

Building: From the Inside Out

A Nonprofit Finance Fund Report
on the Philadelphia Dance Community's Infrastructure Needs

Funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts and The William Penn Foundation

Written by AEA Consulting



Nonprofit Finance Fund

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Preface

We are pleased to present this analysis of the space and capacity-building needs of the Philadelphia dance community. This study was launched in 2001 at the request of members of the philanthropic community, responding to the Philadelphia dance community's belief that it would benefit from a visible "home for dance" in the city.

There are many theaters in Philadelphia, but none built specifically for dance, and most are inadequate for its presentation. While there are many dance sites in the city, there is no primary locus for the dance community to rehearse, congregate, and exchange ideas. Nonprofit Finance Fund was engaged to administer research in this area and commissioned AEA Consulting as partners in this effort. Funding was provided by The Pew Charitable Trusts and the William Penn Foundation.

The Philadelphia dance community is comprised of nearly 2,000 dancers representing a variety of genres, dance organizations (including university and college dance departments), independent choreographers and presenters. The dance community utilizes approximately 20 rehearsal spaces and 45 regional performance venues. Space needs vary widely, as does the need for infrastructure and capacity-building.

The community is dynamic and enjoys a growing reputation for artistic excellence, both within the city and beyond. Recent successes range from touring engagements, national awards and an increasingly international profile to the development of an enthusiastic, collaborative spirit within the community. Additionally, through the Philadelphia Fringe Festival and high-profile local events like DanceBoom!, there has been a noticeable increase in audiences for dance.

The dance community's strengths were the impetus for this study, and the goal of building upon them informed our conclusions and recommendations. Still, the report identifies several limitations within the existing dance infrastructure that will inhibit achieving a "home for Philadelphia dance" in the short to medium term. This report details the areas that need to be strengthened in order to develop the positive momentum of Philadelphia's dance community in recent years

In the past, examinations of the dance community's facility needs have focused on the potential of a particular building or buildings, rather than the role a facility might play in the broader strategy of building and sustaining a vital dance community. This is the first study in which a particular building or site was not the focus. Although it began as an evaluation of the programming, management, governance and financial requirements for successful facilities, as the study progressed it became clear that facilities development should be assessed within the context of the dance community's current and evolving capacities.

It is our goal that this report will serve as a roadmap to continued vitality for the dance community, and achievement of its long-term ambitions. Given the current state of the

economy—which has stalled capital projects in the cultural sector across the nation—the Philadelphia dance community will benefit from strengthening its internal capacities. Improving administrative, managerial and technical capacities will create opportunities for the future. And the dance community’s collaborative and supportive spirit is a key strength to build upon.

We would like to thank the following people, who consistently provided support in the research and development of this report: Greg Rowe and Bobbie Lippman of The Pew Charitable Trusts, Olive Mosier of the William Penn Foundation, Bill Bissell of Dance Advance, Nick Stuccio of the Philadelphia Fringe Festival, and Manfred Fishbeck of Group Motion and the Kumquat Collective.

Finally, we thank everyone who participated in the interview process. The strengths of this report are due to the candor of the interviewees and their proven commitment to the vitality of dance in Philadelphia.

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report presents research from an exercise to identify space needs within the Philadelphia dance community. The purpose of the exercise was to analyze the community's facilities needs – administrative, rehearsal and performance spaces – and to measure them against current provision. The report was commissioned by the Nonprofit Finance Fund, with the support of The Pew Charitable Trusts and the William Penn Foundation, and undertaken by AEA Consulting.
 - 1.2. The need for and justification of dance facilities exists only within the context of a strategy for dance as a whole. In terms of total dollars spent, the primary strategy pursued by the funding community in Philadelphia during recent years has been one of promoting the development of choreographic talent, particularly emphasizing new and innovative works. Other areas that might be prioritized include the development of organizational capacity (administrative skills, marketing techniques, financial reserves, and donor cultivation, for example) and audience development.
 - 1.3. Philanthropic support for non-profit dance may also be delivered at different points within the dance ecology. The principal strategy in Philadelphia (again in terms of total dollars spent) has been to fund the producers or creators themselves through direct support, often on a project basis. Presenters are a second primary target for philanthropic support; DanceBoom! and the Pennsylvania Performing Arts on Tour program (PennPAT) represent two different kinds of presenting initiatives that the philanthropic community has embraced. The audience for dance is a third area to which funding resources can be devoted (by subsidizing inexpensive tickets, for example, or by supporting specific marketing initiatives), although creators and presenters are generally the conduit for this funding rather than the audiences themselves.
 - 1.4. Although an analysis of audience demand for dance in Philadelphia is an important part of this report, no primary audience research was conducted. While we have analyzed relevant available data in order to quantify and characterize dance attendance, the bulk of research for this report consists of interviews with members of the Philadelphia dance community. Interviewees were candid in their responses and willing to give of their time. They are listed at Appendix A, and we are grateful to them for their time and insights.
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- 1.5. The primary focus of the Philadelphia funding community upon the creation of new and innovative dance and its presentation has had multiple benefits for the dance community – from the creation of a funding environment that is overtly sympathetic to dancers, choreographers, and the art form they pursue to increasing press recognition for Philadelphia dance both inside and outside the city. These are important achievements that should not be discounted. Indeed, while the purpose of this study was not an analysis of Philadelphia’s dance community in comparison to that of other cities, many of Philadelphia’s strengths would be difficult to match elsewhere, while many of its weaknesses are widely shared within the dance sector. It is Philadelphia’s unique combination of strengths and weaknesses that this report seeks to describe and address.

 - 1.6. While the question of facility needs provided the impetus for our research, our investigation necessarily involved a wider analysis of dance in Philadelphia, with the goal of identifying the steps required to ensure its continued vitality. Again, facilities are one component of a broader strategy for the development of a sustainable dance community, and a number of other supporting elements are also necessary. For performance spaces in particular, these supporting elements include the management skills and financial capacity requisite for venue operation, sufficient audience demand to generate a healthy income stream, and the quantity of high quality ‘product’ to ensure frequent use. The unavoidable relationship between the supply of dance and the effective demand for it – and the need to balance these – is addressed in some detail in the report.

 - 1.7. In essence, organizational capacity and audience demand have not kept pace with the Philadelphia dance community’s artistic development during recent years. This has led to an undercapitalized dance ecology: most dance companies and independent choreographers in Philadelphia lack the organizational know-how, the dedicated audiences, and the financial stability to match the level of aesthetic excellence that many have achieved and to which all aspire.

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- 1.8. Defining the specific facilities needs of the Philadelphia dance community is more complicated than it may initially appear. This difficulty stems from the diversity of the community and the diversity of its needs, the paucity of hard data regarding current usage and demand within the community, and the number of variables one needs to isolate or standardize within a fragmented community to aggregate its moving parts into a coherent whole. The most significant impediment to precision, however, is the impact of price on demand, or what economists call ‘the price elasticity of demand’ – whether in the context of hiring a presenting venue, paying an hourly rate for a rehearsal studio, or securing a lease for office space.
- 1.9. It is difficult, for example, to quantify the number of nights in a theater of a given size that the Philadelphia dance community could sustain, or the aggregate number of additional hours of rehearsal time the community would use were surplus space available, because these spaces inevitably come at a price. Few organizations within the Philadelphia dance community are accustomed to or capable of paying market rates; the question of aggregate need for space is therefore directly related to what this undercapitalized community can afford.
- 1.10. Despite the impediments to detailed quantification, the breadth of our interviews and our analysis of available data provide grounds for a reasonable degree of confidence in the conclusions. While we do not know the exact number of nights the community would make use of a 300-seat theater, for example, this number is too low to merit building one if its financial viability is a relevant consideration – even if capital costs were not taken into account. Conversely, while current rehearsal needs are for the most part met by the spaces available, the community’s long-term vitality could be strengthened if additional rehearsal spaces were available – even if this space were not utilized to maximum capacity. And while the need for administrative space is less acute, those organizations that do need it and are unable to afford it on their own might find the means to secure it were there more effective platforms for communication within the community. The analysis of the community’s space needs is therefore placed within a broader characterization of the community’s strengths and weaknesses.
- 1.11. There are real space needs within the Philadelphia dance community. But as this report seeks to demonstrate, the community’s principal needs right now *do not* lie in facilities. With that general conclusion in mind, we make the following eight recommendations, which are supported in greater detail in the body of the report:

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- *Recommendation One:* A theater devoted to Philadelphia-based dance presentations should be taken off the short to medium-term agenda (that is, for the next three to five years). There is insufficient demand from paying audiences and insufficient organizational capacity among existing dance organizations to support such a space. Focusing on this more distant goal distracts resources and energies from the practical steps that could help strengthen the community now. This report outlines what those practical steps might be.
 - *Recommendation Two:* While the creation of a new performance space is currently unwarranted, the lack of a consistently available and affordable mid-size presenting venue is nevertheless real. Presenting opportunities that make use of existing infrastructure, like that provided by DanceBoom! (analyzed in Chapter Four), are therefore important for the community. The philanthropic community might consider continued support of these activities.
 - *Recommendation Three:* Development of the audience for dance in Philadelphia – specifically the paying audience and, from that, a constituency of donors – should be prioritized. Events like DanceBoom! are an effective tool in this effort, but a more comprehensive audience development strategy would be beneficial to the community.
 - *Recommendation Four:* Dance service infrastructure in Philadelphia needs to be strengthened. It is the underdeveloped link in an ecology that needs it. Ideally, a strengthened service organization would be the primary vehicle both for the dissemination of technical assistance to support the development of individual organizations and for convening individuals and organizations with similar space needs, potentially for the benefit of the entire community. Whether via a single organization or multiple ones, however, there is a need for the effective delivery of a broad array of organizational capacity-building services.
 - *Recommendation Five:* The dance community at large needs to internalize the critical importance of non-artistic capacity building and take responsibility for increasing capacity on an individual basis. A strong dance service organization and the philanthropic community itself could champion and support these efforts. The development of managerial, organizational and financial skills more broadly within the community is a necessary step towards the long-term ambition of a space devoted to the presentation of dance in Philadelphia.

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- *Recommendation Six:* The community should set as a medium-term objective (within approximately five years) the development of additional rehearsal space – provided the necessary steps to build capacity (addressed in other recommendations) are taken, which will help ensure the effective use and financial viability of any additional space. Additional rehearsal space would ideally be managed independently and available on a free-market basis to the whole community; this might help to provide the greater sense of connection, collective purpose and identity that many in the dance community seek and that the current system of space distribution may, on occasion, work against. (This system is described in detail in Chapter Six.)
 - *Recommendation Seven:* One idea for addressing rehearsal and performance space needs in the short to medium term (i.e. over the next three to five years) is that individual “nodes” of current activity might be more aggressively developed. We recommend that this strategy be pursued only with caution. While it is a comparatively cost effective and pragmatic solution, offering tangible benefits that build upon existing strengths within the community, it also risks exacerbating systemic tendencies toward fragmentation within the community (discussed in Chapter Six) that may work against the collaborative spirit that is now much in evidence. Further, if the dance community as a whole maintains as a long-term ambition a primary venue for dance in Philadelphia, interim facility build out that may narrow the range of options in the future needs to be considered carefully.
 - *Recommendation Eight:* This report provides the opportunity to disseminate a deeper understanding of the dance ecology in Philadelphia, its achievements and current challenges, and the logic behind the conclusions reached in this report regarding the provision of space. As the dissemination of the research may help to build a stronger sense of community, we recommend that the report be made more widely available. Among many interviewees, there appears to be an imperfect understanding of the economics of presenting dance and of the financial dynamics of the sector as a whole. This report could usefully provide the platform for a common understanding of the operating environment in which the dance community finds itself – and for focusing attention on those areas where its energies can be most strategically deployed during the next phase of its development.

2. Introduction: Background to the Report

2.1. Research for this exercise consisted primarily of interviews conducted with members of the Philadelphia dance community over the course of some twelve months. We also reviewed documents relating to the dance community's history, particularly with respect to its use of physical infrastructure and its presenting activities. Our goal was to analyze the current level of activity and the strengths, weaknesses, and character of the dance ecology in Philadelphia in order to accurately describe the community and understand its facilities needs within this broader context. An initial round of interviews led us to hypotheses and preliminary conclusions, the validity of which needed to be tested through further interviews and research. Those preliminary conclusions, refined by our further investigations, are as follows:

- The Philadelphia dance scene is comprised of a number of distinct but overlapping communities – including both large-scale companies, such as the Pennsylvania Ballet, and smaller modern and culturally-specific ensembles – the space needs of which differ.
- Philadelphia's dance community is diverse and vibrant, and it includes a large number of independent dancers and choreographers, frequently working in loosely affiliated ensembles.
- The funding community plays a leadership role within the dance community through the emphases of its programs and the extent of its funding. This is viewed by members of the dance community with both appreciation and apprehension, and because of the importance of the funding community's support, there is inevitably a sense of the 'haves' and the 'have nots'.
- Key elements of the funding community – including the Dance Advance initiative of The Pew Charitable Trusts, the William Penn Foundation, the Independence Foundation and others – have played a large role in effectively nurturing the development of form. Funding the development of innovative choreography and project-based work has to some extent encouraged the maintenance of small, flexible organizational structures with low administrative overheads. Quite naturally, dancers tend to be more interested in making dance than in running organizations, and the quantum of funding available – whether project-specific or general operating support – has tended to reinforce this focus (see Chapter Five).

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- The absence of a strong service organization that can provide effective leadership and play a convening role for the variety of dance communities is widely recognized; there is a perceived and actual need for administrative and other support services within the community at large.
 - The Philadelphia dance community lacks a building for its presenting, rehearsal, and administrative needs. While this lack is real, the problems to which it gives rise are exacerbated by the current weakness in dance service infrastructure. The need for a 'non-denominational' space in which the dance community can congregate, exchange ideas and information, and form a greater sense of collective purpose and identity – none of which have as their primary goal performance to a wider public – drives at least part of the various communities' aspirations for a visible performance venue devoted to dance.
 - While service infrastructure, community rehearsal space, and administrative support might be effectively enhanced without a dedicated presenting venue, the lack of the latter does limit those organizations with active aspirations to develop larger audiences. Even the more sophisticated organizations – of which there are few – do not perform in the same venues – of which there are several – with consistency. Audiences therefore do not identify these organizations – or Philadelphia dance as a whole – with a particular space or with a presenting season.
 - At the same time, most dance activity in Philadelphia plays to a relatively small audience. Many within the dance community see this small audience as the direct result of a lack of dedicated space and maintain the position of 'build it and they will come'. However, the number of ensembles and independent choreographers that could contribute substantially to maintaining a venue for dance presentation (whether in terms of consistent audience draw and earned income or contributed support from committed donors) is small. Balancing the supply of Philadelphia dance activity with effective audience demand for it would therefore be a challenge were a venue devoted to Philadelphia dance either designated or created. The extent to which the lack of a dedicated venue is a real obstacle varies from one organization (or individual) to the next according to whether the organization has the artistic and financial capacity to regularly present and market a strong body of work.

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- The absence of effective service organization leadership paired with the established *de facto* leadership of the funding community may contribute to a situation in which organizational leadership within the dance community itself could be difficult to foster and sustain. By some means the development of managerial and administrative leadership more broadly within the community needs to be prioritized.

2.2. We considered five future scenarios as options that might be pursued by the dance community in Philadelphia and its constituency of supporters. These began with a ‘do nothing’ scenario – that is, maintaining the *status quo* in all respects – and ranged through progressively more complicated and costly options, the last being the provision of a full-scale, purpose-specific dance center that would include administrative, rehearsal and performance space for the entire dance community. From our emerging conclusions, two middle scenarios were initially identified as most viable for pursuit over the short to medium-term (that is, over the next three to five years):

“Developing Current ‘Nodes’ of Activity”

2.3. In this scenario, specific spaces and organizations would be nurtured as dance community leaders with the benefit of the wider community in mind. Spaces for administration, rehearsal, and small-scale presentation, of which there would be several, could be refurbished or developed in tandem with the administrative and organizational leadership appropriate to their management. Dance activity would coalesce increasingly around these several hubs. Larger-scale presentation needs would be addressed within the confines of existing structures, perhaps encouraged by increased subsidy (along the lines of DanceBoom! at the Wilma Theater).

2.4. The principal strengths of this scenario were identified as the relatively low risk and comparatively low cost associated with developing existing physical infrastructure and organizations. The principal weaknesses were identified as the potential risk of additional responsibilities for beneficiary organizations; the potential of fragmenting a diverse community with an increasingly collaborative spirit; the potential of exacerbating the sense of ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’; and the weakness of the scenario in addressing systematically the larger-scale presenting goals of the community and – equally important – the development of audience.

“Building or Renovating a Service-focused Dance Center”

- 2.5. This scenario envisioned a non-performance-oriented dance center, a ‘dance incubator’ that would focus on the rehearsal, administrative support and other service needs of the dance community while providing a physical space for community congregation. Administrative and organizational capacity and leadership would be developed in tenancy relationships, with individual organizations remaining focused on their own needs and objectives rather than those of the broader community. Dance activity would coalesce around this primary hub of activity. The center could be used by all constituencies within the dance community as required, as it responds to needs held in common (primarily service and rehearsal needs). Small-scale presentations might be accommodated within the space. Larger-scale presentation needs would be addressed within the confines of existing structures, perhaps encouraged by increased subsidy – as in the previous scenario.
- 2.6. The strengths of this scenario were identified as: the continuity with and enhancement of the current funding focus on developing artistic excellence; the provision of space and infrastructure to address the needs shared by most if not all of the dance communities; the equitability of the scheme with respect to potential users and its potential boost to collaborative energies; the comparatively low capital cost for providing a physical solution that serves the greatest number.
- 2.7. The weaknesses of this scenario were: the need to strengthen substantially Philadelphia’s service organization in order to make the scheme viable; the potential challenge of attracting to the space a critical mass of financially viable tenants and users – or the need to develop them; the potential administrative and financial complexity of operation; the potential competition to current nodes of activity; the capital costs associated with the scenario, particularly in relation to the low earned and contributed income opportunities (and the current lack of a wide donor base); the long term operating risk; and the weakness of the scenario in addressing systematically the larger-scale presenting needs of the community and the development of audience, as in the preceding scenario.

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- 2.8. Assessing the feasibility of these scenarios required that we understand better the current usage patterns of relevant rehearsal and presentation spaces as well as the demonstrated audience demand for dance in Philadelphia. An analysis of recent funding to the Philadelphia dance community was also required in order to understand the development of the community's current strengths and weaknesses and to substantiate our preliminary conclusions about funding patterns and their impact. Our subsequent findings are presented in the chapters that follow.
- 2.9. Chapter Three examines the presentation and performance of dance in Philadelphia, with particular attention paid to the economics of presenting dance. Chapter Four examines existing data on the audience demand for dance in Philadelphia. It looks at Dance Advance data to estimate total audience size, attendance of dance presentations at the Arts Bank to quantify attendance at a small non-profit theater in the mid-1990s, and attendance at DanceBoom! in 2002 and 2003 to demonstrate the effectiveness of this presenting format. Chapter Five analyzes the funding history of dance in Philadelphia from 1998 to 2002. Chapter Six examines the need for rehearsal space and characterizes the current system of space allocation, one that is governed primarily by personal connections and professional histories that bind individuals and organizations to one another in a way that resists a free market system. Chapter Seven analyzes the need for administrative space, for a stronger service function, and for convening leadership to assist organizations in securing the space they need on a collaborative basis.

3. Presenting Dance in Philadelphia

- 3.1. There are hundreds of dance performances each year in Philadelphia. They range in scale and character from the informal “Glue” series at the CEC, for example, to Philadanco’s presentations at the Kimmel Center and the Pennsylvania Ballet’s season at the Academy of Music. These presentations by Philadelphia-based entities are supplemented by the efforts of Helen Henry, Nick Stuccio, Randy Swartz, and a handful of other presenters, including Philadelphia-based universities, to showcase dance work from both Philadelphia and elsewhere.
- 3.2. Presenting dance is a tough business. Among traditional non-for-profit “high” art forms, dance is perhaps the least popular among the general populace. The audience for dance is also generally less willing to pay a high ticket price for a performance. The basic costs of hiring a venue and running it remain the same, however, regardless of the ticket price the presenter can charge and the size of the size of the paying audience. Dance therefore tends to require more contributed support than other art forms; presenters of non-commercial dance bear a greater risk than commercial presenters and even than other non-profit arts presenters. Rather than an indication of failure on the part of the medium itself or its practitioners, this is an example of ‘market failure’ – where the real costs of providing a good or service exceed the market demand that would sustain it without some form of subsidy.
- 3.3. There is more dance made in Philadelphia – that is more companies, choreographers, and collaborations rehearsing and creating work – than there are presentations of it. This “problem” does not apply to Philadelphia’s large-scale companies, the Pennsylvania Ballet and Philadanco, which perform their work consistently as residents of the Kimmel Center. The principal long-term challenge to the organizational health of these two companies is building and sustaining the paying constituencies that offset the unavoidable need for contributed support. Although each of these companies may face its own distinct challenges, the main challenge – long-term audience development – is no greater in Philadelphia than elsewhere across the nation. (Because of their considerably larger scale and administrative sophistication, the Pennsylvania Ballet and Philadanco are generally dealt with separately in this report; the principal findings of the report apply primarily to the rest of the Philadelphia dance community.)

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- 3.4. The challenge of securing adequate presenting space is more acute for small organizations and for the many independent artists resident in Philadelphia. Many of the Philadelphia venues discussed with interviewees are considered too expensive, too heavily used by others, or simply inappropriate for dance. (These are listed at Appendix B along with their characteristics as perceived by the dance community.) And for smaller scale operations – independent choreographers, collectives that have banded together, small companies – self-presentation is the norm, and the financial risk is high. The number of presenters who are willing or able to take a risk on these smaller entities is small, leaving them with fewer opportunities to show their work than they would like.
- 3.5. There is, however, an important lesson in this: viewed from the nonprofit presenter’s perspective, there is not sufficient comfort regarding audience size and gross ticket receipts to warrant taking the risk. The presenter knows he or she is likely to lose money simply on the venue rental and will seek at least that quantum in philanthropic contributions (whether from foundations, corporations or individuals) in order to make such a presentation possible. In the absence of established, high-visibility companies, a number of small organizations or independents may need to be put on the same bill, too, which adds to the complexity of the project; even then, there is no guarantee of balancing the books. The smaller organizations and independent artists are no less aware of this – they confront the same questions and risks as other presenters when considering whether to self-present. To whom the responsibility for bearing these risks should be accorded, however, varies widely.
- 3.6. There are important justifications for presenting dance that may have nothing to do with audience demand *per se*. But at the end of the day, someone has to pay the bills. In the case of Philadelphia and its small and emerging dance organizations, these bills do not always include even the actual costs for the dancers themselves. Venue hire and marketing generally make up the bulk of the expenses, with dancers and companies often simply grateful for the opportunity to show their work. Contributed revenue makes up the bulk of the income to whoever bears the risk. In the case of a diverse operation such as The Painted Bride, for example, these contributed revenues are part of the overall income balance, and in their absence, individual programs are funded by what amounts to the absorption of losses.

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- 3.7. Although a greater number of performances could be given by Philadelphia-based choreographers, collectives and small companies annually – in a dedicated space for dance or in the city’s many existing venues – the cost of mounting these presentations will inevitably focus attention on the symbiotic relationship between supply and demand and the shortage of the latter in Philadelphia, a condition we analyze in greater detail in the next chapter.
- 3.8. Before this, however, the presenting needs of Philadelphia’s slightly larger organizations should be highlighted. There is no hard and fast rule for defining membership in this cohort of “slightly larger” companies; in general, they are characterized by a marked degree of sophistication or achievement in more than one of the following areas:
- marketing
 - individual donor support
 - administrative capacity
 - distinctive artistic style and/or
 - a sizable dedicated ticket-buying audience.
- 3.9. The more of these assets an organization possesses, the larger or more stable it is likely to be. Rennie Harris Puremovement is the most visible among the groups of this kind and is considerably larger than any others in this cohort. Koresh Dance Company or Susan Hess Modern Dance are perhaps in the middle range of this set. Smaller, younger companies like Phrenic New Ballet or Headlong Dance Theater possess fewer of these attributes but might also belong to this cohort. These diverse companies are mentioned here as representative. What is important is that Philadelphia companies like these need a consistent place to perform in Philadelphia in order to build their local base of support and further develop as professional organizations.

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- 3.10. The obstacles to presenting identified for the smaller companies and independent choreographers are more bothersome for this slightly larger cohort because they recognize the need for consistency of venue in building their identities. They are better able to finance self-presenting, and they understand better the necessity of the costs associated with it. But the costs of 'one off' presentation – hiring a full-service venue for a weekend or a few days mid-week – seem high to them, particularly if the dates are not ideal or if they can not rely on securing the same venue the next season. A company of this kind seeks to build a defined, visible presence within the local market and wants a venue it can count on to support this goal.
- 3.11. Events like the Philadelphia Fringe Festival and the Wilma Theater's DanceBoom! provide a necessary outlet for professional presentation for the kind of organization characterized in 3.8 (and for smaller organizations and independents, also), and in some cases these events supplement seasonal self-presentations. These organizations are poised to benefit from more consistently available dance presentation venues – or preferably a single venue – and this is an actual need for this element of the dance community. However, the organizations that have reached this degree of sophistication are relatively few – too few to sustain a dedicated venue for dance in Philadelphia.
- 3.12. When asked directly about the latent supply of dance presentations – that is, presentations that currently are not happening because an appropriate venue cannot be secured – several interviewees stated there are only some half-dozen companies, collectives or independent choreographers active in Philadelphia today that could effectively sell four or five performances in a 300-seat theater. This would yield a month's worth of programming (spread over the year). Were such a space devoted exclusively to dance, as many within the community would wish, the balance of programming would need to be made up by non-local companies. The long-term financial viability of this solution would necessarily depend upon aggregate audience size. In the shorter term, however, there does not appear to be a management and presenting apparatus in place within the dance community that could take on the responsibility of a venue devoted to dance.

4. The Audience for Dance in Philadelphia

- 4.1. Just as there are many dance communities within Philadelphia, so there are many distinct audiences. The audience for the Pennsylvania Ballet, for example, is well defined and comparatively large by Philadelphia standards (in line with the scale of the Ballet itself). Culturally specific dance groups have their own dedicated audiences, as do many of the smaller and medium-sized dance companies in the modern field. Crossover among these different audiences appears to be relatively limited for a variety of reasons, including ticket prices, performance venue amenities, and audience connection to the work itself or the aesthetics of the different companies.
- 4.2. Marketing can play an important role in attracting audience and growing it over time, but from the information we have analyzed, the audience for dance appears to be under-developed. More than one interviewee from the modern dance community commented, ‘The audience for a [modern] dance performance in Philadelphia is 300 people.’ Clearly, the total audience is substantially larger than this, but most of the small and some medium-sized companies of Philadelphia would consider an audience draw of this size to a single performance a big success.
- 4.3. A perfect picture of Philadelphia’s aggregate dance performance attendance annually is difficult to construct. The data analyzed, however, give the impression of an audience that is growing incrementally – and that is enhanced substantially by the availability of free tickets. The level of analytical detail required to provide an accurate characterization of dance attendance on the whole and on a per-company or per-venue basis is substantial. The analysis of three different groups of data – from Dance Advance, the Arts Bank, and DanceBoom! – serves as our tool for estimating audience demand in the absence of more comprehensive and accurate data sets.

Dance Advance: An Aggregate View

- 4.4. The records of Dance Advance provide the best proxy for estimating aggregate annual dance attendance because of the number of organizations the initiative serves and the information it regularly solicits from its applicants and grantees. Dance Advance has served an increasingly wide circle of organizations over the past several years and has captured a greater percentage of Philadelphia organizations as a result. The growth of the program itself accounts for some of the growth in performances and attendance reported by the applicant pool: 1,469 performances in 1999 rising to 1,913 in 2001; 389,066 of paid and unpaid attendance in 1999 rising to 1,185,322 in 2001.
- 4.5. The Dance Advance figures include all individuals, presenters, and companies within the applicant pool, not all of which define and report their attendance in the same way. Some figures include estimated as opposed to actual attendance as well as attendance during touring engagements; other figures include attendance at presentations of groups brought into Philadelphia. It is not possible to accurately adjust for these variances in order to isolate actual attendance for Philadelphia-based companies within Philadelphia itself.
- 4.6. While the numbers should therefore be used with some caution – and are undoubtedly greater than total attendance for Philadelphia-based groups playing to the home audience – they nevertheless give some sense of the scale of demand for Philadelphia-based dance and the number of people served annually.
- 4.7. As Table One demonstrates, The Pennsylvania Ballet and Philadanco are the leaders in attendance in years during which they are part of the funding initiative. (Odunde was also part of the initiative in 2001, although its 310,000 free attends are not included in the aggregate figures of Table One.)

Table One: Dance Advance Applicant Pool Attendance									
No. of Responses	1998		1999		2000		2001		
	27		48		48		53		
	%		%		%		%		
	Attends	pay/free	Attends	pay/free	Attends	pay/free	Attends	pay/free	
Total paid	146,195	61%	280,643	72%	259,778	64%	778,802	66%	
Pennsylvania Ballet	-		96,938		93,765		86,082		
Philadanco	-		-		-		500,000		
Total free	92,925	39%	108,423	28%	149,209	36%	406,520	34%	
Pennsylvania Ballet	-		0		24,850		15,656		
Philadanco	-		-		-		250,000		
Total	239,120	100%	389,066	100%	408,987	100%	1,185,322	100%	

4.8. **Removing the Ballet and Philadanco from the applicant pool – and adjusting the earned and unearned income ratios accordingly – yields the results in Table Two.**

Table Two: Dance Advance Applicant Pool Attendance (not including the Pennsylvania Ballet & Philadanco)									
No. of Responses	1998		1999		2000		2001		
	27		47		47		50		
	%		%		%		%		
	Attends	pay/free	Attends	pay/free	Attends	pay/free	Attends	pay/free	
Total paid	146,195	61%	183,705	63%	166,013	57%	192,720	58%	
Total free	92,925	39%	108,423	37%	124,359	43%	140,864	42%	
Total	239,120	100%	292,128	100%	290,372	100%	333,584	100%	

4.9. **Excepting the largest scale organizations and events, average annual attendance during these four years of Dance Advance applicant pool activity is 172,158 paid and 116,643 unpaid for a total average of 288,801. Again, these figures include all individuals, groups, and presenters in the applicant pool and the wide variety of performance locations (tours) and programming (non-Philadelphia-based groups) they represent. There is no way of measuring repeat attendance, so the figures represent the total attends rather than the total number of individuals attending.**

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- 4.10. The 14 Philadelphia performance venues listed at Appendix B range from the CEC's 100-seat black box to the Annenberg Center's 950-seat Zellerbach. Only four of these 14 theaters have more than 300 seats. Nevertheless, these 14 venues together have a capacity of more than 1.7 million seats annually, not including the Academy of Music where the Ballet performs. The point of isolating and comparing these figures – 288,801 dance attends versus 1.7 million seats – is *not* to suggest that the dance community could secure the theaters it needs at a price it can afford, that these theaters have open schedules whenever the dance community needs them, nor even that they are perfect for dance. The scale and character of performances within the Dance Advance pool and the diverse constituencies these organizations serve obviously require multiple theaters in multiple locations. Considered in aggregate, however, current demand would not appear to indicate that more theaters are required, particularly given the relatively few companies with the demonstrated audience demand to consistently fill a 300-seat theater (cf. 3.12).
- 4.11. The argument is probably valid that demand for dance presentations would be stimulated by the development of a permanent home for dance in Philadelphia, but such a home would require a sophisticated outreach scheme to develop paying audiences, the consistent presentation of high quality work, and a long-term view with respect to establishing the venue's financial viability – that is, a heavy up-front investment of philanthropic support for both capital and annual operating costs that would need to be sustained. In the conclusion of our report, we suggest the steps that might be taken to assist the Philadelphia dance community in moving towards this long-term goal. At present, however, there simply are not enough paying audience members to support the creation of a dance-specific space.
- 4.12. The average ratio of paid tickets to free tickets in the second of the two tables above is three to two; that is, for every three tickets sold, two are given away. These figures may include free workshop performances, performances for school children, etc. Nevertheless, this average ratio seems uncharacteristic. There appears to be a laudable prioritization on the part of all parties – from the dancers and groups themselves through to presenters and funders – of ensuring that dance performances are available to the widest audience, irrespective of ticket price and adverse revenue implications. From the perspective of a presenting theater, however, for which ticket revenues are the primary source of earned income, such largesse towards the audience would likely prove financially disastrous: in Philadelphia, 60% of the audience for dance bears the responsibility for all the ticket revenues.

4.13. From this data on free admissions, one might reasonably conclude that the effective demand for dance in Philadelphia is less than the aggregate figures analyzed above suggest. Focusing on the development of paying audiences should therefore be prioritized by those individuals and organizations for which free access is not an explicit component of their mission.

4.14. Other avenues for assessing audience demand are the records of presenting theaters. We obtained the records for dance presentations at the 230-seat Arts Bank for the period during which it was an independent entity, as well as for the 302-seat Wilma Theater's DanceBoom! festival of 2002 and 2003.

Arts Bank Attendance: January 1994 through December 1996

4.15. The Arts Bank was built with the substantial support of the William Penn Foundation and was a primary venue for Philadelphia dance performances in the mid-1990s. Its availability as a performance space is discussed as a point of reference within the dance community, although there are conflicting views on what – if anything – went wrong in the management of the venue, both in its initial phase as an independent entity and subsequently, when the University of the Arts assumed its management and became its primary user. Our focus here is on the attendance records for dance performances, which we analyze in two ways, first by average capacity and audience size, then by company performance dates.

4.16. During the period when Arts Bank was an independent entity, it was available for hire to nonprofit organizations, and a majority of users listed below were self-presenting. (Records of dance performances at the venue for 1997 were unavailable.) A total of 114 dance performances served 12,825 audience members during a three-year period, and the theater achieved an average capacity of 48.8%. Table Three on the following page presents available attendance records sorted by capacity achieved.

Table Three: Arts Bank Dance Performances, 1/94 to 12/96
(Sorted by Percentage Capacity)

Date	Event	Number of Perfs.	Total Audience	Percent Capacity
9/94	PAPA presents Annie Sprinkle *	3	690	100.0
9/95	PAPA presents Lypsinka! *	4	907	98.6
2/98	SCRAP presents Myra Bazell and Katharine Livingston**	5	1,037	90.2
9/95	Philadanco – Danco on Danco	3	559	81.0
10/96	SCRAP Performance Group presents Sideshow	4	702	76.3
5/96	PAPA presents Sex and Gravity *	3	507	73.5
5/96	SCRAP presents Myra Bazell and Katharine Livingston	3	493	71.5
11/95	PAPA presents SCRAP Performance Group	3	458	66.4
11/94	Philadanco/Karen Bamonte -- Two's Company	3	411	59.6
9/94	Philadanco -- Danco on Danco	3	400	58.0
8/96	The lone Nash Dance Ensemble	1	130	56.5
9/95	Melanie Stewart Dance	3	362	52.5
9/96	Philadanco -- Danco on Danco	3	354	51.3
4/95	PAPA presents Elizabeth Smullins & Asimina Chremos	2	239	52.0
4/95	PAPA presents Lydia Lunch *	2	235	51.1
12/95	Arranged Introductions presents Jamie Avins & Leah Stein *	2	235	51.1
10/95	Pluck/Kaitlyn Granda	3	332	48.1
3/96	Philadelphia Ballet Theatre	1	108	47.0
3/94	PA Ballet -- Off Center	7	754	46.8
1/96	Ujima Dance Troupe	1	103	44.8
5/95	Brenda Lee Dance Company	1	102	44.3
1/94	Eric Schoefer	3	293	42.5
3/96	PAPA presents Big Mess Theatre's Duchess of Malfi	4	377	41.0
6/96	Melanie Stewart Dance Theater	3	262	40.4
3/96	Nancy Tucker *	1	91	39.6
2/94	Convergence Musicians and Dancers	4	325	35.3
5/95	Seventh Principle Performance Company	1	75	32.6
7/95	SD Prism Dance Theatre	2	148	32.2
8/94	Marion Tonner Ballet Center	1	72	31.3
5/95	Women's Theatre Festival	10	718	31.2
3/94	Leja Dance Theatre	4	279	30.3
10/94	lone Nash Dance Ensemble	2	135	29.3
11/94	PAPA presents Dada Again	2	117	25.4
3/95	Group Motion	6	331	24.0
5/96	Group Motion/Ausdruckstanz	6	321	23.3
1/94	Kent DeSpain	3	99	14.3
6/96	SD Prism Dance Theatre	2	64	13.9

* Denotes non-Philadelphia performers, produced or presented by Philadelphia organizations, in this and the next table. **Note these performances occurred in 1998.

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- 4.17. Table Three shows that in this 230-seat theater, 19 performances played to average audiences of greater than 75% of capacity; 28 to between 50% and 75%; 50 to capacity within the next quartile; and 17 to less than 25% of capacity. The SCRAP collective and Philadanco's Danco on Danco were those most able to consistently capitalize on the opportunity the space afforded. Other than these companies, only PAPA's presentations were able to consistently sell the theater beyond 50% capacity; the bulk of these presentations were of artists based outside of Philadelphia, and PAPA had its misses, also.
- 4.18. Most of the artists interviewed considered the Arts Bank an adequate facility for presentation; its technical capacities and audience amenities are also satisfactory. Although its location has improved in desirability and visit-ability with the addition of the Kimmel Center to the Avenue of the Arts, it was not inconvenient in the mid-1990s. Audience demand for the work on show appears to have been insufficient or the cost of effectively marketing too high to sustain the groups who wished to perform in the venue and, ultimately, the venue itself as an independent entity. (A non-commercial theater of this size requires consistent philanthropic support in the form of operating subsidy. It is simply an uneconomic size – there are not enough seats to generate sufficient revenue to support it even in the best of circumstances, i.e. selling tickets at 100% capacity.)
- 4.19. The Arts Bank's results in terms of dance performances provide limited evidence for judging the extent to which the audience for dance developed; SCRAP's audience did develop, Danco's results were mixed, and other groups remained the same or declined in audience numbers. Table Four, resorted by presentation date and group, shows these results. Companies, choreographers or presenters using the space more than once are indicated by italics in their second and subsequent appearances.

Table Four: Arts Bank Dance Performances, 1/94 to 12/96
(Sorted by Date and Group)

Date	Event	Number of Perfs.	Total Audience	Percent Capacity
1/94	Eric Schoefer	3	293	42.5
1/94	Kent DeSpain	3	99	14.3
2/94	Convergence Musicians and Dancers	4	325	35.3
3/94	Leja Dance Theatre	4	279	30.3
3/94	Philadelphia Ballet -- Off Center	7	754	46.8
3/96	Philadelphia Ballet Theatre	1	108	47.0
8/94	Marion Tonner Ballet Center	1	72	31.3
9/94	Philadanco – Danco on Danco	3	400	58.0
11/94	Philadanco/Karen Bamonte -- Two's Company	3	411	59.6
9/95	Philadanco -- Danco on Danco	3	559	81.0
9/96	Philadanco -- Danco on Danco	3	354	51.3
9/94	PAPA presents Annie Sprinkle *	3	690	100.0
11/94	PAPA presents Dada Again	2	117	25.4
4/95	PAPA presents Elizabeth Smullins/Asimina Chremos	2	239	52.0
4/95	PAPA presents Lydia Lunch *	2	235	51.1
9/95	PAPA presents Lypsinka! *	4	907	98.6
3/96	PAPA presents Big Mess Theatre's Duchess Malfi	4	377	41.0
5/96	PAPA presents Sex and Gravity *	3	507	73.5
10/94	Ione Nash Dance Ensemble	2	135	29.3
8/96	Ione Nash Dance Ensemble	1	130	56.5
3/95	Group Motion	6	331	24.0
5/96	Group Motion/Ausdruckstanz	6	321	23.3
5/95	Brenda Lee Dance Company	1	102	44.3
5/95	Seventh Principle Performance Company	1	75	32.6
5/95	Women's Theatre Festival	10	718	31.2
7/95	SD Prism Dance Theatre	2	148	32.2
6/96	SD Prism Dance Theatre	2	64	13.9
9/95	Melanie Stewart Dance	3	362	52.5
6/96	Melanie Stewart Dance Theater	3	262	40.4
10/95	Pluck/Kaitlyn Granda	3	332	48.1
11/95	PAPA presents SCRAP Performance Group	3	458	66.4
5/96	SCRAP (Myra Bazell and Katharine Livingston)	3	493	71.5
10/96	SCRAP Performance Group (Sideshow)	4	702	76.3
2/98	SCRAP (Myra Bazell and Katharine Livingston)**	5	1,037	90.2
12/95	Arranged Introductions Jamie Avins/Leah Stein *	2	235	51.1
1/96	Ujima Dance Troupe	1	103	44.8
3/96	Nancy Tucker *	1	91	39.6

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- 4.20. Audience development and the establishment of a unique identity for both a venue and its regular performers are long-term exercises. A venue like the Arts Bank and the companies that perform in it are necessarily in a partnership with each other as they seek to build profile and a dedicated audience for each other. Without presenting some portion of the program itself, it is harder for small 'venues for hire' to build their identities because audiences identify whatever appears within the space with the venue. The management of theaters like the Wilma (and like that of the Joyce Theater in New York) is very aware of this issue of branding and the relationship between what appears on stage and the artistic reputation of the theater itself. The greater the diversity of aesthetic style and quality, the more difficult the task of establishing a devoted audience for a small theater.
- 4.21. While the Arts Bank of the mid-1990s was not a successful venue for dance presentations, it may have another opportunity to assist Philadelphia companies in developing their audiences. Over the course of our research, the Arts Bank 'opened up' to the possibility of more external rentals than had characterized its usage patterns in recent years. According to the theater's technical director, this seemingly 'new' openness has more to do with the University of the Art's ability to better plan in advance for its own usage than with any preceding lack of interest in providing this service to the community. The availability of the space is a relatively new development and has not yet been tested by those in the market to self-present. It also remains to be seen what criteria will be applied for prioritizing potential renters – that is, whether it will be available on a first-come first-served basis or whether those with a relationship to the University community will have an edge on securing the space for rental, as is customary elsewhere in Philadelphia. This is an important issue to which we return in the next chapter. With its prime location and well-capitalized ownership, however, the Arts Bank would be an ideal venue in which to nurture audience demand if it were more regularly available.

DanceBoom! at The Wilma Theater (2002)

- 4.22. DanceBoom! provides another model for the presentation of dance – and for assessing the most recent, encouraging figures for demand. The concentration of activity into a festival format that is well marketed and well presented by a fully functional theater dedicated to the endeavor offers many benefits. For those companies that lack the devoted audience or the financial resources to go it alone, it provides an opportunity to present at an otherwise unattainable professional level. For all companies, it provides a platform for communication, seeing one another's work, and fostering other links within the dance community as a whole – all central to the needs expressed by the community.
- 4.23. Most significantly, DanceBoom! provides the opportunity to focus audience attention in a concentrated period at a high quality venue with the amenities the general audience increasingly expects and the technical staff to realize the artists' visions. As discussed in the previous chapter, a venue like the Wilma is expensive, the average ticket price the presenter can command is unlikely to be as high as that for a standard season of theatrical presentations, and the audience for dance events more limited. DanceBoom! therefore requires a high level of philanthropic support if it is to succeed, particularly in the early years. The satisfaction of the majority of artists, theater management, and the audience itself indicates that the first edition of this festival was a success.
- 4.24. Table Five on the following page provides detailed attendance statistics for the 15-night DanceBoom! in 2002. (A similar table for DanceBoom! 2003 is provided as Appendix D. Results for DanceBoom! 2003, an 18-night event, were not meaningfully different from those of DanceBoom! 2002. We have therefore limited our analysis primarily to the 2002 edition, during which an audience survey was conducted.)

Table Five: DanceBoom! 2002 Results					
	Number of Seats	Number Sold	Capacity	Earned Revenue	Average ticket price
Seven					
9-Jan	302	284	94.0%	\$6,021.57	\$21.20
18-Jan	302	306	101.3%	\$4,399.70	\$14.38
Total	604	590	97.7%	\$10,421.27	\$17.66
Group Motion/Scrap					
13-Jan	302	196	64.9%	\$2,313.19	\$11.80
20-Jan	302	276	91.4%	\$3,441.50	\$12.47
26-Jan	302	303	100.3%	\$4,959.83	\$16.37
Total	906	775	85.5%	\$10,714.52	\$13.83
Flamenco Ole					
11-Jan	302	303	100.3%	\$5,166.53	\$17.05
16-Jan	302	299	99.0%	\$4,979.87	\$16.66
27-Jan	302	303	100.3%	\$5,494.93	\$18.14
27-Jan	302	300	99.3%	\$5,253.27	\$17.51
Total	1208	1205	99.8%	\$20,894.60	\$17.34
Phrenic/Court					
12-Jan	302	302	100.0%	\$4,866.54	\$16.11
17-Jan	302	303	100.3%	\$3,816.50	\$12.60
25-Jan	302	303	100.3%	\$4,729.75	\$15.61
Total	906	908	100.2%	\$13,412.79	\$14.77
Headlong Dance Theater					
10-Jan	302	170	56.3%	\$1,834.89	\$10.79
19-Jan	302	228	75.5%	\$3,329.86	\$14.60
24-Jan	302	294	97.4%	\$3,738.16	\$12.71
Total	906	692	76.4%	\$8,902.91	\$12.87
Festival Totals	4530	4170	92.1%	\$64,346.09	\$15.43
Festival Averages	302	278	92.1%	\$4,289.74	\$15.43

4.25. While the first DanceBoom! was not without its problems in terms of complexity and logistics (five different events in fifteen nights), accounts of the experience by participants and audience alike were overwhelmingly positive. DanceBoom! 2002 was virtually a sell-out, with six of fifteen nights sold beyond capacity and an average festival capacity of 92.1%. Among the 4170 seats occupied, 646 or 15.5% were distributed free of charge, primarily to friends and family of performers. Only 153 tickets were bought through Wilma subscription, with the balance coming from single ticket sales. Ticket prices were a reasonable and respectable \$20 on weekends and \$15 mid-week. The distribution of free tickets paired with this price fluctuation by day of week accounts for the nightly change in average ticket prices noted above.

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- 4.26. Audience demand for the festival was clearly high and the percentage of tickets purchased and the average price achieved encouraging. What is perhaps most promising, however, is that the festival format paid off in terms of developing the audience over the course of the run. That is, for each company or bill – or each that did not sell out straight through the run – the audience grew with each performance. Attendance at Group Motion/SCRAP and Headlong demonstrate this tendency. (This audience growth did not come at the expense of average ticket price – or rather by distributing more free tickets – as any apparent decrease is attributable to the performance day.)
- 4.27. Audience satisfaction with DanceBoom! and the multiple benefits accruing from this are worth analyzing in greater detail. The Wilma conducted an informal audience survey of some 400 DanceBoom! audience members, and while the survey was geared towards gathering information for the Wilma, its findings offer important insights. The number of responses vary from question to question, so some responses are more trustworthy as representative than others; we focus on those most relevant.
- 4.28. 65.5% of the audience was female, which accords well with the national audience for dance as measured by the NEA's 1997 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA); in that survey 64.7% of those who attend ballet are female, although the audience for "other dance" is only 52.4% female. 68.9% of the audience was 36 years of age or older, with the highest concentration, 32.1%, in the 50-70 age group. Despite the contemporary quality of the work on view at the Wilma and its presumable appeal to younger generations, this finding also is in accordance with national averages. 74.2% of the audience for "other dance" is 35 years of age or older and 88.4% of the audience for ballet, according to the NEA survey.
- 4.29. The top three ways by which people became informed of DanceBoom! – all considerably more significant than by any other means – were, in this order, "Other", "brochure," and *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. Ten choices were listed for this question including *Philadelphia Magazine*, the *Daily News*, signage, etc. Given the number of choices, one surprising conclusion is that "Other" represents word of mouth.

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- 4.30. The most unusual finding of the survey was the response to the question, “Is this your first visit to the Wilma?” 53.8% (239) said “No,” and 46.2% (205) said “Yes.” DanceBoom! was clearly very successful in bringing new audiences into the Wilma. The opportunity DanceBoom! afforded the Wilma is best measured by another question: “Do you have interest in future Wilma Theater productions?” 387 people replied “Yes”, only 26 said “No.” Even if all those uninterested in future productions were first-time (and last-time!) visitors, the Wilma gained more than 100 new potential clients among survey respondents alone. This question is the single most important indicator in the survey of the event’s success.
- 4.31. The questions relate to the Wilma rather than to dance or to DanceBoom! itself, but this illustrates the partnership relationship between the venue and what is presented in it that we have previously discussed. Were DanceBoom! a failure with the audience, it would be to the Wilma’s discredit and detrimental to developing and sustaining its own audience. Those who see a dance performance at the Wilma and enjoy their experience may be encouraged to try a theatrical presentation at the same venue. Indeed, this audience member may be more willing to return for a theatrical performance to this now-familiar venue than to sample another dance performance in another venue with which they are unfamiliar. (This also illustrates why consistency of presentation venue is rightly viewed as so important by many Philadelphia dance companies.)
- 4.32. One important difference between DanceBoom! 2002 and 2003 that may be directly related to this question is the number of subscription seats sold. In 2002 this figure was 153; in 2003 the number rose to 753 on a scheme of three tickets for \$40. This number therefore represents 251 individual audience members; whether new to this year’s event or returning from last year’s, this growth in subscription-based sales, though modest in comparison to the total number of seats, provides some indication of the development of audience for the event – and for the Wilma.

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- 4.33. The window of opportunity to secure the support of new audience members – whether for the venue, the art form, or the individual company – is limited: 52% of respondents indicated they would see only one DanceBoom! performance. 42% indicated they would see more than one, and 5% weren't sure whether they would see more than one. Of those indicating they would see more than one, three quarters indicated they would see two or three performances. What is most significant in these findings – and in light of those relating to first time attendance at the Wilma – is that while the joy of a festival for dedicated enthusiasts is the opportunity to sample multiple events, it is equally the excitement surrounding the occasion through which single ticket buyers may be first attracted to a venue or artistic organization. Roughly half the respondents were coming for the first time and roughly half said they would see only one performance, but more than 90% indicated an interest in future Wilma productions.
- 4.34. DanceBoom! demonstrated that there is demand for quality Philadelphia-based dance in a full-service venue. The attendance figures DanceBoom! achieved suggest that it is a useful model for growing this audience – whether for the Wilma itself, for individual companies, for dance as a whole or, more likely, for all of them.
- 4.35. With such a resounding success in hand – one that was repeated and marginally expanded in 2003 – the questions inevitably arise as to the length of time over which such success might be sustained and whether such evidence of demand does not in itself provide support for the 'build it and they will come' philosophy espoused by some interviewees when advocating for a presentation home for Philadelphia dance. DanceBoom! happens in the undesirable off-season of January and even there an expanded schedule would be squeezed by the Wilma Theater's own season. Shouldn't this impressive level of demand, measured at a less than ideal time of year, be transferred elsewhere, where it could expand without impediment on the basis of an increased number of performances?
- 4.36. The success of the festival format is premised upon the concentration of performance activity of the highest quality – and the financial and marketing resources to support it – during a short time period. If any one of these is diluted, the glue that binds the audience to the event will come unstuck. Were space and resources unlimited, the only pertinent question would be the quantity of material of DanceBoom!'s caliber available to present and the size of the audience that one could reasonably expect to sustain.

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- 4.37. Each of the billings in DanceBoom! 2002 might have added another night with success, and some perhaps two or three nights. There are also other companies that were not included in the 2002 edition (some appeared in the 2003 DanceBoom!) that could be expected to draw an audience for three or four nights in a theater like the Wilma. Taken together, however, the sum of this supply adds to perhaps a month and a half's worth of programming nights in comparison to DanceBoom!' s fifteen in 2002 and eighteen in 2003. The festival format provides the collaborative context and the audience interest to leverage the month's worth of dance performances in aggregate that was identified at the conclusion of our chapter on presenting (cf. 3.12).
- 4.38. Gross ticket income for DanceBoom! 2002 was \$64,346.09 with an average ticket price of \$15.43. DanceBoom! 2003, with three more nights of programming and a slightly lower average ticket price of \$15.12, grossed \$75,165.59. While these are encouraging figures, they are not yet of sufficient order to contribute meaningfully to the operating costs of a dedicated theater for dance – or to reasonable fees for the many performers that made the event such a success.
- 4.39. As suggested at the beginning of this section, the opportunity to present at a high level for those who lack the audience or the financial resources to go it alone is a real benefit – to these companies, to the audience, and to the dance community. But the festival context – and the multiple-performer billing strategy – is critical to DanceBoom!' s success, even as it may over time play a significant role in building audience support for individual groups and for more regular dance presentations elsewhere year round.

Summary: Balancing Supply and Demand

- 4.40. The audience for dance in Philadelphia is under-developed, particularly the paying component of it. It can be developed without a full-time dedicated presentation space, although all other things being equal, such a space would make the task easier – provided there were a sufficient quantity of quality work to present. At present, this quantity and the effective audience demand for it are too limited to justify a dedicated presentation venue. (Indeed, a dark or half-empty theater might well serve to suppress the development of audiences for Philadelphia-based dance.) DanceBoom! provides an appropriate model for a middle ground strategy that brings dance and its audience together while developing both of them.

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- 4.41. There are real and legitimate needs on the part of some Philadelphia-based organizations for presentation space that is available with greater consistency; these needs need to be addressed within the existing infrastructure. Audience demand is unlikely to be stimulated without the availability of these spaces, without continued contributed support, and without the development of marketing and administrative sophistication more broadly within the dance community. This latter need points to the importance of an effective vehicle for developing non-artistic capacities within the community, a topic to which we return in a subsequent chapter.

5. **Funding History of Dance in Philadelphia, 1998-2002**

- 5.1. The recent patterns of funding for the dance community provide the context for understanding why dance as an art form has flourished and why so much choreographic talent is in evidence in Philadelphia, while the community still has work to do in terms of developing organizational capacity and audiences.

Methodology

- 5.2. Appendix C provides a tabular five-year history of grants expenditures by eight major supporters of dance, including Dance Advance, The Pew Charitable Trusts, the William Penn Foundation, the Independence Foundation, the Fels Foundation, the Bartol Foundation, PennPAT, and the City (funding information from the State of Pennsylvania was not available). These numbers were compiled directly from grants reports, which allowed us to appropriately categorize all outgoing dollars spent directly on the dance community. Grant dollars were allocated by year into five different categories: “Artistic Projects & Choreography Initiatives (Mission),” “Presenting,” “General Operating Support,” “Capacity Building & Technical Assistance,” and “Capital Projects & Planning Grants.” Because of the scale of funding to Philadelphia’s largest organizations, The Pennsylvania Ballet and Philadanco, grants to these companies were dealt with separately.
- 5.3. The figures in Appendix C capture the majority of dollars from which the dance community benefited during the period. However, grants that did not go directly to the dance community or for which eventual expenditure was more diffuse were not included. For example, although The Painted Bride actively presents dance (albeit in varying quantity from year to year), a general operating support grant to The Bride was not included in the aggregation of grant dollars because the dance community was not the *primary* beneficiary and its benefit from the grant was too difficult to track; conversely, dollars to The Bride were included if earmarked specifically for the presentation of dance. Funding devoted to general arts education programs delivered by a variety of entities, and of which dance may have been a part, was not included; in contrast, funding to assist Headlong Dance Theater’s dance camp was included.

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- 5.4. Grants that were awarded for multiple purposes and/or for multiple years – for example, a grant of \$50,000 over 36 months to establish a new administrative position *and* to support artists fees – were divided into separate years and different categories – in this case ‘capacity building’ and ‘artistic projects’, allocating half of each year’s funding (a third of the total) to each of these two categories. Equally, in the case of a multi-year grant awarded in 2002 to run through 2004, only the dollars for 2002 were included in order to ensure accurate annual funding totals.
- 5.5. There is necessarily an element of judgment involved in this method of allocating funds to different expenditure areas, particularly as the degree of fine-grained detail in grant description varies from one granting organization to the next. For example, the existence of the Dance Advance initiative of The Pew Charitable Trusts is in itself a form of ‘capacity building’ for the Philadelphia Dance community, even as the grants it makes to individuals and organizations may be categorized according to their support of other specific goals (artistic, general operating, etc.). In this case, the funding required to operate and administer the program appears as funding from The Trusts in “Capacity Building & Technical Assistance” in Appendix C, while the grants and other expenditures of the program itself within the community are allocated according to their purpose under the Dance Advance heading.
- 5.6. Analyzing individual grants – and seeking further descriptive information in cases of uncertainty – assured that grants were appropriately catalogued. The foundation community was uniformly helpful in providing the information required to achieve accurate results. We assumed that all organizations and individuals utilized the funds according to the purposes for which the grants were allocated.

Findings

- 5.7. The total aggregate expenditure specifically directed towards the dance community by the eight funding sources analyzed from 1998 to 2002 was \$9.4 million, of which \$3.1 million was allocated to the Ballet and Philadanco. Although the Ballet and Philadanco are important components of the community and their organizational presence and physical spaces have a wider resonance within the dance community, our primary area of interest is the remaining \$6.3 million allocated to the rest of the dance community. (As stated elsewhere, the scale of operation of the Ballet and Philadanco mean that these organizations and their challenges are somewhat different from those of other elements of the dance community.)
- 5.8. From 1998 to 2002, this \$6.1 million was divided as follows:
- Artistic Projects & Choreography Initiatives: \$2.6m (41.2%)
 - Presenting: \$1.2m (19.6%)
 - General Operating Support: \$1.1m (18.0%)
 - Capacity Building & Technical Assistance: \$1.3m (20.3%)
 - Capital Projects & Planning Grants: \$57k (0.9%)
- 5.9. Funds devoted specifically to mission related activities, to presenting, and to general operations – for which most funding can be assumed to go towards artistic efforts, with the balance devoted to basic organizational maintenance – accounts for \$5.0 million or 78.8% of the funding over the last five years. It should be noted that this figure represents an extraordinary commitment to the development of artistic capacity by the Philadelphia funding community, particularly as much of the funding went to emerging organizations or individuals. Hundreds of applicant organizations and individuals have directly benefited from this funding.

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- 5.10. The amount allocated to capital projects and planning is small not because these funding entities have not supported projects such as the Kimmel Center, the Mann Center, the Prince Theater, etc. Again, because the Philadelphia dance community was not the primary beneficiary of capital and capital planning grant dollars during this period, funds to these and similar organization were not included in our 'capital projects' totals. What remains are those funds related to capital projects and planning solely for the dance community, to which the present exercise belongs.
- 5.11. The amount allocated to "Capacity Building & Technical Assistance" – funds that help organizations professionalize by developing administrative, managerial, marketing, and other skills – may seem appropriate at 20%. (Funding delivered to the Philadelphia Dance Alliance during this five-year period falls under this header and accounts for 23% of the \$1.3 million.) However, 59% of this \$1.3 million is made up of funds distributed through Dance Advance – the primary area of investment for which has been artistic development – and the costs associated with running the Dance Advance program itself for the five-year period. (Costing 14 cents per dollar distributed for all internal administrative and operational costs, Dance Advance appears to be an efficient operation.)
- 5.12. As described elsewhere in this report (cf. 7.7 – 7.8), Dance Advance has of necessity expanded beyond its primary focus on artistic development, as complementary and related needs have arisen within the community that the program has sought to address. And the difference between artistic capacity building and technical capacity building should not, in fact, be drawn too distinctly; in the best of circumstances, these two are integrally related and mutually reinforce each other.
- 5.13. Beyond funding directed to or through the PDA and Dance Advance, however, the remaining dollars devoted to "Capacity Building & Technical Assistance" were \$227k or 3.6% of the total \$6.3 million during the five-year period. The amount of funding annually devoted to this area by the philanthropic community as a whole (including the PDA and Dance Advance) increased substantially during the period, from \$107k in 1998 to \$515k in 2002. There is also an imperfect correlation between dollars devoted to this area annually and the technical and financial capacity of individual organizations at the same moment because there is an unavoidable lag in seeing results from the dollars invested. In other words, hiring an administrative director, implementing (and sustaining) an aggressive marketing campaign, or developing a stronger board of directors all take a while to pay off.

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- 5.14. On average, however, the balance between funding devoted specifically to this area and that devoted to artistic development (and general support) over the last five years has not been optimal in terms of one area's reinforcing the gains made in the other. The heavier allocation of funding to artistic development in comparison to the relatively small allocation to capacity building and technical assistance helps explain why the quantity and quality of dance in Philadelphia is high when the number of organizations with the financial and organizational capacity to effectively present themselves and manage their own growth strategically is small.
- 5.15. This analysis is descriptive of a particular funding history over a specific time frame, one in which the Philadelphia dance community's artistic capacity and profile have increased. It is unwarranted – indeed it would be disingenuous – to criticize in retrospect and on the basis of current weaknesses and more recently pressing needs a funding strategy that continues to serve the community well. That the community has additional needs – or that non-artistic needs may now seem equally pressing or more urgent – is an indication of the community's dynamism and growth.
- 5.16. Current needs are best addressed from the perspective of 2003, building upon the advances made and the lessons learned over the past five years. While our analysis may point the way towards a shift in funding priorities, we would caution against a *volte-face* response from the philanthropic community. The best of circumstances, again, is a strategic – indeed, a collaborative – funding environment in which artistic capacity building and technical capacity building are integrally related and mutually reinforcing. Many elements of the dance community are poised to benefit from investment in capacity building and organizational development.

6. Rehearsal Space and its Allocation in Philadelphia

- 6.1. The rehearsal needs of the Philadelphia dance community are currently met by a wide variety of spaces controlled by a range of entities – from dance companies themselves, to universities, churches and other nonprofit institutions with excess space. The dance community in Philadelphia is resourceful and astute both politically and financially in finding the space it needs to rehearse, although this space is not always ideal physically, conveniently located in terms of time or geography, or in plentiful supply. There are few needs in excess of the available spaces except for unusual but cyclically recurring periods of high activity: space for an uninterrupted month-long residency is difficult to secure at any time, the end of semesters when university students are preparing works for presentation is problematic, and the in-flux of artists during an event like the Philadelphia Fringe Festival means a scramble for space.
- 6.2. Taken together, these periodic space crunches indicate that Philadelphia’s dance community is currently utilizing available rehearsal space near maximum capacity. Ironically, this does not mean that all spaces are utilized to the extent they could be. The low-cost rehearsal studios at Philadanco are a prime example of spaces that are underutilized, even as dancers and choreographers assert that they regularly have difficulty securing rehearsal space – or counting upon the ability to secure it regularly. Perceptions of neighborhood safety – whether real or imagined in today’s Philadelphia – are part of the problem. But a greater part stems from the fact that dance is a group activity practiced by artists who often work other jobs during the day or night; group scheduling requires appropriate space that is conveniently located and available at a mutually acceptable time.
- 6.3. The dynamics of space availability, recent philanthropic funding patterns, and the scale of existing organizations have contributed to a situation in which there may be more choreographers in Philadelphia than would otherwise be the case: given there is no excess of convenient rehearsal space available to the whole community and that there are few professional dance companies in the city (i.e. who pay their dancers a regular salary that provides the bulk of their income), more dancers may dance to the beat of their own drum, as it were, than would be the case if there were an excess of convenient space or more paying professional companies.

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- 6.4. Also, as analyzed in Chapter Three, the funding available to the dance community has stimulated the development of choreographic work during recent years, a strategy that has raised the profile and the artistic excellence of Philadelphia dance. The number of choreographers applying for grants has also increased proportionally as philanthropic support directed to this area has been a primary income stream for dancers and choreographers alike, particularly in the absence of paying audiences. The need for more and more conveniently available rehearsal spaces has therefore been stimulated, even if the current need does not consistently overwhelm the current capacity.
- 6.5. Most of the spaces for rehearsal in the city are, in theory, available to the whole community (particularly at less desirable times). In practice, however, this availability is limited by prioritization schemes that vary according to site but that rely heavily upon personal connections, whether at an individual or an institutional level. In other words, if you are a dancer or choreographer in need of a place to rehearse, it behooves you to be on a friendly basis with someone who has got it and has the power to give it to you – or at least to sell it to you at below “market” rates. This situation is in fact reinforced by the inability of many dancers to pay market rates for the spaces they secure or by their lack of experience doing so.
- 6.6. The availability and current usage patterns of rehearsal space in Philadelphia are therefore best characterized as operating according to the logic and political economy of fiefdoms. While this fiefdom system is dominant, it need not exist in the absence of a free market; it need only provide an advantage to those who operate according to its logic. The system is more or less benevolent, with most members of the community intending to share their excess resources – excess space or time in this space – with the whole community. Excess space and time are not, however, in plentiful supply, which leads to the prioritization mechanisms that characterize access to virtually all spaces.

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- 6.7. The ramifications of this system – basically a pre-modern patronage system – extend far beyond rehearsal practice. It affects presenting – who is able to secure which space, when, for what reasons, and at what cost. And it intensifies the sense of “haves” and “have nots” that unavoidably exists as a result of the dance community’s primary patronage system – that of foundation funding – although each of these systems may be used (and on occasion *are* used) to counterbalance the effects of the other. It is also partially responsible for the representation that one sometimes encounters of the dance community as a group of (opposing) “camps” – and this despite the fact that there is a genuine collaborative sensibility within the dance community at large and widespread interest in a home for Philadelphia dance as a whole. Indeed, that goal would appear to be fueled at least partially by the experience of operating under the current system – hence the frequently expressed desire for the management of any space available to the community at large for whatever purpose to be aesthetically neutral.
- 6.8. Before briefly illustrating how this system works, two clarifications are requisite. First, no value judgment is intended in this description of the *status quo*, nor any judgment of members of the dance community. We have already stated that non-commercial dance presents an example of ‘market failure’; like most of the cultural sector, it requires philanthropic support – patronage in one form or another – to exist. Were rehearsal space more readily available on a competitive, free market basis to whomever had the funds to secure it, philanthropic support would still be required – unless there were such a surplus of appropriate space that effective demand for it would be negligible. In the absence of this condition, a free market system would simply transfer advantage from those with the personal connections or professional histories that bind them to specific spaces to those with the ability to secure the requisite funding to hire space at the market rate. To suggest that Philadelphia’s fiefdom system of space allocation is inferior to the ‘survival of the fittest’ conditions of the free market, therefore, is to misunderstand the economics of dance itself. Patronage in one form or another will inevitably be required. And so long as it works, this particular patronage system may in fact be preferable to a more free market system. What it lacks in terms of the transparency of its operations, for example, it may make up for in terms of cost efficiencies.

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- 6.9. Second, with respect to rehearsal needs, this system *does* appear to be working in the present environment, although not without its incidents of inefficiency, friction, or dissatisfaction. That is, while some are mystified by who gets space, why, and at what rate, or look upon the more explicable advantages of his or her colleague with envy, the system generally does not present prohibitive difficulties. The majority of dancers and choreographers are able to secure the space they need most of the time.
- 6.10. A few illustrative examples of how this system works:
- Nichole Canuso and Moxie – Nichole attended a dance camp given by Headlong and subsequently became one of Headlong’s regular dancers. Her collective, Moxie, an offshoot of the Independent Choreographers Exchange (a Philadelphia Dance Alliance initiative), rehearses at Headlong’s space, the Parlor, at a discounted rate. Moxie is given second priority after Headlong for rehearsal time. She would prefer to have a regular set time and to rehearse more but would not pay more than the discount rate at Headlong. The rehearsal schedule at the Parlor is generally filled by Headlong, Moxie, and the dancers that comprise these companies; what excess time is available is held by Headlong to ensure that these dancers and choreographers have some degree of flexibility.
 - Rebecca Sloan and the Bald Mermaids – A pick-up dancer for many choreographers and companies, Rebecca and her primary company, the Bald Mermaids are part of the Kumquat Collective. This collective has priority for use of the CEC rehearsal space where the Collective is resident; the CEC is also the Bald Mermaids’ primary performance venue. Whatever excess time is available for non-Kumquat use of rehearsal spaces is generally used by those with a connection to the Collective, if only because they are best positioned to know when the space might turn up free.
 - Susan Hess Modern Dance – The “Choreographers Project” at Susan Hess Dance provides rehearsal time to a group of rotating but recurring individual choreographers whose aesthetic interests are shared by Susan Hess; space allocation works on a residency model, with each resident having 10 hours of weekly studio time 10 months of the year. Those within the group receive preferred rates for any excess time available in the studio, of which there is little. Susan Hess Modern Dance is seasonally presenting the resident choreographers at the Kimmel Center’s black box.

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- Paule Turner – This choreographer and dancer was a student at Temple University. While his company has been provided some rehearsal space at the University of the Arts on a preferential basis, his alumni relationship with Temple led to his summer rehearsal residency at one of the university studios, a program for which there were open calls. There are very few applicants for this new program, but those who have benefited from it are Temple alumni; they may be the only ones who are aware of the program or are comfortable with the location of the space. The committee that vets applications, however, is composed of Temple staff and alumni, and preference would be given to Temple affiliates in the event there were a larger applicant pool.
 - Christine Cox and Phrenic New Ballet – Phrenic rehearses at little or no charge at the University of the Arts and the Drake Theater when it is available. Christine has a long-standing relationship with Susan Glaser, the director of the dance program at the University, and has taught in the department. (Eleone Dance, whose deceased founder attended the University of the Arts, also rehearses free of charge at the University and secures the Drake theater for performance at a discounted rate.) There is little or no excess rehearsal time available in University spaces.
 - The universities distribute space first to classes, then to students, then to professors, then to others, for which engaged and/or accomplished alumni are high on the preferential list. Both Temple and the University of the Arts expressed a need for more rehearsal space even for the inner circle of their users (students and professors). They are a strong and powerful component of the dance ecology broadly, but they are very important in their ownership of – and need for – spaces. Quite rightly, their primary constituencies are likely to remain the same and the hierarchy of their user groups similar.
- 6.11. Several of the spaces just mentioned are candidate “nodes of activity” for potential future development (cf. 2.3 – 2.4), although there are dramatic differences among them in terms of current mission, organizational history, and relationships to the wider community. Implementing this development strategy – refurbishing the CEC, for example, or assisting universities with the refurbishment of space for rehearsal – is, on first blush, a cost-effective and considerably lower risk strategy than the other potential scenario put forward, that of developing a service-focused dance center. Given that the present system works for the most part and that excess needs (i.e. current unsatisfied demand) are not overwhelming current capacity, this conservative scenario has its merits.

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- 6.12. This space allocation mechanism, however, also has its risks. Fueling its development may further separate different cohorts or attenuate lines of communication that exist between them – particularly if what is supported on the grounds of its benefit to the entire community comes to benefit only a select group. Furthermore, leadership in each of these institutions is the glue that holds the current system together; should leadership change, there would undoubtedly be a reshuffling of priorities with new leadership that would leave some without space – or with a much more difficult task securing it. Leadership changes would not level the playing field for the whole community, they would simply redistribute existing imbalances. The delicate equilibrium that has been achieved is at risk of being upset if some entities (or too few of them) are preferred to others or if significant changes in leadership occur. Should this happen, it could prove detrimental to the sustainability of some organizations whose current needs are, for the most part, adequately met now.
- 6.13. There is therefore a compelling argument for the development of additional rehearsal space that is available to the community on a free-market basis. (Again, it is unlikely that any constituency within the dance sector can compete with commercial enterprises for prime space. The term ‘free market’ is used with this caveat in mind.) This space could absorb the additional demand that arises cyclically and mitigate the risks associated with the currently dominant system of securing space. It is difficult to quantify the exact amount of space that would meet these objectives; two or three large dance studios of the scale (if not the pristine character) of those at the University of the Arts, however, would likely suffice. The following characteristics would be most important in the provision of such spaces:
- the free-market nature of their availability to the whole of the dance community (although there would be a real need to protect against ‘space grabbing’ by those with the greatest financial capacity, i.e. the universities, or others beyond the dance community)
 - their control by a neutral entity
 - a convenient and central location and
 - their affordability within the context of a community that is not accustomed to paying commercial or even standard nonprofit rates for space. (At the same time, however, the ability to pay needs to be developed within the community more broadly – the long-term viability of any space depends upon this.)

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- 6.14. Additional spaces would not be used to maximum capacity, at least initially. But they would provide some comfort that the dance activity that has been so successfully nurtured during the past decade could continue to develop without the impediments that many work through or around in the system that controls the allocation of current spaces.
- 6.15. Given the need for such space(s) to be “neutral” and freely available to those who can afford it, the issue of its management is necessarily of primary concern. There are few if any organizations within the dance community with the additional capacity and the dedicated interest required to successfully manage a space rental business and to fund its upkeep, particularly if they are not the primary beneficiary. We return to this issue in the next chapter, which briefly considers the need for administrative space within the dance community. In the absence of an identifiable independent entity to manage a small, multi-use rehearsal center, any build out of rehearsal space that is avowedly for the use of the community at large needs to be evaluated in light of the foregoing discussion.

7. Administrative Space and Service Needs

- 7.1. The need for expanded or enhanced administrative space was expressed by several interviewees. These needs ranged from smaller organizations whose business activities are conducted primarily out of homes (Melanie Stewart, Kulu Mele, Eleone Dance, among others) to medium-size and larger organizations whose operations have outgrown their current spaces (the Folklore Project, the Fringe Festival, Rennie Harris, among others).
- 7.2. For a majority of organizations, the need for administrative space goes hand in hand with a need for capacity building. Particularly among smaller groups, the financial capacity required to take on administrative space is lacking. The communities represented by the Philadelphia Folklore Project require administrative space but are not sufficiently large on an individual basis to sustain spaces of their own. The same could be said for the modern dance community that does not currently occupy administrative offices, the smaller groups and individuals that have not yet grown to the administrative and operational complexity of a Koresh, a Rennie Harris, or a Group Motion, among a handful of others.
- 7.3. For a small number of organizations, the requisite administrative and financial capacity await the appropriate opportunity to initiate expansion. These organizations have generally developed capacity through effective development of funding constituencies, including audiences (Rennie Harris and the Fringe, for example), although further physical expansion will require organizational growth, too.
- 7.4. The emphasis within the funding community on project-based support has tended to encourage the maintenance of smaller, more flexible organizations. While the result may have been a comparative under-investment in the development of organizations as such, this has also mitigated the risk of unsustainable or unjustified growth. A balance of audience support, diversified base of philanthropic support, and administrative capacity provides a solid platform for sustainable growth. The number of organizations with this balance in evidence is small.

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- 7.5. Numerous organizations of varying scale could make use of shared administrative space, but the leadership and management infrastructure to facilitate the development of such a collaboration or vet potential users is under-developed. The need for administrative space should therefore be seen as inseparable from the broader need for capacity-building strategies.
- 7.6. The funding community could – collectively – play an effective role in helping articulate such strategies, but neither it nor the consultative process in which AEA has been engaged are appropriate vehicles for the solicitation of leadership or potential collaborative partners. The impetus for collaboration and for the development of administrative space needs to come from the dance community itself.
- 7.7. Dance service infrastructure in Philadelphia is currently weak. Many identify the Philadelphia Dance Alliance as the appropriate locus for service infrastructure – or assume that is its role. The PDA serves a broad and diverse constituency, primarily through the dissemination of an array of information (both on-site and off), but it does not currently play an active leadership role within the dance community itself. Its mission also includes supporting dance education initiatives for youths, choreographic initiatives for independent artists, and raising the awareness of dance in general among the population at large – a tall order for any organization and particularly for one with so few staff. Beyond the foundation community, however, the PDA is apparently the only independent organization whose explicit purpose it is to serve the entire dance community on an impartial basis.
- 7.8. In the absence of strong service organization leadership within the community, this role has been taken on by a handful of stronger organizations, none of which, although capable of initiating effective results, are ideally suited to the task. Those looking for leadership, for technical assistance or simply for up-to-minute, insider information seek it out wherever they can find it. Dance Advance is primary among the organizations to which those looking for answers may turn because of the strong, visible role it plays in the community and the supportive nature of its primary mission. This has created a situation in which some perceive there is ‘no separation of church and state,’ as one interviewee observed – where the critical service role is implicitly played by the same organization that provides the bulk of funding for the community. (Funding decisions for Dance Advance project awards are determined on the basis of artistic criteria by a panel of dance professionals from outside the region, not by staff or local adjudicators.)

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- 7.9. Other strong organizations that play a convening leadership role either because of their mission (the Fringe Festival and DanceBoom!, for example) or their visibility and importance to the community (the Kumquat Collective, for example, in addition to the Fringe) tend to have an explicit curatorial or artistic focus. This leads to the perception – whether real or imaginary – that objectivity is compromised and that even in the best of circumstances, there may not be equal opportunity for all within the community.
- 7.10. No one service organization is likely to be able to provide for all of the service needs in a given community all the time. These needs change as organizations evolve, and the number and variety of organizations in the Philadelphia dance community mean that there may be a wide range of needs at any given moment.
- 7.11. The absence of a dynamic service and support organization that might play a convening role within the community and offer effective, impartial leadership nevertheless remains a significant weakness within the dance ecology. The collaborative spirit that exists within the dance community would benefit from a strengthened service organization, one that could effectively broker this spirit into tangible alliances, of which shared administrative space would be but one example. Such an organization would also be an appropriate locus for the distribution of practical tools and hands-on support for capacity building, which the majority of the dance community needs in order to secure the advances made in recent years.

8. Recommendations and Ways Forward

8.1. Much of the analysis in this report confirms preliminary conclusions from our first round of interviews with the Philadelphia dance community. However, our further analysis has deepened our understanding of several key issues – the size of the dance audience(s) and the need for audience development; the logic of the space distribution system and its attendant rewards and risks; and the nature of the real versus perceived space needs within the community at large. It has also afforded the opportunity to witness first hand the vibrancy and variety of the Philadelphia dance community.

8.2. We conclude with eight specific recommendations. Together they are the steps that might usefully be taken to strengthen Philadelphia’s dance community:

- *Recommendation One:* A theater devoted to Philadelphia-based dance presentations should be taken off the short to medium-term agenda (that is, for the next three to five years). There is insufficient demand from paying audiences and insufficient organizational capacity among existing dance organizations to support such a space. Focusing on this more distant goal distracts resources and energies from the practical steps that could help strengthen the community now.
- *Recommendation Two:* While the creation of a new performance space is currently unwarranted, the lack of a consistently available and affordable mid-size presenting venue is nevertheless real. Presenting opportunities that make use of existing infrastructure, like that provided by DanceBoom! (analyzed in Chapter Four), are therefore important for the community. The philanthropic community might consider continued support of these activities.
- *Recommendation Three:* Development of the audience for dance in Philadelphia – specifically the paying audience and, from that, a constituency of donors – should be prioritized. Events like DanceBoom! are an effective tool in this effort, but a more comprehensive audience development strategy would be beneficial to the community.

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- *Recommendation Four:* Dance service infrastructure in Philadelphia needs to be strengthened. It is the underdeveloped link in an ecology that needs it. Ideally, a strengthened service organization would be the primary vehicle both for the dissemination of technical assistance to support the development of individual organizations and for convening individuals and organizations with similar space needs, potentially for the benefit of the entire community. Whether via a single organization or multiple ones, however, there is a need for the effective delivery of a broad array of organizational capacity-building services.
 - *Recommendation Five:* The dance community at large needs to internalize the critical importance of non-artistic capacity building and take responsibility for increasing capacity on an individual basis. A strong dance service organization and the philanthropic community itself could champion and support these efforts. The development of managerial, organizational and financial skills more broadly within the community is a necessary step towards the long-term ambition of a space devoted to the presentation of dance in Philadelphia.
 - *Recommendation Six:* The community should set as a medium-term objective (within approximately five years) the development of additional rehearsal space – provided the necessary steps to build capacity (addressed in other recommendations) are taken, which will help ensure the effective use and financial viability of any additional space. Additional rehearsal space would ideally be managed independently and available on a free-market basis to the whole community; this might help to provide the greater sense of connection, collective purpose and identity that many in the dance community seek and that the current system of space distribution may, on occasion, work against.
 - *Recommendation Seven:* One idea for addressing rehearsal and performance space needs in the short to medium term (i.e. over the next three to five years) is that individual “nodes” of current activity might be more aggressively developed. We recommend that this strategy be pursued only with caution. While it is a comparatively cost effective and pragmatic solution, offering tangible benefits that build upon existing strengths within the community, it also risks exacerbating systemic tendencies toward fragmentation within the community that may work against the collaborative spirit that is now much in evidence. Further, if the dance community as a whole maintains as a long-term ambition a primary venue for dance in Philadelphia, interim facility build out that may narrow the range of options in the future needs to be considered carefully.

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- *Recommendation Eight:* This report provides the opportunity to disseminate a deeper understanding of the dance ecology in Philadelphia, its achievements and current challenges, and the logic behind the conclusions reached in this report regarding the provision of space. As the dissemination of the research may help to build a stronger sense of community, we recommend that the report be made more widely available. This report could provide the platform for a common understanding of the operating environment in which the Philadelphia dance community finds itself, for celebrating its successes during recent years, and for focusing on those areas where its energies can be most strategically deployed during the next phase of its development.

Appendix A: List of Interviewees

Conrad Bender, dance technical director serving numerous Philadelphia companies

Bill Bissell, Director, Dance Advance

Tina Bracciale, Winged Women Dance Collective and Rennie Harris Puremovement

David Brick, co-Artistic Director, Headlong Dance Theater

Joan Meyers Brown, Executive Director, Philadanco

Nichole Canuso, Co-Artistic Director, Moxie Dance Collective

Christine Cox, Co-Artistic Director, Phrenic New Ballet; corps de ballet, Pennsylvania Ballet

Nancy Dengler, Executive Director, Philadelphia Dance Alliance

Manfred Fischbeck, Artistic Director and Founder, Group Motion; Founder, Kumquat

Terry Fox, Director, Philadelphia Dance Projects; former dance curator, The Painted Bride Art Center

Susan Glaser, Chair, Department of Dance, University of the Arts

Naomi Grabel, former Managing Director, Wilma Theater

Helen Henry, independent dance curator (formerly International House)

Susan Hess, Artistic Director, Susan Hess Modern Dance

Luke Kahlich, Chair, Department of Dance, Temple University

Debra Kodish, Director, Philadelphia Folklore Project

Ronen Koresh, Artistic Director, Koresh Dance Company

Alon Koresh, Managing Director, Koresh Dance Company

Troy A. Martin-O'Shia, Technical Director, Arts Bank Theater

Whit McGlaughlin, Artistic Director, New Paradise Laboratories

Amanda Miller, Co-Artistic Director, Phrenic New Ballet; former dancer, Pennsylvania Ballet

Michael Rose, Managing Director, Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts

Michael Scolamiero, Executive Director, Pennsylvania Ballet

Rebecca Sloan, Co-Founder, The Bald Mermaids

Leah Stein, Artistic Director, Leah Stein Dance Company

Melanie Stewart, Artistic Director, Melanie Stewart Dance Theater

Nick Stuccio, Producing Director, Philadelphia Fringe Festival

F. Randolph Swartz, Artistic Director, Dance Affiliates

Sheila Ward, Executive Director and dancer, Eleone Dance Theater

Dorothy Wilkie, Artistic Director, Kulu Mele African American Dance Ensemble

Appendix B: Principal Venues for Dance in Philadelphia

Note: The table below details the spaces of a broad size range that were mentioned during our interviews, along with expressions of their perceived suitability and shortcomings. (There may be other relevant spaces not mentioned by interviewees.)

Venue	Seats	Availability	Notes on Suitability / Cost
Zellerbach Theater, Annenberg Center, U. Penn	970	U. Penn programming (Penn Presents, of which dance is a part) limits availability substantially.	Good for dance, but the capacity is generally too large for Philadelphia dance companies, making it economically unviable.
Perelman Theater, Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts	650	RPAC's programming limits availability.	Practicality for dance is unknown, although Danco will perform there. Costs are generally considered prohibitive.
Prince Music Theater	450	Very limited availability because of Prince Theater's programming (an 8 play season schedule; Film Festival; Curtis Opera (2 weeks in fall and spring); International Festival of World Cinema; Gay and Lesbian Film Festival); also used by Philadanco. Commitment to dance presentation is not central to the organization's mission.	Rent cost per night is \$3,000 + inclusive, making it generally prohibitive. Not an ideal stage for dance.
Mandel Theater, Drexel University	424	Available only during school breaks for outside companies to rent. There are three 1-2 week breaks throughout the year.	Adequate space.
Wilma theater	297	Available on a limited basis. Priority to Wilma's current 5-play schedule and other needs.	Site of 2002 and 2003 DanceBoom! Space and cost generally considered viable.
Iron Gate Theater	290	U. Penn programming (Penn Presents) limits availability substantially.	Suitable for theater and dance performances but dance floor has to be installed at client's expense (not ideal).
Painted Bride Arts Center	280	Availability limited due to Painted Bride's programming leaving approximately 40 days available between Sept. and June. Dance only a portion of the Bride's programming (20%).	Only one dressing room. Lacks wing capacity but generally considered adequate. Rents space in an Open Door series, generally for community rentals (\$1,000 everything included). In general, sells at 40-50% capacity for current dance programs.

Venue	Seats	Availability	Suitability / Cost
ArtsBank, University of the Arts	230	Perceived as available only to University of the Arts related activities and performances, although this may have changed over the last year.	Not considered an ideal presenting space for dance, but the community rallied behind the venue until the University assumed control.
Herald Prince Theater, Annenberg Center, U. Penn	211	U. Penn programming (Penn Presents) limits availability substantially.	Not considered a good space for dance.
Conwell Theater, Temple University	170	Available Sept.-May on a limited basis. Priority goes to University dance department activities and programming.	Considered merely adequate as a theater for dance.
University for the Arts, Drake	170	Availability limited to U of A classes and performances needs, and off-semester for non-university organizations.	Considered an adequate space for dance.
CEC	100	Available year round; dedicated space.	Small, informal black box without fly or wing capacity.
<u>OTHER</u>			
Arden Theater in Old City	175-studio; Primarily theater; limited other availability. 360-mainstage		Phrenic has used as a performance space. Flexible seating, a black-box without proscenium.

Appendix C: History of Dance Funding, 1998-2002

Foundation/Funding Initiative		Dance Advance	Other Pew Trusts	William Penn	Independence	Fels	Bartol	PennPat	City (State N/A)	Totals by Year
Artistic Projects & Choreography Initiatives (Mission)	1998	210500	0	44550		5418	3000			\$263,468
	1999	300950	0	66000		4000	4000			\$374,950
	2000	345180	0	92500	15000	2000	5000		3787	\$463,467
	2001	424280	0	166000	36500	4000	18000		5722	\$654,502
	2002	445500	0	349370	5000	4000	10000		15986	\$829,856
	subtotal	\$1,726,410	\$0	\$718,420	\$56,500	\$19,418	\$40,000	\$0	\$25,495	\$2,586,243
Presenting	1998	97000		55000		3500	3000	9208	3836	\$171,544
	1999	125000		27500		17500	3000	26930	8112	\$208,042
	2000	148303		82500		8000	5000	13471	5715	\$262,989
	2001	105303		55000		7000		130295	10681	\$308,279
	2002	80000		80000		13500		103478	4641	\$281,619
	subtotal	\$555,606	\$0	\$300,000	\$0	\$49,500	\$11,000	\$283,382	\$32,985	\$1,232,473
General Operating Support	1998	20600	0	41250	23000	9000	9000		83713	\$186,563
	1999	21700	0		15000	14000	10500		101832	\$163,032
	2000	49200	0		16500	13500	12500		121409	\$213,109
	2001	128000	0	14083	30000	10500	12000		112632	\$307,215
	2002	38000	0	57349	30500	13000	20000		103199	\$262,048
	subtotal	\$257,500	\$0	\$112,682	\$115,000	\$60,000	\$64,000	\$0	\$522,785	\$1,131,967
Capacity Building & Technical Assistance	1998	15000	71900		3000	10000		6645		\$106,545
	1999	23600	161750	13200	20000			13490		\$232,040
	2000	23303	161711	27500	22000	4000		3400		\$241,914
	2001	103303	18811	15833	25500	3000		9835		\$176,282
	2002	93000	254000	120348	15000		5000	27520		\$514,868
	subtotal	\$258,206	\$668,172	\$176,881	\$85,500	\$17,000	\$5,000	\$60,890	\$0	\$1,271,649
Capital Projects & Planning Grants	1998									\$0
	1999			16500						\$16,500
	2000									\$0
	2001			40150						\$40,150
	2002									\$0
	subtotal	\$0	\$0	\$56,650	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$56,650

Foundation/Funding Initiative		Dance Advance	Other Pew Trusts	William Penn	Independence	Fels	Bartol	PennPat	City (State N/A)	Totals by Year
Total Funding	1998	\$343,100	\$71,900	\$140,800	\$26,000	\$27,918	\$15,000	\$15,853	\$87,549	\$728,120
	1999	\$471,250	\$161,750	\$123,200	\$35,000	\$35,500	\$17,500	\$40,420	\$109,944	\$994,564
	2000	\$565,986	\$161,711	\$202,500	\$53,500	\$27,500	\$22,500	\$16,871	\$130,911	\$1,181,479
	2001	\$760,886	\$18,811	\$291,066	\$92,000	\$24,500	\$30,000	\$140,130	\$129,035	\$1,486,428
	2002	\$656,500	\$254,000	\$607,067	\$50,500	\$30,500	\$35,000	\$130,998	\$123,826	\$1,888,391
Total w/o Ballet & Danco		\$2,797,722	\$668,172	\$1,364,633	\$257,000	\$145,918	\$120,000	\$344,272	\$581,265	\$6,278,982
Philadanco	1998	77000		100000	15000	8000	5000	36400	12135	\$253,535
	1999	72000		100000	20000	9500	11000	42870	16538	\$271,908
	2000	98303		100000	20000			32045	17110	\$267,458
	2001	73303		41500	20000	7500		87407	16748	\$246,458
	2002	80000		25000	25000	7000		27000	18400	\$182,400
	subtotal	\$400,606	\$0	\$366,500	\$100,000	\$32,000	\$16,000	\$225,722	\$80,931	\$1,221,759
Ballet (and School)	1998	76000			50000	3000				\$129,000
	1999	80000			50000	13000			16538	\$159,538
	2000	80000		387247	50000	13500			16739	\$547,486
	2001	80000		387247	17500			30100	16748	\$531,595
	2002			387247	60000	5000		15000	17450	\$484,697
	subtotal	\$316,000	\$0	\$1,161,742	\$227,500	\$34,500	\$0	\$45,100	\$67,475	\$1,852,317
Total w/Ballet & Danco	1998	\$496,100	\$71,900	\$240,800	\$91,000	\$38,918	\$20,000	\$52,253	\$99,684	\$1,110,655
	1999	\$623,250	\$161,750	\$223,200	\$105,000	\$58,000	\$28,500	\$83,290	\$143,020	\$1,426,010
	2000	\$744,289	\$161,711	\$689,747	\$123,500	\$41,000	\$22,500	\$48,916	\$164,760	\$1,996,423
	2001	\$914,189	\$18,811	\$719,813	\$129,500	\$32,000	\$30,000	\$257,637	\$162,531	\$2,264,481
	2002	\$736,500	\$254,000	\$1,019,314	\$135,500	\$42,500	\$35,000	\$172,998	\$159,676	\$2,555,488
GRAND TOTAL		\$3,514,328	\$668,172	\$2,892,875	\$584,500	\$212,418	\$136,000	\$615,094	\$729,671	\$9,353,058

Appendix D: DanceBoom! (2003)

DanceBoom! 2003 Results					
	Number of Seats	Number Sold	Capacity	Earned Revenue	Average ticket price
Robinson/Arte/Sharma					
22-Jan	302	294	97.4%	\$5,789.97	\$19.69
26-Jan	302	282	93.4%	\$4,319.85	\$15.32
31-Jan	302	301	99.7%	\$4,931.45	\$16.38
2-Feb	302	306	101.3%	\$4,991.49	\$16.31
9-Feb	302	301	99.7%	\$5,197.21	\$17.27
Total	1510	1484	98.3%	\$25,229.97	\$17.00
Leah Stein/Kulu Mele					
23-Jan	302	178	58.9%	\$1,971.50	\$11.08
30-Jan	302	184	60.9%	\$1,764.88	\$9.59
2-Feb	302	257	85.1%	\$3,573.13	\$13.90
7-Feb	302	302	100.0%	\$4,286.55	\$14.19
Total	1208	921	76.2%	\$11,596.06	\$12.59
Canuso/Soto					
24-Jan	302	266	88.1%	\$3,326.45	\$12.51
26-Jan	302	209	69.2%	\$3,014.77	\$14.42
1-Feb	302	265	87.7%	\$4,133.21	\$15.60
5-Feb	302	306	101.3%	\$3,963.20	\$12.95
Total	1208	1046	86.6%	\$14,437.63	\$13.80
Koresh/Rafael Xavier					
25-Jan	302	306	101.3%	\$5,366.59	\$17.54
29-Jan	302	302	100.0%	\$4,005.85	\$13.26
6-Feb	302	304	100.7%	\$4,291.55	\$14.12
8-Feb	302	305	101.0%	\$5,428.18	\$17.80
9-Feb	302	304	100.7%	\$4,809.76	\$15.82
Total	1510	1521	100.7%	\$23,901.93	\$15.71
Festival Totals	5436	4972	91.5%	\$75,165.59	\$15.12
Festival Averages	302	276	91.5%	\$4,176.48	\$15.12
Comp tickets of total sold	698				
Subscription tickets sold	753				
Ticket Prices	\$15 Wed-Thu		\$20 Fri-Sun		