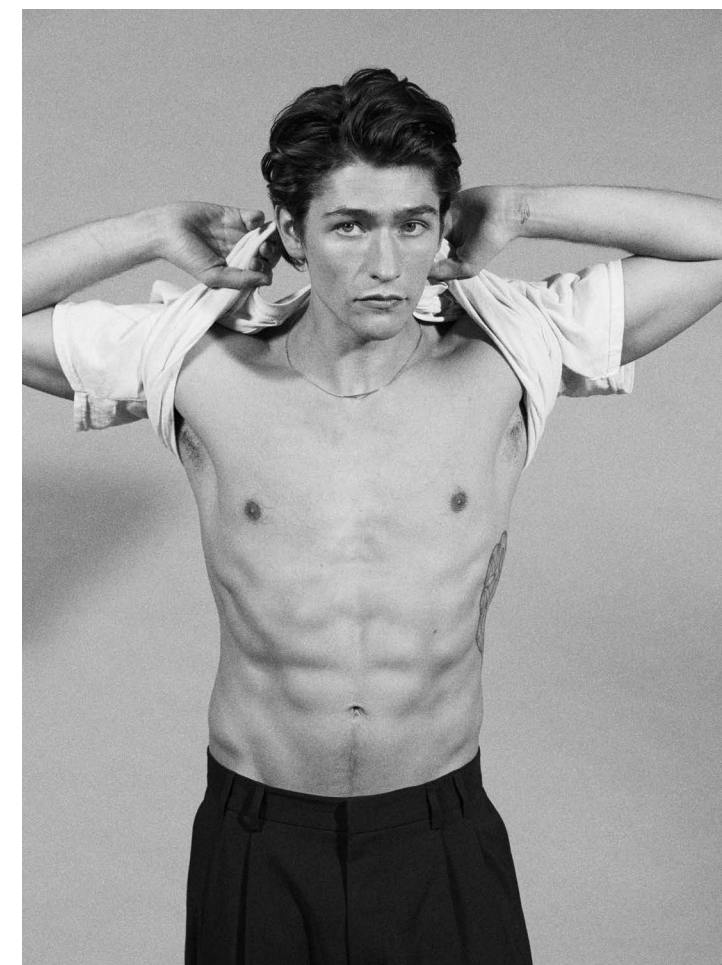
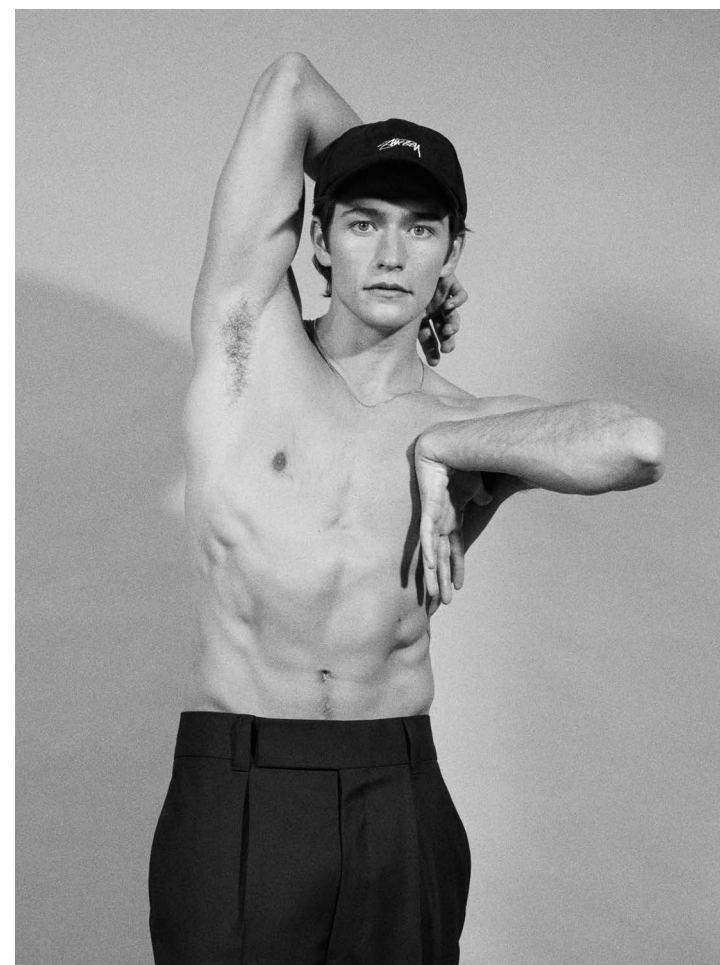




BARTON COWPERTHWAITTE

Photography AGI SAKAI
Styling DIANNA LUNT



We've got our eyes peeled on dancer Barton Cowperthwaite. Recently flexing his creative muscles on *Fosse/Verdon* on FX, next up he can be seen in the anticipated Netflix series *Tiny Pretty Things*, making its global debut in December. Based on the best-selling book by Sona Charaipotra and Dhonielle Clayton, the series is set in the world of an elite ballet academy and charts the rise and fall of young adults who live far from their homes, each standing on the verge of greatness or ruin. We can't say much more, you'll have to watch to see how Owen, his character's, story unfolds, but it's damn good. Meet Barton, below, just don't ask him the size...of his coffee.

YALE BRESLIN: Tell me about Oren, the character you play in *Tiny Pretty Things*.

BARTON COWPERTHWAITTE: Oren wants to be the best dancer in The Archer school, and one day the best dancer alive. His girlfriend Bette is the Queen Bee of the program and that makes him the King. From the outside it looks like he has everything under control and is setting himself up for a lifetime of success. But on the inside, he's tragically insecure. Oren is in the clutches of a severe eating disorder and isn't honest with himself or anyone else about how he is, or who he is. His hidden desires to be a vulnerable, sensitive, and kind person is at odds with the facade he believes is his ticket to the top, and it's starting to tear him apart.

YB: What was it about the script that attracted you to it?

BC: I was immediately drawn to the complexity of the character, and the fact that he lived in the world of ballet. There is so much I can connect with right away, and so much that I needed to learn to do justice to the creative vision. As we dove deeper, the script revealed so many stories that are authentic and important to share. I've rarely, if ever, seen a man with an eating disorder represented on screen and I instantly knew that I wanted to give that story a life.

YB: How much of your own experience do you share with Oren?

BC: Oren and I have enough in common to make him accessible to me and a lot that's foreign, which made him complex and challenging. We both dance, we're versatile movers, and great partners. We've lived in dorms and studios, and share a drive to be great. We were both bullied as kids for being drawn to dance, and have had to walk a less traveled path toward defining our sense of masculinity. But we break off from this shared path rather quickly and our insecurities have manifested in very different ways.

YB: Body issues, especially in men, is a bit of a taboo subject, one that your character faces head on. Is this a subject that's spoken about amongst your friends?



BC: I think more and more we are learning that what we perceive to be society's expectations, weigh very heavily on young men. Despite the stereotype that eating disorders only occur in women, about one in three people struggling with an eating disorder is male. In the United States alone, eating disorders affect 10 million males at some point in their lives. But due in large part to cultural bias, they are much less likely to seek treatment for their eating disorder. Being an artist and an athlete, I am fortunate to have a community of friends who are willing to talk about the pressures we feel. I have to acknowledge that this is likely not the norm, and hopefully with more visibility, we can encourage those who are struggling to seek support.

YB: Coping with the world right now is not an easy thing and people lean on their own tactics to help get them through it. How does dance keep you optimistic?

BC: I give myself a barre 3-4 times a week, I installed one next to my bed. One of the best things about dancing right now is that it gets me away from my phone. All of the news, and handheld madness can just melt away and I get an opportunity to check in on myself. Physically and mentally, dance is an outlet to exercise the energy in you, to tell stories, and to break a sweat. But in all honesty, dance hasn't been my source of optimism during the quarantine. This has been the longest time outside of a studio since before I started dancing, and I know

that getting back in shape is going to be grueling. My current sources of optimism are coming from activism, acting classes, meditation, and my girlfriend.

YB: What are the three most frequently asked questions you get?

BC: They are "How do you pronounce your last name?", "OMG you dance?! Will you do a move?" and "Medium or Large iced coffee?"

YB: I know you got into dance because of, well, your brother. How much of your success do you attribute to him?!

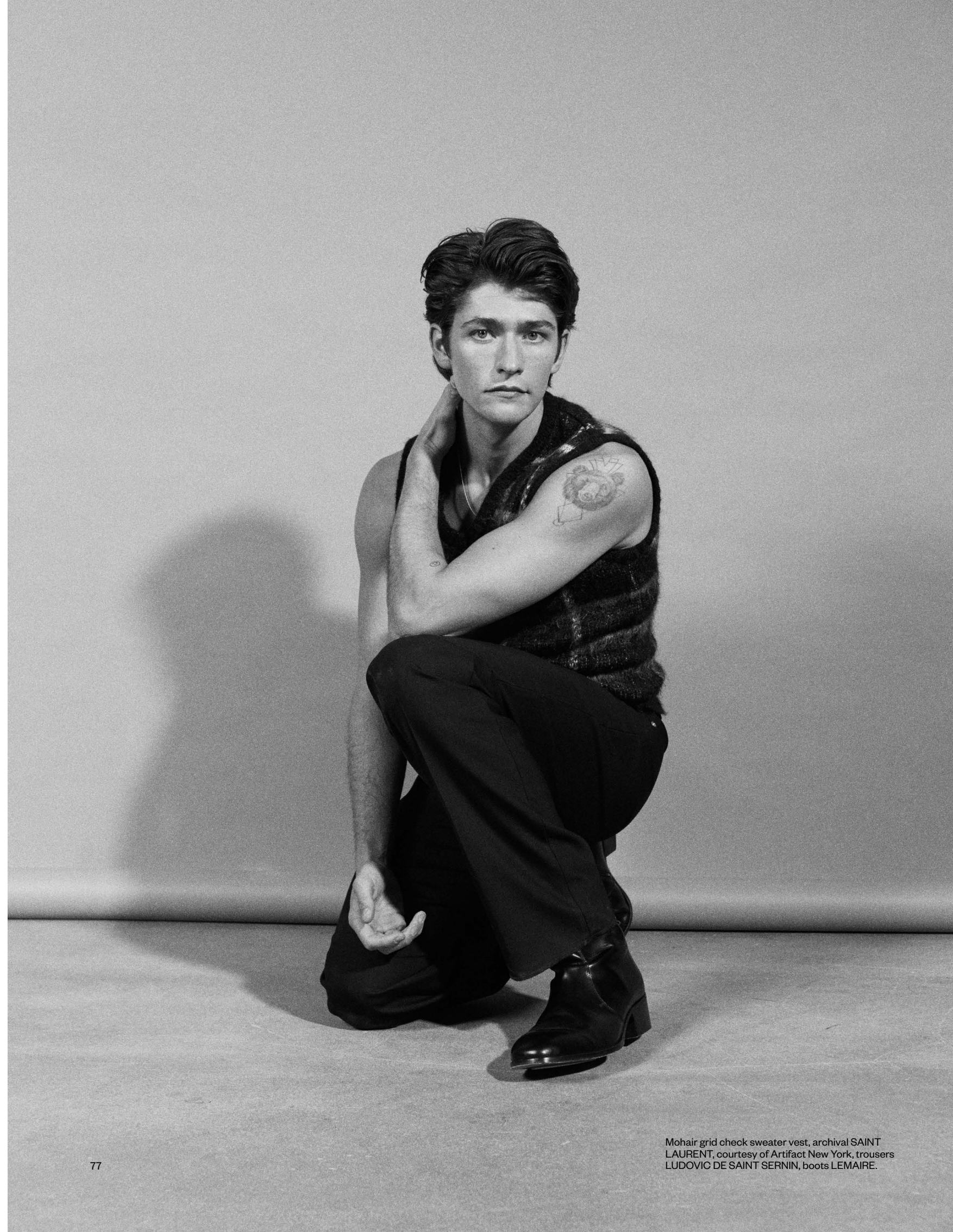
BC: Well, there would be no tree without its seed, right? But, it needs water and sunshine and other plants and animals to keep it thriving. Joey got me started and deserves TONS of credit, but I've been blessed to have supportive parents, teachers who believe in me, access to quality training and schools, engaging professional opportunities, and my own passion and motivation to keep me in it for the long haul. I'd attribute him a generous 8.6% of my current success ;).

YB: You've described yourself as being quite emotional - how are you feeling these days?

BC: I am feeling a little bit of everything. My entire industry is shut down and I've been unemployed since March, so that has been sad and stressful. Last year I did my dream job shooting a lead role in a Netflix series and it's coming out soon so I'm grateful, nervous, and excited. The election has me feeling motivated to do my part and encourage people to turn out at the polls. I wrote letters, raised money for the NAACP, and am volunteering to be a poll worker, so I'm really proud of how I've channeled the anxiety. I've been inspired by my acting classes and I'm hungry to find the next thing, I want to work again, on set or in the studio. And I'm optimistic from all the good I see others taking part in, to make a difference in the work around them.

YB: What are you listening to these days?

BC: Here's my top 10: Jacob Banks, The Weeknd, Haim, Woodkid, Labrinth, Tones and I, Post Malone, Robyn, Chloe x Halle and Max Richter.



Mohair grid check sweater vest, archival SAINT LAURENT, courtesy of Artifact New York, trousers LUDOVIC DE SAINT SERININ, boots LEMAIRE.



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