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"We Make Do"

More Time Is Better, But Budget Is King

A Report Assessing Dance Rehearsal Space Needs and Availability, Focused on Mid-Career, Single-Choreographer-led Companies

For The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
November 1, 2010

We Make Do

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Executive Summary

Introduction

NYC Performing Arts Spaces (NYC PA Spaces), a Program of Fractured Atlas*, was awarded a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to assess rehearsal space demands for New York's dance community, with a specific focus on mid-career, single-choreographer-led companies without their own space. Foundation funds supported an assessment of the existing supply of dance rehearsal facilities, barriers to access by professional artists, and possible solutions, including new dedicated facilities.

New York City has long been central in the history and development of contemporary dance. If we value dance as an art form, we must commit to supporting the development of dance artists and their work, particularly with regard to workspace needs for creative growth, research and development.

This assessment consisted of focus groups with select Facilities and Choreographers, surveys to Facilities and Choreographers, and research on efforts to address these infrastructure issues.

Choreographer Surveys

The surveys to choreographers examined Work Patterns and Finances and formed a profile of this community in New York City. A set of criteria was applied to the surveys to identify a Core Group of mid-career, single-choreographer-led companies without their own workspaces and with at least the beginnings of a significant professional profile. Most of these 25 choreographers create two to four pieces a year, with generally one evening-length and one commissioned, although the total number fell from 2007 to 2009. Almost half do not have consistent workspace, and "sometimes" they have access to the types of space they need. 70% were aided by free residencies.

For all respondents, total income fell by 15% from 2007–2009, with a 37% drop in contributed income. 49% expect a deficit this year. One reason may be increases in average hourly rehearsal space rates reported by 36 choreographers, from $15.72 in 2007 to $16.05 in 2009. Data showed the need for suitable, affordable, available workspace for longer periods. 76% use subsidized rehearsal space, but current subsidies are insufficient in amount and frequently unavailable. When companies must rehearse in different facilities, they lose continuity and increase costs: transporting props, performers and equipment has increased by 13% over three years. Further, 78% of these choreographers handle administrative duties in their small under-resourced companies when they could be making dance. 41% do not pay themselves and many subsidize their work.

Facility Surveys

The two facility surveys examined Space Details and Finances. 64% of respondents are in Manhattan, 27% in Brooklyn. Altogether, they house 121 dance studios, with 62% of spaces designated as "large," over 1,200 square feet. Their total income rose by 20% from 2007 to 2008 and fell by 15% in 2009; expenses kept pace. More than half receive 30–50% of their

* See Appendix, page 36.

contributed income from foundations, less than 25% from government. Facilities received their major earned income from rentals, secondly from classes and workshops, an increasing, more stable, source. Importantly, for 100% of facility respondents, many of which are also dance presenters, providing space resources for choreographers is central to their missions. Half provide free time and space to choreographers. But increases in expenses, including real estate costs, and physical facility impediments, limit their availability. For 77% of respondents, studio occupancy was focused on 12 noon to 6 p.m., the preferred dance community times, with outside rentals less than 75% of capacity. 64% have an on-site contact person.

Barriers and Opportunities

To assess the need for a new dedicated dance facility, we examined projects that were not built, dance organizations with relatively new spaces that are surviving, and dance organizations whose space expansions are potentially threatening their survival. We looked at successful shared-space models outside the dance discipline and identified the necessary elements: committed boards and staff leadership, City partnerships and the role of neutral, discipline-specific arts service organizations. We explored possible partnerships with the New York City Department of Education and in public and private universities to use their seasonally empty spaces.

We looked at the amount of available time in respondent facilities: Of 34, 7 were booked 75–100% and 12 booked 50–75% of available time. They do not currently offer discounts based on time of day, day of week, or season.

Core Group choreographers and the field as a whole need a wide variety of spaces for their work at different times in the creative process. Models exist: We looked at residency programs within New York City, and some outside, such as the Maggie Allesee National Center for Choreography (MANCC) in Tallahassee, Florida. In dance, space limitations dictate the work.

For strapped *facilities* focused on supporting dance artistry, classes, commercial rentals and "bulk" space rentals to local universities enable them to stay above water but often do not forward the mission. Lack of funding for adequate on-site staffing lessens the potential for rentals that could provide income in off-peak times.

We conclude that ample underused spaces exist; a new facility is unwarranted and would divert capital and ongoing support needed by existing facilities. In fact, infrastructure support—to cover basic physical facility needs, equipment and staffing—has been too long neglected for both the dance community and the facilities.

Rehearsal space subsidies, chiefly supported by the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA), help the dance community to access suitable relatively affordable space, but the available hours are too limited. While the subsidies help facilities serve artists, they have not kept pace with costs. With State finances and the ongoing economic climate, this most important support for the field—those who create and the facilities that enable creativity—will most likely be further reduced.

One positive opportunity responds to an issue requested by both focus groups of choreographers and facilities: an online scheduling system to match supply with demand and enable streamlined booking in advance for busy choreographers. This system is being created by Fractured Atlas.

Next Steps and Areas for Further Exploration

"'We're more interested in helping shore up what organizations have already built,' said Alice L. Carle, program director of the Kresge Foundation." New York Times, *Dec. 12, 2009*

The issue here in New York City is access and affordability at existing facilities. Choreographers need continuous, affordable access to existing space, and the facilities that house dance want and need to provide that support.

Investing in Infrastructure

The Next Steps below are directed to the *entire* funding community, both public and private sectors, and not to any single source. If groups of funders pool resources and intelligence, not only would it create a more robust engine to catalyze this support, it also has the potential to offer long-term solutions to these systemic problems.

Taken together, these infrastructure supports can help existing facilities increase occupancy to stabilize their own and the needs of the broader dance community. These steps require coordinated, focused, relatively modest expenditures on the part of the funding community.

Immediate Next Steps: Rehearsal Space Subsidies

A new coordinated public/private sector rehearsal space subsidy fund should be established to retain, and importantly, double NYSCA FY10 funding levels of approximately $249,000, and provide for additional staffing. A further subsidy fund should be created, modeled on Dance Theater Workshop's former Outer/Space program, and administered by a neutral dance arts service organization.

Going Deeper

These steps require a deeper investment of development time and resources from the funding community in collaboration with the dance community.

Residency Network

We propose a network of multiple existing residency centers in New York City to serve the key junctures in the creative process: time for research and reflection, initial explorations with dancers, choreography and rehearsals, and extending to a more technically-outfitted, pre-production/design development period. The spectrum of facilities in the residency network would vary in sizes, budgets and technical resources. These centers would complement and cross-fertilize residencies outside New York City, such as MANCC.

Building such a network will require coordinating host facilities, a group of mid-career single-choreographer-led dance companies, and supportive funders to develop a strategy and then to determine participants and budgets. Funding would underwrite fees for facility resources and for the artists, plus dedicated additional staffing for administration for each, and program evaluation.

This residency network could also be extended to support emerging and, in some cases, established choreographers without their own space; it would be just as relevant to their needs.

Administrative Infrastructure Support

"Never mind the naming rights; there's nothing sexy about paying for utility bills." New York Times, *April 3, 2009*

We propose a multi-year funding commitment to support the basic operations of both dance facilities and choreographers with their own companies. With additional staff support, facilities would be able to maximize available rental time and residency activity. Similarly, choreographers could be paid for their administrative time or hire staff and focus more on dance-making.

A preliminary assessment focused initially on survey respondents who commented on need would show the variability and kinds of support needed and would lead to cost estimates.

Technical Assistance and Capital Improvement

All facility respondents in rental spaces *expect* to stay there—from those serving hundreds in the dance community to others serving few, but in other crucially important ways. Most would benefit from small capital improvements to increase facilities' booking capacity and desirability for renters. Consultants could supply strategic advice on how to better use their space and to develop business plans and practical aid, from minor improvements, like mirrors to more major, such as new heating, ventilating and air conditioning. An initial evaluation could then be followed by an implementation phase.

Capital Funding

Public and private sector technical assistance and capital improvement funding exists but on an individual basis. NYSCA has offered matching funding for architect's fees and capital funds for equipment purchase or other capital improvement projects. The City's Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) offers capital funding to current grantees for furniture and/or equipment for initial outfitting of a facility and construction or renovation with a minimum cost of $500,000.

We propose that a coordinated effort of funders and consultants develop a strategy to build a new pool of money with no minimum cost or matching funds and expedited actions, followed by implementation and evaluation.

Areas for Further Investigation

Analysis of the Subsidy Program

Together, facilities and funders could examine subsidy guidelines to enable bookings farther in advance, for longer periods of time and that would ideally cover all associated costs for facilities and for dance companies.

Potential Additional Residency Opportunities

1. *Residency Network.* Expanding the residency network to include New York City-based educational institutions could also expand the exposure both of dance companies and students. Initial discussions with two levels—the City's Department of Education and local universities—could be pursued.

2. *Extending the Residency Network Beyond New York City*. The geographic scope of this report was restricted to the five boroughs of New York City. Discussions could be initiated with universities, facilities or potential residency partners beyond the city. Residencies outside the city could possibly work in partnership with a local residency network (as described above) and/or to supplement NYSCA's Long-Term Residency Program for Dance.

Conclusion

The dance community involves four sets of stakeholders—those who create and produce dance, those who house and nurture it, those who come to see it, and those who fund it both individually and through granting vehicles. What is needed to ensure the viability of the New York City dance community and/or specifically to support the growth of mid-career, single-choreographer-led companies and their work is a new concerted effort on the part of a group of dedicated funders.

Introduction

Charge and Methodology

Charge

NYC Performing Arts Spaces (NYC PA Spaces) was awarded a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, to examine the following:

- "The need and demand for rehearsal space for professional dance companies in New York City, with a specific focus on companies led by single mid-career choreographers that do not have their own rehearsal facilities;
- "The supply of existing workspaces available for dance rehearsal and those being built, both nonprofit and for-profit, assessing capacity and occupancy, and forecasting potential appropriate facilities;
- "The barriers to the effective use of existing spaces and whether enhancements or changes in policy could result in increased supply or use;
- "If study results warrant, whether one or more dedicated spaces should be converted or built new to serve the existing and projected needs of the dance community."

Goal

The assessment seeks to help solve a problem experienced particularly by a number of mid-career single choreographer-led dance companies as they prepare for New York City or touring seasons. These companies, described as lightly institutional, do not have their own rehearsal space or priority use of a space. Anecdotally, they have expressed the concern that their work is not of the caliber they aspire to, largely because rental rehearsal space is not available and not affordable for the extent of time needed. There is a perception—fair or otherwise—that New York City no longer supports or maintains its world-class dance companies, and that the artistic edge has been ceded to other dance centers in Europe. (*New York Times*, "How New York Lost Its Modern Dance Reign," Sept. 6, 2005)

Optimally, these companies want consistent, affordable, well-located rehearsal space but are not in an organizational or financial position to afford or maintain their own space. Having access to such workspace in multi-studio facilities would also provide opportunities for dance community interaction and artistic cross-pollination.

Definitions

It should be understood at the outset that all definitions in this study are imperfect and fluid.

Many researchers, policy makers and artists think such terminology as "emerging," "mid-career," and "established" is unhelpful and misleading. For contemporary dance, most, if not all, research definitions come with caveats. The artists themselves are highly resistant to labels, for themselves and their work.

For our purposes, the following definition of "mid-career" or "Core Group" choreographers in New York City was established, with input from program staff at the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation:

- They have been making work for at least 10 years.
- They are being presented by nationally significant venues.
- They are supported by nationally significant residency spaces.
- They have at least the beginnings of a touring profile, and are reviewed in major publications.
- They employ a group of dancers (same or pick-up) in the development of their work.

The preceding definitions are age-based only in that choreographers must have at least 10 years of experience in the field. Choreographers exit "mid-career" and become "established," not at a particular age, but when they have achieved national and international prominence and have substantial and reliable funding, space and infrastructure to develop and deliver their work. Only a handful of choreographers ever achieve this level.

Another problematic definition is "dance company." Many of the choreographers who participated in focus groups were resistant to this term, with its intimations of a more traditional model, a level of institutionalization, or a set pattern of activities and ways of working that do not reflect their actual circumstances or practice. Fertile, boundary-crossing art forms such as contemporary dance in New York City are notoriously difficult to quantify.

For this study, we will use "dance company" for the practical purpose of having a simple term to reference choreographers and the core collaborators they work with in the development and delivery of their work. It should be understood that the term in no way attempts to describe or delineate a level of institutionalization, a way of working or a type of output.

For this study, we also use "infrastructure" to refer to the underlying foundation of physical facilities, equipment and personnel.

Methodology

The primary vehicles of this study were *focus groups*, *surveys* and *research*.

Focus Groups

A series of four focus groups was held in October 2009: two for choreographers and two for facilities. The two choreographers' focus groups were divided into Work Patterns and Finances. The two facilities focus groups were divided into Space Details and Finances. Focus group participants were invited based on suggestions from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and David Sheingold, the project's Dance Community Consultant. They were chosen with an eye towards diversity across a range of criteria.

These focus groups were held in October 2009 at Dance Theater Workshop. Led by Sheingold, they touched on a broad array of topics, including levels of support for choreographers, programmatic goals, financial roadblocks, and gaps in access to space. Focus group participants were also asked to comment on survey drafts. Focus group participants are listed in the Appendix.

Surveys

The project team formulated and tested four surveys: Space Details and Finances for Facilities, and Work Patterns and Finances for Choreographers.

Surveys were distributed December 14, 2009, and key respondents were targeted for follow ups. Survey respondents were identified by email and/or organization name, but all responses were anonymous with data being disseminated or published only in the aggregate. For additional information on methodology, see the Appendix.

Research

Our research took several forms:

1. We examined the *sustainability of facilities*, both recently built and those proposed but never built. We looked at key components in successful models, and warning signs of distress in others. We researched shared-space arts facilities, searching for appropriate models across disciplines. We looked at the history of spaces for dance rehearsal over the last two decades in New York City.

2. We participated in the summer 2009 conference about *research and development* in dance at the Maggie Allesee National Center for Choreography, the MANCC FORUM, and examined the facility as a potential prototype for long-term residencies in and outside of New York City. We visited sites for potential dance residency centers in New York City, and examined the pros and cons of new facilities.

3. We began a discussion on activating *alternative residency and rehearsal spaces* for choreographers with the NYC Department of Education and with several universities.

4. We analyzed *funders of New York City-based dance*. We looked at patterns. The areas of *capital funding for facilities, ongoing organizational infrastructure support* and *rehearsal space subsidy* were of particular interest.

Chapter I
Results of Surveys to Choreographers

A. Profile of the Dance Community as a Whole

All Survey Respondents

Note: The Appendix describes the methodology of these surveys to a targeted population. 156 respondents began the survey of Work Patterns, and 117 completed it. 81 began the survey of Finances, and 43 completed it. The data below offer a credible profile of these choreographer-led companies. A separate set of data beginning on page 14 examines responses from the Core Group of choreographers.

Basic Information/Demographics

These choreographers are primarily located in Manhattan and Brooklyn. Two thirds are women. Most respondents—32%—are in the 30–39 age bracket, 25% are 40–49, 22% are 50–59. 80% have a college or graduate degree. They have been choreographing for an average 17 years beyond formal education; 29% for less than 10 years, and 33% for 10–20 years. Their ethnicity breaks down as follows: 70% white/Caucasian: 12% black/African American, 8% Hispanic/Latino, 4% Asian American, and 3% American Indian/Native American.

Finances

65% are incorporated, and 90% of those incorporated are 501c3, with 10 of them having been incorporated for over 25 years. Of the 35% that are not incorporated, 42% use fiscal sponsors. None are for-profit.

As for income:

- In 2007 and 2009, two respondents reported no income; in 2008 one reported no income;
- In 2007, two reported income that totaled $6.3 million; in 2008, one had $2.97 million and in 2009 one had $2.7 million.

As for expenses:

- In 2007 and 2009, two reported no expenses;
- In 2007 and 2008 three had expenses totaling $6.6 million; in 2009 four had expenses totaling $7.7 million.

The chart below deducts those extremes and shows resulting totals and mean/average income and expenses.

FIGURE 1-1: Choreographers' Income and Expenses (by number of respondents)

Year	Total Income	Avg. Income	Total Expenses	Avg. Expenses
2007	$6,333,501 (n=36)	$175,931	$5,453,743 (n=35)	$155,821
2008	6,211,871 (n=39)	163,470	4,518,784 (n=37)	122,129
2009	6,340,380 (n=38)	176,122	3,317,071 (n=34)	97,561

Over the three years, fees were the primary source of *earned income*, increasing from 2007 to 2009. Teaching was second, with at least half of choreographers reporting up to 25% from that source. Ticket sales and commissions increased slightly. Outside non-dance-related work—probably by the choreographer—was an increasing source, with four reporting it provided 80–100% of their earned income.

For *contributed income*, foundations and individuals were the primary sources; each year one choreographer reported 100% from foundations, and each year at least three reported 100% of funding from individuals. Corporate contributions, never more than 20% of unearned income, decreased significantly, with only 28 choreographers responding: 16 received less than 20% in 2007; 14 received less than 20% in 2008, and 10 received less than 10% in 2009. The others received none.

Asked about their financial condition for the coming year, 27% expect a surplus, 49% a deficit, and 24% expect to break even. Half the respondents commented about how they subsidize their work—their "day jobs," gifts and loans from families or board members, credit card debt and lines of credit. When possible, they build cash reserves. Several remarked that the line between deficit and break-even/surplus is often due to government and other grants committed but not yet received.

Creative Development and Output

As for *productivity*, based on 124 respondents in 2007, 125 in 2008 and 127 in 2009, the average company created 2.4 new pieces a year, increasing from 299 new works in 2007 to 322 in 2009.

- 80% of the choreographers *present their own works exclusively*.
- 50% created *evening-length works*, generally one per year.
- 50% created *works for students*, averaging one per year.
- 50% produced an average of one *commissioned work* in 2007, dropping to 44% in 2008 and rising to 55% in 2009.

82% report paying or otherwise compensating their dancers, with many variations:

- 56% pay dancers per performance
- 47% pay them per project
- 40% pay by the hour
- 33% pay per rehearsal
- 27% pay weekly or combinations of rehearsal and performance
- 14% pay a part-time salary
- 9% barter for teaching classes or free space
- 2% pay an annual salary

21% of respondents have dancers under contract, with two thirds of them fewer than 10 and one third from 10 to 18.

Administrative Expenses

The following survey data illustrate impediments:

Choreographers

1. 78% of choreographers also handle administrative duties for their companies; 13% say they do "sometimes," and 9% say not at all. These choreographers/administrators estimate that they spend 47% of their time doing administrative duties, instead of choreographing.

2. On average, 32% reported paying themselves for administrative and artistic work, 21% solely for artistic work, 2% for administrative work only. The remaining 41% either do not pay themselves for choreographing or administration or plow back their salaries to help defray expenses.

Dance Companies

1. Of the 41 respondents, 52% paid administrative staff (other than themselves) in 2007, and that percentage increased in 2008 and 2009 to 59%. Those averaged 3.3 full-time staff and 4.5 part-time paid staff members across the three years. Note: one respondent had consistent 25 full-and part-time staff.

2. However, the total administrative *pay* decreased from an average $40,769 in 2007 to $29,263 in 2008 and to $28,217 in 2009.

3. 29% provided health insurance, while 64% did not.

Asked what percentage of administrative staff's time has gone toward such *workspace* tasks as finding space, booking, contracting, and negotiating, including performance, in 2007 the 30 respondents were evenly distributed among the four answer options: under 10%, 10–24%, 25–49%, and 50% or over. In 2008, of 36 respondents, 15 spent 10–24%, 7 from 25–49%, and 8 over 50%, including 1 at 70% and 2 at 85%. 2009 mirrored 2008, and each year the number under 10% diminished.

As for *administrative workspace*, of 50 respondents, 27 use home offices, some making do with laptops in their living quarters. 16 rent office space, about one third paying market rates and one fifth in subsidized spaces; 10 share space.

Rehearsal Space

Over the past three years, the total number of rehearsal hours reported by 36 respondents increased 10% from 9,762 in 2007 to 10,872 in 2008, and then dropped down by 12% to 9,651 in 2009. Based on what respondents paid, average rehearsal rental rates increased, from $15.72 per hour in 2007, to $16.05 in 2009. Forty respondents reported on their annual rental costs. After removing the extremes, average rental costs were $7,697 in 2007, $7,214 in 2008 and down further to $6,319 in 2009.

76% of respondents used NYSCA, Harkness, or Dance Theater Workshop's Outer/Space Program (which no longer exists) or other subsidized space. Among the other spaces they listed, by alphabet, are: Alvin Ailey, American Dance Center, Ballet Hispanico, Baryshnikov Arts Center, Battery Dance, BRIC Arts, Bronx Academy of Arts and Dance (BAAD), Brooklyn Arts Exchange (BAX), Center for Performance Research (CPR), Chen Dance Center, Chez Bushwick, City Center, Dance New Amsterdam, Dance Theater Workshop (DTW), Duke 42nd Street, Gina Gibney, Hundred Grand Dance Studio, Joyce DANY, Joyce SoHo, Mark Morris Dance Center, Panetta Movement Center, PMT Dance Studio, Soundance at the Stable, Spoke the Hub, Topaz Arts, Trisha Brown Studios (no longer available), Union Street Dance, and 92nd St. Y.

A series of questions asked if they tried to get lower rehearsal rates:

- *Adjust rehearsal time for discounted rates?* 16 said yes, 12 sometimes, and 17 no. One respondent noted: *"Less money for space means more money for dancers!"*
- *Negotiate?* 5 choreographers said yes, 8 said sometimes, and 31 (or 71%) said no. Several commented that they had tried unsuccessfully.
- *Barter?* 39 said they do not, 6 said sometimes, and 1 yes. Those who do, barter teaching for space.

Although most choreographers spent less than 25% of their annual budgets for workspace-related costs (other than actual space rental costs), cumulatively these expenses are clearly increasing:

- *Transportation of props, performers and equipment:* The number reporting increased from 17 to 25 over the period. Climbing from maximum 20% in 2007 to 30% in 2008 and 25% in 2009, with one each at 40% in 2008 and 2009.
- *Secure storage (on- or off-site):* The number reporting averaged 14, with clear efforts to keep the costs under 20% for the period.
- *Rehearsal props and costumes:* This category showed the largest increase, in both number of respondents (from 21 to 27) to percentage of budgets. In 2007 and 2008, 18 respondents reported 25% or less, and in 2009 23 reported 20% or less; in each year at least three respondents spent in excess of 30%, reaching from 35 to 85%.

B. Profile of the Core Group of Choreographers

Demographics

25 respondents in the choreographers' surveys met the definition of Core Group or "mid-career" on page 9. More than half (56%) live in Manhattan, predominantly on the Lower East Side and the West Village. 36% live in Brooklyn, in zip codes 11215 and 11231, which correspond roughly to Park Slope/Gowanus and Red Hook/Carroll Gardens. The others are divided between Bronx and Staten Island. None live in Queens.

In terms of age, 44% were 50–59, 28% were 40–49, 20% 30–39, 4% 20–29 and 4% 60–69. They have worked an average of 21 years beyond formal education, excluding two reporting 40 years beyond.

Finances

Fewer in the Core Group responded to financial questions for years 2007, 2008, and 2009, and not all provided answers about finances.

FIGURE 1-2: Average Income and Expense Data (for 11 respondents)

Year	Avg. Income	Avg. Earned	Avg. Contributed	Avg. Expenses
2007	$286,113	$145,511	$146,724	$293,839
2008	268,763	104,288	171,280	264,240
2009	275,545	127,002	145,076	283,542

Contributed income came from these sources:

- *Foundations* consistently provided over 50%.
- *Individuals* consistently supplied over 30%, with fund-raisers adding to that total.
- *Government* support almost doubled from 2007 to 2008 and then dropped slightly in 2009.
- *Corporations* never even reached 10% of contributed income and dropped to 5% in 2008 and 2009.

Earned income came from these sources:

- *Non-dance work* was the primary source, with choreographers subsidizing their own work. It represented 43% in 2007, rose to 48% in 2008, perhaps to supplement loss in performing activity and ticket sales that year, and dropped to 42% in 2009, averaging 45% (but with one respondent earning 80–95% over three years).
- *Performance fees* averaged 36%, with a small dip in 2008.
- *Ticket sales* dropped significantly from 26% in calendar year 2007 to 11% in 2008 and then recovered to 24% in 2009. A likely cause was recessionary impact—audiences cutting discretionary spending, perhaps companies canceling performances.
- *Teaching* averaged 20%.
- *Commissions* grew from 19% in 2007 to 27% in 2008, with a slight dip to 25% in 2009. These were also calendar years. It is unclear why commissions for the Core Group seemed relatively healthy at this time, but a possible explanation is that they were secured before the market downturn.

Creative Development and Output

For the 25 Core Group choreographers, overall productivity varied little from 2007 through 2009: 9 of 24 respondents created 1 work each year; the maximum number created was 6, by 2 choreographers, in 2007. The remainder created between 2 and 5 works. Note that for many, evening length and commissioned works are probably the same.

From 2007 to 2009, the number of choreographers creating evening-length pieces increased from 14 to 16 to 19 out of 21 respondents. Most created one piece, and in 2009 one created the maximum for the period–5 pieces.

Almost two thirds of the 25 Core Group reported working on a commissioned piece. The total number of these works was 29 in 2007, rose to 31 in 2008, and dropped to 26 in 2009. Half of them had one; the maximum, in 2007, was one with five pieces.

Nine of the Core Group companies have a consistent core of dancers under contract, with four having nine to ten, one with six, and two with two to four.

C. Core Group Rehearsal Space Usage

For 23 Core Group respondents, choreographic/rehearsal space time usage averaged 390 hours in 2007, grew to 448 hours in 2008 and dropped slightly to 444 in 2009. (Note: Not included were one respondent with a consistent 1,000 hours a year and the few with less than 100 hours a year.) 76% said they used NYSCA, DTW's Outer/Space, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council (LMCC), Harkness or other subsidized spaces.

Access to Types of Space Needed

Asked if they have *consistent workspace*, 24 choreographers responded. 7 said yes, 11 said no, and 6 checked "sometimes." One respondent had *exclusive access* to a space, and 4 others shared space.

Asked whether they had *access to the types of spaces they needed*, 23 responded. 7 said yes while 3 said no, and 13 said "sometimes." Almost all wrote comments. Threaded through was the need for multimedia capability, for pre-production spaces where they could try out sets and where they could leave equipment or sets.

"We spend a lot of resources on carting equipment around due to lack of storage." Survey Respondent, Choreographer

"Some spaces are too small, affordable studio space is a huge challenge, also could have used more time in the theater." Survey Respondent, Choreographer

Asked whether spaces suited their current needs, one summed up a common thread in the comments:

"I adapt to whatever space I can afford and maintain. Less than ideal but it is the reality." Survey Respondent, Core Group Choreographer

20 Core Group choreographers responded:

FIGURE 1-3: Rental Spaces Meeting Needs (by 20 respondents)

	Yes	No	N/A
Time Available	50%	50%	0%
Cost	85%	10%	5%
Size	60%	40%	0%
Storage	20%	70%	10%

Probing further, those in the Core Group were asked what *types of space would have helped them with their work:*

"Theatre/space . . . ," "time for technical experimentation," "storage for props"

"Studio in a residency situation. Long term, several weeks or months."

"Residency where you don't have to pack the set and all the equipment daily."

Looking at workspace from a different perspective, the Core Group respondents were asked whether they had *residencies that were free or that paid an artist's fee*. Of the 22 respondents, an average of 15 received this workspace support. Hosting organizations cited include LaGuardia High School of the Performing Arts, Mount Holyoke College, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, Dance Theater Workshop, Brooklyn Arts Exchange, Joyce SoHo, Jacob's Pillow, Danspace Project and Dance New Amsterdam.

Chapter II
Results of Surveys for Facilities

A. Basic Characteristics

Note: The Appendix describes the methodology of these surveys to a targeted population. Altogether, 37 respondents began the survey of Space Details, and 36 completed it. 19 of them began and 12 completed the survey of Finances. The data below provide a credible profile of dedicated and other cultural facilities that house dance rehearsals.

Finances

14 are nonprofit; 100% report that dance is central to their missions. One respondent is a LLC.

13 facilities provided data on their income and expenses for the years 2007–2009. There were extremes:

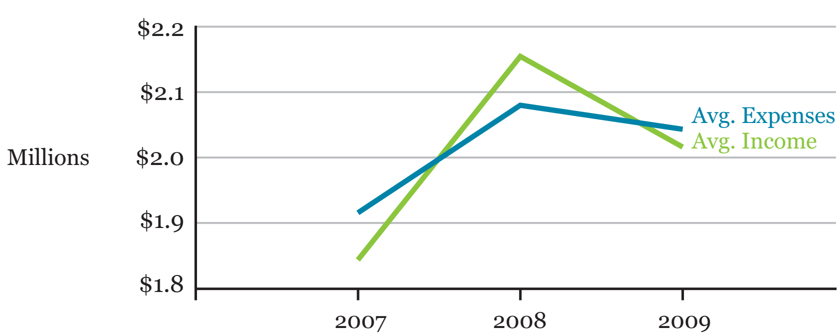
- One facility reported income of $6.5 million in 2007, a rise to $7.7 million in 2008, and a big drop to $6.1 million in 2009. Expenses almost equaled income in 2008 but were much lower in 2007 and 2009.
- Another facility reported income of $77,600 in 2007, $52,400 in 2008 and $67,000 in 2009. Expenses exceeded income slightly in 2008 but were below income the other years.

Of the remaining 11 facilities:

- *Income* for each year for four facilities was under $1 million and for one was above $5 million; in 2007 and 2008, five were between $1 and $5 million, and in 2009, four had between $1 and $5 million
- *Expenses* were below income for seven facilities in 2007, five in 2008, and three in 2009. Expenses exceeded income for three in 2007, five in 2008, and four in 2009. Expenses and income balanced for one in 2007 and 2008 and four in 2009.

Comments had not been solicited.

FIGURE 2-1: Average Income and Expense (for 11 facilities)



More specifically, the 13 respondents reported the following income sources and changes over the 2007–2009 period. They were asked to check earned and contributed by categories 10–25%, 30–50%, and 55–75%.

Contributed Income

- *Foundations* More than half the respondent facilities received 30–50% of their contributed income from foundations in 2007 and 2008; in 2009, that percentage jumped to 55–75% of income for three facilities. The increase appears to be in facilities already receiving considerable foundation support. With foundations operating on balancing three-year financial cycles, this increase shows a willingness to help facilities weather the recession.
- *Individuals* This next highest source provided 30–50% for four facilities in 2007, dropping to three facilities in 2008 and 2009.
- *Fundraisers/benefits* Most facilities received 10–25% of their funding from fundraisers or benefits, and one received up to 50% through all three years.
- *Government* Most respondents received less than 25% of their funding from government, with two moving into the 30–50% category in 2008 and 2009. Although one facility received 55–75% in 2007 and 2008, none did in 2009.
- *Corporate funding* This minor source of support has never been more than 25%, with the number of recipient facilities, even at those levels, dropping from five in 2007 to four in 2008 and two in 2009.

Earned Income

Sources varied little over the three-year period.

- *Rentals:* For the 13 facilities, renting out space was the single largest source, even though generally under 25%; 3 reported from 30–50% and 1 a consistent 80–85%.
- *Box Office/Ticket Sales:* The majority earned less than 25%, and one reported a consistent 90%.
- *Classes/Workshops:* As the years passed, the larger percentage decreased—from two at 75–80% in 2007 and 2008, to two at 60–70% in 2009. Facilities are sometimes able to charge a higher hourly rate for classes, as opposed to rehearsal use.
- *Educational Programs:* The number rose from five in 2007 to six in 2008, then dropped to four in 2009 but was never more than 25%.

Expenses

More specifically, in the last 12 months, the facility respondents reported:

- *Increases:* 58% cited rent/mortgage, electrical/utility, insurance, staffing
- *Stayed the same:* 33% said telephone, marketing, cleaning, routine maintenance, equipment updates, office expenses
- *Decreased:* 8%

The Bottom Line

As for surpluses and deficits over the past three years, ten facilities reported:

- Six had surpluses: three put the funds into cash reserve, one put it toward a major capital project, and two paid down debt.
- Four had deficits: two had borrowed for building new spaces, one appealed to landlord and lenders, another to founder to cover costs.

For the coming year, 13 facilities provided forecasts: 6 expect a surplus, 4 expect to break even, and 3 expect deficits, 1 because of expansion.

B. Real Estate and Related Factors

These facilities are primarily located in Manhattan and Brooklyn. All facilities except one are in privately owned buildings. 58% of respondents rent their spaces, and 33% own. The remainder own one and rent another. All owners expect to be in those facilities five years from now. Renters are less certain: 30% plan to renew, and 50% replied "maybe."

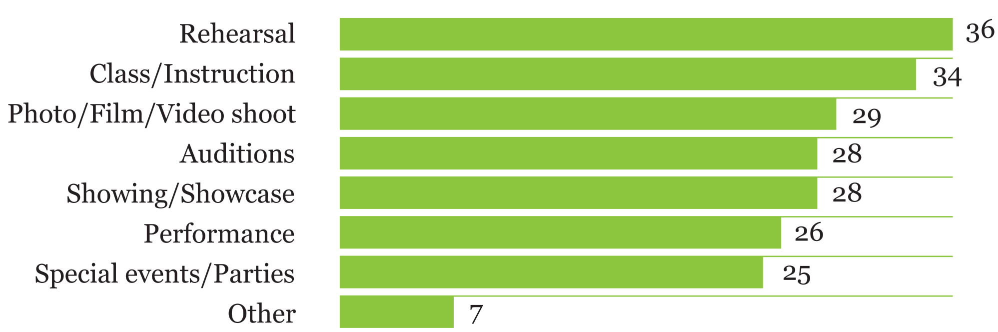
Rental Arrangements: Space Details

The 36 respondent facilities have 121 dance studios. (Note: The Joyce Theater's new DANY Studios were not included in this figure. The facility survey was released Dec. 14, 2009, and DANY began operations approximately the same week. They have 11 studios available for rental.)

- The number of rehearsal spaces in the 36 facilities ranges from 11 facilities with 1 space, 18 with 2–5 spaces, 4 with 6–9 spaces, and 3 with more than 10 spaces.
- As for size, 12 studios were small (less than 600 sq. ft.), 20 were medium (600–1,200 sq. ft.), and 30 were large (1,200 sq. ft. or greater, with 12 in the Alvin Ailey Dance Center). Asked about size of space most in demand, 70% of facility respondents reported requests for large spaces.
- Notably, 64% of facilities are accessible from the street without stairs, and 77% are ADA compliant.

100% use the spaces for their own in-house rehearsals and/or programming in addition to rentals. 97% rent to outside users, and 83% of them rent to non-dance artists. The chart below shows all uses:

FIGURE 2-2: Uses of Dance Facilities (by 36 respondents)



The following chart shows differences in rental rates by use. Income from outside rentals reported by 11 facilities averaged $212,687, ranging from $20,000 to $882,478, with 64% from non-profit users.

FIGURE 2-3: Rental Rates by Use

Space Usage	Range of Rates from 11 respondents
rehearsal	$5–$75 hourly
performance	$27–$96 hourly; $150–$300 nightly; $600–$23,000 weekly
class/instruction	$13–$75 hourly
audition	$13–$75 hourly
showing/showcase	$25–$100 hourly; $25–$300 nightly/per showing
photo/film/video shoot	$25–$450 hourly; $1,500 daily
special events/parties	$27–$5,000 hourly
commercial rentals	$27–$300 hourly; $1,000 daily; $15,000 weekly

Several other variables are at play:

- location (Manhattan facilities generally have higher rates than the other boroughs)
- the size of the space (larger spaces have higher rates)
- commercial renters (events, film shoots, etc.) are charged higher fees than nonprofit or dance-focused rentals
- 33% barter in exchange for studio time

C. Rehearsal Space Usage

Rehearsal and Other Rentals

Space usage is concentrated on weekdays from 12 noon to 6:00 p.m. The lowest occupancy is weekends and weekdays from 6:00 p.m. to 12 noon. Figure 3-1 on page 27 shows rehearsal space demand.

Looking at the past 12 months in terms of outside rentals, 34 facilities reported they booked the following percentages of available space:

- 12 facilities booked 50–75% of the time
- Seven booked 25–50%
- Seven booked 0–25%
- Seven booked 75–100%.
- One booked 100% with a waiting list

In a comment, one facility noted: *"We have to turn people away a lot, although occasionally there are empty slots here and there."*

Compared to bookings the previous year, 52% increased, 16% decreased and 32% remained the same.

For the next year, 44% expect an increase in bookings, 38% expect the same, 6% expect a decrease and 12% are not sure. Of those predicting an increase, four facilities are expanding the number of studios. Two facilities (5.9%) expect a decrease, due to expanding their own programming.

More specifically, respondents noted the following factors that limit their facility's availability for rental, almost all equally impacting:

- Building restrictions on hours, access, and noise
- Security
- Costs for staffing limit open hours and result in lost rentals
- Competition with core programs, classes and the rental income they provide.

Operationally, 64% have an *on-site contact person*; 6% have someone off-site, 22% have someone both on-and off-site, and 8% have someone "sometimes." For those without full-time on-site support, the reason is financial. 57% of respondents have *on-site technical support staff*; 14% do sometimes, and 29% do not. 32% use an *online rental calendar*; 68% do not.

Residency Activities

Half of the facilities provide free time and space programs that enable choreographers to research and develop their work. 75% provide this as part of a commissioning/presentation package. Some are informal; others are more formalized and ongoing. Several rely on subsidies to support the program. Sample time allocations for residencies ranged from

- 35 hours at no cost plus 35 hours at half price
- multiple weeks, at least two; one multi-week 24/7
- 110 hours each for 8 artists, 59 hours for 6 artists

Most supplemented with stipends for the choreographers, ranging from $500 to $10,000, with facilities noting that the amount depended on funding received. Alternatively, they provided some or all of the box office.

D. Analysis of Other Facilities

Dance Facilities That Were Not to Be

We interviewed key players who were in discussions on plans for several proposed "shared space" dance facilities, plans that were eventually abandoned. While there was obviously disagreement as to reasons for failure, we found several points recurred:

- Sponsoring arts service organizations or "lead" organizations were not in a financial position or with sufficient board leadership to develop projects that rely heavily on committed capital and operating expenses. The drop-out of "leaders" or "lead groups" often caused a domino effect on the entire project.
- Dance companies in shared-space projects were unable to commit to even nominal participation funds.
- The dance-specific need for "column-free" space severely reduced available options.
- Revenue estimates were based on untested "time-share" commitments from participating companies.

Other issues have become problematic for dance facilities built in the last decade. City funding can go only for capital or program, not operational support. Private sector funders are reluctant to support facilities, rather than programming/presenting. And the impact of the economic recession on foundation giving and individual donors cannot be underestimated.

Distressed Models, Current Facilities

"The big nut to crack is the monthly mortgage," Michelle N. Burkhart, Director, Dance/NYC

Much can happen to derail the best-laid capital funding plans. A key donor passes away, the economy slips into recession or the company director moves on to another position. In recent capital projects for dance, the monthly mortgage calculations were more or less accurate, but building maintenance estimates, including security, were not. Debt can become unsustainable within months. Large capital funding plans have, on the one hand, a certain amount of guesswork, and, on the other, no room for error.

Prescriptions

Two recent expansions have achieved a degree of financial stability, with supportive boards, strong staff leadership and, a "star" artistic director. Smaller organizations have managed to survive as well, capitalizing on less-competitive funding fields for "outer-borough" dance companies, and—anecdotally—strong backing from the local community which feels it has a stake in the organization's survival.

Chapter III

Barriers and Opportunities

A. A New Facility versus Other Infrastructure Support

The *New York Times*, Dec. 12, 2009, article entitled “Bigger Buildings May Not Be Better,” interviewed D. Carroll Joynes, a Senior Fellow at the University of Chicago Cultural Policy Center, who is collaborating on a study of 50 cultural building projects completed from 1994 to 2008 and their planning processes. “In Mr. Joynes’s view, *‘The recession is exposing the weakness of a lot of institutions that were seriously overstretched”* before it began. *“It’s exposing poor management and poor planning,”* situations, he added, in which *“nobody actually asked: ‘Is there a need here? If they build it, will they come?’”*

As noted in the Introduction, we were asked to analyze the need for a new dedicated dance facility or a major renovation. We examined proposed and built facilities as potential models. We consulted with real estate professionals, and we visited existing facilities, including raw spaces. While tempting, they would be expensive to outfit, and impractical to maintain.

The data from the surveys in Chapters I and II are also conclusive: While a new or major renovated facility would be glamorous, it would draw attention and funding from the larger needs of the Core Group, the dance community and existing dance-focused facilities.

“‘We have become increasingly concerned about the sustainability of organizations as a result of these building projects,’ said Alice L. Carle, program director of the Kresge Foundation, which supports nonprofit organizations nationwide.” New York Times*, Dec. 12, 2009*

In sum, the results of this study do not support constructing or renovating a new dedicated dance facility. Nor is it financially feasible in the current economy. Indeed, it could worsen the already precarious situation of many existing facilities and companies.

B. Barriers

Special Issues and Needs of the Core Group

Workspace

Based on survey responses, we formed a picture of the overall community of choreographers in New York City. We were also asked to focus on a subset of choreographers, which we refer to as the Core Group. These 25 “mid-career” choreographers have produced work of a recognizable caliber over at least a decade. They are ineligible for the grants and residencies that go to “emerging” choreographers and lack the resources of “established” choreographers. They need support to enable them to move to the next level.

“Big dance companies have flexibility because they can pay for what they need. Middle size companies have less flexibility than the large or very small ones, and they somehow are under the radar.” Diane Vivona, Arts Consultant

Again, the picture that emerges is remarkably consistent in its bleakness: Lack of affordable, available workspace, of on-site storage and of funding to develop new work means dance artists have to use multiple rehearsal spaces. In turn, this leads to increased transportation and storage costs.

"There are expenses on the staff side in terms of time and management of moving equipment to and from a rental rehearsal space. This expenditure can be costly for a mid-sized dance company." Survey Respondent, Choreographer

"Honestly, at this point in my career I feel the lack of a dedicated space that I can call my own . . . has adversely affected my ability to make dances happen. Also the lack of funds . . . makes it very difficult for me to rehearse consistently. I manage by mustering as much free space as I can usually attached to a commission and by limiting the scope of my activity to making smaller works, shorter, with less performers and in less time." Survey Respondent, Choreographer

"Space is our Achilles heel. We have been finding that creating work outside of NYC through partners . . . is a creative solution, though very inconvenient for our dancers and production staff and we then bear the burden of per diems and travel costs. We have been trying to find a home . . . for many years." Survey Respondent, Choreographer

Choreographers, particularly in the focus groups, stressed the need for different spaces for different phases of their work and the desire to be in different types of settings. Early stages may consist simply of reading and research. Later, beyond choreographing and rehearsing, pre-production and design development stages require technical resources, collaborators or multi-media support. These companies have little agency to strategically align these spaces to meet varying space needs at the appropriate times in the creative process.

Administration

Choreographers need administrative support in order to free them to create. For many, the only steady general operating support is NYSCA funding, often a small proportion of their annual budgets.

More than three quarters of choreographers handle administrative duties for their companies, on average spending almost half their time, time not being spent on choreographing or rehearsing or performing. Not only do 21% not pay themselves for administrative work, 41% do not pay themselves anything—for choreographing or administration. Almost as many had no paid staff in 2009. In fact, most choreographers self-subsidize their work.

Goals and Obstacles of Dance-Focused Facilities/Presenters

"Facilities are frustrated by rising operating costs. Yet to serve the artistic community and keep studios occupied rental rates are often kept low, despite rising expenses." Survey Respondent, Facility Manager

Focus group participants and facility respondents emphasized that they view choreographic research and development support as *central, not peripheral, to their mission*. Those committed to serving the dance community want to make the best use of their studios for their own and others' uses. 62% of facility respondents provide some form of research and development support for choreographers. This support can be subsidized rentals for rehearsal, residencies, and developmental workshops/public showings and averaged 28% of available time. In addition, facilities offer cash support, which may include commissioning fees, production funds and some or all of the box office.

But facilities are realistic and frustrated. Current subsidies are not enough to underwrite dance companies' research and development and facilities' general operating support to keep the doors open, pay staff, and service debt. All of this drains their administrative budgets and siphons resources away from the mission of nurturing and promoting dance.

In focus groups, facilities and presenters were encouraged to envision their "dream" scenarios for choreographers. They spoke of their wishes to partner with other venues in and out of New York City, in order to provide more development time to the artists they support. Over and over, they spoke of their desire to "maximize the time the artists can have the space."

"Our rent has become very expensive and the administrative costs to run so many studios have had to increase so we can keep up with the workload. . . . Our staff of two make small salaries and work 50+ hour work weeks. We keep our rates low because we believe in supporting artists and would like to do so as long as possible. However, it is quite likely our rates must increase soon, to keep us afloat." Survey Respondent, Facility Manager

In focus groups with facilities, participants pointed out that funders emphasize the importance of grantees' collaborations and partnerships. But quality collaborations and partnerships require time and staffing, two resources in critically short supply for many of the organizations surveyed and interviewed.

Rehearsal Space Supply and Demand

The Inventory

As of June 1, 2010, there were 680 spaces in 306 facilities listed as appropriate for Dance and available for rehearsal on the NYC Performing Arts Spaces websites. These include dedicated dance rehearsal facilities, community/cultural centers, dance schools, religious institutions and gyms. Many of these spaces would no doubt be inappropriate for the companies surveyed. But many could work.

Drilling deeper, in data queried earlier in 2010 from NYC Performing Arts Spaces, we compiled information on spaces. Altogether, 233 spaces in New York City, out of approximately 640 spaces listed on the Dance website at that time, met the following criteria:

- Facilities are designated as "Dedicated Performance/Rehearsal Space," rather than a church, a school, a gym, etc.
- Space has a primary usage of rehearsal, i.e., is not primarily a "performance space" which may rent out for rehearsals as well
- Space is listed on NYC Dance Spaces, which includes dedicated dance spaces as well as multi-disciplinary spaces.

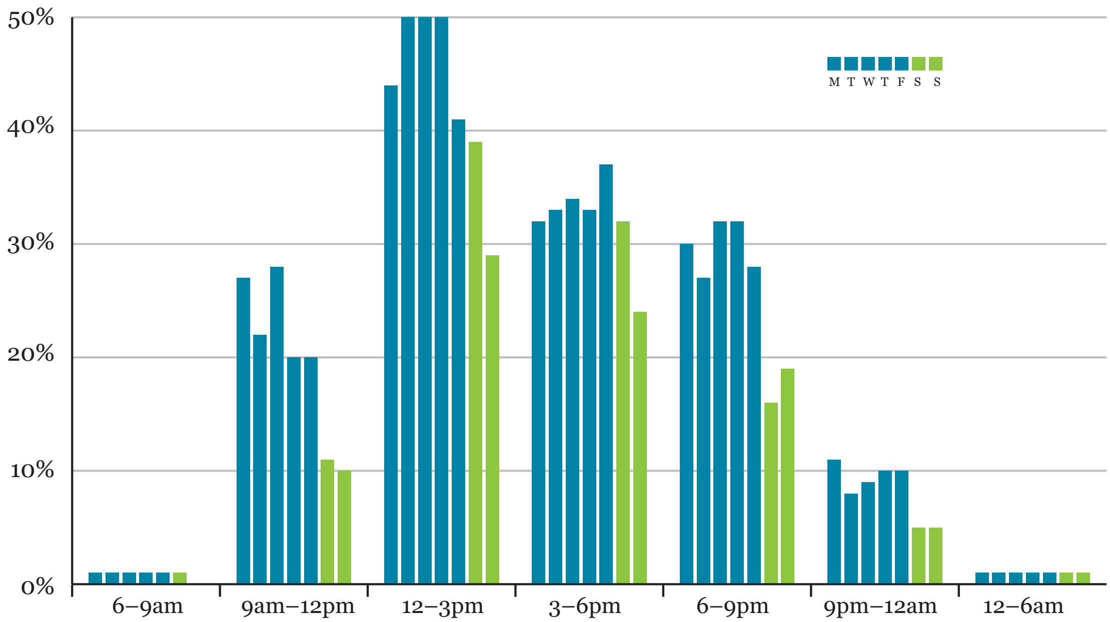
Rehearsal Space Capacity Exists

In focus groups, facilities spoke of being nearly full, but still having gaps in their schedules. Some of the facilities considered the most sought after by survey respondents reported booking rates of 65–75%; healthy, but not capacity. Asked "In the past twelve months, what percentage of the time were your available rental spaces booked by users outside your organization?," only one facility responded with "100%." 35% of survey respondents put this booking percentage at 50–75%.

As shown in Figure 3-1, occupancy at the times the Core Group choreographers and others prefer to rehearse is concentrated in a narrow six-hour weekday time period, weekdays from 12 noon to 6:00 p.m.

FIGURE 3-1: Days/Times When Choreographers Generally Rehearse

Percentage of 115 responses



Factors that limit availability, such as building restrictions and lack of money to staff more rental hours, must be dealt with. In their comments, facilities spoke of their desire to maximize space usage, but noted they are restricted by building codes, union regulations, or security issues over which they have little control. They specified the need for additional funding for staffing, ADA compliancy, or security.

"Although we have an on-site staff member, they have multiple responsibilities and are not always immediately available to assist with studio issues."

"The lack of staff . . . is frustrating. Many times renters are using the space on their own without any supervision and that is a lot of responsibility on them."

Space Drains

Facilities need to continuously maximize rentals. 97% of respondents rent to users outside their organization; 84% rent to non-dance performing artists.

A major use of rehearsal space is *dance classes*. For many facilities, using space for dance classes yields stable, long-term revenue. 75% of respondents offer dance classes as part of their core programs. Of this total, 50% reported using their space for their classes as much as half available time. Rentals to outsiders for classes account for about a quarter of available time, and 75% of renters offer yoga and exercise. On average, facilities host their own classes 30% of the time and rent to outsiders to teach class 16% of the time.

"We have an acting school rental during morning and afternoon hours, three to four days a week, nine months of the year. They average 16–22 hours a week and pay premium rates . . . This is the largest outside renter and provides $2–3,000 per month. We turned away another similar Sat. rental to expand our own programming, but have not been able to make up for the loss of income with newer smaller renters." Survey Respondent, Facility Manager

Other issues limit space availability for choreographers. While we do not have comparable data from years past, anecdotally facilities are frequently forced to maximize rental income with long-term renters, particularly *private universities* that need more space during the academic year. In New York City, they have "deep pockets" relative to the dance field and can aggressively pursue available space for classes and students' rehearsals. Facilities are torn: eager to enter into these long-term agreements with renters who purchase space in "bulk" and pay in advance, yet they and dance community users have expressed dismay at this "draining-away" of the city's cultural space from professional artists.

Rehearsal Space Subsidies

Usage

Both dance companies and facilities depend on rehearsal space rental subsidies to keep rental rates low. It is the most consistent, crucial support for the field. NYSCA program guidelines state: "Applicants must offer a minimum of 1,000 hours of rehearsal time each year for the period proposed and agree to charge no more than $10 per subsidized rehearsal hour."

76% of respondent choreographers use subsidized space when available. In FY10, NYSCA's Dance Program supported 29 facilities with rehearsal space subsidy grants totaling approximately $249,000. For FY11, the budget was cut approximately 16% and is reflected in the grant determinations.

"While we like NYSCA rates, . . . scarcity of space make it difficult." Survey Respondent, Choreographer

"We . . . need to be able to rent "NYSCA" space . . . farther in advance. We can't wait for two weeks or a month before we need the space to be able to book it, because we need to have our schedules in place earlier, so that we can hire dancers without time conflicts." Survey Respondent, Choreographer

"The NYSCA space grants, although limited in number of hours, are a tremendous help!!! If only even more studios would offer them . . ." Survey Respondent, Choreographer

Economics

Facilities also lamented the financial constraints: Even now it does not provide enough financial support for them. One recipient provided specifics:

"We have not found the basic subsidy and capped fee structure . . . to be realistic or feasible for a midtown studio having only two spaces, one disproportionately larger than the other. At a rental fee cap of $10/hr. plus a grant subsidy of $10/hr. our space would be losing money to

deliver these development hours. Payroll cost for a staff person is $9.60/hr, and we estimate our space overhead to be $9,000/mo. or $300/day. Based on being open 12 hr./day, that overhead is $25/hr."

"Our rent has become very expensive and the administrative costs . . . have had to increase . . . We keep our rates low because we believe in supporting artists and would like to do so as long as possible. However, it is quite likely our rates must increase soon, to keep us afloat." Respondent, Brooklyn Facility Manager

Compounding the problem, Dance Theater Workshop's Outer/Space Studio Subsidy program has now closed. This funding also included creative residency grants for dance artists. From 2007 until recently, DTW re-granted $255,700 to facilities and artists operating in the four boroughs outside Manhattan.

"The reality is, a decent sized space, at an affordable price is difficult to come by in this city, specially for independent choreographers." Survey Respondent, Choreographer

C. Opportunities

Online Scheduling System

Choreographers in the focus groups and in their survey responses told of their need to book space well in advance, given dancers' "day jobs," child care issues and the logistics that go into scheduling any group of busy people. In focus groups held in October 2009, both facilities and choreographers agreed on the need for a *centralized online scheduling system, where choreographers could book and pay for space securely well in advance* are looking for solutions.

"(I) want to spend time making work, not scheduling." Survey Respondent, Choreographer

"I get physically sick if I see gaps in my rehearsal rental schedule." Focus Group Participant, Facility Manager

Fractured Atlas is developing such an online system, expected to be available in New York in 2011. This is one of the simplest and most effective tools that could match supply with demand and save staff time for each. It would benefit all in the field: emerging and mid-career choreographers, facilities of all sizes. It could also capture space utilization data, and help funders better understand market demands for artists' workspace.

Needed: Infrastructure Support

"Everybody wants infrastructure. Everybody uses it when it's there. If it's not there, you miss it. But no one wants to pay for it." Jonathan Denham, Principal, Denham Wolf

The dance community—from the core choreographer-led companies to emerging artists and on to established companies—is dependent on physical facilities that house the creation and production process. If the dance community is not just to survive, not just to "make do," but to be healthy and productive, new tools must be developed and implemented to ensure stability and growth.

Access and Continuity

What is needed are measures to increase access for the artists for longer periods and to make that access financially feasible for the facilities.

Access here, for *the Core Group and other dance companies*, means underwritten, longer term, suitable rehearsal space at times they can use. The spaces exist. Yet there is a major disconnect between when facilities have underused times, and the times dance companies prefer to rehearse. In addition, almost half the facilities noted that with nominal capital expenditures their spaces could be made more productive.

Funding efforts must also include paying dance artists to develop their work. The creative process and not just the final product must be supported.

Specifically for the facilities, *crucial financial support* is needed to provide the underlying foundation—the infrastructure—for personnel, physical facilities and equipment. With a focused, relatively modest expenditure of funds, funders collectively can help existing facilities with underused capacity to stabilize the needs of the broader dance community.

A New Approach to Funding

Public and private sector funders have long supported dance in New York, generally on an individual basis, often too through third-party re-granting. What is needed to ensure the viability of the dance community is a new effort on the part of a dedicated group of funders, *a dance funding community*.

In Chapter IV, we propose several short- and longer-term next steps that are contingent on funders' concerted efforts. They would realistically address new directions for three groups of stakeholders: choreographers and their companies, facilities and funders. But these steps are contingent on funders being willing to work together, to fund together. If one funder falls out of the mix at some point, the entire program does not fall apart. And, at the same time, no single funder has to bear the burden of funding the entire program, except by choice.

If a cohort of funders were able to work together to maximize their resources and intelligence, not only would it create a more robust engine to catalyze this support, it also has the potential to offer a lasting solution to these endemic problems. If dance artists in New York City are to realize their potential, long-term funding strategies must be developed and implemented for those who create and perform and those that provide the work space.

Chapter IV
Next Steps and Areas for Further Exploration

A. Invest in Existing Infrastructure

The health of the dance community—from the core choreographer-led companies to emerging artists and companies and the dance facilities—depends on *infrastructure support*. It is, literally, the foundation for personnel, physical facilities and equipment.

"'We're more interested in helping shore up what organizations have already built,' said Alice L. Carle, program director of the Kresge Foundation." New York Times*, Dec. 12, 2009*

The Next Steps below are directed to the *entire* funding community, both public and private sectors, and not to any single source.

B. Immediate Next Steps

Rehearsal Space Subsidies

Subsidizing rehearsal space benefits those in the NYC dance community and the facilities that house their work. NYSCA's dance rehearsal space subsidies have been crucial to fostering a degree of stability in the field. But with NYSCA's current 16% budget cut, programs cannot be maintained at current funding levels. *We propose that a coordinated public/private sector subsidy fund* be put into place immediately, requiring a relatively straightforward investment of funds.

The new fund would maintain and at least double to $25 per hour the current FY10 NYSCA subsidy amount in New York City of $249,000 to keep the rental costs to dance companies low and provide additional operating support for the facilities. We have discussed this proposal with the Dance Program at NYSCA.

We propose an additional subsidy fund, administered by a neutral dance-specific arts service organization, modeled on Dance Theater Workshop's Outer/Space program. Initial funding for this program would be set at a minimum of $40,000 a year, based on FY10 costs from Outer/Space.

Both subsidies would continue to go to the facilities to match hours that serve the dance community's rehearsal space needs.

C. Going Deeper

The following steps require a deeper investment of development time and resources from the funding community in collaboration with the dance community.

Residency Network

We propose a network of multiple existing residency centers in New York City to serve the key junctures in the creative process. Residencies could provide the artists a continuum: time for research and reflection, initial explorations with dancers, choreography and rehearsals, and extending to a more technically-outfitted, pre-production/design development period. The spectrum of facilities in the residency network would vary in sizes, budgets and technical resources. These centers would complement and cross-fertilize residencies outside New York City, such as MANCC.

Building such a network will take time to develop and coordinate among host facilities, a group of mid-career single-choreographer-led dance companies, and supportive funders. These partners would come together to determine participants and budgets. Funding would underwrite:

- Fees for facility resources
- Fees for the artists
- Dedicated additional staffing for administration and evaluation

This residency network could also be extended to support emerging and, in some cases, established choreographers without their own space; it would be just as relevant to their needs.

Administrative Infrastructure Support

"Never mind the naming rights; there's nothing sexy about paying for utility bills." New York Times*, April 3, 2009*

"A vicious cycle is leaving nonprofits so hungry for decent infrastructure that they can barely function as organizations—let alone serve their beneficiaries. The cycle starts with funders' unrealistic expectations about how much running a nonprofit costs, and results in nonprofits' misrepresenting their costs while skimping on vital systems—acts that feed funders' skewed beliefs. To break the nonprofit starvation cycle, funders must take the lead." Stanford Social Innovation Review, Fall 2009, "The Nonprofit Starvation Cycle"

We recommend a multi-year funding commitment to support the basic operations of both dance facilities and choreographers with their own companies. Facilities could maximize available rental time and residency activity with additional staff support. Choreographers could be paid for their administrative time or hire staff; choreographers could focus more on dance-making.

Given the complexity of this recommendation, we suggest a preliminary assessment, focused initially on survey respondents who commented on need. The resulting cumulative view will show the variability and kinds of support needed and lead to cost estimates.

Technical Assistance toward Capital Improvement

All facility respondents in rental spaces expect to stay there. Some facilities serve hundreds of members of the dance community; others may serve few, but in crucially important ways beyond numbers. Most provided comments about limitations on their functioning and need for specific upgrades. Small capital improvements may also increase facilities' booking capacity and desirability for renters.

Strategically, they wanted advice:

- *Physically*, when, how and by whom space could be better utilized, including combining or expanding studios
- *Financially*, developing new business plans that maximize revenue and use and serve the mission of the dance companies.

Practically, they wanted:

- New heating, ventilating and air conditioning,
- Upgrades to outmoded/unreliable hot water heaters and plumbing
- Storage space
- Portable flooring
- Improved lighting and sound equipment
- Amenities and minor improvements, such as mirrors, wi-fi, paint, and Energy Star compliant equipment.

An evaluation, initially focused on survey facility respondents, would be a logical first step.

Capital Funding

Public and private sector technical assistance and capital improvement funding exists but on an individual basis. For instance, NYSCA has offered: (1) Architect's fees of up to $35,000 are awarded for cultural groups doing master planning or other facility design projects through the Architecture, Planning and Design Program. (2) The Council's capital funds can be used for equipment purchase or other capital improvement projects, with a maximum grant level of $50,000. In both cases, the Council's funds have to be matched. However, NYSCA is operating under budget constraints and future allocations will almost certainly be less.

The City's Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) offers capital funding to its current grantees in two areas: Furniture and/or equipment for initial outfitting of a facility, with a minimum cost of $35,000, and construction or renovation with a minimum cost of $500,000. For many of these facilities, a minimum of $35,000 is prohibitive, when many of their capital needs cost less.

We propose a coordinated effort of funders and consultants to build a new pool of money that does not dictate a minimum cost or require matching funds and that can be delivered quickly and efficiently for technical assistance services, implementation grants, and evaluations.

D. Areas for Further Investigation

Analysis of Subsidy Program Economics

The rehearsal space subsidy program is critically important. Facilities and funders should be encouraged to rethink subsidized space guidelines to enable bookings farther in advance, for longer periods of time. Facilities' and dance companies' rehearsal expenses would need to be analyzed. The results would show the feasibility of underwriting more—ideally all—space, personnel and overhead costs.

Potential Additional Residency Opportunities

We have looked at two levels of New York City's educational institutions and believe there could be opportunities for collaborations.

New York City Department of Education

"Students broaden their perspective by working with professional artists and arts organizations representing diverse cultural and personal approaches to dance, and by seeing performances of widely varied dance styles and genres." Blueprint for the Arts: Dance, "Working with Community and Cultural Resources"

Discussions were held with the head of Dance at the City's Department of Education (DOE) and with two schools about the potential for a choreographer-led dance company in a residency for a semester, a year or longer. Pursuit of this partnership would require significant planning to figure out how to meet the needs of the artists, the DOE and the participating schools. With that said, there is interest from all parties and significant, largely untapped, space and availability.

Local Universities

Universities often have underutilized space in the summer and during winter breaks that can be activated for choreographic residencies, including the research and development phase. This partnership would be advantageous for all: In terms of professional development, faculty members frequently have ties to the dance community that can be nurtured by introducing their students to these professional relationships. CUNY faculty views it as part of their mission to serve artists and their city.

Extending the Residency Network Beyond New York City

The geographic scope of this report was restricted to the five boroughs of New York City. Discussions could be initiated with universities, facilities or potential residency partners beyond the city. Out of city residencies could possibly work in partnership with a local residency network (as described above) and/or to supplement the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) Long-Term Residency Program for Dance.

Concluding Comments

NYC Performing Arts Spaces was awarded support to examine workspace issues for the New York City dance community, with a special emphasis on the needs of mid-career single-choreographer-led companies. Our study revealed many pressing issues in the community relating broadly to infrastructure support. Some of the preceding recommendations and observations are geared toward select mid-career single-choreographer-led companies. Others would benefit the entire field, including facilities. We believe that all are equally necessary to ensure the future viability of New York's dance community.

In this report, we have sought to address issues in this art form in ways that will alter its support systems. We believe an adjustment in strategy and approach, particularly for funders, is essential. We encourage coordinated efforts among stakeholders—those who create dance, the facilities that enable their work, and the funders—to examine all relevant issues, including space, and to view dance and community as a whole and consolidated entity.

November 1, 2010

Appendix

NYC Performing Arts Spaces was established in 2006 as a DBA for nonprofit Exploring the Metropolis, Inc. In the fall of 2008, NYC Performing Arts Spaces became a Program of Fractured Atlas, a nonprofit organization serving the basic resource needs of a national community of performing and visual artists and arts organizations.

NYC Performing Arts Spaces, a Program of Fractured Atlas, conducted this study of the rehearsal space needs of the dance community for the internal use of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. This public version was prepared by the project team for the Mellon Foundation under the auspices of Exploring the Metropolis.

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Survey Methodology

Target Populations

The surveys were restricted to and sought out responses from two target populations:

1. NYC-based choreographer-led dance companies
2. NYC facilities that primarily provide space for dance rehearsals

Databases of potential survey respondents were built from several sources:

1. Lists from these government agencies, local arts councils, local service organizations:
   Bronx Council on the Arts
   Brooklyn Arts Council
   Council on the Arts & Humanities for Staten Island
   Dance/NYC
   Dance Theater Workshop
   Fractured Atlas
   Lower Manhattan Cultural Council
   Maggie Allesee National Center for Choreography (MANCC)
   NYC Department of Cultural Affairs
   New York State Council on the Arts
   Queens Council on the Arts

2. NYC Performing Arts Spaces' own databases of dance artists and dance facilities and all facilities on the NYC Performing Arts Spaces website if facility managers had listed them as suitable for Dance and available for rehearsal. These included multi-disciplinary facilities, for-profit facilities and facilities whose primary purpose is other than cultural: schools, religious institutions and community centers.

3. Members of Fractured Atlas who live in New York City and who self-identified as choreographers were added.

Instructions and Response Rates

The surveys were only available online and for a period of two months (Dec. 19, 2009 to Feb. 17, 2010). Instructions to choreographers promised anonymity in responding to surveys on Work Patterns and Finances and to dance facilities in responding to surveys on Space Details and Finances. The instructions noted that each survey, which looked back over three years and forecast for this year, should take about 20 minutes to complete. NYC PA Spaces staff followed up online and by phone to encourage participation, but both potential respondents' time and access to information became a disincentive. As a result, not every respondent who began the survey completed every question. For the finances surveys, asking detailed questions on income and expenses, choreographers' response rate was 5%, with 3% completing entirely; facilities was 9% and 3% entirely. For the easier surveys—*Work Patterns* for choreographers and *Space Details* for facilities—the rate was higher, at 9%.

Analysis of the Responses

In interpreting the data, we used average/mean. When applicable, response extremes were deducted from the totals and the remaining responses were averaged.

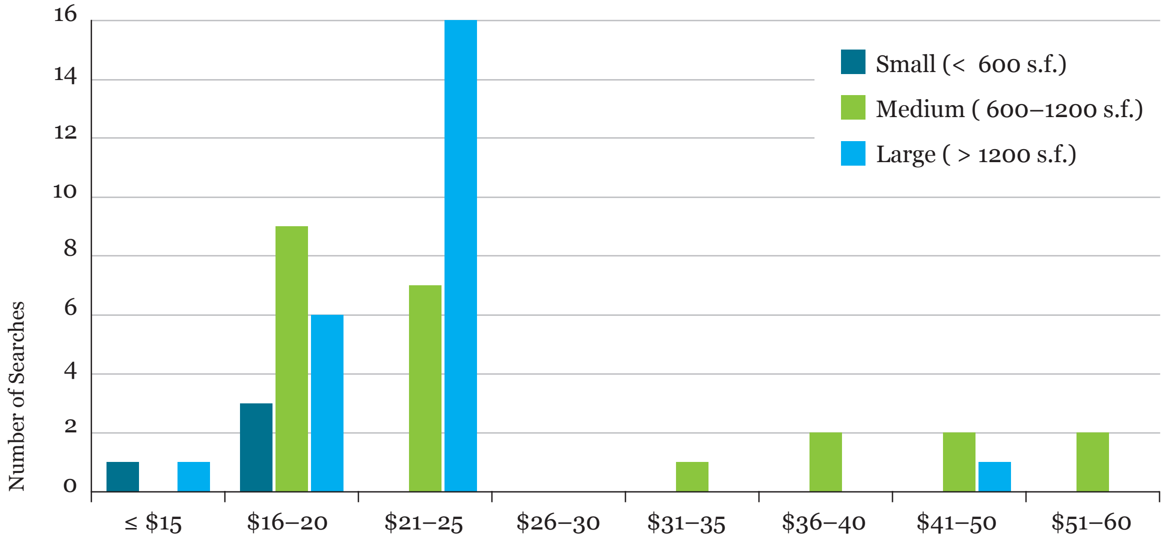
Based on our knowledge of the field and, specifically, the two target populations, we believe the responses constitute a credible sample.

Respondent Dance Facilities by ZIP Code

Manhattan		
1	10027	Upper West Side, Harlem
1	10024	Upper West Side
1	10023	Upper West Side, Lincoln Center area
2	10019	Midtown West, Theatre District, Hell's Kitchen
2	10018	Midtown West, Theatre District, Hell's Kitchen
1	10016	Midtown East
3	10011	West Village, Chelsea
2	10001	West Village, Chelsea
1	10012	West Village, Chelsea, Lower Manhattan, parts of Soho
4	10003	East Village, Gramercy, Tribeca
2	10013	Lower Manhattan, Chinatown, Soho, Tribeca
1	10007	Lower Manhattan, Tribeca
Brooklyn		
3	11211	Greenpoint, Williamsburg
1	11206	Greenpoint, Williamsburg, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Crown Heights, Bushwick
1	11215	Downtown Brooklyn
4	11217	Downtown Brooklyn, BAM District

Rehearsal Space Searches by Size and Hourly Rate

Database searches on the NYC Dance Spaces website (November, 2009)



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