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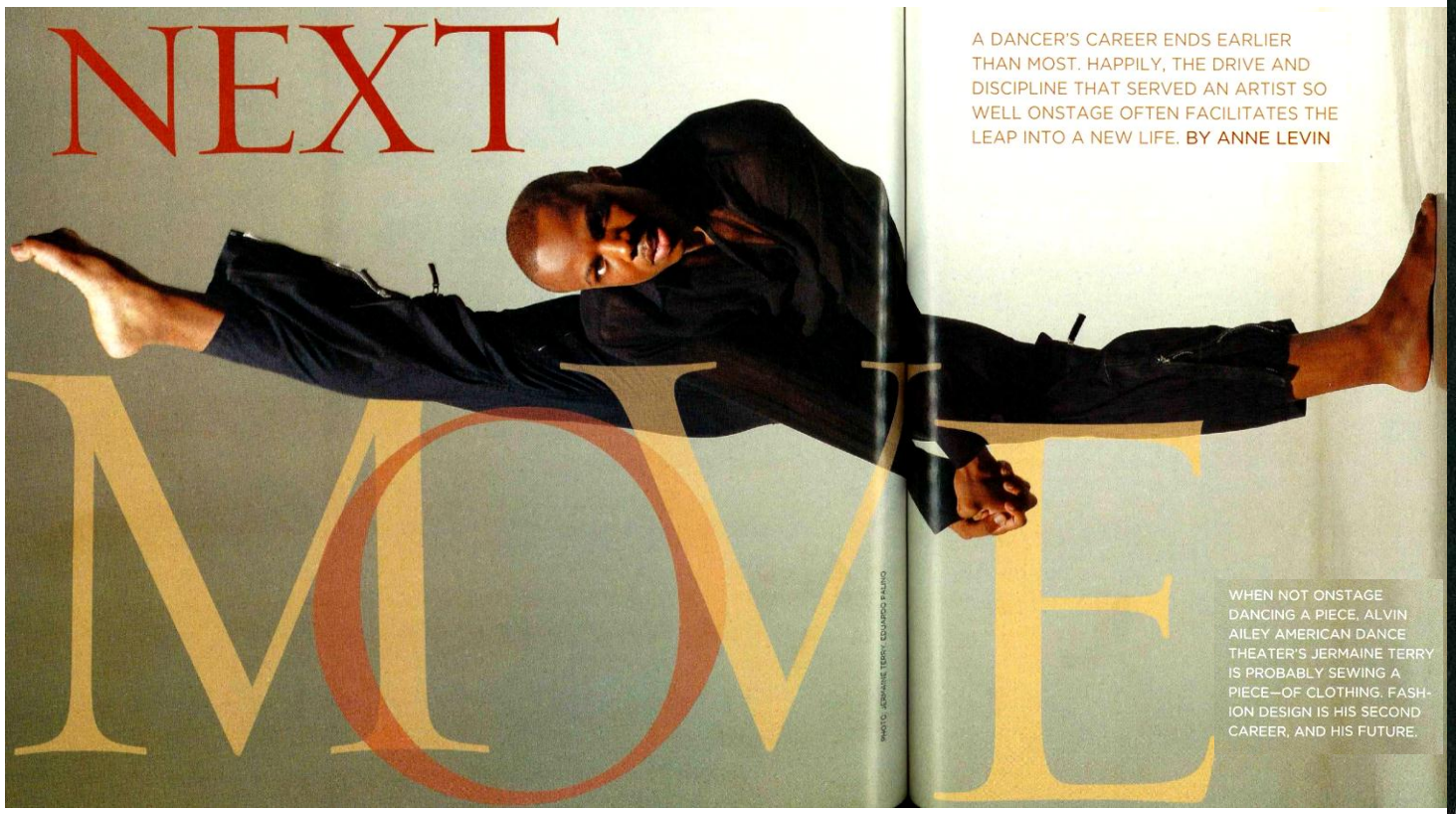


A DANCER'S CAREER ENDS EARLIER THAN MOST. HAPPILY, THE DRIVE AND DISCIPLINE THAT SERVED AN ARTIST SO WELL ONSTAGE OFTEN FACILITATES THE LEAP INTO A NEW LIFE. BY ANNE LEVIN

WHEN NOT ONSTAGE DANCING A PIECE, ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER'S JERMAINE TERRY IS PROBABLY SEWING A PIECE—OF CLOTHING. FASHION DESIGN IS HIS SECOND CAREER, AND HIS FUTURE.

PHOTO: JERMAINE TERRY, EDUARDO PALMO

It's a half hour to showtime at New York City Center, and members of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater are limbering up in the wings. Often missing at the barre, however, is Jermaine Terry, who is likely to be found crouched over a length of fabric, needle and thread in hand. Costume design has become a second passion for the critically acclaimed young dancer, who does double duty performing in such ballets as "The External Knot" and "Revelations," while turning out dance wear for the Ailey ballet school, as well as costumes for several dance companies.

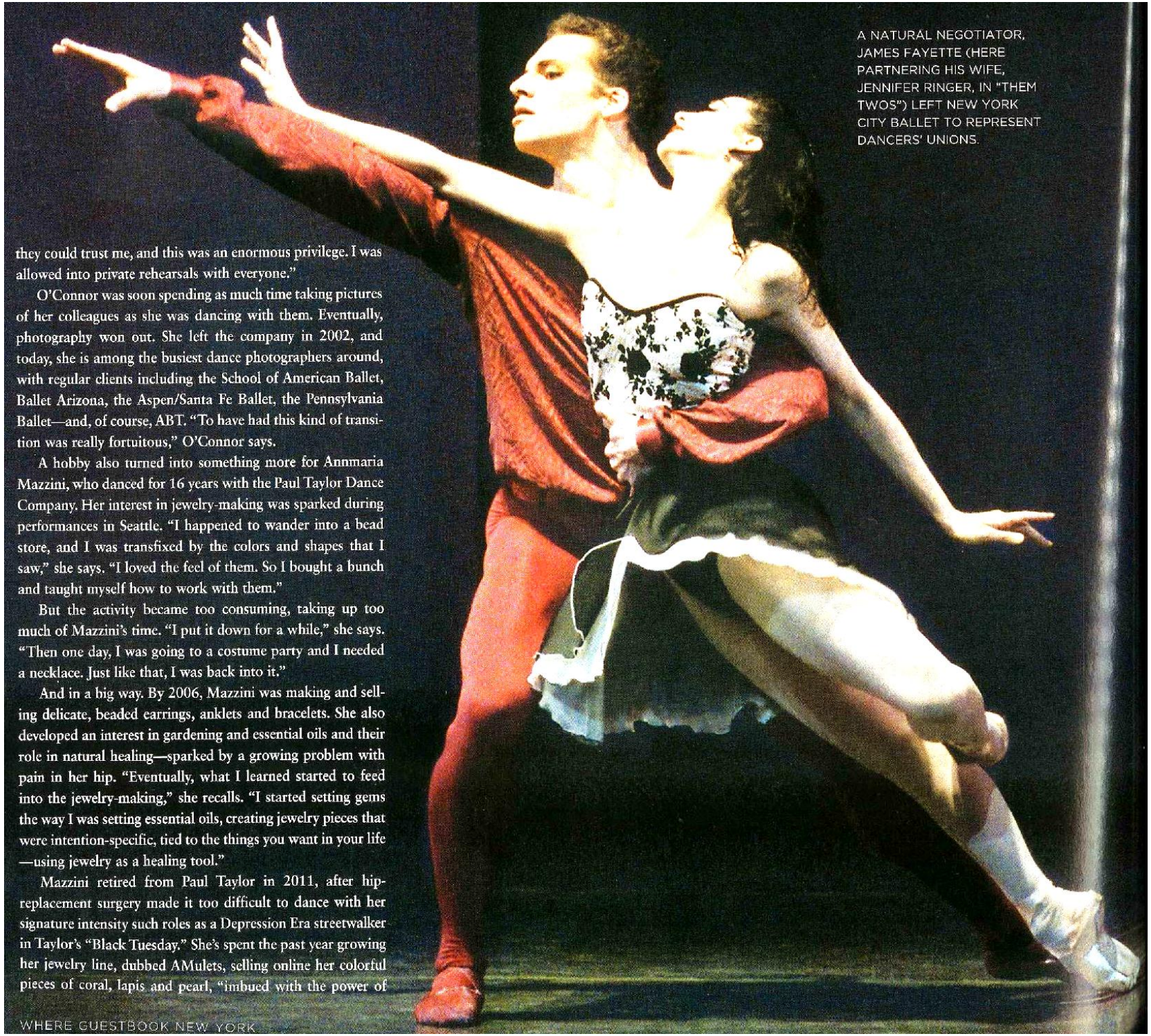
"I come in early to the theater and sew until it's time for rehearsal and class," Terry says. "Then during the break to get ready for the show, I sew for about 30 minutes. I like the end product, and I like learning new things. Every time I make something new, I challenge myself to work with fabrics or techniques I haven't done before."

Terry is only in his 20s, but he has already found a path to follow once his performing days come to an end. A dancer's career lasts only as long as his or her body can meet the art form's extraordinary physical demands. While the inevitable transition can be traumatic, a surprising number of artistes have made a successful leap into fulfilling careers—sometimes an extension of their terpsichorean past, sometimes in completely different directions.

Rosalie O'Connor grew up with two passions—dance and photography. Chosen in 1987 by then-artistic director Mikhail Baryshnikov for American Ballet Theatre, she spent 15 years in the corps de ballet, where she danced supporting roles in *La Sylphide*, *Giselle* and *Romeo and Juliet*. Sidelined temporarily by a serious foot injury, she filled the hours by experimenting with her camera, a constant companion since she was 6 years old. "When I was with ABT, I would always photograph all these countries we would travel to on tour," O'Connor says. "I was a big fan of dance photography, but it never occurred to me that I could do it."

Then, in 1996, she decided to enter a photo contest being held by the now-defunct magazine *Dance Ink*. She pulled together a group of dancers from ABT and New York City Ballet (all friends), borrowed a tripod and camera, and posed them on the side of the Metropolitan Opera House. To her surprise and delight, she won the contest. "It was a life-changing moment," she says.

ABT administration, aware of her talent, asked O'Connor to create a photo gallery for the new company website. "It was thrilling. Everyone was behind me. The dancers knew



A NATURAL NEGOTIATOR, JAMES FAYETTE (HERE PARTNERING HIS WIFE, JENNIFER RINGER, IN "THEM TWOS") LEFT NEW YORK CITY BALLET TO REPRESENT DANCERS' UNIONS.

they could trust me, and this was an enormous privilege. I was allowed into private rehearsals with everyone."

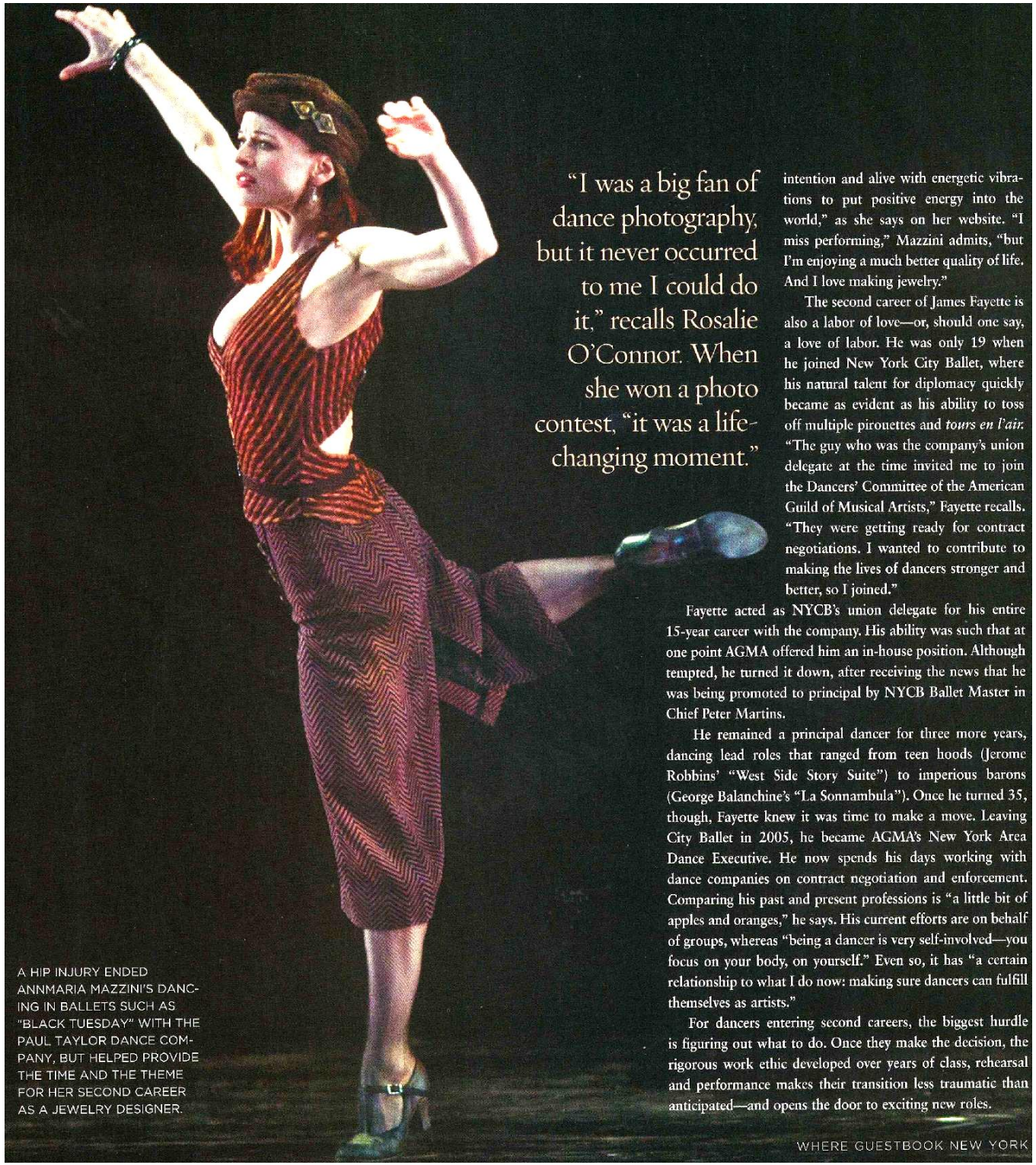
O'Connor was soon spending as much time taking pictures of her colleagues as she was dancing with them. Eventually, photography won out. She left the company in 2002, and today, she is among the busiest dance photographers around, with regular clients including the School of American Ballet, Ballet Arizona, the Aspen/Santa Fe Ballet, the Pennsylvania Ballet—and, of course, ABT. "To have had this kind of transition was really fortuitous," O'Connor says.

A hobby also turned into something more for Annmaria Mazzini, who danced for 16 years with the Paul Taylor Dance Company. Her interest in jewelry-making was sparked during performances in Seattle. "I happened to wander into a bead store, and I was transfixed by the colors and shapes that I saw," she says. "I loved the feel of them. So I bought a bunch and taught myself how to work with them."

But the activity became too consuming, taking up too much of Mazzini's time. "I put it down for a while," she says. "Then one day, I was going to a costume party and I needed a necklace. Just like that, I was back into it."

And in a big way. By 2006, Mazzini was making and selling delicate, beaded earrings, anklets and bracelets. She also developed an interest in gardening and essential oils and their role in natural healing—sparked by a growing problem with pain in her hip. "Eventually, what I learned started to feed into the jewelry-making," she recalls. "I started setting gems the way I was setting essential oils, creating jewelry pieces that were intention-specific, tied to the things you want in your life —using jewelry as a healing tool."

Mazzini retired from Paul Taylor in 2011, after hip-replacement surgery made it too difficult to dance with her signature intensity such roles as a Depression Era streetwalker in Taylor's "Black Tuesday." She's spent the past year growing her jewelry line, dubbed AMulets, selling online her colorful pieces of coral, lapis and pearl, "imbued with the power of



A HIP INJURY ENDED ANNMARIA MAZZINI'S DANCING IN BALLETS SUCH AS "BLACK TUESDAY" WITH THE PAUL TAYLOR DANCE COMPANY, BUT HELPED PROVIDE THE TIME AND THE THEME FOR HER SECOND CAREER AS A JEWELRY DESIGNER.

"I was a big fan of dance photography, but it never occurred to me I could do it," recalls Rosalie O'Connor. When she won a photo contest, "it was a life-changing moment."

intention and alive with energetic vibrations to put positive energy into the world," as she says on her website. "I miss performing," Mazzini admits, "but I'm enjoying a much better quality of life. And I love making jewelry."

The second career of James Fayette is also a labor of love—or, should one say, a love of labor. He was only 19 when he joined New York City Ballet, where his natural talent for diplomacy quickly became as evident as his ability to toss off multiple pirouettes and *tours en l'air*. "The guy who was the company's union delegate at the time invited me to join the Dancers' Committee of the American Guild of Musical Artists," Fayette recalls. "They were getting ready for contract negotiations. I wanted to contribute to making the lives of dancers stronger and better, so I joined."

Fayette acted as NYCB's union delegate for his entire 15-year career with the company. His ability was such that at one point AGMA offered him an in-house position. Although tempted, he turned it down, after receiving the news that he was being promoted to principal by NYCB Ballet Master in Chief Peter Martins.

He remained a principal dancer for three more years, dancing lead roles that ranged from teen hoods (Jerome Robbins' "West Side Story Suite") to imperious barons (George Balanchine's "La Sonnambula"). Once he turned 35, though, Fayette knew it was time to make a move. Leaving City Ballet in 2005, he became AGMA's New York Area Dance Executive. He now spends his days working with dance companies on contract negotiation and enforcement. Comparing his past and present professions is "a little bit of apples and oranges," he says. His current efforts are on behalf of groups, whereas "being a dancer is very self-involved—you focus on your body, on yourself." Even so, it has "a certain relationship to what I do now: making sure dancers can fulfill themselves as artists."

For dancers entering second careers, the biggest hurdle is figuring out what to do. Once they make the decision, the rigorous work ethic developed over years of class, rehearsal and performance makes their transition less traumatic than anticipated—and opens the door to exciting new roles.