



*Photographer—and  
former ballet dancer—  
Steven Caras has captured  
some of the most glorious  
moments in dance*

# THE JOY OF DANCE

## WALTZ OF THE FLOWERS

For its 1990 production of George Balanchine's *The Nutcracker*, Miami City Ballet introduced bold color choices, particularly for the *Waltz of the Flowers* costumes (left). Caras, looking down at the dancers from a ladder, depicted them as hibiscus flowers in bloom.



#### FREEZE FRAME

New York City Ballet dancers (left to right) Lisa de Ribere, Sandra Jennings, Peter Frame and Christopher d'Amboise perform Jerome Robbins' *Interplay* at New York State Theater (Lincoln Center, New York, 1978). Before the digital age, a freeze-frame shot like this took quite a bit of skill and precision—such was the nature of working with film. Caras calls it “the ultimate photographic boot camp. Capturing this shot early on reassured me that I might have a future in photography.”



**S**teven Caras (above) began his career in dance with the New York City Ballet. Under the leadership of its founder, George Balanchine, Caras danced worldwide in works choreographed by Balanchine and Jerome Robbins.

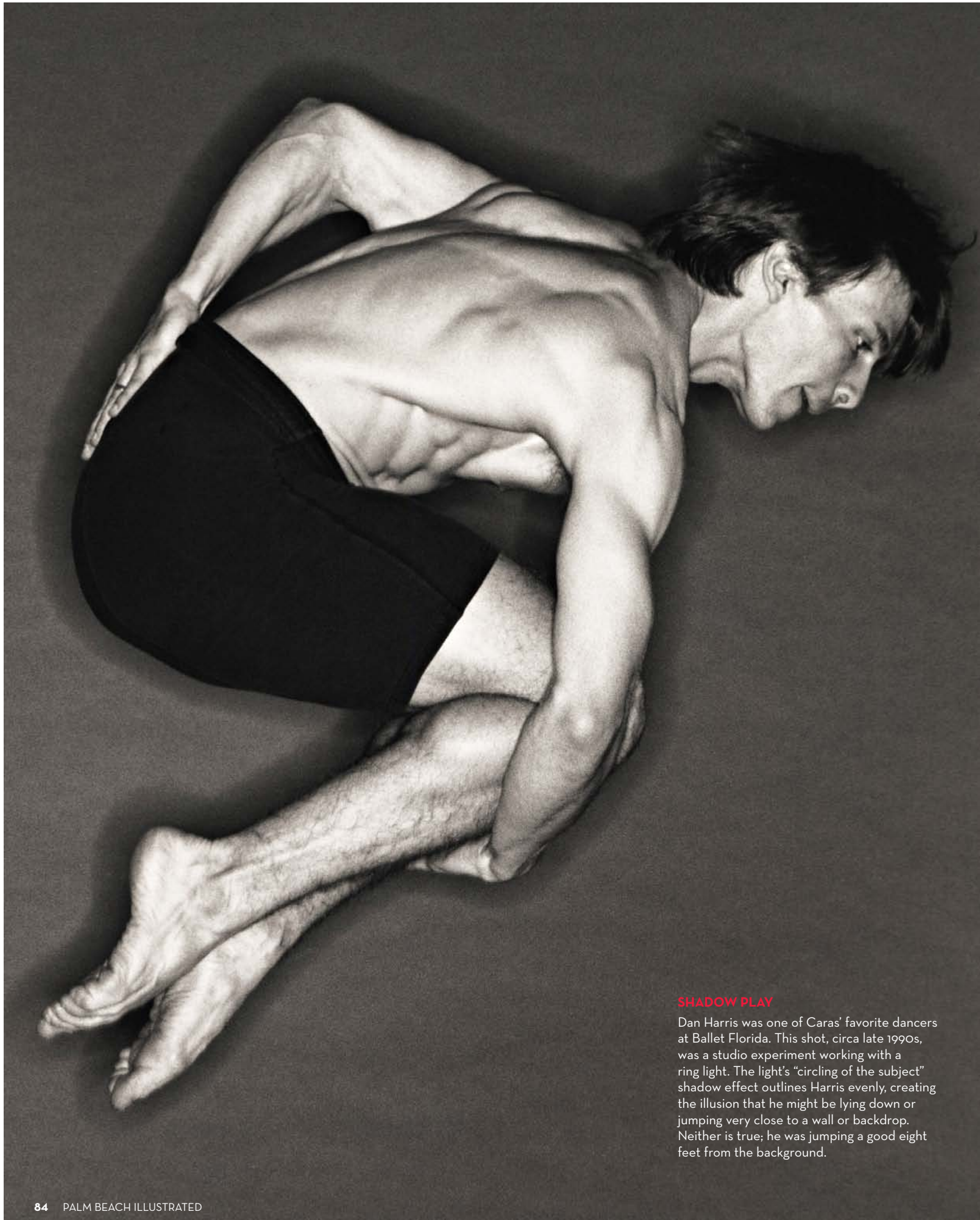
Balanchine also mentored Caras in dance photography, which led him to a second career after his dancing days were over. Celebrated as “one of the most revered image makers of dance in history,” Caras has amassed a body of work that includes 120,000 photographs, many of iconic dancers such as Rudolf Nureyev and Mikhail Baryshnikov.

Caras now lectures and teaches, as well as raises funds for the arts. He is founding chairman of two local nonprofits, The Randolph A. Frank Prize for the Performing Arts and College Drive.

A documentary on his life and career, *Steven Caras: See Them Dance*, was released by PBS in 2012 and won several awards, including an Emmy. It continues to air on PBS stations nationwide.

In honor of his own transition from dance to photography, Caras will receive the Heart & Soul Award from Career Transition for Dancers, a profit organization with offices in New York, Los Angeles and Chicago, as well as outreach nationally, on January 29 during a dinner dance at The Breakers in Palm Beach.





**SHADOW PLAY**

Dan Harris was one of Caras' favorite dancers at Ballet Florida. This shot, circa late 1990s, was a studio experiment working with a ring light. The light's "circling of the subject" shadow effect outlines Harris evenly, creating the illusion that he might be lying down or jumping very close to a wall or backdrop. Neither is true; he was jumping a good eight feet from the background.



**BODIES OF WATER**

This shot of Ballet Florida dancers Janine Harris and Stephen Hoff, shot in Palm Beach in 1993, was taken for a New York magazine called *Dance Ink*—an avant-garde quarterly dedicated to contemporary dance. For this image, Caras was inspired by photographer George Platt Lynes' midcentury studio portraits of dancers on the beach.





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**SWAN LAKE**  
New York City Ballet dancers (foreground, left to right) Victoria Hall, Principal Dancer Maria Calegari, Helene Alexopoulos and ensemble in *Swan Lake* at New York State Theater (1987). George Balanchine's one-act *Swan Lake* has gone through several looks since its original 1951 version, but the most visually stunning premiered in 1986, three years after Balanchine died.

**SERENADE**  
*Serenade*, performed by New York City Ballet at New York State Theater (1995), was the first work George Balanchine created in America. The students from his School of American Ballet performed it outdoors in White Plains in 1934, but its official premiere took place nine months later at the Adelphi Theater in New York, performed with the American Ballet, the earliest dance company created by Balanchine in the United States.

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**STILL LIFE**  
New York City Ballet dancer Lisa de Ribere warms up behind the scenes during the 1978 performance of *Serenade*. Prior to the curtain rising on this piece, the dancers even out their layers of tulle because the opening tableau involves a full cast of motionless females—bodies facing head-on as they gaze high in the air past one extended arm in three-quarter profile.





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**PRINCE OF DANCE**  
 Peter Martins, principal dancer with New York City Ballet, performs *Orpheus* in 1981. Martins, now ballet master in chief for the company, displayed more gesture than virtuosity for this piece portraying Orpheus' emotional journey. "Peter revealed an entirely different side of himself as an artist in this role, and, in my eyes, he triumphed," Caras says.

**PERFECTION IN MID-AIR**  
 Mikhail Baryshnikov's first performance with New York City Ballet was *Coppélia* (Saratoga Performing Arts Center, New York, 1978). This shot depicts his gravity-defying, slow-motion "perfection in mid-air." He almost appears to float above the stage—a hallmark of his dancing style.

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#### PURE MAGIC

Guest artist Rudolf Nureyev performs with The Joffrey Ballet in *L'Après-midi d'un Faune* (New York State Theater, New York, 1977-1978). The Joffrey Ballet, normally in season at City Center, was performing at the New York State Theater (now the David H. Koch Theater), and Caras was given permission to shoot. The program was an homage to the Russian dancer/choreographer Vaslav Nijinsky, deemed the greatest male dancer of the early twentieth century.



#### LAST BOW

Closing nights of New York City Ballet's spring seasons always included one of the most anticipated annual traditions—George Balanchine's solo curtain call. During the bows, audience members were unyielding in anticipation of seeing him, and on this night—July 4, 1982—more than ever. Balanchine's failing health was no secret and many sensed this could be one of his last public appearances. When he came into public view, the thunderous ovation shook the house as sailing white bouquets landed at his feet. It was, in fact, his final public appearance. "Mr. B." passed away nine months later, on April 30, 1983.

