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A Study of the Choreographer/Composer Collaboration By Van Stiefel

Abstract

This paper examines the working relationship of composers and choreographers in modern dance with attention to basic processes, barriers, and opportunities that characterize their collaborations. The paper draws its conclusions from a series of informal interviews and group discussions with musicians, choreographers, producers, presenters, and critics held at the 2000 Bates Dance Festival, as well as from the author's own experience as a composer. By outlining a brief history of music in modern dance and dance education, along with identifying the ways in which projects combining the two genres are initiated, the author identifies the historical and institutional contexts for the experiences of his informants. Basic scenarios for collaboration are defined and the opinions of participants examined regarding the perceived advantages and disadvantages of each type. Finally, the author suggests ways to overcome some of the existing barriers between composer and choreographer, music and dance, exploring how the structure of the world of modern dance influences artistic production.

Introduction

For those unfamiliar with the world of modern dance, a study of the collaboration between composers and choreographers from the viewpoint of a musician might prove useful as an “insider’s glimpse” into the complexities of this working relationship. For those who are active in the world of modern dance, however, this same study may be more useful if considered the observations “of an outsider.” Making music and making music for dance can seem to be strikingly different activities. I have “traveled” to the curious world of dance before, but neither my training as a composer/guitarist, nor even my previous forays into dance composition, can prepare me for the new things I encounter each time I revisit. To study the working relationship of a composer and choreographer is to find an interdependent pair of artists engaged in vastly different artistic processes but aspiring to a shared goal. I hope to illuminate those processes in ways useful not only to composers and choreographers, but also to producers, arts administrators, performers, and designers—to anyone involved in such collaborations.

The collaboration between choreographers and composers is complicated for variety of reasons, most of which concern issues of dependence and control *within* a given production that potentially conflict with the sense of independence and autonomy these art forms as professional networks enjoy *outside* the production. If the goal of choreography and composition is, as the common metaphor would have it, a “marriage” of music and dance, then the first priority, like that of a marriage, is to acknowledge possible obstacles. Such obstacles are familiar to any “marriage:” disputes over money, communication, values, etc. But of particular difficulty to the choreographer/composer relationship is that the training received by composers and choreographers, and the aesthetic assumptions they adopt consciously or unconsciously can make for misunderstandings of one another’s art form. The “structure” of the collaboration—what I am calling a complex of factors ranging from creative processes to professional relations within a “dance world” and/or “music world”—brings with it certain features that limit the freedom and range of both sides in any potential collaborative effort. My aim in this paper is to illuminate factors that have a decisive impact on the outcome of collaboration. I hope in this way to assist artists and other participants in distinguishing these factors from the many ad hoc influences that sometimes inspire and at other times hinder the creative process.

The primary research for this study resulted from interviews and casual conversations with choreographers, composers, dancers, producers, critics, lighting designers, and related professionals at the Bates Dance Festival. As an affiliate with the Center for Arts and Cultural Policy Studies at the Woodrow Wilson School, I conducted most of these during the 2000 Bates Dance Festival. This was my third summer at the annual festival, however, and many conversations/anecdotes from previous years informed the present inquiry and influenced my questions. In support of this research effort, the Bates Festival director, Laura Faure, organized an “artist’s roundtable” resulting in a three-hour group discussion between choreographers and composers about their experiences working together. In addition, I participated in a fascinating group discussion organized by the American Composers Forum and the Dance Theater Workshop in New York City. The Bates Festival included choreographers and composers widely ranging in experience and career development, many of them quite accomplished. Removed from New York and the “impulse to network” common to the City, our dialogue was straightforward and open

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and led to a number of even more frank one-on-one discussions related to what had been covered (or gone unsaid) in the initial discussion. I have chosen to refer to most informants as anonymously as possible. Contacts provided to me by my brother, Clark Stiefel (a composer/pianist who has worked with dance for some 15 years), led to phone calls, correspondences, and conversations with choreographers and composers who were not at Bates during these three summers. I am quite grateful Laura Faure and Clark for their help in providing access to all the artists contributing to this paper.

The nature/limits of the data

My research is based on anecdotal evidence from choreographers and composers describing in their own words successful and unsuccessful experiences in the profession. For the purposes of this paper, a successful collaboration is one that is *felt* to be successful by the artists involved. The primary purpose of this paper is not critical, but to identify the basic structures in which composers and choreographers work. These basic structures define how musicians and dancers will interact, regardless of whether the production is supported formally by an institution or becomes critically acclaimed. Individual productions are referred to in general terms; there are few specifics regarding budget, support organizations, names of artists, etc. This paper attempts to explain more generally how outside influences affect choices and patterns within the creative process. I hope others might use this general framework to better understand specific experiences at their own companies, grantees or collaborations.)

The structure of the music/dance collaboration: a brief history

The “marriage” metaphor for music and dance really only goes so far. It may say much more about the emotional experience of the collaboration on an interpersonal level than about any one artistic result or about the underlying generic conventions of both music and dance that influence all collaborative endeavors. The organizational forces shaping the collaboration, the history and nature of communication between the art forms can at times, make the music and dance collaboration resemble less a “marriage,” than a “trial reconciliation.” From the point of view of cultural policy, it is common and necessary to regard dance and music as separate disciplines with separate needs and concerns. For the most part, they have separate audiences and separate sources of funding. There are aesthetic and historical reasons for these commonly held divisions. The ease with which we can regard the two as separate is the result of a slow evolution of music and dance into “art forms”—activities free of a function once held in court or religious ceremony.

A key ingredient of ritual in many cultures, dance in western countries was separated from official religion by a church which found its emphasis on the body inconsistent with spiritual pursuits. In Europe, dance was either participatory, or integral to court spectacle. Modern dance from the early part of the twentieth century was derived from ballet, which itself evolved into a stand-alone art form only after serving opera, court ceremonies, intermedii, and “horse ballets.” Indeed, music and dance have struggled for, with, and against one another, in what we might now see as a modernist quest for autonomy. Some dance masters following Rudolf Laban (1873-1958) have explored a

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dance free of music altogether. Certainly, there is music free of dance.

The structure of a well known, and often cited, collaboration between John Cage and Merce Cunningham was simply to agree upon the overall duration of a piece and to compose and choreograph in isolation until the performance. This extreme solution paradoxically suggests both the ease and the difficulty with which dance and music truly fit together. The 1960's saw changes in dance/music practice. The influence of "happenings" and performance art drew some choreographers away from musically inspired forms towards a mode of performance closer to theater. Today modern dance has a related form, one that is fundamentally different in its use of music: dance theater. Dance Theater is further removed from ballet in its use of varying musics, spoken text, and other theatrical conventions, the avoidance of which had, paradoxically, defined ballet as an art form distinct from theater or opera. The reality today is that modern dance is a diverse practice and one with a potentially rocky relationship with music. As noted dance critic, Joan Acocella, summarized, "Of all known forms of dance, there is only one that has mixed feelings about music: European-American modern dance."

In the early part of the 20th century, modern dance drew a great deal of its formal sensibility from music. It would seem similar to ballet in this way, but modern dance regarded other genres of music as suitable for dance, not just music written especially for the ballet—music often narrative and episodic in nature. To dance to a classical string quartet or to a Bach Prelude meant to find a way of *interpreting* its form. Furthermore, modern dance differed from ballet in the size and scope of its institutions, its choreographic vocabulary, and its very different notion of physicality. If ballet is characterized by typical body types and gravity-defying posture, modern dance is not.. Like all things modern, modern dance takes great stock in originality, style, and sharply delineated formal distinctions. The formal counterpoint between music and dance remains a potential medium for marking such originality and style.

Many of the big names in modern dance from the early 20th century were influenced by the work of a music theorist: Emile Jaques-Dalcroze. Dalcroze invented Eurythmics, a method for teaching music that taught students rhythm by coordinating limbs of the body with the various rhythmic strata. It is a way of seeing and feeling music through physical motion. In a similar vein, Isadora Duncan, whose name, like that of Martha Graham's, is practically synonymous with modern dance in this country, regarded dance as a way of interpreting music. It was not just moving to music; it was giving music and the listening experience a physical analog in space. Similarly, the American choreographer in the 1920's, Ruth St. Denis, invented a method she called "music visualization." Music visualization was a way of understanding dance as simply music-made-visual. For example, she developed what she called the "synchoric orchestra," making visible distinct orchestrations of a musical score through the imitation of that scoring by dancers on the stage: a specific dancer might equal a specific instrument or musical motif.

Her student, Doris Humphrey (who was to become very influential in the 1930's) developed these concepts into a freer kind of musical analysis through dance. She fashioned a choreography that was a kind of counterpart to music without being dependent on musical structure in the more literal fashion suggested by "music visualization." While sharing certain formal qualities with music, choreography became, for Humphrey, a reflection of human interaction. This somewhat freer concept of

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dance's dependence on music proved very influential on the future American dance. To varying degrees, Humphrey's legacy is detectable in the works of Paul Taylor, Martha Graham, and Jose Limon (Humphrey's student).

Perhaps the greatest influence on many of today's dance composers was the work of legendary composer/dance teacher, Louis Horst. Like Emile Jaques-Dalcroze, Horst was a musician and thinker whose greatest impact was felt in the dance world. A music director for some of the most important American choreographers of the century, including Martha Graham, Horst was also a very prominent dance composition instructor in the early days of the Juilliard dance program. Horst developed a method for teaching dance composition based on principles that were essentially musical but not dependent on any specific musical composition. In many ways, his method was a logical extension of the prevailing aesthetic for dance in the early 20th century—a music-driven one. The primary difference, though, proved crucial. Horst's methods were based on generic musical principles applicable to choreography in the abstract. He encouraged choreographers to prepare their choreography according to principles that would allow their work to have formal coherence *independent* of a specific musical work. From this time on, most choreographers would choose to form their choreography first and to seek a musical accompaniment afterwards, a working method still favored by many.

Laban initiated a parallel development in Europe. A developer of an intricate notational system for choreography and movement, Laban and others felt that creating notation for choreography would not only serve to document a given dance, but also encourage the creation of a choreographic vocabulary independent of musical forms. As mentioned earlier, he theorized about a dance form free of music. To make a long story short (skipping a fascinating history of German modern dance surrounding the Folkwang Schule that related musical gesture with politics), Laban's legacy is detectable in the European taste for Dance Theater, Pina Bausch being a well-known proponent. Dance Theater as a movement has gone far to extricate dance from musical values, to the point of preferring a vocabulary of gestures often construed as not only not "musical," but also not even "lyrical." As Joan Acocella explains in her book on American choreographer Mark Morris, a certain "musicality" in choreography, for some critics, can read as naïve, old fashioned, "too musical" –too closely tied to musical values.

An important counter to this trend is the influence of nonwestern dance and music forms on Euro-American modern dance. Multiculturalism, as we might refer to this phenomenon of cultural exchange present today in a variety of disciplines, is nothing new to dance. Many modern dancers have as much training in a traditional "folk" dance as in ballet. The influence of these music and dance practices calls into question the conceptual schism between music and dance in "modern" dance. As one drummer I interviewed, who specializes in Afro-Cuban dance, observed, "In some African languages; music, dance, and theater are all referred to by the same word!" Recent African-American dance styles (e.g. hip-hop) reflect such an integration between music and dance that some regard it as nothing short of a rebirth of the music/dance relationship in a modern idiom. For others, it is a dance overly determined by music (and popular culture) and in that way a retreat from "pure" (substitute "*modern*") dance.

This brief detour into recent dance history serves to bring to mind the rather complex position in which a dance musician is situated. Likewise, young choreographers face

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the difficult task of discerning which way of using music is most appropriate to their voice, intentions, and role in the profession, etc. While dancers and dance musicians work in close proximity with one another practicing and making art in the moment, there is often not much discussion about the recent histories of the art forms and the influences such histories have on the training/taste of the participants. Dancers are quite aware of the specific vocabularies and uses of the body characteristic of recent choreographic styles, i.e. Graham or Cunningham, but not so much the specific kinds of music that are related to those styles. Many of the composers that I interviewed feel that the burden is theirs to acquire the knowledge necessary to communicate with dancers about their musical needs. Dancers in the modern tradition are not required to have the degree of music training that many nonwestern traditional dancers acquire (i.e. Indian classical dance). Meanwhile, of course it goes without saying that composers in the modern tradition rarely have dance training! The musicians who specialize in dance acquire their knowledge in a rather haphazard, “hands-on” way.

The musician in the dance class setting:

A microcosm of the composer/choreographer collaboration

I found that discussions of the composer/choreographer collaboration were often sidetracked into discussions of the dance class, but these seeming digressions proved relevant. The dynamics of the class setting in a sense mirror those of the composer/choreographer collaboration. The teacher is often a professional choreographer. The students are in the class to study that particular professional’s choreography and, in some cases, to audition informally for a spot in the choreographer’s company. The musician in the class, most often a pianist, percussionist, and/or vocalist, is present for the entire class at the expense of the choreographer or the sponsoring organization. In some settings, the musician is paid at the end of the class by taking a collection from the students!

Even in advanced dance education classes, a musician may still be regarded as a luxury. Many programs exist without continuous live music in the classroom. Bates Director, Laura Faure, laments the fact that young dancers may be perhaps overly exposed to the popular music and MTV, etc. Responding to a variety of live music in the class (and hearing music be responsive to their movement), is a vital part of the education she seeks to provide.

The basic hierarchy of the composer/choreographer collaboration is present in this classroom setting. The choreographer directs the class and the musician must improvise a musical accompaniment by interpreting the choreographer’s directions and choreographic markings. This can be a tricky business for both. Choreographers and musicians do not count time and mark structure in the same way. Musicians are often very critical of choreographers on this account, but it is not in the interest of a choreographer to count like a musician. They are counting sequences of gestures, each of which may have a specific, intrinsically physical timing, and, furthermore, they have to communicate these gestures to a roomful of dancers who have varied degrees of experience dancing to live music. Dancers must negotiate interacting with music

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without being so swept up by it that they can no longer remember the steps. Likewise, the musician must keep the improvisation relevant to the choreographer's work. A musician cannot just be a great improviser and follow the natural course of musical improvisation. If the teacher is teaching repertoire, the music must eventually coalesce into something formally clear and, within reason, repeatable. The musician must be flexible and make changes if a choreographer believes it is in the best interest of the class to do so.

In many respects, the collaboration between a composer and choreographer intending to produce a concert work is not so different. Dancers learn a choreographic structure, which, at first, may not be tied to a specific musical accompaniment. Sometimes as a matter of practicality, a choreographer will choose music for a dancer to work with individually, to bring out his or her uniquely personal way of moving.. Later, the results of the individual dancer's work might form building blocks that the choreographer will use in conjunction with other dancers and perhaps with other music. Composers brought into a project sometimes feel as if the dancers will dance their choreography "to any old music," and for choreographers with a Louis Horst-style dance composition sensibility, this may be true. Yet while "any old music" seems to do in the beginning, composers are often shocked by the degree to which the choreographer finds specific faults with a newly fashioned musical accompaniment.

There is, then, a difference between the classroom and the production setting. The live music of the classroom is intended to give dancers the experience of being "caught up in the music," that is, to provide a heated sense of music's inevitability and drive. Through such experiences, dancers learn to control their responses — to be influenced by music but to not lose their concentration on the movements they must execute. The professional dancer has mastered this controlled response; he or she can turn it off or on at will, and, at times, respond to 'any old music.' It is a sad irony that dance students enjoy more live music than professionals do, in that live music in a dance company rehearsal is rare. Company rehearsals for a concert piece are often danced to specific musical works composed and/or chosen for a production and which are in recorded form, as practicality and expense prevent live music from being used in every rehearsal. Spontaneous reaction to music, one cultivated in the classroom, becomes, instead, a kind of artifice assumed in the rehearsal setting.

This difference between the classroom and the production raises a fundamental, if somewhat theoretical, question: for whose benefit is the music? Is it for the dancer or is it for the audience? Obviously, it is there for both, but not in the same way. For the dancer, music motivates action; for the viewer, music contextualizes it. This distinguishes the role of music in dance from its role in film, for example; in the latter case, music does not motivate the actors in their work. Dance is the one genre where music can both motivate and contextualize action in time and space. When we see a dancer perform, we interpret his or her relationship to the music in many ways, but not least, we interpret it in a spatial sense. In ballet, this relationship is often quite formal: traditional patterns of motion through space correspond to traditional musical phrases. Likewise in modern dance, but since modern dance tends toward experimentation, the relationship between gesture, space, and music is subject to variation and complexity. How is space defined and shaped by the music and dance? How is form articulated? Is it translated from one to another, or complemented? If it is complemented, how

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does the performance space, lighting, etc. function in the synthesis? These are questions a piece asks, and, in the best cases, answers.

The basic structures of the composer/choreographer collaboration

Collaborations between composers and choreographers are almost always initiated in one of four ways: by a choreographer, composer, producer, or music group. At the nonprofessional level, the first two categories are obviously most common. Once the project is initiated it tends to fit into one of seven scenarios:

- 1) Music composed prior to choreography and performed live with dance
- 2) Music composed prior to choreography and recorded
- 3) Music composed after a specific choreography and performed live
- 4) Music composed after choreography and recorded
- 5) Music improvised to choreography and performed live
- 6) Dance improvised to live music
- 7) Dance improvised to recorded music

While it would seem that artistic style and temperament would determine the choice of scenario, I found that it is rather the way in which the project is initiated that often determines the scenario. Before discussing the seven scenarios in some detail, I will address first how a project is initiated.

The choreographer-initiated project

By far the most prevalent type of collaborative project is that initiated by the choreographer. There are a variety of aesthetic reasons for this, the most obvious of which is that existing music, composed and/or recorded, may not suit a choreographer's conceptual and structural needs. Yet there are a number of other, non-artistic reasons for the choreographer-initiated project to be the most common. Many of them have to do with money. As in the dance class model described above, the choreographer is in a sense, "the buyer." Most choreographers present their work with music (despite noted exceptions, such as Tricia Brown, who performed for many years without), so that presenting a new dance means to some degree presenting new music, as well. Commissioning a new composition heightens the sense of excitement and novelty surrounding the event, but desire to do so can be motivated by non-artistic reasons.

Some choreographers I interviewed hinted that they have felt some obligation to dance to new music for "professional purposes." Perhaps the creation of new music is a part of the commission they receive as a choreographer or otherwise improves their chances for getting an important grant or attracting new audiences to their performances. Commissioned music leads to heightened publicity and greater sense of

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overall spectacle. From the tone of some of the choreographer's comments, I detected some sense of frustration — feeling that the composer-choreographer collaboration is, in fact, a kind of necessary evil. If a choreographer is to prove that her company is established and important, commissioning a new piece from a noted composer is a significant benchmark in demonstrating that success. The irony is that often the composers who possess a degree of fame or who might attract new audiences, press, etc., do not have the experience with dance that the rehearsal/dance class musician has!

One composer I interviewed, who has professional experience as a composer, performer, and dance accompanist, emphasized the importance of playing for dance classes in order to compose for dance. He described his observations concerning the relationship of music to the kinetic forces that motivate the dancer's gestures. He speculated that dancers are often more happy with the work of composers who were also professional dance accompanists than they were with the scores commissioned from musicians who compose primarily for orchestras and/or chamber ensembles.

The choice of composer is perhaps the number-one reason for the popularity of the choreographer-initiated project — the choreographer can select with whom to work. In some cases, collaboration simply results from the fact that a choreographer is attracted to the work of a particular composer. She or he hears a recording of a particular work, calls the composer, recording company, or publisher, and secures rights for using it in a dance concert. This echoes the scenario described above in which music is composed and recorded prior to the choreography. While this scenario does not have the publicity cachet that a new commission does, many choreographers (especially with new or small companies) prefer it. That is because this scenario is cheaper and considerably less troublesome than the perhaps more “ideal” form of collaboration – namely, simultaneous creation on the part of both composer and choreographer.

The choreographer in the choreographer-initiated project has adopted the role of “buyer,” a position designed to maximize both freedom of choice and artistic control. One choreographer I interviewed stated that he pays for new music “out of pocket,” preferring to cover music costs from the general company budget rather than have the collaboration tied to a specific grant or commission. In this case of direct payment, the choreographer is in charge; he is not obligated to music he cannot work with.

In some choreographer-initiated projects, choreographers choose composers who have commercial music experience (in TV, film, or radio), because of their proven ability to meet deadlines and take artistic direction. Many choreographers joked with me that they were “frustrated musicians,” and that if they could compose the music themselves, they would. These are choreographers who are often attracted to musicians who take artistic direction well. There can be potential conflicts here, however, in terms of the overall goal of the participants. At the composer/choreographer forum at Dance Theater Workshop, there was much discussion about the discrepancy in levels of “investment” in a given project on the part of the composer. The level of investment for the commercial musician is related his or her desire to create a suitable product at the negotiated fee and in the negotiated time frame. Choreographers who have worked with such musicians have later complained that they did not share the same level of commitment to the “artistic vision” of the choreographer that the dance company would have wished.

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Choreographers would like composers to be as dedicated as the dancers in the company to fulfilling this vision.

For those in a dance audience particularly attune to music, a hint of commercialism in the sound of the score can be a turnoff. From a critical point of view, there can seem a profound discrepancy between the aesthetic sensibility of a given choreography—its stylistic specificity—and that of a more generic musical score. It is a matter of negotiating that fine balance between creating music that both *motivates* and *contextualizes* movement successfully. This is a highly subjective matter, of course, and, as a point of fact, many commercial musicians work successfully with dance. More often than not, they have the necessary equipment such that additional recording costs are included in their fee, and they generally can work quite fast. In cases where the choreography is worked out in advance, maybe to a temporary musical score (temp-track), commercial musicians are often more open to stylistic variation and imitation, and can handle working within strict conceptual parameters. Their skills are suited to many Dance Theater type projects, where an eclectic arrangement of musical needs is technically coordinated with real world sounds and cues, etc.

The producer-initiated project

An underlying intention of the producer-initiated project, is the attempt to bring not only composer and choreographer together but to combine them with artistic directors and/or artists from other disciplines. The effort can be one of connecting artists with unique voices and bringing them together in a single piece. The producer-initiated project is in some ways the oldest model.

The impresario-as-producer has a long history in ballet and theater and is still the most prevalent working model in the entertainment industry. There is much to be said for this model in terms of practicality. The producer forms a team in which several minds are brought into the decision-making process, especially helpful at those times when the composer/choreographer is at a standstill. It is an art by consensus. One need only look at the artistic, and sometimes commercial, success of the Ballet Russe in the early twentieth century, when Diaghilev was able to bring together such tremendous artists (and egos) as Nijinsky, Picasso, Stravinsky, Satie, Matisse, etc.

The term *impresario* is not favored by dance producers today, however, as they reject the notion that they are driven by the profit motive in their projects. The artists with whom they work can feel exploited if such concerns are made explicit.

Two of the mid-career choreographers that I interviewed had participated in projects that were spearheaded by an outside producer; both admitted that they had participated primarily for the money. Others who had danced in similar contexts said that money was generally the company's motivation for taking on the project. Accepting such assignments was seen as an opportunity to keep a company working during the year, so that other projects could be scheduled and developed, etc. (Keeping everyone working, and therefore keeping everyone, is the number one challenge facing any professional company).

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When I first began this research I was convinced that the producer-initiated project was the ideal model for bringing together artists from different disciplines to work in new ways, without the pitfalls that can limit the choreographer-initiated project. I now think that I was wrong. Many participants felt that such projects were extremely trying experiences in which they were constrained by contractual agreements to work in ways they found unsuitable to their styles and habits, and that strained relations with their dancers. Dancers, after all, agree to work in a company with a particular choreographer in charge of artistic direction. They do not expect to find themselves dancing in pieces where they have little input or in compromised situations such as, in one case, being forced to wear costumes that constricted their movement! Regardless of whether or not such “innovations” may be worthwhile, the fact remains that in a producer-initiated project, dancers generally feel one additional step removed from the decision-making process.

As with many of the projects researched for this paper, the anecdotal evidence from a handful of participants is perhaps not enough to evaluate the success or failure of such projects. Nevertheless, it seems feasible to assume that, given the costs and risks of producing a large-scale project with established artists, a less formalized producer-initiated project, one which is not intent on a specific final production, is a more sensible option.

Such an informal approach resembles that adopted by Laura Faure (Bates Director) in initiating new projects. Amid the performances, classes, and other activities of the Bates Festival, certain companies are invited to workshop new pieces. Sometimes the choreographers work with composers who they met at past festivals or with whom they have given classes. While an established working history between choreographer and composer is not a requirement for a productive collaboration, it has proven to be a common characteristic in a number of success stories. Faure likes to provide opportunities for “trial” collaborations; she thinks of these opportunities as a “seed bed” for future pieces. One of the programs puts choreographer and composer together to produce a piece during the festival for the primary purpose of teaching students the repertoire of a particular choreographer, but it is also a chance for that choreographer and composer to have an opportunity to work together. Another program pairs choreographers with composers simply for the purpose of creating new, experimental pieces that will not necessarily be performed but are rather staged as works-in-progress.

If the development of a successful piece seems promising, at a later stage the producer in a producer-initiated project can assist in finding funding for *development* and *touring*. Development and touring support are key if a company is to make time for creating new pieces, bring these pieces to new audiences, and finance the project through additional performances. Organizations that support touring are especially interested in projects which have received development support, yet since a production needs to tour in order to make good on the initial investment, the two must go hand-in-hand. A producer assists in coordinating these two efforts. A festival director, such as Faure, is also a presenter and is therefore in a position to spot potentially successful works that might appeal to other presenters. It is obviously in the interest of presenters to share in the responsibility of developing new works, since no one presenter can really afford to tackle the challenge alone. Some detractors feel that these substantial costs and necessary coordinated efforts force grant organizations for touring and development, festivals, and presenters to

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function a bit “as a cadre”, that there are not enough alternative paths to significant development and touring funds. Yet such centralization may be unavoidable given the costs of artistic production and limited available funds.

Despite the wisdom of these development methods, they do not address one of the key issues motivating the impresario-style, producer-initiated project mentioned earlier: the bringing together of artists who may not otherwise have had access to one another. (Since my intention is to focus on the composer/choreographer collaboration, I will refer mostly to these types of artists). The American Dance Festival addressed this issue through a now-discontinued composer/choreographer project which took applications from composers and choreographers individually, but put them together to create a new piece during the Festival. There were several problems with this method. One was that of scope in relation to timing: it was practically impossible to create a work during a summer festival that was developed enough to become a concert piece, one that could tour and therefore attract presenters. The other problem was establishing the criteria by which choreographer and composer were put together.

Many of the composers that I interviewed were aware of this program but had felt frozen out of it. In the opinion of my informants, the composers chosen by the panelists had résumés characteristic of emerging composers in jazz, chamber music, or orchestral music. The typical dance musician has spent time developing a different sort of career—a different sort of résumé. Many such musicians work in the classroom setting described earlier. Music specialists often do not recognize the names, experience, or even the skills of such musicians, and thus they were, by and large, excluded from participating in the American Dance Festival collaboration project. While it is difficult to discern if these criticisms were justified, many of the choreographers who were aware of this program (or had participated in it) were also skeptical of its success. The choreographer and composer could be paired with seeming arbitrariness, and the outcomes were occasionally disastrous. These “forced marriages,” as one choreographer put it, could turn collaboration into a labored struggle for control and common ground within a professionally exposed arena.

The intent to bring in musicians from outside the dance world seems promising in theory, but it requires a special effort. At a festival which is primarily a teaching festival and which generates income primarily by means of lessons which dancers pay to attend, the organization cannot afford musicians who are not also on staff as dance accompanists. Choreographers may not then have the opportunity to meet (socialize/work with) musicians who could potentially bring a fresh outlook. Producers are not likely to have the opportunity otherwise to find musicians whose music might prove interesting for dance. Producers can go to concerts, buy recordings, etc. just like choreographers, but they cannot anticipate the potential success of a collaboration until they meet, observe, and receive feedback from potential collaborators.

Composers who are on staff as dance accompanists are affected as well. If they are creating a new piece, they are not in a position to write for instrumentalists not already on hand for classes. This can sometimes lead to electronic substitutes, rendering a potentially tiresome “demo” quality of sound. To avoid this, the dance musician is forced (yet again) to be the composer-performer, and while many prefer is role, it can be as artistically limiting as a choreographer always having to dance solo works. But more

importantly, it may have a negative impact on career development. The composer-performer has recently returned to a respected position in music circles, but, ironically, this has not always been the case, and biases against the composer-performer may still exist. In a history too complex to fully explicate, composers of the not-so-distant past were primarily known for the work they created for professional performers, chamber groups, orchestras —i.e., for *other* people. The composer was one who *composed* and who was judged according to his or her ability to orchestrate music for others. The typical dance musician, however, is often a composer-performer. Such a musician may not have the experience writing for other instrumentalists and is at a disadvantage if stacked up against composers who have specialized in concert music. The structure is analogous in jazz music where the dance musician may not have had the opportunity to play with/compose for a famous bandleader.

Many of the dance composers that I interviewed had given up applying for the grants, competitions, etc. that define a composing career outside of dance; they share a feeling of alienation from the music world. It would seem as if their dedication to dance has to some degree foreclosed a career outside of it, and given that many of the prestigious dance-oriented grants now go to “brand name” composers recognized in music circles, their opportunities for growth within the dance world itself are also growing limited.

The composer-initiated project

The composer-initiated project is extremely rare (although St. Mark’s Church in New York has recently funded such a project). There are a number of reasons why this is so. While one might quickly jump to the conclusion that musicians are simply not of the mind to commission choreography for their music, I have talked to many composers who are clearly drawn to the choreographer-composer collaboration. Yet the composer-initiated project, even among these musicians, is rare.

The rarity of such projects probably says more about the structure of the “dance/music world” than it does about the mind of the musician. There are a number of factors that affect a musician’s choice of what kind of projects to initiate. Unlike choreographers who form a dance company as early in their career as possible, musicians (especially composers) are not quick to start nonprofit organizations. This limits their ability to receive grants and other kinds of tax-exempt funding that might finance a composer-initiated dance and/or theater piece. Unfortunately composers tend to be “on their own.” The organizations that fund them usually support concert music projects, sponsoring ensembles rather than individuals. Furthermore, composing organizations like ASCAP and BMI were formed to license concert performances of *music*, even if that music was originally created for the theater — for Broadway. They were formed in this country when Broadway tunes became “popular tunes,” performed in concert or broadcast on radio. Even today, these organizations do not monitor royalties for dance and theater. The rights to use music for dance performances (grand rights) are negotiated event by event. A musician must be an entrepreneur in order to initiate theater-oriented projects. Managers of composers sometimes contact choreographers, but this is usually just simply a way of inducing a choreographer-initiated project and coordinating a grant.

One musician I interviewed recently commissioned three or four midcareer choreographers to make dances for a concert of his music. This musician has quite a bit

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of experience with dance music (both as composer and accompanist), which is probably both the reason why these choreographers agreed to work with him and why his project was funded. This composer has turned the table.

While this project may signal a new trend, the composer-initiated a project is still the exception. One of the core factors that I believe affects the composer/choreographer collaboration is the role of arts criticism particularly in journalism. Many of my composer-informants complained that dance critics who attended performances inevitably make only a passing remark about the music, if even that. One composer wrote a piece for full orchestra for a ballet company performance (a big compositional effort, organized at significant expense and risk for the company). He told me that the critics never made a single reference to the score in their reviews. Understandably, a professional dance critic may rarely wish to wade into the murky waters of musical commentary, and likewise, music critics do not cover dance concerts. The critic-in-residence at the Bates Dance Festival agreed that this hard-and-fast genre division was a problem. She was also, however, quick to point out that the little space for dance criticism given by a newspaper or magazine's editorial staff is simply too small *not* to focus primarily on dance.

Perhaps another underlying division between dance and music along with their separate sources of funding, separate audiences, and training institutions, is the separation of the critical discourse the conceptual dimensions addressed by the artworks. This is a most costly price for the status of "autonomous art form." As an artist, I am of the mind that both new music and new dance could benefit from a heightened sensitivity to the intellectual and conceptual dimensions that these art forms potentially share, as well as those that divide them.

Projects initiated by a music ensemble

There are ensembles (usually new music chamber groups) who have hired choreographers and/or composers to collaborate on a project. This is a growing trend. One of its advantages is that it allows for a third party to share in production concerns. It can increase exposure for artists in either discipline. Choreographers involved in such projects enjoy the opportunity to perform with live music. Very few companies can afford live music in their own productions. Composers enjoy this type of project because it combines a familiar aspect, supplying a commissioned work for an ensemble, with the challenge of meeting the needs of a choreographer. There is a kind of triangulation in the collaborative process, rather than just the choreographer/composer collaboration; there is a third party involved, one with its own artistic voice and objectives. It will be clear what course such a project will likely take after reading the scenarios described below.

The basic scenarios of the choreographer/composer collaboration

I am now going to outline in some detail the scenarios mentioned earlier describing various possibilities for the composer/choreographer collaboration. I think this is important, because I know from first-hand experience that dance projects and similar interdisciplinary projects are often launched without sufficiently contemplating the scenario into which the project's process will naturally gravitate. While often it is clear from the outset what the scenario will be (i.e. a jazz composer may have a great deal of improvised music, etc.), imagining all the possibilities can help in determining which scenario will be appropriate for the conceptual design of the work. While not all artists work this way, of course, a producer, presenter, or other such collaborator brought into a project at a later stage may wish to consider the structure of the collaboration in order to determine how best to participate. Some scenarios may seem to describe situations that are not collaborations, per se. I think it is important to imagine these possibilities in order to delineate "collaboration" when (or if) it is relevant to the scenario.

1) Commissioned composition composed prior to choreography and performed live

Music composed prior to the choreography and performed live with dance is perhaps the most traditional model; it is the one most employed in ballet. This is a grand and expensive endeavor and can be quite rewarding for the participants. This is the scenario preferred by many composers for obvious reasons. The composer is usually given the most basic of structural points within which to work, perhaps even a simple treatment outlining overarching themes or narratives. These concepts are often worked out in accordance with the wishes of the choreographer (perhaps they are even entirely created by the choreographer), but in order to make the piece, the choreographer must accept working within a defined musical structure. Choreographers these days rarely prefer to work this way unless they are either "music visualizers" or of the mind to create choreographic structures that need not adhere rigidly to musical structure. They must also be willing (and have the time) to wait for a completed musical structure before beginning their own compositional efforts.

Choreographers who have worked in this scenario are generally quite experienced ones. Only established companies with respected directors can generate the interest and funding for such a project. Furthermore, the cost of rehearsing musicians for live performance limits the number of rehearsals that dancers may have with musicians. The collaborators must fashion a demo for the purpose of creating and rehearsing choreography. The creative process can lack the immediacy of live sound that the performance wishes to provide. In this way, this scenario seems indistinguishable from the less ambitious and less costly scenarios I will describe later, since these, too, often rely on recorded music.

This scenario is very performance-oriented and is quite traditional in that way. Artists for whom the most gratifying aspect of their work is the creative process will find this scenario too formal and restricting. Many large and heavily publicized events fit this scenario, in that the project's intention is to bring together the creative character of the

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collaborators and attract the audiences that attend each. It would seem that the most important resource for such a project (besides money) would be time. An adequate demo tape for the composition needs to be made in order for the choreographer to begin working and for any necessary revisions to the composition to be made. To this must be added time for instrumental parts to be produced for the performance. Parts can only be done once the music is set. A project of this sort requires a great deal of planning and coordinated effort by both dance and music organizations (funding sources, management, public-relations, etc.) It would be in the interest of all involved to attain both music-related and dance-related press coverage.

2) Music is composed prior to choreography and recorded

This scenario, in which music is composed prior to the choreography and recorded for performance, is quite common for the obvious reason that live music is expensive, and using recorded music often means that commissioning a new composition is not necessary. This is not always the case, however. Often a project may fit the first scenario for the premiere (that is, a commissioned musical work performed live) but adhere to the second scenario with subsequent performances (live dance to recorded music).

This scenario can have the publicity cachet that the first one has without the additional costs of touring with established musicians or rehearsing new ones. Sometimes it can be arranged that the cost for commissioning a new music composition will include grand rights for subsequent performances. Composers are often quite happy with this arrangement, because they can be certain of the quality of the music performance and can enjoy the exposure in venues wherein live music is rare. Choreographers like the consistency of timings and acoustics when working with recorded music. Recorded music need not be thought of as a substitute for live music. Indeed, when the recorded music is specifically composed as electro-acoustic or studio-produced music, the result can seem quite natural.

3) Music is composed to the choreography and performed live

When music is composed to the choreography and performed live, it can have the “live-sound” excitement of the first scenario and be tailored to the needs of the choreographer. One choreographer I interviewed is also a musician and performs frequently as a musician and dancer in his own work. This is a rare talent and one that provides the projects he is involved in with a great deal of flexibility. The choreographer-musician rehearses with live music (sometimes just with a partial band) and brings in additional musicians for performance. I have worked with this choreographer and have enjoyed his ability to communicate about his musical needs. Often this choreographer works with recorded music as well, combining live and recorded sound.

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Musicians with experience performing in dance classes are well suited to this type of project. Composer-performers who have experience improvising with dance are often brought into projects that fit this scenario because they are used to taking artistic direction from a choreographer. This scenario is used well in pieces in which the musician is also a performer on stage. One of my informants has worked quite a bit this way. The composer is called upon not only to make music but also to perform theatrically, thereby integrating the production of sound with the movement and action of the dance. The composer is a member of the company and is artistically/personally connected to the dancers as well as to the choreographer.

When projects like this do not go well, it is usually because the predetermined choreography generates expectations for the musical score that are difficult to meet. I have unfortunate firsthand experience with the potential challenges of this type of collaboration. A European dance company received a rather important grant, commissioning a new work from emerging artists and stipulating that new music be commissioned and performed live. Those involved hired my brother (the principal composer in this project) and I, but rather than waiting for us to compose a piece, they instead asked us to begin working only after the choreography was “set.” The choreography was created to a variety of temp-tracks, none of which resembled the instrumentation it was understood that we would provide. With high hopes, we nevertheless attempted to compose music to the gestures and narratives provided to us. The results were felt to be so disastrous (mostly in the opinions of the choreographers) that we almost found ourselves in court. While neither side in this process would wish to be labeled naive, each relied on overly simplistic ideas of just what the creative process would entail. We were to write the music and they were to make the dance.

I confess this artistic failure not only to reveal my motivation for writing this paper (“were we alone in making such a mistake?”), but also to suggest that grant organizations may wish to seek more specifics, regarding ways any given production will be organized.

Such projects can suffer from what one choreographer jokingly called “demo love,” meaning an attachment to either the composer’s demo tape or to a pre-existing temp-track that makes adjusting to a new music difficult or impossible. One choreographer I interviewed had planned to work with a composer from Africa. Unable, for practical reasons, to work as one would in the first scenario (i.e. to wait for the score), this choreographer also fashioned an entire choreography to temp-track. Once the new score was complete, he was excited and pleased with the result; his dancers, however, found working with the new music disconcerting. This case provides an interesting example of the different people in any one production can understand music differently. A choreographer may be fascinated with a variety of contextualizations, indeed varieties are possible, but for the person whose actions are to be motivated, such a variety may not seem possible.

4) Music is composed after choreography and recorded

This scenario is the one most used (perhaps overused), particularly by new or small companies and students, but also by well-known companies who frequently tour. Choreographers favor it because not only is the musical structure determined by the choreography but the performance costs are also minimal. The music is new, but the costs are limited to those of the initial recording. All that is required musically thereafter is a suitable public address system. I should add here a frequent comment from composers as to the inadequacy of sound systems in many dance-performance venues. While the needs of a dance theater and that of a concert hall are, of course, entirely different, it seems that only the best of dance venues are careful to have good sound.

There is much flexibility in the process when this scenario is employed. The recording can be modified along the way so that the demo can greatly resemble the final product. Composers who have much experience with dance accompanying and/or with commercial recording are best suited to participate in this type of scenario.

Very important to this scenario (and to others as well), is the mutual understanding between choreographers and composers regarding the role of music as that which *contextualizes* as well as *motivates* action. I think it is rare that music functions equally in these roles. More often than not, one or the other role predominates. This inequality is most evident in modern dance and dance theater, as opposed to ballet where the roles do tend to be more balanced. When the music is composed to an existing choreography, the music will more naturally contextualize the dance. Perhaps the only exception to this, is when the recorded music is a well-known popular song or dance tune (of course, in this case, it would have been composed before the choreography and therefore fits scenario two). The motivation to dance to such music is clear to the viewer perhaps shared by her. If a choreographer wishes rather for a newly composed music that seems to *motivate* action, then this will rarely be the best scenario. One composer told of an experience where he was asked to compose to pre-existing choreography. He said it felt “like doing a crossword puzzle;” musical phrases were designed to fit the dance and the result was forced. One critic even deviated from the typical reticence regarding music in dance, to comment that the composition was “too subservient.” While some composers like the challenge that this scenario brings, some have complained that it is too difficult to make musical structure adhere strictly to choreographic structure. Of course, choreographers have had to deal with the scenario in reverse for many years. Nevertheless, discussing in advance the motivation verses contextualization question may solve some of these problems before they arise.

Interviewed composers frequently complained that choreographers “do not know what they want the music to do.” The statement itself characterizes a composer/choreographer relationship that is either unclear or not really collaborative; the composer is waiting for artistic direction that does not seem to be forthcoming. But sometimes a statement like: “I do not know what the music should be here,” is an invitation to collaborate, especially if a composer hears such a statement at the beginning of a project, say, before any choreography has been determined. I suspect that sometimes there is miscommunication as to the expectations that a choreographer has for the composer. It is difficult to clarify how one can maintain artistic direction over the music, yet still maintain a feeling of “collaboration.” I think it is particularly difficult given instances where choreography is

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set. Even when music is composed to an existing choreography but performed live, there is a greater sense of involvement on the part of the musician in the dance production than exists in cases where music is simply recorded.

5) Music is improvised to choreography and performed live

When music is improvised to an existing choreography, it fits a scenario that probably most resembles the dance class setting. While the composer in this type of collaboration may be musician who also accompanies dance classes, he or she can also be a musician specializing in improvisation, such as a jazz performer, who may or may not have had experience working with dancers. Since composing for dance will generally take more time than improvising for a performance, choosing the latter alternative can be a relatively inexpensive way to have live music in a performance (unless the musician is well-known and consequently commands a high fee). In this scenario, the choreographer should be confident in creating a choreographic structure that is “music proof.”

One of the midcareer choreographers that I interviewed told of a successful collaboration with a well-known jazz musician, but one in which the choreography was not predetermined. The two were able to adopt a process wherein the jazz musician and the choreographer together determined meter and tempo (how fast the rhythm should be and how it should “feel”). The musician then made a demo that was simply a bare outline of the chord changes in time. That was all the choreographer had to work with. In the final rehearsals and in the performances, the musician improvised to those set chord changes, a process familiar to jazz musicians. This loose musical structure was enough for the choreographer to work with, at least for this project. These were experienced artists, yet, in my opinion, the project went well not just because the collaborators were good at what they did, but because they had chosen the right scenario for the project.

6) Dance is improvised to live music

Dance improvised to live music is somewhat rare. It is perhaps more common in popular idioms than modern dance, per se. When it does occur, the choreographer is usually someone who specializes in improvisation. It is often in a scenario that is either composer/musician-initiated or producer-initiated. I was able to interview one such choreographer and, on another occasion, one of the musicians with whom he has worked. The musician, in this case, found working with this choreographer a rewarding experience. He stated that the choreographer “shared the bill” with the musician, that the choreographer really regarded the process as a collaboration. It makes sense that when a dancer improvises to live music, the music will determine much of the form. A musician can work with a great deal of freedom. As it happens, people who specialize in improvisation tend to be a happy lot when it comes to collaboration. They are open to and welcome many of the more hair-raising aspects of the collaboration process. Collaboration is what their art is about.

The above interviewed choreographer tends to work in one of two versions of this scenario. Either he works with an existing music group, i.e. a chamber ensemble that

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specializes in new music (on one occasion he collaborated with an ensemble in a project initiated by that ensemble), or he collaborates with musicians who are also improvising. His method of working has involved projects initiated by music ensembles, the fourth (and growing) type of composer/choreographer collaboration. In projects he initiates, he likes to think of the musician “ as another dancer.”

He does not prefer to commission music, but, rather, to pay the musician as he would another dancer, another performer. Musicians inclined towards this kind of performance enjoy the equal investment they feel in the project. In a similar project, another choreographer and music ensemble designed a process wherein it was clear that both were improvising according to predetermined rules. The musicians performed a version of John Zorn’s *Cobra*, the score of which consists of signs written on cards that the collaborators show each other during a performance, thereby indicating how the others are to improvise. This choreographer, who specializes in a form of improvisation known as contact dance, fashioned an analogous score for the other dancers.

I have also seen projects initiated by music groups in which a dancer improvises choreography. One problem in these cases is that the dance often can appear purely ornamental, secondary to the music. While the music clearly motivates the gesture, the visual aspect of seeing musicians play, even the theater itself, etc. may not contextualize the gesture successfully.

7) Dance is improvised to recorded music

As with some of the other scenarios described, this one may or may not include collaboration with a composer. Again, it might strike the reader that to refer to a process that is not collaboration falls outside the concerns of the paper; however, I think it is helpful to imagine logically possible scenarios for the purpose of better defining future collaborations. The choreographer that I interviewed above, who specializes in improvisation, confessed that he was becoming more interested in improvising to recorded music. He wishes to work more at this point in his career with a clearly defined musical structure—a structure he can anticipate when performing. This scenario raises some interesting contextual-motivation issues. If it is clear that the music is not improvised, it may be difficult for the choreography to read it as improvised (if this improvisational aspect is, indeed, conceptually important to the work). Improvised music can signal an improvised choreography, but recorded music, whether improvised or not, will seem less spontaneously created. We had a rather interesting conversation concerning this problem. He confessed that even when the music is clearly improvised, audiences not *very* familiar with dance are unaware of the improvisational aspect of his choreography.

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Some concluding remarks about other factors determining the collaboration between composers and choreographers

While my focus has been on the collaboration between composers and choreographers, there are other collaborators in the production of a dance piece such as costume, lighting, and stage designers, to whose work a similar analytical approach might prove useful. There were times in my discussions with choreographers that concerns with other production issues were inseparable from issues affecting their collaboration with a composer. For example, in a production with choreography accompanied by improvised music, the collaborators found that lightning in the performance space had an unanticipated effect on the music being improvised and therefore on the overall piece. I found in discussions with the lighting designer in residence at the Bates festival that many of the issues facing the composer, in contending with a pre-existing choreography, face the lighting designer, as well. Lighting designers are almost always brought into a project late in the process. Some choreographers give the designers a great deal of freedom, some do not; in neither case are results entirely predictable, yet much in the way of process is determined from the outset, in ways which mirror the composer/choreographer scenarios outline above.

The lighting designer whom I interviewed added that he believed the composer/choreographer collaboration was plagued by what he regarded as a spurious notion held by choreographers, which is that “music makes or breaks their dance”. (It is important to note to that this choreographer worked with Merce Cunningham for many years; he is slanting the role of music towards contextualizing rather than motivating action). For him, music is not unlike lighting, in the sense that its primary role is to “create atmosphere” or context. Music and lighting are not required mirror choreographic form in a one-to-one fashion.

Collaboration can naturally pit artistic direction against expertise in a given discipline. The relationship between choreographers and *dancers* is another vastly complex determinant in the collaboration between choreographers and composers. A bit like the relationship in theater between a director and the actors, it differs in that a dancer’s career can be a much shorter one than that of an actor. I do not think I am wrong in sensing an underlying urgency to almost every dance production among professional dancers, an urgency that a participating musician does not always share. If a dancer is to continue to be active in the field, at some point she must negotiate a difficult transition from performer to choreographer and/or teacher. I bring this up only to point out that many of the most trying issues of collaboration, in general, are present well before a composer arrives on the scene. Dancers trust a choreographer and their colleagues with their physical wellbeing and ultimately, with the very blessings of their youth. Dance resembles athletics in this way. When a composer arrives to collaborate on a piece, he or she is, in a sense, a permanent outsider. Choreographers spend much time building dancers’ loyalty, convincing dancers that their talents are being well used. It is easy to imagine a choreographer’s reluctance to relinquish what he or she must, in allowing musicians to impact the quality and design of any major piece.

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Depending on the scenario employed in the project, the composer is either an interpreter of the choreography, or the choreographer is an interpreter of the music. It seems that, given the duality between context and motivation, choreographers and composers could be more inventive in creating a vocabulary with which to discuss their respective aims. As far as traditional training goes, I think that the typical “music for dancers” class, a requirement in most dance programs, should be revised to include a study of theories of communication and film, one which addresses issues surrounding the combination of various diverse artistic mediums. . “Music for dancers” is a course that is often taught by professional dance musicians who stress technical aspects of music, with the hope of redressing the communication gaps between dancers and musicians that make their profession a challenge. As important as this is, more important perhaps is an analysis of how music conceptually relates to dance in terms of context, motivation, narrative, and space. Dancers seem reluctant to embrace technical theories of music, and I think there is good reason for this. Technical theories of musical form, melody, and rhythm do not explain entirely how music works for them. I believe dancers and composers are not unlike their audiences in that they are informed by television, film, and other (newer) media. Future choreographers would benefit more from the study of recent cultural histories of a variety of musics, rather than from the memorization of details of musical notation and nomenclature.

The initiation of future projects

While I believe dance education could benefit from some of the suggestions above. I also believe, perhaps even more strongly, that it is the professionals who through their work might redress some of the shortcomings in past collaborations. The key here is in the initiation of future projects. I think it would be interesting to bring established choreographers and composers together in contexts that do not entail the creation of a piece right away. That is, I think it is necessary to brainstorm ways of bringing potential collaborators together which temporarily suspend practical concerns, concerns which cause the artists to fall back on tried patterns and processes. If the producer-initiated project is to work, which I think it can, interested sponsors should perhaps consider “hiring” choreographers and composers to interact, display work, and otherwise discuss the aesthetic concerns of any collaborative project, etc. One potential (and relatively cheap) idea would be for dance and music festivals to include a composer or choreographer lecture series. In the case of dance festivals, these could include composers not on staff for classes and perhaps without previous experience in dance. Choreographers could, conversely, speak to groups of composers and instrumentalists. I think this type of exchange could further the cause of introducing one group to the values of the other.

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