

# by Patricia Delgado

Miami City Ballet principal



Delgado with former MCB dancer Yann Trividic in *Slaughter on Tenth Avenue*

**Lying in the bathtub one night** after back-to-back matinee and evening performances, I remember asking myself if I was cut out for this. It was one of my first programs with Miami City Ballet, performing Balanchine's *Concerto Barocco*, *Scotch Symphony* and *Who Cares?* I was completely overwhelmed. Muscles I didn't realize existed were in pain. My mind didn't know how to handle the pressure: I'd been scared out on stage, which had never happened to me before. The challenges of a ballet career felt impossible.

Yet, these challenges convinced me to keep striving. I wanted the satisfaction of accomplishing something I didn't know would be possible.

I'd been hooked since my first ballet class at 5. Whether it was in the studio or with my sister in our living room, moving to music just made sense. Perhaps it's in my Cuban blood. I had no idea what ballet technique meant, what the requirements would be or the sacrifices I would make. I didn't know the pain I

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would feel from injuries. I didn't know the deep respect I would gain from the art form or how it would shape me as an individual. All I knew is that I loved it.

As I grew with the company, I found new peace in working in the studio, striving for perfection. At the same time, onstage I began to discover moments of spontaneity. I found myself breathing the music. I began feeling the energy of the audience. I caught myself responding to the dancers I shared the stage with.

I am so fortunate to be part of the incredibly close Miami City Ballet family. I realized this most when we performed 14 ballets in three weeks at Paris' historic Théâtre du Châtelet. We knew we were bringing a different style than the Parisians were used to—and their enthusiastic response elevated our confidence. The sense of teamwork was one of the most powerful experiences of my life. Wherever we perform, my peers and, especially, my sister, inspire me every day.

Dancing new ballets by Alexei Ratmansky, Liam Scarlett and Justin Peck makes me feel the most like myself. Trusting my instincts and pushing past what has been done before to create interesting art leaves me wanting to dance forever. But when I think back on all my roles, one memory is the clearest: The emotional release I felt after performing Juliet in John Cranko's *Romeo and Juliet*. Finding myself in a character, the vulnerability, the complexity, the journey I went through while performing it, I realized that dance is not only what I do, but who I am. ■