

What professionals are saying:

“This is a masterpiece of professional and real-world guidance for the many leaps and pivots a career in dance takes. The emphasis on ethical behavior, inclusivity, and compassion is vitally important for our field, especially those who train and employ the next generation of dance artists. I will use it with gratitude.”

- Marina Hotchkiss, BFA Program Director Alonzo King LINES Ballet BFA, Dominican University

“This comprehensive guide sets the stage for an immersive journey through the intricacies of personal and professional development, providing tangible direction for a fulfilling career in this intangible art form of dance.”

- Nejla Yatkin, Choreographer and Movement Artist

“Written from the perspective of an experienced mentor, this practical and encouraging text demonstrates a pathway to longevity in a dance career. The focus is holistic, balancing career advice with physical and mental health and wellbeing. It is ideal for pre-professional and college-level dancers and will inspire and encourage dance educators and mid-career artists to re-engage with their unique artistic voices and career paths.”

- Meg Brooker, Professor of Dance & Director of The School of Performing and Visual Arts, The University of Southern Mississippi

Excerpt from PLACES

Places are called, and you stand ready in the wings. As the lights dim and your excitement and adrenaline increase, the audience's anticipation is palpable. Poised to enter the stage with all the training and rehearsals that led to this moment, you are prepared.

Passion is why we dance, and discipline is how we improve. Turning passion and discipline into a livelihood also requires preparation. How? With intention. Whether starting out or making a mid-career change, begin by taking center stage. Shift the focus from what you think will get you hired and, instead, clarify your unique artistic gifts, professional ambitions, and personal

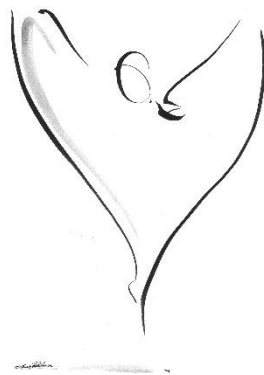
considerations. These three motifs become touchstones for determining and acquiring the skills necessary for choreographing your dance career.

Where are you right now? Perhaps you're weighing which school or company is the best for you or are considering the pros and cons of different career paths. Are you transitioning from a performer to a choreographer, company director, or studio manager and realize there is still much to learn? Maybe you're unsure where to begin or about what to do next. Possibly, you haven't fully committed to a dance career because you often hear, "You can't make a living in the arts." or "There is too much competition, and only one in a million makes it."

I have lived through many of these same issues and challenges. I researched options for my dance education, wrestled with my insecurities about failure, and overcame the objections of others. Once I committed to having a life in dance, I sought opportunities to perform and choreograph. I began in schools, community centers, outdoor fairs, and dance festivals, then on to theaters, small and large. I dealt with people in all the different roles involved with creating, producing, and promoting dance. It became necessary to understand what they did so I could communicate what I wanted effectively and efficiently. Additionally, I was often responsible for many of these jobs due to financial constraints.

My career has been very fulfilling but was rarely easy, and I was not always successful. At its best, it allowed me to collaborate with and learn from many gifted artists, nationally and internationally. But I hit walls of exhaustion, performed with injuries, received bad reviews, and lost opportunities due to economic downturns, marketplace preferences, and a global pandemic.

**I sought the information required for each opportunity and career shift.
More than once, I had to acquaint myself with a new city and arts community,
each with its own history, culture, and cliques.
I did my best to adapt and create a work-life balance,
often without the guidance, assistance, or support I needed.
I want it to be easier for you.**



Artwork by Laura Higgins Palmer