

To market, to market

Most dancers see themselves as artists, so how does that square up with the cool business heads and keen sense of self-promotion that dance teachers need? **Geny Calois** hears from Maral Kojayan and Mariano Laplume, tango teachers and performers, who are making it work



A balancing act: Maral Kojayan and Mariano Laplume

In times of crisis many of us might wonder: what if I re-invent myself? What do I love doing? Perhaps our love for dancing might make us look in that direction as a possible way to enhance our lives. Maral Kojayan and Mariano Laplume are a pair of young dancers who are living just such a dream, though, as they explain, it is not always easy to find a balance between dance and business.

Maral and Mariano met in a milonga in Buenos Aires five years ago. Mariano is Argentinian and Maral, originally from Armenia, grew up in London. She has loved dancing since a tender age. By the time she'd finished secondary school in London, she had an

AS-level qualification in Dance Analysis and Choreography.

Fresh-faced and full of energy, Maral started teaching dance and within five years she had formed the largest Armenian dance group in London, which comprised both adults and children.

Mariano began his journey in tango first as a musician in Argentina. "I had the good fortune to play as a violinist in the Academic Orchestra of Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires," he tells me. In recent years he became involved as a co-founder and violinist in the internationally renowned and much loved Sexteto Milonguero. Parallel to his music he developed his dance skills.

The couple, now in their early thirties, have been together for four years and married for two. Dance and teaching go hand in hand for them. Although Mariano admits that dancing is, of course, a pleasure, they need to teach in order to be able to invest time and money on advancing their dance and their research on movement and its relationship with the body.

Find a unique selling point

The couple focus on providing their students with technique and precision, so that each one can find his or her own style in tango. This is their unique selling point. "Our work together cannot be separated from our personal lives ➤