

Meeting with representative of the private dance teaching sector in Scotland

Edinburgh Festival Theatre, 3 February 2005

This meeting was pulled together by the dance department at the Scottish Arts Council with a focus of giving representatives from the dance teaching organisations in Scotland an opportunity to feed their views and ideas to the cultural commission. The majority of initial dance training of children and young people in Scotland is gained through the private teaching sector and these teaching organisations play a major role in developing and nourishing talented young dancers. Without the private dance teachers there would not be a dance sector in Scotland.

Those in attendance from the sector were:

Sean Williamson:	Director - Council for Dance Education and Training
Karen Berry:	representative of Royal Academy of Dance & teacher (Aberdeen)
Jennifer MacFarlane:	Regional Administrator - Royal Academy of Dance
Louise Murray:	representative of Royal Academy of Dance & teacher (Stirling)
Warren Brown:	President of Scottish Dance Teachers Alliance & teacher (Glasgow)
Effie McGowan:	representative of British Association of Dance Teachers & teacher (Bridge of Allan)
Lesley Wood:	representative of the Imperial Society of Dance Teachers & teacher (Glasgow)

Also in attendance were:

Anita Clark:	Head of Dance - Scottish Arts Council
Carol Warner:	Arts Development – Scottish Arts Council
Susan Hay:	Dance Officer – Scottish Arts Council
Malene Ropars:	Dance Secretary – Scottish Arts Council (minutes)
Karen Watson:	Project Manager – Cultural Commission

In discussion the following points were made:

Developing Talent:

Teachers affiliated to all the dance teaching organisations represented teach classes for young people throughout Scotland in a variety of dance styles: classical ballet; jazz; modern stage; tap; contemporary; highland; ballroom and Latin American dancing. The majority focus on ballet, tap, jazz and highland. Independent teachers run their own school as a private business, but usually are affiliated to at least one organisation, through which they will have received their training and qualifications eg some teachers affiliated to both RAD and ISTD. This enables them to enter young people into the Association's exams and to receive a range of support - from continued professional development opportunities to public liability insurance and information on how new legislation will effect their work (e.g. recent developments in Child Protection).

Due to the physicality of the artform, it is a requirement in all dance styles that vocational training starts at a young age. Hence it is vital that children are introduced to dance at an early age. In the 'stage performance' dance styles (ballet, contemporary and musical theatre) the usual route for dancers to enter the profession is by attending a full time training course at aged 16+ for a minimum of three years. Entry to these courses is by audition and to have any chance of gaining a place, most young people will have to have reached a high standard by this stage. In some cases, especially with young men, it is possible to enter dance at this age with little background, especially in street dance styles, although this is becoming less common.

In 'social performance' dance styles such as ballroom and latin american, entry into the profession is as part of a partnership and usually through developing a strong coaching relationship with an individual teacher. At the highest of levels, couples will be able to enter the international competition circuit at amateur and then professional level. Ballroom dancing, or Dancesport has in recent years been included as an activity in the Olympic Games and the public success of Strictly Come Dancing has given the dance professionals in this field a higher profile.

The training of dance teachers is through a similar pathway to the stage dancer, undergoing full-time training to Diploma or Degree level and gaining certification through one of the teaching associations. Some young dancers will enter this training with the intention of becoming a teacher; others will pursue a performance career, moving into teaching at a later stage. It is also possible for a young dancer to work with their local teacher to gain teaching qualifications through one of the teaching associations. This will often involve them assisting in classes and their teacher taking a strong mentoring role in their development.

In Scotland there is one school offering vocational dance training, the Dance School of Scotland at Knightswood Secondary School. The school is an excellent model giving specialist training to talented young dancers as part of their secondary education. Since 1999, the Dance School of Scotland has received funding directly from the Scottish Executive Education Department, enabling any young person in Scotland with the required talent to be funded to attend. Although a fantastic example of vocational dance training at the critical ages (11-16years), the provision does not meet the needs of all young people interested in dance as a profession. It does attract young people from throughout the country, and those outwith Glasgow are looked after at a boarding house. Moving away from home at a young age does not suit all children. The Dance School of Scotland also focuses on classical ballet (in years S1-S5, it is now possible to attend for a year in S6 to follow a musical theatre course) so does not provide for young people interested in developing a career in contemporary, musical theatre or ballroom.

Opportunities need to be developed that would enable support for talented children, from all backgrounds across Scotland, to access appropriate and high quality dance training enabling them to aspire to a viable career in dance.

The cost of training dancers:

There is currently no public subsidy for young people learning to dance with a private dance teacher. The cost of classes varies but will need to cover hire of the studio/hall, advertising, insurance, professional fees and payment for teacher and possibly an assistant or musical accompanist.

For a young dancer contemplating a career in the profession, by the time they are in their teens, this can mean up to five classes a week and the costs to parents is immense. Often teachers offer free classes to allow talented dancers to get the training that is required to develop within the artform. Therefore the development of talent within the dance sector can be restricted because of family income or relies on the commitment of the private dance teacher to subsidise the training, at their own expense.

Within the group of teachers present, the need to move to a more equitable situation for the training of young dancers was clear. A number of different models and examples were discussed:

- One teacher gave an example of two French students she teaches who have moved to Scotland with their parents. The French government pays the fees for these young dancers to receive their vocational dance training as they have been recognised as having talent and potential.
- In sport, funding follows the talented individual and they are supported to utilise the most appropriate training available for themselves and their particular sport whether it is through an institution or with an individual coach.

In England, the Music and Dance Scheme (formerly the Music and Ballet scheme) run by the Department for Education and Skills recognises that vocational dance and music training needs to start at 11/ 12 years. The scheme has historically funded young people to receive this training at full time, specialist boarding schools. However, over the past two years the limitations of this model, in terms of the background the young people accessing this training and the geographic spread of the pupils, has been recognised. In 1999 the DfES introduced the Dance and Drama Awards (D&DAs) for individuals intending to become professional dancers, actors or stage managers. The awards offer greatly reduced tuition fees and help with learning and living costs at some of the leading dance training providers in England. There are 525 new awards per year made to those students who prove most talented at audition; demand is high. Dancers applying for awards must be aged 16 or over and must take up a place on one of the DfES approved courses – Ofsted grade 1 and/or 2.

The DfES is in the process of introducing other pathways which seek to broaden access to vocation training. This includes a number of centres of excellence throughout England that will provide young people with talent in dance or music, to access high quality, vocational training out-of-school hours and in their locality. These initiatives are still in the early stages of development but, for dance, will include a means-tested bursary of £3000 per annum that will enable the young person to access training in technique, performance skills and health practices through these centres and specialist technique training through their own choice of teacher.

The teachers present would urge the Cultural Commission and the Scottish Executive to look at these examples and work with the sector to devise similar opportunities for young people with talent in dance in Scotland to access high quality training from a young age and in their locality.

Keeping talent in Scotland:

The lack of funding, support and opportunities for dancer in Scotland means that talented youngsters are moving to London or overseas to further their careers where there is a strong infrastructure, better developed support for talent and there is greater recognition of dance as a viable career option. As in all fields, this drain of talent from Scotland weakens the sector and the already fragile infrastructure.

The teachers present would urge the Cultural Commission and Scottish Executive to recognise the importance of strengthening dance training and the professional dance sector to enable talent to flourish within Scotland.

Dance in Education:

In the Scottish educational system dance is not a discreet subject in the curriculum, but is part of PE in the 5-14 Expressive Arts Guidelines. This is different to the system in England where there are specialist dance teachers in many schools and opportunities for young people to study dance at GCSE and A Level standard. If dance is taught in schools (and the research commissioned by Scottish Arts Council's Dance Department in 2003, shows that provision is patchy and disparate) it is generally taught by PE teachers who do not necessarily have enthusiasm, training or experience in the subject. There are some exceptions to this and in areas where Dance Development Officers or Artists-in-Residence posts exist, generally funded by the local authority, they sometimes provide this specialist training for schools. Scottish Youth Dance, the dance agency for developing participation in dance for young people works closely with local authorities to help to provide dance within schools. However, the independent 'private' teacher is often not given such opportunities to work within mainstream Education. Higher Dance is a relatively new subject, which is growing in popularity, but is predominantly taught by specialist dance teachers, not PE staff, in a limited number of schools and therefore is not accessible to most schoolchildren. For those who have had little or no experience of dance until sitting the Higher, a lot of extra curricular work needs to be done, in addition to the course work in order to pass.

Dance has a significant role to play in the physical and motor development of children. It establishes movement skills, which if not gained at a young age (aged 3-7 years) are difficult to develop at a later date. Whether or not a child chooses to continue to dance, the skills

developed through an initial dance education are significant and will lay the foundation for physical and co-ordination throughout their life.

Access to dance through mainstream school will enable those children with a special interest and aptitude to be identified and to be channelled into the existing training infrastructure.

Given the recommendations in the PE Review which recognises the place that alternative physical activities should be playing in school PE and the opportunities that are available through the current Curriculum Review, the dance teachers present would urge the Cultural Commission and the Scottish Executive to establish dance in all schools in Scotland.

Who should teach dance:

In Scotland there is already a work force of skilled and experienced teachers, qualified through the different dance teaching organisations, who work in the private sector and outwith the mainstream education system. Dance teachers should have the opportunity to bring their skills, experience and expertise into the educational system. Currently private dance teachers have no recognition through the public sector or education system but they are at the frontline of providing a service in communities which engages with major government initiatives, e.g.:

- Increasing levels of physical activity
- Improving access to out of school hours provision
- Increasing access to creative and cultural activity

If an approach can be identified enabling the work of dance teachers to be recognised both in their role in increasing access to creative activity and in training young dancers, then it will be possible to increase the access and capacity available through this provision.

In England the Council for Dance Education and Training is working with these teaching organisations to enable them to have their qualifications recognised in the National Qualifications Framework.

- Part of the curriculum review which is being undertaken by Scottish Executive is to look at freeing up teachers time to allow for more creative activities.

The dance teachers present would urge the Cultural Commission and the Scottish Executive to recognise the role that dance teachers can play in formal and informal education and work with the teaching organisations to recognise the training and expertise that already exists.

Access to Facilities:

In order to provide good quality dance experiences to young people, whether for enjoyment or at a vocational/ training level, access to good and affordable facilities is essential. Many private dance teachers hire spaces from Local Authorities and are charged premium rates as they are seen as private businesses. This doesn't recognise the service to the community that the dance teachers provide and often means that because of costs and staffing issues they are unable to access the best spaces for these classes. With the current programmes to improve facilities within schools it is an exciting opportunity for local authorities to work with the private teaching sector to utilise these facilities during out of school hours and at weekends.

The dance teachers present would be keen to seek ways of working closer with local authorities and other publicly subsidised venues to utilise facilities for a wide range of dance activities. In recognition of the role they play in developing dance within the community, dance teachers would like to negotiate more affordable rates for suitable spaces, to ensure that class levels were not mixed, thereby enabling the teachers to provide a higher quality of teaching/dance experience.

Profile of Dance:

Despite high participation levels in dance, across the generations the public profile of dance is still low and there is a significant lack of media coverage of most dance events. TV programmes, films and the increasing profile of dance within pop videos all help to raise the profile of dance within the public's perception. The popularity of *Strictly Come Dancing* has done wonders for increasing participation in ballroom dancing. However, dance is still too often only associated with ballet or more experimental work and not for the likes of us. More work needs to be done to broaden public appeal.

The suggestion of a 'Young Dancer of the Year' award, encompassing dance in all its diversity, similar to the Young Musician Award, was welcomed by the dance teachers represented who recognised that such an event could bring welcome publicity, respect and public awareness for the artform.

The work of teaching associations:**Royal Academy of Dance (RAD):**

The Royal Academy of Dance, established in 1920, is one of the largest examining and teacher education organisations for classical ballet in the world. It has over 17,000 members and a network of international offices and representatives. There are currently 1,200 students in full-time or part-time teacher training with the Academy. Each year, the Academy Examination Syllabus is taught to more than 250,000 students.

Graduating from one of the RAD teacher education programmes entitles the teacher to be included in the Academy's Register. They take great care to monitor teachers throughout their training and beyond to ensure that high standards are maintained.

Examinations are open to all students studying the Grade and Vocational Graded syllabi, offering them a challenge to demonstrate their understanding and knowledge of the work. The grade Syllabus is for younger children with the emphasis on having fun with dancing. Students who, for various reasons, may not wish to take a formal examination, can opt instead for the graded presentation classes. The Vocational Graded syllabus is for boys and girls aged 11 and over who wish to study ballet more seriously, possibly with a view to pursuing a career in dance or dance related subjects.

The number of Scottish students currently studying at Intermediate level and above, NVQ level 2 and 3, (Ballet and Modern Dance) is:

Intermediate	200
Advanced Foundation and above	100

This is based on 16 to 18year olds. Of course not all go on to study dance at tertiary level, however these skills they have learned are at their disposal to use at any time throughout their lives.

Number of registered teachers in Scotland: 167

Imperial Society of Dance (ISTD):

The Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing was founded in 1904 to supervise teachers of ballroom and other types of dance forms around world.

Today the ISTD is divided into Faculties which cover many different forms of dance styles from theatrical, recreational and social dances:

Imperial Dance & Theatre Faculties include Classical Ballet (both Cecchetti Ballet and Imperial Ballet syllabi), Classical Greek Dance, National Dance, Modern Theatre, Tap Dance and South Asian Dance.

Imperial Dance & Dance Sport Faculties include Modern Ballroom, Latin American, Sequence, Disco/Freestyle/Rock 'n' Roll and Club Dance.

In addition to the Natural Movement Group there is also the Dance Research Committee, which provides courses in Historical Dance.

The main objectives of ISTD is to 'educate the public in the art of dancing in all its forms', by;

- ◆ Promoting knowledge of dance
- ◆ Maintaining and improving teaching standards
- ◆ Qualifying, by examination, teachers of dancing in the ISTD's specialist techniques taught by its 10,000 members in dance schools throughout the world
- ◆ And by providing through its syllabi, techniques upon which to train dancers for profession.

Each year up to 250,000 people are examined through graded examinations and medal tests to assess their proficiency.

Number of schools in Scotland: 40

British Association of Teachers of Dance (BATD):

The British Association of Teachers of Dancing was one of the first professional dance teacher's association to be established in the year 1892. From this early beginning they have now grown to cover the whole of the UK and have members on five continents.

The Association organises refresher courses, festivals, seminars, championship, instructional sessions and annual conferences. Professional and amateur examinations are available in Tap, Jazz, Modern Dance, Stage, Ballet, Acre-Gymnastics, Highland, Scottish National, Dance Exercise, Majorette, Disco, Rock 'N' Roll, Latin American, Modern Ballroom, Classical, European National and Country Western Line Dancing.

The British Association of Teachers of Dancing is represented on the British Dance Council, The Stage Dance Council International, The Scottish Official Board of Highland Dancing, The Central Council of Physical Recreation and is a Corporate Member of The Council for Dance Education and Training.

Number of registered teachers in Scotland: 1200

Scottish Dance Teachers Alliance (SDTA):

The Scottish Dance Teachers Alliance (SDTA) is around 80 years in existence with members throughout the UK, Canada, USA, South Africa and Australia. Their head quarters is located in the west end of Glasgow, and cover a wide range of dance styles from ballet, tap and ballroom to highland dancing.

Number of registered teachers in Scotland: 320