Making School Work

How five professional dancers balance college and a career.

BY JULIE DIANA

Gone are the days when dancers had to choose between a professional career and a college education. Now, even the stars are finding ways to fit academic classes into their demanding schedules. They go to school in the morning before company class, in the evening, on their only day off or even online from their dressing rooms. If you think you can’t follow your dance dreams and earn a degree at the same time, take a cue from these dance pros and think again!

When Jeanine made it past the Top 10 on “So You Think You Can Dance,” she wasn’t nervous about the dancing. She was worried because she’d have to reapply to her college of choice, the University of California Los Angeles. She had already been accepted, but her dancing success meant she had to put off enrollment and apply again later that year.

Luckily, Jeanine got in, and she’s now enrolled in UCLA’s World Arts and Cultures program with a concentration in dance. She’s studying subjects like physiological science, dance film and Pilates—topics that are important to her as a dancer. The more knowledge she has, the more she can find different ways to approach her movement. “College was always something that I was going to do,” she says. “I knew that my career and my education could grow simultaneously.” Each of her college classes meets only once or twice a week, and Jeanine says that options like online and weekend classes make it easy to fit school into her schedule.

But it also requires multitasking. She’s