

THE SECOND WINGS OF
DANCERS

Career Transition Casebook

The Second Wings of Dancers

Copy Editors & Readers | In-Ja Park, Mun Ghy Min, Ji-Sun Han

Final Corrector English | ArirangTV MEDIA, So Yun Jang

Cover Photography | Photographer BAKi

Design & Printing | GNPLINK

Publication Date | November 2018

Published by

Dancers' Career Development Center

19, Sungkyunkwan-ro 4-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul, 03074, Korea

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www.dcdcenter.or.kr

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Career Transition Casebook

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PREFACE



The Dancers' Career Development Center was established in January of 2007, with the aim of transition support and welfare promotion for professional dancers. We work to improve the creative work environment and to protect the rights of dancers through career development, transition support, injury prevention programs, and financial support for medical expenses caused by injuries.

In 2017, to celebrate our 10th Anniversary, we published the casebook of dancers' transition, 'The Second Wings of Dancers,' to provide guidance for dancers who must face retirement earlier in life than those in other fields of art.

The Second Wings of Dancers introduces career transition cases of dancers from eleven member organizations, located in ten countries around the world, of the International Organization for the Transition of Professional Dancers (IOTPD). The IOTPD was established to support career transition of dancers and has since then, funded research and promotion of social values of dancers as well as achieving its initial aim. We thank the IOTPD member organizations for the help they have given us in collecting the stories.

56 dancers from the 10 countries – Canada, The Czech Republic, France, Germany, Korea, The Netherlands, Poland, Switzerland, United Kingdom and the United States – and 4 dancers who received the Philippe Braunschweig Grant wholeheartedly shared with us their personal stories. These stories include the concerns that each and every dancer must face during transition and their diverse lives thereafter. Stories of ex-dancers now working in careers that are relatively close to the field of dance and performance, such as rehabilitation training or performance organization, and others who are pursuing a career completely unrelated to dance, such as veterinarian, lawyer, and pilot, deeply affect us all the same. We hope that the stories of dancers in their second stage of life provide encouragement and hope to the dancers who are now facing the challenge of career transition.

We are pleased to publish an English version of this casebook upon IOTPD's 25th anniversary. We are grateful to the 60 dancers who shared with us their personal stories in the common hope of encouraging other dancers who have yet to make a transition or are still in the process. We are grateful to photographer Gui-Sub Park for providing the cover image, and to everyone who helped us make the publication of this book possible.

We hope this book will help dancers to replace the fear of retirement and transition with joyous anticipation.

Dancers' Career Development Center
Chairwoman
In-Ja Park

GREETINGS



My first visit to South Korea was in 2005. I had been invited to take part in a conference about the transition of professional dancers and to provoke thought on how this issue could be addressed in South Korea. At that time this topic was new to the dance community in this country. The concept that dancers who reach the end of their performing careers should be able to receive support was new.

The conference was an inspiring experience. As a dancing career itself it was highly professional, dedicated, creative and geared towards results. Still it came as a surprise that only two years later the Dancer Career Development Center was established. In other countries it had taken a lot more time before dancer transition centers were founded. Obviously I was not aware at the time and of the innovative nature of the Korean people. It was not only me, but all my colleagues in the International Organization for the Transition of Professional Dancers who were impressed by the results that were achieved so soon after the first conference in 2005.

Since its establishment ten years ago DCDC has played a vital role in South Korea's dance sector. Important initiatives like the Job Market, conferences about health care and its contribution to the wellbeing of dancers in general have been and will continue to be of significant importance to the art form in South Korea.

DCDC's tenth anniversary is certainly worth a heartfelt congratulations and I am happy that I have been able to make a small contribution to the initiative leading up to the foundation of the organization. I am more proud though of all the people who have been building this organization over the last ten years and have made it to what it is right now.

Impressed by the energy and attitude of everyone involved and the output of DCDC's work thus far, I am convinced DCDC will continue to play its important role for, at least, the next decade.

Paul Bronkhorst

Executive Director Dutch Transition Program for Dancers
President International Organization for the Transition of Professional Dancers



Founded in 1985, the Dancer Transition Resource Centre (DTRC) is a national, charitable organization dedicated to helping dancers make necessary transitions into, within, and from professional performing careers. We also operate as a resource centre for the dance community and general public and support activities that improve the socioeconomic conditions of artists across the country.

As a world leader in dancer transition, we are active participants in international conferences and research initiatives and help drive change within the dance community.

OUR VISION

We recognize that dance is one of the most challenging professions, physically, emotionally and financially, and that transitions are inevitable. Our goal is to ensure that dancers have the tools they need to reach their potential throughout their dance career and after retirement from dance performance.



© David Cooper

AINSLIE CYOPIK

Dancewear Designer, AinslieWear



In an interview with Chatelaine Magazine during my days as a dancer with Ballet BC, I was asked about life after dancing. I remember remarking that “there are a million things to do in life, so surely I’d find something else after the stage!” After an incredibly fulfilling dance career at both BBC and the National Ballet, I’ve been fortunate enough to have two careers – as a yoga teacher and a dancewear designer.

I grew up in a house of colour and texture, as my father was an artist and my mother sewed beautiful garments – luckily, she also taught me how to sew! It was while I was at Ballet BC that I really started to design and make my own dancewear. The studio was right above a very funky fabric store and I would hunt for interesting colours and textures in stretch fabric on my lunch break. “AinslieWear” was what everyone called a bodysuit I had made, and friends began asking me to make something for them. I also started working in BBC’s wardrobe department, making costumes for performances, and I felt blessed to be performing and creating dancewear side-by-side – two artistic endeavors I loved.

After about nine years with Ballet BC, a foot injury sidelined me for a few months. I still believed I wanted to dance, but as the months passed I realized that my passion was waning. One day, I was struck very clearly by a message – “this is no longer me”.

Though I had always loved creating dancewear, I didn’t see it as a career path at that time. I did, however, see yoga as an option. I had been practicing for several years and absolutely loved it. With the gracious assistance of DTRC, and Joysanne Sidimus’ ever-supportive words, I was able to study with a brilliant teacher near Seattle. I went on to teach yoga for several years, all the while still creating dancewear. In the end, my heart led me to make AinslieWear a full-time venture, and it’s now a thriving business that reaches dancers worldwide. The DTRC helped smooth my transition out of performance and I am eternally grateful for this.

I tossed the pointe shoes out many years ago, only to embrace stilettos for tango dancing! I am thrilled to have the career I have now, but dancing will always be in my blood.

ANNEBRUCE FALCONER

Organic Farmer



© Angelo Barsetti

Right now, my sow is due to give birth to a litter of piglets any day, and my to-do list includes harvesting and drying herbs, straining oils, and canning the tomatoes, plus putting in the garlic crop for next year.

I bought the 25 acres of land that Liberterre Farm currently sits on six years ago, when I was still living in Montreal dancing, teaching and touring full-time. I had always maintained a garden, but my busy performance schedule didn't allow me the time I needed to really focus on keeping it up – I was only able to go up on weekends, which I did as often as I could. I had been dancing for over 20 years when one day in the studio, I looked out the window and suddenly thought, “I think I just lost my lettuce crop”. It became clear I couldn't do both, that my split city/country life was not working, and I was faced with a choice: had I toured enough? Was dance still ultimately satisfying? Could I really make a change this big? I felt the answer deep down, “I have to do this, and though I don't know why now, I will eventually.” My husband was the one who encouraged me to contact the DTRC.

As I began researching what taking farming full-time would involve, I realized the magnitude of what I'd have to learn just to begin. Additionally, since I was interested in small-scale, biodynamic organic farming, traditional education was not for me – I needed to learn with my hands. After a significant amount of research, I submitted my apprenticeship proposal to the DTRC. No one had ever proposed such a thing before and I was nervous. However, my plan was accepted enthusiastically, and I was thrilled – and nervous!

I began with basics like soil dynamics and root systems, but most importantly, humility in the face of Mother Nature. The farmers from whom I began learning treated me like an equal right from the beginning and I realized that what I initially believed was an apprenticeship was actually my new life. The learning process is ongoing and lifelong, each year is different from the last, there's always something new to learn, and there is no room for ego – much like dance. I wanted the same adrenalin rush and opportunity to create I got from dance, and not only did I find it in farming, but it also felt incredibly natural.



© Erich Kory

DANA GINGRAS

Gyrokinesis Master Trainer / Gyrotonic Trainer / Owner of STABLE



© Gilles Berquet

Dana Gingras began her dynamic dance career in 1987 as an early member of EDAM (Experimental Dance and Music) before co-founding the highly acclaimed Holy Body Tattoo, and award-winning contemporary dance company, with Noam Gagnon.

She was unexpectedly set upon the path toward a second career when her critically-acclaimed, hard-hitting performances came to a halt in 1999 after tearing her ACL in a performance with Holy Body Tattoo in New York. “I was literally thrown off my legs for about nine months,” she recalls. It was during her recovery that she approached Gyrokinesis and Gyrotonic for the first time — as a rehabilitative technique — and was immediately intrigued not only by the technique itself, but also with the idea of teaching it.

The practice is often appealing to dancers who have spent their lives meeting the physical demands of a performance career. “All choreography is imbalanced,” Dana explains. “It favours one side more than the other” depending on the preferences of the choreographer. By contrast, Gyrokinesis and Gyrotonic “re-centres and creates a kind of efficiency in the body,” she says, making it applicable for both rehabilitation and injury prevention.

During the 2014/15 year, with the assistance of the DTRC, Dana became a fully certified teacher of teachers, and is now one of only about 150 Master Trainers of the methodologies worldwide. To complete the highest echelons of her training, Dana traveled to Germany and multiple cities in the US for highly specialized workshops and to personally assist Gyronkinesis and Gyrotonic creator, Juliu Horvath.

Dana appreciates being able to serve a diverse client at her studio, STABLE, located in Montreal. She says some clients have trouble walking or can barely move their spine, while for others, “it’s really about quality of life, and thriving rather than surviving.” Attending to such individualized needs requires that Dana calls upon all of her skills “as a dancer, choreographer and an organizer of bodies.” However, unlike the ephemerality of performance, she can see the benefits of the work accumulating in her clients’ bodies and appreciates being able to witness her impact on their well-being.

Today, the ongoing practice and teaching of Gyrokinesis and Gyrotonic occupies a similar place in Dana’s life that performing always has. “It’s part of my daily life,” she says. The depth of the practice puts it into a rich, reciprocal relationship with her artistic practice and the two worlds continue to feed each other: “I’m constantly getting nourished from one and the other. It keeps up a level of curiosity.”



© Yannick Grandmont

ERIN RICHARDSON

Veterinary Technician



© David Richardson

Life as a professional ballet dancer can be so absorbing and so demanding that contemplating a transition to another career is quite literally unthinkable – it leaves the mind blank.

From the ages four to 26, I lived and breathed ballet – it was the structure of my life. Then, rather suddenly it seemed, I faced the moment many dancers dread: the decision to hang up my pointe shoes. In my case, painful bone cysts in my metatarsals made performing torturous and retirement from dance was inevitable. The Dancer Transition Resource Centre helped me approach my blank canvas with optimism and purpose. I was able to use their career counseling services to explore many possibilities and to discover not only what I would be good at, but also what I loved. The DTRC helped me see that my love of animals and my concern for their wellbeing could well be my next passion.

Here is where my story has a unique twist. Having decided that I wanted to pursue a career as a veterinary technician, I recalled having met a veterinarian at a season closing reception – Dr. Terry Boston and his wife Diane are patrons of the National Ballet of Canada. They care not only about dance, but just as importantly, about dancers themselves. I contacted Dr. Boston and without hesitation, he offered to take me on as an assistant so that I could gain first-hand experience and determine if I was suited to this career path.

With the DTRC’s support, I completed the pre-requisite courses for the Seneca College Veterinary Technician Course, and graduated from the program with Honours in the spring of 2009. I was immediately offered an emergency technician position at the prestigious Mississauga-Oakville Veterinary Emergency Hospital and Referral Group. I passed the exam to become a Register Veterinary Technician that summer.

Now that my transition is complete and I am established in a new field, I look back fondly on my life as a dancer and value the self-discipline and determination it instilled in me. At the same time, I am equally passionate about my new career and I look forward to what it may hold. I am grateful that the DTRC and Dr. Terry Boston have helped give me another opportunity to make a difference.





© David Cooper (Sebastian, chor. Ali Pourfarrokhi)

JOHN KELLNER

Airline Captain and Approved Check Pilot, Transport Canada



I laughed at a fat lady. That’s how my dance career began. I was in first year pre-med when fate found me a part-time job — to earn beer money — as an accompanist for the local ballet school. One evening I laughed too loudly and too long at one of the ladies in an adults’ class. The next week a rather substantial bottom planted itself on my piano bench. I was handed a pair of sweats — so I could take the class if I thought it was so easy. And I could tell you, it was not. But I loved it. Dance had stolen my heart and I knew I had to follow.

My first introduction to the then Dancer Transition Centre and Joysanne Sidimus was as a student during the dance summer school at the Banff Centre. I sat there asking myself, “Why in the world do I want to be thinking about making the transition out of dance when I haven’t even gotten there yet?” Joysanne is a wise and forward-thinking woman! I joined the DTRC with my first job and went on to dance and travel, almost unable to believe that I was doing something that I absolutely loved. I felt lucky and blessed — and sorry for non-dancing “civilians” in their nine-to-five lives.

I had always dreamed of flying. It was a delicious fantasy, not something I imagined possible. When I stopped being a company dancer and moved back to Edmonton to direct a student dance company, I decided I would take a “discovery flight” — \$50 for half an hour in a small plane. My heart had been stolen again! The odds seemed insurmountable. The cost was a large factor and starting to fly at 36 seemed unrealistic.

The DTRC arranged for a line captain with Canadian Airlines to review my career strategy. He thankfully reported back to the DTRC that my plans seemed viable but also that I didn’t have time to waste. With a grant from the DTRC, I qualified for my Aviation Diploma while working on my Commercial Pilot Licence. I now have my Airline Transport Pilot Licence and earned my way to be an airline captain after several years of delivering new aircraft all over North America.

I soared through the air as a dancer and now, with the help and support of the DTRC, I am again soaring through the air — completely blessed to be doing something that makes my heart sing.



LÉONIE GAGNÉ

Lawyer, Lavery De Billy



Léonie Gagné had high hopes for her second career. “I wanted to find something that I was proud of and matched my ambitions,” the former ballet dancer revealed. While her career transition is characterized by careful planning and incremental career changes, she has found all the passion and excitement she was looking for in her new career as a litigator. In 2014/2015, Léonie became an associate at Lavery De Billy, a prominent Quebec law firm, practicing in the areas of insurance law, civil and professional liability as well as product liability.

Léonie began her dance career in the corps de ballet at the National Ballet of Canada before performing for nearly a decade with Opera Atelier. In 2008, she made the decision to explore careers outside of dance and enrolled in the Certificate in Public Relations program at Ryerson University with the assistance of a DTRC retraining grant. While her sights were set on a bachelor’s degree, part-time studies allowed her to continue taking freelance performance opportunities. “It was my way to transition softly and not to shock myself,” she explains.

With her certificate in hand and a strong desire to continue studying, Léonie enrolled in a law degree at the Université de Québec à Montréal. The program had a small number of students and the flexibility in class scheduling made it a great fit. It was only as she began her degree that she remembered all of the times her family, friends and colleagues suggested she should be a lawyer. She quickly accepted that law “suits my personality, it suits my interests and it’s what I want to do.”

Now that she is a practicing lawyer, Léonie is amazed at how “the daily life translates” from her career as a dancer to her new life as a lawyer. The discipline and rigour of dance assists her greatly as she prepares cases, and then there is “the adrenaline of being in front of a judge” not unlike stepping on stage at show time.

Few people consider the finely tuned communication skills that dancers possess, but Léonie emphasizes how her experiences of collaborating and negotiating with various stakeholders in the dance world – sponsors, fellow ballet dancers, and casting directors – have helped her in her capacity as a litigator. With a diverse range of cases and clients, she values her ability to focus on the smallest of details in every interaction.

“I’m not starting from scratch,” she says of her transferable skills. As an associate at Lavery – a firm with more than 200 lawyers – her experience navigating the complex relationships within a professional ballet company continues to be a source of support.

NOAM GAGNON

Artistic Director and Entrepreneur, Beyond Pilates & Compagnie Vision Selective



Looking back now I can see that I have always been a dancer, dancing in my living room, bedroom and parties. I come from a family of visual artists and musicians, and initially believed I would find my destiny here. During my last year in visual arts training, a friend asked me to dance in her piece. She made me a solo, and the first move had me running on stage from the wings into a huge open heart arch jump. This, without knowing it, was how I literally jumped into dance. The world disappeared like it had never before. I felt at home. She said, “Tuestune bête de scene”; that I was made for this. I had no idea what had happened or what it meant, but I knew it felt great and very special.

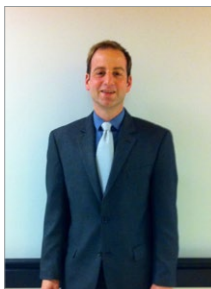
I decided to do a six-month experiment by taking dance and choreography classes at Concordia University, to test this world out and help me find myself within it. As my experiment concluded, I realized I was hooked – that I was, in fact, made for this. After all, dance requires that your body, mind and spirit be connected or assembled in a particular way – some people are born dancers. I went on to complete my degree.

During my first year dancing professionally, I became a member of the DTRC. I also began Pilates, which did wonders for me and I knew that I would like to become a certified teacher one day. That was not the right time though. I had a career to build with The Holy Body Tattoo, an award-winning dance company that I had co-founded with Dana Gingras. The company burst onto the international scene right from the start, and we worked our butts off (to great acclaim)! However, after years of touring our very demanding body of work, I was injured during a performance at UCLA and started to realize the need to rebalance the whole of my body. Not ready to retire my dancing shoes yet and with 16 years of Pilates training under my belt at the time, I became certified with the DTRC’s help in 2002.

I have always dreamt big, as big as that first leap into space. Those dreams now inform the work I do at Noam Gagnon’s Wellness Center – Beyond Pilates, as well as my new dance company Compagnie Vision Selective. I could not be happier enjoying the best of both worlds.

PAUL WINSTON

Physiatrist
Clinical Associate Professor, University of British Columbia



Dr. Paul Winston is no stranger to the kind of care that dancers' bodies require. He danced for six years with the National Ballet of Canada, and then another three years with Opera Atelier while studying science and preparing for medical school. An alumni of the Dancer Transition Resource Centre, he credits the DTRC with giving him an opportunity to go to school while continuing to perform part-time. The grants provided by the DTRC "really made it doable" he recalls.

Dr. Winston is now a Victoria-based physiatrist – a specialist in physical rehabilitation and pain management – as well as a Clinical Associate Professor at UBC. In September, he opened The Dancer's Clinic at the Allan McGavin Sports Medicine Centre, the first artist-centred health clinic in British Columbia.

While treating some dancers at his practice in Victoria, the need for healthcare providers with a background in dance became increasingly obvious. He recounts, "Whenever I see dancers, they're always so happy, and there's always this funny look on their face because they don't know I have a dance background. I start talking about technique and even asking them to demonstrate dance movements." He knows from dancers' feedback that it is easier to see a doctor who understands the kind of strain they put on their bodies daily.

This scenario is vastly different from Dr. Winston's own experience of seeking medical help at the height of his dance career. He recalls, "Particularly in the old days when you'd see a sports medicine doctor, their assessments would just make you cringe. ... They had no idea what the norm is for a dancer."

Often, it is at the diagnostic stage where physicians with a dance background vary from their colleagues in the treatment of dancers. Dr. Winston notes that dancers with the highest levels of training generally have "very sound technique," but for many semi-professional or recreational dancers, "It's often bad technique that has led to their injury." When treating dancers then, physicians like Dr. Winston not only have to diagnose the injury, but also "explain how to avoid it." He notes that "typical strengthening in a gym or physiotherapy doesn't fix the technical problem the dancers have. If you don't have a dancer's eye, you can't fix that." This technique problem solving is a crucial element in treating dancers because, as Dr. Winston acknowledges, "You can't tell them to rest".

Dr. Winston's dance background is an asset that extends far beyond his treatment of other dancers to those who have very little body awareness. If someone comes into his office with back or neck pain, he explains that "they often panic. They get scared; they don't want to move." Athletes and



© Cylla von Tiedemann (Tory Game)

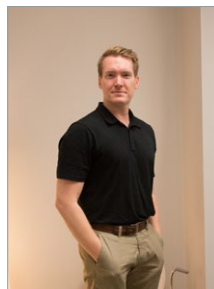
dancers, in contrast, "learn how to shut off pain, understand pain, see what pain is and know how to work with it, and also how to goal set."

The intensity of training that dancers undergo has helped Dr. Winston to innately understand goal setting. He explains that dancers are "taught how to build and build and build and keep fixing and perfecting. ... And many people just aren't used to having that opportunity." "Many people – particularly people from a lower socio-economic bracket – they don't know about goal attainment. If you're treating someone with a bad pain problem, or who's had a stroke, you know their life is not that easy. They don't know what self-mastery feels like. ... They get very frustrated in the face of a challenge and they don't know what to do." A background in dance "helps me relate to people who don't have self-mastery."

"It's everything," says Dr. Winston of the way his dance training helps him to work with people who are unaccustomed to dealing with pain.

SCOTT MAYBANK

Chiropractor



As someone who came to dance “late,” I began serious training at the time my friends were starting university careers. We spent each Christmas together and it was fascinating to see the shift in conversations over the years. Dance is my passion but my curiosity was piqued by their university experiences, which prompted me to take distance education courses. While at The National Ballet School’s Intensive Dance Program, I required surgery on my ankle. During the recovery I hobbled into Ryerson University for a night class. The most valuable course was a business-writing course; it greatly elevated my confidence to communicate with organizations and people in the “real world”.

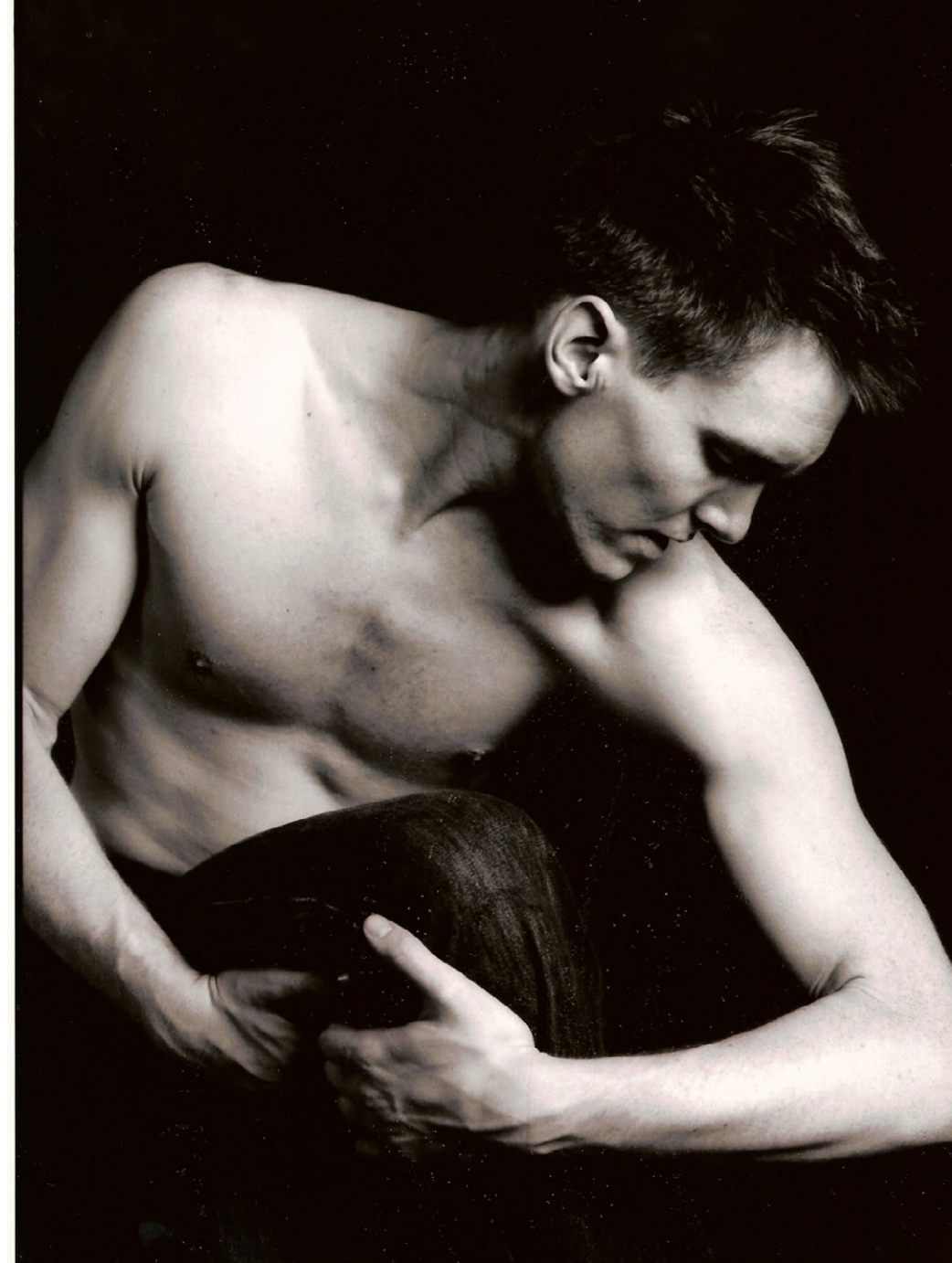
At the age of 29, I found myself with enough injuries, cities, and shows behind me that I decided to leave my dance career. It was a challenging decision. My dance career gave me the opportunity to perform, be creative, and to spend my days with incredible friends and fellow artists. Although difficult to appreciate at times, a dance career is a treasure.

I threw myself into full-time University which turned out to be the best use of my energy. I was fortunate enough to be a member of the DTRC since my first contract with Ballet British Columbia. Having the support of the DTRC took financial pressure off me and allowed me to enjoy the opportunity of seeking a new career.

Through trial and error, I discovered that choosing a profession as a chiropractor best suited my talents and interests. It was not my initial choice and only came after attempting to love calculus (no mining engineer here), organic chemistry (not quite Walter White abilities), and, finally, discovering that anatomy and physiology fit my interests perfectly. It was gratifying that knowledge of the human body was certain, and impossible to argue. For example, it’s a fact that Barishnikov has a couple zygomatic bones. That’s just true.

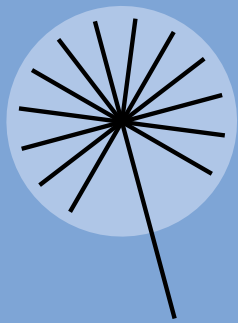
Surprisingly, I found that certain aspects of university were easy due to my dance background. For example, public speaking was fairly straightforward, especially as this time I got to wear pants when standing in front of an audience. Being a mature student allowed me to see the long-term outcomes and the self-mastery that dance instills in you. Dance teaches habits on which to build success.

Being able to understand the human body from the chemicals up, yet simultaneously appreciating it as a work of art, allows for an incredibly satisfying clinical process. The experiences of both injury and peak performance as a dancer, allows me to better connect with patients. For example, I can explain with firsthand knowledge and anecdotes that being generous with recovery time is beneficial for the long-term.

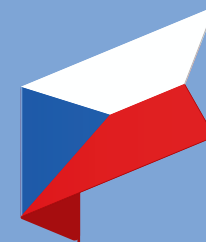


© Sylvain Senez

My dance career was more than overcoming injury, and very much about growing, learning, and developing as an artist. The same progressive approach can be taken to one’s transition when it comes to adopting another career passion. The support of the Dancer Transition Resource Centre, through generous awards funded by Stanely E. Greben and Lynda Hamilton, allowed me to enjoy the building of a new career. I feel blessed to be part of such an incredible organization and I encourage all dancers to enrich their transition experience through the DTRC.



DANCE CAREER ENDOWMENT FUND



Dance Career Endowment Fund (DCEF) is the only institution in the Czech Republic to actively support professionals in the field of dance, movement theatre and circus before and within the process of career transition. DCEF is building up a system that will ensure appropriate conditions for career change.

DCEF was founded by Vize Tance and Taneční Sdružení, two professional associations that aim at improving work conditions and professional prospects of performing artists in the field of dance, movement theatre and circus.

As defined by its statutes, the Fund's activities focus on providing information and mediating services that facilitate career transition and development. The second major field of the Fund's activity is to promote the establishment of a saving product designed for dancers and professionals working in associated fields.

JAROSLAV ROUBAL

CEO, Perspektka (Firefighting Equipment Company)



Jaroslav Roubal was a member of the ballet ensemble of the National Theatre Brno where he mainly danced group and smaller soloist roles. Later on, when he became 30, he changed to the operetta ballet ensemble to be able to pursue another career while dancing. He ended his dance career at the age of 33, mainly because he saw no perspective in being a dancer. He did not have any health problems that forced him to quit his dance career.

An important preparation for establishing his own company came with the contract for the Billa Company. In 1994, he took up his father-in-law's firm with minimum property. His job was to take part in the construction of 48 supermarkets and provide technical supervision of engineering preparation. He says, "If you had a family, the salary from the theatre was not enough to make living. Some people worked in shops, others in restaurants," and therefore, it was not exceptional for ballet ensemble members to make extra money somewhere else.

During the time he was expanding his business activities, the management of the ballet ensemble, especially the artistic director, Zdeněk Prokeš, showed full support. To focus on expanding business, he later had to change from the leading ballet ensemble to the operetta ballet ensemble where the workload was smaller.

Later he found a new business opportunity in the field of fire protection. He and his wife – also a former ballet dancer – developed their company, Perspektka, specializing in equipment for fire-fighters and fire safety, from scratch. To work in this field he had to study a specialized course in management development and fire protection issues. Otherwise he was self-taught. "I learned by doing," he says when talking about the foundation and development of the Perspektka Company. The company now has 11 employees and closely co-operates with around 50 others. It runs six branches and a certified training centre. They focus on beating their competition with quality, not quantity, as well as by providing complex services in the field.

When he was asked if he could use some experience from the ballet career in his current business his answer was no surprise: "Working in the ballet ensemble taught us responsibility and discipline. These qualities are rather valuable in business." He could also apply skills such as presentation, cooperation, and communication to his new job. "When I have to give a presentation in front of 150 fire-fighters, I have no problems with that thanks to my time spent on-stage" he says.



As far as his relationship with his former career is concerned, he hasn't cast ballet away completely and still follows the trends. He even went back to the theatre as an inspection engineer. He misses the physical exercise but tries to compensate for it by doing sports – an activity that was partly forbidden for him in the dancing times due to the risk of an injury. Today, he plays halfback in a football team playing a regional league and also enjoys skiing. Business and company ownership brought a significant improvement on his financial situation, and he also has more freedom in pursuing a great hobby.

KAROLÍNA KOVÁČSOVÁ

Independent Attorney
Former Junior Associate, Kavinek & Partners



She had a contract for 8 years with the National Theatre Brno. In her third year, she was accepted to the Faculty of Law of the Masaryk University in Brno. At first, she considered quitting her dance career because her legal studies became her priority. She had many concerns about life after dancing and wanted to make sure she would have a secure job in the future. The Director of the ballet, Karel Littera, offered her a chance to study while pursuing her dance career. She recalls the beginning of her studies being very hard. However, she eventually found a way to manage both her school responsibilities and her career in the theatre.

Soon after she finished her legal studies, she terminated her contract with the theatre as well as her dance career at the age of 26. She was ready to move on to a new life. In 2010, she started working as a junior associate in a law firm, Kavinek & partners. By 2014, she started working as an independent attorney.

During her studies at the Conservatory she did not consider the fact that dance career has an inevitable age limit. “Everybody at the Conservatory wants to be the best. Every student gives their best shot, almost at any cost. Students are not foolish and they are aware that there will come a day when they have to stop dancing. However, they do not consider what the options are after their dance career is over. The teachers are not very supportive about it either,” she recalls.

She did not consider a legal career during her studies at the Conservatory, but her mother is a lawyer and she got a chance to learn what her work was about. She chose law because legal studies did not require her to do mathematics, chemistry or physics as she knew the education at the Conservatory did not give her enough background on these subjects. Her knowledge from the Conservatory, on the other hand, was good enough for her admission exam at the Faculty of Law. She even feels she was prepared extremely well-prepared for a section of the exams on logic as it required her to use imagination, which is an important skill in dancing.

Looking back on the time when she finished her dance career and started working at the law office, she admits that she missed physical exercise. Her body had to get used to spending long hours in front of a computer. This itself was not every difficult but it negatively affected her eyes. She also misses the team spirit in the theatre and being able to make close friends there, as the atmosphere is not the same in her office.

She considers being mentally strong, loving their work, bravery, and being able to respond quickly to sudden changes as the strengths of the dancers and says that they can apply them to their non-dancing careers after retirement from dance. “When I work in the office, I always try to do my best



even though it sometimes means staying much longer after my working hours,” she says, providing an example from her current career.

She is also capable of coping with the stressful and demanding job thanks to her experience on-stage, where stress and psychological tension are rather common. In spite of the fact that she does not dance anymore and that her new career is completely different from ballet, she still likes to keep up-to-date on the trends of ballet world and also keeps in touch with her colleagues from Brno and Prague.

LUBOR KVAČEK

Stage Manager at The National Theatre Prague



Dancer Lubor Kvaček worked with major ensembles in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. His dance career lasted for 25 years until 2006, when he suffered a serious injury which resulted in the termination of his career.

The artistic director of The National Theatre Prague, Petr Zuska, offered him a job as an assistant director of the ensemble as soon as he had made his recovery. Lubor accepted this offer and spent four years in the position. He has known Petr Zuska for years and his support meant a lot to him after the accident. “Ending your career is like a small death for every dancer. Your life as you have known it is over, and your dancing dreams die. I was very lucky to be allowed to stay with the theatre as it is my love and I could not imagine my life without it,” he confides. In general, dancers at the end of their career consider support from their dance company as one of the most important things. It took him six months to recover from his injury, and the fact that he could return to the theatre to work on a different position as soon as he was ready was very important from the psychological point of view. “My new work was a stimulus for faster recovery. I was looking forward to it. I also knew that this work would enable me to pay my bills. I didn’t have to worry about my future,” he says, adding an important practical aspect.

In 2012, he was offered a position as stage manager at the theatre, which is still his job today. “When I changed my position to a stage manager, I had to learn all the technical things from scratch – how the stage equipments work, how to prepare the stage for a performance, how they work during performances, and what needs to be done after the performance is over,” he says. It is a continuous learning process as he needs training in fire safety procedures, occupational safety, and many others. However, he believes that his ballet career give him some advantage in his new job because he knows exactly what happens in every ballet scene even he cannot see the stage directly.

The accident happened at the time when he already knew that his age would not let him dance for many much longer anyway, so the change was not too much of a shock for him. However, from the physical point of view, he was used to daily practices and rehearsals and that had come to an abrupt end. He still needs to exercise every day, and seeks therapy for his aching back and knees.

During his studies at the conservatory, he had never heard that getting a new career after retirement would be an issue. He graduated at a time when all dancers were eligible for a retirement pension based on their years spent dancing and therefore, it was not really an issue back then. Most problems in the ballet world arose when these retirement pensions were cancelled without compensation (in 1995, editor’s note).



VENDULA KREDVÍKOVÁ

CEO, Dobrá vína (Wine Importing Company)
Former Stewardess, Czech Airlines



Vendula Kohoutková's dance career was very short yet rather diverse. Within six years, she worked with four ensembles, two of them abroad – in Finland and Slovakia. Her career ended at the age of 24 due to injury. It was a sudden twist in her life and she had to start looking for a new career at a short notice. She briefly considered studying at a university but eventually made a different decision. Her participation in the selection procedure for air stewardesses with the Czech Airlines was rather accidental. She even says that it was definitely not her dream job. As a frequent flyer due to her dance career involving a lot of tours, she could see how demanding an air stewardesses' job could be.

Vendula's ballet career provided her with advantage such as psychological resilience or emphasis on appearance. However, she also says that her previous career was an aggravating factor, especially in terms of her physical conditions as she was handicapped because of her injury. She worked as an air stewardess for three years and then went on maternity leave. She did not return to work, again, due to physical health issues. Walking long hours on high heels was getting more and more painful – she could feel the pain escalating in her ankle that she injured repeatedly during her dance career. As a result, she was even granted a disability pension for a short period of time.

Although Vendula ended her career in the National Theatre Prague as soloist her transition resulted in a significant improvement in her financial situation. Her salary as an air stewardess was double her monthly income at The National Theatre.

Her dance career caused her a lot of physical pain – several protracted injuries still cause her pain goal. She cannot enjoy activities such as intensive sports, as it could have fatal effects on her health. "I have had long-lasting problems with my shoulder and I don't want any more operations. My body is slowly deteriorating. I also have troubles with my ankles and toes. I have had my knee successfully operated in Sweden, but still it does not work as well as it should", she says, explaining her health conditions. She has had a total of eight operations so far.

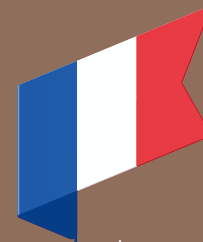
Her career transition brought a significant change in life values. As a dancer, her only priority and goal in life was her artistic career. Unlike devoting her life completely to ballet, her current priorities are like a pyramid built on solid basis and cannot be broken down easily. She thinks that in ballet, "either you work as hard as possible and you succeed at the expense of your own health, or you do things cautiously in which case you will fail to get to the top." Compared to the times when she was focusing on the success of her career, she now feels much more satisfied about her life. At first she tried to compensate for the absence of physical exercise by doing boxing, but now she only does sports for fun.



Vendula was an air stewardess for three years and after her maternity leave, she started a business with her husband. However, looking after her children is still of major importance to her and she is an active, participating parent at Waldorf School in which her children attend to. Their family company called Dobrá vína imports quality wine, mainly from France. Her husband is a sommelier and guarantees the quality of their products while Vendula manages the company's daily tasks. Has ballet taught her anything she could use in her new career? "Tenacity and discipline", she says.

CND

Centre national de la danse



The National Dance Centre is a public institution based on a permanent circulation between creation, distribution, patrimony, training, services to professional dancers and access to cultural and choreographic education.

One of the missions is to provide information and support to all actors in the dance community regarding organisation and economy, production and dissemination, employment, training and trades, law and health in order to increase awareness, development and structuring for the dance community, to help to develop and secure the dance careers at all stages, to promote dance companies development and support key specific dance questions including transition and health issues.

CÉDRIC ANDRIEUX

CEO, BureauProduire (Production Company)



I wondered about the transition as soon as I started working. I had been warned that the profession of a dancer was hard and didn't pay well. When I was about 26, while performing for Merce Cunningham, I obtained a grant to take a course in photography, while continuing my career as a dancer. I was subsequently recruited by the Ballet of the Opéra de Lyon where I danced from 2007 to 2010.

I met Jérôme Bel in the context of 'The Show Must Go On', at the Opera, and we created the solo Cédric Andrieux. I then decided to leave the Ballet of the Opéra de Lyon. Before long, during tours, I was alone and took in hand certain contacts with various partners (the technical and artistic directions of venues), particularly when it came to logistics and communication. I thus had the opportunity to develop professional relationships and skills, which went beyond those that had previously been expected from me as a performer.

This experience confirmed my interest in what went on off-stage and comes into play during the production of a live show. So I decided to use my professional experience, my network, and a certain visibility to plan my transition. I spoke about this to professionals who confirmed the need to take a course so as to establish a different form of legitimacy and perhaps to acquire new skills. At the age of 37, I started a Master's 2 in the administration of performing Arts at the University Lyon 2.

Not having studied before, I was convinced that I would not be admitted to university and, once my admission had been accepted, I started attending the courses with a certain apprehension. But my fears soon faded away when I took the measure of how much my career had taught me, in terms of the overall understanding of what is at stake in the world of performance and culture.

I took a course at the theatre Nanterre Amandiers, in public relations and production, then I worked at the Centre National de la Danse in the production office. After these experiences, it seemed to me to be necessary to work directly in the service of artists and companies, so as to gain an overall vision of the issues of production and diffusion. So, another administrator and I set up BureauProduire, a production company, devoted to the theatre and dance. Setting up your own structure means acquiring freedom, mobility and responsibility. It also means liberating yourself from the prejudices of employers who have problems recognising the skills acquired during an artistic career.

I still dance the solo, 'Cédric Andrieux', I also assist Jérôme Bel in some of his projects. After my training as an administrator, I wanted to drop these projects completely, so as no longer to be identified as an artist. But, in the end, by setting up my own production company and working for various artists, I realised that my experience as an artist was a strength. My profile is different from that of a highly technical production director, and I can bring to this position a combination of practical and artistic experience as well as skills acquired in the field.



ISABELLE CELER

Librarian



I have the feeling that my process of transition ceased this year, when I passed the exam to become a librarian. I have become a public sector worker after spending 7 years taking a series of training courses, looking for jobs on short-term contracts. This precarious situation was another form of impermanence which meant that I constantly had to keep moving forward. I am now pleased to be able to gather the fruit of all those years, which gives me a form of legitimacy, and a certain stability.

The change from dancer to librarian happened thanks to a course taught by the dance historian and critic, Laurence Louppe, in Aubagne, in 2003-2006. Questions of documentation and traces of dances were central to it. This approach also chimed with my earlier literary studies at university. As a dancer, I was starting to have problems working, but I set about transforming these difficulties into a desire and a new professional project: becoming a librarian at a site specialised in dance.

It was not easy to find the right course, which corresponded to my career and my project. I had to persevere, explore on my own and seek out the right information.

I enrolled at the University of Nancy in a DUT (technical university degree) to learn the profession of a librarian. I then completely stopped dancing so as to devote myself fully to my studies. The year in Nancy acted like a bubble, or an air-chamber between two lives. I was happy to concentrate just on my course.

I then took a training course at the library of University Paris 8, in association with the archives of the dance department, then various missions in other university libraries (Paris 8 and Paris 13). For 5 years, one short-term contract led to another, while at the same time I was preparing the exam to become a state sector employee.

On my return to Paris after my year's studies in Nancy, I started giving dance lessons again, while at the same time respecting my first contracts in libraries. This allowed me to top up my income, while being in a dynamic of movement, thanks to dance. When I had to stop because of my schedule, I started to take lessons again myself. I am continuing this practice as much as possible, because it is necessary for my balance. This is because, apart from the moments spent taking care of the collections or informing the public, the work of a librarian is mostly office tasks. It is difficult for me to stay sitting in front of a computer screen for too long, while remaining static.

In terms of physical practices, I'd like to be able to do more. My relationship with the dancing body is obviously no longer the same, and more a question of expertise, but it still remains primordial. I no longer



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practice dance professionally, but I still feel that I am a dancer. Today, I don't have the challenge of earning a living through dancing anymore, and the relationship with the body is more intimate, and gentler too. The project is to advance with your age, with a sensitive, awakened body still in motion.

The tie between dance and the profession of librarian lies in the role of mediation: in both cases, the idea is to transmit something to the public. I like being in contact with the public, exchanging and helping someone to find what they are looking for. Whereas my initial project was to work in a specialised centre of dance archives, the world of university libraries has provided me with a great openness to the world, in all fields of knowledge. It is as if my vision had become broader. It's a great pleasure to participate in this world of information, which is in constant, rapid evolution. It is a professional sector which is meaningful for me. Now that my status as a public sector employee gives me the possibility to change establishments and functions, I don't exclude the idea of reconnecting with dance and its history as a librarian.

KATHARINA BADER

Interpreter / Translator



I started classical ballet at the age of 6, in Germany. When I reached adolescence, my teachers told me that I didn't have the right body for it. However, dance was essential to me and so I turned towards contemporary dance. I went to France, then the USA. Over there, dancers are very lucid about the fact that dance can only take you 'half-way'. At the age of 35, I was very satisfied about having been able to dance so long. At 40, I said to myself that my luck was not going to last forever.

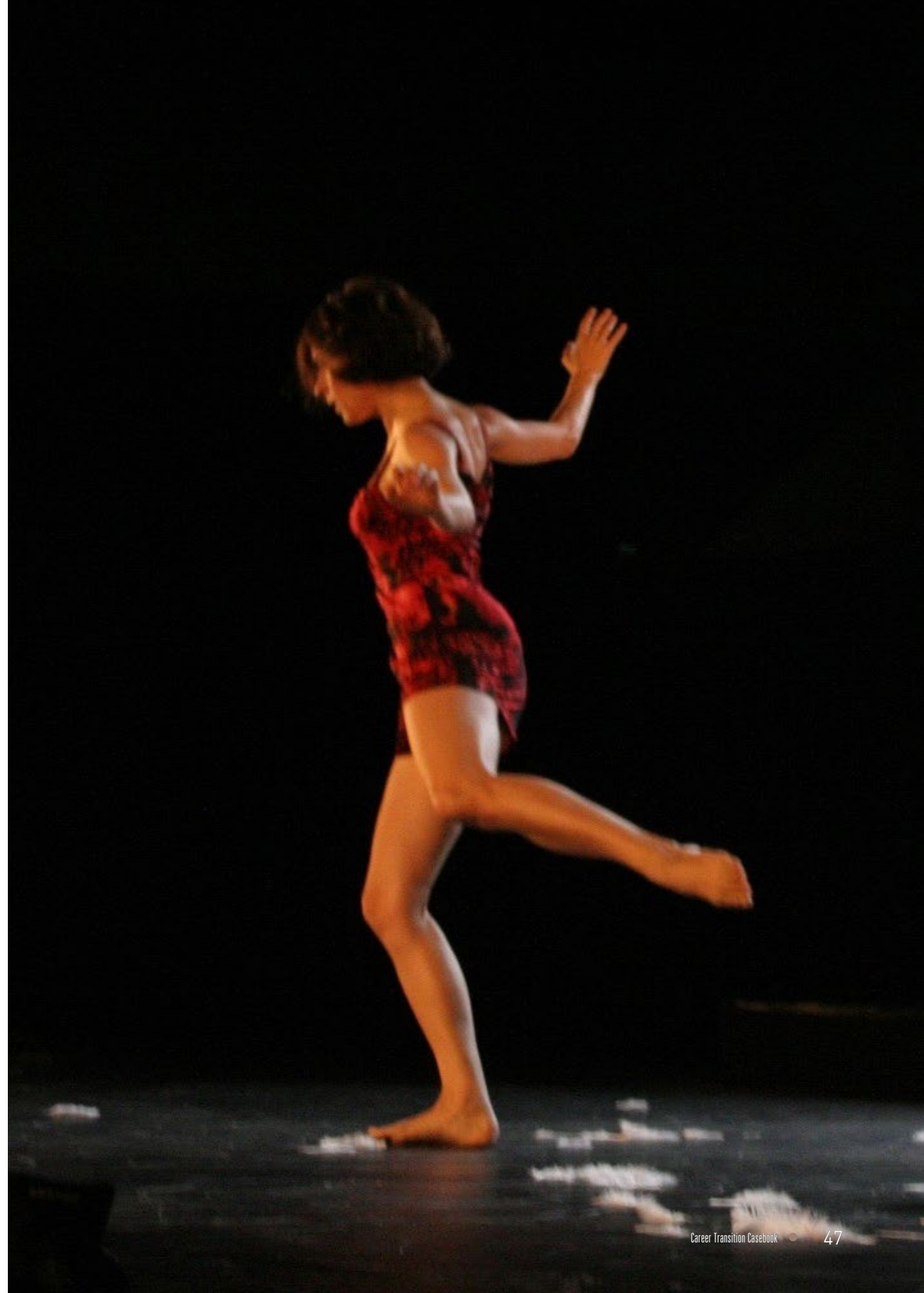
Thanks to my German origins, my experiences in the USA and my life in France, I already had some linguistic skills and knew where I wanted to turn. I wanted to stay in the world of the spectacle, while using my language skills. I thought about a position of interpreter, in a large theatre or opera house, in charge of welcoming foreign companies.

With this as my objective, I enrolled in a master's degree in specialized translation. Those two years were very difficult: being with young students, continuing to work while also studying, and looking after my two children. Still, I enjoyed learning. It felt like I was growing up, progressing into adulthood. Things are simple when you are a dancer in a company. You are 'taken in charge' and all you have to do is dance! Those two years spent doing a master's degree were also necessary for me to feel legitimate, and see for myself that I had skills as an interpreter.

Today, I work as an interpreter or translator for the Goethe Institute or theatres. I also produce subtitles for theatres using a specific software programme. At the same time, I'm still an assistant choreographer as well as a part-time instructor.

The rigor that I have acquired during my dance career have helped me in my work as a translator, especially in a quest for perfection. I can be efficient, find solutions at once and improvise. However, this job also requires a lot of preparatory work in order to feel at ease, and thus I need to learn a lot of vocabulary. My knowledge about the stage as a dancer is also a great help for me when establishing communications between French and foreign technical or artistic teams. The tie between the stage and my current activity can be seen on several levels. Just like when I was a dancer, I am at the service of a content that has to be transmitted. But I do not become completely invisible, there is always a question of interpretation that colours the source text.

Constantly running about in search of work is exhausting. But it is vital for me to keep one foot in the world of dance. It is my home. I do not feel frustrated about no longer being on stage, in the spotlight. What matters to me is contributing to an artistic production.



LAURA MARIN

Lawyer



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I danced as a Professional at the Ballet Gulbenkian in Portugal, Ballet de l'Opéra de Lyon in France, Ballet Staatstheater München in Germany, Ballet Deutsche Oper am Rhein Düsseldorf in Germany, Introdans in the Netherlands. and Ballet Staatstheater Hannover in Germany. I had some projects as free-lancer with Jérôme Bel and Marie-Claude Pietragalla in France.

I had the chance to dance in pieces choreographed by : Jiri Kylián, Merce Cunningham, William Forsythe, Ohad Naharin, Angelin Preljocaj, Nils Christie, Maguy Marin, Jean-Christophe Maillot, Jérôme Bel, Odile Duboc, Marie Chouinard, Hervé Robbe, Mauro Bigonzetti, Rui Horta, Gilles Jobin, Didy Veldman, Itzik Galili, Cesc Gelabert, Regina Van Berkel, Juorma Uotinen, Ramón Oller, Henrique Rodvalho, Tere O'Connor, Edd Wubbe, Ted Brandsen, Kirsten Debrok, Rodrigo Pederneiras, Robert North, Pietragalla, Paulo Ribeiro, Philip Taylor, Juan Carlos García.

My artistic formation was done in the Conservatory of Ballet in Valencia, Spain, and I continued my studies with a scholarship at Académie de Danse Classique de Monte-Carlo and École de Maurice Béjart (Rudra), Lausanne. I am also earned with the teacher diplôme in France Diplôme d'État de Professeur de Danse (DE).

I finished dancing in difficult circumstances. The direction of the Opera of Lyon was not comprehensive with the fact that I was starting my studies at the university with resultant absences. They compelled me to stop my career.

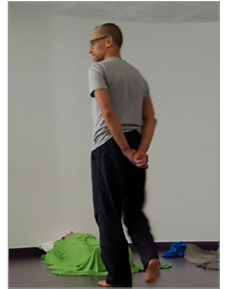
So I first finished my Master of Arts Management in the Universidad Complutense de Madrid with a master's thesis about the Professional Transition of Dancers. I worked for a while as executive assistant at the Centre National de la Danse in the department of continuous training. But I wanted to go further in my studies and started from zero at the Sorbonne Law University of Paris. I specialized myself in Intellectual Property. After seven years of studies I passed the exams in France to become a Lawyer.

I just started in Paris to work in a Lawyer's Office in its Intellectual Property department (Fidufrance Avocats). I am mother of two little daughters (3 and 5 years old). I feel very involved with the subject of Professional Reorientation of Dancer and hope one day to work on it as a lawyer.



MARCELO DE ATHAYDE LOPES

Dance Therapist / Psychotherapist



I didn't come to dance therapy by chance. Dance has always been therapeutic for me. It has allowed me to understand myself. I discovered dance during a university sports cursus, in Brazil. For an exam, we had to devise a choreography. The jury was extremely touched, and my teacher told me: "Marcelo, you are a dancer". This teacher obtained for me a grant, so that I could train in classical, modern, and modern jazz dance. I also discovered what was called at the time "spontaneous dance", which is dance based on improvisation. It was this focus on improvisation, creativity, and this approach to the body that were to become pivotal to my entire career. Firstly as a dancer, then as a therapist.

Dance became my professional project. There were not many boys, and I was offered work, which made me proud. It seemed obvious to me. I wanted to enter into this world of dance. Dance had captured me. During my career as a dancer, I never wondered about what I was going to do later on. I didn't think about where my other desires might lie. For me, the transition of a dancer meant either becoming a dance teacher, or directing a company, or else setting up a dance school. But I didn't want to do any of those things! So, what to do? It is very important for dancers to benefit from guidance. Dancers need to understand during their training that dance is only temporary, and they should start thinking and seeking out information for their future early on.

At about the age of 37, I started to feel that my body was no longer responding so well, and I wanted to discover something else. The guidance that I was given at the Centre National de la Danse was of great help. I thus benefited from a skills assessment which was vitally important. This assessment allowed me to stop and take time out to look at my life, examine the skills that I had acquired, and those that I wanted to develop.

This skills assessment gave me the chance to discover art therapy. I didn't even know that it existed. It also let me understand that I wanted to help other people and accompany them. As a dancer, the distance with the audience had never satisfied me; I needed contact and exchanges.

I started a training course to become an art therapist. At the same time, I had to work in a store selling materials for designers. It was tough, but I was happy. Little by little, while continuing my studies, I found work as a dance therapist in a hospital, for 1-, and then 3 days a week, and I was able to drop my work as a salesman.

Currently, I work too much, but that suits me. I'm a dance therapist, but also a psychotherapist (specialising in EMDR - Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing). I work both as a selfemployed therapist, in my private practice, and in the psychiatric departments of hospitals. I love my work and the fact that I can help so many people! I am continuing my training so as to deepen my therapeutic approach.



MATTHIEU BAJOLET

Production Manager



I don't have the feeling of having undergone a transition. A transition implies that you stop doing something so as to do something completely different. But, for me, I experienced it simply as a pathway that opened up, one that I had already initiated and am now continuing to follow.

Right back when I started training as a dancer, I really wanted to know what I was going to do afterwards. Being a dancer means constructing: a choreography, a meaning, a show, but also relationships and connections. Very quickly, I wanted to know what I would construct when I would no longer be a dancer. I knew that I wanted to be a performer and dance for others. I knew that I didn't want to be a choreographer or a dance teacher. Right back in the Conservatoire, I had that in mind.

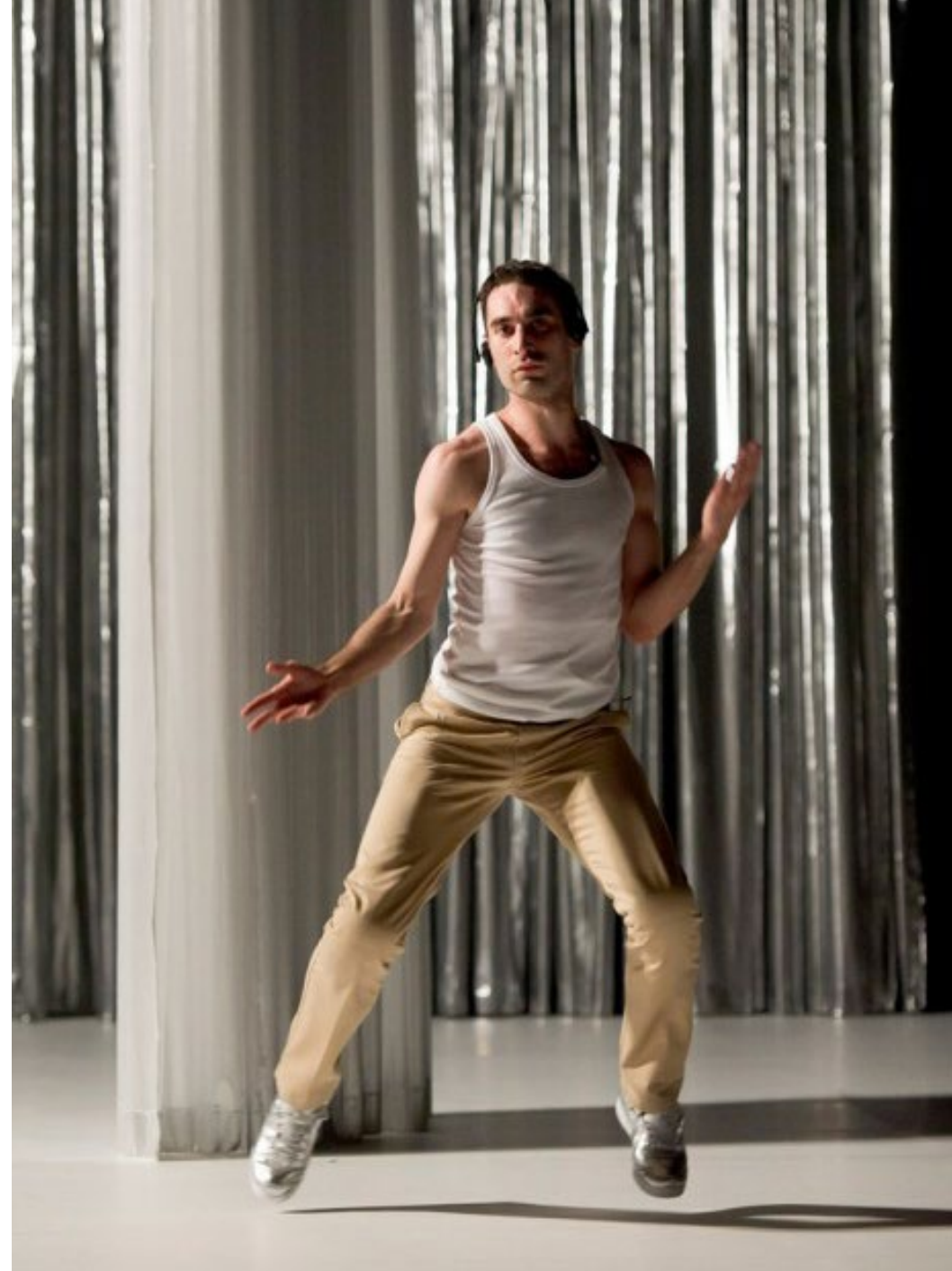
For 12 years, I was a performer, constantly looking out to work with new people. Each time I left a project it led me towards other, unexpected projects. I was never afraid to refuse a project. You shouldn't think "this is the chance of a lifetime". That would mean that there was just one life. But a life is made up of a multitude of encounters, chances and possibilities.

At the age of 34, it became clear for me that I wanted to stop dancing and do something else. But it was still vital for me to remain in the world of choreography. I tried to see how I could continue to accompany and support choreographers. I had no fear of doing administrative work. And the idea of making decisions appealed to me.

I wanted to go back to college, but despite my 6 years spent studying dancing, university degree equivalences were hard to obtain. It took me a long time to find a course that suited me. In the end, I was able to sign up at the Institute for European Studies, where I took a master's course in "Cultural Policies and Management in Europe". After this course, I started taking care of the logistics in a production office and worked as a production manager. The artist Ivana Müller needed someone for her company, and so I joined it.

I felt completely fulfilled in this new role. Being in charge of production and an administrator means: enabling. A lot of commitment is required for a project to work out, and for the voice of an artist to be heard in society. There are a lot of things to do if all is to run smoothly, but I love being 'drowned' in my to-do list.

In my work, I make use of qualities I developed during my career as a dancer: knowing how to adapt,



cooperate, learn very quickly, make things possible, and have no fear to create. The professional milieu can sometimes convey the impression that a former dancer will have problems being a good administrator. So you have to prove that the opposite is true, and emerge from the role that the milieu has allotted you.

I had no worries when imagining the day I'd stop dancing, but I am also happy to see that artists can dance again later. It's liberating.

ROZENN JACON

Feldenkrais Method Instructor



For 5 years, I have been teaching the Feldenkrais method. Initially, I trained in this method to help myself in my practice as a dancer. The Feldenkrais method is extremely useful for dancers, providing them with movements for which the body has been designed, while searching for a certain neutrality and fluidity, and also breathing and posture. It is a very gentle, reparative method, thus forming reconciliation with dance, which can sometimes be painful. The Feldenkrais method has gradually become a professional project. First, I trained for myself, and then I wanted to transmit what I had discovered.

I always worked both as a dancer and a dance teacher, in both jazz and classic. I then turned towards contemporary dance and started creating my own choreographies for a young audience. When I had my first child, I stopped teaching because it required a lot of preparatory work as well as being available in the evening and weekends. I continued with my shows for the young and also started teaching the Feldenkrais method, which I had discovered while I was pregnant.

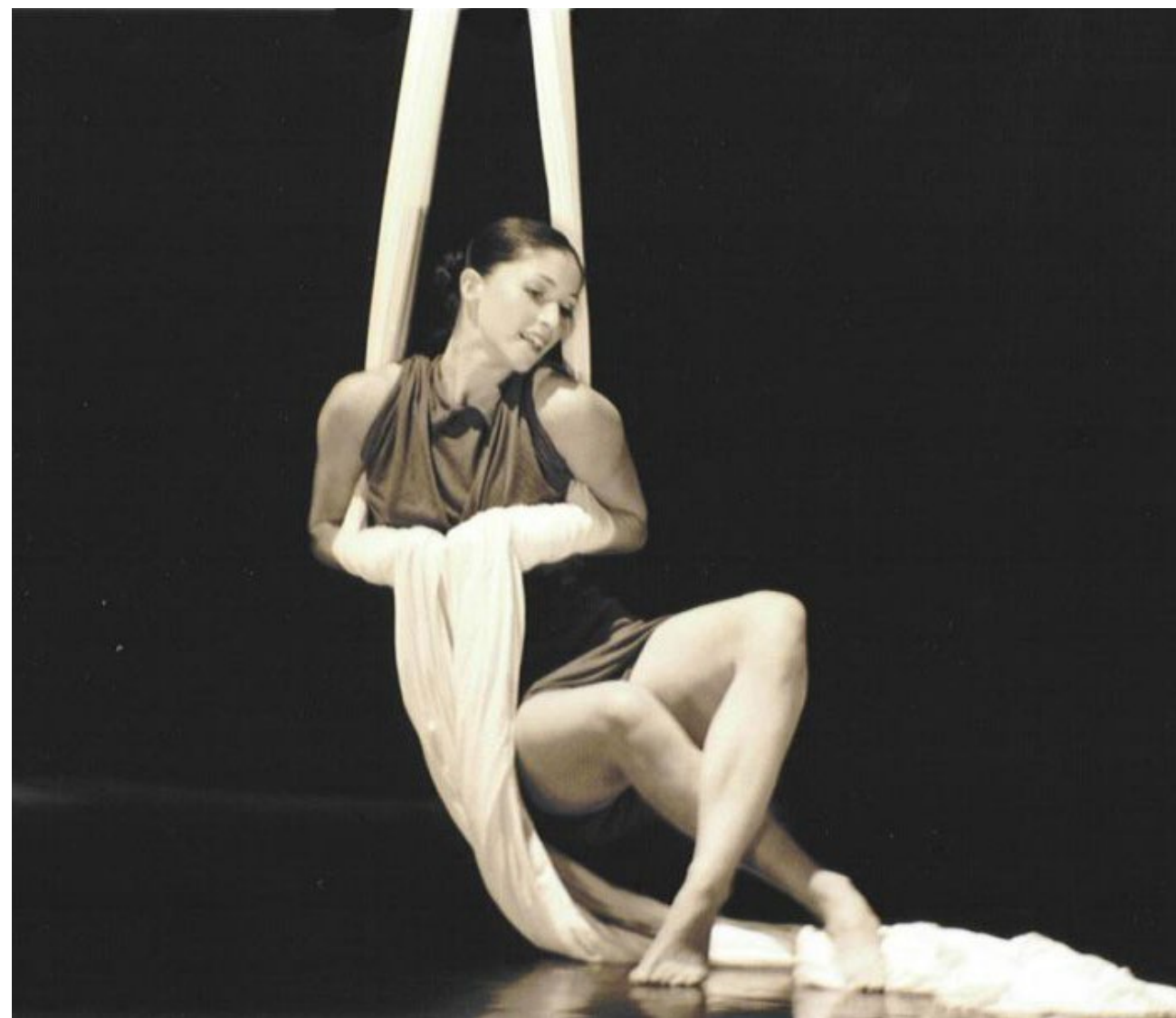
After the birth of my second child, my family life became my priority. I wanted to continue working, but I didn't want this to be detrimental to the upbringing of my children. I made a decision to stop dancing but kept on teaching the Feldenkrais method as well as barre au sol lessons.

The problem is that, today, I am not earning a decent living with my Feldenkrais practice. This is in part because of my own choices: I am self-employed and have decided to work mostly during the day with the exception of one evening per week and one weekend per month. I keep a schedule that allows me to pick-up my children from school! However, I get the impression that even if I worked full-time, it still would not be enough to make a living.

This is a general problem: the Feldenkrais method is still not very widespread in France, so there are very few lessons that are available for me to teach. At the same time, the cost of rent in Paris is very high. I cannot pay myself a salary from this activity, and I can continue only with support from my partner.

Only a few Feldenkrais practitioners manage to make a living out of their activity, and because of this, I am skeptical about the possibility of becoming a professional practitioner. There is a crucial question you should ask yourself when making a choice for your second career: how will I earn a living?

Transition also raises the question about how ready you are to distance yourself from dance. I never envisaged an immediate and complete disconnection. I prefer to think about it as keeping distance. I may draw away from dance or return towards it. Whichever way I choose, dance remains my home. It is still



there and it still thrills me. I dreamed of being a dancer, I became one, and I do not want to imagine an "afterwards".

Today, Feldenkrais suits me perfectly: I love teaching, I love helping people to feel better in their bodies. These are the same dimensions that I liked about dance. This method nourishes my life. I am doubtlessly at a new step in my transition, with questions about my choices, which may lead to another period of training.



Stiftung TANZ – Transition Center Germany accompanies and supports dancers from the beginning of their education through every stage of their career up until the conclusion of their process of transition. Stiftung Tanz is open for all professional dancers, whether they are employed or freelance, at city theaters, state theaters, musical theaters, in film or on TV.

Stiftung TANZ – Transition Center Germany wants to advance and support dancers and dance practitioners.

FIONE A. RETTENBERGER

Undergraduate in International Studies



When I was 15 years old, I decided to become a dancer. After my ballet training in Mannheim, London, and Hamburg, I got my first job at the age of 20. When I tried to attend university after living as a dancer for 7 years, the university entrance system did not acknowledge my qualification as a ballet school graduate. No teacher had informed me of that back then. When my contract with Hessisches Staatstheater Wiesbaden came to an end, I completed my social studies undergraduate degree at a university in London, but the German system did not acknowledge that either. I ended up taking university entrance exams in all of the federal states.

At the end of 2010, I was in a severe car accident but I did manage go back on stage. Half a year passed by, and there was a notice for a dance foundation workshop at the theatre. I took a day off with my colleague to attend the workshop in Berlin. I liked the atmosphere in which you could discuss about certain possibilities freely, and I learned that the age limit for an undergraduate course was 30 according to the federal job education support act. After listening to the lecture offered by Dr. Heike Scharff in Wiesbaden, I met her immediately in the cafeteria. I told the story of how I had suffered through physical and mental pain after the accident, and that I was in despair as a dancer. In return, Dr. Scharff asked why I couldn't abandon my career as a dancer. That comment was a reverberating sound of liberty to me. I had lacked the courage to do so before.

I discovered myself through my job. To me, the job was not something that earned wages, but my life itself. Empowered by the workshop, I took on several practice sessions after my contract expired. I worked at a ballet management office in Wiesbaden, and in a dramaturgy project. After six weeks, a Schleswig-Holstein music festival agency tried to recruit me but I chose to go to university instead. During that time, I began to think that it would be good for me to find work on an international scale after my studies.

As I continued with my studies, I decided to take international studies as my major and philology as my minor. Currently, I am attending Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen. My golden years were in my university years. It was hard to enroll but now all my energy and time is spent on studying. This job feels like freedom to me.

I do not feel any desire to be idle or the need for mood changes. I am happy to conduct research on various subjects. The things I do best as a dancer are training and concentrating. I concentrated on studying not only the required textbooks but also other data on diverse fields of study. That is how I acquire knowledge that I can use later on. That is what I have learned through my years as a dancer.



HANS-GEORG LENHART

Rehabilitation Therapist



Something happened when I was 13. My mother saw me moving my body in a creative and free way along to the music in a discotheque and took me to a national education center's jazz gymnastics class. I was the only teenager there. The national education center in Duisburg and the international dance workshop I participated in during the vacation period was all the education I had in dancing before I entered the world of dance.

After I completed an intermediate course and got concerned with an unsure future, the dance teacher from Folkwang-Hochschule in Essen recommended that I attend the audition there, and I passed the entrance exam at the age of 17. After graduating in 1989, I went to Brussels to dance in the projects of La Theatre Royal de la Monnaie and the Mark Morris Dance Group for over two years. I also carried out a personal project and the Schlömer project. When Joachim Schlömer became the choreography director at the Theater Ulm, I followed him there. I participated in independent performances in the Netherlands and Germany, and produced my own work along the way. It had to work very hard. In 2003, I participated in the Glyndebourne Opera production of Peter Sellar's 'Idomeneo'. It was choreographed by Mark Morris and conducted by Sir Simon Rattle. Rattle let me feel like I was flying on the stage. I felt the limitless freedom of dance. Rattle followed me around. He held onto me and stayed by me.

A few days later, I got a fracture in a motorbike accident. I wished to continue dancing, but my body could barely dance again. I had to think earnestly about my second career in life. First, I needed to break free from the constricting idea that 'I am a dancer and I am nothing without it.' Then I got masseuse training with the insurance payment I received after the accident. Working as a masseuse was fun and it enabled me to use my best skills. I examined people carefully, followed their movements carefully, and could remember the whole process. I also had no problem being in contact with people, so I worked as a freelance masseuse at a gym once my training was finished.

During that time, I realized that I was working only for my own satisfaction. I wanted more than that. I wanted to help others. However, I was disheartened by the public rehabilitation therapist qualification exam which was notoriously difficult. First, I told myself as a dancer, "learning new things is completely different from standing in front of a bar every day. Let's be open toward possibilities and examine them always." I registered at an institute to prepare for the exam and passed it after a year of study. I also registered as a rehabilitation therapist at a German osteopathy institute. While I was attending the Folkwang-Hochschule, I learned osteopathy extensively, and this became the core of my second career.



However, money was needed in order to complete a 4-year university course in Berlin. I went to the German dancer career transition center, Stiftung TANZ. They sent me to the Kathe Dorsch Foundation and I was able to receive financial support. Later on, I found another source of support, and was able to receive it in my second year. When I became a father and had no sure source of financial support, Stiftung TANZ offered me another chance at a scholarship, and it was thanks to this that I was able to complete my undergraduate course and started a master's course. This course it set to be completed in 2017.

I do not have any regrets about not being able to dance. The job I loved was the act of dancing together as well as the production process. The moment in which dance and music harmonize into one entity is what I loved the most. As a rehabilitation therapist, I am not alone. There is always somebody in front of me. A rehabilitation therapist works with the muscles of the patient. In a way, you can say that it is also an act of dancing together. That is why I love my current job.

LUISA SANCHO ESCANERO

Master's Degree Candidate in Comparative Theatre Studies



When I had completed my ballet training, I did not even have a high school diploma. My famous teacher Maria de Ávila told the graduates to "Go out into the world!" and I did. Six months after working in Spain for two years, I took the graduation exam. I was 26 years old then, and I enrolled in an English Literature course. When the arts major courses were rearranged due to the lack of professors around year 2000, I was able to get credits for my 7 years of ballet training. I was the first dancer in Spain to take the exam, and I was qualified as a teacher with my career and university degree. In 2010, I enrolled in a master's degree program at the age of 35. I could have danced for five more years, but I decided to take up studying full-time.

However, in 2011, the Spanish government raised the university tuition fees by 70 percent. The salary I was receiving from the Staatstheater Mainz was not enough. I was too old and too employed to receive the Spanish government's scholarship. Then I learned about the dancer career transition center in Germany, Stiftung TANZ. I received support from the foundation three times. It saved me. It was a drop of water granted to the thirsty in the desert. My solutions were to never expect someone to find a way for me and to always be on active search. I did not step back. It was never easy but I do not regret any of the decisions I made.

Ever since I was employed at Staatstheater Mainz, I was always looking for chances for further studies, so I studied whenever I had the time. Even taking the entrance exams at German universities was hard since I was a foreigner. The educational program I found in Barcelona was not valid in Europe. However, the course at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya was, so I immediately registered into the Comparative Theatre course at the Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia. I was a little skeptical about the course being online, but I soon felt confident about myself and produced good academic results. The meetings with the professors were also successful. Many famous experts presented lectures in my department. I am also fortunate enough to study philosophy now. I received useful advice from the Dramaturgy professor at the former Forcitta Dance Company. I had been invited to work there under a contract. I wanted to enroll in the doctoral course after the master's. After that, I want to work in a research institution. Being a student is wonderful, but it is a process that requires an immense amount of study. Studying awakened many desires within me.



I am on a path always searching for someone or something. I can make changes. The feeling that there should be 'something different' and the feeling of a performance which is brilliant even in my eyes. I will not let go of the many footprints in my career. That is the way a person who exposes oneself to new circumstances must take in life.

I thought about what I needed in order to finish my studies. And I found the answer close by. When I was working at Staatstheater Mainz, I practiced everyday without resting. The consistent practice and fighting spirit that I held onto during the process of creating, searching and practicing as a dancer and a choreographer, is what I need in my new life.

MICHAL FATURA

Art Assistant Director



When I was 10 years old, I went to a private dance school in my hometown, Žilina, Slovakia. When I turned 14, my teacher recommended that I attend the dance boarding school in Košice, and I made up my mind to start ballet in earnest. I often heard from then on that I had started to take the professional ballet course too late in life and because of that, I lost confidence over time. Nonetheless, I trained and practiced hard. I enrolled in the ballet academy in Bratislava and graduated with great grades in the graduation exam. After graduation, I got a job in Prague. Later on, I went to an audition in Berlin and was recruited by the Staatsballett Berlin.

During my years in Corps de Ballet, I got a foot injury and had to take six months off. My life revolved around the theatre and my friends, but soon I grew skeptical about such a simple life. When I returned to the theater, my feelings about dance had changed. While I was in extreme agony but lacked the strength to leave the place, my contract expired and was not renewed.

At the audition of the Friedrichstadt-Palast, I made it to the final stage but decided to discontinue my career in ballet. I examined myself from another perspective and sought advice from a friend who worked in advertising. I got a good impression from that field – great products, visual, and humorous. I had always liked such things, so I gathered information and looked for a school. The Miami Ad School in Berlin suited my interests perfectly. This school was an international one, and offered programs in two languages. Ten days after the performance season, I started my studies.

I needed the tuition fee for a 2-year program, but could not receive any support. After much consideration about whether I had to give it all up, I found Stiftung TANZ, a German dancer career transition center, and succeeded in receiving financial support after a long interview. The school seemed like a part-time job for me. I carried out practices at agencies in Beijing, Prague and Berlin, drew up an entry portfolio, and graduated. There were many areas of work but I applied to an ad agency. I was simultaneously accepted by many famous ad agencies but did not wish to leave Berlin for another place. I consider Berlin to be my home.

I left Slovakia 8 years ago to enter a large ballet company in Germany, and have been working as an art assistant director since 2015. I am happy going to work every day. On the first page of my portfolio is a photo of me looking out to the audience from an empty stage with the line 'The new chapter starts now' above it. I am dreaming of a transformation from a dancer to an art director.





The Dancers' Career Development Center is a foundation under the Korean Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism that was established in 2007 for dance welfare and career development. Around 4,300 dancers are registered members.

Career Transition

This program is designed to provide a wider variety of career transition choices to dancers, who retire at an early age. Applicants set a career transition target and field, and establish a study plan. Financial support is provided to cover educational expenses after a screening process.

Injury Rehabilitation and Prevention

Financial support is provided to pay for hospital medical expenses and rehabilitation treatment expenses that are incurred from injuries that dancers suffer during a dance performance or rehearsal. Also, rehabilitation trainers are dispatched to dance companies to help provide medical treatment for dancer injury prevention.

Dancers' Job Market

Dance companies that are planning dance performances are connected with dancers who wish to become a part of the performances. Dancers are thus presented with an opportunity to work with competent dance companies.

EIL-ARN KO

Rehabilitation Trainer, Korean National Ballet



I encountered dance for the first time when I began learning Korean Dance in my second year of high school. I learned Korean Dance but the ballet class that I took once a week excited me more. I made up my mind to change my major to Ballet once I entered university, but I was not accepted. Having unsuccessfully gone through a lot of trouble with regards to trying to change my major, I dropped out of the university and got re-admitted to a ballet course in Sejong University.

I had a firm belief that ballet was what I had to learn despite its difficulty, and I thought that it was my everything. Thanks to the help I received from fellow students at the university along with my own dedication, my skills grew swiftly, I was accepted as a member of the Korean National Ballet. I appeared in performances such as 'Swan Lake', 'Giselle', 'Le Corsaire', 'Spartacus', and 'Romeo and Juliet'. Back then, I only ever experienced ecstasy when dancing.

However, it was not easy to work at the ballet company. I suffered from various injuries, including a ruptured knee cartilage during the rehearsal for Boris Eifman's 'Musagete'. After getting injured while doing a turn, I was admitted to the hospital for two months and was basically considered to be retired. Since I had vaguely set the plan to retire from ballet at the age of 35 and had not thought about my life after that, leaving the ballet company left me in a state of desolateness like the darkness behind a closed curtain.

When I decided to retire, I had a family with a child to support, so I had no time to leisurely think about my future. Act Two of my life started with various jobs unrelated to ballet. However, my heart did tell me that I wanted to remain in the field of dance and do something related to it.

When I was filled with hopelessness and confusion, I heard about the dancer career transition support program of the Dancers' Career Development Center. And this news turned my life into a different direction.

I applied for the Dancers' Career Development Center's 'Dance Rehabilitation Trainer Training Course', and prepared for a new life with the support of a full tuition. That said, the theory classes on becoming a rehabilitation trainer were particularly difficult for me, as I had learned and experienced only ballet for the past 15 years. The unfamiliar medical terms were so foreign to me that I kept forgetting them despite much memorization. Nevertheless, I could not give it up since my life and my family's future were at stake. I went to study rooms consistently to study and successfully completed the theory course. The practice course that followed was even more difficult than that of theory.



I worked at the hospital for the same hours as the other rehabilitation trainers and helped normal people and athletes receive rehabilitation training. I learned how to clean and use the exercise machines, and even did a presentation once a week with original anatomy texts. I could not sleep on the days before the presentations due to the necessary and extensive preparations. I divided up my time in order to learn theory and practice, and whenever felt I had reached my limit, I thought about the faces of my family.

What I regretted the most during the process of preparing to become a rehabilitation trainer was when I realized that I could have not retired and could have still been dancing had I known earlier about the rehabilitation knowledge I learned later.

My life as a dancer was already over, so I wanted to help and prevent younger dancers from having the same difficulties as I did. I passed all the theory, practice and examinations and finally entered the Korean National Ballet again in 2009 as a rehabilitation trainer.

I work at the Korean National Ballet now as a rehabilitation trainer and not a dancer, and whenever I see young dancers expressing their passion on stage, I wish to advise them to start preparing for their later career transitions while on the stage already, and not off the stage. Life does not hold one's hands in between Acts, and continues on. If you are not prepared, a long period of aimless wandering could await you. As the first step to preparing for your remaining life, which is likely longer than that of your life as a dancer, you should know what you are good at and what role you can take in your field of interest.

GUI-SUB PARK

Photographer



I became a member of the Korean National Ballet in 2006, and left in 2010. It was a little too early a time for a dancer who had not been severely injured to leave the stage. The biggest reason why I left the Korean National Ballet was because I had a lot of curiosity about and interest in various fields other than dance. I had always been inquisitive about other worlds and other things, so I started a small fashion business with my friends in 2007. I had no knowledge of business, and only had an interest in photography, so I encountered 'photography' for the first time through this business.

I danced at the Korean National Ballet during the day and learned photography during the evening by visiting studios and learning through books and actual fieldwork, but learning photography was harder than learning a new dance for me. There was limited equipment available for taking photos, and limited physical strength to do two jobs at the same time.

After studying for months both day and night, I started to learn photography by myself through practice. I could produce considerable results through my photos and my business. However, my friends and I had to face hardships due to the fact that we had no knowledge about required matters such as tax laws. We lost people, money and time, and we failed for the first time at the pinnacle of success. Through this experience, I was determined to spend more time in photography than in ballet, and decided to leave the Korean National Ballet. I believed that hope could shine through even despair. An agency in Japan contacted me, and I could encounter dance photography thanks to a good friend of mine.

My second chance had come faster than I could have expected. I believed that I had found something that only I could do well, and that could belong to me only. It was dance and photography combined. Existing photographers had great skills in lighting and photography, but had an incomplete understanding of dance and physical movements, and there were many former dancers who had made career transitions to performance photography but none of them made the use of 'images'. I created such images by putting fashion and dance together.

I tried hard to make images similar to magazine images rather than creating or inventing new things. Imitation for creation. That was all I could do then. I thought it was an unexpectedly good beginning, but a thirst inside of me was growing, and a crisis occurred once again behind my back.

I stepped out of the performance halls wanting to enter society with my photography, but having had no connections, experience or knowledge outside of the area of dance, it was not easy. I was rejected from a meeting that selected my photography portfolio since I did not have any previous career experience in photography. I was embittered and angry, but such was the real world.



Then yet another crisis hit. Concerns that I could not continue on with my path in photography consumed me. The belief I had in myself wavered, and I fell into a slump. At that time I thought once again about what, amongst all my possessions, was the most precious and valuable to me. The answer came not long after.

What I had around me that was most precious were my fellow dancers at Korean National Ballet. The best dancers in Korea were right by my side. I made images of Korea's best dancers with my camera. I endeavored to capture the expressing of beautiful human bodies. I explained about my work to all my former colleagues one by one, with a trembling voice. The 10 colleagues that were in contact willingly consented to my request, and the 'SHADOW' series was created thanks to them. It was then that I became known to the world as Photographer Park Gui-Sub.

From my days as a dancer to my current path as a photographer, I have received and am receiving help from numerous people. The job of casting familiar clothes and putting on new ones is a nerve-wracking and fearful experience as if all the uncertainty in the world is mine alone.

However, all the dancers including me must live a life after dancing. No change can be made if they do not make the first step due to fear and obscure sight. Life might be easy as a fish in stagnant water, but when the stagnant puddle dries up, the fish would also. If you understand your advantages and disadvantages well, and do not fear failure, that itself will be a great asset in life. When having to make major life decisions yet the fear of the future seems unavoidable, look around: The source of your empowerment could be waiting nearby.

HAE-IN CHOI

Employee, Korea Arts Management Service Center



I had an admiration for ballerinas that danced on stage in spotlights, and I dreamed of being one by studying ballet in a university. It was a long-held dream for me, but the dream became sullied with concerns as the injury in my knee worsened. From then on, my real dream began. I found new value in the process of staging, planning and promoting performances for the dancers. Many dancers including myself might easily think that only the occupation of the dancers is important. However, that is far from the truth.

There are planners that bring the stages into reality, as well as designers in various areas such as stages, lights, and costumes. Staff members that work to operate the stage are also a crucial part of the performance. Additionally, the rehabilitation therapists that help the dancers give their all on the stage are also very important. The audience might be able to see only the dancers, but there are many components that make a performance possible and only when these components function fully, the performance can take place successfully and impressively.

I dreamed of becoming an international planner who creates international networks between dance organizations and choreographers. However, I was soon intimidated by such a huge goal. I had much affection for and understanding of the world of dance, but I did not know about what other capabilities I needed to have in order to become a planner. In order to make up for the skills that I lacked, I dreamed of attending a graduate course in a related field. Performance and visual arts classes were included in the courses at many universities, and they offered the required knowledge in a plethora of different art fields. I attended an arts and cultural management program at Hongik University's Graduate School of Business, which had an interdisciplinary curriculum with England's Northumbria University to enable the growth of one's internationality.

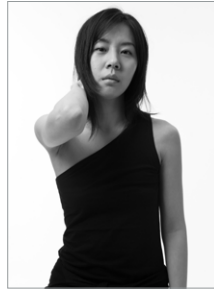
The Dancers' Career Development Center's career transition support program encouraged my new dream. Korean graduate schools have high tuition fees and not enough scholarships. When I was hesitant due to such circumstances, the Dancers' Career Development Center supported me with educational fees which was a huge support for me in taking on this new challenge. Thanks to such support, I received a Business MBA in August, and am now on my way to becoming an international planner by working at the Korea Arts Management Service Center affiliated with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism.



The process of dreaming of something other than the stage can be difficult for people who have been dancers for so long. The matter of choosing a different path after a long period of hard training is not easy, and it requires a lot of courage. The support from the Dancers' Career Development Center encouraged my dream, and assisted me in a practical way. It was my most reliable assisting party in realizing my dream. We dream. But that dream is neither single nor eternal. I sincerely encourage the new dreams of many dancers.

JI-MIN PARK

Freelance Interior Designer



I graduated from Korea National University of Arts and went to England in order to experience a bigger world. I completed a one-year Contemporary Dance Performance VERVE 09 MA course at the Northern School of Contemporary Dance. There, I overcame language and cultural barriers and worked with choreographers from other countries, and started my career as a dancer throughout Europe. After returning to Korea, I worked as a freelance dancer using my experience in Europe, and passed the Korea National Contemporary Dance Company's audition for a foreign choreographer's performance. Beginning from Joelle Bouvier's 'What About Love', I performed as a full member in Hong Sung-Yop's 'The Blood in Horses' 'Eyes', 'HOSITAMTAM' and 'Suspicious Paradise'.

I have always had much interest in interior design, so I kept searching for beautiful and spectacular spaces, lighting and props. For one month in the winter of 2009, I spent at my friend's house in Stockholm before an audition for a Swedish dance company, and this stay became the definitive opportunity for me to become an interior designer. I had looked around this unfamiliar country's life style; warm spaces, beautifully arranged furniture, and thought about how enjoyable it would be to make such beautiful spaces. I had gone to Sweden to dance, and had found what I truly wanted to do. After shedding all familiar things, I was able to find what that suited me most. I made the decision to leave Korea National Contemporary Dance Company to become an interior designer who would design prosperous lifestyles for customers.

Keeping in line with my motto, "Though you may regret, try" I registered in an interior design academy. The plan of learning the technical side of such design wavered from the start. The world of interior design puts products and peoples' lives together in the most reasonable and aesthetic way. I felt constricted by limiting myself to learning only technical methods when it came to interior design, and I began to think that I wanted to receive specialized and systematic education that dealt with a deeper understanding of space. Even more so, I felt empty about the fact that I did not major in interior design nor had a related degree. I had even considered attending graduate school, but that was difficult due to the high tuition fee.

As my dilemma worsened, I came across some news about the Dancers' Career Development Center's career transition training program, and luckily became selected among the many applicants. I was accepted to a spatial design program at Hongik University's Graduate School of Design Contents, and as of this writing am still taking the course.



I am no longer a dancer. I am now a student majoring in spatial design and a freelance interior designer. When I was a dancer, I used to convey joy and emotion to the audience, and now I'm conveying emotions by creating life spaces. The job of granting emotion, joy and convenience to people makes me happy and proud.

My new life has barely begun and I have only taken a few steps towards it. However, I am deeply grateful to the Dancers' Career Development Center for helping me in realizing my desire for a related degree and professional knowledge. The way to show such gratitude would be to make beautiful and happy spaces for more people. I will live a confident life after graduation as an amazing interior designer, one who suggests and presents new lifestyles to my customers. That would be the best I can do. I will keep doing my best throughout my life.

KYOUNG-SOO KIM

Instructor, ABC Program



I majored in dance when I was a university student, and spent my 30s creating and practicing performances after establishing a dance company with those whom I shared common interests with. My colleagues and I made performances that talked about the lives of mankind, Korea's history of division and segmentation, unemployment and alienation of labor in our society, and the lives of our youths. We also performed consolatory dances for the people who had been unjustly sacrificed and shunned in our society. I took on the role of the dance company's training staff in charge of assisting the skill enhancement of younger dancers. The life of a dancer is very isolated, and yet the most meaningful out of all unusual lives.

However, as I passed through my 30s and came into my 40s, my physical ability and dancing skills were not what they used to be. I thought about making a career transition since it became more and more difficult to be satisfied with my dancing. I felt the need for a systematic training method after so many years of having taught ballet and modern dance. That was when I encountered the 'ABC Program Instructor Training Course', which is a physical training for actors and a part of the Dancers' Career Development Center career transition program.

I learned about the program by taking classes, but what surprised me the most was that my body was retaining its balance. It was an interesting program and I developed a strong belief in it since I could feel its usefulness through the experiences I had with my own body. After completing the ABC Program Instructor Training Course, I worked as an assistant instructor for the Instructor Training Course in 2014 and learned the program all over again.

From late 2014, I have been working as an instructor for the ABC Program for Actors at the Chungmu Art Center Musical Academy. I have taught the 8-class course for the sixth time in the four years since. I have met many prospective musical actors, and have shared advice on what the dancers would like to be on the stage based on physical training and the 20 years I spent on creating and performing.

I always say that anyone who gets on the stage has to be in complete control of themselves, and that complete control begins with physical training. However, I am still shocked to find that prospective musical actors have more often than not had no physical training whatsoever. Whenever I run into such cases, I feel sorry that the ABC program is not wide-spread enough throughout the field of dance in Korea.



Better performances and better foundations for dancers to have longer careers can be created through the ABC program. I hope that prioritizing scientific and systematic understanding of one's own body through the ABC program is proliferated more as opposed to solely learning technical skills. I am now a part-time employee working as a short-term instructor twice a year at Chungmu Art Center, but I am continuing on with my efforts to balance my career as an ABC program instructor and a performer. Also, I have another life goal of modifying the ABC program and turning it into a perfect physical training program that can be used and spread consistently.

MIN-JEONG KIM

Announcer, KBS



I am still under the spotlight, but people are showing interest in how I ended up in a different job. I constantly get the question, "How did you become an announcer after doing ballet?" It might seem like an unrelated job, but they are not different at all to me. I am still expressing myself and communicating with the world by working alongside my colleagues.

I was 15 years old when I began to learn ballet in earnest. I had begun learning it at an age that was far older than the other children who usually began at around 6 or 7 years old. As a result I was dedicated even more so, pushing myself to practice two or three times harder than my friends. Naturally, I constantly overworked my body and I was never far from the danger of injury. I got a severe injury when I was in my third year of high school, and looking back at it now, that injury was the final blow. I took the university entrance exam and went to Sookmyung Women's University, but my injured ankle kept failing to work. The act of dancing, which had been full of joy, became painful and arduous. On one snowy day, I got another cast placed around my ankle and ultimately accepted my fate as I returned to university. This was not to be my future path.

There had been no other future for me, having only ever dreamed of becoming a ballerina. That is why I decided to study what I wanted. I had much interest in literature, so I double-majored in Korean Literature to soothe my loss of art. The career path of an announcer naturally followed. I was introduced to the prospect of becoming an announcer whilst participating in a Korean volunteer group that taught Korean to foreigners, and taking on the role of a university publicity model. At the announcer mentor program that I had attended by chance, I met Announcer Lee Geum-hee who told me about the career path of an announcer. It was a job that I believed I could take on fully. I attended an academic high school, learned the arts, double-majored in both humanities and arts, and did not feel like I fully belonged anywhere else anyhow. About the time when I had set a firm goal, I graduated from university and changed my phone number in order to sever all my former personal connections. I had much to prepare. I was also fully aware of the urgency in my endeavors, since I knew that I had to try not just two or three times-, but possibly ten times harder to reach my goal.

During my preparations for embarking on the path to becoming an announcer, I began to think about something for the first time. Why had I been so crazy about ballet? What was it about ballet that captivated me? After much thought and deliberation, I found the answer: expression. I realized that I liked to express something and that I had been attracted to the way that ballet enables such expression.



I had always thought that it was I who knew myself best, but that turned out not to be true. There were many questions that had been left unanswered. Through such thoughts, I came to trust myself, and such trust changed to conviction and then to confidence. There is something I always tell younger students regarding their career path. I tell them to look inside themselves. If you slowly concentrate on your past and yourself, you will be able to discover a part of you that you could not have seen as a dancer. That could be the starting point for your next leap. Just as it was for me.

Having now become an announcer, I feel that there are many advantages I have retained as a former dancer. The practice of matching my movements to my fellow dancer's vibe, breathing, arm lines and leg angles became useful in matching my movements to the program director, camera team, sound team, lighting team, graphics team, assistant director, floor director, and makeup team, and the practice of making rich movements on the ballet stage helped me naturally walk onto the stage of a news studio and pose there to make the small area look large. I feel that it was thanks to dancing that I became what I am today. That is why I feel that being an announcer is an extension of being a ballet dancer.

Fyodor Dostoevsky said, "Dreams seem to be spurred on not by reason but by desire, not by the head but by the heart." I read the quote aloud and exercised control over myself whenever I had difficulties in preparing to become an announcer. I know very well how hard and scary it is to begin something again and take on something new. Only when one embraces such fear can they make a leap to a new world. In order to achieve such a Grand Jeté, a deep Plié must be made. I would like to encourage others that a better tomorrow will arrive if an uncertain past is used as a stepping stone for a bold challenge.

WE-HYOUNG LEE

CEO, ATLAS Physical Care



I started dancing at Anyang Arts High School at the age of 16, and I majored in ballet at Hanyang University, planning my life as a dancer. Through performing in many productions at university and working as a visiting dancer at the Wise Ballet Theater, I performed on major and minor stages all over the nation. Such diverse experiences remain as treasured memories in my mind, a time in which I had pure love for ballet. Daily practices and rehearsals were difficult, but the passion and hope toward the dream of being a ballet dancer made my heart flutter.

The shadow of misfortune entered my life at a time when I had the deepest love for ballet. While balancing my university studies and ballet, an accident was caused by some sound equipment falling onto the top of my right foot at the practice room. While suffering through my injury, I had absolutely no understanding of the proper rehabilitation methods. Also, I prioritized the upcoming performance above all else, so I pushed myself by getting pain relief injections.

Even though I had learned how to dance, I had no knowledge or understanding of dancer injuries, so I continued to perform on the stage without adequate treatment after the accident. My right foot suffered from permanent pain and worsened to the point of being unable to dance. The injury that I hadn't treated well had grown into something that rendered my life of becoming a dancer impossible. I still think about how I could have continued dancing, had there been a resident or dispatched rehabilitation trainer at the dance company at the time of the accident.

I have not had a dream other than that of a dancer since my teenage years, but I had to find or create a new path. I took much interest in seeing how modern-day people focused on health enhancement and management by changing their lifestyles, and witnessed how Korea was developing into a sophisticated society at a faster pace than any other country. That enabled me to make the call that the job of a trainer was future-oriented with a high added value. Even at the time when I was preparing to become a trainer, there were not many resources available related to the job. I began the preparations by earning the Sports-for-All Trainer Certificate.

After earning the Sports-for-All Trainer Certificate, I worked at the Sports & Recreation department at Seoul Club for two years. Later, I worked at a training center in Bangbae-dong and took interest in more complex and more specialized rehabilitation exercises. While I was learning rehabilitation exercises on my own, I came across the Dancers' Career Development Center's 'Dance Rehabilitation Trainer Training Course'. I was among the first students who completed the course, and



I also completed an internship at an orthopedic office. After such process, I became a rehabilitation trainer affiliated with the Dancers' Career Development Center and worked for injury prevention and rehabilitation exercises for many dancers in Korea. It was also a time of rehabilitation in overcoming my dream of becoming a dancer.

While working as a rehabilitation trainer, I could acutely feel that the occupation was needed in Korea's dance companies. Most of the dancers working had gone through at least one major or minor injury. Although injuries are frequent for dancers, there was almost no support for proper treatment or systematic rehabilitation. Having given up my dream due to injury, I could sincerely empathize with their pain and despair.

I thought more and more about spreading the training for treatment improvement and injury prevention for dancers. In November of 2016, I could finally open a dancer rehabilitation center named ATLAS Physical Care.

My new dream is to manage ATLAS well so that it becomes a renowned dance rehabilitation center. It will become the pathway to offer adequate treatments and preventive methods to current dancers, as well as academic knowledge regarding dance and injury prevention to students.

WON-JUNG JANG

Dance Rehabilitation Trainer



Flashing lights, heart-thumping music, extravagant choreography, gripping voices and acting, and an excitement I had never felt before... Musical 'West Side Story' filled my younger years with an ecstatic experience of unexpected emotions.

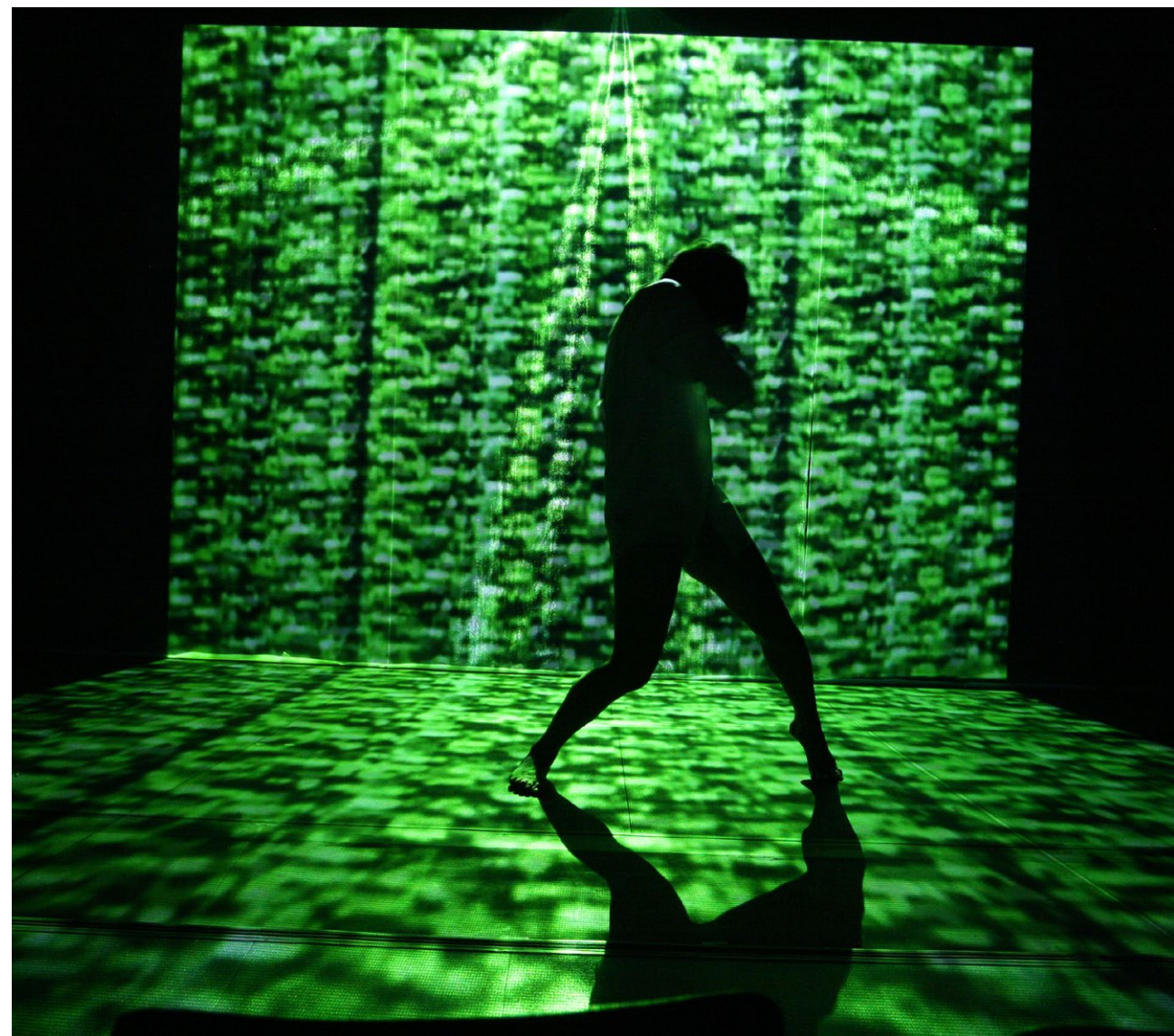
Through the musical that I watched when I was in my first year of junior high school, I came to have a vague kind of longing for the stage. After much trial and tribulation, I started dancing at a late age. Since I had started later than others, I practiced more than others and got injured more than others. As dance was something I had started with initially much difficulty, I would endure any pain without telling the teachers about them during practice. I did not realize it at first, but the repetitive injuries and pain I felt were like a recurring nightmare that I would not be able to escape from.

I visited the hospital frequently, but I could not adhere to the doctor's instruction, 'You must rest'. The ankle that I had gotten injured when I was younger kept causing problems, and even lead to a fracture, causing me to make a leave of absence from university. The injury kept tormenting me in everyday life, as well as on the stage and during practice.

After graduation, I worked in a dance company, and saw the other dancers also going through pain. I came across the notice for the Dancers' Career Development Center's 'Dance Rehabilitation Trainer Training Course', and began my studies with the thought of vaguely wanting 'to learn'. But of course, studying was a sizable hurdle for me.

I had to learn and memorize medical terms for the first time in my life, and anatomy studies were also complicated. Since there was no training specialized for dance, I had to receive training that was customized for sports athletes. This led the way to a multitude of dilemmas and problems. Also, as I was studying, I came to understand my own injuries and pain, and grew the desire to want to help other dancers suffering in as much pain as I once had.

I faced many difficulties after receiving my hard-won athlete trainer certificate and worked at the sites with dancers. The dancers I met did not have any understanding of the importance of, nor showed any acknowledgement of the existence of a trainer, and were simply enduring the pain through massages, thinking that was the appropriate method. Just like how I was before I knew about rehabilitation trainers, the dancers took on their own pain as a part of their lives, and pushed through the agony. However, chronic injuries and pain do not get cured miraculously. Strengthening exercises must be done in the right way, but dancers usually hope for the pain to disappear altogether or at least be lessened temporarily.



I have worked as a trainer for three years now, and I can see that the prevalent opinion about the 'beauty of endurance' is slowly disappearing now. There is also an increase in the number of dancers who see their injuries and pain improved by putting their trust in their trainers. Dance is an art expressed through the body, but it is also a sport that shapes the body and pushes it to the limit. It is the role of trainers like me to assist the understanding of bones and muscles, and the enhancing of movements.

I am now working on the stage of exercise as a dance-specialized rehabilitation trainer. I feel tremendous pride about my job. I am also consistently and constantly studying and trying. I am on my way to meet dancers again today in order to put an end to the thought that pain and injuries are a dancer's virtues.

OMSCHOLING DANSERS NEDERLAND



Omscholing Dansers Nederland (ODN) is the Dutch retraining program for dancers.

Dancers are without exception passionate workers. They're often so enthusiastic that they don't even realise they're doing a job. Dance is more than that. It is a very fine line between who they are and what they do. It takes little imagination to understand that putting a stop to such a career is not easy. Although it is impossible to retire from who you are, it is possible to set up your life differently.

At this point in a dancer's life, the Omscholingsregeling can lend a helping hand. It is an independent organisation that dancers can turn to for support. As they are stopping their dancing career, they seek the advice of the scheme's careers advisors, and their help in discovering a second passion.

Dancers put great trust in the Omscholingsregeling, also for other questions about their dancing career and what comes afterwards. They know they're in professional hands and can count on independent and expert advice. Around a hundred and twenty dancers contact ODN each year for information and guidance.

ANNA SEIDL

Assistant Professor at Amsterdam University



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What I love about dance is that I love to perform, I love to express myself through movement and I love the music I dance to. After I stopped dancing, I realized how much I loved to dance myself. Now that I am on the other side, in the audience, I surprisingly don't have the same interest in dance any longer.

I have enjoyed my whole dancing career and particularly my years with the National Ballet were all a kind of highlight, but I also remember my frequent guest appearances in London with the English National Ballet. I was invited to dance major roles in Swan Lake, Sleeping Beauty and Giselle. Especially my opening night at the Royal Albert Hall in London on a Saturday night with 3000 people in the audience was very special to me. Of course I was incredibly nervous, but I thought if I get through this and also enjoy the performance I have achieved something for myself. I was lucky. I reached my goals and had the feeling that for a short moment I had also been able to move my audience.

When I terminated my dancing career, my transition went quite smoothly. It was because I had started in time to look into something new that I wanted to do after my dance career. Not only did I find a study that I loved, I found new friends and colleagues, and also had a son. He kept me occupied and distracted.

The greatest challenge that I faced when I started my new studies was to catch up all those years that I did not spend studying. As a dancer I had been physically active and all of a sudden I had to learn to sit for hours behind my desk and books. I also had to start to use my brains in a way that I was not yet accustomed to.

To study German was, to a certain extent, a logical choice. The step was not really strange for me to take, because my whole family is doing something academic. As a dancer I was more an outsider and now I am one of them.

During my studies, I realized that I benefited greatly from a number of qualities that I developed as a dancer. For instance, my discipline has proven to be very important. I can keep deadlines, I am reliable and I can work with and in groups. My professors admired me for my drive and working pace.

If you ask me what information/advice I could pass on to other dancers facing transition, it is to prepare. It is important to start in time to look for what you would like to do after dancing. That way, you don't lose time trying many different things. I would really advise to take a good look into the new career before starting a course etc, In that case, transition support can be used optimally.



To have had access to the support of the Dutch transition program has been incredibly important. Financially, of course, but also in the sense of career counseling. Most dancers don't know what to do with their future and need advice. It is important not to fall into a black hole. The dance family is gone; one's identity is gone, and most of all, the stage is gone. In those times, one needs new challenges and a lot of help from friends, family and professionals. The dance world is very exclusive. I met a totally different world outside, but was lucky to find my way in it. To be able to make the transition from the theatre to the university as I did, was perhaps a bit unusual, but it was made possible with the help of the transition program.

ANNE AFFOURTIT

Psychomotor Therapist



It has been more than twelve years now, since I used the Transition Program. The transition process is therefore already way behind me.

I chose a second career in mental healthcare because I'd always felt I wanted to do more for society – not from the stage, but actually among people. Towards the end of my dancing career, that feeling grew even stronger. In the first years, I combined various projects at home and abroad, and later my studies, with dancing. Later on, I concentrated completely on the social work, as it was becoming too difficult to combine, both mentally and physically. I then worked for seven years in psychiatric institutions which was great work although difficult. While doing this work, I always had a small practice of my own, and I'm now expanding that practice. I'll probably do some projects abroad again, as well.

Sometimes there's no link between what I'm doing now and dancing, and sometimes there are strong links. In dancing, there's a strong focus on being able to do things (or everything) and surpassing limitations, on beauty, creativity and perseverance, and often, in my experience, on crossing borders too.

At the start of my new line of work, I was in Timbuktu in the midst of poverty and war. I could not imagine I had ever spent so much time on worrying whether my leg was held high enough! It had really excited me. I looked back on my life and felt that I had been very egocentric. Fortunately, I've now become a bit less harsh on myself and others, and I realize that it's nice to experience and create so much beauty in the world alongside all the misery.

Nowadays, when I'm in the audience, I notice that I'm really impressed by all the things dancers can do. It is as if I'd never been on stage myself for nearly thirty years. What I really like is that this sophistication can impress me as much as a patient who is severely depressed and looks up for the first time. It costs him or her just as much effort and blood, sweat and tears... only for very different reasons.

The highlights from my dancing career, I think, are those moments when at last I felt I didn't need to do it better, deeper, faster, more sensitively or whatever, but was satisfied, happy and enjoying dancing. I had those moments more often on stage than in the studio. On stage, I couldn't see myself and could obviously dance more from the inside out. In studios with mirrors, the image of my body being a bit too heavy and not supple enough often held me back and made me uncertain of myself.

Attributes that I needed as a dancer that still benefit me today are discipline, perseverance, improvisation, adaptability, and a certain craziness and individuality. At the moment, now that I'm



investigating rather smaller things, patience and discipline are coming in very useful. Besides all the nice qualities, however, I also developed some that have worked against me. But probably they were already in my nature and were just nurtured by dance. I have always found it difficult to define boundaries, often having the feeling of not doing or being enough, and then working even harder. Fortunately though, I'm learning to deal with that.

I look back on the retraining process with gratitude that I got the chance to take the time to study – even though there was trial and error, of course. The biggest challenge during this process was sitting, learning with your mind, and moving as little as possible. Not being 'free' and moving around all day long, and less travelling.

It's really important for dancers to feel things in good time, to listen to their heart and to think about what one wants after their dancing days. For years during my dancing career, I looked at and did all sorts of things in the field of work I took up later. Don't set your heart too much on one thing and take a good look around. Dancing and being young seem endless when you're right in the middle of it, but they aren't. That can make you sad, but you can also see it as a new challenge in your life. I've learned myself that I'm not the center of the world, but rather part of this world along with other people.

The transition program is incredibly important for support and time you need to lead another life after such an intense and hard profession. Without being too dramatic about it, the necessity of stopping dancing means you'll have your work cut out for you. A tree is supported by its enormous roots in the ground, and that costs time. Let the transition program be those roots, and take a few years' time to grow into a tree that can stand up to other winds than those that blow in the world of dance.

LEO VAN EMDEN

Film Director



Eight years on, I've finished my retraining with the help of the Transition Program, although I believe in and advocate lifelong learning. I'll always keep up the search for development and growth – not just for income and 'success', but for the sake of satisfaction and experience.

Currently, I'm a film-maker, and I make films on commission, I do a lot work for art and cultural organizations, and regularly make dance and theatre recordings. My love of films crept up on me over the years, through recording my own choreographic works and doing camera work for small local broadcasting corporations.

What I'm doing now is similar to dancing in the sense that I continue to learn and anticipate. Dance and film are both very dynamic, continuously developing and subject to change. They are both about continuation to learn within the profession and about adjusting and anticipating. I've always seen dance as a combination of artistry and craftsmanship and this is reflected in film. The excitement I get from filming is similar to that of performing.

It's difficult to say what the highlights of my dancing career were. It's a long list. I'd rather talk about a more recent experience. In 2013, I made three short clips for the Dutch Dance Festival, which were shown at 'The Dutch Dance Celebration' in between the performances of the dance companies. That was a really great job, for which I could travel the country filming choreographers and dancers at work.

Creativity and out-of-the-box thinking are skills that I developed as a dancer and that I can still apply (successfully) in my current job. On top there is the dedication within a creative process, whereby the end result is achieved through collaboration. Other useful attributes are motivation, discipline, working under pressure and a total lack of a nine-to-five mentality. These are things that you take from dance that will benefit any dancer for the rest of his life. In my current profession, too, things often have to be done or changed time and time again, and I have no problem with that whatsoever. That's what I'm used to.

My retraining process was very smooth. The film making course was divided up into different subjects with a lot of independence and practical learning. I started to take on commissions straight away to build up a CV. It felt more like a gradual change process. Of course, I still actually feel like a dancer. Although the physical element goes away, the way you approach life stays with you. You use it, and that's something I want to hang onto. Once a dancer, always a dancer – whatever you do afterwards. Only nowadays, I dance with a camera.

The biggest challenge during my retraining was switching over to concrete thinking. As a dancer



and theatre person, my approach to and thoughts about a process were very abstract and free. Making a film is nearly always very concrete. That was a really big transition that I had to get used to, especially where it concerned directing. You never quite get used to sitting on a chair all day during your studies or a montage period. That's why I prefer camera work. I enjoy being active and on the go, and I like the excitement of the moment of filming.

At a certain point, I had lessons about storylines in making a montage and mounting images. That was a real eye-opener. I'm sure that if I'd have learned that twenty years earlier, I'd have been a better dancer and definitely a better dance-maker. Dancers should already look for courses while still dancing. That certainly can add value to the life as dancer or choreographer. Start talking

to a career counsellor early on, long before you actually want to stop, with an eye to the future. That gets people thinking and gives new insights. A good build-up of your retraining is actually also a sort of proof that the decision to dance was the right one – so follow your heart.

I think it's important that dancers get support during the process of retraining. For me, three things are important: the foundation, the process and the broader context of the transition program.

My wife, who is also an ex-dancer, stopped dancing fairly early on. During and after her dancing career, she studied on her own and found a successful new career without the Transition Program. I could never have done that. I was too old for a start, and nowadays studies are not so easy to combine with part-time work in the same sector and the desired one. We live in different times.

The counselling during the process was very important to me; first in choosing a course and later when making the study plan and also in the reflection moments. It's great to know that someone is there for you if necessary – someone who knows you and thinks along with you, and who's critical and sometimes shows you how to look at things differently.

I sometimes hear that the Transition Program also helps dancers who have to stop early due to injury and don't meet the requirements for a study and income allowance. For me, that's the broader context that surpasses the individual and feels like an ally for dance.

PHILIPP FRICKE

Studies Biology at the University of Münster in Germany.



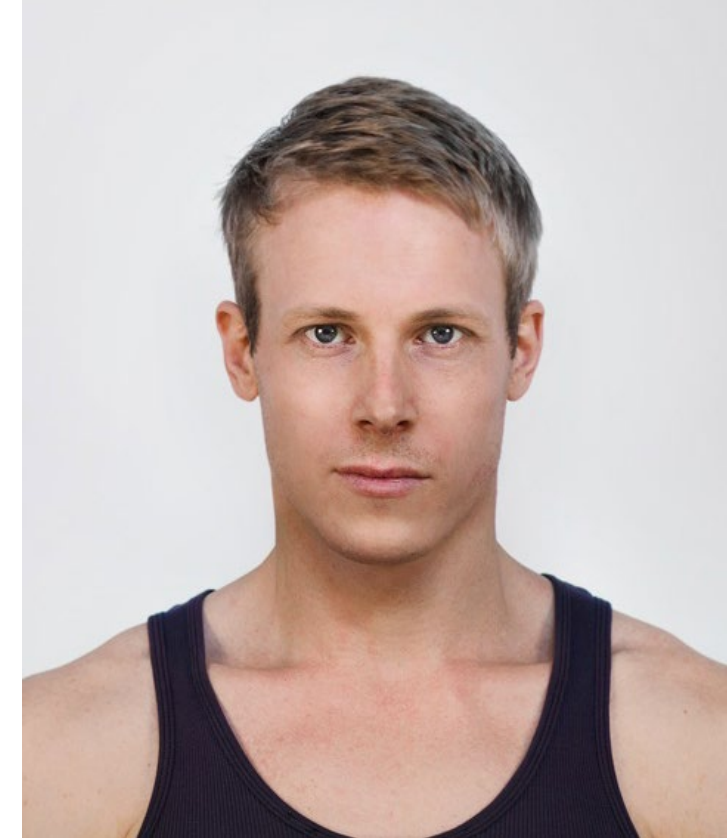
What it is that I love about dance? That's a good question. Before I started my dance training at a very late age, I admired the control that dancers have over their bodies. The ease with which dancers move through space. As a child, I was very physical and I always liked to try out different sports. What I enjoyed about dance was that it is about aesthetics of movement rather than about reaching a certain goal of higher, further, faster no matter how it looks. Obviously, I was also attracted to the idea of performing on a stage for an audience. But this was more of a fear/joy experience. A little like diving into cold water.

What I most enjoyed during my professional years as a dancer were the international tours. These took us to Japan, China, Australia, Russia, USA, and basically every country in Europe. The best one was a three-month tour with a small but great crew from a dance company that was run by the renowned choreographer, Anouk van Dijk. During that tour we performed in the United States and Australia. One of many highlights was the performance of our quartet at the Sydney opera house. Thinking about those days makes me nostalgic. Thanks to my work as a dancer, I have set foot in parts of the world that I otherwise may not have seen.

To stop dancing is tough. To make the decision to leave the dance world took me several years. I always postponed it. My best excuses were that I had to do just one more interesting project or international tour. Although I did realize that a dancing career would not last forever, I was very afraid to leave my comfort zone in which I was respected for what I could. And in a new place I would still have to prove myself capable. Luckily, I had a kind of soft transition period. After I stopped dancing I was still performing in two successful shows that were shown every other month. This way I didn't have to leave my old life entirely just yet.

My greatest challenge so far has been not to give up my studies. Sometimes I got overwhelmed by the pure quantity of things I am supposed to learn. It may sound banal but to just keep going saved me so far. It may be in small steps, but it doesn't matter at what pace you move, it matters that you move.

It feels strange at times that everybody around me is about fifteen years younger than I am and in a totally different period of their life. Right now I am in the end phase of my study in Biology at the university of Münster in Germany. I grew up in a family that was very interested in science. Also during my time at high school science subjects came the easiest to me. I don't really have a masterplan yet on where I want to go. I simply chose this subject because I find it interesting. In my opinion that is the most important reason to choose a path.



I did not realize this at first but I think there are certain skills that I have learned in my dance profession that helped me during my transition and studies. The most important is discipline mixed with perfectionism. I discovered that I can work very focused and spend more time on my preparations for an exam than an average student. I also noticed that memorizing useful facts about my studies is not that different from learning the steps of a new movement phrase.

The transition process from being a dancer to the pursuit of a new direction in my life has been an enriching experience. I would advise other dancers, if there is something they have a serious interest in, to go for that idea. Every big change in life is scary. Not doing something though because of fear is never a good reason. In case someone decides to study something very different from dance I would suggest to start reading a little here and there to get into the subject. Get some very basic books about your course of interest and get more familiar with the matter. Doing so will help you to find out if it is the right direction that you are heading for.

Unless you belong to the 1% that continues dancing for a lifetime, every dancer has to face the time that follows their professional career. This is a very hard period because we have to start a new education or profession at an age in which others have already established a craft and network. Overcoming the fear and diving into something totally new is hard enough even without having to worry about making a living. To have the financial support of the Transition Program provides the chance to see this inevitable step as an interesting opportunity to learn something completely new. There are times that I am happy and very grateful that I have the opportunity to have more than one career in my life.

SUSAN POND

Owner of 'Pond Translations'



In the last few years of my dancing career, I also started to choreograph and I gave several workshops with the education department of the company. Having discovered choreography at the end of my dancing career, I would have liked to pursue it further when I stopped dancing. However, I had a two-year-old son and another on the way, and I couldn't imagine combining the unsocial hours and international travel of a choreographer with bringing up a family. Especially not as a single parent. But luckily, I could make use of the full four years of retraining offered by the Transition program in the Netherlands, as I had paid the maximum in premiums. So I had the time and resources to find a new direction that was better suited to my lifestyle.

Things got off to a bad start, however. In order to qualify for financial support from the Transition Program I also needed to apply for an Unemployment Benefit. I had to register as unemployed and I took my baby son along to the interview for the Benefit. The man I talked to appeared very sympathetic, saying that his wife hadn't wanted to go back to work after having their baby. I nodded my agreement, which turned out to be a big mistake. A few days later, I received a letter saying that the Unemployment Benefit was denied to me, because they didn't consider me ready and willing to go out to work again. In despair, I contacted the Transition Program and they managed to smooth things over and convince them that there was a special understanding about the situation of dancers. So I was allowed to register as unemployed on condition that I applied for at least one job a week. Although this was a bureaucratic nightmare, in the end it turned out for the best, as one of the jobs I applied for was as a translator. I really enjoyed doing the test translation and decided that was what I wanted to do.

I then signed up for a three-year translation course at ITV in Utrecht. It was ideal, as most of the work was home study and I could work around looking after the boys. And as soon as my youngest went off to school, I set up my own translation agency called Pond Translations. The first thing I had done on stopping dancing was to take a short course to get my entrepreneur's certificate. I had done this, as I had always fancied running my own business and now I had the opportunity to do so.

I suppose that's the biggest difference between dancing and translating. As a dancer, your days are mapped out for you - roles, rehearsal times and studios are all assigned to you and you just follow orders. Whereas now I control my own schedule and decide which assignments to accept. There are lots of other differences too. Now I work with words rather than movements, and of course the sedentary nature of the job is completely opposed to dancing all day long. Though I must confess that I bought an office chair that allows me to sit in frogs when I feel like it!



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But there are definitely qualities I developed as a dancer that I can apply to my present work. Dancers are not shy of pushing to the limit and working till all hours, which comes in very useful. And in the dance world, you are always working towards a goal - honing, shaping and perfecting the final product, which is exactly what I do now. I like to think that I have always been a translator, as my main motive

for dancing from an early age was to interpret the music; a motive that continued later in my choreography. But although there are similarities with dancing, it's really the differences that I value the most. I think dancers have a wonderful opportunity in being forced to switch career in the middle of our working lives. You can discover so many different sides to yourself and develop aspects that would never have been possible if you'd carried on dancing forever. So my advice to dancers is don't be afraid of the unknown - it's full of great surprises. Get out and explore the world and explore yourself at the same time.

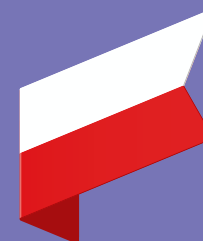
My second piece of advice is not to leave things until the last moment. It's better to start looking around and getting a feel for what might interest you as early as possible. It can be too easy to stick your head in the sand and pretend your last performance will never come. It will - and sometimes even earlier than planned due to injury. I was about 28 when I decided I wanted to study for a degree from the Open University and asked the Transition Program if it would be possible to get a study allowance while I was still dancing. They agreed, and studying while you dance has been part of the standard arrangement ever since. At the time it was quite unusual, and it turned a few heads when I had all my books opened during breaks in the canteen or on the bus to Groningen! I did a mixed degree in arts and technology to find out where my interests lay. It involved the added benefits of learning to touch-type and use a computer (a real novelty at the time) which are two skills I couldn't do without today.

One final thing that dancers should be aware of is to really use the Transition Support program. Their expert advice, guidance and support are invaluable. Although you may think you have no idea what you want to do after dancing, the more you talk about it, the closer you will get to finding all sorts of hidden talents and wishes that you can develop in the future. It's true that a dancer always remains a dancer at heart, but that doesn't rule out the architect, physiotherapist, pilot, zookeeper or translator in you!

Since 2002, I have had my own translation agency 'Pond Translations', where I mainly translate arts and culture-related texts from Dutch to English. Over the years the Transition Program in the Netherlands became, of course, a valued customer!



program przekwalifikowania
zawodowego tancerzy



Program przekwalifikowania zawodowego tancerzy (career transition program for dancers) was launched in 2015 as one of the programs of the Dance Department of the Institute of Music and Dance. It provides services to professional dancers in all career stages through one-to-one career counselling, psychological support and transition workshops, while also granting retraining scholarships to dancers with at least twelve years of professional stage experience. The program also organizes educational activities for ballet schools' students.

The Institute of Music and Dance (IMiD) operates as a state-run cultural institution. The Institute's basic mission is to support the development of music and dance culture in Poland.

RADOSŁAW LAK

Prospective Professional Driver



I had no difficulty deciding to retrain for another profession – I was 42 years old and knew I would not be able to dance much longer. At the end of my stint with the Muzyczny Theatre in Poznań, I began to realize that health issues would slowly but inevitably prevent me from dancing at the highest level.

Initially, I began to seek new opportunities and took first steps towards becoming a professional driver. I completed several courses, and it turned out I developed a real knack for the profession, because I simply liked driving. I resolved to become a professional driver. In the meantime, I had also learned about the new scholarship program of the Institute of Music and Dance. Aided by my career counselor, I filled out an application and received funding to cover my subsequent professional training. I passed each exam with flying colors and gained a range of qualifications. I learned to drive an 18-meter vehicle. I also trained to drive buses and tank trucks, which means I am now thoroughly prepared for the new job. On top of that, I completed a first aid training, which I think should be mandatory for everyone to enable them to help others when needed.

In the course of the application process, I was positively surprised by my counselor's approach – she was genuinely interested with my professional and personal background. It was all of great importance for me when choosing my prospective career. Providing for the family and securing my near and dear is my priority, and it helped me improve my learning curve. The counselor not only helped me to fill out the scholarship application form but also suggested alternative career opportunities. Our conversations kept me motivated. I am happy I was able to benefit from the help provided by the Institute and the staffs who oversaw the project. They are true professionals through and through. Also upon my counselor's suggestion, I began to learn German. I am now planning to continue to study the language in order to help me work in Berlin on weekdays, and spend weekends with my family in Poznań.

As of now, I am due for an orthopedic operation, following which I am hoping to start working as a professional driver in Poland or Germany. Luckily, in my new profession it is the work that seeks out people, and not the other way round. Thus, I think I will not face great trouble looking for employment. I am sure I will be able to provide for my family. I am also convinced that the job will bring me much joy, as did my international tours with the theatre: not only will I like it but I will also get paid. And I know I have what it takes to do it right.

Each of us is different, but I would advise dancers to plan ahead and pursue new qualifications as early as they can. They should make a good use of the transition program rather than keep pondering over vague alternatives. The world is changing, and we have to adapt.



d tr^an sition e



Association Danse Transition is a non-profit organization based in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, which supports professional dancers during their training, performance career and professional transition. Since 1993, it helps them develop tools to manage their career. Danse Transition has developed expertise regarding the dance profession and milieu: it works towards improving social recognition and acknowledgement by government authorities of the dancer's profession and of its specificities.

ALESSANDRA MATTANA

Secretary General of the Association Danse Transition



© Gregory Batardon



© Gregory Batardon

Dance has always played a predominant and ever-present role in my life. I learned this craft through long years of intense and passionate practice and concentration. Thanks to dancing, I have understood the meaning of art and vocation. Dance has also taught me that no matter how much individual effort is involved in a project, it always gains a lot more significance when it becomes part of a group achievement.

At the end of the day, a performance is a product of artistic collective intelligence and I have particularly enjoyed this aspect of it. It was wonderful to follow creative and skilled professionals collaborating and combining their sensibilities for the sake of producing something new. Ultimately, I have always felt very lucky to live a life in dance.

By the time I was around my thirties, it had become increasingly difficult to combine a very busy touring agenda and my family interests. I started then to reflect on professional retraining and that was the moment when I got in touch with the Association Danse Transition .

The leap between a career on stage and another occupation means, in most cases, an enormous challenge. Therefore, Danse Transition's support was critical. They helped me to identify transferable skills, refine my new career choices and finance my professional reorientation. I chose to do a Masters in International Organizations Management (IO-MBA) when I acknowledged I had multiple interests. Earlier on, alongside my dance stage career, I had studied Communication Sciences. At the moment of my career transition I realized the master's degree would be exactly what I needed to expand my project and organization management skills, and revamp new career opportunities in a vast array of industries. Straight after my studies, I worked as a project manager in the marketing and design field for a fast-moving consumer goods multinational company. I was still very interested by the arts and culture field, and after three years of experience I was hired to work as the coordinator of the first Swiss University level program in Contemporary Dance, participating in its program design and implementation whilst combining my program management and dance technical skills. Ultimately, my social and economic studies brought me back to dance.

GABRIELA GOMEZ ABAITUA

Director, Festival Dansez Maintenant



© Florent Cheymol

At a very young age, my mother taught me to dance. My dance career unfolded rather smoothly since my first contract at the age of 18. When I turned 29, I embarked on a new journey.

The anxiety-inducing issue of making a career transition was always on my mind. So when the time came, I experienced a very tough phase of contemplation. It got to the point where I first had to feel entirely lost to be able to take matters in my own hands, and dive into solving my career transition.

Choosing was the most difficult: I have always been very curious about various areas. However, my wish to discover and open up to a plethora of new horizons was preventing me from deciding on which path to take. My journey towards the next step was made possible in a big part thanks to the encouragement from the Association Danse Transition. Sarah Guillermin, former association's General Secretary, accompanied me through a lot of discussions, and did so with kindness. We searched together for different possibilities and considered the most appropriate course of action in my situation. Do not be afraid to ask for help and allow oneself to receive advices: one cannot deal with it alone!

With a grant from Danse Transition, I embarked on a Sciences Po Paris University Professional Certificate, tailored for high performance athletes in transition. This special course allowed me to study at the same time as pursuing my dance career. It has a good component of support through mentoring to help orientate oneself within the new career.

Studying at university was a big learning opportunity! Not only did I extend my knowledge, I also developed competences that I had not yet used before. I learned about history, economy, sociology, and politics. Through public presentations and writing I gained confidence and improved my verbal skills. These achievements opened up my mind and I was able to find a new connection to the world.

During my studies, I did not stop dancing. I have not yet decided what to do later, but I have opened doors with possibilities. Without a doubt, my passion for dance has influenced my choices. Thanks to the various companies I worked for and the numerous people I met, I have built a network that is today the base of my projects. I have been approached to teach in companies, I have been hired to choreograph, and currently I am working on the creation and development of a significant project: Festival Dansez Maintenant!

If there is one thing to remember from my transition, it is to allow yourself to be lost sometimes and to learn to take on new opportunities - even if they may be small. That is what fostered my journey and still helps me move on with my life.



ISMAEL OIARTZABAL

Rolfing® Structural Integration Practitioner.



© Gregory Batardon

Life is surprising! I was not supposed to live far from my family and away from my village. I was not supposed to speak several languages. And of course, I was not supposed to be a professional dancer. But it happened...

I also thought at the beginning of my dance career that when dance would be over I would go back to my country and go back to my previous life. But dance doesn't just change your body, it also changes your mind. I learned too many different things experiencing the art world. And I definitely learned a lot about myself.

Being active in several contemporary dance companies for more than 17 years made me encounter many choreographers, or should I say bosses. With my body, I had to adapt to their different styles and to find ways to express their ideas and meet their expectations: I had to understand their minds for a clearer and more interesting response.

Working with dancers from all kinds of backgrounds also allowed me to discover many different personalities: their strengths, vulnerabilities, and various abilities to find their place within whatever new dance group they joined... All of us had to try hard to excel. We learned to work as a team, paying great attention to every subject and detail. We learned to take decisions as we were improvising. We learned that sometimes, there are inexplicable connections and unexpected creative solutions to problems. And to achieve such feats, being in touch with one's intuition is the key.

Discovering adaptation, empathy, beauty, discipline, team work, ego, group dynamics, commitment, decision making and improvisation, vulnerability, intuition, etc. allows us to develop precious skills, and to jump into different types of new jobs when our dance career comes to an end.

This is what—little by little—brought me to the next step. Actually, I realised that I was personally developing through dance, and that this personal development was my main motivation to keep dancing. I also received assistance from body therapists. And that's what led me to become someone who can help others in their development. I had a strong desire, to do that through body and movement. That's how I chose to study Rolfing® Structural Integration.

I am grateful for the scholarship I received. This is something that I also was not expecting to get, when I decided to quit my Basque language teacher job to give a chance to dance at 28 years old. But after 15 years dancing in Switzerland, the Association Danse Transition supported me in my new life project. I'd like to show them my biggest gratitude for that.



KARINE GRASSET

Secretary General of Corodis, Performing Arts Touring Commission of French Speaking Switzerland



Dance was an instinctive and absolute calling I followed. During my training, I dreamed about becoming a dancer as I progressively understood that this connection with the art form was the bond I wanted to nourish.

Artistic creation was stimulating me; helping me to grow as a person. Dancing on stage, I felt fully alive. I enjoyed the sensation of grasping space, feeling the air resistance, experiencing the spiral dizziness, the confidence in a partner. I was experiencing a precious feeling of freedom. I so much questioned my talent however, and my contribution to the world. I did not dare to affirm my identity as an artist. But today I understand that defining oneself as an artist is not a claim but a state of being: it is the nature of one's relation to the world.

I left the stage following my divorce. I was a happy mother of two but the life of a single mother was no longer compatible with my career as a freelance dancer. I had to find ways to increase my income and to provide a stable life for my children.

My career transition carried two central issues: building a new professional situation, while at the same time, pursuing my life with the same level of meaning and alignment as I had before through dance. A question remained: How can I continue to deepen the knowledge of myself when my body is no longer the main tool of my everyday work? The biggest difficulty was to change my relationship to work. As a dancer, what I was and what I was doing were nourishing each other and were closely interrelated. There was no barrier. It felt impossible to experience this anywhere else. How then, does one achieve work satisfaction whilst feeding the soul through passion?

Today, I work for Corodis, an organisation that supports touring companies. I am still involved in the cultural field. I need what art awakens, for art and culture are essential elements in my life. Investing my time and energy by focusing on my career transition was very instinctive. Meeting the right person and experience in employment gave venue to it.

For the past few years, I have intensified my yoga practice. It offers me a new place for physical exploration and a new understanding of my relationship with the world. It nourishes my need for interiority and spiritual elevation.

Thanks to my career transition, I have developed new skills. As I was exiting from the very protective environment of a dance company, it has sometimes been painful to confront myself with other realities. But I have also gained in self-confidence and reassurance. My material condition and my life are stable, which allow me to take care of my children.



KYLIE WALTERS

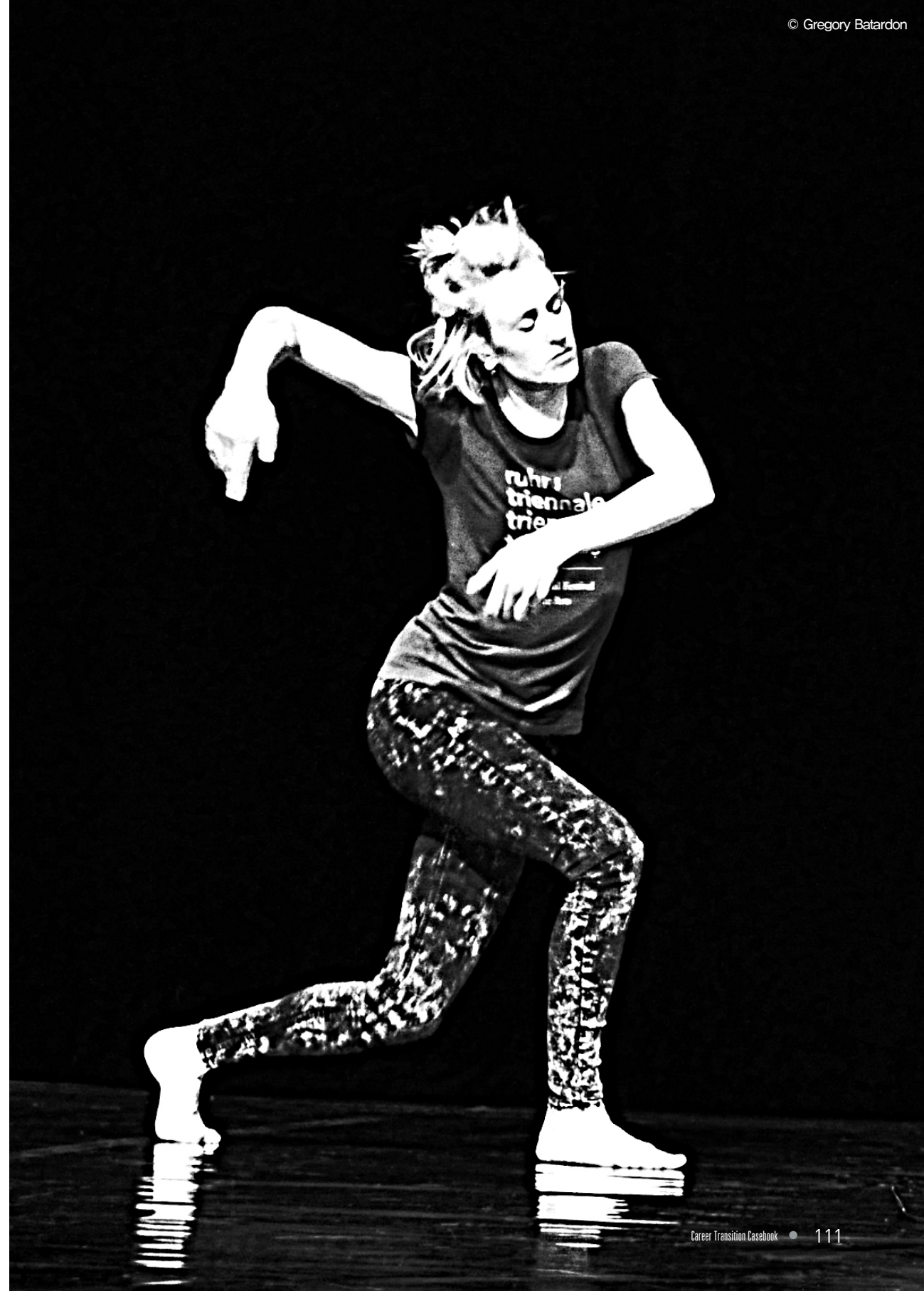
Public Health Consultant



© Sophie Couronne

I reached a point where I needed a new challenge. I had worked with an activist-performance group in Belgium, presenting conference-style shows on the intersection between health, poverty, and energy security. This experience, along with discussions with friends from the sector, confirmed that public health was where I needed to be. A passionate new field melding epidemiology, economics and politics, but one that required post-graduate level science studies. The problem was that, although I had BA dating 20 years, I had no medical or biological sciences degree. Thankfully, my previous academic results and activist work counted. I was accepted to the prestigious London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) with the caveat that I pass the core subjects with ease to continue the master's programme. Via distance learning, I performed and toured whilst writing the academic assignments and studied for exams. I took extra courses on the Ebola and Zika virus outbreaks. I contacted the Association Danse Transition and with their aid received a scholarship from the Fondation Inverni-Desarzens to finance my education and a three-month internship at the World Health Organization. The internship gave me the opportunity to develop contacts in public health, and thanks to a successful intern project presentation, I am negotiating my first consultancy contracts with WHO, to produce a series of expert videos on emerging HIV drug resistance.

Building a new career takes time – but I have 20 years of professional life ahead so I want to make it count. The assets I acquired from dance are a combination of creative and scientific prowess, and the motivation that I am doing something vital for life itself.



SUN-HYE HUR VECCHIONE

Chinese Medicine Therapist

© Mario Del Curto



I never wanted to quit dance, but a back injury forced me to. Also, my desired to have a family of my own, in addition to giving birth to a child, put a strain on my dancing career. While injured, exchanging ideas with my Chinese medicine practitioner developed my interests: he allowed me to watch his practice over the span of two months. I realized that Chinese medicine was at once allowing me to use my experience in dance, my Korean roots, and my interests in health and the human body.

In 2015, I was invited in Seoul by the Dancers' Career Development Center to give a speech about my transition. Between 2010 and 2014, I had luckily been awarded a grant by the Association Danse Transition in Switzerland to support myself in taking a massage and Chinese medicine course. Sharing my career transition story during this international symposium in my home country was a very emotional moment that provided me with the courage to pursue my life decision to be an acupuncture and massage therapist. During the previous four years, I had been through a rough change of life and had a difficult time with everyday studies. I felt as if I had betrayed dance, but finally understood that what I am doing now is just a continuation of my dance career in another form.

Today, as a therapist in my own practice, I listen to the body that speaks. It is as if I was still on stage each time I give a treatment. Movement is a part of every second of my work.

In addition, I continue learning about health in general and pathology. I exchange perspectives and give advices on change and transformation through everyday movement, body positions and exercise. I today wish to pursue my studies in Chinese phytotherapy. It never ends!

My professional project in the health sector helps me develop my values and the meaning of life that I want to pursue. I understand how important it is in life, and especially during transitions, to attach extra value to relationships, communication, and the chance to meet with people. This is how I got so far!

SSUDK

Schweizerische Stiftung für die Umschulung
von darstellenden Künstlerinnen und Künstlern



The "Schweizerische Stiftung für die Umschulung von darstellenden Künstlerinnen und Künstlern SSUDK" (Swiss transition foundation for performing artists) is domiciled in the German part of Switzerland, in Zurich. The SSUDK is advising and supporting stage artists, especially professional dancers in their career transition through consulting, financial support and workshops during and after their stage career. The foundation is active in the German and Italian speaking parts of Switzerland as well as in Liechtenstein and is cooperating with the "Association pour la Reconversion des Danseurs Professionnels" and "DanseSuisse".

ERICK GUILLARD

Certified Leather Dresser

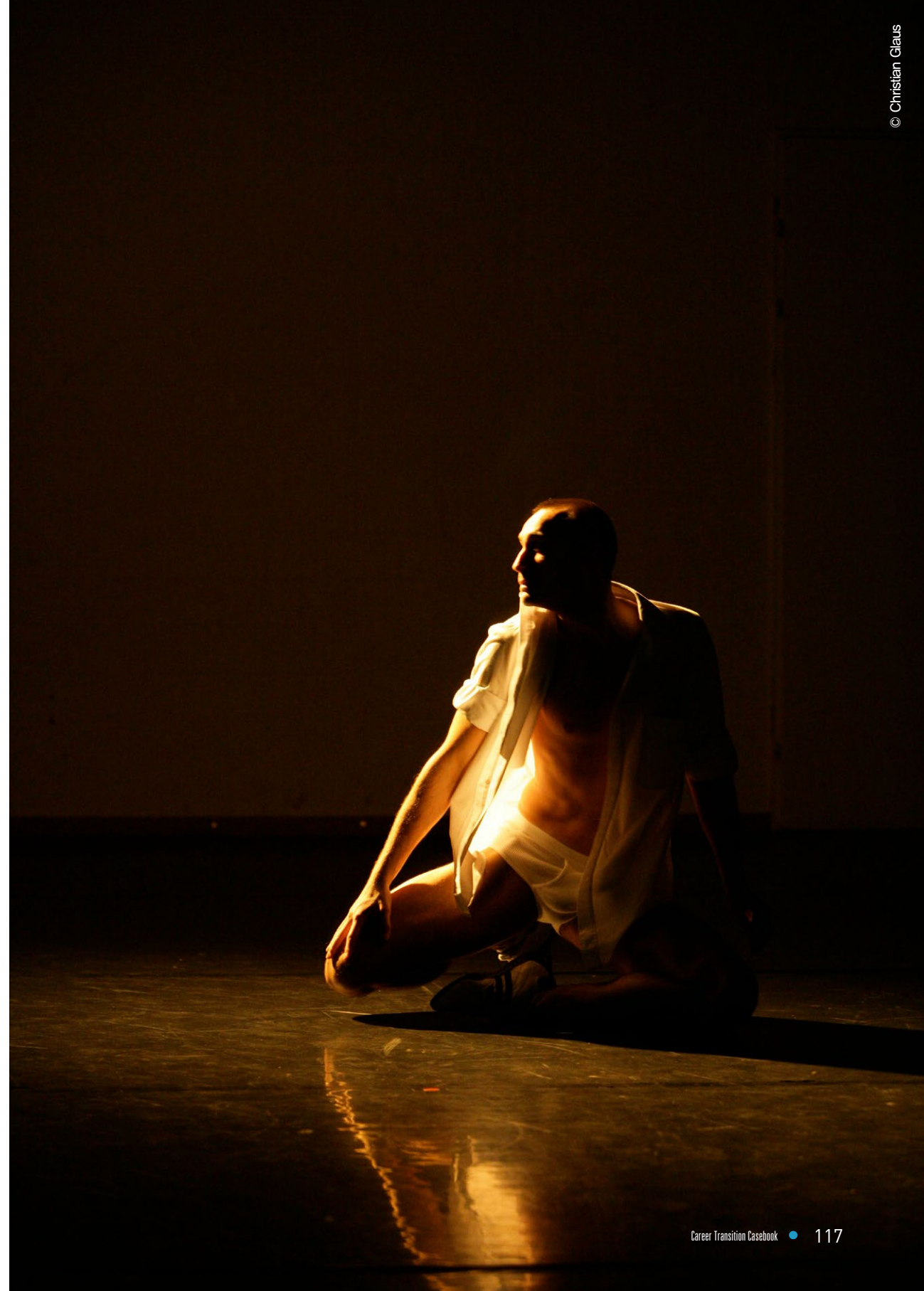


© Omar Gordon

Most of my ballet teachers gave me the same advice, which was that I had to find something other than dance that I was good at. That is why I always asked myself, “What would I do if dance disappeared from my life completely?” As a result, I constantly tried to be competent in other skills. When I was 25, I was diagnosed with a herniated disc and had to go through a period of utter terror. One day, as the performance came to an end, symptoms of a herniated disc appeared in my body, and my whole body was paralyzed for the next 3 days. There was a six-month rehabilitation process before I could walk again on stage. That experience encouraged me to think of my body differently and have the confidence to dance differently.

My career transition came after years of doubt and hesitancy. I could not even think about dancing for another 20 years. Aside from performing on the stage, I tried various jobs such as being a trainer, assistant, ballet instructor, choreographer, and a clothing and accessory designer. In the end, I found the expressive ingredient of leather, and the expressive medium of bags. The idea of learning professional knowledge and becoming independent was very attractive. The skills needed in accurate hand movements and combination were similar to those needed in dancing. But the problem was that it seemed impossible that I could make a living with this.

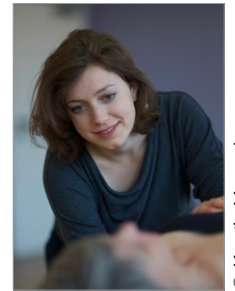
However, after taking the job aptitude test, I became certain that I could take that route. After a whole year of searching, I finally found the master that would impart his knowledge and let me experience the field. He also helped me acquire a three-year course that grants a qualification that is also valid in Switzerland. Since I had left school too early to become a dancer, I had to get speech correction treatments, but my skills grew to a certain extent and I could draw up study plans. I am currently in a workshop near Zürich working on the production of my first collection. I also work at workshops of producers who helped me develop my plans, dreaming of the day when I can see the bags I made being held in the cities and performance venues.



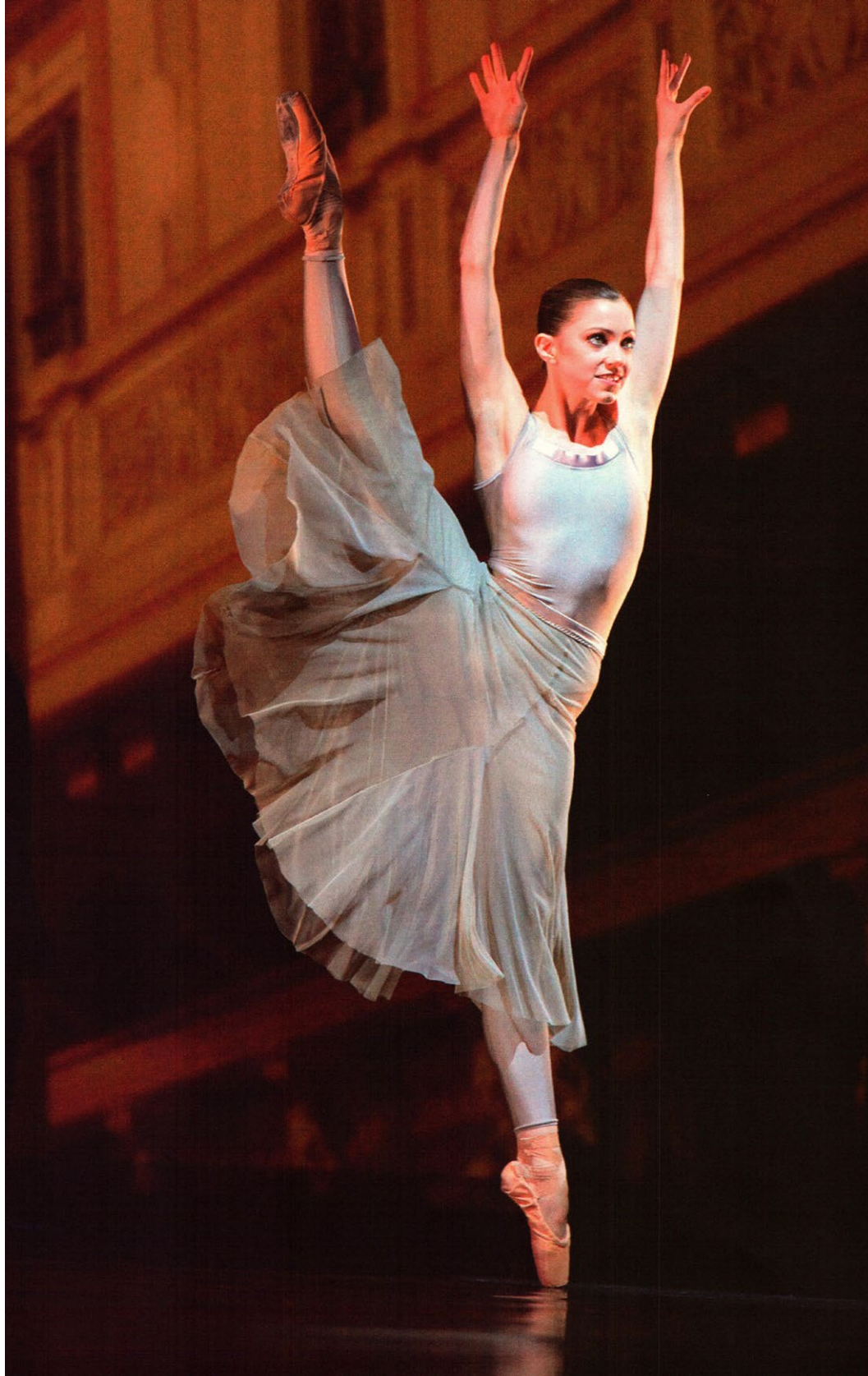
© Christian Glaus

NORA DÜRIG

Yoga Instructor



© Kerstin Mauersberger



© Peter Schmetz

I have always been an open-minded person, curious to explore the world around me. For many years, dancing was the primary focus and there was hardly any time for any other activities. This was not a big problem at the beginning of my career. In fact, I felt quite special having a clear career goal for the next few years whereas my colleagues from high school were just starting university.

As much as I love to dance and I can truly say that it is one of my biggest passions, I also realized how much time and effort was needed to keep up with my personal expectations. I realized that I should put extra work into developing my growing interests outside the ballet world. As a first step, I booked an intensive yoga teacher training that I could take during the summer break.

It matched perfectly with my interest and gave me the opportunity to start something new. I came back with a lot of courage that whatever I choose to do after my dance career, I would be okay and able to find my way. I continued for one more year in the dance company which gave me the chance to slowly start a small yoga studio by teaching a few yoga classes in addition to the intensive training as a dancer. This prepared me to wholeheartedly make another strong decision in my life. I stopped my professional dance career and put all my energy into developing of my future. I have to admit that at that point the future career path was rather nebulous. In addition to running my yoga studio, I took a Kinetic Chain Release course and over time my new passion started to shape up. It became clear that I wanted to use my deep understanding and awareness of the body in my new role as body therapist. This is when I was drawn to Rolfing®, a form of bodywork that seeks to reorganize the body's connective tissues to more effectively function within the earth's gravitational field.

The combination of the newly developed skills with my year-long dance practice provides me with a unique viewpoint to work with my clients in a respectful yet effective way. I am very much looking forward to keeping up the relationship with the dance community, but now from a different perspective. A new experience is the fact that I will be my own boss from now on. Initially this idea was quite frightening. I worried, 'Will I be able to succeed financially?' Putting this concern aside, being a business woman empowers me to dive into my new rich world without too many external constraints. Isn't this exactly what I was dreaming of?

SEBASTIAN GIBAS

Healing Teacher at a School for the Disabled



© Selma Bolt

It took five years for me to realize what it was that I wanted to do. During that time, I worked as the dancer in residence at the Theater St. Gallen and worked on all the projects that I could think of, trying to form a network along the way. I presented lectures for all ages, developed project ideas, and participated in the dancer union and local association in order to support the field of dance. A job as a masseur, acupuncturist and psychomotorist became candidates for my career transition, but what I chose in the end was to become a healing teacher at a school for the disabled. In order to take on the job, I had to go through a five-and-a-half-year university course, at the end of which employment was guaranteed along with a steady livelihood base. However, since I had to attend university, there was the matter of tuition fees, as well as the living costs for my family. Moreover, being a student for so long a time seemed impossible.

After making preparations step after step, I was admitted as a student. In order to do so, I had to go through practice sessions which took place across a year. During the practice sessions at the school for the disabled, I worked as a teacher 50% of the time. The school recruited me as a teacher for 40% of my course, even though I was still in the training to become one. The Swiss Theatrical Association, the Swiss transition foundation SSUDK, and interpreter foundation supported half of my tuition fees. There seemed to be no prospects for me in executing such a long-held plan all at once. It was a massive project, and I was at the foot of the mountain which I had to overcome.

However, all the problems were resolved through patience and passion. Today, I am attending the school most enthusiastically. Additionally, I am working with amateur dancers as a freelance choreographer, and act as administrative manager for the Curtis Dance School, which is a nice complementation to my studies in pedagogy and my 'Improvised Dance Skills' lecture. 'Improvised Dance Skills' is a lecture that I designed myself in which I was able to incorporate all my experience and knowledge from my dance career. I am currently preparing for the publication of a children's storybook that I wrote myself. The storybook features a story of the dances of severely disabled children. I am also preparing a video which includes a recording of the acted version of this book, as well as my own work sessions with the children. This video is a 70 minute film which I directed and filmed during the dance practice.

It took a long time for me to become mature enough to accomplish everything. Nevertheless, I am happy. I have discovered the way to present a future to my family, and myself, and discovered the work that gives me joy. The experiences and knowledge I have acquired by working as a dancer will be used valuably in new areas! I am most happy about having the time to spend with my family.



© Constantin Georgescu

YORKIE CHADWICK

Senior Lead Developer, Networking AG Zurich



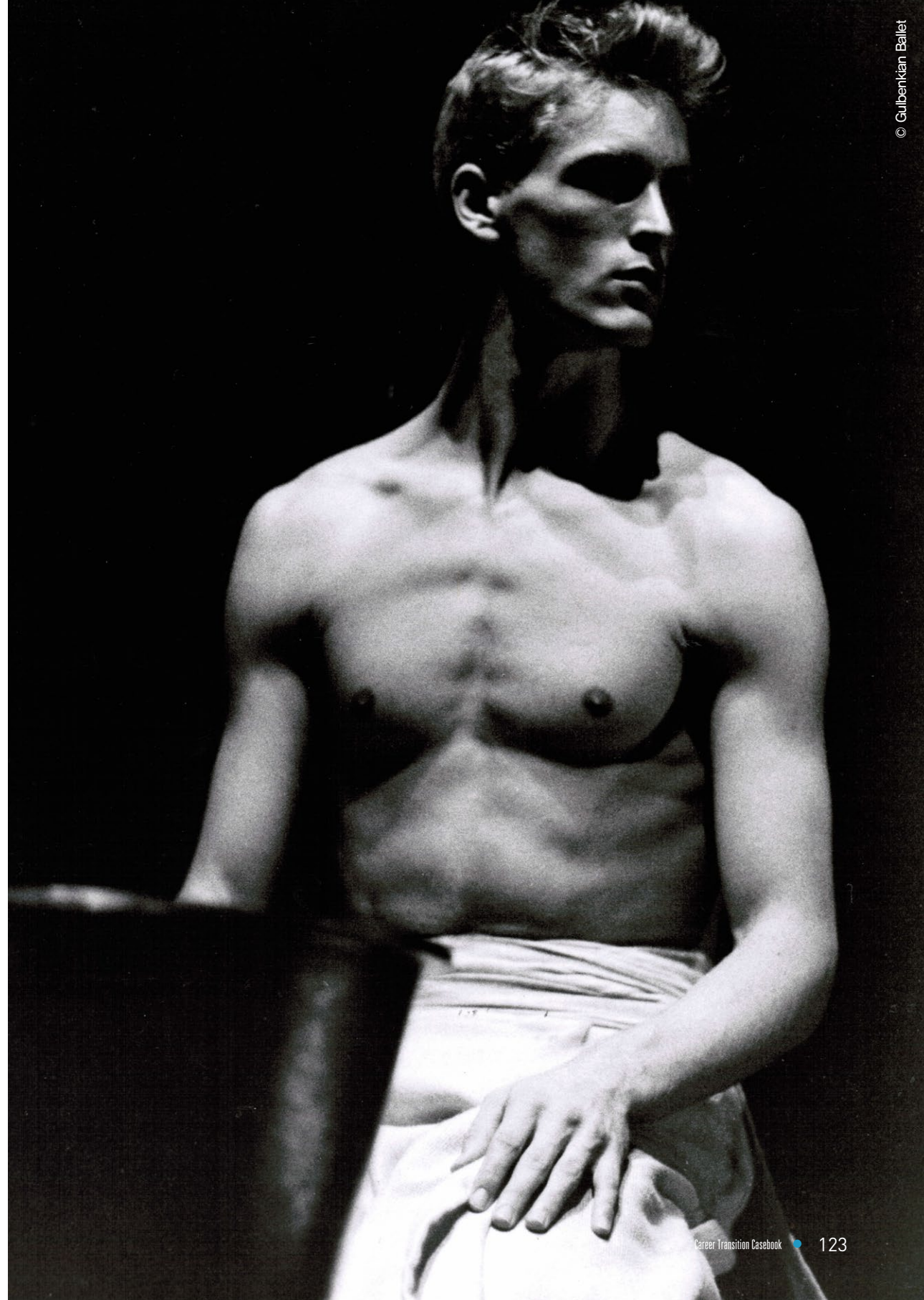
It all started with Sammy Davis Jr., or so my mother tells me. After watching him on television, I wanted to be a dancer. After a year of tap dancing and a round of roller skate dancing, I had had enough and wanted to do "proper dancing", which took me into ballet.

Later in life, at the age of 25, it occurred to me that I wanted to explore more aspects of my personality. Being a dancer was one of them, but what else could I be? First I went from Paris, where I was working as a dancer, to London, where I started my studies for a Diploma in Marketing Communications from the CAM Foundation whilst working at a clothing store. I successfully completed four of five modules, before realising I missed dance too much, and returned for another four years of throwing my body around the place for money. But sure enough, I arrived at the same point again shortly before turning 30. As any ex dancer knows, we are very lucky to have been able to turn our passion into a profession, and therefore I was determined to find a new passion to make a career out of, as opposed to just a temporary job.

It was my partner at the time who suggested that I get into programming, uniting the technical world with the creative world. He had witnessed how fascinated I was with my new computer, and how I would get lost in the monitor till late in the evening. Having no formal qualifications, and unlike many of my friends, not having had university education, I doubted my abilities in such a technical world. I visited an evening course at the EB Zürich, which got me really excited about the possibility of working as a web programmer.

Soon it became apparent to me that the same skills which helped me to achieve my dream of being a dancer, working in companies around the world - discipline, determination, the ability to work autonomously on my own skills, and to work well in a team - would serve me well in my next career as a programmer. The ability to interpret the clients' wishes to create something new, as well as the ability to know that nothing is ever finished for nothing is ever truly perfect also turned out to be helpful in my new profession. With a little financial help from the SBKV (The Swiss Stage artist union), I went on to complete a Diploma in Web Publishing, covering everything from technical programming, and server skills, the creation of content for the web, as well as project management and law.

Soon after that, I was lucky enough to be given the opportunity to join a Web Agency here in Zürich as a junior programmer. Ten years later, I am currently employed as the Senior Lead Developer at the very same agency.





Dancers' Career Development (DCD) is a registered charity and the only organisation of its kind in the UK to support dancers to identify alternative career opportunities after retiring from professional performance.

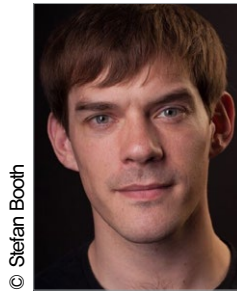
Established over 40 years ago, DCD (UK) has helped over 2,000 dance artists, from all genres of professional dance, to recognise their unique talents and transferrable skills, transitioning into a diverse range of careers after life as a professional dancer.

Transition support services include one to one confidential support, upskilling, workshops, financial grants and networking.

With the generous support of our partners and funders, DCD (UK) makes a direct impact on the lives of professional dancers across the UK.

ADAM SALTER

Personal Trainer



© Stefan Booth

I started my dance career at the late age of 18 when I went to Laine Theatre Arts and studied for three years in dance and musical theatre. In my second year I got my first job in Panto for UK Productions, which then went onto hire me for my first musical of Seven Brides for Seven Brothers. This then launched me into a wonderful journey doing different shows all over the world including London's West End.

There came a point in my career when I wanted a change, not because I was unhappy, but because we had the news that we were going to have a baby. I decided that I needed a more stable job but still something I loved and was passionate about. I went to Dancers' Career Development (DCD) and talked to them about what I wanted to do. They provided all the guidance I needed; I even had a career profiling session to talk about different jobs I had not thought about. I eventually came to the conclusion that I wanted to be a personal trainer. I looked into courses that provided the training and got a place on a course covering the Level 3 qualification I needed to be employed as a Personal Trainer. I then applied for funding from DCD for the course fees.

I started the course in April, 2015. As I was doing my training I tried to make as many connections as possible in my new chosen field. I put my new CV online, applied to all the PT positions I could find, went into a lot of gyms to ask questions, and applied in person as well. I started working at David Lloyd gym in January, 2016. Now I have five clients and a job of 40 hours per week. I have the stability I needed but also the passion and love for my new job.

In retrospect, the transition from dancer to a new career was very scary. All I had ever done until then was dance and perform. You have to face your fears, plan ahead, and talk to as many people as possible. Even the smallest thing can end up helping you along your journey. Try to be open to new ideas and approaches so you can take it all on board and use what you need to succeed.



© Roger Bygott

ANNA LOWE

Programme Manager, British Council



Having successfully carved out a role in the career I had always dreamed of, I made the decision to retire from performing following a period of uncertainty and unhappiness. At first, I chose to retrain for a new career in arts administration. However, in the midst of a financial recession where seemed scarce, this proved to be more challenging than anticipated. With no administrative experience, I was advised to develop my skill set and undertook a series of courses before taking on an internship in the development department at Shakespeare's Globe.

I was awarded a grant from Dancers' Career Development to further my education in the cultural sector. Following my time at the Globe, I went on to work as an intern and subsequently Culture Programme Coordinator helping to deliver the London 2012 Festival and Cultural Olympiad as part of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Following a period of freelancing, I joined the British Council in 2013 as Project Manager. I have gone on to work on international programmes which celebrate and showcase the UK's innovation and excellence in the arts and creative industries in Mexico, Nigeria, Korea, and the UAE.

Whilst working professionally, I mentored for CDET's Aspire Project, offering advice, support, and guidance to a vocational mentee. I also volunteered as mentor for Dance United, a contemporary dance based initiative that worked with young people who were marginalised in society and whose potentials were often unrecognised or unfulfilled.

In terms of advice I'd give dancers facing transition, my main mantra would be "if you don't ask, you don't get". Calling upon the drive and networking capabilities that got you to where you are in your performance career, is really all you need to take yourself where you want to go next. Of course, deciding where to go next can often be difficult so my try a few things out and see where they lead. You really only stand to gain things by saying 'yes,' and who knows where you might end up? I think it's also important not to be afraid of 'failing'. You learn more by getting things wrong than getting things right.

It may seem strange for dancers to consider themselves as extraordinary because being disciplined, determined, creative, meticulous, detailed and ambitious is something they just are without even thinking about it, but all of these qualities go a very long way to help you stand out in a different context. With unique experiences to draw upon, dancers often have a refreshing take on the 'norm'.



AYO (JONES) SMITH

Personal and Executive Coach / Consultant / Educator in Performing Arts



© Diane Howe

I have a vivid memory of the exact moment I met my destiny. At the age of three, I attended a nursery school attached to a church hall. I remember looking through the slatted glass window of the door to a hall full of little girls dressed in sky blue leotards, chiffon ballet skirts, tights and ballet shoes. The girls were dancing around and I looked up to my Mum and said, "I want to do that." My passion for dance was born.

I attended the Joan Clare School of Dance, followed by training at The Northern School of Contemporary Dance. I graduated with an MA in Advanced Performing Arts from the University of Leeds. I have since danced and taught with companies including Phoenix Dance Company, Irie Dance Theatre, Adzido Pan African Dance Ensemble, and ACE Dance and Music. I acted and facilitated workshops for Theatre Company Blah Blah Blah, Primary Colours, Interplay Theatre Company, and Fittings Multi Media Productions and also choreographed and directed productions for The West Yorkshire Playhouse, Pains Plough and Told by an Idiot. I was also Co-Director of Mango Creative Arts where I was head of the Education Company.

In many of these productions I was employed because of my ability to perform different roles. As a dancer I would say it is important to keep extending different areas of your craft within the industry. I also developed choreographic, directorial and teaching skills, allowing me to work outside of the performing arena.

Transitions can feel overwhelming and daunting. However, they can also be a great source of reflection, a time to pause, to gather thoughts and to learn. Making the decision to transition from being a dancer into another field is no exception. When I pursued my career as a dancer it was my dream and I think this is true for most dancers. Therefore, when you consider a new career path, it is important to ask yourself, "What makes me feel excited, engaged and alive other than dance? What else makes me feel passionate? And what does my future dream look like?"

As dancers we have transferable skills that can be utilized in other careers. We have the ability to communicate and relate to other people, to overcome obstacles, adapt quickly to change, be dedicated and willing to work hard. We are also creative and have the ability to step outside the box which allows us to see things from a different perspective. Connecting my skills, strengths, passion led me to my new career as a coach.

GERRY TURVEY

Choreographer / Workshop Leader / Performer / Yoga Instructor



I trained as a visual artist, and started dancing in my twenties with a strong desire to work physically and creatively. I have participated in projects worldwide, including Africa, America, and Europe. I make performances in public spaces, work in art galleries, and collaborate with other artists. My work concerns community and culture, and brings people together to share positive physical experiences. I am also an independent choreographer and performer, as well as a yoga instructor running several classes a week in a local Yoga centre. I started teaching yoga as a favour for a friend a few years ago. One thing led to another and I found myself with a regular weekly class, which mostly was made up from patchy knowledge of doing my own practice and going to other yoga classes. I am still in transition, and hopefully I will be able to continue to be involved in dance as well as develop my new skills as a yoga instructor during the years to come.

At the age of sixty I felt I also had to assess my future and longevity of my career path, and doing yoga seemed to be a positive way of moving forward supporting my dance work while also attaining tools for the future. However, I was limited in both my approach and the ability to teach without the necessary qualifications. I started doing some research into yoga teacher training, and while it all sounded wonderful, the price put the possibility out of reach. This is when I approached Dancers' Career Development (DCD) which provided me with support. The help I got in writing my application was generous, supportive, and invaluable. I shortly found out that the application was accepted and a month later I started on the Yoga Teacher Training. I had several intensive weeks and weekends in the course of a year. It was incredibly challenging but I am very proud of myself for doing it, and feel a great sense of achievement; I am now a fully qualified Yoga Instructor.

I very much appreciated the continuous support from DCD: a meeting during the year, an interview and feedback form at the end of the year, as well as three coaching sessions. It was all very helpful during the process of transition.

Starting something new can make you feel less confident, and being in a learning situation again can create some concerns and take you out of your comfort zone. However, it will be paid off through self development, a sense of achievement, new avenues, relationships, and ways of doing things in your life.



JOSH TUIFUA

PDTD, RAD RTS - Dance Educator



© John Joshua



I discovered ballet by participating in an outreach project run by Inner London Educational Authorities (ILEA) and the Royal Ballet School. Following my successful completion of the project, I was invited to join the Junior Associates of the Royal Ballet School. After my first year, I was offered a place at White Lodge where I continued my training for a further six years. I completed my education at the Upper School before joining The Royal Ballet. I danced with the company for sixteen years, rising to the rank of Soloist, performing and creating a variety of roles both in London and internationally.

During my career, I had continuously developed interests and hobbies outside of dance, from fashion, textiles and photography to aviation, always with 'life after tights' in mind. When the time finally came to leave the company, I found that all my hobbies and interests had failed to prepare me adequately for the transition; it had just left me with too many choices and an abundance of confusion.

After taking a few years out to look after my elderly parents, I decided to learn a new skill set. I have always been highly sociable, so I decided to investigate the hospitality industry. I started working for a two Michelin starred Chef, learning restaurant structure from gastro pubs to fine dining. I found myself drawn to the PR and Marketing aspects of the business. During this time, I discovered that many of my skills from my life on stage were transferable.

After four years of working in hospitality, I felt it was time to move into a new area. I still felt somewhat lost. So I took the life changing decision to seek professional help planning my next step and contacted Dancers' Career Development (DCD). The support that I have received from the entire team has been invaluable. We began with identifying my interests and hobbies, deciding how I'd like to implement them in my life, and prioritising my focus. With the help of DCD, I graduated from the Professional Dancers' Teaching Diploma course at the Royal Academy of Dance (RAD). Since then, I have been teaching for the RAD at their school in Battersea, holding workshops nationally and teaching internationally as part of their summer school faculty. I also work with the educational department of Birmingham Royal Ballet; the musical theatre course at Arts Educational; and also with City Academy. With this structure in place, I'm now able to focus on another of my passions, photography, whilst still expanding my freelance teaching. I am truly grateful for the continued support from the team at DCD and have found that the transition is continuously a work in progress.

MARIA HAYDAY

Education Manager



I trained for three years at Arts Educational School, Tring Park, followed by three years at The Place, in London. In 2006, I was awarded the Robert Cohen Scholarship for Outstanding Promise and went on to do an apprenticeship with the National Dance Company Wales. I stayed with the company for four years, and alongside performing works by choreographers including Stephen Petronio, Itzik Galili, Stijn Celis and Andonis Foniadakis, I also choreographed my own work for the Alternative Routes Season with the company. In 2011, I moved to Amsterdam to freelance for choreographers Heidi Vierthaler and Dorrottya Kiss and then joined Scottish Dance Theatre, where I performed works by Jo Stromgren and Fleur Darkin.

During my contract with Scottish Dance Theatre, I sustained an injury in my back which put me out of action and into intensive rehabilitation. Following this injury, I began a career transition into the education sphere. I initially self-funded a CELTA (Certificate in English Language Teaching Ability to Adults) qualification and found work as an English language teacher in an international school in Israel – home to my partner and former colleague, Yuval Lev. After a series of promotions, I began managing one of the campuses of the international school, and with the help of Dancers' Career Development (DCD), I looked into ways of furthering myself within my budding new career. I found an incredible looking MA program at the University of Bath that I could complete online through distance learning alongside my management position. The MA is in Educational Leadership and thanks to the invaluable careers advice and financial support from DCD, I am currently working towards my second module out of five – having completed module 1 with Distinction! Thank you so much DCD!

I think it's so important to remember that even in the darkest moments – like living through the panic and distress caused by an injury – there is always a silver lining if you keep your head up high enough to look for it. These days, I feel weirdly grateful that through my injury, my eyes were involuntarily opened to all the amazing possibilities lying outside of the dance world. My experiences have really made me appreciate the vast wealth of transferable skills we, as dancers, intrinsically carry with us. We are a species of resilient, self-motivated, insanely hard working and adaptable humans with enormous personal strength and with the right support, these attributes can so easily be channelled and put to use in so many different fields.



© Roy Campbell-Moore



Career Transition For Dancers

A Program of The Actors Fund

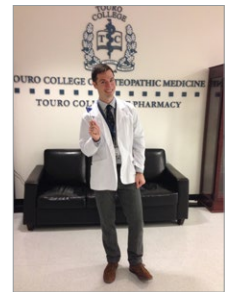


Founded in 1985, Career Transition For Dancers at The Actors Fund enables dancers to define their career possibilities and develop the skills necessary to excel in a variety of disciplines outside of dance. Core program services include: Career Counseling and Guidance Program and the CTFD Scholarship and Grant Program. Dancers are also eligible to receive individual and group counseling services, referrals for healthcare and health insurance and, where eligible, access to emergency financial assistance.



CLARK JOHNSEN

Medical School Student



It was my first week of college and I decided it would be fun to try something different in order to fulfill my Freshman Physical Education requirement.

I was 18 years old. I chose a modern dance class. After the class, the teacher told me, “I think you might have a talent for this and you should take some more classes next semester. You have a lot of facility.”

“Facility?”

“What I mean is, you’re a natural,” she smiled. The next semester I enrolled in beginning ballet, tap, jazz, folk dance, theater dance and even clogging.

Those first dance classes led me to move all the way to New York City after graduation and pursue work as a Broadway dancer. Because I had always wanted to be a doctor, I told myself that I would give it two years and if I didn’t ‘make it’ I would just pick up and apply for medical school with no regrets.

Starting in 2004, my performing career encompassed major productions of: La Cage Aux Folles, 42nd Street, Mame, Mamma Mia, High School Musical, Mary Poppins, The Addams Family, and finally in 2011, I got the opportunity to make history as the only actual Mormon in the original cast of The Book of Mormon.

As I approached my third full year of performances in the Book of Mormon, I found my body buckling under the grueling Broadway schedule. At the same time, I felt a longing to go back to my other passion: medicine. But where could I start? It seemed overwhelming to consider all the years of school that lay ahead and the financial burdens I would have to undertake. As I considered how to move forward, a cast member told me about Career Transition For Dancers.

On a snowy Monday in late 2012, I came to my appointment at CTFD, feeling overwhelmed with emotion. I was afraid that making the first steps would be too daunting and difficult. The team at CTFD encouraged me to take my transition one step at a time. Less than 2 years after that initial meeting, I was accepted to medical school at Touro College of Medicine in Harlem, NY, where I am now completing my final year. I have been able to apply the diligence I developed as a dancer to my medical training, and in so doing, I finished first in my class and was recognized with several academic awards by the faculty and deans of my school. Next year, I plan to start my training to practice within the field of psychiatry.

GEORGE DE LA PEÑA

Professor, University of Iowa



I began my career with American Ballet Theatre after graduating from George Balanchine's School of American Ballet, and have had the honor to work with many choreographers including George Balanchine, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Martha Clarke, Alonzo King, Kenneth MacMillan, Mark Morris, Rudolf Nureyev, Dwight Rhoden, Jerome Robbins, Antony Tudor, Twyla Tharp, Glen Tetley, Doug Varone, Dan Wagoner, among many others. The highlight in my career was in 1978 when I was chosen to portray Vaslav Nijinsky in the Paramount Pictures/Herbert Ross film "Nijinsky". I participated in numerous other projects in film and television as an actor and worked with distinguished artists such as Alan Bates, Blake Edwards, Marsha Norman, Richard Levinson, Stanley Donen, John Turturro, Kathy Bates, Elizabeth McGovern, and Patrick Swayze.

I also began teaching early in my career as a dancer. This was in large part because the School of American Ballet encouraged us to share our knowledge. However, I later learned that years of teaching experience in the studio was not considered enough of a credential for higher education in academia. This news was upsetting and confusing.

It was at this point that I sought guidance from Career Transition For Dancers. Their objective and compassionate assessment of my circumstances was life-changing. Without them I would not have secured a fellowship from State University of New York (SUNY) where I resumed my studies. It took time and effort to build those "learning" muscles since the process was very different from learning a new choreography or a role. Throughout, I received amazing support from CTFD and my college advisor, Professor Lucy Winner.

I am now a professor with tenure at the University of Iowa. The unexpected benefits that were yielded from returning to school were immeasurable and have led to my current research in neuroscience and adolescent cognitive-emotional development. In addition, I continue to utilize my early education as a performer to enrich my work with the next generation of aspiring performing artists. Also, I still passionately advocate for the arts as one of the necessary pillars of education for civilization.



INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION
FOR THE TRANSITION
OF PROFESSIONAL DANCERS



IOTPD

(International Organization for the Transition of Professional Dancers)

IOTPD aims to ensure that every professional dancer has the support and tools they need to make a successful transition. The organization creates opportunities for the dance community worldwide to share experiences and expertise to give better support to dancers. The IOTPD raises awareness of dancer transition issues through various measures which include initiating and encouraging research, conferences, publications, platforms etc.

IOTPD develops initiatives to raise understanding of dancer transition issues and about the role of a dancer in society on a national and international level. It represents the transition concerns of dancers in international fora and as an organization unique in its kind. The organization seeks active collaboration with those in and outside the dance community to develop possible solutions to transition challenges and support organizations and countries seeking to establish transition programs. Most importantly, the IOTPD and its associates empower dancers to manage the career transition process themselves.

IOTPD Philippe Braunschweig Grant

Invited by Philippe Braunschweig representatives of dancer transition programs gathered in 1993 at the University of Lausanne, Switzerland. Main purpose of the meeting to explore the needs of dancers who face the end of their performing career.

It was the start of the International Organization for the Transition of Professional Dancers (IOTPD), an international network of support programs for dancers, dedicated to offering the resources and support dancers need when they reach the end of their performance career and need to prepare to pursue a new career.

MARISSA PARZEI

Pursuing a Degree in Business Management



© Tony Noël

My plans for the future are not set in stone, nor would I want them to be. One thing I know for certain is that I want to learn more about management and what it means to be a good leader. That is why I chose to pursue a degree in business management. Business is all around us. And while I'm not the type to want to be a tycoon, I do want to participate in society with more skills than just dance so that I can do something that makes an impact and difference.

I started my studies with the Open University. It is a fully online university that allows me the flexibility to conclude my dance work and study at the same time. So far, so good! I am really enjoying the material and the questions that arise in my mind. The investigation of it all is what I find exciting.

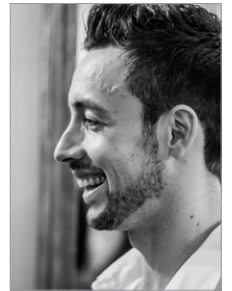
I'm not entirely certain where I want this degree to take me. Whether I stay in the arts, move to a different area of arts, or change to a completely different field is something time will reveal. What I know is that business management studies will give me skills that will be able to take me far. I also look forward to experiencing my future open up.

In some ways, I feel lucky to leave dance. I now have the opportunity to get a second career. It is an opportunity that not many people have. Maybe I won't entirely leave dance. To be completely honest, I don't think I could. Yet my focus will be driven towards a new angle.

I am so grateful for the support of the Philippe Braunschweig Grant and the IOTPD. I have been given the support for a new beginning.

MARK BIOCCA

Gyrotonic Trainer

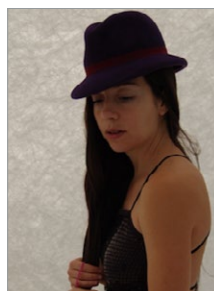


Being a dancer is a volatile career and fragile in its nature. In many cases, the ability to be successful as a dancer is compromised by factors that are out of one's control, regardless of talent or determination. When faced with these challenges, finding the strength to move on or to pick up the broken pieces can seem impossible as the life or pathway you had been seeing till then may suddenly be no longer possible.

IOTPD not only allows you to fix what is broken but gives you the real opportunity of seeing things the way they are as they evolve. I am now a fully qualified Gyrotonic trainer, and this gives me the skills and knowledge to move forward with my new career and life in a positive and productive manner. I am forever grateful to the programme and hope that it will help many others in the future. Your career is what you make of it and IOPDT has made mine greater!

NAIARA MENDIOROZ

Master's Degree Candidate in Dance Movement Therapy



I have been a freelance dancer since 2003 in the Netherlands and abroad. I have worked 13 years professionally in the performance and dance field with endurance, joy, and a deep respect for my profession.

However, due to the short life of this career and a personal desire to extend my skills to other disciplines, I decided in 2016 to enroll in the Master of Dance Movement Therapy at Codarts University, Rotterdam.

Since 2010, I have been working as a dance teacher for female victims of domestic violence along with my regular dance career. It was in New York when I had my first opportunity to work in a shelter. The experience I had there, as well as the impact dance would have on these women, deeply moved me and therefore I decided to offer my skills into this very concrete group at the Department of Equality and Women in Navarra.

Furthermore, I have worked sporadically as a volunteer with refugees and homeless people at an organization call Paris 365, located in Spain. Due to this position, I have been shadowing other professionals in the field of psychology and therapy. Now I have an enormous inspiration to become a therapist just like them.

As for now, I am in the second year of my studies and it is the first time that I do not dance professionally since my career began. However, the transition from dancing to becoming a therapist is, in my experience, a beautiful way to expand my own knowledge and the possibilities of dance. I have discovered my second vocation. To me, helping others through dance feels like a very natural path to follow. I can use the methods and techniques I acquired in dance to facilitate for others a way to cope with the adversities of everyday life. My plans for the coming future are to continue working on the educational field teaching dance to students in combination with my second profession as a dance therapist.



TOM DE JAGER

Ballet Shoes Coordinator, Royal Ballet of Flanders



Ever since I was born, I have been learning; and ever since I could walk, I have been dancing. With the encouragement of my father who, himself, was a passionate high school teacher, it has always been a second nature for me to go school and university alongside my dance career.

Therefore, enrolling into a bachelor in event management was for me a very natural decision. For a dancer who has been dancing in many different countries around the world, it is not always easy to find the financial and guiding support. Fortunately, I then became acquainted with the IOTPD from which I was awarded the Philippe Braunsweig Grant in 2016. Thanks to the PhB Grant, I was able to start my education at the university as well as obtain guidance in making some big decisions in my career.

This then resulted in a great work experience behind the scenes in the offices of the Royal Ballet of Flanders in Belgium, where I am now responsible for the coordination of all the ballet shoes for the company.

No matter how well financed or how well organized the transition process in a country may be, it will never completely take away the fear and grief of having to say goodbye to this harsh but beautiful profession as a dancer. The IOTPD has made this process much easier for me and for that, I am forever grateful

