

**Independent Dance Review Report**

by Gill Clarke and Rachel Gibson

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Contents Page

1. Summary	i-iii
2. Introduction	1
3. Confusions and Contradictions	2
4. The Brief: Aims and Methodology	3
5. Independent Dance: Origins	5
6. The Art	5
7. Artists: Empowerment and Responsibility	11
8. Artistic Issues	14
Career Paths	15
Wages and Conditions	16
Physical Working Conditions	18
Health and injury	19
Equity	20
Regional Issues	21
9. Infrastructure	24
NDAs	24
Partnerships: Artist-Promoter-Producer	26
Distribution	28
Resources and Support Structures	31
Mentoring	33
Dance Management	34
Politics, Profile and Advocacy	36
10. Marketing	38
Marketing	38
International Profile	40
11. Funding	41
12. The Arts Council	43
Broad areas of concern	43
Advisory System	45
Show Report	46
Fixed Term Clients	47
Project Funding	48
Delegation	50
Lottery	50
13. Evidence	53
The Success Story	53
Case Studies	54
Contrasts between rates of pay	57
In-kind support	60
Spend by Dance Companies on artists working in other artforms	60
Growth of the Sector	62
14. A New Model	64
Details of the Model	64
Advisory and Monitoring Systems	69
Other key areas of development	71
A wish list	73

- Appendix 1 List of those consulted
- Appendix 2 Key issues Paper
- Appendix 3 A Dance Novice Views Spring Loaded
- Appendix 4 Arts Council of England, Brief
- Appendix 5 Extracts from A Creative Future - the National Arts and Media Strategy, 1987

Independent Dance Review

SUMMARY

The Independent Dance sector is the engine of new work within Dance. At a conservative estimate there were about 280 new pieces made with subsidy to this sector from the English Funding System in 1997/8. This field of energy and commitment is the seedbed of experimentation with new forms, new languages, new genres, new contexts in which to meet the public, new collaborations across artforms and new ways of confronting contemporary issues and reinventing tradition. Whilst a continually growing number of young artists try and enter the profession it also boasts a generation of mature and highly respected artists who are celebrating 20-30 years of making, performing, facilitating and teaching. British work is acclaimed and in demand overseas and Independent choreographers are increasingly being recruited to work for leading national Opera and Drama companies.

There is a creative buoyancy and artistic confidence to much work presently being produced, to the extent that one leading promoter admitted having difficulty selecting a foreign season of work because much of it did not match up to the home product. The breadth of genre and artistic concern reflected in the sector results in an extraordinary diversity of work for the public to choose from all round the country and in spaces ranging from small arts centres, to large theatres, from beaches, to empty buildings, from shopping malls to railway stations as well as on film, computer and the Internet.

However, the sector is in very imminent crisis. This creative confidence is belied by an extreme financial fragility especially in terms of the individual artists involved in the making of the work. The national funding system sustains directly only about 34 Independent artists year round - 14 of these dancers and 15 artistic directors/choreographers. The financial underpinning for the working process itself is weak - a mere 11% of the total Dance budget in 97/8 went directly to the support of companies and artists for production and research, and this figure has declined in real terms has in the last 5 years.

There is a log-jam at all levels of the present Independent sector, with artists unable to develop further, frightened for their security from one year to the next and aware of others coming up behind. This has created a climate of suspicion, competition, and frustration amongst artists and has left funders in the impossible situation of trying to make rational decisions based on criteria and judgements of 'quality'. Advisers across the funding system acknowledge that decision making for Independent Dance has become a negative debate about what can be turned down, rather than a positive process to decide what merits support.

Artists have proved resourceful in their pursuit of new opportunities and in their adaptation to the changing cultural and economic climate, piecing together a freelance living, part of it frequently outside the arts altogether, in order to subsidise their creative work, begging favours for the use of space and personnel, not having money to put by for their future, for health treatments, or to incur any ongoing financial commitments.

The Dance Department and Panel have sought to respond to the burgeoning of this sector by making the case for additional funding - for example to establish the NDAs and more recently the London Dance Network - and by prioritising the enhancement of the portfolio of regularly funded organisations.

The emphasis in *Stepping Forward* Graham Devlin's report for the Dance Panel of 1989 was on the development of infrastructure and led to the establishment of the National Dance Agencies. The existence of a very well-developed infrastructure would give the Independent Dance sector greater access to other sources of money and resources and this should remain a long-term aim. In the short and medium term, however, the support systems cannot be fostered at the expense of the livelihood of artists and the development of their work. This review therefore attempts to redress the previous emphasis on infrastructural support to one that addresses the needs of artists and the artform in the belief that investment in people and the development of excellent work will lead to increases in audiences in the long term.

The Dance Department and Panel, in commissioning this review, acknowledge that the current situation cannot be allowed to continue. Professionals from across the sector have responded positively and generously to this opportunity to have their voice heard. There is a widespread agreement not only that the time is right to respond boldly and with vision to the potential of Independent Dance - to put it on a firm footing from which it can develop over the next ten years - but also, that if this opportunity is lost the implications are dire.

The climate at ACE into which this review is delivered is one of rapid change and uncertainty, but a time of change is a time of opportunity. It is vital that the Dance Panel and Department seize this opportunity to review the balance of funding within its whole portfolio and argue the case for putting substantial funding behind its previous indications of support for the artistic work of this sector.

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The views and ideas expressed in this report were arrived at through extensive consultation with the Independent Dance Sector. In some instances the report flags up well-worn issues and arguments because action is still required in these areas. For example the physical conditions in which Independent Artists work are often dire. Although this concern has been raised many times in the past, it is still a pressing issue and to overlook it because it is not new would have been unhelpful.

At the same time as arguing the case for increased resources the report highlights the need for some radical shifts in thought and perception:

- The need to recognise that the essential resource for all dance artists is space
- The need for artists to move from a sense of over-dependence on the funding system to a relationship based on self-confidence and artistic independence
- The need to embrace a greater flexibility within the funding system in response to artistic need and a greater fluidity of movement between categories of funding as well as in and out of the system
- The need for the funding system to move away from its paternalistic relationship with artists to one that is based on the notion of equality and mutual respect
- The need to acknowledge that many artists are committed to a lifelong career in the Independent Dance sector and this must be financially viable

- The need to dismantle the many hierarchies which exist within the sector and to move towards an approach that values diversity and the contribution that each individual makes to the wider picture and the development of the artform
- The need for funders to recognise the value of many different kinds of artistic contribution and resist an approach which forces artists to conform to an inappropriately rigid set of parameters
- The need to move away from the limited making and touring approach to the creation of work and recognise the fact that much dance work is approached in ways that are more akin to composing, writing or painting
- The need to move away from the assessment of a company's worth as dependent upon the sheer number of touring dates it is able to accumulate
- The need to move away from a narrow notion of touring to a broader concept of the distribution of work, freeing artists and promoters to develop imaginative new approaches

### Key Recommendations

The report contains a myriad of suggestions and recommendations which grow organically as the arguments are developed. To remove them from their context and list them separately would be confusing. Instead they are highlighted in the text in bold print.

The major recommendations of the report are contained in the **New Model and Other Key Areas for Development** sections. (Pages 64-73)

As important as the recommendations themselves are the shifts in thinking underlying them and these are summarised above.

## Independent Dance Review Report

By Gill Clarke and Rachel Gibson

*"In civilised countries bridges are littered about the landscape in generous numbers and in a rich variety. They provide a very interesting display of different structural principles. With most other artefacts the vital structure is hidden away behind panelling or insulation or wiring or gadgets of one kind or another and is not easily seen or inferred. One virtue of bridges is that the structure and the way in which it works are clear for all to see.*

*In primitive countries suspension bridges of various sorts were fairly common. These were made from rope or other kinds of vegetable fibre. However, although rope is a strong and reliable material for carrying tension when it is new, ropes made from plant fibres deteriorate fairly quickly in the open and become undependable. For a permanent suspension bridge cables of iron or steel are necessary."*

*Structures or Why Things Don't Fall Down* by J E Gordon.

### Introduction

#### 1. The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary defines Independent as:

- Not depending on the authority of another; not in position of subordination; self-governing, free
- Not contingent on or conditioned by anything else; not depending on the existence or action of another
- Not dependent on another for supplies, to earn one's living
- Not influenced or biased by the opinion of others; thinking or acting for oneself; refusing to be under obligation to others
- (Maths) not dependent on another for its value.

2. It feels disempowered and in a position of subordination to the funders - its work and thinking conditioned by funding structures and reliant on them for its existence and livelihood. It is highly influenced by the opinion of funders, too often looking to them as its primary audience and dependent upon them for its value and self-esteem.

3. This heavy dependence on the funding system has resulted in a number of confusions and contradictions that must be resolved if the artistic work of the sector is to develop and grow.

### Confusions and Contradictions

4. The lack of a developed mixed economy for Independent Dance means that artists are not in a position to choose between the Arts Council and other sources of funding. Instead they feel they have to pin all their hopes on the eventual acquisition of ACE support and the rubber stamp of approval that this brings. At the same time the Arts Council seems reluctant to acknowledge the value of anything with which it does not have a direct funding relationship, whether this be an artist who has been working outside the funding system for a period of time or a key dance agency that is funded at regional and local rather than national level. As a result artists and other organisations feel unduly deferential to the Arts Council.
5. The sector has an established 30 year history and its achievements are widely acknowledged but it is funded by the Arts Council as if it is small and insignificant in relation to the revenue-funded companies. The work is predominantly small and middle scale, there are very few dancers on full time contracts and pay and conditions across the sector are poor, particularly for artists. The most exciting and innovative work in dance emanates from this sector but it struggles to be taken seriously by the dance establishment. It is hard to imagine a Pina Bausch - an established and widely respected artist based in a large theatre and making experimental work at the large scale - operating successfully in England at present.
6. This sense that the sector is not really "serious" has resulted in a situation where funders lack trust in artists. Application processes and the systems for monitoring grants are unnecessarily complex and burdensome, implying that unless funders crack the whip artists will not get on with producing the work. Given the struggle that most artists endure to sustain a living, to create and present work it is unlikely that the acquisition of funding will be a demotivating factor. **A new relationship between artists and funders is required, based on a more open dialogue, simpler application and monitoring processes and a greater degree of trust.**
7. Some of the demands placed on artists by funders flow from the demands placed on the Arts Council by the government. The growing emphasis on justification for public funding being driven by quantitative rather than qualitative arguments has put pressure on the Arts Council to show very tangible outcomes - stringent budgeting and evidence of growing audiences. This pressure has been passed on to clients and has led to an obsession with management and bureaucracy in the Arts. This is ironic in an age when **Business has learnt from the Arts and is reverting to fluid and flexible structures, nurturing creative individuals and teams rather than emphasising self-perpetuating administrative tasks. The arts need to learn back some of these skills.**
8. Art and access are two sides of the same coin not two different coins. The profession needs the Arts Council to argue this case more strongly both

internally and at government level. Short-termism under pressure from government has compromised artistic development. **The ideas contained in this report are predicated on the notion that the development of excellent work will lead to increases in audiences in the long term.** The main strategic thrusts of the Dance Department in recent years have been oriented towards the development of infrastructure. This has led to some important developments, nurturing some valuable individual promoters and enablers, but has done less to foster the long term development and day to day survival of artists. Now is the time to seize on the artistic strength and diversity of the sector and invest in it for the future.

### Brief for the Review of the Independent Dance Sector

9. The parameters for the review are quoted verbatim from the Arts Council's brief. The full brief is attached at Appendix 4.

### **Aim**

*During the past five years the Independent Dance Sector has experienced a significant number of changes. These include changing working patterns, poor working conditions for dancers, infrastructure, touring, the evolution of digital dancing, challenges to the established access points for dance. In response to these and many other changes the Dance Panel seeks to appoint a consultant to review the sector in order to assess its characteristics, current status, and prospects for future developments. The consultant will be expected to make recommendations which will enable the development of strategies to strengthen the infrastructure and artistic endeavour over the medium and long terms.*

*The consultant should seek to substantiate the level and range of activity undertaken by this sector. It will be essential to examine the development of the sector over the last five years and to look at changes in the support of dance across both the public and private sectors.*

### **Scope of the Consultation**

10. We deliberately adhered to the broad definition of the Independent sector implied in the brief we received from the Arts Council. We consulted some 460 people, this included in-depth individual discussions with 131 key figures in the Independent profession. We also received completed questionnaires from 175 individuals and organisations. This means that we received a total of **635 individual inputs** into the consultation process. Those we consulted included the Artistic and Administrative directors of ACE and RAB fixed-term funded companies, artists in receipt of regular project funding from ACE or RABs, NDA Directors, the Directors of regional dance agencies, promoters, RAB officers, freelance managers, amateurs, lecturers in FE and HE, the directors of umbrella organisations

and a host of artists and other individuals who are not in receipt of regular funding from ACE or the RABs. For more detail on those consulted see Appendix 1.

11. Excluded from our remit was work undertaken by youth groups and fourth year performance groups and the work of ACE revenue clients and dance training institutions. As these last two areas have a major impact on the sector they will be alluded to in the report but were not investigated in detail during the review.
12. Ongoing changes in the unemployment benefit system continue to have a profound effect on a sector in which many artists are out of work and claiming benefit for a proportion of each year. The introduction of the Government's New Deal threatened to impact on the sector faster than the timescale for the review. In the light of this the Dance Department organised a special meeting to feed into the Arts Council's overall submission to Government on this issue.

### **Fact Gathering**

13. Besides wide consultation with those working in the sector we undertook a basic information gathering exercise and developed a small number of case studies in an attempt to substantiate what has always been an elusive sector. The results of this process are included in the **Evidence** section of this report and used as illustrative examples where appropriate.
14. Our emphasis has been, however, on opinion gathering, discussion and debate rather than extensive fact-finding. Our approach to consultation was one of allowing people to raise with us the issues that they felt to be particularly important, provoked by a paper of key issues (attached at Appendix 2). The ideas contained in this report, therefore, reflect the extent to which discussions were dominated by the sector's concerns about under-resourcing, and current funding systems and schemes.

### **Outcomes**

15. This report includes a proposed new model for supporting the Independent Dance Sector. This is geared predominantly towards helping the Arts Council's Dance Department develop a funding strategy for the future but is constructed with imminent changes to the national funding system in mind. Inevitably our consultation raised issues which cannot be directly addressed by funders. These are logged for further discussion and action by the funding bodies and the sector as a whole as well.



### Independent Dance - Origins

16. Contemporary Dance in the UK has grown from several roots: the evolution of a classical ballet company, Ballet Rambert into a modern classical one; the introduction of American Modern Dance via Robin Howard, Bob Cohan and The Place leading to the formation of London Contemporary Dance Theatre; The European Dance Theatre tradition with channels through the Art of Movement Studio and individuals such as Kurt Jooss at Dartington College in Devon.
17. In the 1970s as a reaction to the aesthetics and structures of the developing modern theatre-dance 'establishment', and partly inspired by radical artists in the USA, the first 'independents' began working in what was termed the 'New Dance' movement - X6 and then Chisenhale became central foci of their activity in London with related developments at Dartington.
18. Alongside these experiments, the amateur movement was taking hold around the country with many enthusiastic and committed individuals being catalysts for local activity within the community and making invaluable links between touring professional companies, their audience and dancers of the future who were inspired through workshops and residencies. In the 1970s and early 1980s funding from schemes such as the Manpower Services Commission and support from Local Authorities, in particular the Greater London Council, helped to stimulate the development of many African People's and South Asian Dance artists and companies.
19. The recent development of the artform has also been enriched by choreographers with backgrounds in other dance traditions e.g. Shobana Jeyasingh, Nahid Siddiqui, Peter Badejo, Beverley Glean, in the visual arts e.g. Siobhan Davies, Lea Anderson, in film e.g. Kim Brandstrup - and by collaborations and engagement with other contemporary arts - music, film, new technology, live art, visual arts, theatre, opera.

### The Art

20. The creative buoyancy and individuality of the Independent Sector is built on these diverse foundations, and yet in funding terms all this myriad of work is pressed into the same narrow mould in terms of structures, criteria, touring requirements and competes for a mere 11% of the Arts Council's Dance budget.

21. In 1989 in his report 'Stepping Forward' Graham Devlin referred to Dance, like drama, as a form of theatre. Almost a decade later it has tapped into many other veins of inspiration and developed many new dimensions.
22. The richness and individuality of the work produced -- especially that which lacks easy definition - excites promoters and is seen as a strength, but is frequently viewed as problematic to funders, since even stretching the resources to cover already existing and easily definable work of quality is impossible.
23. The present model for funding Dance and the accepted mode for its distribution are based on an interpretative, as opposed to devised, theatre model. Artists are brought together for a short period of time to rehearse, the product is toured and the people involved disperse to other jobs or to rehearse other pieces.
24. In some situations and for certain kinds of work - particularly repertory full-time dance companies - this model functions reasonably well (despite the need for more time to make work). But for many in the Independent Sector, while their work continues to be shown in a theatrical setting, this narrow view of how Dance artists are expected to function has led to many tensions between artists, funders and promoters.
25. On a project driven funding model, even for fixed term clients, artists are supported to work in short bursts of activity - to make new and innovative work from scratch to full production in a mere few weeks, frequently with new dancers and collaborators, in unsatisfactory working conditions. The following year they are expected to again demonstrate development through some surprising change of direction, or a striking new idea. **Funders have responded to artists' frustrations at these strictures by introducing 'research and development' grants, but many artists feel these still put the working process 'in a box', introducing a valuable pre-production phase but not acknowledging a completely different approach to investment in artists or the working process, which might be conducive to the production of fewer but better pieces.**
26. For many dance artists the current structure does not fit with the way they think about their own work. For them it is a vocation not an intermittent job that can be picked up and put down. A painter would not be deprived of daily access to his/her sketchbook or canvas, a composer his/her piano or stove, a writer the notebook in which to make jottings and observations. We accept that this is an integral part of his/her working process - the **daily** nature of the profession - a natural, sometimes spontaneous, sometimes very focused and accumulative activity which leads to the production of the work that will reach the public.
27. Many established choreographers feel they have never become truly professional because they cannot practise their art on anything like a daily basis through access to a studio and dancers. This belies the public acclaim for their work but reflects the low status of the artform and the artists within it.

28. What is true for choreographers, is also true for many dancers. Increasingly they play an important creative and contributing role in the choreographic process, devising movement material and taking an active and supportive part in the conceptual and structural development of a piece or body of work. The relationship between dancers and choreographer can be an important long-term collaboration underpinning the work.
29. The generally recognised need for dancers to do class on a regular basis in order to keep fit is a true but limited view. **For dancers to develop: to refine, be in tune with, gain control over, explore and expand their potential - their own intelligence, imagination and physical skill - they need a daily engagement with their art and craft - not to keep the kettle on the boil, but to move forward and therefore to have ready access to greater range and depth of knowledge when they come to each production process.** The same would be true, and acknowledged of any musical soloist who is contributing their skills to a groundbreaking contemporary composer or any musician who works through improvisation and relies on his/her own imaginative and technical skills.
30. The richness and quality of much current Independent work does not, in several important respects, reflect the level of present subsidy it receives. It relies on the past subsidy of stable companies where several of our mature choreographers and dancers had their training ground and which no longer exist. For example, choreographers including Siobhan Davies and Richard Alston at London Contemporary Dance Theatre and Lloyd Newson at Extemporary Dance Theatre.
31. **Artistically we are reaping the benefit now of this past investment. This must be replaced in ways which reflect the present need for more continuity and sustainability without imposing the limitations of large, static organisations which can hamper creative flexibility.** The development of these choreographers took a traditional pattern: working as a dancer; being supported to make work within the company as the risky part of a repertory programme, and eventually leaving to pursue their own work and form their own companies. In such companies dancers were financially secure and, free from practical responsibilities, could spend time on their own personal development.
32. Developments in the South Asian sector have relied on artists trained and frequently born in India and Pakistan. We are now witnessing the emergence of a generation of British born artists who are struggling to become established. Despite important work by key South Asian Dance development agencies, these artists do not yet have access to proper provision for development and training.
33. The full-time repertory company model benefited a generation of artists in the 1970s and early 80s but is not a realistic or appropriate model for today. However, the present perception by young graduates that they must rush to form a company and jump onto the funding ladder, belies the

necessity for a period of development and experience, and time for their creative thinking to mature. Many of the present project funded clients might not have been long recognised as strong creative voices, but they have years of experience, many of them as dancers, to draw on: E.g. Mark Baldwin and Jeremy James with Rambert Dance Company, Javier de Frutos with companies in New York and Spain, Jonathan Burrows with the Royal Ballet, Russell Maliphant with Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet, Wendy Houston with DV8 and Paul Douglas with Siobhan Davies Dance Company.

34. For some the seeds of choreographic talent may be evident early on, if so they should be supported and encouraged, but not bled dry by getting stuck on the under-resourced production and touring treadmill until they burn out or lose their creative spark for lack of air. This is a very short-sighted exploitation of creativity rather than a long-term investment in it. **Artists must be confident enough to step off as and when they need artistically, instead of ploughing on in fear of losing their place.**
35. **The work funded and seen for only a few short weeks each year is also the tip of an iceberg of commitment and the ongoing investment of time and money of artists themselves. Without this invisible subsidy (see Evidence section of this report for further details) the quality of work could not have continued to develop in the way that it has. Funders should remember that the current creative buoyancy of the sector does not indicate that it is being supported at an appropriate level.**
36. One might expect, given the poor remuneration in the Independent sector, that artists would struggle to enter or remain within the large, funded institutions. The reverse, however, is true with the creative traffic in one direction - from the revenue companies into the Independent sector. (The occasional commission from Rambert Dance Company to an Independent choreographer is a welcome exception). Unfortunately funding does not follow these artists and so the sector becomes more overstretched, whilst the Royal Ballet continues to receive substantial funding for creative development which has had little impact on the development of new dance work.
37. There has been evidence in the past of large institutions at a point of change being reluctant to follow or accommodate the vision of artists wishing to steer them in new directions. The growth of the Independent Sector is in itself a result of artists' dissatisfaction with such organisations and their need for greater flexibility. Large institutions and their Boards should remain open to shifts in the real world and to the changing needs of artists. **Funders, in turn should respond to the movement of artists and acknowledge that to form a large full time company is not necessarily their creative aspiration.**
38. The Independent sector needs to articulate its own history, to acknowledge that it is building a tradition and has shared roots from which it continues to



branch in order to feel a confidence in its achievements and to assert its demand for attention. This would help to give substance and seriousness to the work and its artists, in an artform which is by its nature preoccupied with the new and transient. **To re-affirm its common history would be one step in a process of creating a solid ground from which individuals could then develop or rebel. Development at present is too frequently viewed as difference and change rather than consolidation. Both should be funded and encouraged.**

39. One of the beauties of contemporary dance work is that it is of the moment, a live experience integrally bound up with its performers. This does not negate its importance. A piece may be toured to a large audience or it may influence a relatively small group of peers. In the latter case it can still make an important contribution to the ongoing thread of the form's development. It can in this way have an equal, although different, value to the work that reaches a wide audience. In drama, the written text can form this important link in the chain, read by students and interested professionals, whether or not they see the live performance. Likewise with classical music composition the score is the continuing life of the work as much as, if not more than the concert or recording. In this way work which does not presently have wide appeal can remain as an influence to other artists, possibly to be reclaimed by a wider public at a later date.
40. On the one hand Dance needs to exploit new technology and produce documents of live work that can do it justice, that can encourage future revivals or new interpretations of 'modern classics', on the other it needs to revel in its particular nature and strengths. Dance can have a very direct and powerful impact on its audience, and work made in the Independent sector is frequently presented in intimate venues which are sympathetic to this immediacy.
41. Recent experimental film and video schemes like Dance for the Camera have provided valuable outlets for artists and have developed the potential of dance on film as a medium in its own right. A number of prestigious International awards have highlighted the achievements of British Dance in this field. For some artists this has led directly to work in film e.g. Yolande Snaith choreographing for a Stanley Kubrick film. For others these opportunities have developed an ongoing interest in film as a creative medium. The Film, Video and Broadcasting department at the Arts Council was instrumental in the development of work in this area through the provision of production grants, initiating partnerships with broadcasting organisations and promoting British work abroad. Artists expressed concern at the recent demise of this Department.
42. Being non-verbal and by its nature collaborative dance crosses many artform boundaries, is adaptable to many different contexts, including those that are non-theatrical, site specific and digital, and provides valuable exposure for the work of contemporary artists in other forms. The profile of several classical composers has been enhanced by their work with dance.

for example Michael Nyman, Gavin Bryers, Kevin Volans and Orlando Gough

*"In many cases, creative musicians are hired by dance or theatre companies. Over the years, some very high quality music has been produced in these situations, which are anything but 'pure music' environments and, if the production is successful, that music is often heard by far more people than might encounter a contemporary classical piece in a concert. **The music funding system should recognise the significance of this part of the new music economy.**"*

*ACE music department's consultative document on the support of new music (Striking A New Note, February '96)*

43. On limited resources the funding bodies cannot support all artists of merit on an annual basis. A change of attitude and greater flexibility to the strengths, value and appropriate support of different artists could lead to a better investment both in the artform and the quality of work that subsequently reaches an audience. **It is widely acknowledged by the professionals in the sector, from promoters to artists, that too much work is being produced to supply the number of dates available and that the pressure to produce compromises artistic quality. Greater investment by the Arts Council in fewer and better works would benefit everybody.**
44. Individuals from across the profession observed with concern that the Independent Dance sector is riven with many spoken and unspoken hierarchies:
- **There is a hierarchy of artistic activity which appears to place higher recognition and value on choreographers, next in line come dancers, then teachers and community dance workers.** This attitude seems to start in the training institutions and is reinforced by a system of support that is choreographer-based. As a result young artists tend to aspire to be choreographers with their own companies rather than being clear about where their strengths lie.
  - **There are hierarchies of scale where middle scale work appears to be valued more than small scale and achieving middle scale status opens the door to more appropriate technical facilities, stages and levels of funding.** It is clear that because of this many companies aspire to the middle scale too early - before they are artistically or financially able to sustain work at this scale. There is also an assumption that once a company reaches the middle scale it will stay there. The constant pressure to retain relationships with a circuit of promoters allows little flexibility for artists to choose the scale of their next work depending on their artistic ideas.
  - **There is a hierarchy of location where incoming international work is perceived to have the highest status and is in a position to demand**

the highest fees, artists in receipt of Arts Council funding and with a national touring circuit are perceived to have "made it" and regional artists struggle to obtain even minimal profile for their work

- There is a hierarchy of ensemble size where a company of five or six dancers is seen to offer "value for money" whilst a company of only two is not. Allied to this is a perception that solo work is either difficult in terms of content and or selling potential. This presumes that a choreographer will gradually and consistently wish to work with more people and so undervalues a solo artist who wishes to remain at the small scale or make an ambitious solo for the middle scale
- There is hierarchy of genre where classical ballet has high status and experimental work is not taken seriously. This is exacerbated by the lack of a symbiotic relationship between the large companies and Independent sector. In Drama or Music this cross-fertilisation exists and in France contemporary choreographers are regularly commissioned by ballet companies
- There is a hierarchy within management where proactive and promoting roles have high status and facilitating and servicing roles have low status
- There is a hierarchy of power, born out of financial dependency that places the Arts Council at the top of a pyramid and the artists at the bottom.

45. Some of these hierarchies may be perceived rather than real and they are not universally felt, but the perception of their existence serves to disempower large numbers of people who work within the sector. People waste time aspiring to recognition within these hierarchies when their energies should be focused on their next work. **The sector would benefit from a change in culture towards one which recognises and values the unique contribution of each individual. Both the Arts Council and the Dance sector must take steps to challenge and dispel these unhelpful hierarchies.**

### Artists

*"If one doesn't search for security, true creativity fills the space"*

*There Are No Secrets -- Peter Brook*

### **Empowerment**

46. Many funding policy documents in recent years have written of the need to become more artist-centred. To truly empower artists would be to give

them a greater control over their destiny, to trust their commitment to their work and provide a greater flexibility in the ways in which this can be supported and distributed. An artist wants to make the best piece of work s/he can, and wants to communicate through it to an audience. More rules and hoops to jump through will not make the work itself better.

47. Greater flexibility in funding could enable artists to move with confidence up and down the perceived hierarchies described above, to move off the funding 'ladder' completely for a while or to enter the funding system for the first time at any point and at any stage in their career. It would, for example, enable an artist who had come to choreography after considerable experience as a dancer (at present a problem within the overstretched project portfolio) to put in for a realistic budget to work with his/her peers, paying them appropriately. A choreographer could apply for a period of individual research, a revival or a tour of previous work, or for money to promote and market the company, according to his/her pressing needs and not according to what it was considered the funders would find impossible to refuse. This of course relies not only on a change of attitude but on a greater total allocation to the Independent sector.
48. Artists need to be able to have a dialogue with funders on an equal footing and in an atmosphere of mutual respect. A climate of trust is needed in which artists feel they can talk freely about their work - be self-critical and discuss problems where appropriate - rather than keep up a pretence that all is rosy because they feel under constant threat.
49. Greater use should be made of practising artists and former artists on all advisory panels throughout the Dance funding system as happens in other artforms. Their expertise is at present underused and undervalued. From outside this reads as a patronising presumption that art is made to be judged and steered by others who know better, and that artists cannot see beyond their own taste to the wider picture.
50. The fragmentary and isolated nature of the Independent Sector also disempowers artists and leaves them invisible and feeling uninformed. During the consultation process for this review it became clear that one reason for this was lack of access to information and opportunities to network with fellow artists. **New technology should be exploited and made available to artists to facilitate the free-flow of information.**
51. The sector is in desperate need of greater sustenance and its artists a greater degree of continuity in their careers. The first generation of Independent artists, including those working in African People's and South Asian forms, has now gained maturity. These individuals should be valued, regardless of the whims of stylistic fashion, and ways found for their expertise and knowledge to feed back into the sector. Otherwise their investment in them has been wasted.

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52. Independent Dance boasts some 'electric performers' and the artform relies on a pool of talented and creative dancers. Their importance should be acknowledged, alongside choreographers, and **greater attention should be given to the ongoing development of dancers throughout their careers.**

### Responsibility

53. If artists are to be given greater flexibility and freedom to tailor funding to their own needs and according to their own artistic strengths, then this greater independence carries with it greater responsibilities on their part.

54. Artists should shift away from their reliance on funders for approbation, value judgement and the rubber stamp of approval as well as funding. **Young graduates should not have immediate expectations of funding and artists should collaborate to create their own opportunities, develop ideas and devise partnerships rather than waiting to fit into the schemes offered by funders and promoters.**

55. Artists themselves expressed the need for greater creative and critical rigour. The artform will only progress if artists take it upon themselves to constantly challenge and push at its boundaries. Some artists working outside the regular funding system felt that funded work was not always artistically rigorous, and that funding decisions too often favour style, fashion or personality over the intelligence and integrity of the work.

56. Artists should not assume their audience. Having made a piece of work they need time to step back and think about how it will engage an audience, to think imaginatively about how they can make the viewing experience into an 'event', or what is the most appropriate context in which to show it. Too often at present 'contemporary' work is perceived to be obscure and inaccessible by promoters and a general audience who has seen little. **Artists should take responsibility for opening up their process to funders, promoters and audience and to talk and write about it more openly.** In this way they will make the work more 'accessible' without compromising the work itself. Over a period of time this process could help individual artists to be clearer about the nature of their distinctive audience, enabling promoters to target marketing appropriately.

57. Most artists have a mixed portfolio of jobs, some of which relate to their art and some which do not. Many have low self-esteem and seem reluctant to consider themselves as artists, as if only full-time funding would confer this status. **Artists should take responsibility for their own self-definition and not rely on funding to confer it.**

### Artistic Issues

58. At what point does the present diversity of Independent Dance work become dilution? If funding and touring dates have to be thinly spread does the artform, and the public's perception of it, suffer in the long term?

59. **There was a general consensus from those we spoke to that the sector is severely underfunded but that spreading resources too thinly is not the best strategy. For the profession to have a sense of aspiration and status a few properly funded companies are required.**

60. Work produced in the sector is judged artistically alongside the work of large full time companies - both national and international - although it has been very unequally resourced. This is of particular concern to classical South Asian Dance Artists who, working in a classical form, too often feel unfavourably compared to the revenue funded ballet companies.

61. Emerging artists should not be given unrealistic expectations or encouragement in terms of funding prospects. They should be given opportunities to work in the studio and encouraged to generate their own presentational formats as well as being provided with appropriate platforms.

62. Too much importance is attached to seasons such as Resolution! and Mosaics which encourage young graduates to form their own companies very early on. These seasons charge artists to hire the theatre but whilst providing unseen subsidy in the form of technical back up, publicity and mentoring, this cannot extend to support for the making of the work. Thus at an early stage young artists get the message that value is placed on the product rather than access to the raw materials of creation to develop their work - space and dancers. **A sense of dependency and reliance on promoters and funders to provide opportunities and a seal of approval is engendered at this early point in artists' careers.** Because of the kudos attached to The Place, Resolution! in particular raises unrealistic expectations and can lead to artists feeling lost as to the next step.

63. Recent years have seen shifts towards greater acknowledgement of the importance of process over product. Initiatives like Choreodrome have proved invaluable. Whilst not paying artists to work, the virtue of this opportunity is that its organisers have resisted developing it into a more structured 'scheme' and left it as a basic resource to be used by artists as they wish. In the present climate of outcomes and the need for organisations to show 'development' year by year this is to be applauded.

64. Greater acknowledgement of the need for investment in process is welcome. However, process related schemes, whether offered by promoters or funders, are of their nature time limited. The next step is a recognition that for many artists the creative process is ongoing and support should be formulated in ways that can be organic rather than being based only on short bursts of activity.

## Career Paths

65. There is little prospect of a career path in the Independent sector, little chance that you might enter it as a young dancer or administrator and gradually move up a wage scale as you gain experience. The very sporadic pattern of employment and the lack of a thriving mixed economy mean that professionals are unable even to plan for a year in advance. With no sense of progression within their own profession it is difficult for dancers to make the transition to another career at an appropriate level.
66. At the same time notions of a career structure in the world at large are changing fast, with short term and freelance contracts becoming the norm. In this climate the sector should fare well as it is prepared for and adapted to portfolio careers.
67. Artists and managers would not wish to sacrifice the freedom and flexibility of self-employment, but feel that there are steps that funders and other support organisations could take to provide a greater sense of stability and development within what is a volatile profession:
- **By ensuring that artists are paid properly when they are in subsidised work, at a level that appropriately reflects their experience and which helps them to provide for periods between employment.** At present artists are too often paid the bare minimum by funders, venues, NDAs and the fact that they are freelance workers and that their career is a short one is not taken into account.
  - **By acknowledging the importance of an ecology that sustains artists, freelance managers and producers within a web of professional activity - by providing information, training and development opportunities between projects.**
  - **By encouraging a range of salaried posts for artists as residencies within Higher Education or within Dance Agencies or attached to performing arts venues.**
  - **By recognising and valuing the ability of artists to contribute to the sector in various ways, other than as choreographers e.g. as directors, curators, teachers, rehearsal directors, movement researchers, mentors, thinkers and opinion formers.**
  - **By recognising that independent artists acquire many complementary skills that equip them for future roles within the sector e.g. NDA director, promoter, producer, administrator.** Role models of such re-focusing of careers should be acknowledged: e.g. Betsy Gray, Gregory and Emma Gladstone as Associate Directors of The Place and

Theatre; Gregory Nash and Nelson Fernandez as officers at the British Council and Visiting Arts respectively; Christopher Bannerman as Professor of Dance at Middlesex University; Ursula Lawrence at Salongo in Bristol.

- **By providing training and opportunities to gain experience in related fields whilst still pursuing a creative career.** Work experience and apprenticeships should then be valued when artists or managers try and step sideways. At present there tends to be a narrow categorisation of jobs which hinders imaginative appointments at senior level.
- **By helping young artists to be realistic about their skills and prospects.** It is generally acknowledged that the volume of aspiring choreographers is augmented by frustrated performers who see no prospect of work as dancers and so turn to making their own work.
- **By providing opportunities for young performers to gain that all-important 'experience' that will help them to get noticed by choreographers.** Opportunities such as the 'Space' Programme at Dance City or the Lottery funded Dansconnect project at Swindon Dance are valuable models. Changes to the benefit system as well as the Lottery should be explored to provide other such opportunities which could at the same time offer related training in freelance life skills - computing, writing copy, administration as well as provide choreographic outlets for young choreographers.

## Wages and Conditions

68. The Independent sector is characterised by choreographer-led companies, in which the dancers form an important part of the identity of the company. In this respect the artists have led the infrastructure. It would be cheaper and more efficient for several choreographers to join forces, sharing dancers and management. But most choreographers - for whom finding their choreographic voice requires experimentation and the development of a personal language and process over a period of time - have chosen to work with their own group of dancers, building on this relationship from one season to the next. From this close relationship a common language and understanding develops as well as a loyalty and commitment on both sides.
69. Dancers (some also choreographers) in this sector have a very insecure existence. Even within fixed term funded or long-standing project companies they work for a maximum total of about half the year, but this work can be very fragmented, uncertain and unpredictable from one year to the next. Touring dates have, in recent years become more sporadic, and dancers find it increasingly difficult to find other employment that can fit flexibly around their performances. For dancers in many of these companies then, their commitment is year round,



the functioning of the company relying on the loyalty of its members to always put it first. Their life is itinerant, moving round the town or country to rehearse, (following the sources of funding) as well as to perform, and incurring considerable out of pocket expenses daily because they never have a home base. The nature of employment and remuneration makes it almost impossible to save for times between employment, to plan for transition, to consider making pension contributions, to obtain a mortgage let alone make repayments. **It is little wonder then that the sector and its audience are in grave danger of losing a generation of mature artists at the height of their careers. The audiences who enjoy these soloists would be shocked to know how they survive. And the prospect is no better for those coming on behind.**

70. In the Drama and Combined Arts Departments of ACE projects are seen as just that. Funders do not consider that artists are reliant on this work for their livelihood. In drama there are commercial outlets for actors, which enable them, at the height of their career, to then make the personal choice to work for a low wage at the Almeida for a short period. The Live/Performance Art area is much younger within the funding system but has strong connections with Higher Education which sustain many of its practising artists. Dance needs to develop these mixed economies, but freelance work within the subsidised sector also needs to be realistically supported.

#### **Wages**

71. **As a first priority the concept of a scale of pay throughout a freelance career should be embraced by companies and funders.** Within this it should be possible to reward the experience level of dancers and their long-term commitment to a company. This exists in the revenue funded sector and some fixed term funded companies have introduced loyalty increments. Applications to funders should then reflect the actual cost of paying the respective dancers rather than the number of years experience the choreographer has within the funding system.

72. The sporadic nature of current touring disadvantages dance artists, particularly those working for project funded companies. At present some companies have to resort to paying "per performance" fees on tour, rather than a weekly wage since the dates are so spread out. This in turn often means that unpaid rehearsals are required before each performance which are therefore either subsidised by the dancers or by the choreographer going further into debt.

73. **Benefits which are standard within revenue companies should be filtered down through the more established Independent companies as a first step towards a rationalised policy across the sector.** These include payment of pension contributions, resettlement contributions, maternity cover as well as the safety net of medical and injury cover.

74. In France the legal status of Dance artists has been secured to be the same as that of workers on a regular salary. If they have been in employment for the equivalent of 60 hours in the previous month or paid an equivalent contribution, then they can claim benefits - maternity (6 pre and 10 post natal, they are entitled to 21 weeks paid pre natal but this can be hard to claim) injury, medical expenses etc. They are entitled to paid holiday, to a supplementary pension, medical and life insurance. Contributions are made by employers and points calculated at the end of each year to enable shortfalls to be made up. (Information taken from Ciod/Theatre Contemporain de la Danse et Adami Sessions d'Information 1996/7)

75. In Germany dancers pay into a Dance Card scheme on a monthly basis. For under £30 per year this gives them certain discounts, but more importantly access to insurance schemes - health, injury, and invalidity. It also pays contributions towards a pension, which they might pay into for 10 years to the age of 35 and then leave invested to collect at 65.

76. In many countries in Europe the issue of dancers' transition is taken very seriously. In England the Dance Companies Resettlement Fund was set up in 1973 to help dancers in transition from the major revenue funded companies, who in turn pay in to the scheme. These grants, which can support substantial retraining over a number of years have enabled dancers to become self-sufficient professionals in another area. In 1986 the Dancers Trust was established by the Arts Council and Equity to begin to address the needs of dancers within the Independent and commercial sectors. This service offers valuable advice and counselling but at present has a fund of only £38,000 per year and can offer grants up to a maximum of £3,000 for those who have been a professional dancer for 10 years (6 in the UK) and are over 30 years old. It is clear that this provision is wholly inadequate to meet the needs of present and future mature dancers in the Independent sector.

77. **Priority should be given to establishing provision for freelance artists on a rationalised and sound financial footing in line with the Resettlement Fund. Any developments should be compatible with those across Europe allowing for job mobility across the continent.**

#### **Physical Working Conditions**

78. Rehearsal conditions are frequently unsatisfactory - with unsprung and unsuitably surfaced floors, inadequate heating, draughts etc. Funders should ensure, as a priority that subsidised spaces are safe and suitable since inappropriate physical working conditions are potentially dangerous and can cause or exacerbate chronic injury.

79. Many performance venues at all scales provide poor working conditions - no sprung floor, poor heating, draughts, no showers, lack of adequate dressing rooms etc. There is financial pressure on companies to take these

dates as well as a need to fulfil funding requirements. Networks such as MLG can draw attention to these deficiencies. **Funders and Equity should help these venues to find ways of improving their facilities.**

80. Lottery funding has produced a new phenomenon in heating problems: the "ballet setting" which is a feature of new computerised heating systems designed to cater for the needs of dancers for a warm stage, whilst keeping the audience cool. Unfortunately the cool air from the auditorium is sucked onto the stage creating dreadful draughts and causing more problems than would a slightly lower overall temperature. Such systems should be remedied on the basis of a more comprehensive understanding of the safe conditions required by dancers.

81. **There should be more consultation with artists and their needs within lottery application processes** and funders should be proactive in informing prospective applicants of the physical needs of Dance.

82. Even when a contract states a minimum temperature dancers lack bargaining power. The venue knows the company needs the money and will not refuse to perform. At present dancers frequently rely on musicians to ensure good working conditions because of the strength of the Musicians Union. The intensive nature of Adventures in Motion Pictures recent West End run highlighted many of these issues. In response to lobbying by dancers the company raised the minimum temperature from 18.3 - 21 degrees centigrade and upgraded the floor. Dancers received more support for physiotherapy, were paid for all classes, and had their working hours reduced from 45 to 42.

83. **A document for promoters explaining the safety requirements of dancers in a straightforward and unprecious way would be useful.** At present their requests are frequently not thought through or not taken seriously. For example it can be presumed that the minimum temperature is required by the time of the performance rather than the beginning of rehearsal. Similarly there are problems with Local Authority or other institutional spaces. Heating is ruled by the calendar not the outside temperature and is often turned off at weekends and Bank Holidays. Spring and Autumn can therefore be potentially more injurious than winter. Some companies have addressed this problem by touring their own additional heaters. V-Tol has purchased, with the help of the Lottery capital fund a portable sprung floor which opens up many otherwise impossible rehearsal spaces and combats safety problems with touring venues.

#### Health and Injury

84. Dancers need to take responsibility for saying they are too tired to rehearse, that continued working is potentially dangerous, that they will not perform with an injury. Choreographers should resist the temptation to cut class when more rehearsal is needed and should not exploit the energy of young and willing dancers.

85. Self-confidence drops during unemployment and is put under pressure by the stress of short rehearsal periods. Depression should be taken seriously as a factor that effects the health of dancers and can add to the risk of injury.

86. Dancers need access to free or affordable, specialist medical advice at short notice. Treatment on the Health Service is frequently unsatisfactory, and cost often prevents dancers seeking specialist treatment early enough in the course of an injury. A scheme at London Contemporary Dance Theatre which provided dancers with access to an osteopath on a regular basis, for a check up as well as treatment, resulted in a dramatic drop in the injury rate.

87. Dance UK is investigating the possibility of setting up a pilot health insurance scheme, which Equity hopes to support, that would give Independent artists swift and affordable access to outpatient care. Its Healthier Dancer Project has also achieved much in raising awareness of health and fitness issues including the importance of warm up, warm down, diet, continuous access to drinking water, the healthy balance of physical activity.

#### Equity

88. The sector as a whole has little faith in Equity to represent its interests. However Equity has recently changed the brief of its officer from Opera and Ballet to Opera and Dance and has expressed its intention to re-engage with Independent Artists. It has agreed to support the lobby to ameliorate conditions and remuneration in the sector by recommending to the Arts Council that it introduce a pay scale with increments related to experience and expertise. (Until now the annual communication with ACE has related only to current minimum rates of pay.) It was agreed that Equity's influence could best be focused in the first instance on the problems affecting the middle scale companies, with the knowledge that changes in this area would then filter through the sector.

89. Equity is keen to work with the Management Liaison Group on the improvement of conditions for Dance in touring venues and in communicating the special requirements of dance - including minimum temperature throughout the building, get-in times, the provision of drinking water (which should come under the Factories Act.). In the longer term it hopes to facilitate the expansion of the touring circuit for dance and the number of nights offered.



## Regional Issues

90. The consultation process raised many issues which artists round the country shared in common:

- **Artists lack access to appropriate space to make work, meet and rehearse.** Without such a "hub" independent artists cannot function effectively and their work seem invisible.
- **Those regions without a dedicated RAB Dance officer felt that there were particular difficulties in communicating their needs to the RAB.** They also felt the lack of an individual to lobby on their behalf both regionally and at a national level.
- **Many artists spoke of the problems of gaining 'national' exposure and recognition from ACE for regionally-based work, and in gaining exposure through platforms and mixed bills.**
- **Artists need local and national networks to give them a voice.** However, for these to operate successfully consideration should be given to the re-imburement of expenses as travel can be problematic and costly. A regional newsletter is one successful way local artists keeping in touch with one another and access to New Technology will facilitate communication and the dissemination of information.
- **Artists highlighted the need for more opportunities for regional and cross-regional touring.** Many artists and promoters are mobile, cross-regionally and nationally, and find the regional funding system can be too parochial, for instance in its narrow view of touring. A national directory was requested which could help artists find accommodation with other artists around the country.
- **Established companies and organisations should play an active part in the region, interacting with independent artists and not remaining as self-sufficient and isolated.**
- **Visiting artists should be brought in as part of a regional strategy in consultation with regionally-based artists rather than being imposed upon them.**
- **It was acknowledged that on balance it is not cheaper to make work out of London.** London-based artists have the expense of accommodation and subsistence, and local artists frequently have to hire in

dancers from London and therefore pay them on a fixed term contract which adds up to more work than they would get with the sporadic payment of a London-based company, in acknowledgement that they will not easily pick up additional work and will have to keep a home base.

- **There was a common consensus that London is presently the engine of dance and is likely to remain so for many years to come. An artist living anywhere in the country can have a national overview, but needs financial support to be able to travel and exploit the capital in the way that promoters do. London-based artists are generally paid to travel out of London. The same should apply to artists and companies travelling in to London.**
  - **The importance of investment in the provision of class regularly and long-term was identified across the country.** NDAs sometimes expressed frustration that this had been tried and failed due to lack of attendance. There are certainly logistical problems in finding a mutually agreeable time and in choosing teaching styles to suit most people. It was commonly agreed however that this was the most basic provision necessary for the sustenance or growth of a local dance ecology with importance as a networking gathering as well as training provision. It was argued that once a regular slot has been chosen it should remain consistent so that dancers can depend upon it and begin to plan their other employment around it. Successful schemes seem to be those in which artists have taken responsibility or are very closely involved and consulted e.g. those at Yorkshire Dance Centre, Swindon Dance and the DanceXchange
91. Many artists expressed the need for a clear, coordinated, regional strategy in which they would have a central role and which would pool available resources ensuring maximum benefit for the development of dance in the region. A decision making group made up of representatives from regional dance artists, RAB, venues, NDA, local dance agencies, an artist from another artform, a dance artist from another region would meet to devise an annual strategy and allocate resources in the areas of artists commissions, training, research, regional artists' touring, the visits of incoming artists. This process should be an open and transparent one and would be monitored annually to highlight and address any recurring trends
92. During the consultation process issues emerged which were specific to the circumstances of a particular region and these are highlighted here. We have not attempted to describe the characteristic of every region individually and have included only those issues which are additional to the general ones listed above.
- The Eastern region is very particular in the emphasis it has placed on the development of an infrastructure for dance. This has led to some innovative partnerships and consortia amongst the region's promoters, agencies and animateurs. There was a strong feeling that there is a lack

of quality accessible dance which is appropriate to the specific needs of the region's audiences.

- Artists in the North West have been through a period of confusion as the four elements of the NDA have clarified their collective working approach. However, the NDA is very keen to be responsive to artists needs and the Artists Forum is gaining momentum and a strong voice. Now that the parameters of the NDA are clear, artists welcome the fact that it does not have a single building base and feel that this gives it the flexibility and geographical diversity to meet their needs effectively.
- Artists in the South West have a long-standing sense of their needs being disregarded. There is great anxiety that this is being perpetuated in the development of the new Harbourside Centre. They feel the lack of an NDA denies them a focus but are anxious that any plans to establish one take into account the particular geographical and artistic context of the region.
- In the South East the strong partnership between funders, promoters and artists which underpins the current development of the South East Dance Agency is a real strength. The fact that it has placed clear priority on the professional work and development of regional artists, and is led by one of those artists, gives it a strong grounding and focus.

93. **The growth of a vibrant national dance ecology needs to happen through support of organic growth, and the nurturing of existing activity and key individuals rather than through imposition of ideas and infrastructure from the outside.** Whilst many of the concerns of artists around the country were very similar, the local ecology which they inhabit in terms of geography, existing infrastructure and touring network, critical mass, training institutions, transport, history of dance activity, collaboration and communication was very different. Every region therefore has its own particular needs.

## Infrastructure

### National Dance Agencies

*"Regional resources should be identified which can act as agencies for dance. In the short term these RDAs could be developed as performance, rehearsal and studio spaces. They could serve as a focus for the development of young audiences and for professional classes. Some might specialise in non-western dance. All would aim to become "home" for a regionally based dance community, offering space to house local amateurs, youth dance groups etc., while also acting as an information network on a local and national scale. In addition they could provide opportunities for commercial exploitation. They could act as co-producer or commissioning agency for professional companies, thereby offering artists long residences in sympathetic surroundings. They would also be a focus for the outreach activities of major touring companies visiting the region." - Stepping Forward - Some Suggestions for the Development of Dance in England during the 1990s. Graham Devlin 1989*

94. In many respects National Dance Agencies (NDAs) are one of Dance's success stories. They have given a substantial boost to the national dance infrastructure and provided strong focal points for dance activity in the regions. They are developing a track record for nurturing emerging artists and provide a range of professional training opportunities. Their Directors are senior figures in the profession and are powerful advocates for dance, individually and potentially collectively through the newly constituted Association of National Dance Agencies (ANDA). The individuality of each NDA has become more clearly defined and this too is considered a strength.

95. Whilst acknowledging their successes and recognising that NDAs are still at an early stage of development, artists and promoters voiced some frustrations and concerns. As the relationship between NDAs and their funders has been the subject of a recent report by Anthony Peppiatt and Gwen Van Spijk, further comment on this is not included here. We are also aware that each NDA is different in history, character and mission and that the comments contained here are general. Naturally the extent to which they apply to each individual NDA will vary.

- In some regions artists feel caught in the middle of poor communication and friction between the NDA and the RAB. NDA Directors and RAB Officers should work together for the benefit of their region's artists.
- It is a cause for concern that so few NDAs have paid positions for artists either on their core staff or as resident artists. When Directorships or other appropriate posts become vacant at NDAs job descriptions should be couched in terms that allow for the potential to appoint a working artist. Steps should also be taken to ensure that the voice of regional artists is heard at board level within NDAs.

- An NDA's roles of supporter on the one hand and promoter on the other do not always sit easily together. The supportive function implies open access and the promoter function requires the NDA Director to make programming choices which cannot be all-inclusive. However, both these roles are important and NDAs should articulate more clearly how the two functions can operate in tandem.
- Greater clarity about the balance between an NDA's national and regional roles is required. Many regionally-based artists feel that their NDA places higher priority on working with nationally recognised artists than on supporting the development of their work in the region and that the NDA is under pressure to do this to "prove" its national status to the Arts Council and fellow NDAs. Regionally-based artists welcome the presence of visiting artists in their regions providing it is planned in consultation with them and does not take precedence over their own needs and development. For example, the Dance Management Services post at Swindon Dance is a critical link which ensures that the professional development programme of the NDA is informed by and responsive to the needs of artists in the Southern region.
- NDAs vary in the degree to which they have developed a mechanism for ongoing dialogue with the artists in their region. For example, the Forum for Professional Dancers in Yorkshire and the Artists' Forum in the North West provide an open channel of communication through which the views of artists can feed into and inform the development of the NDA's work.
- South Asian Dance artists in particular feel that few NDAs are offering support for their specific creative and developmental needs. They expressed a desire for NDAs to provide space and support to allow them to come together and develop new approaches and choreographic ideas.
- Middle scale touring companies feel they have little relationship with most NDAs. Their perception is that NDAs focus on emerging artists. NDAs appear ideally placed to work with promoters in their region and develop supportive touring networks for dance but generally speaking NDAs do not appear to have developed this role. Some companies said that they tend to bypass the NDA and go to amateurs, where they still exist, who they find are more clued in to regional promoters and networks. Some promoters, particularly those without specialist dance expertise, commended the helpful artform advice they receive from NDAs.
- Some artists and regional dance development agencies felt that the arrival of an NDA in their region had sucked resources away from existing activities and was in constant competition with them for limited financial support. Something that should have been mutually progressive has instead been counterproductive to existing regional organisations. NDAs should recognise and work with the existing strengths of the region rather than trying to superimpose new and sometimes conflicting activities. Artists in the North East had set up their own subsidised class and networking scheme 10 years before the NDA was put in place. It is

regrettable that once the NDA arrived the fund for these classes was cut on the grounds that such provision was the role of the NDA. Examples such as this demonstrate why regionally based artists sometimes feel disenfranchised by the NDAs.

96. **The Arts Council should resist the temptation to assess NDAs on the number of people who have passed through their doors and judge them instead on the extent to which they have developed the dance ecology of their region in the medium to long term. Collectively their co-ordination as a national network should be assessed in order to instil a stronger sense of co-operation rather than competition.**
97. **The Arts Council needs to recognise that the NDAs are one element in a complex national dance infrastructure which includes promoters, regional dance development agencies and amateurs. There are many organisations and individuals who are fulfilling a role of equal importance to that of an NDA but who perceive that their work is disregarded and under-resourced because they do not have an NDA "badge" and access to the funding that this brings. Equal recognition and value must be given to all the elements in the national dance infrastructure.**
98. **If and when new NDAs are established properly remunerated positions for artists should be considered from the outset.**
99. **NDAs cannot and should not be all things to all people and each one is different, but each NDA should articulate clearly what it offers and there are certain things - for example support structures for regional artists - that should be part of the core mission of all NDAs.**

#### **Partnerships: - Artist - Promoter - Producer**

100. Many of those consulted, including artists were willing to revisit the debate about the appropriate balance of funding that could usefully be channelled through promoters/producers to artists. A few years ago this would have been received with more apprehension on the part of artists. There are several reasons for this change of attitude.
101. The number of respected promoters of Dance has increased, the addition of NDA directors swelling these ranks, and therefore the pool of arbiters of taste has diversified. There have been some good examples of the way in which an enthusiastic and knowledgeable promoter/producer can transform the presentation of dance in a specific venue or locality through sensitive programming and imaginative audience development strategies. These include Stella Hall and then Bush Hartshorn at the Green Room in Manchester, Nigel Hinds at Phoenix Arts in Leicester and Nikki Millican at The Third Eye in Glasgow.

102. At a time of frustration with funders, promoters/producers are seen as more in touch both with artists and with their audience, and some artists have found them to be an important source of artistic as well as financial support. Daunted by the fiercely competitive nature of funding, artists can find the personal nature of a relationship with a promoter preferable. They feel re-assured by the trust that has been placed in them by a commission, and relieved that they do not have to sell themselves and their idea through the laboured funding application process. Those in favour of increasing promoters' ability to support artists, through more power and resources, argue that this would attract good people to these jobs and as a result Dance would benefit.

103. The counter argument is still fierce: many artists fear that to rely on promoters would just mean pandering to a different set of criteria, that promoters would be led by the need to attract large audiences rather than foster the art, and that promoters already provide awkward limitations on a company's timetable and work pattern to fit in with their programming schedules.

104. There are few producers in dance. There are individuals who have the experience and the desire to fulfil a producing function but are not resourced in a way that enables them to develop this. Producers work in a variety of ways. There is the venue-based producer who uses his/her skills and the resources of the venue to develop and support the work of artists, NDA Directors would fall into this category. There is the producer whose role has developed from that of a company manager to one which is more entrepreneurial, examples here include Katharine Dore at AMP, Julia Carruthers working with Jonathan Burrows and Russell Maliphant and Artsadmin. Finally there is the producer who operates independently of a building or a particular company/artist, commissioning work, often for specific sites and who like the venue based producer develops creative relationships with artists, examples here include Art Angel, shinkansen and Nikki Millican. **Greater investment in the entrepreneurial skills of these people would help to expand the dance economy and provide new creative opportunities for artists which would result in a richer and more diverse menu from which audiences could choose.**

105. The answer would seem to be a balance of funding sources and on providing support to those valuable individuals who have a track record. **The emphasis should be on partnerships, acknowledging the value of long term relationships between artists and promoters that take a strategic approach to the development of audiences for the work.**

106. It was acknowledged that Dance suffers when a keen Dance promoter moves and is replaced by someone less interested in the form. Despite the increase in Dance friendly promoters, there is still a need for more Dance-knowledgeable promoters in mixed-programme venues. At Klapstuk - a producing house in Belgium- Directors are employed on a four year fixed term contract and frequently move on to promote dance in other venues. This provides them with a clear focus for their time and gives

Dance a regular influx of new and knowledgeable promoters. A similar model could be adopted in this country if, for example, new NDA Directors were offered fixed term contracts.

## Distribution

107. The primary mechanism for distributing performance work in England is touring. This thriving home market is a strength and is envied by those European countries with limited internal touring opportunities. For small and middle-scale dance, touring has tended to mean one or two night stands which have been funded and assessed on the "more dates the better" principle. A commonly expounded view is that dance is seen by promoters as "difficult" to sell, that there are few promoters who are genuinely enthusiastic about promoting dance and that audiences are easily put off by a bad experience.

108. Our conversations with the artistic and administrative directors of companies, with freelance managers and promoters flagged up many of the difficulties associated with the touring and promotion of dance:

- Dance is usually playing in venues that were built primarily to house another artform - usually drama or music. The relationship between stage and auditorium size is a drama legacy and unhelpful for many independent dance companies, forcing them to aspire to the middle scale too soon. A network of venues with middle-scale stages and small-scale capacities would be helpful to dance. As an aspiration this may not be realistic but it is important to note its absence
- Dance companies often need a get-in on the day preceding the performance thus depriving venues of an additional programming night
- The fact that many dance performances run for only one hour and without an interval is perceived by some promoters as offering poor value for money
- Some promoters underestimate the extent to which dance audiences will take risks. However, some companies whose work is perceived to be "difficult" have attracted enthusiastic and sizeable audiences in unlikely places
- The collapse of the network of small scale venues, particularly those with a commitment to experimental work, leaves emerging artists without a platform on which to develop and test audience reaction to their work
- The Touring Department at ACE is of limited use to the Independent Dance sector as it is not primarily concerned with small and middle scale work and yet most Independent dance is presented at these scales. There is a widespread view that cooperative working between the Dance Department and the Touring Department is poor and this further inhibits



the extent to which either Department can effectively develop strategies for distributing Independent Dance. **The two Departments together with the RABs should agree ways of supporting the distribution of Independent work especially at the small scale.**

109. Despite these problems there are many promoters who are enthusiastic about dance and would promote it more regularly if they could do so without excessive financial risk. Imaginative funding packages developed in consultation with promoters would transform their ability to programme dance on a regular basis. Many artists and companies are developing successful relationships with a range of venues and some interesting models of good practice exist. Northern Stage in Newcastle has imaginatively tried to encourage audiences to cross between drama and dance and Eastern Touring Agency is developing long term relationships with a group of companies and artists.

110. For some companies – e.g. Motionhouse and Union Dance, one and two night stand touring is a mainstay of their artistic and financial existence. However, "hit and run" touring is a small scale drama legacy and it is questionable how far this inflexible and limited approach to distribution is sustainable or appropriate for all kinds of dance work. **If the distribution of dance is to be developed in the longer term then new approaches must be found to compliment and develop beyond the one night stand pattern.**

111. Many companies and promoters expressed frustration with the transient nature of one-night stand touring, feeling that it does little to develop relationships with audiences in the longer term. One night stands contribute to the difficulty of attracting significant media coverage and make it impossible to attract audiences through word of mouth.

112. Many choreographers and dancers mentioned the importance of regular performance to their development and that of their work. The sporadic and short term touring patterns experienced by many companies inhibit this important aspect of artistic development. Opinions vary as to how far the touring circuit has developed in recent years – some company managers reported an improvement whilst others felt that opportunities had dwindled. Either way there was widespread agreement that at present there are too many companies chasing too few dates. This is exacerbated by the fact that most companies tour over a limited number of weeks in the autumn and spring, increasing competition in what is already a competitive field. If companies were allowed to break free of the annual cycle of making and touring - creating and showing over perhaps an 18 month rather than a 12 month period then competition for dates would be reduced.

113. There was a widespread view that more flexible approaches to the distribution of work should be developed, not instead of the current touring pattern but to compliment it. The work of this sector is highly diverse and it makes no sense to try and fit this wide range of work into one distributive mould.

114. Opportunities for longer runs in fewer venues should be explored. Long term audience development would arguably be served as well by a company working with a targeted group of promoters in two or three towns and cities as by dashing around the country trying to amass as many dates as possible. The development of sound relationships between artists and promoters would also be facilitated by the option to work together over longer periods of time.

115. Changes in the patterns of distribution could not be achieved overnight. There are financial implications for companies and venues whose income earning parameters are often predicated upon a one-night stand touring pattern. However, greater flexibility at the Arts Council, a move towards an approach which encouraged artists and promoters to work together to arrive at an appropriate relationship, would at least allow for the exploration of new models for those who wished to pursue this route. At present companies feel constrained by and anxious about the acquisition of a large number of touring dates. ACE needs to have greater faith in the ability of artists and promoters to devise presentational formats which will serve both the work and the development of audiences well. **A move towards greater flexibility would not excuse artists of their responsibilities towards audience development, rather it would allow them to think more laterally and creatively about how best to develop an audience for their work rather than forcing the work into a commonly accepted mould.**

116. If changes in the patterns of distribution are to be achieved then a number of things need to happen:

- **ACE must adopt a more flexible definition of touring that embraces other models than the one-night stand. It must prioritise strategic partnerships and quality of dates over mere quantity and advocate the long term benefits to be reaped from this rather than falling into the "performance indicator", quantity driven trap**
- **Funding should be used strategically and flexibly rather than requiring all companies to fulfil the same remit**
- **Increased funding is required and this should be invested in strategic partnerships between companies and promoters (see New Model)**
- **Steps should be taken to break down existing barriers between companies and promoters. Too often they are at loggerheads, with companies claiming that promoters do not understand their artistic needs and promoters arguing that companies do not acknowledge a promoter's unique knowledge of the local audience and how best to reach them. Understanding and honest communication is required and opportunities should be made for promoters and artists to work together on strategies that would enhance the promotion of dance.**

## Resources and Support Structures

117. **Access to affordable space is a major problem for the sector as a whole.** Where spaces do exist they are either too expensive, or affordable but in inaccessible locations and often cold and dirty. Space is the dance artist's notebook. It is essential not only for rehearsal and class but also for ongoing experimentation and development. It is now unrealistic to expect that Lottery funding will give rise to substantial amounts of new space, but efforts must be made to open up existing spaces to artists in flexible and affordable ways. **Those funded companies which own or permanently lease spaces should be required to make them available to independent artists at off-peak times.** Even artists who have emanated from large ballet companies have not generally been supported in this way. Senior Independent choreographers have been generous in support of the choreographers emerging from their companies through advice and flexibility to the sharing of dancers. One benefit of such companies acquiring their own building base would be the ability to extend such relationships through provision of shared studio space.
118. **Educational institutions should also investigate the feasibility of allowing access to their spaces during vacations or take on practising artists in residence.** Recent initiatives at Middlesex University, Laban Centre London and Choreodrome at The Place provide useful models that other institutions could follow. Too often bureaucratic and income generating considerations are allowed to over-ride flexible use of space. ACE and the RABs should work with clients and other institutions to investigate how spaces which are currently under-used might be made available to artists. In London *The Space Directory* – initiated by London Arts Board and housed and updated by a number of regional service organisations has proved useful. It was suggested that regional versions of this database might help to open up currently under-used spaces for artists.
119. London-based artists identified the need for artists' space in central London with studios, information and a meeting place but without a "directed" artistic policy. **Artists across the country emphasised the need for easy access to spaces where they can take class, meet and have access to resources.** For some artists a building-based NDA, or similar agency (e.g. Greenwich Dance Agency and Derby Dance Centre) can provide these facilities but many artists do not live near enough to such an organisation to benefit, or feel that the artistic policy of an agency inhibits flexible access to space by individual artists.
120. The number of professional classes has increased across the country although there is a gap in provision of specialist and more in-depth and long term professional training for artists.
121. The umbrella support organisations - Dance UK, British Association of Choreographers, the Foundation for Community Dance, ADiTi, The Place

Dance Services - are important resources, information points and advice points for artists. Since the sector has become more fluid and less "pigeon-holed" the particular and complimentary roles of these organisations should be clarified, especially those of Dance UK and the Foundation for Community Dance. As the divisions between community and professional dance have eroded and artists move freely between the two fields they are left unclear as to which organisation best serves their needs. A South Asian artist living in London and pursuing both choreographic and teaching work would ideally need to join all four of the organisations mentioned above, an unduly cumbersome and costly process.

122. Many artists feel that neither Equity nor the umbrella organisations properly represent their views or lobby in their best interest. The fact that the Arts Council is the primary funder of FCD and Dance UK is felt by some to compromise their effectiveness as lobbying organisations. On the other hand, in the current circumstances, **Service and umbrella organisations are subsidised to support artists and so owe it to the profession to provide open access to information, to co-ordinate and cooperate.** The service elements of NDAs should be included in this.

123. **The need to meet and have access to information was raised repeatedly during our interaction.** The receiving and distribution of information within a fluid and non-hierarchical structure are the key elements of any human network. By their nature they are not invented but evolve and they tend to generate action.

*"Networking is a way of organising rather than being an organisation itself. It is a simple, flexible and mutable response to complexity and difference in society and evolves from the needs of individuals to make contact, exchange ideas and work together. It is a synergy that produces a multiplying effect greater than the sum of its parts; where information is the currency of self-empowerment, and human contact, often supported by the application of new technology, is the means of distributing it."*

*Networks in the Cultural Sector. Prepared by Mik Flood for IETM and EFAH from original texts by Mik Flood, Judith Staines and Neil Wallace. Jan 1998.*

124. There are several usefully functioning networks in operation around the country serving groups of promoters, managers, or artists. Such networks need to be able to retain their flexibility, rather than become cumbersome organisations, and yet have access to financial support in order to start up or function well. This will increasingly include the exploitation of new technology. Such costs might include the purchase of IT equipment, facilitation support, the expenses for particular meetings, travel, occasional publishing etc.

*The British Association of Choreographers (BAC) is a national organisation of choreographers. The Place*



## Mentoring

125. Mentoring schemes have become fashionable with funders and service organisations in recent years. At their best these have provided invaluable support for artists and made useful contributions to the artistic development of individuals.
126. Unfortunately, *mentoring* has become a catch-all term to cover a range of activities including informal feedback sessions, private tuition and some forms of training. The standard and usefulness of these varies. Artists expressed concern that mentoring is often used as a cheap alternative to proper choreographic development opportunities. Others feel that they have had mentoring imposed upon them whilst at the same time having self-determined support systems ignored. A number of artists said that whilst feedback on their artistic work was useful what they often needed was advice from someone with an artistic and sectoral overview who could help them see where their work might fit into the wider Independent Dance picture.
127. The Foundation for Community Dance is currently conducting a research project on mentoring which takes a broad view of the possible supportive roles of a mentor. The aim here is not to pre-empt or duplicate this research. However, our consultation gave rise to a number of thoughts about the future of mentoring schemes which are included here for consideration by both the funding system and the wider Independent Dance sector:
- mentoring schemes should be initiated by the individual for whom the mentoring is intended, in discussion with funders or others where appropriate
  - a system for matching artists with someone who can help them gain an overview would be widely appreciated
  - a brokering system could form a conduit between mentors and artists
  - distinction should be drawn between long-term mentoring and short-term feedback sessions – both are useful but they differ in purpose and outcome
  - administrators and other professionals expressed interest in access to mentoring and professional support schemes
  - mentoring requires a commitment of time from both mentor and mentee. In a sector with a large freelance constituency time often requires money. Financial resources for mentoring may not be a priority for many organisations at present but this being the case it is important to

recognise that mentoring opportunities may, therefore, remain limited.

## Dance Management

128. The term Dance Management is used here to refer to those individuals who provide managerial and administrative support services to artists, either within the context of a company structure or on a freelance basis.
129. Clare Cooper's report - *Freelance Dance Managers in England* - provided useful background information and its contents inform this section of the report. It is clear that Clare's report raised many important issues about administration in dance and the funding bodies are acting on some of Clare's recommendations. However, the consultation process for the Independent Dance Review raised a number of issues from dance managers and artists and these are included here to supplement the findings contained in Clare Cooper's report.
130. Dance Managers provide an essential support service for artists. Artists at an early stage in their careers are frustrated by a lack of administrative support whilst those at a later stage who are supported either by full time administration or access to part time support emphasised its essential role in the development of their work. A successful long-term partnership between an artist and a manager can be a catalyst for successful artistic and/or company development e.g. Matthew Bourne and Katharine Dore, Mark Murphy and Suzanne Walker. A sound managerial structure can also contribute to the economic stability of an artist or company by acting as an agent for other work.
131. The sector benefits from a handful of senior individuals, some of whom are working for the fixed-term companies and others who are providing artists' management services on a freelance basis. These key managers should be nurtured. They should be enabled to develop individually tailored training packages which might include mentors from or work placements in other industries. The lack of experienced managers leads to a recurring crisis whenever a post falls vacant. The need to address this in the short term has inhibited the creation of a longer term strategy to both develop and retain senior managers within the Independent Dance sector.
132. As there are only a handful of highly experienced managers many companies and artists are without appropriate administrative support or are forced to appoint an inexperienced individual on the basis that they will train them up for the job in hand. The general perception is that many of these less experienced people acquire useful training in dance and then move on to higher paid and higher status posts in other artforms or outside the arts sector altogether.

133. The lack of large full-time companies in the Independent sector forces managers to throw themselves in at the deep-end without the support of a structured and resourced training ground. This gap should be acknowledged and **ways should be found to provide different forms of on-the-job training for Dance managers, fundraisers and publicists.**

134. Compared with other artforms Independent dance is under-resourced administratively. Not only are experienced administrators rare but most companies are being run by one or at the most two permanent administrative staff. This inhibits development as the day to day workload always takes precedence, and takes its toll in areas such as international touring. The British Council finds the touring of dance labour intensive as it has to provide significantly more hands on support than it would for equivalently sized drama companies.

135. **There are inherent tensions in the relationship between artists and managers which should be acknowledged even if they cannot be immediately resolved.** The disparity in pay and conditions between artists and managers is a source of disquiet. Because there are few experienced managers they inhabit a buyers market and whether salaried or freelance are remunerated better than artists. Most artists usually work on short-term contracts on poor pay and experience large parts of the year when they are out of work, working without pay or working as something other than an artist. At the same time managers are often over-worked and under-valued, with too much of their time spent servicing the needs of funders. Their pay may be better than that of artists but it is low in the general scheme of things. Most managers carry heavy workloads and many experience burnout and ill health as a result. The tendency of some artists to take their manager's for granted adds to feelings of low status and lack of self-esteem.

136. **Future models of managerial support should be flexible and predicated on the notion that management requirements are driven by the essential needs of the art:**

- **artists should be in a position to choose whether full-time, part-time or shared managerial support suits them best.** They should also be free to choose unconventional structures or manage themselves if this is their choice
- **the sector should move away from the notion that a full-time company structure is something to which every artist should aspire**
- **the potential for dynamic partnerships between artists and managers to act as catalysts for artistic development should be recognised and valued throughout the sector.**
- **the notion of flexible pools of administration into which artists could dip should be explored.**

- **management should be accorded appropriate status and relieved of the low status and time-wasting aspects of jobs.**

#### Politics, Profile and Advocacy

*'Advocacy is primarily a political activity which involves the judicious use of appropriate information' - Taliruni's Traveller's - An Arts Worker's View of Evaluation by Gerri Moriarty*

137. The Independent Dance sector is a success story but needs urgently to "get out of the ghetto" and place itself in society: to broadcast its achievements, sell its wares, and communicate on an equal intellectual footing with other contemporary artforms. At present it is too insular, talking to itself rather than the wider world and so failing to advocate effectively on its own behalf.

138. **With the greater flexibility in the use of Arts Lottery funding on the horizon, the Arts Council should ensure that it emphasises the importance of artists - the software, as well as the hardware of capital requirements.** If the aim of Lottery funding is quality access and wide participation this cannot be sustained without long term investment in professional artists.

139. The sector is in need of detailed information - figures and case studies - to back up its arguments. Data is collected by funding bodies but large parts of it are rarely analysed and it is often gathered in ways which make useful comparison difficult. **The funding bodies should investigate mechanisms for collating this information and feeding it back to the profession so that the whole sector can use it as an advocacy resource.**

140. **Dance needs powerful advocates** in all spheres, within the profession, non-artists as well as artists, and also through identification of its supporters outside the field. Dance should be contributing to ongoing intellectual, cultural and political debate but is frequently overlooked and seems to lack intellectual credibility and profile in the wider arena, despite the respected thinkers within its ranks. Too often Dance seems to be arguing its own tiny corner rather than contributing on an intelligent level to a wider debate, both in this country and in Europe.

141. **Links should be made with key organisations to enable Dance to take a more active part in initiating and contributing to fora for cultural debate** e.g. The Royal Society for the Arts, The National Theatre, the Royal College of Art. etc. Opportunities for debate within the profession, like the ACE open meeting for Dance should be used for serious high quality debate to move the form forward.

142. **Dance needs to wake up to political reality and devise a coherent strategy to influence government thinking in the short and medium term.**

Appropriate arguments need to be found to support its case, to raise awareness of its importance and ways explored to translate these into a language that will be understood by politicians with a populist approach to the justification of the arts. **In many significant ways the work of the sector sends out ripples that reverberate through society, connecting with a wide range of people at various stages in their lives. These experiences need to be harnessed and used to good advantage.**

143. The Dance service organisations are making some valuable inroads into the political domain and advocating for Dance, but this needs to be undertaken in many ways, at all levels and in a more public arena.

*"An advocacy strategy that assumes decisions about policy and resources are based solely on sober evidence and scrupulous evaluation is worthy, but not worldly-wise."*

*"On one occasion, I was trying to persuade the local authority to invest in the work of our organisation. The chair of the Education committee, a formidable woman, with a reputation for regarding spending on the arts as a sign of a weak mind, announced she was coming to see the final stages of our summer performance work. She came, she watched, she talked to local parents and young people, she was convinced, the grant came through. I could have provided statistics, performance indicators, assessments til the cows come home. They would probably have helped her understand the price the local authority was asked to pay, but I doubt it would have helped her to see the value they were getting."*

*Taliruni's Travellers: An Arts Worker's View of Evaluation by - Gerni Moriarty*

144. One NDA director spoke of their experience of trying to build a constructive relationship with a councillor who appeared a little cool. On one occasion when he was obliged to talk to artists after the show, he had anxiously asked for guidance about the work he was watching. How often do we misinterpret lack of confidence and diffidence as lack of interest? **We should have greater confidence about engaging politicians in our work rather than adopting a defensive or commutative stance**

145. The present government makes substantial use of think tanks and focus groups in the development of its policy. Dance should target those who influence its thinking and decision-making in this way and ensure coverage and inclusion in the key intellectual press and journals.

146. Much of the advocacy work described above requires a coordinated, strategic approach. **A Task Force should be set up, possibly facilitated by Dance UK and Foundation for Community Dance, and chaired by a senior member of the profession** which could plan a coherent approach aimed at maximum impact by the time of the next election. The advocates and thinkers within the sector, and its champions outside, could be targeted and properly briefed to undertake specific tasks on the sector's behalf. In addition a briefing pack could be made available to enable them

to represent the sector in an informed manner when they are approached individually.

### Marketing

147. There is a general agreement that Independent Dance needs to do a better job at selling itself. Dance should take a positive approach to raising its profile, vaunting its glass as half full in terms of artistic achievement, rather than half empty in terms of resources. There is a buzz around the 'new' in the media. Since the foremost characteristic of the sector is its wealth and diversity of original work, this aspect should be exploited. **The sector does not have a great deal to spend on marketing, but it was suggested that a 'blow out' to sell the 'brand' of new Dance work might be a good investment.** This might be implemented by the London Dance Network, working with a Business in the Arts placement or by one of the Regional Arts Marketing Agencies. A large one off sum should be spent on a proper commercial advertising campaign for a significant dance performance or season and its impact properly assessed and monitored.

148. The consultation raised emotional but contradictory debate about the images used to market Dance. Some, mostly from the regional promoters' standpoint argued that Dance should exploit beautiful Dance images since these were its strength and were effective in attracting an audience. The touring Department at ACE concurred that Independent Dance companies should be aware that they are trying to appeal to a wide Dance audience. Others argued that Independent Dance is so diverse that it should try to honestly project the particular qualities of each company or piece since it is misleading to do otherwise. To market a heavy issue-based piece as beautiful dance creates the wrong expectation and can put an audience off returning. There is significant evidence from TGI data that a 'contemporary arts' audience exists and for some companies this might be a more appropriate target. Those marketing Dance, however, are very aware that it has a large first time audience but fewer return attenders. There are many suggestions as to why it should be so difficult to entice audiences back. Some feel that provision is too sporadic, others that work is marketed in a misleading way which creates the wrong expectation, others that Dance presented without adequate preparation and development leads to disappointing experiences for audiences.

149. At the same time many artists reported positive feedback from new audiences for their work. It is clear that some first time attenders approach dance performances with trepidation and are then pleasantly surprised. (see Appendix 3 for an example of this). **There are a number of long standing complex issues surrounding the marketing of dance. The fora for debate amongst artists, promoters and company managers initiated by Management Liaison Group and the Touring Department at ACE will hopefully provide useful first steps in moving forward on some of these issues.**

150. The marketing of Independent Dance is considered as often formulaic, unimaginative and untargeted. Artists need to become clearer about communicating to their audience through their copy and programme notes. Frequently the pressures to produce copy before a piece has even been made exacerbate the problems around this process. If the time cycle of making work can be made more flexible, and work is able to live for longer, some of these problems should be solved. **Open communication needs to exist between artists and marketing specialists/promoters with a mutual respect of their different areas of expertise.** It should be possible to communicate to an audience without compromising the work itself.

151. There is scant coverage of Independent Dance work in the press, except for the most established festivals and companies. The level of criticism was generally not considered to be high, with a few notable exceptions, and it was considered that critics should have a responsibility to be knowledgeable and informed about what they review, enabling them to act as advocates for Contemporary as well as Classical Dance.

152. **Dance needs to make more and better use of the media, especially television.** There is a widely held view that recent experimental film and video schemes like Dance for the Camera have done little to develop audiences for live work, nor should they be expected to do so. Their promotional value lies in their ability to draw a huge new audience of viewers (e.g. 1.6m people watched Rosemary Lee's *green man*), many experiencing movement based work for the first time. This all helps to generate a greater awareness of Dance in the popular imagination. However, 10 year ago well documented stage work was a regular feature of TV programming. This proved a valuable marketing tool and increased the longevity of successful work. The advent of Digital TV, with many new channels looking to fill airtime may provide a welcome new opening for Dance screening of all kinds.

153. The introduction of art-dance to club settings, for example the intrusion of movement jockeys onto dance floors by shinkansen and collaborations between DJs and South Asian dancers have helped to build bridges between art and social dance.

154. In other ways Independent Dance is moving beyond theatre settings and finding ways to connect with different audiences. Given the eclecticism of existing work and its context, let alone future developments through new technologies Dance has huge potential to reach out to an even wider public. Again this needs to be used as a marketing opportunity for the form as a whole. Since work of a site specific nature cannot frequently be toured and therefore has a limited life-span, the more imaginatively these experiences can be documented the greater their impact and the more long term benefit they can have for the profile of the form.

## International Profile

*"The last few years have seen an enormous boost in the confidence, creativity and profile of British dance artists. Right now the future looks good for many of our most innovative choreographers and outstanding dancers, as invitations continue to arrive from around the world, and international audiences continue to get excited about the wealth of talent, invention and virtuosity British Dance has to offer."*

*British Council Magazine (January 1998)*

155. The international profile of much contemporary British work should be exploited in raising the profile and status of the sector. British Producers and promoters who frequently travel to see international work should also have a brief to be ambassadors for British work. Several British artists have gained an international reputation and earn a considerable part of their income from overseas work. **This reputation, the co-commissions and touring, should be recognised by funders, and their assessment of a company's programme should acknowledge international dates even if they do not form part of a funding agreement.**

156. At present the funding system encourages and supports the import of foreign work and artists to this country, through International Initiatives, the Arts Council's Touring Department, Visiting Arts and programming support to individual promoters. For example, The Place Theatre spends its programming subsidy on fees only for foreign work. British Companies using Spring Loaded as their national showcase have the insecurity of a box office split rather than a guaranteed fee, where they would not accept this risk anywhere else.

157. **The bias towards incoming International work should be redressed with more proactive funding support for touring and partnerships abroad.** The British Council has been crucial in facilitating the foreign touring of British work and promoting it through support of showcases for foreign promoters. Its work, however, relies on the Arts Council's funding to make the work and sustain the companies it tours. In financial terms it is only able to be responsive to requests made to it from abroad, rather than to proactively promote British work.

## Funding

158. There are indications that a mixed economy is beginning to develop in Independent Dance. For example:

- Adventures in Motion Pictures' recent commercial success in the West End and on Broadway
- One or two artists' involvement in TV commercials and trade shows – Gandini Juggling Project, Jane Turner, Wayne MacGregor
- Choreographers working in Opera – Aletta Collins, Vanessa Gray, Kate Flatt, Gaby Agis
- Significant Film and TV work for artists such as Lea Anderson and Yolande Snaith
- The expansion of the Jerwood Choreographic Awards to include Independent Artists.

159. However, whilst such opportunities may provide useful additional personal or company income they rarely provide artists with an income which can support their ongoing creative work. Dancers also gain short term employment with national opera companies but except on the rare occasions when they are given soloist status these wages are poor. (see Evidence section)

160. In recent years RABs have struggled to provide security to more established regional organisations by placing them on fixed term funding agreements. Done in a context of dwindling treasury resources this has had the effect of reducing flexible development funds significantly in many regions. During our consultations at least four RABs reported that they had only £20,000 of flexible funding available. This lack of development funds at RABs leaves artists aspiring inappropriately for ACE funding as the only body with significant financial resources on offer.

161. Local Authorities are significant contributors to the Independent Dance economy. Whilst it has not been possible to gather comprehensive figures during the course of this review the funding questionnaires which were returned by 160 companies and individuals provide an interesting illustrative overview of Local Authority support for the sector over the last five years.

162. 63 of the 160 respondents indicated Local Authority support of some kind on their questionnaires. This ranged from a one off payment of £200 for a specific individual project to annual support of over £80,000 to Kokuma Dance Company.

163. The main recipients of Local Authority support fall into three broad categories: national and regional dance agencies, individual artists carrying out specific projects and amateur-type work.

164. The support to national and regional dance agencies is particularly significant. Examples include:

Cheshire Dance Workshop	428,715
Greenwich Dance Agency	589,541
Suffolk Dance	20,436
Shropshire Dance	32,750
Essex Dance	178,000
Dance 4	83,948

*All figures given are totals for the five years 1993/4 to 1997/8.*

165. Only five of the performing companies who responded – Carousel, Motionhouse, Iriel, Ludus and Kokuma indicated Local Authority support at significant and ongoing levels.

166. In total Local Authority support to the individuals and organisations who responded to the questionnaire amounted to £3,324,247 for the five years 1993/94 to 1997/8. Local Authorities remain key supporters of Independent Dance despite the intense pressure on local government spending in recent years and the volatility brought about by changes in the structure of local government. **It is worth noting, however, that Local Authorities would appear to play a relatively minor role in funding the work of the major performing and touring companies of the Independent Dance Sector.**

167. Whilst there are some good examples of complimentary support from other sources the sector is very heavily dependent upon the Arts Council for its survival. This places the Dance Department at ACE in a position of unusual responsibility. **The lack of a thriving mixed economy, coupled with Dance artists' need to engage with their art on a daily basis to maintain and develop their craft, requires the Dance Department to consider the day to day welfare of artists in a way that their colleagues in Drama and Music do not have to.**



## The Arts Council

### Broad Areas of Concern

168. The Independent Dance sector is aware of the difficulties that have beset the Arts Council in recent years and the pressure that the decline in Treasury funding and the introduction of Lottery funding has placed on paid staff and advisers.
169. The lack of a well developed mixed economy in Independent Dance places the Arts Council Dance department in a position of great responsibility. In an ideal world it would be just one source of funding which individuals and organisations could approach for particular and appropriate projects. In reality it is the only significant source of funding for the creation of work and the ongoing sustenance of the companies which make that work. This coupled with the Dance Department's reluctance to fully appreciate the scope and complexity of work within the sector and the importance of those elements with which it does not have a direct funding relationship leaves the profession feeling unduly deferential towards the Dance Department.
170. There was a widespread view amongst artists and others that the Department is not serving the sector well at present, not just in terms of funding but in its general attitude and approach. The Dance Department has responded to the financial pressures imposed by government in recent years by creating tighter parameters around funding and imposing more stringent monitoring systems. As the Department has become more beleaguered it appears to have retreated behind a bureaucratic screen.
171. There is a widely held view that the Department is not operating as an effective team, that the skills of individual officers are not harnessed to best effect. Moreover, officers are not always sufficiently experienced to engage in dialogue with clients on an equal basis. Mature artists and experienced managers feel they are often discussing complex issues with people that know substantially less about their area of work than they do. The confidence of officers is undermined by this situation and this has the effect of throwing officers onto the defensive in their dealings with the sector.
172. The Department should be able to fulfil an effective advocacy role for the sector but it is unable to do this as it lacks gravitas.
173. Artists feel unable to have an open dialogue with Officers. They feel that their views are not listened to or valued, that they cannot discuss past work or new ideas freely and honestly for fear of jeopardising their chances of funding.

174. Mature artists who had not recently applied for funding reported that they were often spoken to as if they were young artists with no experience. The Arts Council must acknowledge that people may wish to engage with the funding system at different points in their careers and not assume that someone who has not applied for funding recently is automatically a new or emerging artist.
175. There is a culture clash between the patriarchal and formal approach of the Arts Council and the free thinking and flexible approach of many of those working in the sector. This further hinders communication between the two sides.
176. Recent years, particularly since the introduction of Lottery schemes, has seen a growing obsession with monitoring. Moreover it is the wrong things which are being monitored. The system for monitoring the work itself is deeply flawed. The systems for monitoring financial and managerial performance are complex and excessively time consuming for both funding officers and clients. Monitoring does not make better art. The current heavily bureaucratic systems should be replaced by relationships based on trust and open dialogue.
177. The Dance Department might find itself better able to handle the pressurised funding situation if it took steps to develop a more honest dialogue with artists. It will have to continue to take difficult decisions and would find it easier to justify these if they were taken in the context of a clear strategy and with the reasons communicated clearly to artists. Our consultation exercise found the sector ready and willing to engage in constructive discussion about its future. **The Dance Department should build on the channels of communication it has opened with this Review and draw on the energy within the profession as it develops a strategy for the sector's future.**
178. The Independent Dance Sector articulated very clearly what it wants from the Arts Council's Dance Department:
- **a strategy that states what ACE will and will not fund and why. This should include a clear statement of the fitness for purpose of each funded company (regularly funded and project) and what they are funded to do**
  - **an overview of the sector which acknowledges the importance of things it does not fund**
  - **flexibility and responsiveness to the needs of individual artists rather than finding them problematic**
  - **Leadership in those areas where it is appropriate for ACE to have leadership – e.g. negotiating with the Department of Employment over changes in the benefit system, collection and collation of statistical information, lobbying on the artform's behalf, accessing new sources of**



funding – and a hands off approach in terms of the day to day running of organisations

- **An open dialogue with the sector – an improved ability to listen and reassurance that up front debate will not jeopardise an artist's chances of future funding**
- **The confidence and knowledge to take tough decisions when these are needed.**

### Advisory Systems

179. We are aware that any discussion of ACE advisory systems takes place against a background of change throughout the Council as a whole. Comments offered here are naturally on the current system and suggestions for development offered in a way that, we hope, can inform the development of new structures as the whole system undergoes change.

180. As many artists in the Independent sector are heavily dependent upon Arts Council funding for their survival, they want assurance that the decision-making processes that inform the distribution of these funds are rigorous and clear. The systems may be clear to those involved in decision making but they are far from clear to the sector. Moreover, there are idiosyncrasies in the current structure which should be addressed as new advisory processes are developed:

181. The need for the Dance Panel to be "representative" has been interpreted in a tokenistic way, with individuals being appointed as much for their ability to represent a particular area of dance as for their skills and experience. For example, South Asian artists expressed concern at the fact that there was only one voice for South Asian dance at the Panel and that if the individual concerned was unable to attend a particular meeting then there was no obvious voice at all.

182. Because the Panel comprises a relatively small number of people representing specific areas across a very wide field the common understanding between individuals on the Panel is limited. The inevitable gaps in representation mean that the Panel's collective knowledge does not amount to an overview of the Dance world and the quality of debate is limited by the lack of common understanding between Panel members

183. There are too few artists involved in the advisory structure at Panel or Development Adviser level

184. The balance of power between Development Advisers and the Panel is uncomfortable. **Artists want decisions about their work to be made by people who know and see that work.** Their perception is that this expertise exists at Development Adviser level to a greater extent than it

does at Panel level and that time and proper consideration is given to applications by Development Advisers. The fact that these recommendations can then be over-turned cursorily at Panel leaves artists and Development Advisers feeling powerless and frustrated. The Drama and Combined Arts Departments' systems, where a separate projects committee is empowered to take decisions is clearer and ensures that the people assessing applications are those with an in-depth knowledge of artists' work.

185. Our discussions with Panel members and development advisers indicated that whilst the principles of where decision-making authority rested are clear, the implementation of these principles is confused and confusing

186. The current system is too easily swayed by the strongly held opinions of one or two vociferous individuals. Many people feel that success within the current system is dependent on one's ability to lobby the right people rather than one's artistic track record. Whether or not this is true the perception is damaging.

187. The **New Model** section of this report sets out some ideas for the development of the Arts Council's Dance Advisory system.

### Show Reports

188. There is concern throughout the sector about the current system of reporting on work. **Greater honesty about how far show reports really effect funding decisions is required. Either they are a critical factor in which case the system must be improved or they are not in which case the system should be abolished.**

189. The difficulty of trying to run an effective system on a voluntary basis is understood but even within these parameters there is room for discussion about how the system might be improved. The **New Model** section of this report outlines some ideas for a different approach to show reports which tries to address some of the concerns raised by artists:

- The anonymity of show reports is problematic. Artists need to have a sense of where the writer is coming from and the anonymous nature of the process absolves the writer of giving full consideration to the way in which they express their views
- The pretence that show reports in their current form are useful to artists needs to stop. Overwhelmingly artists feel that they are rarely useful and too often actively damaging
- The use of a single system to gather views on everyone from the emerging artist straight out of college to the senior choreographer with 25 years

experience is clearly inappropriate. A more flexible system which recognises differing stages in an artist's career should be developed

- There needs to be a greater sense of this kind of assessment being done *with* rather than *to* artists. A system which allowed artists more of a say in the way a particular project or body of work should be assessed would not necessarily result in too "soft" or subjective a system
- Greater emphasis should be placed on the quality of reports received rather than the quantity.

### Fixed Term Clients

190. Most fixed term companies have an artistic director and management structure which is year round. The creative activity, however, and employment of dancers takes place for only part of the year (see Evidence). It is clear that the fixed term funding system has provided an appropriate support mechanism for the generation of artists who were developing at a time when they were able to benefit from it. The artistic directors we spoke to felt that it had provided them with a supportive company structure without which they could not function. In some instances this structure is an important mechanism for generation of additional income. Lea Anderson, for example, explained how The Cholmondeleys and Featherstonehaughs office acted as an "agency" for other work, the income from which contributes to the overall company finances.

191. Most felt that fixed term funding had been offered to them at the right time in their artistic careers, that it had been supportive rather than constraining. However, many also spoke of the pressures of having to change rapidly from a small project funded company with little in the way of a formal structure to a fairly large and formally constituted organisation. They felt that the Arts Council did not acknowledge readily enough the enormity of this task. The casualties of the process were often those managers and administrators who had developed with the artist and who shouldered the burden of the structural change. For Black Dance artists the difficulty of this situation is compounded by the lack of suitably experienced and knowledgeable managers, leaving the artistic director to shoulder the burden to the detriment of his or her creative work.

192. Some fixed term companies felt that their relationship with the Dance Department was positive and that they received supportive and helpful advice from their lead officer. However, they commented on the intrusion of a bureaucratic screen in recent years and felt less able to maintain an open dialogue – to talk about future projects freely – than they had been able to in the past.

193. Their distance from the Dance Department's advisory structures was noted and some felt that their artistic and financial security is heavily dependent upon their relationship with their lead officer. This has become

more of an issue as the Department has appointed less experienced staff. The situation leaves them feeling vulnerable and **they questioned the extent to which the Panel's overview includes them and their work.**

194. There was widespread anger about the A4E scheme with companies feeling that their expectations had been raised unrealistically. Those who had invested weeks of time making applications in good faith only to have them rejected without adequate explanation were particularly adamant about the extent to which the scheme was ill-conceived and mismanaged.

195. **From the perspective of those who are not in receipt of fixed term funding the glass ceiling between project and fixed term funding is anachronistic and damaging.** There is huge frustration amongst those artists who have been receiving project funding on a regular basis and can see no prospect for the future but a continuing annual cycle of project applications. There is frustration too that fixed term funding is not in practice "fixed term" so clients do not move out of the portfolio after a period of time, leaving room for others.

196. The vision of creating a gradually increasing portfolio of regularly funded dance companies was realistic at a time when Treasury support to the Arts was increasing. In a time of declining support this vision has left a complex legacy to which there are no simple solutions. "Fixed term" suggests time-limited support and implies that there will be progress on to something else or that artists will naturally stop wanting this support after a period of time. In Dance the lack of a mixed economy means there is nowhere for most companies to move to beyond fixed term support (AMP being the notable exception), leaving a log jam behind which a growing number of project clients stack up. Across the funding system generally the only situations in which regularly funded organisations are dropped from a portfolio are when they run into extreme financial difficulty or when a funder-driven review process raises concerns profound enough to justify change. Both these situations are negative and cannot form part of proper strategic thinking about a portfolio.

197. **The new model proposed in this report seeks to address some of these issues in the long term by creating a system which is more flexible. It retains time guaranteed funding but is based on the notion of fluid movement between funding categories rather than a ladder with fixed term funding at the top.**

### Project Funding

- There is no question that the Arts Council Dance Department has been under increasing pressure in the area of projects, as development moneys failed to keep pace with a sector which has increased enormously in size and diversity. Project funding served a developing sector relatively well, but is wholly inadequate to meet the needs of a mature sector. At the

same time budgetary constraints have led to a situation where the one great virtue of project funding – flexibility – is no longer possible. £750,000 to support so vibrant and diverse a sector is clearly inadequate, more money is required to address this sector's needs in the longer term. At the same time **an overhaul of this area of work is urgently required to arrive at a system of support which recognises the maturity of the sector and some of the individual artists working within it and which acknowledges the varied working practices and approaches used by these artists.** The **New Model** section of this report offers some ideas for such an overhaul derived from discussions about the best way of resolving some of the issues set out below:

- Funding for dance implies a ladder of progression - from no funding to RAB support then on to ACE project funding and finally Fixed Term status. This might have been realistic in the late 80s and early 90s but is no longer achievable under current constraints. Funding should be reformatted in more flexible ways to (a) get rid of this sense of a ladder and (b) recognise the widely different approaches and working practices of artists
- Many clients are RFOs by another name – e.g. Jonathan Burrows, Motionhouse, Ricochet, Small Bones - in that they receive project funding each year and use it to support an ongoing programme of work rather than execute a single project
- The distinction between these companies and the Fixed Term funded companies is becoming increasingly blurred in terms of their profile and the scope of their activity
- Whilst standstill funding scenarios have been problematic for companies, uncertainty about funding from year to year is a greater problem - hampering artistic development and giving rise to many missed opportunities. A number of companies and artists we spoke to said that knowing they had say £15,000 every year for three years would be more useful than receiving say £25,000 one year and not knowing about future years
- Energy and resources have been invested in the support of emerging work because it is relatively cheap.
- Project funding is formulaic, suiting only those artists who want to make a new work over six weeks and then tour it usually on a hit and run basis for as many dates as possible, or those who want to undertake a specific R&D or site specific project. Criteria should be redrafted to give artists permission to work in more flexible ways
- The move from two deadlines a year to one may make sense from the Arts Council's perspective but is unhelpful to artists and adds to the inflexibility of the system

- The practice of offering less than asked for compromises funder and funded. ACE should be bold – offering grants as requested or rejecting a project outright. Until this happens artists should have the confidence to insist that they do less for a smaller grant and in extreme situations give back inadequate grants and refuse to do the project
- Project applications should be assessed on the basis of an artist's entire track record not only on the success or otherwise of his or her last piece or the quality of the written application
- The long gap between recommendation by Development Advisers and ratification by Panel is problematic. It creates an excessive period of uncertainty for artists and adds to the perception of unfairness by leaving the door for lobbying wide open
- Many artists reported that when they asked for clarification on reasons for rejection they were given stock answers based on the criteria rather than a genuine flavour of the discussion of their applications. On the other hand some artists recounted indiscretions about discussions which should have remained confidential.

#### Delegation

198. There is widespread concern amongst companies and artists about delegation. This was one area in which there was no overall consensus. The sector was aware too that the degree to which it is in a position to influence what happens is limited. Broadly speaking the sector feels that the following principles should apply to delegation:

- National companies/artists – i.e. those whose work is regularly seen across the country and abroad – should be funded at a national level regardless of their scale
- RABs should be financially empowered to support the work of artists in their regions and the Arts Council should support a small portfolio of national artists properly.

#### Lottery

##### Capital

199. The capital Lottery scheme has given rise to some new developments, which will benefit the Independent Dance Sector e.g.

- The New Sadler's Wells
- The development of Yorkshire Dance Centre
- Derby Dance Centre

and has enabled a number of fixed term companies to improve their technical and office equipment.

200. To date the Arts Council has made capital awards totalling £99,774,239 to projects which include dance within their overall remit. Of these, awards totalling £45,847,377 have gone to specialist dance organisations or projects where the facilities will be predominantly for dance use. The Lottery capital scheme has evidently made some exciting contributions to the development of the Independent sector but its impact on the day to day working life of artists has been marginal. **There is frustration that it has not been possible to use the capital fund for the widespread development of much needed facilities such as well appointed and affordable studio space.**

#### A4E Main Scheme

201. Dance organisations have received 26 Main Scheme Awards totalling over £3.8 million.

202. The concerns about A4E Main Scheme that we encountered are those that have been widely voiced by the arts community in recent months:

- That the upper limit on grants was too high given the level of demand and that as a result too few awards have been made to allow for real impact
- That the requirement for activity to be additional has been problematic for organisations struggling to deliver a core programme of work on diminishing funds
- The exclusion of individuals from the scheme fails to recognise the way much art is made and has disadvantaged artists from a range of disciplines including dance
- That the access criteria have been crudely applied, limiting the fund's potential to support significant artistic developments
- That the monitoring requirements are ludicrously complex and burdensome, wasting time and human resources at client and Arts Council level.

#### A4E Express

203. Of all the Lottery schemes A4E Express has had the most tangible impact on the Independent Sector, mainly because at the stage most applicants for the Express scheme are at a small investment can make a significant difference.

204. 339 A4E Express awards totalling £1.412 million (6.6% of the overall A4E Express total) have gone to dance organisations. These £5,000 grants have allowed many emerging dance companies to consolidate early work with a relatively well funded production. Community groups and artists' networks have also benefited, giving rise to a small but significant amount of grass roots activity.

205. Once again, the wider arts community has discussed most of the adverse aspects of the scheme:

- A grant of £5,000 has raised the expectations of recipients and created a new demand which the funding system as a whole does not have the resources to meet
- Whilst a policy of open access is laudable in some respects, the lack of assessment on the basis of artistic track record and potential has created a system of support that is at odds with the treasury funding stream
- Rigid application of petty criteria such as availability of referees and the bank details of the recipient has somewhat undermined the credibility of the scheme.
- Whilst the Independent Dance Sector has benefited from the Lottery to a limited degree the long term impact of Lottery funding on the sector is likely to be marginal. The criteria for Lottery funding mean that a predominantly non-building-based sector inhabited by a large number of individual artists can only benefit to a limited extent. **For many in the Independent sector the Lottery appears as another missed opportunity which has once again failed to address the most pressing need of the sector – SPACE.**

## Evidence

206. One aim of the review was to gather evidence to substantiate what has always been an elusive sector. The size and diversity of the sector makes it difficult to collect facts and figures that are comprehensive or easily comparable and so the unsubstantiated nature of the sector has persisted. In an attempt to break this cycle we have sought to draw together figures and examples which make the sector more tangible. The approach has been to some extent pragmatic and has been informed as much by what it has been possible to gather as by what is genuinely needed. **The lack of concrete statistical information about the sector is a weakness and the Arts Council should consider investing in a more detailed information gathering exercise in the near future.**
207. The information contained in this section of the report is not intended as a statistical overview of the sector. Instead it aims to clarify some of the key features of the sector and those who work within it to underpin the views and arguments contained in the report.
208. Some of the information contained here is descriptive rather than numerical. Where figures are offered they should be read as illustrative or indicative examples not as detailed or fully analysed statistics.

## **How Independent Dance in Britain has Grown Up**

### ***The Success Story***

- Mature choreographers such as Richard Alston, Siobhan Davies and Rosemary Butcher celebrating over 20 years of making work
- Founder amateurs including Marie McCluskie, Veronica Lewis, Linda Jasper and Scylla Dyke are now figureheads and leading players in national institutions
- At the Dancing in The Aisles Festival in New York in Autumn 97 British Dance was acclaimed by those respected as its forebears and mentors
- The British Council reports increasing demand for British work abroad.
- Sue Hoyle - whose early career included the administration of an Independent Dance Company - rose to become Deputy Secretary General of the Arts Council
- Partnership of Matthew Bourne and Katherine Dore begun as part of an Arts Council/Greater London Arts administration scheme leads AMP into the West End and Broadway.

## **Case Studies**

The following case studies are included as illustrations of the career paths of a few respected professional dancers. They have been chosen as examples because they are widely known as performers, but not because their case merits any greater attention than any other dance artist. Sometimes the move from a full time company has left individuals with lasting benefits which those whose career takes place wholly within the Independent Sector do not presently enjoy.

### ***Russell Maliphant***

When Russell left Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet in 1988 at the age of 27, after 7 years he was on a wage of £330 per week after pension and NI deductions. He was employed for 52 weeks a year and was paid through injury, had access to a physiotherapist, paid holiday, pension and resettlement contributions, health insurance.

From 1988-1992 he work sporadically for about 20 weeks a year with DV8, Michael Clark and Laurie Booth for £220-£250 per week with no benefits. He supplemented his income with carpentry and decorating work at £400 per week. Since this time he has been making his own work, paying himself £250-£300 for rehearsal and occasionally receiving choreographic commissions of £1,000-£2,000.

In the re-directing of his career he has benefited from his years with SWRB. In 1991 he sustained a knee injury and the Royal Ballet Benevolent Fund paid for his two operations. He also received £12,000 over 3 years to train as a rolling practitioner - a long term investment in a skill which is now the source of his financial sustenance. His target is to earn £500 per week pre tax and NI to ensure that he can make regular mortgage and management payments, since otherwise 2-3 weeks without work will leave him in debt. In actual fact he estimates that he probably earns an annual salary of slightly less than he did 10 years ago and has no ongoing payments for injury treatment, pension or health insurance.

### ***Kate Coyne***

Kate finished her training in 1988 at the age of 18 and immediately joined London Contemporary Dance Theatre. She was on a starting salary of £145 per week full time and with NI, pension and resettlement contributions paid. Her salary rose steadily, to reach £313 by 1994 when she left the company to join Rambert Dance Company.



Here her starting salary was £342, rising to £364 by 1996. At the end of 1996 she left to start a freelance career with 14 weeks as a soloist dancing for English National Opera for a freelance wage of £350 per week.

Despite getting further work with Jeremy James and Mark Baldwin on a wage of between £220 and £300 per week, and one trade show she only worked professionally for 20 weeks in 1997 for a total of £9870. By this point she was 27. In November, with 9 years professional experience she started working as a sales assistant in a designer shop for £40 per day, uncertain of whether she could afford to continue in her dance career.

### **Anna Williams**

Anna left College in 1991, aged 22 and earned £1,300 from 7 weeks Professional work in that year. Her total weeks of professional work gradually increased until in 1994, in her third year of working for Ricochet Dance Company she was employed for 20 weeks, earning £4,160. She supplemented this with evening work as Front of House staff in the West End. In 1996 she was working 20 weeks for Ricochet but supplemented this with additional teaching and choreographing to make a total of 36 weeks and £11,135.

By 1997, at the age of 28, with 6 years professional experience she was being paid £300 per week for Ricochet, but was able to fit in less other work and so only earned £10,272. None of this work has given her pension, resettlement contributions or holiday pay.

She estimates that she earns about the same annually as she did 4 years ago, but that this has been supplemented recently by the lack of out of pocket expenses during foreign tours. After her rent is paid, she has weekly outgoings of about £50 to exist as a freelance artist in or out of work. These include class, gym membership, travel card, and lunch. She has no ongoing financial commitments such as mortgage, car, pension payments, health insurance.

### **Lindsey Butcher**

Lindsey gained her first employment, aged 20 in 1984/5, with Extemporary Dance Theatre. She was employed for approximately 30 weeks a year on £165 per week, earning a total of £4,961 gross. She stayed with Extemporary from 1985/6 receiving additional pension contributions of £420 pa, and by 1989 was supplementing this with freelance work for the Royal Opera and Ra-Ra Zoo. She worked approximately 42 weeks for £200 per week, earning a gross of £8,564.

In 89/90 she was injured, for which she was covered by the bare minimum salary contribution of the Dance Umbrella insurance scheme that was used by

companies at the time. She therefore only worked approximately 29 weeks, with Ra-Ra Zoo, and earned £5,951.

For the next few years she freelanced with Ra-Ra Zoo, Green Candle, Amici, Fin Walker, Gandini Juggling Project, her income vacillating between about £9,000 and £7,000, and in 93/4 re-located from London to Brighton. She usually rehearses in London staying with friends and incurring increased travel costs. Most companies contribute to these.

In 1994/5 she took less employment as she began retraining as a sports therapist with funding from Equity and the Dancers Trust. The following year she continued to freelance and in 96/7 she was making her own solo show with funding from A4E Express and SE Arts, as well as performing with Momentary Fusion, Gandini Juggling Project, The Royal Opera, plus other film and commercial work. In this year, aged 32 with 12 years professional experience and accumulating a total of about 48 weeks work she earned approximately £12,000. She has continued her pension payment of £420 per year but has no other benefits, health insurance etc.

### **Paula Hampson**

Paula's career and income has progressed steadily since she left college at age 21 in 1989. She immediately got a job with the Gregory Nash Group for 13 weeks at £165 per week. Her income for 1990 was approximately £3,000 and stayed at around the same level for the next two years when she worked on several small projects and began to make her own work.

In 1992 she got her first funding from North West Arts Board - £1,500 to make a solo. She has based herself in Merseyside and worked from project to project, with an impressive range of choreographers and Companies - Sue MacLennan, Juleyen Hamilton, Gregory Nash, Gaby Agis, Fishpool, Small Bones, as well as doing her own projects funded by North West Arts. Latterly this has been augmented by teaching work and choreographic commissions which have been her best paid work. Her income rose gradually from about £5,000 in 1992/3 to £9,000 in 1995/6, to £10,000 in 1996/7. Until this point her highest wage for dancing was £200 per week. For the last 3 years she has been recipient of a Wingate scholarship which enabled her to set up a regular professional training programme in Liverpool and to take 4 weeks training for herself.

She has continued to pursue her career as a regional, national and international artist from her home base and with support from her region. In 1998 her wage as a dancer rose to £250 and for 1997/8 she estimates that, with 9 years experience, a very good track record in terms of career and employment she has earned about £14,000.



**Paul Douglas**

Paul joined London Contemporary Dance Theatre in 1979 age 23 on a salary of about £3,500. This rose to £14,000 by the time he left in 1988 and included sickness and holiday pay, pension, resettlement contributions etc. In 1988 he joined the Siobhan Davies Company earning about £3,000 and spending 6 months on unemployment benefit, and by 1995/6 when he left the company, his income had risen back to about £10,000 including teaching as well as short periods of unemployment.

Since this time he has been making and performing his own work and his earning capacity has been limited by the unpaid time he commits to running and administrating his own company. But he fits in additional teaching, earning about double if he goes abroad rather than stays in London. The pension he had accrued from his time at London Contemporary Dance Theatre he cashed in at a time of need, but he gained £7,000 from the Dancers' Resettlement Fund towards Aikido training in Japan.

Nevertheless at age 42 with 19 years experience his present income is about £10,000. He and his partner Sasha Rubicek have been able to survive by sharing their incomes through periods of low employment, but now that she is pregnant and will gain no paid maternity leave on top of statutory maternity benefit it will become harder.

**Contrasts between Rates of Pay for Artistic and Administrative Posts**

The woefully poor rates of pay for artists in the Independent sector become clearer when contrasted with the rates of pay for recent administrative posts. Note that the posts advertised here ask for two-three years of professional experience in contrast with the 9-19 years of experience of the artists described in the case studies above:

- *Dance Community Programme Co-ordinator salary £14,000- £15,500. Candidates will be expected to have at least two years' professional experience of coordinating community programmes.*
- *Dance Administrator for an A4E funded performance led Dance in Education project Salary up to £17,481. Candidates will have at least 2 years' experience of administration of a touring dance company and/or dance projects.*
- *For an A4E funded regional Dance Development scheme - Project Manager salary up to £18,000 - Marketing Officer salary up to £16,000 - 2-3 years experience in an arts environment is essential.*

**Comparisons of Rates of Pay Across the Dance Sector**

**Project Clients**

Figures drawn from short-listed applicants in the 1998/9 project round.

Average administration fee	£7,604
Range of administration fee	£2,000-15,000
Total paid to administration through these applications	£182,496
Average artistic director fee <small>This usually includes choreographic commission and performer's fees</small>	£7,528
Range of artistic director fee	£2,500-18,200
Total paid to artistic directors through these applications	£180,690
Average fee paid to dancers	£4,096
Range of fees paid to dancers	£1,320 - £8000
Dancers average number of minimum budgeted weeks employed	14
Range of weeks employed	6-25
Dancers average weekly wage approx.	£275
Range of weekly wage	£220 -£350

**Fixed Term Clients:**

Figures for 1997/8 Financial Year

Dancers average number of weeks employed	28
Range of weeks employed	20-52
Dancers average weekly wage	£304
Range of weekly wage	£220-360
Dancers average total wage	£8520

**Royal Ballet/Birmingham Royal Ballet - rates 1997**

Principal	584.48
1st Soloist	534.39
Soloist	440.89
1st Artist	367.53

**Corps de Ballet**

Year 5	334.17
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Year 4	310.64
Year 3	290.57
Year 1/2	267.20

**ENB Travel and Allowance Supplements**

Class supplement £16.65 per wk all grades

London travel	(rehearsal wks)	£13.38
"	(performance wks)	£21.68
Personal effects allowance (female) pa		£237.56
"	(male)	£120.46

**Rates of Pay for Dancers working in Opera**

Weekly rate including holiday pay	£213.40
Dancers supplement per performance	£15.60

**Equity Minimum**

1997/8	£233.00
1998/9	£245.00

**Comparison of ACE support to Revenue Clients and Independent Sector**

**Number of artists supported on a year round basis:**

Independent Artists	34
Artists in Revenue funded companies	360

**ACE Funding given Directly to Companies and Artists**

1992/3	£2,741,900 (including LCDT)
1998/9	£2,633,500

a drop of £108,400 (not including impact of inflation)

**Examples of Personal Debt in the Independent Sector**

- Over 4 or 5 years of his own work Jeremy James has subsidised the work to the tune of about £20,000

- Paul Douglas estimates that he has had an overspend of about £2,000 on each project, totalling £10,000 over a 5 year period
- Freelance Dance Manager June Gamble estimates that she finishes each business year with a debt of £1,000

**In Kind Support**

It is widely acknowledged that the Independent Dance Sector survives in part because of the extent to which it is supported "in kind" by donations of space and a equipment and through the many thousands of hours that those that work in the sector donate out of necessity.

Our research attempted to quantify this "hidden" means of support through the questionnaire that was circulated to over 1,000 organisations and individuals at the start of the Review. Respondents were asked to estimate the degree to which in kind contributions had supported their work over the five year period covered by the questionnaire.

Inevitably the figures gleaned from this exercise can be no more than indicative. However, the findings do serve to illustrate the extent to which the sector is reliant on in kind support.

Of the 160 respondents the majority – 103, attempted to provide estimated figures for in kind support.

These ranged from £72 for donated rehearsal space for a specific project to £75,000 for major donations of technical equipment or extensive unpaid work.

The total in kind figure for the five years covered by the questionnaire (1993/4-1997/8) was **£1,949,061**. As many respondents felt that it was too difficult to give an estimate this figure represents the minimum level of in kind support received by the sector over the last five years.

**Spend by Dance Companies on Artists working in Other Artforms**

As Dance is a highly collaborative form the creation of work involves contributions from artists working in a range of complimentary artforms.

The research for this review attempted to quantify the amount of money spent by Independent Dance companies on commissions or fees to collaborating artists.

The results shown here are drawn from a sample of 19 Independent companies and artists all of whom responded to the questionnaire circulated as part of the research for this review and all of whom have received funding from the Arts Council and/or an RAB during the five year period covered by the questionnaire: Claire Russ Ensemble, Wendy Houstoun, Shobana

Jeyasingh Dance Company, Richard Alston Dance Company, V-Tol, Siobhan Davies Dance Company, Kokuma Dance Company, Vincent Dance Company, Jonathan Burrows, Random Dance Company, The Cholmondeleys and Featherstonehaughs, Yolande Snaith Theatredance, Ludus Dance Company, Bullies Ballerinas, Bedlam, Ricochet, Motionhouse, Irie! Dance Theatre and Small Bones Dance Company.

The table below shows the total spend by these companies on a variety of collaborators over the five year period (1993/4-1997/8) covered by the questionnaire.

These 19 companies alone spent over £1 million on commissions and fees to collaborating artists over the last five years.

Collaborators	£	Notes
Composers	176,810	
Musicians	443,179	Upwards of £30k pa for some cos.
Theatre Directors	10,980	
Other performers (actors/singers etc.)	20,085	
Writers	10,900	
Visual Artists	14,668	
Set Designers	110,390	
Costume Designers	143,690	
Lighting Designers	75,145	
Digital Artists	2,000	
Film/Video Makers	23,820	
Other	32,036	Inc. Photographers, Production Managers, Visiting Choreographers
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,063,703</b>	

### Growth Illustrated by Developments in Presentation and Attendance

#### Resolution! - London

The Resolution! season at The Place has developed from the presentation of 25 artist/companies over 4 weeks in 1991 to 108 over 7 weeks in 1998, when for the first time in an intentionally uncurated season 80 companies had to be turned down.

#### Dance Umbrella Festival - London

Attendances as percentage of capacity:

1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
60	40	60	81	78

#### Nott Dance Festival - Nottingham

	1994	1995	1996	1997
No. of performances	16	19	23	30
Attendances as % of capacity	80	77	74	87
Dance 4 Commissions	0	2	3	6
Premiers - Regional Artists	5	4	3	6
Premiers Int/national Artists	2	0	0	3
Advanced Workshops	0	2	4	3
Workshop Attenders	15	40	40	(inc. 1 x 3 day)
Education/Community Workshops	1	10	9	
Ed/Com Attenders	17	150	200	

#### Growth Illustrated through Lengthening Performance Runs

DV8 was able to extend its season at the QEH in London as follows:

1990 - 5 performances, 1995 - 7 performances, 1997 - 10 performances

## Growth Illustrated through Provision by Service Organisations

### The Place Dance Services

- Total membership has risen from just under 500 in June '95 to 1090 in March '98. Of this figure 52% are from London, 34% from the rest of the UK and 14 from overseas.
- The number of enquiries for the year '97/98 was approximately 6700, or an average of 558 per month.

### Foundation for Community Dance

- The number of members has increased from 575 in 1995/6 to a current 703.
- Distribution Figures (which includes enquiries, dissemination of information, magazines etc.) have risen from 11,179 in 1995/6 to 15,600 in 1997/8.

### Growth in the Education Sector

- The number of students taking A Level Dance has gone up from 499 in 1994 to 707 in 1997. This is a 41.7% increase.
- The number of students taking AS Level Dance has gone up from 244 in 1994 to 476 in 1997. This is a 95.1% increase.

(J Thrift - Principal examiner A Level, NEAB)

## A New Model

209. The descriptions of bridges in the quotation at the beginning of this document struck us as appropriate metaphors for aspects of the Independent Dance sector. It currently inhabits a "primitive" country with rope bridges as very temporary structures which have become overstretched and therefore "undependable". If the sector is to survive it needs to replace these bridges with ones using cables of steel. At the same time the sector aspires to become part of a "civilised country" where bridges are "littered about the landscape in generous numbers and in a rich variety" built on various structural principles according to their individual nature and function.

210. The Independent Dance sector is woefully under-resourced and will need increased investment by the public funding system if it is to make the transition to a civilised country. However, the model offered here is not predicated merely on an injection of new money, an essential prerequisite is a fundamental change of attitude and perception within the funding bodies and within the Independent Dance sector:

- The structures for funding and supporting dance have been inherited from other artforms, particularly drama. Whilst they are appropriate mechanisms for supporting some types of creative activity in dance, there is a huge range of work that is not best supported by the "make and tour" approach. The creative process for many choreographers is ongoing and exploratory between bursts of production - more akin to that of writing, painting or composition.
- The hierarchies which infest the Independent sector should be dismantled, particularly those which assume that there is a ladder of funding up which all artists progress. The model offered here aims to be non-hierarchical and moves away from the notion that continuing Arts Council funding is the ultimate accolade to which all artists aspire
- Funding structures should be more flexible and responsive to the needs of applicants, making it easier to build a proposal around the work they really want to do rather than squeezing a project to fit existing criteria. There should be greater freedom to move between categories of funding rather than encouraging artists to see the funding system as a ladder up which they will progress
- The basic raw material for the making of work is access to space, time to use it and the dancers to work with
- Dancers are increasingly becoming major contributors to the creative process. Dancers need a greater degree of continuity in their working practice. The ongoing creative development and employment needs of dancers are as important to the future health of the artform as those of choreographers

- Increased funding is required to begin to address the levels of pay and working conditions across the sector
- The development of imaginative partnerships between artists and promoters/producers is essential both for the development of Dance and the development of the artform's relationship with its audiences
- The funding system needs to move away from the notion that the only way to tour is in a succession of one night stands and that the only indicator of "value for money" is the number of dates acquired. This would free artists and promoters, enabling them to work together to develop new presentational formats and modes of distribution
- Dance funders should develop more sophisticated approaches to long term planning based on open and honest dialogue with artists
- Advisory systems should be developed in ways which place more artists in positions of influence within the funding system
- Funders should work with the profession to develop the mixed economy for Independent Dance, freeing the sector from its over-dependence on the Arts Council.

#### Funding Patterns at ACE

211. Current funding patterns at ACE are based on precepts that were viable 10 years ago but are now outworn. These assume that:

- The Independent sector is a young one made up primarily of emerging artists
- That the company model is the most appropriate for sustaining artists and making work
- That the Dance budget increases year on year allowing for a growing fixed term portfolio to which artists can realistically aspire

212. Our new model is offered in outline only and is intended as a starting point for the Dance Panel (or whatever advisory body replaces it) as it discusses the best way to support the sector. In it we have discarded the outworn precepts. The funding model is underpinned by a number of key principles:

- The sector requires a properly resourced "top end" – a small number of companies producing excellent and innovative artistic work who are flexibly funded in a way that enables them to plan and to offer realistic levels of pay to artistic and administrative employees be they on full time or short term contracts

- The need for investment in ongoing artistic sustenance. True artistic development is at odds with the stop start nature of funding. Artists need to be able to practice their art throughout the year not just when they make a new piece of work
- That the sector needs to develop more performance opportunities and this will happen most successfully if long term rather than short term approaches are pursued
- Funds should be located across the system more broadly than they are at present. RABs should be financially empowered to develop regionally based artists properly, obviating the pressure on these artists to aspire to Arts Council funding inappropriately. At the same time promoters and producers should be financially empowered to enable them to engage in effective partnerships with artists. ACE should then concentrate its resources on a smaller portfolio of truly national clients.

213. In our model funding would be divided into the following categories:

#### Guaranteed Companies

214. This category would support a small number of companies producing excellent and innovative work. It should be offered only to those artists who want and require a formally constituted company structure, rather than being the golden egg to which all artists aspire. Support should be offered at realistic levels which allow for proper remuneration and improved working conditions for artists. Funding to these companies would be guaranteed for a certain number of years, the term varying from company to company. It should be offered on the basis of an agreed programme of work for the term of the guarantee, which might include years of significantly reduced activity. A level of funding would be agreed for the entire term of the guarantee but within this annual budgets might vary according to the nature of the activity. It would enable greater flexibility in production schedules and move away from the current assumption that work is always produced on an annual cycle. It would allow companies to plan effectively for the period of the guarantee thus improving their ability to develop long term partnerships with promoters and identify other sources of funding.

#### Stipends

215. These would be available to artists who are active on a year round basis but who do not wish to be burdened and constrained by a formally constituted company structure. It would provide an annual grant towards the key things the artist needs to sustain their activity – e.g. a fee or wage



for themselves and a manager, studio hire and fees to dancers for periods of experimentation. The areas of expenditure should be determined by the artist. Artists in receipt of a stipend would be able to apply for project support for productions as and when required. This category aims to acknowledge the fact that some artists and companies are in fact operating on this basis by default, spreading their ACE project grant to cover an ongoing programme of activity. Stipends could be time guaranteed and so offer some security and continuity without the constraints of a constituted company structure.

#### Individual bursaries

216. These are introduced to recognise the need for ongoing sustenance for individual artists (choreographers and dancers), managers and promoters. They should be flexible allowing individuals to receive support for projects which enhance their creative and professional development. It might cover advanced training, apprenticeships, sideways steps for artists e.g. an opportunity to curate a season of work or a work placement with a senior marketing officer, travel, sabbaticals, certain kinds of R&D. The key criterion should be the importance of the project to the applicant's development and the watchword should be flexibility.

#### Projects

217. Project funding should be available for application from stipend clients and from those artists who genuinely operate on a project basis. It should be flexible and could include site specific, digital work or publications. Applicants should be required to describe an appropriate distribution mechanism for their work but there should be room for this to be a small number of carefully chosen and properly researched partnerships or a "traditional" tour.

#### Promoter/Producer- Artist Partnerships

218. An investment is needed to empower promoters and to build more long term and secure bridges between the artist, the promoter/producer and the audience. This could be achieved by:

- fixed term agreements with senior promoters and producers based on their track record in working with artists and devising imaginative approaches to audience development
- supporting creative partnerships between promoters/producers and artists – these could be led by either the promoter or the artist.

#### General Points

219. Whilst this funding model is aimed primarily at the Arts Council it is hoped that it may form a useful starting point for debate across the whole funding system. It has been developed with the prospect of delegation in mind and elements of it could be best delivered by the RABs rather than Arts Council.

220. The model flags up the need for increased development funds within RAB budgets, empowering RABs to support regionally based artists at a more realistic level and in ways that encourage progression and development. They should also encourage cross regional links and touring, recognising the need for artists to be mobile. The Arts Council could then focus its resources on genuinely national companies and artists. A move towards non-hierarchical systems and greater resources at regional level would allow proper value and recognition for the work of regionally based artists and free them from the pressure to aspire to ACE funding for the recognition and status it is perceived to bestow.

221. The divisions between project, stipend and guarantee must be non-hierarchical, allowing movement between categories depending upon the nature of an artist's work and recognising that working patterns change over the course of an artist's career.

222. Systems should de-emphasise the written application and place greater emphasis on artistic track record as a key part of the assessment process.

223. There should be a higher degree of trust in artists on the basis that they want to make and show their work.

#### Costings

224. To implement the model outlined above new resources are required both at ACE and within the RABs. If the future of the Independent Dance Sector is to be secured then the Dance Department must make the case for this increased support, finding the resources from within its own portfolio or arguing the case with the Council.

225. These figures are intended as an illustration of the immediate increase required if the model is to be implemented and are informed in part by the make-up of the current ACE portfolio. They do not reflect the longer term financial needs of the sector which obviously would be much greater. They represent the minimum requirement to solve some of the most pressing needs of the sector and form a first step in an ongoing process of reviewing the balance of funding across the whole dance portfolio.

Guaranteed Companies 13 ranging between £400,000 & £75,000	2,370,000
Stipends 11 @ £25,000	275,000
Individual Bursaries	200,000
Projects	600,000
Promoter/Artist Partnerships	500,000
Total	3,945,000

ACE current spend on equivalent areas (approx.)	2,688,500
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Shortfall - New Resources required at ACE	1,256,500
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New Resources required across RABs	650,000
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**Total requirement across funding system £1,906,500**

226. If the Arts Council is to adopt this model then it needs to prepare:

- it must review its current portfolio (revenue, fixed term and project) with a view to arriving at a clear statement of the reasons it funds each client and their fitness for purpose and ongoing relevance
- it must make this review widely available to the profession
- it must engage in a dialogue with its clients to establish their medium term plans, allowing it to chart peaks and flows in activity in order to plot financial requirements over the next 5-10 years. This should be done in a spirit of openness, allowing clients to speak honestly about their plans without fear of jeopardising their future funding.

**Advisory and Monitoring Systems at ACE**

**Advisory structures**

227. As advisory systems across the Arts Council may change, only broad principles are outlined here.

228. A floating advisory pool would provide greater flexibility than the current rigid system. Individuals within this pool could be drawn on for the specific expertise both within and outside formal meeting structures.

229. A Panel or standing advisory group should meet two or three times a year to look at long term issues of strategy and development. They should not look at the detail of individual decision-making processes, being free instead to maintain an overview. An appropriate balance between representation and expertise should be found. The need for the group to be representative should not take priority over its collective ability to hold an overview or the seniority and expertise of its individual members.

230. A separate group drawn from the advisory pool should take "Project" decisions. This group should be empowered to take decisions rather than merely make recommendations. It should be small enough to be conducive to high quality debate and its members should be individuals who are in touch with the sector and who view the work of artists frequently. (If the system for reporting on shows is revised then the onus on this group to be knowledgeable about the work increases) There should be flexibility to allow members to stand up and down for particular meetings, coopting where necessary, to avoid conflict of interest.

231. The expertise of artists should be used throughout the advisory system.

232. There should be consistency of advisory input across the entire client portfolio. At present project clients are under far greater artistic scrutiny than regularly funded organisations. This is illogical and adds to the sense that advisors do not have an overview. There should be fixed points in the year when the advisory group takes a detailed and strategic look across the entire portfolio.

233. A correct balance between continuity and rotation should be found.

**Show reports**

234. Any development of the system of reporting on shows should be preceded by a rigorous discussion of the extent to which show reports are genuinely useful as a means of assessing work. There is an argument that says they are not useful, particularly as the system operates on a voluntary basis, and that the practice should be discontinued.

235. If they are deemed useful then they could be developed along the following lines. The emphasis should be on quality rather than quantity and the system should be one which includes artists.

236. Artists should be asked to name two or three people who they feel would be able to report on their work in a constructive and analytical way. These nominations should then be discussed with ACE/RAB officers and mutually agreed.

237. Nominated assessors should be offered training to ensure commonality of approach and to help them feel confident about their dual feedback role.

238. The assessors should report to the Arts Council in written form with copies always being available to artists. They could provide additional informal feedback to artists if both felt this was useful.

#### Other Key Areas for Development

239. Steps should be taken to move young and emerging artists away from the sense that they have to climb straight onto the producing treadmill and allow for slower and more considered development. High profile "showcases" (Resolution! and Mosaics) should be refocused to emphasise time in a studio coupled with informal showings and sharings. Initial funding from the RABs should be changed in emphasis to focus on space and time rather than product.

240. The opportunity for established companies to become building based would open up possibilities for more flexible working patterns, for the development of mixed economies and the raising of the status of the Independent sector.

241. Opportunities for Artists in the Higher Education sector should be explored. A working party should be drawn together to investigate the potential for artists to take up roles in HE Institutes which allow them to continue to create work. Many benefits could accrue from this:

- it would provide new career openings for artists who want to work outside the confines of a company structure
- it would harness the expertise of mature artists and provide a structured way for them to support and influence new generations of potential artists
- it would create strong links between the "academic" and "practical" aspects of the profession and provide meetings points where creativity, research and debate could intermingle.

242. Action should be taken to help stimulate a mixed economy for Independent artists. A "Dance Fixer" post should be created – subsidised at first with a view to becoming self-financing. This person would fulfil a dual role:

- keeping a diary of artists' availability for work which could be used to link dancers with choreographers during gaps in their employment. This should aim to compliment the BAC Choreographers' Directory
- actively seeking commercial opportunities – in film, advertising, West End shows etc. for independent artists.

243. Lottery funding has resourced a circuit of small rural venues with technical facilities for performance. This opens up increased opportunities for small scale touring by Independent Dance Companies.

244. Artists should develop their own initiatives to propose to funders/promoters. These could include commissions, collaborations or imaginative partnerships between companies. For example a shared programme of work might open the door to performances in a number of middle scale venues which would otherwise be reluctant to take the risk on one company.

245. Theatre spaces are needed for the documentation, production and previewing of work. "Dark" theatres could be exploited to provide this resource.

246. Successful work should be encouraged to stay in a company's repertory for longer or to return at a later date. This would help substantiate the achievements and history of Independent Dance, as well as increasing opportunities for International touring. With the advent of digital and interactive technologies a body of well documented "modern classics" might develop which could be utilised not only as a valuable educational resource but also, potentially as "texts" to be interpreted by emerging companies and artists.

247. A coordinated approach should be taken to ensure that the recent changes in the Benefit System do not disadvantage dance artists both before and after the age of 25. This would include arguing their valid case at government level and investigating how schemes might be introduced within the 'New Deal' which could offer young artists short term performance and training projects, or apprenticeships. Information should be pooled of present schemes such as that offered by the Reanimators supported by TECs in West London.

248. Dialogue should take place between the profession and the training institutions to discuss and clarify the current training needs of Dance students entering the Independent sector. This dialogue might usefully be initiated by the Greenhouse Effect Festival Conference at Bretton Hall in September which will focus on the training and development of choreographers. The debate should then be expanded to cover all areas of training including the practical knowledge, realistic expectations and self-confidence required of graduating students.

## A Wish List

- A replacement for the Digital Awards – This would provide a welcome “dream pot” for companies. The Premier Award provided a valuable opportunity for the profession to acknowledge the achievement of key individuals within its ranks – a replacement is required.
- A “bluffers guide” to Contemporary Dance, its history and terms, would help promoters to gain access to what they perceive to be the tight-knit “inner circle” of knowledgeable aficionados.
- An artists’ discount card for performances
- A national database to facilitate skills sharing between individuals across all areas of the profession.

**“There must be many efforts – all efforts create a field of energy and this at a critical moment attracts towards it a solution”**

**Peter Brook - There Are No Secrets**

## APPENDIX 1

### List of Those Consulted

Individual interviews in person or by phone were conducted with the following people:

Liz Agiss	Independent Artist/Brighton University/SEDA
Gaby Agis	Independent Artist & curator
Clare Baker	Independent Artist
Darshan Singh Bhuller	Independent Artist
Rosina Bonsu	Independent Artist
Laurie Booth	Independent Artist
Jim Brown	Independent Artist
Rosemary Butcher	Independent Artist
Julia Carruthers	Dance Manager
Caryl Churchill	Playwright
Emilyn Claid	Independent Artist
Aletta Collins	Independent Artist
Kate Coyne	Independent Artist
Samantha Dawn	Independent Artist
Nilima Devi	Independent Artist
Andrew Downs	Independent Artist
Henrietta Esiri	Independent Artist & curator
Becky Edmunds	Independent Artist
Javier de Frutos	Independent Artist
June Gamble	Dance Manager
Ruth Gibson	Independent Artist
Vanessa Gray	Independent Artist
Paula Hampson	Independent Artist
Philip Hill	Independent Artist
Wendy Houston	Independent Artist
Detta Howe	Independent Artist
Jeremy James	Independent Artist
Louise Katarega	Independent Artist
Rosemary Lee	Independent Artist
Jackie Lansley	Independent Artist
Colin Marsh	Dance Manager/Brix Dance
Judy McCartney	Dance Manager/Brix Dance
Russell Maliphant	Independent Artist
Cecilia McFarlane	Independent Artist
Belinda Neave	Independent Artist
Sally Ridgeway	Independent Artist
Sarah Rubidge	Independent Artist, Lecturer & Teacher
Nic Sandiland	Independent Artist
Gwen Van Spijk	Dance Manager
Sarah Trist	Dance Manager
Tim Tubbs	Dance Manager
Alison Turner	Independent Artist
Athina Vahla	Independent Artist
Fin Walker	Independent Artist
Jeremy Warr	Independent Artist
Anna Williams	Independent Artist
Sian Alexander	Administrative Director, Siobhan Davies DC
Richard Alston	Artistic Director The Place/RADC
Lea Anderson	Artistic Director, Cholmondeleys & Featherstonehaughs

Peter Badejo	Artistic Director, Badejo Arts
Mark Baldwin	Artistic Director, Mark Baldwin and Dancers
Deborah Barnard	Director, Ludus Dance Company
Kim Brandstrup	Artistic Director, Arc Dance Company
Mark Bruce	Artistic Director, Mark Bruce and Dancers
Jonathan Burrows	Artistic Director, Jonathan Burrows Group
Siobhan Davies	Artistic Director, Siobhan Davies Dance Company
Sarah Dawson	Coral Dance Company
Emma Diamond	Artistic Director, Diamond Dance
Paul Douglas	Artistic Director, Small Bones Dance Company
Kevin Finan	Artistic Director, Motionhouse
Yael Flexer	Artistic Director, Bedlam
Beverley Glean	Artistic Director, Irie! Dance Company
Kate Gower	Ricochet Dance Company
Matthew Hawkins	Artistic Director, The Fresh Dancers Group
Avril Hitman	Director, Magpie Dance Company
Jennifer Jackson	Ballet Independents
Jeannefer Jean Charles	Co-Artistic Director, Bullies Ballerinas
Shobana Jeyasingh	Artistic Director, Shobana Jeyasingh Dance Company
Nina Rajarani	Artistic Director, Srishti
Pit Fong Lo	Bi Ma Dance Company
Ming Low	Bi Ma Dance Company
Edward Lynch	RJC Dance Company
Wayne MacGregor	Artistic Director, Random Dance Company
Mark Murphy	Artistic Director, V-Tol
Lloyd Newson	Artistic Director, DV8
Elizabeth Old	Rambert Dance Company
Karen Potisk	Ricochet Dance Company
Nina Rajarani	Artistic Director, Srishti
Louise Richards	Artistic Director, Motionhouse
Sasha Rubiocek	Small Bones Dance Company
Barbara Vijayakumar	Kathakali/Centre Ocean Stream
Charlotte Vincent	Artistic Director, Vincent Dance Company
Suzanne Walker	General Manager, V-Tol
Sue Wyatt	Admin Director, Chomondeleys & Featherstonehaughs
John Ashford	Director, The Place Theatre
Sheryl Aitcheson	Sadler's Wells
Christopher Bannerman	Head of Dance, Middlesex University
Maxine Barclay	Westminster Arts Marketing
Ken Bartlett	Director, Foundation for Community Dance
Theresa Beattie	Director, The Place Dance Services
Richard Blanco	Freelance Consultant
Ghislaine Boddington	shinkansen
Val Bourne	Artistic Director, Dance Umbrella
Assis Carreiro	Peacock Theatre
Paula Gillespie	Sadler's Wells
Emma Gladstone	Associate Director, The Place Theatre
Betsy Gregory	Programme Manager, Dance Umbrella
Nigel Hinds	Artistic Producer, Sadler's Wells
Walter Heun	
Sue Hoyle	General Manager, The Place
Linda Jasper	Head of Dance, Surrey University
Mira Kaushik	Director, Akademi
Brendan Keaney	Director, Greenwich Dance Agency
Richard Lee	Director, The Jerwood Space
Sue MacLennan	London Contemporary Dance School
Michael Morris	Producer, Art Angel
Nasreen Rehman	Director, Aditi

Alan Roberts	Bristol Dance Centre
Anthony Roberts	Colchester Arts Centre
John Robinson	Equity
Alistair Spalding	Performing Arts Programmer, South Bank Centre
Anthony Waller	Cornwall Dance Agency
Lyn Williams	Eastern Touring Agency
Elizabeth Adlington	Senior Touring Officer, ACE
Daniel Brine	Combined Arts Officer, ACE
Hilary Carty	Dance Director, ACE
Anne Clayton	Dance Officer, North West Arts
Sally Cowling	British Council
Mileva Drljaca	Dance & Mime Officer, Yorkshire & Humberside Arts
Simon Gammel	British Council
Clare Lovett	Dance Officer, Arts Council
Carole McFadden	British Council
Deborah MacMillan	Chair of the Arts Council Dance Panel
Gregory Nash	British Council
Anouk Peripanayagam	Performing Arts Officer (Dance), WMA
Ian Reid	Director, Combined Arts Department, ACE
Claire Stewart	Touring Officer, ACE
Rob West	Drama Officer, ACE
Andy Prodder	Equity
Marie McCluskie	Director, Swindon Dance Agency
Janet Archer	Director, Dance City, Newcastle
Amanda Leon	

In addition substantial written responses were received from:

Dance UK	
Deborah Barnard	Director, Ludus Dance Company
Fiona Cameron	Administrator, Dance Theatre Red
Andy Papas	Artistic Director, Dance Theatre Red
Philip Gehmacher	Independent Artist
Bode Lawal	Artistic Director, Sakoba
Angela Kennedy	
Viv Jakeman	
John Muir	Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan
David Steele	Denmark
Kirsi Heimonen	Finland
Els Baeton	Flemish Theatre Institute
Anouk Peripanayagam	Performing Arts Officer (Dance) West Midlands Arts
Jacqueline Rose	Principal Dance Officer, London Arts Board
Raymond Otto	Takalani Dance Theatre
Isabel Jones	Artistic Director, Salamanda Tandem
Pauline Wetton	University of Durham
Sophie Hansen	Bi Ma Dance Company

The following programme of consultative meetings was carried out between February and April 1998:

29/1/98	Meeting British Council Officers
12/2/98	Management Liaison Group Meeting - London
17/2/98	post-London Dance Network meeting - London (failed)
21/2/98	Meeting regional practitioners - Yorkshire Dance Centre - Leeds
23/2/98	Association of National Dance Agencies Meeting - London
26/2/98	Thursday Group Meeting - London
27/2/98	Post-Scott Clark's class at Greenwich Dance Agency - London



3/3/98	Post-David Waring's class at Coram Fields - London
5/3/98	Southern Arts Planning Meeting – South Hill Park - Bracknell
5/3/98	Pre-Yolande Snaith's performance - The Place - London
6/2/98	North West practitioners meeting – NWA Offices - Liverpool
10/3/98	Pre-Bedlam's performance - The Place - London
13/3/98	Post-Philippa Donnellan's class - The Place - London
14/3/98	Dance UK Regional Artists meeting - London
16/3/98	Eastern Arts DASH Meeting – Eastern Arts Offices - Cambridge
16/3/98	Key Eastern region individuals - Cambridge
20/3/98	South West artists meeting - Bristol
20/3/98	Pre-Shobana Jeyasingh performance – Queen Elizabeth Hall - London
23/3/98	Pre-Chatarung meeting – Midlands Arts Centre - Birmingham
23/3/98	South East Dance Agency Board meeting - Broadstairs
23/3/98	South West artists meeting - pre- Featherstonehaughs - Taunton
26/3/98	Thursday Group meeting - London
27/3/98	Meeting East London artists - Barking - London
30/3/98	Key East Midlands individuals - Derby Dance Centre - Derby
30/3/98	East Midlands artists meeting - Derby Dance Centre – Derby
31/3/98	Welfare and Benefit System Meeting – Arts Council
3/4/98	Northern artists meeting – Northern Arts Offices - Newcastle
7/4/98	Southern Arts artists Talkshop – Swindon Dance
9/4/98	Pre-Jonzi D - The Place - London
15/4/98	West Midlands promoters meeting - DanceXchange –Birmingham
15/4/98	West Midlands artists meeting – DanceXchange - Birmingham
17/4/98	Pre-Russell Maliphant - The Place – London
17/4/98	Aditi - South Asian Artists meeting – Nehru Centre - London
18/4/98	South East Arts Artists Mentoring Day - Surrey University - Guildford
23/4/98	Pre-Javier de Frutos - The Place - London

## APPENDIX 2

### Key Issues Paper

This document was written in January 1998 and circulated to participants in the consultative meetings. Its aim was to stimulate the thoughts and ideas of participants as a starting point to wider discussion:

### Introduction

Our approach to the Independent Dance Review places a strong emphasis on problem solving through discussion and debate. We feel it is of the utmost importance that the review does not merely reiterate the problems which beset the sector at present, but moves beyond this into constructive and creative problem-solving.

The purpose of this paper is to flag up some of the issues that have already been identified as particularly pressing. We hope that you will find it thought-provoking, that it will stimulate your own ideas and help you to prepare for the consultative meetings and discussion groups which form an essential part of this review.

### Key Issues

The conditions in which dancers work are grim - oscillating between long hours in dirty studios under intense pressure and periods of unemployment. What steps could be taken to improve the conditions in which dancers work?

Remuneration across the sector is poor, particularly for choreographers and dancers. Is it possible to distribute the limited resources available to dance differently to improve pay for dance artists and others?

Choreographic development projects and mentoring schemes have become fashionable with service organisations. Are these initiatives having a positive impact on the development of the artform?

There are limited opportunities for career development in dance. How might this be addressed? Bear in mind that notions of career structure are changing in the world at large and that short-term and freelance contracts are increasingly replacing permanent employment. Is dance one step ahead of the game as it is accustomed to working in this way or is the lack of a career structure limiting the development of the artform?

What conditions are needed to allow artists to take greater control of their work and development?

Is it responsible to encourage new choreographers into a sector which is increasingly unable to sustain those who are already working within it?

Mature artists are wearying of the continual battle for funding and of living in perpetual debt. Are we in danger of losing our established artists? How can their needs be catered for and the contribution they have made to the sector be recognised?

The current system of project funding is failing to deliver the limited resources available to dance in ways that encourages longer term artistic development. Are there alternatives to the current project funding system and if so what might these be?

Promoters and producers are the interface between artists and audiences. Would greater investment in the work of these individuals enable them to support artistic endeavour in more creative and structured ways?

Too many companies are chasing too few performance dates. Is the funding system's emphasis on touring unrealistic and unbeneficial to the artform or do ways need to be found to expand the touring options for dance? If so how could this be done?

Anecdotal evidence suggests that audiences for dance have grown over the past five years but dance is still a minority interest and is seen by many (even those who enjoy it) as esoteric and "difficult". Is there potential for substantial increases in the audience for dance or does it need to find ways of achieving profile and credibility despite relatively small audiences?

Are we going about the development of a national infrastructure for dance in the right way? The NDAs and other key promoters have strengthened substantially the regional infrastructure for dance but many artists still feel a strong pull towards the capital. Competition for funding everywhere is fierce but in London scant resources are at breaking point. The needs of artists based in the regions differ substantially from those based in London. Is it possible to reconcile some of these tensions in ways that result in a more supportive environment for everyone?

Gill Clarke  
Rachel Gibson  
January 1998

### APPENDIX 3

#### A Dance Novice Views Spring Loaded

As part of the Spring Loaded Dance Season Emma Gladstone, of the Place, invited Peter Curran, ebullient Irish presenter on Greater London Radio, to go to see five performances by different companies. He had never seen Dance before, but is a frequent theatre-goer and includes his views as part of his show. His comments gave an interesting indication of a novice's expectations and perceptions of new dance work.

The following is a brief precis of his observations:

Before the first performance his perceptions of dance had been that it was 'style and not substance', that since it had no words it could not deal in subtleties, that dancers were physically fit - therefore probably masochists - and that to watch them perform would, as a result be intimidating!

The work he saw was wide-ranging but he was struck by the following characteristics:

- the humour and individual personalities built a human empathy between audience and performers
- the very direct communication - straight to the heart rather than via the head
- that the greatest force was in a volume of dancers together, despite a formality which seemed to require that everyone got their solo!
- like theatre it has a beginning, middle and end - and the contact with the audience seems to be lost most frequently in the middle
- the music can overpower the dance and detract from its own impact
- the power of primeval physicality
- the pleasure of the absurd
- the dance made obscure music palatable
- the physical perfection is intimidating
- the confidence of execution is impressive
- more steps per minute than....
- the mystery, honesty, speed - mesmerising.
- the honesty of the body and the very direct connection with an audience.

Thoughts on marketing:

He felt the publicity copy that he had seen was indulgent and pretentious and seemed to be trying to sell work as ground-breaking and novel rather than exploiting its - quality, excitement, watchability.

He felt that dance should be seen as the medium rather than the message, vaunting its extraordinary, wordless power to communicate.

People in the media should seize the opportunity to make an exciting piece of writing or radio about dance rather than merely describe a piece. On radio the use of talking over the music could help to create the atmosphere and buzz of a piece.

As the result of his initiation he claims to be a convert!

## APPENDIX 4

### Arts Council brief for the Independent Dance Review

## Independent Dance Sector Brief

### Aim

- 1 During the past five years the Independent Dance Sector has experienced a significant number of changes. These include changing working patterns, poor working conditions for dancers, infrastructure, touring, the evolution of digital dancing, challenges to the established access points for dance. In response to these and many other changes the Dance Panel seeks to appoint a consultant to review the sector in order to assess its characteristics, current status, and prospects for future developments. The consultant will be expected to make recommendations which will enable the development of strategies to strengthen the infrastructure and artistic endeavour over the medium and long terms.
- 2 The consultant should seek to substantiate the level and range of activity undertaken by this sector. It will be essential to examine the development of the sector over the last five years and to look at changes in the support of dance across both the public and private sectors.

### Consultation

- 3 In order to put boundaries round a large area of activity, work undertaken by youth groups and fourth year performance groups will be excluded. Whilst the Dance Panel recognises the role played by these groups in employing many IDP choreographers, it is necessary to restrict the focus of the research in order that it will be most effective. Project and fixed-term funded clients of the funding system should be included. In addition, it is important to ensure that the views of dancers within the Independent Dance sector are gathered as part of this process.
- 4 In the last financial year both the public and private funding systems have undergone a process of rapid evolution. The research should look at the following areas and potential impact on the IDP funds:

- A4E main scheme and A4E Express
- Shrinking development funds across RABs and ACE. How to ensure a co-ordinated approach to dance development across the integrated funding system
- Stabilisation funds
- ACE review of Development Funds across the integrated funding system
- Trusts, Foundations, Businesses
- Local authorities

## Time Scale and Budget

- 5 It is expected that the research will take between 40 and 50 days and should be completed by April 1998. Please submit a budget for the work indicating outline costs as appropriate to your methodology.
- 6 **Number of drafts required:**
- First: Working group and lead officer
  - Second: Dance Department officers for fact check and presentation issues
  - Third: Dance Panel and fact check from those consulted (if required)

## Background

- 7 "*Stepping Forward*" by Graham Devlin set out a strategy for Dance in the 1990s. It raised many issues to be addressed throughout the decade. Much has been achieved, whilst other initiatives are in the process of being addressed. The overriding objective is to create a healthy dance ecology, an environment where new work can flourish and where new approaches to dance are constantly sought.
- 8 With the stated priority to enhance the portfolio of regularly funded organisations over recent years, dance budgets across the funding system have seen a gradual but significant decline in Development Funds. In the Independent Dance sector total funding has remained relatively static but the Arts Council's ability to respond to the demands of the sector has significantly declined with the Department's response rate decreasing from 36% in 1994/95 to 23% in 1996/97. Dance Officers across the funding system have endorsed the necessity to re-prioritise the building of development resources as a matter of urgency.
- 9 **Approximate size of sector 1997:**
- Fixed term funded clients: 15
  - Project clients ACE: 35
  - Project clients across funding system:
  - Dancers: approx. 1,500
  - 50 Dance artist support groups: 15
  - Green List (list of unsubsidized and subsidized companies): 256
    - National Dance Agencies: 8
    - Dance Development Agencies: 25
    - A4E Express and Main Awards: 336
    - Regional Arts Board officers: 10
- 10 **Some of the changes in working patterns include:**
- Greater emphasis on two year working cycles (R&D year one, production year two);
  - Touring patterns, increased middle scale touring from regularly funded IDP clients;

- Activity on the small scale touring network, unsubstantiated reports that there are too many companies fighting over a small number of dates;
- Rise in audience figures reported by dance festivals e.g. Nott Dance, Taking Risks, etc;
- The impact of commissions, festivals and new promoter networks on the development of ID sector e.g. NDAs, London Dance Network;
- Choreographers in residence programmes, the role of the HE establishments in artistic development;
- African Dance companies and South Asian dance companies and their profile;
- Increased movement of dancers and choreographers between the commercial and subsidised sectors;
- The lack of administrative support for small dance companies;
- Continued poor working conditions;
- Assessment and comparison of salary levels, particularly for experienced dancers within the sector;
- Staff burnout of dancers, administrators and choreographers who have now reached late 30s and still on levels of pay which do not reflect level of skill and experience. Often results in low self esteem and loss to the profession of experienced and articulate personnel.

## Application process

Please submit your methodology, detailed schedule, rationale and ambitions for the research together with a financial estimate. Applicants will be expected to be able to demonstrate an extensive knowledge of the Independent Dance sector and give details of a recently commissioned research project with references.

Tenders should be submitted by **21st November 1997**. Interviews will be held the week beginning December 8th 1997.

## Management

The consultant will work with a steering group comprising of Marie McCluskey (Dance Panel representative), Gregory Nash (Development Adviser representative - 1st meeting only), Nikki Crane (Regional Arts Board representative), Graham Marchant (External Adviser) and an artist representative. This group will be coordinated by Clare Lovett (Dance Officer) and will meet approximately four times.

## APPENDIX 5

### Extracts from A Creative Future

*"Development in the arts cannot be sustained if artists are unpaid – or even if they are paid only when their work reaches the public: development work is expensive. Reductions in the amount of experiment and of new work in all forms are already apparent and are clear signs that Great Britain cannot without grave damage continue to get its arts on the cheap."*

*"It is important - in all the justified emphasis on artistic originality - that the claims of stability are not neglected. ...originality covers not merely new art, but new ways of bringing together art and public. All self-critical arts organisations, including those who work in traditional ways, think hard about themselves, the art they present and the communities in which and for which they work, and seek to develop accordingly. Development from a base of stability deserves support; artistic stagnation does not."*

*"Originality and sustained development in the arts need more than a few artistic 'flagship' organisations, however generously funded. The flagships themselves, the arts as a whole and the public will be served if a wide range of artists and organisations is funded and if funding categories are flexible and respect the unpredictability of the new."*

*A Creative Future – the National Arts and Media Strategy 1987.*

□