

strative but passionate devotion to the art must have lodged in the young dancer. The decency Boal conveys on and off the stage has been a bright spot in the confused post-Balanchine landscape.

Boal is married to former dancer Kelly Cass, and they have three children, ages 8, 6 and 3. They live outside the city but make sure their kids see the ballet regularly, as Boal did. Boal's oldest child, Sebastian, asked recently if he could be "a geologist and a ballet dancer."

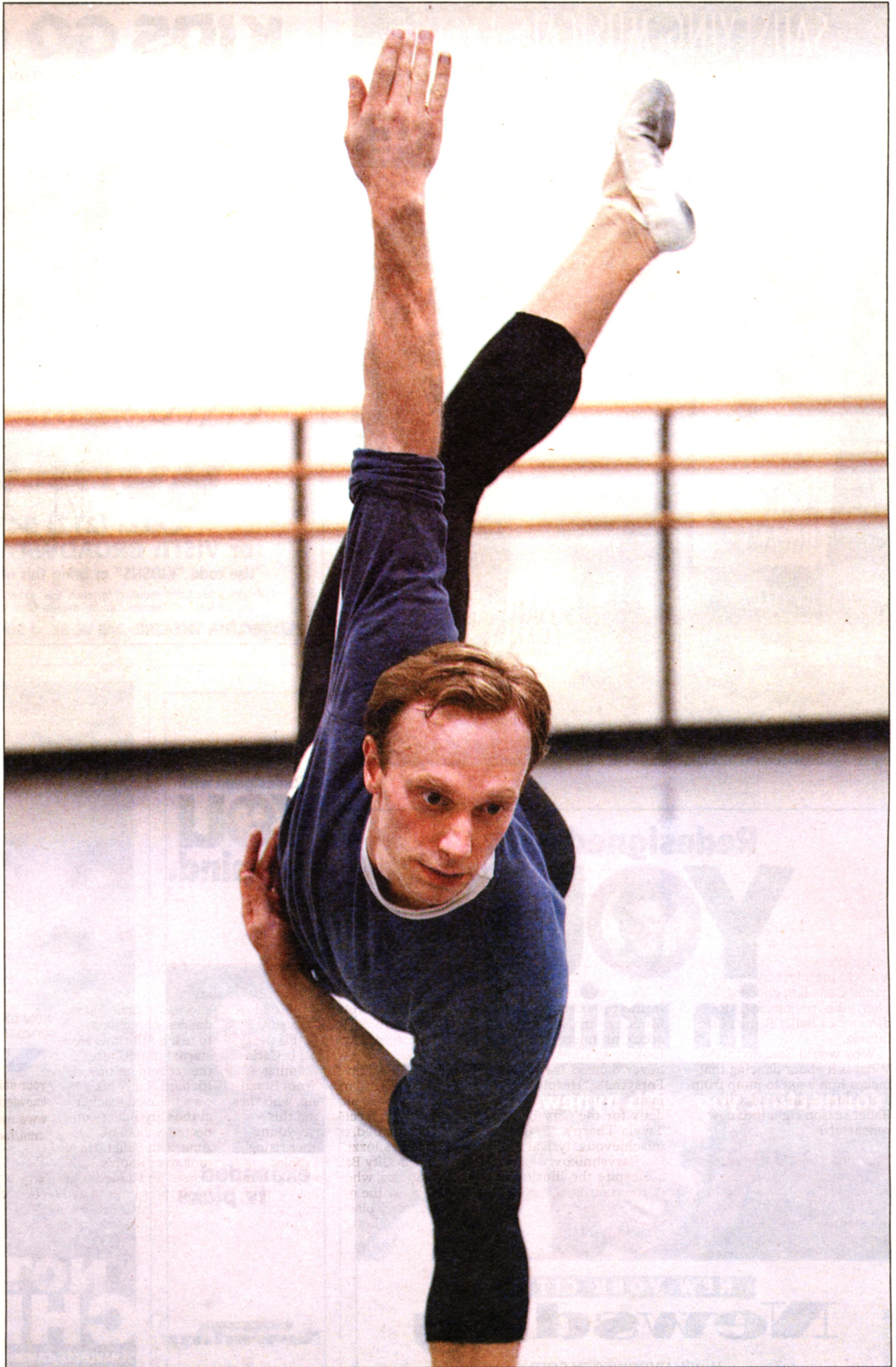
**Serving the field**

It's Boal's very ordinariness, his modesty, that makes his dancing great. In Forsythe's "Herman Scherman," — it's a quote from a Steve Martin movie — Boal dances with the beautiful City Ballet veteran Wendy Whelan, his frequent partner. As she puts on toe-shoes and he sheds sweats, they joke with each other and with fellow principal Albert Evans, who's rehearsing them. The instant the dance begins, they're focused and hyperpresent, like cars that have imperceptibly gone into high gear. They walk forward, turn to look at each other, then come together in a duet about lightning communication, shifting balances, mutual teasing and deep trust. Their no-fuss manner and total commitment to the moment moves a viewer to tears.

This is what audiences will see at the Joyce: great dancers at their peak and younger ones who, for the great ones, carry the hope of the profession. "I'm always trying to serve this field," says Boal. "From the directing end, the producing end, the programming end, even the fund-raising end. How many ways are there to serve the field?"

Boal hasn't yet found them all, but he's on the way.

*Elizabeth Kendall is a freelance writer.*



**A MISCHIEVOUS PIECE** created for Baryshnikov will be a new role for Boal at the Joyce. He's also presenting offbeat works.