

# WHO DO YOU THINK I AM?

25 years on I could never have imagined that crashing through a glass door to announce the local chip shop was on fire would result in me lecturing biomechanics, choreographing for the V&A and teaching contemporary at English National Ballet School (ENBS) but it did!

Sporting a large cut to my chin, judo and gymnastics were shelved and off I trundled to ballet. My inspirational teacher soon contacted my parents to discuss vocational training and age eleven, an extremely excited girl arrived at Arts Educational School, Tring, courtesy of a discretionary grant that allowed children from lower income families to access training.

Tring was a magical place for me: exposure to music, dance and drama that your average northern lass couldn't normally access. At seventeen, a congenital scoliosis was diagnosed and I was advised to stop dancing by a physiotherapist – heartbreaking, but being a wilful adolescent this didn't stop me! Two years on, I joined National Youth Dance Company and then auditioned for London Contemporary Dance School (LCDS). This was a perfect stepping stone, as I was fortunate enough to leave with that graduate rarity – paid work!

My performance career was eclectic; tangoing with Laurie Booth, walking on egg shells with Aletta Collins, donning a nurse's uniform for Jasmin Vardimon, abseiling a sculpture in Glaswegian winter and leaping about in a lift for Carol Brown.

However, the financial frustrations of being a freelance contemporary dancer began to emerge. The catalyst for change came after signing on between jobs (yet again) with a successful dancer ten years my senior. I knew I couldn't sit there in ten years, so my 'What I want to do when I grow up' list was born.

After a foundation course in physics and chemistry, I secured a place at an Osteopathic College. That was the easy part, giving up dance wasn't, and I found myself deferring for three years waiting for that ONE dance job that would leave me feeling complete! Needless to say it never arrived and I accepted my place after the college refused to hold it any longer.

My sabbatical from dance was tough, not because of the academic rigors but because I missed the creativity and openness of the dance community. On the upside, I got to massage my brain matter and found time to study trapeze,



Ju-Jitsu, acrobatics, climbing and fell desperately in love with travel!

On graduating, LCDS offered me the position of Osteopath and Anatomy Lecturer plus involvement in their new Centre for Advanced Training (C.A.T). My answer was a resounding YES, alongside acceptance of leading the contemporary dance course at ENBS.

Five years on and thankfully my career path has afforded me fantastic opportunities from running CPD courses, performing at Sadler's Wells 2004 *Breakin' Convention*, to choreographing around Europe. I was the therapist for BBC1's *So You Think You Can Dance*, and continue to enjoy researching into training elite young dancers to support the teams with which I work. In my practises I have a fascinating client base and adore teaching the CAT students and adult class. In fact, I love teaching anyone who enters a studio with me.

Oh, and when their bodies break...well I can suggest where they might get fixed! ■

**Do you know who I am?**  
Turn to Page 26 to find out!

