

# A Dancer's Journey—II

## Up close with ABT Corps de ballet Dancer Erica Lall



Summer Intensive. That fall, I moved to New York on my own to continue my training on a full scholarship at ABT's JKO School. After a little over a year in ABT Studio Company, I received a contract for ABT's main company.

### **How did you know you wanted to become a ballet dancer?**

I always loved being on stage and the feeling that I could touch the audience and lift their spirits. I was a competition dancer before I started strictly ballet training, so my main focuses were tap, jazz, and contemporary. Once I focused on ballet, I loved the constant challenge, and I knew I wanted to work through those challenges everyday to eventually become a professional ballet dancer.

### **What is typical day for you like?**

I get to the studios around 9:45–10:00 to warm up for class! Then it's technique class from 10:15–11:45 and rehearsals from 12–7 with a lunch break from 3–4. Then it's home to cook, rest a bit, and prepare for the next day!

### **If you had to be in another profession, what would that be?**

I would either want to run track or be an actress!

### **Who are your artistic influences and why?**

Stella Abrera has been someone I have looked up to since I came to New York. Her artistry is something else, so beautiful and so incredibly real, and I strive to be an artist like her someday.

### **What is your favorite ballet?**

My favorite ballet is *Giselle*. There's something that I really love about how "Giselle" has to become completely vulnerable on stage.

### **What is your favorite part of your job?**

When the curtains open and I get that rush of excitement! It feels so good to go onstage after all the countless hours of hard work in the studios and behind the scenes.

### **Any other advice you want to impart to aspiring young dancers?**

Try not to compare yourself to others. It's one of the hardest tasks in all careers. Once you stop constantly comparing yourself to others, you can really focus in on being the best you.



### **How did you start dancing?**

My sister, who is 8 ½ years older than I am, has always been my biggest inspiration. I wanted to do everything she did. When I was two years old and would not leave the doorway when she was in dance class, her teacher let me in and gave me a spot in the back corner. I mimicked everything.

### **Where did you receive your ballet training?**

When I was 8 years old, I began training at Houston Ballet's Ben Stevenson Academy. However, I still wanted more, and by the time I was 13, I made my parents take me to additional classes in Houston with professional dancers. After one of these classes, a dancer told my dad that I needed to be in New York. I got the chance to audition for ABT's summer intensives and did the ABT Orange County program. I became an ABT National Training Scholar after that summer. The following year, when I was 15 years old, I did the ABT New York