

Boyd today (below),
and performing with
June Onmura in Mark
Morris' *Grand Duo*.



Charlton Boyd

MASSAGE THERAPIST

For a dancer, the art of finding equilibrium is an ongoing practice achieved through continuous subtle adjustments. After 14 years with the Mark Morris Dance Group, **Charlton Boyd** is finding balance in both body and soul and helping his massage therapy clients to attain the same.

It was with the Inner City Ensemble, under the loving tutelage of director Ralph Gomez, and later at Juilliard that Boyd developed his dance technique, artistry and strong work ethic. Sidelined from the Limón Dance Company with a torn medial meniscus, he explored the acting and singing talents learned at ICE.

In 1989, he was hired to perform at the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels, as a "supplémentaire" dancer for Mark Morris' *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato*.

Returning to New York City, at a crossroads in his dance career, he appeared in musicals and sang in nightclubs. Morris hired him as a full-fledged company member in 1994. His long line, quiet spirit and can-do attitude graced many a Morris work for the next 14 years. A total of three arthroscopic surgeries later, the job he loved had become an overwhelming source of stress. "Anyone in concert dance knows," Boyd says, "company life, not the healthiest of environments, can be all consuming. It's a vicious cycle of constant wear on the body and psyche."

With a leave of absence, Boyd did some research—and a

lot of soul searching. "I sat down and asked myself, What do I value most? What makes me happy? In what kind of atmosphere would I find fulfillment?" he says. He knew his calling lay in a healing, nurturing environment and his dance training had instilled in him an understanding of body mechanics, anatomy, and sensitivity to energy flow.

Using resources and support from Career Transition For Dancers and The Actors Fund, he entered a rigorous 1.5-year program at the Swedish Institute. He got his license as a massage therapist in 2009, and before going into private practice, honed his skills at a local spa. "It's the best place to refine your technique and find your rhythm when first starting out," he says.

"Charlton had the same intelligence, sensitivity, and intuition as a partner that he now utilizes in his massage practice," says MMDG dancer Amber Star Merkens. "His holistic approach is deeply compassionate. He has a natural gift as a healer."

Boyd's dream is to open a wellness center that will be a therapeutic gathering place for artists and musicians. The biggest challenge he finds is managing the business end, something most dancers have no experience with. What he is certain of: his relationship with movement continues to provide the balance in his life. —*Rachel Berman*
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