plan on inspiring those who are hungry for the journey once I'm unable to experience it.

I participated in a mission trip to Nicaragua that became one of the most impactful experiences of my life. Witnessing poverty to that extent changed my perspective on the way I live. My trip consisted of kids starving, dirty from not having a shower, attending such poor schools where they were bullied by peers every day. Seeing this gave me a drive and passion for helping those that many don't take the time to think about. I realized that I took everything in my life for granted and even though these kids were living in dirt, they found some way to smile. These kids long for some form of expression like dance. I want to teach those artists in the making the things that I was taught and the things I learned through my experiences and opportunities. I want to prepare them for the ones they will encounter so that someday they can do the same for the next generation of artists.

For someone who lived such a short life, I realized that I could set a plan for the next 50 years of my life, if God permits. The reality is, I don't know how long I have. What I do know is that I am here now. I am writing this for you because there is no life for me without dance. It has never been about only getting to where I want to go. This is the reason I moved 1400 miles away from my family in Florida at the age of 16. This is the reason I only see my parents once every two months. I'm in New York because my journey requires action. And what will those actions be? Stay tuned.





Just Trying To Help



The Backstage Mom who can't do anything right

by Christina Jensen

CHRISTINA JENSEN
A CHOREOGRAPHER
AND CURRICULUM
WRITER DANCES
PROFESSIONALLY
FOR THE
ROCKETTES AND
THE PHOENIX
PROJECT.

There have been so many times I have been backstage watching moms helping their children during a show, concert, or competition. Most of the time, the common scenario is a parent desperately trying to help their child, and the child just gets mad with the smothering parent. They don't like the way their hair is done, or their eyelashes have been glued on. So how do you handle this situation? Most commonly, the parent gets frustrated and just yells back at the child creating a scene with one or both in tears. The parent is just trying to help, yet the response is unappreciated. So what should a parent do? Be backstage to help their child, or allow them to handle the scene by themselves?

One thing a parent needs to understand is how much anxiety and pressure the dancers go through. Remembering numerous dances, not making a mistake on stage, nailing that triple pirouette. There are so many things running through a dancers head at the time of a performance that the last thing they should be thinking about is the atmosphere backstage. This can be a huge problem because whatever happens backstage can greatly affect what happens on stage. It's an incredibly hard thing for a parent to decide.

My mom and I used to have this problem when I was growing up so I asked her opinion. She gave a great point of view. She said that your children will always behave better with someone else than they will with you. By allowing them to handle getting ready, and going through the performance process alone, it creates great confidence, responsibility, and independence for the child. They are always better being in a situation where they can help each other as well. Have faith that you have raised good kids, and if they need anything, tell them to just ask.

Parents backstage can sometimes get in the way and create more nervousness for their child. Encouraging independence is one of the greatest gifts a parent can give, and children love having the freedom to become responsible and independent. One of the safest atmospheres you can do this is at dance. Give positive feed back and tell them how proud you are of them. In turn, you will create a beautiful and independent dancer who is a pleasure to work with and be around for their young and adult life.

(continued)

Mom says

“your children will always behave better with someone else than they will with you.”

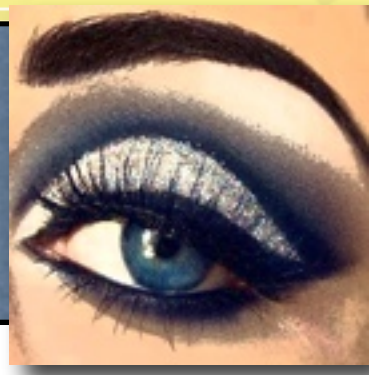


To help become the most prepared dancer/parent combination you can be, I have come up with a few points that will help make a dancer more prepared for the performance experience.

- 1 Make a list ahead of time of everything you could possibly need backstage. Starting with each costume, and every piece that is apart of that costume including head pieces, undergarments, and shoes.
- 2 Think about the order in which each piece will be performed, and set the costumes in the proper order before you get to the theater.
- 3 Pack extra everything. This includes hair spray and gel, bobby pins and elastics, safety pins, hair nets, eye lashes and glue, body glue, earrings, and things of that nature. Also include extra pairs of tights, a needle and thread, and some sort of make up wipes for quick make up transitions.
- 4 Make a list of the order in which the dances will be performed, along with all the pieces of the costume that way nothing is forgotten.
- 5 A few other things you might want to include would be emergency ice packs, Ibuprofen, band aids, and any other emergency medical items you may think you will need in a bind. Always have your OWN stuff, do not depend that someone else will have what you need.
- 6 Next, go over each transition with your child. That way there is a clear understanding of where everything is and what order the dances are in.
- 7 Finally, buy a rolling Fishing tackle box, and organize all the make up and products I listed above in the compartments. Not only is a tackle box bigger than a caboodle, it is more durable and provides more space.

Do not limit yourself with the items you come prepared with for a performance. It is always better being over prepared than not having something you need. There is nothing wrong with helping out your child backstage. Just understand that there is also nothing flattering or constructive about a "Dance Mom" either. Be organized, come prepared, and give your children the freedom in a safe environment to become the independent children you have raised them to be! Now sit back, and enjoy the performance!





Techniques to create

perfect

ballerina eyes.

by Colleen Dugan

A ballet dancer's makeup must accentuate and enhance the natural shape of her eyes. It is in her eyes and dance that the audience can feel the emotion of the story. As you're preparing for your upcoming performances I would like to share with you my best tips on how to use dance makeup to create beautiful ballerina eyes.

Ballerinas are known for being beautiful, and there is something especially stunning in the way dance makeup is used. Eye makeup for ballet dancers can be intimidating at first, but by following a few simple steps you will be applying stage makeup like a professional makeup artist in no time at all! In order to create the perfect ballet eye look you must first understand the basics of eye contouring. Contouring uses dark eye shadows to create dimension as well as natural tones to brighten your eye.

PRIME

Eye shadow primer is a stage performer's best friend. To ensure your eye shadows don't crease, fade or lose color, apply a waterproof eye primer to your eyelid. Use an eye primer close to your skin tone or slightly lighter to achieve highlights. Apply the primer to your eye lid starting at your lash line and blend it with your finger all the way up to your brow.

STEP 1

Using an eye shadow brush, apply a lighter skin toned color eye shadow to your eyelid starting at your lash line all the way up to your brow.

STEP 2

The next step is to apply a slightly darker neutral tone to just your eyelid. Using a light colored pink or natural shimmer eye shadow will add luster and brightness.

STEP 3

The last step is to cut your crease with a coffee colored eyes shadow. You can contour the darker color in the corner of your eye in a "c" or "v" shape to add more drama. Be sure to blend the darker color to remove any sharp edges.

Follow these important dos and don'ts to help you create beautiful, expressive ballet eyes. These important tips will help you whenever you're doing makeup for dance.

The Dos:

- 1) **DO** use warm, neutral, earth-toned eye shadows such as brown or taupe. These colors look great under all stage lighting colors and will accentuate your eyes.
- 2) **DO** apply your dance makeup heavily enough so that it can be seen up to the first 8-12 rows.
- 3) **DO** use false lashes to enhance the shape of your eyes.
- 4) **DO** add a red lipstick for a glamorous elegant look.
- 5) **DO** practice your makeup application well in advance in case you need to make changes.

The Don'ts:

- 1) **DON'T** use black liquid eyeliner under the eyes! Instead use you darker shade eye shadow with an angled makeup brush or, if you must, use an brown eye pencil.
- 2) **DON'T** forget to blend, blend, and blend some more!
You're a ballerina not a rock star!
- 3) **DON'T** use black liner on the inside of your lower eyelid, your eyes will look much smaller, instead, use a white pencil highlighter on the inside rim of your lower eyelid to make your eyes big and bright.

and... **DON'T** forget; practice makes perfect.

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(noun): The action or power of moving the intellect or emotions

Inspiration is at the heart of dance. It is the essence of dance. It may take blood, sweat, and tears to train ourselves to perform at peak physical perfection onstage, in front of an audience, but inspiration is the fuel that drives our dreams. What inspires you? What magical moment created in you this most incredible desire to dance or to pursue a career in dance?

The beauty of inspiration is that it works on two levels: our intellect and our emotions. When it comes to our intellect, we can be inspired to be rational and logical about planning our success. We can watch a dancer or dance, be inspired and think, rationally or logically, "I can do that; with training and persistence, I can be up there doing that." Emotionally, we can be inspired to provoke our feelings of passion and intensity, both of which are so desperately needed on our long road to success.

Accentuate the Positive!

When you are young, it is very important to pay close attention to those lessons that shape you; this isn't always easy. In fact, sometimes it can be downright difficult to decipher the advice and information you are given. You may very well receive conflicting advice from various sources and, therefore, all decisions should be weighed carefully and discussed with trusted sources. As a side note for parents, I do encourage you to be involved and present in your child's training and/or career. My only caveat is to suggest that you do so without becoming a stereotypical "stage mother." It is so important to encourage and support children while ensuring that they are always in good hands. You want to be there and be in the know without being pushy, as you don't want to hinder their careers, only help them make their own wisest decisions.

Mentors + Trust = Inspiration

Mentors are synonymous with inspiration. And when you look up to your mentors and trust them to guide you with experience and wisdom, you can be doubly inspired to achieve all your dancing goals. That's because being inspired follows a simple formula: Mentors + Trust = Inspiration.

Excerpt from "Starting Your Career as a Dancer"

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"Takes you behind the curtain and reveals what it really takes to break into the business. An indispensable guide for aspiring dancers."
— Ben Vereen, Tony Award-winning actor, singer, and dancer

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SPOTLIGHT on SUCCESS



Teddy Kremer :: A-Marika Dance Company :: Cincinnati, OH

Teddy age 29, who is one of 40 students with Down Syndrome at A-Marika Dance, snagged first place in tango, waltz and fox trot categories at the National Ballroom Competition in Covington, KY. It was his first competition.



**Sheahan Keinick :: Crossings Dance & Fitness
Calgary, AB**

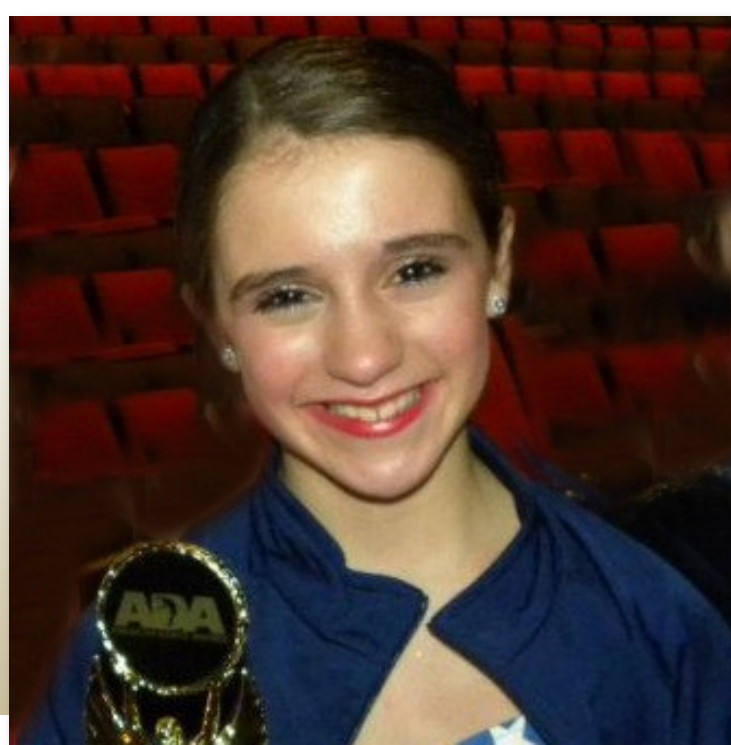
In a whirlwind trip to England and France in August 2012, Instructor, Sheahan Keinick, passed examinations for the highest level awarded by the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing (ISTD) her "Fellowship" and accepted a proposal of marriage!

**Mallory Carman and Katie Anderson :: Step Up and Dance
Greene, NY**

Mallory 8 and Katie 13, both received the Top Solo Awards for each of their age categories at the 2012 United States Tournament of Dance regional competition in Binghamton, New York.



**Julia Padavona
Perkins School of the Arts
Vestal, NY**



Julia 12, won Junior Dancer of the Year and also scored an Ultimate Gold with partner Brooke Brown at the American Dance Awards in Binghamton, New York

Have YOU or has someone you know recently accomplished an outstanding achievement in dance or the performing arts as a performer, choreographer or instructor? We'd love to share it with our readers in our magazine and web avenues.

email your short write-up and photo to
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Say Hello to Mic

Microphone Basics Every Potato Head Should Know

by Tom Mody



In every form of entertainment there are sounds that need to be heard beyond the stage. The spoken or sung voice, the tapping of feet, the amplified instrument or the necessity to record it all. But for proper clear sound free of noise and hum, there are simple basics about the mic that make a world of difference. Even though you may be still be scared to speak into it, you now won't be scared to plug it in.



To ensure you are getting a quality microphone, it is common for the connector bottom to have 3 recessed pins in the mic. All mics of this pin type are considered male gender.

Standard microphone cables have a female gender connector on one end and a male on the other. These type of mic connectors are called "XLR" connectors. All the mic inputs on your components will be female, the opposite of the mic, which is why the mic cable has opposite genders on each end.

Microphone signal is considered a balanced signal and a quality balanced wire should have 2 internal wires each in a colored jacket, then wrapped in a foil or braided shield which is then wrapped in a flexible outer jacket. All mic wire needs to be grounded wire which is the function of the shield. This configuration is the same as headphone wire but different than speaker, guitar or RCA wire. All pre-made microphone wires will come this way but if you are running bulk wire in your walls or stage you must make sure it is balanced and shielded wire.

The wire comes in different gauges (thickness) and shield coverage. A good durable yet flexible stage cable is 20 gauge wire with 85% to 90% shield coverage. This can easily run 100' without adding noise. Mic wire installed in your walls must have a CL fire code rating. It usually comes in 22 gauge with 100% foil coverage allowing it to run hundreds of feet.

When micing close up to sing or with an instrument you would use what is called a "dynamic" mic. Most, like the sure SM58, have a round head, are durable and cost around \$100. For ambient micing or choir micing you would use a "condenser" mic. These however require extra power. A few can use batteries but most need something called "phantom power." This is usually supplied by a button on most good mixers and mic input components or you can buy a separate PP box.

A final feature of microphones is the on/off switch. For performance use, many avoid this because it can be accidentally pushed. For general speaking it is a nice feature to have. As for wireless mics, they are not quite wireless. The same cabling principles apply. It's just that the mic wire goes to the transmitter box off stage. Now clear sound is only as good as what the mic plugs in to but the mic and cabling should be the least expensive part of the sound chain though that doesn't mean it's where you should skimp.





ACT to BACK



A double shot of Music Theatre



KASIE GUNTHER IS AN AWARD WINNING CHOREOGRAPHER/ VOCAL /ACTING INSTRUCTOR AT BOTH NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL LEVELS.

Becoming an Actor

I want to be an actor. Where do I start?



by Kasie Gunther

Start acting :

Sounds simplistic, but if you're a teenager and you want to act this is the number one tip. Get on stage. Audition for the school play, audition for community theatre. Professional acting is audition-heavy, so the more practice you get the better.

Refine your Dream :

It's one thing to say, "I want to act!" It's another thing to say, "I want to work in theatre. I want to be in musicals. I want to be in film. I'd love to be on a television show." When you say you want to act, what exactly do you mean?

Refine your Dream II :

Ask yourself, "Why do I want to act?" Be honest. If you want to be famous, that's the answer. Don't sugar-coat it. The more you refine the 'why' the easier it will be to determine a path. For example, if you want to be a movie star, it's not going to happen in Kansas. If you want to perform in musicals, you need to start taking singing and dancing classes.

Take Classes :

Acting is a skill and a craft. There's always something you could be better at. Once you refine your dream, focus your classes on that particular dream. Don't have classes in your area? There's a summer camp for every area of the performing arts. Find the right one for you.

Volunteer :

Volunteering is a great way to get in the building. Volunteer at your local theatre. Does your town have a community television station? Volunteer there. Once you're in the building, watch, listen, and ask questions. Start learning right now.

“Be honest. If you want to be famous, that's the answer.”

Visit Kasie at www.nystage.org

(continued)



Research

DON'T go on Yahoo Answers and ask, "How do I become an actor?" You do the work. Research your area: Do you live in an area that has many theatres? What kind of classes are available? Are there reliable agents? Research potential schools that will help you achieve your dream. Do you know what open auditions are? Do you know how much an agent's commission is? What's the process for commercial auditions? The more you know, the more prepared you'll be when you step into professional waters.

I'm really talented. Isn't that enough?

It's a great start, sure. And it certainly will help. Talent is something you can't teach an actor. But there are many, many talented actors out there. There are other factors at work. In commercials, for example, talent takes a backseat to appearance. Acting professionally takes more than talent. It takes know-how, determination and perseverance. The person standing beside you at auditions is also talented. They've researched the director, taken classes, don't give up when they lose a job, act in a professional manner, never submit a resume without a personalized cover letter, have more than one monologue and one song in their audition arsenal... the list goes on and on. Talent is just one part of the package.

"The person standing beside you at auditions is also talented."

Most maddening, sometimes acting takes luck. Being in the right place at the right time. Living in the right city. Choosing a monologue that happens to hit a director the right way. There's nothing you can do to control that. This is why it's important to have a passion for acting.

How do I get discovered?

The whole "Being discovered" thing is largely a myth. Sure, Zac Efron became an overnight sensation. He seemed to come out of 'nowhere' to star in High School Musical. Except that he didn't. He started acting in musicals when he was eleven. His first television roles were guest starring parts. He filmed TV pilots that didn't catch on. He has a career and a history of performance that lead to High School Musical.

Also, actors who look like they've become instant stars sometimes have help. They live in Los Angeles where there's easier access to auditions. They have parents or other relatives in the business. The story is not always as easy and straightforward as it seems.

Does discovery ever happen? Sure. A teenager goes to an open call because the directors are looking for something specific, gets cast in a role and their life changes. An agent goes to a high school production and signs the lead. It can happen. But to make 'discovery' your career goal will leave you sorely disappointed.

I live in Iowa, how do I get cast in a Hollywood movie?

Unless the production is casting in Iowa, it's highly unlikely. A lot of your success as a professional actor depends on location. You need to go where movies/television/commercials are being made. But Hollywood is not the only city with opportunities. Are these opportunities going to be high profile and long lasting? Probably not. But they will give you experience and credits.



To Thine OWN Self

How do I sell myself and audition WITHOUT an agent or manager?

by Kasie Gunther



Getting Started :

First things first – you need to sell yourself. Promote, network, and promote yourself some more. Starting out, you probably won't have a talent agent, manager or other form of representation. That's okay. Every actor begins working on their own and at the earliest stages of your acting career you won't need an agent. However, even if you've already signed with a talent agent these rules still apply to you.

All actors, signed or not, still need to carry out self-promotion. You can't depend solely on your agent. Your agent surely has other clients who are just as talented and willing as you. Therefore, you must make yourself stand out. Instead of waiting around for a call from your agent, go out, meet people, network and tell others about yourself. And don't think that just because you spent four years studying acting and drama that you will instantly be considered over someone else for a role.

Self-Promote to Casting Directors :

You want to grab the attention of casting directors because they have the power to hire you and offer you acting work. The more you perform for numerous casting directors and casting associates, the more opportunity you will have to be cast in their productions. But as simple as that sounds, you can't just show up to a casting director's office unannounced and perform.

In order to be seen by a casting director or casting associate, you need to attend an open casting call, audition or actor's showcase. Every time you attend an open casting call, audition or actor's showcase, you'll be performing in front of a casting director and a panel of casting associates, producers, directors and other various filmmakers. These people judge your performance, evaluate your acting abilities, and ultimately cast you in their productions.

So where do you find these all-important casting calls and auditions? Start by looking online for casting notices, auditions, and events that are going on in your area. Most of the free audition web sites are inundated by spam and junk casting and audition notices. Therefore, your best bet is to register with a reputable casting web site. My personal choice is Actingland.com. With Actingland.com you can preview the latest casting notices for free and are only asked to register if and when you find a casting call that interests you. Even then, the registration fee is so low it's silly not to register. In addition to online, check classifieds for any audition notices and attend as many as possible.

Go to all of the auditions you find. Don't pass on unpaid acting jobs because they can still prove to be extremely valuable. With each job (unpaid jobs, too) you can add to your resume and build up your online profile. Plus, the auditions and unpaid roles will give you first hand and on-the-job experience and training. Remember, never stop learning!



Self-Promote to Talent Agents :

As a beginning actor you won't need an agent. But as you progress in your acting career, you'll find a time when it will help to have an agent. To find an agent, you'll have to self-promote. In this case, you'll have to introduce yourself to talent agents by mailing them your professional headshot, well rounded acting resume, and concise cover letter.

To begin, do your homework and research exactly where the offices of talent agents and agencies are located. You can search online for talent agents and agencies. Actingland.com provides the complete list of all SAG talent agents in the United States and hundreds of AFTRA and extras casting agents and agencies.

After you've found several agents or agencies in your area, try to find out who is and isn't accepting submission materials. When possible, don't send any materials until you know that the agent is accepting them. This step can save you lots of time and money. For those talent agents that are accepting submission materials, find out if they actually want to see your resume; at this point they may only be interested in receiving postcards with a little detail. Ask what they need from you and send it.

Also, a talent agent doesn't want to see too much information crammed onto your resume – it needs to look neat and professional, plus has to be easy to read (think of how many they'll have to read!). If you have too much information, your resume may be tossed out and replaced by another which is far more pleasing to the eye. Send your materials in a neat, large envelope, anything grubby will look like you don't care what image of yourself you present.

Another point; make sure that everything you send out has no spelling errors, is grammatically correct, and most importantly has your headshot attached to the back of it. Add your contact details including your telephone, mobile number and email address. Do not include your social security details as this info will not be required until you get the job.

Finally, don't forget to include a short cover letter to introduce yourself. Keep it brief, all your work history and skills and abilities lists are already on your resume. But although it's brief, try to personalize each cover letter you send. This may be difficult to do, but if you happened to attend the same school as the agent or are friends with one of their other clients, mention this in your letter. Try to be friendly and casual but also professional, too.

Follow up those resumes you've sent out by calling the agents or sending out chasing postcards. Once you are up to around forty to fifty follow-ups per week, you really are focusing properly and are more likely to be seen by your next potential talent agent.

However, keep in mind that very often, after you've sent your materials, you may never hear back from those agents. Many agents receive so many resumes they just can't respond to everyone. If you aren't getting responses then it may just be that it's the wrong time for certain talent agents. Don't let this stop you. Keep going. Rejection is all part of building your experience.

Final Thoughts:

Whatever form of self-promotion you decide to do, remember to keep with it and follow through. Treat your acting efforts as if you were running your own home business because ultimately, you are. You're in a high-stakes business to sell yourself. So go out there and get some customers!





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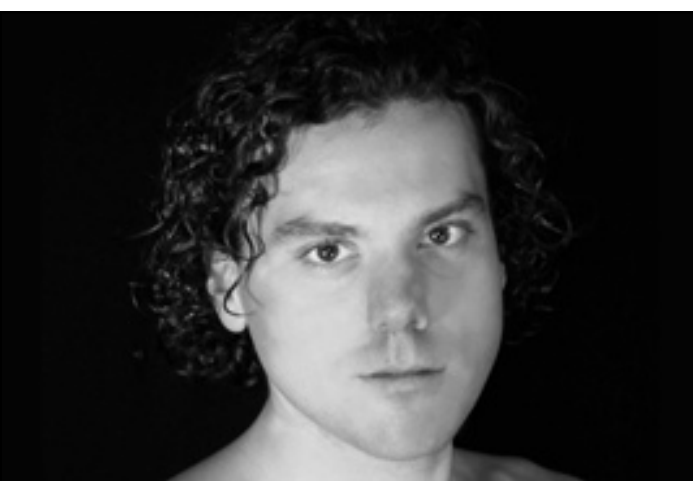
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Christina Jensen :: Senior Contributing Professional :: Trained to be a dancer since the age of two, she continuing her education in dance at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia where she graduated with a Bachelors in Fine Arts degree. She has traveled the world with the Phoenix Project Dance dancing in renown theaters and venues ranging locally to New York City and Munich, Germany. Jensen is also a teacher at the SUNY College at Oneonta where she teaches ballet, and modern dance. She has designed a course for the college called Learning Through Dance which teaches educators how to implement movement in the classroom. Tthe last few years, Christina has been a featured dancer in the Radio City Christmas Spectacular. She can be seen in commercials for Chobani Yogurt and workout guru Shaun T.



Travis St. Denny :: Senior Contributing Professional :: Dancing since the age of five, Travis has received many overall awards and national titles at various dance competitions. Continuing his dance education, Travis then trained at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, PA and The Ailey School in Manhattan, NY. Before completing the program, Travis was offered a position with the Garth Fagan Dance Company as an immediate full time dancer. Travis has toured all over North America, Canada, Greece, Turkey and Germany and is now a principal dancer with the Phoenix Project Dance Company. He is now being sought after for his intense master classes which blend athleticism, strength, musicality and fluidity as well as for his innovative choreography. It is Travis' belief to never stop growing and reinventing himself!



Mikey Perkins :: Senior Contributing Professional :: Currently the co-operator of Perkins School of the Arts and Executive Director of Phoenix Project Dance company, Mikey has traveled internationally in both capacities. In 2006 he was presented with Choreographer of the Year at The American Dance Awards. He has also traveled extensively lecturing and teaching master classes designed to introduce a style of dance that is based on the traditional modern techniques of Horton and Dunham and infused with partnering & weight sharing.



Christina Ilisije :: Senior Contributing Professional :: Graduated summa cum laude with a B.F.A. in dance and a concentration on modern technique from Marymount Manhattan College. Upon graduation, she became a full company member with Buglisi Dance Theatre and also worked as a guest artist with Take Dance and participated in a structured improvisation, Behind Resonance, with Shen Wei Dance Arts. Currently, Christina can be seen dancing with Parsons Dance and tours domestically and internationally year-round. She has helped develop the educational teaching curriculum for the Parsons technique and actively teaches master classes on behalf of the company as well as her own class, Ballet Blast. She writes about her passions on her blog living-dance.com.



Kasie Gunther :: Theatre Professional :: Kasie brings 20 years of experience in teaching dance, acting, voice, music theory and piano. She is also a talent consultant for young performers. Her Professional credits include: The Forrestburge Playhouse, Disney's MGM Studios, Disney's EPCOT, Universal Studios and has appeared in various Television Commercials. Kasie has also worked with The Broadway Theatre Project, Is a faculty member at Marcia P. Hoffman Institute at Ruth Eckerd Hall, has instructed the Florida Citrus/Capitol One Bowl Cast Members, been a judge for the Star Walk Beauty Pageant Judge . She has also been a member of Member of The Professional Dance Teachers Association since 1992. Her mantra is to support and encourage all who love performing arts. www.nystage.org



Dan Padavona :: Core Photography :: Founded Warmpicture.com in January of 2011 to give shelter to stock artists looking for an opportunity to directly offer their images to designers, editors, and writers. As a dance photographer & videographer, and with a family history in music and dance, Dan's eye for capturing "that moment" in a performance is evident throughout his body of work.



Tom Mody :: Publishing Editor :: He's been a self employed entrepreneur at Mody Company Creative LLC for over 20 years and is actively involved in music, design, publishing, online marketing and now of course, dance.... because that's what his wife and daughter are into. He is also the author of the satirical novel, The Dogs of Sherburne.

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