

POINTE



Fábio Mariano. Photo courtesy Collage Dance Collective.

How Collage Dance Collective's Fábio Mariano Weaves Together Careers in Ballet and Crocheting

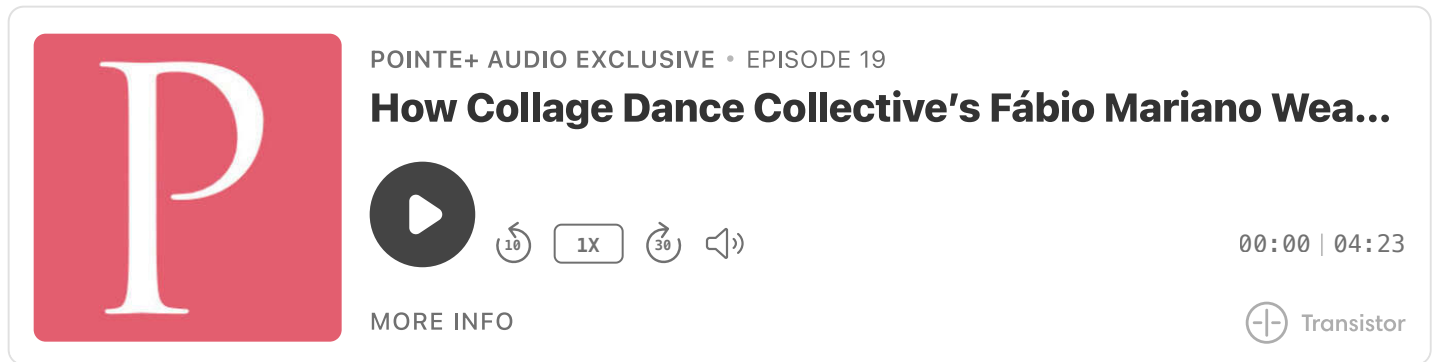


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Rio de Janeiro native Fábio Mariano first experienced cold winters when he performed with the New Jersey-based Atlantic City Ballet for its 2016-17 season. His circumstances led him to pick

up crocheting. “I had no winter clothes, and I didn’t have a lot of money to buy stuff,” says Mariano, now a member of [Collage Dance Collective](#) and the founder of Fabiolous Crochet.



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How Collage Dance Collective's Fábio Mariano Wea...

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The image shows a podcast player interface. On the left is a red square with a white letter 'P'. To its right, the text reads 'POINTE+ AUDIO EXCLUSIVE • EPISODE 19' and 'How Collage Dance Collective's Fábio Mariano Wea...'. Below the title is a play button icon, a volume icon, a '1X' speed icon, and a speaker icon. The duration '00:00 | 04:23' is on the right. At the bottom left is 'MORE INFO' and at the bottom right is the 'Transistor' logo.

A family friend introduced [Mariano](#) to knitting when he was young, but as an adult, he found the one-hook approach of crocheting easier to manage than two long knitting needles. Within a few years and with online tutorials as a guide, he’d gone from crocheting for fun to founding his own line of colorful, handmade crochet apparel and accessories. [Fabiolous Crochet](#) primarily focused on crochet dancewear early on, but now, Mariano’s designs include hats and apparel that can be worn year-round.



Mariano wearing a Fabiolous Crochet sweater. Photo courtesy Collage Dance Collective.

Mariano’s dance journey began at 14 when he fell in love with a ballet performance he saw on TV. After a few years of classes, he sought more professional training and was admitted to Brazil’s prestigious Escola Estadual de Dança Maria Olenewa. While most students were graduating at age 16, Mariano was just beginning the school’s typical nine-year term at 17. “I had to do a lot of catching up,” he shares, speaking of the creative scheduling the school allowed to help him accelerate his completion. He was able to combine classes, skip a few years, and even complete his last year remotely after he accepted a position with Corpo de Baile Campos dos Goytacazes in 2014.

In 2016, he tried his luck in the U.S. and spent a month in New York auditioning for as many companies as he could. "The biggest issue was finding a company that offered a visa," he says. Eventually, in August 2016, he joined Atlantic City Ballet, where he performed soloist and leading roles in full-length productions like *The Sleeping Beauty*, *The Nutcracker*, and *Carmen*, among others.



Photo courtesy Collage Dance Collective.

In early 2017, Mariano auditioned for Collage Dance. Now in his seventh season with the company, Mariano has performed a range of works by choreographers like Amy Hall Garner, Camille A. Brown, and Kevin Iga Jeff, as well as lead roles in *Swan Lake* and George Balanchine's *Prodigal Son*, to name a few. "Collage has helped me diversify my artistry," he says of how he's been stretched beyond his classical ballet training.

His artistry isn't the only thing that's grown. Since his first winter in New Jersey, he's improved his crocheting through trial and error, having learned to create his own dancewear patterns and designs. He brought his hobby with him to Memphis and tapped his company friends for fittings and feedback. When requests for personal pieces started coming in, Collage's executive director, Marcellus Harper, encouraged him to sell the pieces instead of giving them away.



Fabulous Crochet warm-up clothing. Photo courtesy Collage Dance Collective.

That encouragement inspired Mariano to establish Fabiolous Crochet in December 2017. The same patience, repetition, precision, and creativity needed to succeed in ballet has helped him thrive in crocheting, too. Now, seven years later, the vast majority of his business still comes from custom in-person or Instagram orders.

“I really want to enjoy this and give it my best,” Mariano says of his stress-free approach to growing the business. He stays pretty busy with both careers, so he rarely commits to delivering pieces on a timeline due to his full-time performance, teaching, and guesting schedule. He squeezes in crocheting between rehearsals, at the airport, and even on his flights. “I always have two bags,” he says, “my dance bag and my crochet bag.”