









than I. Growing up, I thought I was about half of the entire male ballet population of Washington state, although I didn't *really* mind being the only male in class.

So when guys just started spontaneously showing up for class at the rural Arlington (Washington) studio where I was teaching, of course they were welcomed into the advanced ballet class. (Tossing guys into advanced ballet class was a tactic that the chair of the Dance Department, Karen Irvin, used to deploy to good effect at Cornish College.)

My favorite drop-in was a member of the Love Israel commune. Truth turned up one day, saying his goal was to be an actor and that he knew actors needed movement training, so he wanted to take ballet. Truth knew many of these young women in ballet from high school, so I'm sure it seemed logical to him to attend their class, too. He actually did well, not so much because he had innate talent but because he was so good-natured and good-humored that messing up or not being quite able to do something didn't bother him. And the girls loved it. We even were able to put Truth into the end-of-the-year recital.

Today, many dance schools have boys in their classes, and a few have quite a lot, with some offering "boys-only" classes.

By my own feeble calculations, I've taught, substituted, filled in, adjudicated, given master classes, or coached at what seems like just about every studio in the greater Puget Sound region of Seattle and of Washington state—and beyond. The physical plants these represent range from Pacific Northwest Ballet's made-to-order complex to a studio in Olympia that used to be someone's attic.

On famous Lookout Mountain, Tennessee, our branch studio was a church social hall, and one of my jobs—as artistic director of Chattanooga Ballet's school and company—was to set up the ballet barre each week before class, using folding chairs. On the next mountain north, our Signal Mountain branch studio was a stage. Headquarters in Chattanooga was the studio underneath the football stadium bleachers. It was actually the reception room for alumni, so during Homecoming and other big football events, we'd have to vacate.

Talent and degree of training also have their range. Talent pops up in some of the most unlikely places. One of the best studios I've come across is in the central Washington town of Ellensburg, home of its famous rodeo. No cowboys, but some very lovely and well-trained young