



DANCE SECTOR REVIEW
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*'be dancing
be dancing,
it is work to be dancing'*

*'dean dannsa,
dean dannsa,
se obair a tha ann a bhith dannsa'*

(Aonghas MacNeacail)

CREATIVE

LAND

SCOT

ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL

Dance Sector Review: Executive Summary

Dance in Scotland has come of age: the sector is reaching maturity with vigour, confidence and a spirit of ambition. Carrying out this review had been an opportunity to take stock and look at how this can be built upon in the future. Over the next two to three years, there is a window of opportunity to significantly strengthen dance and take it to the next level.

1 Background:

The Dance Sector Review has been undertaken to provide an overview of the cultural ecology for dance and inform future investment priorities. The review has been written by Anita Clark, Creative Scotland's portfolio manager for Dance, Festivals and Touring, and overseen by an industry steering group. It is one of a number of artform reviews which Creative Scotland commissioned, each following a common brief.

Our approach included:

- A mapping and digest of data undertaken by Erika King, Scottish Cultural Enterprise (Digest of Statics)
- A series of consultative workshops with people involved in dance facilitated by Roanne Dods
- An online survey

85 people participated in the workshops and 101 completed the online survey.

The review draws on a number of sources of existing research and reports commissioned by Creative Scotland and other bodies. The starting point for the dance review has been the *Dance in Scotland Report*, published in August 2011 by the Federation of Scottish Theatre. The report was led by the FST's dance working group and involved significant contributions from the sector, recommending:

- Everyone in Scotland should have access to a local dance activity
- Investment in professional dance needs to be sustained so we can build new audiences for the future
- All children should have access to high quality dance teaching in schools, particularly now that dance is part of the Curriculum for Excellence
- More opportunities for specialist training and professional development are needed so that our talented young dancers, including those with disabilities, can be nurtured and retained in Scotland.

2 Summary of findings:

Health of the sector

Dance in Scotland has been through a substantial period of development over the past 15 years. It is now a thriving and ambitious part of Scotland's cultural life. Yet there are still some major gaps and compared with some other art forms, the infrastructure for dance is small. For someone starting out professional today, sustaining a career in dance may be very challenging with limited opportunities to progress.

The dance sector is ambitious, outward looking, eager to grasp opportunities and able to recognise where improvements are required with honest reflection. The people who make dance in Scotland happen are committed, passionate, enterprising and often pioneering in taking dance into new contexts. We can estimate from the data gathered that over 2000 people work in dance in Scotland in a wide variety of roles including as performers, choreographers and teachers. Portfolio working is prevalent and demonstrates that dance professionals tend to have a wide range of flexible skills that are employed in varying work contexts and across different dance styles. This dedication and energy is a huge resource for developing the future of dance.

Infrastructure for dance:

The dance sector in Scotland includes professional dance companies, organisations and artists who are all creating opportunities for people to take part in dance and experience dance as audience members. The infrastructure includes charities and commercial organisations, mainly small-scale and with many self-employed sole traders. Creative Scotland invests in four dance-foundation organisations: Dance Base, City Moves Dance Agency, YDance (Scottish Youth Dance) and Scottish Dance Theatre.

Scotland has two full-time dance companies: Scottish Ballet and Scottish Dance Theatre. Alongside their increasing profile, there are now independent companies and ambitious choreographers receiving increasing recognition for their originality. There are around 20 such dance companies, mainly built around an individual as a vehicle for their own work and engaging dancers for each project. These artist-led companies and choreographers represent a multitude of practices, embracing different dance styles and aesthetics. Many artists are involved in socially engaged work or community dance, creating dance opportunities for people across society. Through the rich diversity of their work, these artists provide the public across Scotland and, increasingly internationally, with a wealth of dance experiences.

Dance's strengthened position is visible in the new buildings for dance; Dance Base, national centre for dance in Edinburgh, the Space (home of the Scottish School of Contemporary Dance) in Dundee and Scottish Ballet's headquarters at Tramway in Glasgow.

Public engagement with dance:

The review's research shows that more people are taking part in dance and there are greater opportunities for people to enjoy high-quality dance performances. Audiences for dance within Creative Scotland's foundation and flexibly funded organisations are increasing (from 88,095 in 2008/09 to 95,164 in 2010/11). Looking more widely, data from Cultural Sparks¹ demonstrates that audiences for dance peaked in 2007/08 and following a dip in 2008/09 and 2009/10 are increasing again. In 2010/11, 265,430 tickets were sold for dance performances, generating over £4M in revenue.

Access and the level of participation are already tangible strengths of the dance sector in Scotland. Dance remains the second most popular cultural activity after reading² and the numbers of people taking part in dance through Creative Scotland's foundation and flexibly funded organisations has grown significant (from 54,781 in 2008/09 to 85,208 in 2010/11).

Public Investment

Creative Scotland's investment in dance in 2011/12 was £3,629,116: this represents 5.4% of the organisation's overall budget. As part of this review, investments from 2008/09 - 2011/12 were tracked across Creative Scotland's five corporate objectives. Levels of investment in dance have fluctuated with decreasing investment in artists, talent development and international working and increasing investment in access and participation.

Overall it appears that in the first year of Creative Scotland's open investment programmes, dance has struggled to maintain a share of investment available but has benefitted from targeted programmes to encourage participation such as lottery investment in Get Scotland Dancing and the Cashback for Creativity programme. Only 4 out of 158 awards made through the Quality Arts Production investment programme in 2011/12 were for dance.

3 Strengths, Weaknesses & Aspirations:

Participants in the consultative workshops were encouraged to consider the strengths and weakness of the dance sector in Scotland.

The **strengths** identified are:

- The value and importance of dance as an artform
- A strong, intelligent Scottish dance community
- The diversity of practice and career opportunities
- Achievements in building the infrastructure and developing dance in Scotland
- A readiness for a change
- The sector's strong values and notable generosity

¹ Data from Cultural Sparks: The Source 2006/07 – 2010-11

² Scottish Household Survey 2011

The **weaknesses** identified are:

- The need to develop the quality of dance education and training
- The strong need for a PGCE in Dance so that high quality dance teaching can be realised and embedded in the schools' curriculum: this was consistently requested throughout the consultation
- Concern was expressed about the consistent quality of work developed in Scotland
- A desire to develop an improved methodology to critique each others' work, and improved professional development opportunities and mentoring
- More access to and programming of international work
- The need to market, promote, talk about and celebrate dance in new and more effective ways

The **aspirations for the future** were:

- A hunger and shared aspiration for a huge vision for dance in Scotland in the next ten years
- A willingness and readiness to embrace and take part in change
- A shared sense that the dance world in Scotland is diverse and inclusive, with a greater willingness to collaborate towards a shared vision
- A shared understanding of the key issues that need to be addressed to develop the quality, diversity, participation and excitement that dance in Scotland could achieve within the next 10 years
- A shared sense that dance has something special and unique to offer Scotland, and what that 'special' thing is.

Our review also considered the opportunities and threats for the development of dance in Scotland.

Opportunities

- The Scottish Government's commitment to Get Scotland Dancing provides the policy context to embed dance across government agendas including culture, health and physical activity, education and community development
- British Dance Edition hosted in Glasgow and Edinburgh in 2014 provides the focal point for the Scottish dance sector to raise its international profile
- Glasgow Commonwealth Games 2014; dance is well positioned to maximise the opportunities presented through the cultural programme for Glasgow 2014 building on Get Scotland Dancing and achievements of London 2012
- The Creativity and Learning Action Plan; created and shared by Creative Scotland, Education Scotland and the Scottish Government, this provides a strategic context to strengthen the delivery of dance in the Curriculum for Excellence
- The National Youth Arts Strategy, due for publication later this year.

- Creative Scotland's changing investment context and increasing funds from the national lottery
- A confident and ambitious dance sector and the opportunity to work and move forwards in partnership with Creative Scotland

Threats

- The fragility of the dance sector with a small number of organisations and consequent currently limited capacity to take forward significant developments
- Creative Scotland's changing investment context and decreasing grant in aid funds from the Scottish Government
- Significant funding cuts and changes in higher and further education
- Competing subject demands on the curriculum in schools
- Decreasing budgets in local authorities and competing demands.
- The danger of simply not seizing this moment

Over the next two to three years, there is a window of opportunity to significantly strengthen dance and take it to the next level. This is created by a synergy between the strong level of the sector's ambition, Get Scotland Dancing, and a number of key events; it is a moment to be grasped.

4. Key Issues and recommendations for the future:

Our review has identified some key issues for developing a vibrant dance sector in Scotland. Addressing the issues raised will require advocacy, strategic partnerships and influencing, as much as direct actions from Creative Scotland. Professionals working in dance have informed this review and, while taking action forward will require Creative Scotland's leadership, it's important that this responsibility is shared with the sector.

The engagement with, and the hunger from, these workshops for making, teaching and experiencing dance of world-class quality was impressive and there are a remarkable group of people in Scotland working in dance at the moment. It is important to ensure that this process strokes those flames and encourages the best of those people to continue to work towards these stated aspirations.

(Roanne Dods, Report on Dance Review Workshops)

The vision for the future of dance in Scotland:

- Scotland's choreographers and dance artists are world class
- Scotland's dance companies inspire audiences across Scotland, the UK and internationally
- People across Scotland experience high quality dance as audiences and participants
- Dance is taught consistently and to a high level as part of Curriculum for Excellence

- There is a sustainable and accessible infrastructure for dance across Scotland.

Three themes have been identified to inform future planning for dance:

- **Developing Talent**
Strengthening the dance training routes, pathways into the profession and nurturing choreographers and dance artists.
- **Inspiring audiences, participants and artists**
Access to high quality artistic opportunities to inspire audience, participants and also artists in the development of their own work.
- **Embedding dance in education**
Dance in education is at the heart of improving the ecology for dance in Scotland and this should be taken forward as a priority.

Scotland can significantly raise the bar for dance by addressing the current weaknesses and gaps within dance education and training. Using specialist dance teachers in schools will improve both the quality of initial dance experiences and the standard of students entering into vocation training. Holistic methods to developing young artists will equip them with the skills and approaches to develop their own careers and the range of opportunities for dance graduates.

More detailed recommendations arising from this report are set out in the table at Chapter 5 in the full report. These could form part of a strategy for Creative Scotland, other partners and the sector to consider to strengthen the future of dance. For Creative Scotland, these recommendations are intended to inform future priorities for investment and provide the basis for strategic commissioning, which will be introduced in 2013.

Strategic commissioning

Areas to address the gaps and strengthen the sector, which could be considered by Creative Scotland as part of strategic commissioning, comprise:

- New investment approaches to supporting artists and communities of artists rather than requiring artists to develop company structures.
- Investment in a producing resource that enables commissioned choreographers to access producing and technical support and potentially work with a core ensemble of dancers.
- A venues-consortium model to develop dance touring, particularly in areas such as work for children and young people and rural touring.
- Approaches to encourage more incoming international work.
- Developing capacity in the sector to ensure that it is in a strong position to respond to new opportunities.

5. Conclusion

The Dance Sector Review has mapped the huge developments in dance over the past 15 years but also highlights the vulnerabilities. There is an opportunity for Creative Scotland to build on the public interest in dance and work with the sector and other agencies to ensure that dance is able to take a bolder place Scotland's cultural life.

'Over and over again, I heard people wanting dance to raise its game, to increase the quality of work and experience at all levels, and to take a bolder place in arts and culture in Scotland's future. Importantly, there was a collective recognition that this was about Scotland's place in the world. There was a real desire to see international work and dance in and from Scotland to be recognised in an international context.'

(Roanne Dods, Report on Dance Review Workshops)

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