

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This thesis offers an institutional business plan for a new type of museum that would integrate the history of American modern dance with American contemporary modern dance performance. The proposed museum, which would be created as a result of the institutional business plan, would initiate interaction among choreographers, dancers and visual artists and would exhibit their work. The proposed museum's goals would be creative, educational and cross-disciplinary.

The word *museum*, it is claimed, first referred to the 'temple of the muses,' built by Ptolemy in A.D. 2 in Alexandria, where performances of music, dance, and poetry took place at a site adjoining a library and collection of antiquities.¹

mu'se'um *n.* a building for an exhibit of art, science, etc.²

A museum is not only a place but a state of mind. It is about collecting, of perceiving where there is a need and actively courting those with the material. It is also about housekeeping – preservation, maintenance and security. Finally, it is about sharing this new thing that has been birthed – this collection – with a larger group of interested people, the public.³

By including dance performances and an onsite archives, the American Dance Museum (ADaM), the currently hypothetical organization proposed in this thesis, would stretch the modern, narrow, dictionary definition of the word museum, while retaining somewhat its original, broader meaning.

Four needs exist for contemporary modern dancers and choreographers in New York City that should and must be met.

First, there is a need for a second midsize, well-equipped theater for small modern dance companies and independent choreographers. (The first is The Joyce Theater on 8th Avenue and 19th Street.)

Second, there is a need for affordable rehearsal space for small modern dance companies and independent choreographers.

Third, there is a need for a complete, effective system of documentation of their work.

Fourth, there is a need to educate the public about contemporary modern dance in order to widen its audience and increase its funding.

The proposed American Dance Museum would fill each of these as yet unmet needs for contemporary modern dancers and choreographers and would also create jobs for visual artists, arts administrators, theater personnel,

choreographers and dancers. Independent choreographers and dance companies, chosen by a board of directors, would create new works in the proposed American Dance Museum's rehearsal space and would perform these works in its theater. In addition, the creative process as well as the finished performances would be documented through various media including videos, photographs, paintings, sculptures, drawings and manuscript collections. The public would be educated through accessible, onsite archives and through onsite exhibits of the archival material and fine art generated at the proposed American Dance Museum. Thus, contemporary modern dance would be used as subject material for fine art, thereby blending dance audiences with fine arts audiences.

This thesis proposes a plan for collections-based dance performance and dance-related exhibitions programs, which would be offered by the proposed American Dance Museum. The museum's collections would be unique because they would exist at the same historic theater where the performances, rehearsals, interviews and so forth, would be held, documented and exhibited. The process, therefore, would be a circular⁴ one, unique to a historic site, serving artists, student artists and the general public and taking place under one roof in a historic, theatrical setting.

This thesis, then, proposes an institutional business plan for a new, non-traditional forum in which to create dances and describes a new system of documentation devised specifically for the ephemeral art of dance. For these reasons, Madeleine Nichols, Curator of the Dance Collection at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, encouraged this project, saying it is "workable" and that "nothing like it exists."⁵

Chapter Two of this thesis states recommendations for improving the current state of the dance community in New York City and cites the research upon which these recommendations are based. The research for this thesis may be divided into the following three topics: first, existing dance centers similar to the proposed American Dance Museum; second, how to write a business plan for a non-profit organization; and third, the results of a market survey (Appendix A) prepared specifically for the purposes of this thesis. The other institutions, similar to the proposed American Dance Museum, are Kaatsbaan International Dance Center, Inc. in Tivoli, New York; Bardavon Opera House in Poughkeepsie, New York; The National Museum of Dance in Saratoga Springs, New York and Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival in Lee, Massachusetts. These four institutions were studied through interviews, press packets

and websites. Studying how to write a business plan for a non-profit organization entailed the review of sample business plans and business planning guides in monographs and articles in addition to actual business plans of Kaatsbaan, and Jacob's Pillow.

The market survey results are condensed into a series of graphs (Appendix B) and tables (Appendix C). Appendix C, Table 1 illustrates the breakdown of the vocations of the people to whom the market survey was sent. The following six groups are identified in the table: choreographers (planners), dancers (performers), visual artists (documenters), academics (observers/preservers), administrators (organizers/presenters) and others (unidentified). The market survey itself consists of twenty-six questions, based upon the four unmet needs stated above. The respondents rated the value of the subject proposed in each question on a scale of one to five, one being the lowest point on the scale and five being the highest. The graphs and tables show the average value for each survey question for each separate group and also for the respondents as a whole.

Chapter Three is the institutional business plan, which shows how to carry forward with the recommendations set forth in Chapter Two. The business plan proposes a

method for the preservation, documentation and support of dance through collections-based dance performance, archives and exhibitions programs at the proposed American Dance Museum and develops an audience profile. Chapter Four summarizes the plan and recommendations.

This thesis, however, does not describe collections management issues, such as materials preservation and conservation methods, since these issues have already been studied and discussed at length in other literature. It does not discuss the most current videotaping methods since they are constantly being updated. In addition, the thesis does not discuss a budget for the project since the site selection and implementation aspects of the project are currently hypothetical.

CHAPTER TWO

RESEARCH AND RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION

Create an affordable, well-equipped, midsize performance and rehearsal facility in New York City at a historic site related to the arts

REASONING FOR RECOMMENDATION

According to Bentley Roton, Director and Co-founder of Kaatsbaan, "dancers need space – both psychic and physical."⁶ While a number of small downtown and large uptown performance spaces exist there is a need for a second medium-sized, well-equipped theater for dance, which caters to independent choreographers and small dance companies. There is a need to reach out to this sector, this large population of independent choreographers and dancers who belong to small, pick-up dance companies. This sector needs a clean, affordable, well-equipped space (with enough room for large group pieces and live musicians) in which to rehearse and perform. Currently, The Joyce Theater is the only theater in New York City that fits this description. Of course, other theaters for dance do exist in New York City. Well-known theaters like City Center

Theater on West 55th Street or Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts on West 65th Street, however, are too large for most dance companies to afford, while venues like Joyce Soho on Mercer in Soho or Danspace at St. Mark's Church on St. Mark's Place in the East Village, are small and informal. Furthermore, these venues do not have sprung floors, making performances physically uncomfortable for the dancers at best and shortening dancers' careers by causing injuries at worst.

Market survey respondent Myra Hushansky, a retired dancer, choreographer, dance teacher and dance studio manager, wrote,

I was recently evicted from my affordable, attractive and accessible dance studio space, causing difficulty for teachers and choreographers to work with slight budgets. This is presently rampant in New York City with the market value rate soaring, crowding out anything and anyone who is not extremely wealthy.

Indeed, other dance performance/rehearsal facilities that recently closed or will soon be closing due to rent increases that cannot be met include Context Theater and Dance on Avenue A, Free Range Arts on West 26th Street and the studio at 550 Broadway known simply as 550 Broadway.

Bentley Roton described why Kaatsbaan is located at a historic site in aesthetically pleasing surroundings located in Dutchess County, part of New York's Hudson River Valley:

For a sense of place, a psychic vibration, for inspiration and history. Aesthetic things subliminally stimulate the creative process, [which in turn] stimulates wholesome, aesthetic, moving art, so life is affected. Audiences will feel something they've never felt before.⁷

According to the results of the market survey conducted for the proposed American Dance Museum, dancers especially sense this importance. In fact, dancers rated the value of a dance performance and rehearsal facility being located at a historic site to be a perfect 5.0. (See Appendix B, Graph 8.)

METHODOLOGY FOR ACHIEVING RECOMMENDATION

Dance Residency and Performance Programs at a Historic Site Related to the Arts

The proposed American Dance Museum would be a curated⁸ venue for residencies culminating in performances. In other words, dance companies and independent choreographers would audition to have their work documented and presented at the museum. In addition, special performances of modern dance masterpieces by pioneers of American modern dance, such as Martha Graham and Doris Humphrey, would be given to honor them and remind today's post-modern choreographers and dancers of the roots of their craft. The museum would also be architecturally significant, aesthetically pleasing and located at a historic site in New York City related to the arts, thereby encouraging a feeling of historical

importance for visitors to the museum as well as the artists who would create and perform works there. This would remind them that work done now is history in the making and is worthy of preservation.

RECOMMENDATION

Create a new, complete, effective system of documentation of the creative processes and performances of existing contemporary modern dance companies and independent choreographers

REASONING FOR RECOMMENDATION

As dance is an ephemeral, performing art and only truly exists when one is dancing, there is also a need to document it as fully as possible, and through more than one medium, so that the work can be built upon and enjoyed. As Bentley Roton said, visual documentation is vitally important for dance, which must be seen in order to be perceived.⁹ Dances, then, must be frozen in time in order to preserve them for future study by their particular choreographers, student choreographers and also people who simply wish to experience dances for art's sake.

When creating a work of art, a painter brushes paint onto his canvas, a composer writes notes on a page, a photographer clicks a switch on his camera and his artistic vision, indelibly impressed upon emulsion, may be easily reproduced many times. A choreographer/dancer's only tools, however, are his body and the space through which he moves.

He begins from a stand still and improvises movements from point A to point B, but his body only draws invisible lines in the air. His movements are not recorded in space. Without the aid of some form of documentation, choreographers and dancers must rely solely on their memories as their movements evolve into finished dances.

While methods of documentation for dance exist, most of them do not prove practical. For example, dances are often passed from one dancer to another simply through both vocal explanation and physical demonstration of the steps. This may be thought of as a combination of oral history and movement history. Even the best of memories, though, cannot be relied upon one hundred percent of the time and especially not after long periods of time have passed. Indeed, older dancers are oftentimes physically unable to even demonstrate the dance steps they once executed with ease. Dance notation, for example, Labanotation or Benesh notation, is a tedious process and can only be read or written after a great deal of study. Of course, many choreographers have their own personal systems of dance notation (see Appendix B, Graph 21), but these systems are only intelligible to the choreographers themselves. According to market survey respondent Keila Cordova, a dancer, choreographer and writer,

Ohio State University teaches a workshop, which I attended a couple years ago, on Dance Documentation using video and, most interestingly, CD-Rom. Some projects incorporated Labanotation and video documentation, where the Laban notes would, for example, scroll on the left side of the screen, while the video of the dance is presented on the right side of the screen.

Computers, however, are expensive and impractical in the dance studio. Indeed, why bother with the complicated Labanotation portion of this method when the video is shown simultaneously? So, while the CD-Rom dance documentation method is intriguing, it is clearly meant for the scholarly viewing of dances in a library or archival setting and not for the practical reconstruction of dances in the dance studio.

In modern dance much of the rehearsal process involves more than the mere running of the finished dances for the building of the proper stamina and the perfection of details. It involves the creation of dances. Finished modern dances are usually a product of the choreographers' specific movement ideas as interpreted by his or her dancers in combination with the dancers' improvisation as interpreted by the choreographer. Ideally, improvisation sessions last at the very least a few minutes. It is not possible to remember and recreate all of the improvised movements created during these sessions without the aid of a video recorder.

Rehearsals then, should be videotaped for two reasons. First, the flow of spontaneous ideas dancers translate into movement during improvisation is preserved in total. Thus, the fullest possible use of these ideas can be made. Once preserved on video, rejected ideas for one dance can also be saved for future use in other dances, much like scraps of discarded material for one sewing project may be used later in a patchwork quilt.

Second, videotaped rehearsals take the pressure off the dancers who must rely solely on their memories in order to recreate movement set for them by choreographers. Oftentimes, circumstances may force a dancer to leave the rehearsal process before the dance is even finished, taking his memory and the only record of his role in the dance with him. Similarly, a completed dance that is not documented can be lost forever. Without the aid of a video recorder dancers and choreographers are often left with vague memories of their work at best. The result is frustration and wasted effort, time and money in an already constrained funding environment.

Video documentary of the entire process is also useful, not only for professional choreographers and dancers, but also for students. Through taped interviews with professional choreographers and dancers, students

learn how the rehearsal and creative processes work. This gives them an understanding of how these processes differ from choreographer to choreographer, inspiring them and giving them the courage to express their own individuality through dance. These documentaries also aid students in deciding if dance is a good career choice for them. Video/film cameras, however, are expensive and require an extra person to operate them efficiently. This makes videotape or film of most performances, let alone rehearsals, an unheard-of luxury for most dance companies in New York City, since most subsist on meager budgets and cannot even afford to pay the dancers.

METHODOLOGY FOR ACHIEVING RECOMMENDATION

Systematic Documentation of Residencies and Performances Through Various Artistic Media

There is a need, however, to preserve more than just a fleeting, finished performance. Those chosen to do a residency at the proposed museum would have not only their performances videotaped but would also have their creative process (from the initial idea through technical rehearsals) documented through several different media. Thus, the proposed American Dance Museum would go far beyond the mere preservation of dance through video and would also build a collection of fine art and archival

material that supports the creative process. The collection would include photographs, sketches, illustrations, drawings, paintings, sculptures, costume renderings, music and/or text and manuscript collections including performance programs, copies of grant proposals and notes and diagrams pertaining to choreography. In this way, every dance created and performed at the museum would be fully and efficiently documented. Other media through which market survey respondents would like to see dances documented include the following: musical scores and recordings, written descriptions, critical writings, monographs, discussions, poetry, holograms and dance scores. (See Appendix C, Table 3.)

In a market survey response, Gayle Gibbons, a professional dancer and choreographer, wrote,

If a dancer comes into a company, one thing they have to do is learn roles that were created on someone else. It would be invaluable for that dancer to be able to have every medium at hand to recreate that role. Dance is an art that is difficult to pin down, very difficult to record because there are so many levels.

Having more levels of documentation would be extremely useful. To see a sculpture, a painting, a video, a photograph, etc. of a dance would give the fullest possible impression of it aside from actually being there. It would be invaluable.

The public doesn't even know what modern dance is, much less post-modern and now we are even farther from post-modern. Education at this point is vital if we are to maintain or cultivate any connection with the general public.

Additional Benefits of Documenting Dance Through Various Artistic Media

There is a need to document dances, however, not just for personal use and for posterity, but also so that dances can be contemplated by artists of other disciplines.

Indeed, Bentley Roton of Kaatsbaan challenged, "How do you separate the arts? They're related."¹⁰ The proposed American Dance Museum would provide an arena for the interaction of dance with other artistic media and the documentation of dance through these media. It would inspire artists and initiate collaboration causing innovation to thrive. The careful, systematic documentation of dance through the visual arts would give artists, their audiences and researchers alike a sense that the work is important and is worthy of exhibition in aesthetically beautiful surroundings. It would also boost the morale of choreographers, dancers and artists by reminding them that their work should be carefully preserved for the education and enjoyment of future generations as well as present audiences.

The results of the market survey conducted for the proposed American Dance Museum show that artists are highly interested not only in a new, complete, effective system of dance documentation, but also in collaboration between

artists and dancers. The average response for both was 4.9. (See Appendix B, Graph 3, questions 7 and 8.) In addition, market survey respondent, Deirdre Towers, Director of Dance Films Association, wrote, "I find that the public is most interested in excellent collaborations between dancers and media artists..." By bringing visual and performing artists together in one place, the proposed American Dance Museum would initiate collaborations thereby stimulating the artists' imaginations. Like the dailies on a movie set, the systematic documentation of their creative processes would further assist the artists by helping them learn from themselves. It would also teach and inspire dance scholars and student choreographers who would utilize the archives for research. Market survey respondent Nan Melville, a dance photographer, feels that video, painting, sculpture, photographs, sketches, illustrations and drawings "all have a place" in the documentation of dance and that "often audiences do not know how much they depend on this collaboration. They take it for granted on the whole." She went on to write the following:

As a dance photographer I am very interested in all forms of dance... I feel much more exciting projects could be undertaken with good collaboration between dancers and photographers, videographers and other visual artists. There are millions of wonderful photographic images lying wasted in drawers. These images could be so valuable and useful to the dancers, choreographers, public and photographers.

I wish there was somewhere, some way, something could be set up for this to happen (for example, images made available for whatever purpose – research to decorating someone's wall) and the photographers paid for the images – not just a donation to the Public Library, which is what happens and what the library expects. It is about time that the artists and those visually connected with dance were paid for their talents – especially where research is concerned.

RECOMMENDATION

Educate the public about contemporary modern dance

REASONING FOR RECOMMENDATION

Market survey respondent Henning Rübsam, graduate of the Juilliard School, dancer, choreographer and artistic director of Sensedance (a New York-based modern dance company), wrote,

A performance/rehearsal facility that is open to the public for dance education purposes is a wonderful idea. Dance needs an audience! Since dance is rarely part of the general education system all efforts to educate people about dance are to be applauded.

Dancers strive for many years, sometimes many decades, to make their extremely difficult craft appear effortless and to find their voices as choreographers. Perhaps if the back-breaking training and rehearsal processes were better understood, funding for contemporary modern dance in New York City for small dance companies and independent choreographers would be improved. In addition, documenting the dances through many different media would bring a wider audience to contemporary modern dance, thereby increasing

its funding. This potential audience would consist of people who affect decision-making about public and private funding for the arts, such as donors, voters, corporate employees and managers. Members of this new, broad audience, educated by the proposed American Dance Museum, would be a potential source of advocacy for public and private funding for the arts.

METHODOLOGY FOR ACHIEVING RECOMMENDATION

Onsite Archives and Exhibitions Programs Linked to the Dance Residencies and Performances

In addition to being a rehearsal and performance facility where dances would be documented through several different media during the creative process, the proposed American Dance Museum would educate the public through ongoing, onsite exhibits of these media and accessibility of its onsite archives.

Collecting Methodology for Onsite Archives and Exhibitions Programs

The artwork and objects to be included in the exhibitions would be drawn exclusively from the primary sources on file in the on-site archives. During weeks in which performances would be given, the previous choreographer's video would be shown in the exhibit space and at least one piece of art (photograph, sketch, costume, sculpture etc.) used in their performances would be put on

semi-permanent display. The exhibits would also include the visual artists' taped or written impressions of their experiences documenting the dances. This way, each artist's work would linger after they have gone and would add a link in the chronological chain of artifacts at the museum, thereby continuing its history and development. People attending performances would see a choreographer's work as well as collaborative artwork or documentation of dance by a visual artist. Special exhibitions of visual art by professional performing artists would also be held.

RECOMMENDATION

Value and Scope of the Collections

REASONING FOR RECOMMENDATION

An anonymous market survey respondent, an artistic director of a museum, wrote,

There is difficulty in figuring what and who to document and who to leave out. Time gives the perspective required to make decisions of this kind. The world of post-modern dance does not have enough history behind it in my opinion.

The goal of the proposed American Dance Museum, however, would be to ensure that dances, whether or not they may be highly valued in the future, are not lost forever by devaluing them in the present. Since dance is an ephemeral art, the only way to do this is to document dances in the present, while they are being created and

performed. In other words, we must document dances while they live in order to ensure they keep on living. The proposed American Dance Museum, then, may be compared to the Museum of Television and Radio on West 52nd Street in New York City, which also archives and exhibits an ephemeral, performing art. According to Doug Gibbons, Director of its Library and Information Services, it is a museum in the sense that they must be and are selective.¹¹

We cannot collect everything, so we employ a professional curatorial staff charged with being savvy about topics of all genres, about things happening in the world and in the past... We consciously choose the programs for our collection.¹²

At the Museum of Television and Radio the curators carefully watch current television and radio shows for who is doing something different and doing it well.¹³ Similarly, at the proposed American Dance Museum, a committee of board members, consisting of qualified and experienced choreographers, dancers and other artists, would carefully consider and choose the dance companies who would reside, perform and be documented there, as well as the artists who would document them. Thus, its collections would also be deliberately and prudently chosen.

Furthermore, since the proposed American Dance Museum's collection would start with the first dance company that creates, rehearses and performs there, its

holdings would be of the twenty-first century. Therefore, its specialized collection would also be valued for its uniqueness by other institutions. In fact, the proposed American Dance Museum may also be likened to the Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology, whose collection is in support of the history of fashion and textiles. According to Curatorial Assistant Brett Fowler, other institutions like the Metropolitan Museum of Art and museums abroad come to the museum at FIT for their extensive twentieth century holdings. Also, he estimates an equal number of graduate students and professional designers from the fashion and textile design industries use the museum's collection for research and inspiration.¹⁴

METHODOLOGY FOR ACHIEVING RECOMMENDATION

Provide a Curated Collection of Documentation for Participating Dance Companies

All documentation kept on file in the on-site archives would be indexed and accessible to artists, student artists and the public for research and/or pleasure. By attending performances and exhibitions and through the study of archival documentation, participating artists, non-participating artists, dance and art students, and the general public would all be educated. A portion of the archives would relate to the historic site itself. The

portion of the archives related to dance, however, would be a unique repository of primary sources generated solely by visual artists and dancers working at the museum. These primary sources would include photographs, sketches, illustrations, drawings, paintings, sculptures, costume renderings, music and/or text and manuscript collections. The dances would also be documented through film and videotape. On-site interviews with the choreographers, dancers and collaborators (such as musicians, lighting designers, set designers and costume designers) would also be held. The interviews would include discussions of both individual interpretive processes and collaborative processes. Thus, the proposed American Dance Museum would create and provide a curated collection of documentation for choreographers and other participants, which would become part of its permanent archives. This curated collection, then, would be composed of integrated or linked sub-collections, for example: a collection of videos, a collection of paintings, a collection of sculptures, a collection of drawings.

RECOMMENDATION

Visitor Profile

REASONING FOR RECOMMENDATION

The results of the market survey conducted for the proposed American Dance Museum show that choreographers highly value a new dance rehearsal and performance facility (average response 4.9), which would offer exhibitions of art documenting dance created, rehearsed and performed onsite (average response 4.75). (See Appendix B, Graph 1, questions 3 and 5.) Choreographers (average response 4.6) and academics (average response 4.5) showed most interest in using the archives of the proposed American Dance Museum for research. Dancers and artists, however, followed close behind (average response 4.4). (See Appendix B, Graph 10.) Artists highly valued exhibitions of manuscript collections, fine art and video/film, which feature dance (average response 4.5). Choreographers, dancers and academics, however, also significantly valued this type of exhibition (average response 4.1). (See Appendix B, Graph 16.)

Market survey respondent Tricia Brouk, free-lance writer on dance-related topics and member of the Lucinda Childs Dance Company, wrote,

I think a research center that is readily available to post-modern artists and dancers is highly needed. The separation of ballet and modern dance is a valid one, so we need a facility that caters to 'our' dance history, for example, Martha [Graham], Hanya [Holm], Doris [Humphrey], Judson Church and the artists making history right now who haven't yet made the history books.

Market survey respondent Aimee Östensen, a former professional ballet and modern dancer who is currently a student of elementary education at New York University and an assistant teacher and movement teacher at Manhattan Country School, feels that an organization such as the proposed American Dance Museum would be a useful resource for her teaching.

As a creative movement teacher ... I want to do movement lessons on themes... A place that is one center that has videotapes, music, [manuscript collections] and a library to do research, which is all based around dance would be so useful to me in terms of producing and planning lessons and a curriculum.

In an interview, Maurice O'Connell, General Manager of the National Museum of Dance, said,

Something new that documents the creative process should be helpful to choreographers and composers since choreography and music go hand in hand. A separate space for research on music for dance should be a major focus of any dance research facility. It would help with the educational process as well as the creative process. People hear music when they see dance and wonder how to find it. It should be made available.¹⁵

METHODOLOGY FOR ACHIEVING RECOMMENDATION

Archives Users

Dance critics, journalists and set and costume designers would also find the archives of the proposed American Dance Museum useful for research in addition to teachers, artists, musicians, composers, dancers and choreographers as mentioned above. Bentley Roton stated the

following reasons. Dance journalists and critics can use a dance archives to compare contemporary performances and roles with past performances and roles. Research at a dance archives may also be done when duplicating costumes and sets. Dance scholars, such as those studying dance at universities, may wish to study different interpretations of the same dances or different interpretations of specific roles within dances. When making new work, choreographers may visit a dance archives to get direction, to find new ideas and to find out who has done what. Choreographers may also visit a dance archives for aid in choreographing revivals, recreations or condensed versions of extant dances, or in order to make references to other's past works. Dancers and choreographers can visit a dance archives to study their own work to see if they are improving.¹⁶ Wise dancers may even use a dance archives in order to study the work of a choreographer for whom they wish to audition. Of course, the archives of the proposed American Dance Museum would be useful to those who study fine art as well, since its collection would consist of various fine arts media. Indeed, an anonymous market survey respondent who is a curator wrote, "My interest is specifically how dance is portrayed in art."

RECOMMENDATION

Unique Contribution in a Competitive Arts Marketplace

REASONING FOR RECOMMENDATION

Four organizations similar to the American Dance Museum proposed in this thesis already exist. They are the Bardavon Opera House, Kaatsbaan International Dance Center, Inc., the National Museum of Dance, and Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival. The Bardavon Opera House, an historic landmark listed on the National Register of Historic Places, was built by James Collingwood in 1869 in Poughkeepsie, New York. On its stage Bardavon shows music (jazz, blues and classical), drama, opera, dance and film events. Mark Twain, Sarah Bernhardt, the Barrymores, Edwin Booth, John Philip Sousa, Burns and Allen, Dizzy Gillespie, Tommy Dorsey, Frank Sinatra and legends of the dance world Martha Graham and Merce Cunningham, have all performed there. In addition, they hold training sessions for amateur performers in the community as well as children's educational programs, mixers for singles and community meetings for the discussion of civic issues. Their special programs include Matinees and Music Series for Senior Citizens and Theatre-Life Connections (a program that provides tickets for needy children and teens). They also have archives, hold exhibits and offer membership to donors. So, the Bardavon Opera House would be

similar to the proposed American Dance Museum in that it is located at a historic site and has archives and an exhibit space. Unlike the proposed American Dance Museum, however, their focus is neither on the art of dance nor the documentation of those who perform there.

At Kaatsbaan International Dance Center, Inc., located on park-like grounds in Tivoli, New York (and at a historic site), the focus is on dance of almost any genre from all over the world. Dance companies ranging in size from small to large make new dances and perform them at Kaatsbaan (a Dutch word that means playing field). Resident dance companies are documented. In fact, there is a video camera in every studio. According to Bentley Roton, Kaatsbaan's Director and Co-founder, "the goal is to give dancers and choreographers tools to encourage and facilitate creativity."¹⁷ They only keep, however, documentation of finished performances of works made at Kaatsbaan. Their goal, then, is not necessarily to keep documentation of the creative process. But, videos of the rehearsal process are surely used on a daily basis. The dancers and choreographers would view them to help them remember steps from the previous day's rehearsals and to pull out needed material from improvisation sessions. Documentation of this process, however, is precisely what the proposed American

Dance Museum would record through various media in addition to videotape and would keep on file in its archives.

At Kaatsbaan, artists are encouraged to sculpt, draw or paint the dancers. Like the proposed American Dance Museum, Kaatsbaan is a place to meet, make connections, start collaborative relationships and exchange ideas with visual artists. Also, like the proposed American Dance Museum, dance companies can show their finished, new works to an audience and audiences can see works in progress. Kaatsbaan is purposely located in the Hudson Valley for relief from the financial and spatial problems of operating in New York City. But, the proposed American Dance Museum would be purposely located in New York City to be at the center of dance for both dancers and dance audiences. Kaatsbaan also has a museum onsite and an extensive dance-related art collection and archives. The collection is extremely broad in scope, as it is international and consists of photographs, paintings, drawings, video and also notated works and autographed materials. Their collection statement is "[We] take everything."¹⁸ The American Dance Museum, on the other hand, would build a collection with a narrower focus. This collection would support dance history by documenting the creative processes

of American contemporary modern dancers and choreographers as well as their performances that would be held onsite.

The National Museum of Dance in Saratoga Springs, New York, another National Historic Landmark, is currently America's only museum dedicated to all types of American, professional dance. It is adjacent to the Lewis A. Swyer School for the Performing Arts, where museum visitors are allowed to observe students from the New York State Summer School for the Arts in classes and rehearsals. Much of the material used in their exhibits is drawn from the archives at the museum. The museum has one permanent exhibit, the Hall of Fame, devoted to individuals who have contributed to the field of dance on a grand scale. The other galleries hold rotating dance exhibits, employing such media as photographs, costumes, props and memorabilia. This idea of having one permanent exhibit and several other changing exhibits is a good one that the proposed American Dance Museum may also employ. Special programs at the National Museum of Dance include Family Dance Day, teacher training sessions, guided tours and movement workshops for students of all ages.

Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, founded by modern dance pioneer Ted Shawn in 1930, is located on 150 acres of woodland in the Berkshire Hills in Lee, Massachusetts. Now

a historic site devoted to dance, it was originally bought by Shawn and his wife, fellow modern dance pioneer Ruth St. Denis, as a retreat. Their then famous Denishawn company rehearsed there until 1931. The Pillow now presents dance performances by well-known troupes such as the Mark Morris Dance Group, the Trisha Brown Dance Company and the Paul Taylor Dance Company. The site includes two theaters, an outdoor stage, four dance studios, archives, an exhibition gallery and resident facilities. They exhibit photographs and archival material drawn from their own extensive dance archives as well as artwork made by choreographers, such as Paul Taylor. The School at Jacob's Pillow, for which students must audition, offers full days of dance classes and rehearsals and evenings scheduled with dance performances, artist-scholar lectures, exhibitions and archives research time. In addition, they offer internships in technical/theater production, operations, development, marketing/press, archives/preservation, programming, education and documentation. While Jacob's Pillow would be similar to the proposed American Dance Museum in that it has dance performances, exhibits and archives, these three programs are not linked as they would be for the proposed American Dance Museum.

METHODOLOGY FOR ACHIEVING RECOMMENDATION

**Unique Contribution of the proposed American Dance Museum
to the Field of Dance**

None of these four organizations (Bardavon, Kaatsbaan, the National Museum of Dance, and Jacob's Pillow), then, consciously document creative processes, by recording choreographic processes in addition to finished performances in order to build a specialized collection of video/film, fine art and archival material that is housed and exhibited onsite for the education and enjoyment of the public. Also, none of these four organizations is located in New York City, the center for dance in America. Theaters in New York City, such as The Kitchen Center for Video, Music and Dance at 10th Avenue and 19th Street and Dance Theater Workshop on 7th Avenue and West 19th Street have onsite archives, which include such media as video and film. They also show art exhibits. But, the exhibited art is not usually related to the dances performed at these venues. In addition, these two organizations do not focus on dance alone, but on multi-disciplinary performance works. Furthermore, none of these facilities are specially equipped to document the creative process through various fine arts media as the proposed American Dance Museum would be. In fact, market survey respondent Penny Ward, an archivist and dance videographer, wrote,

I can see that [the proposed American Dance Museum] would combine elements of the performance space/archive availability of The Kitchen plus the well-established access provided by [The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at] Lincoln Center.

Indeed, the specialized collection of the proposed American Dance Museum would stand out from the collection of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center and other large collections, such as the Harvard Theater Collection, because it would have a narrower focus and would, therefore, be smaller and less intimidating to its users.

CHAPTER THREE
BUSINESS PLAN

THE AMERICAN DANCE MUSEUM

DANCE RESIDENCIES AND PERFORMANCES/DOCUMENTATION OF DANCE
THROUGH VIDEO, FILM AND VARIOUS FINE ARTS MEDIA/LINKED
ARCHIVES AND EXHIBITIONS PROGRAMS

BUSINESS PLAN

NEW YORK CITY
NOVEMBER 2000

The American Dance Museum
c/o Alice Evelyn Stock, Founder
18 Gramercy Park South

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 New York, NY 10003
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THE AMERICAN DANCE MUSEUM

BUSINESS PLAN

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1. PURPOSE STATEMENTS

PURPOSE OF THE PROPOSED AMERICAN DANCE MUSEUM

- A. To preserve the ephemeral art of dance through systematic documentation of creative/choreographic processes as well as finished performances
- B. To widen the audience for American contemporary modern dance
- C. To increase funding for American contemporary modern dance

PURPOSE OF THE BUSINESS PLAN

The Business Plan for the proposed American Dance Museum will serve as:

- A. An operational guide for the proposed business
- B. An explanation of the proposed business for funding purposes

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The proposed American Dance Museum will seek to improve funding for American contemporary modern dance by bringing a better understanding of the creative process to a wider audience. The mission of the proposed American Dance Museum will be to generate, collect, preserve, interpret and exhibit fine art and archival material, which document American contemporary modern dances as they are being created and performed.
- Housing an art studio, an archives, an exhibit space and a rehearsal space at a renovated, historic theater, the proposed American Dance Museum will provide American contemporary modern choreographers and dancers a midsized, new venue in which to rehearse and perform in New York City. Through linked dance residency/performance, documentation, archives and exhibitions programs, students and professionals from the visual and performing arts as well as the general public will be educated.
- The proposed American Dance Museum will be the first and only institution of its kind. While The Bardavon

Opera House, Kaatsbaan International Dance Center, Inc., The National Museum of Dance and Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival are similar to the proposed American Dance Museum in that they are located at historic sites and have dance residency/performance, archives and exhibitions programs, none are located in New York City (the center for dance in America) as the proposed American Dance Museum will be. Furthermore, like the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, none of these institutions (except the proposed American Dance Museum) focuses exclusively on American contemporary modern dance and its documentation.

- Thus, the American Dance Museum will add a unique and specialized collection and documentation process to existing dance collections in order to support American contemporary modern dance history. This business plan, then, describes a new, non-traditional forum in which to create dances and describes a new system of documentation devised specifically for the ephemeral art of dance.

3. CONDITIONS IN THE FIELD/
WHY IMPLEMENT THIS PROJECT?

**FOUR NEEDS EXIST FOR CONTEMPORARY MODERN DANCERS AND
CHOREOGRAPHERS IN NEW YORK CITY THAT SHOULD AND MUST BE MET**

A. A second midsize, well-equipped theater for small modern dance companies and independent choreographers (the first is The Joyce Theater on 8th Avenue and 19th Street)

B. Affordable rehearsal space for small modern dance companies and independent choreographers

C. A complete, effective system of documentation of the work of small modern dance companies and independent choreographers

D. Public education on contemporary modern dance

Meeting these needs will:

1. Widen contemporary modern dance audiences
2. Increase funding for contemporary modern dance

The proposed American Dance Museum will:

A. Fill each of the four unmet needs for contemporary modern dancers and choreographers stated above

B. Create jobs for

1. Visual artists
2. Arts administrators
3. Theater personnel

4. Choreographers

5. Dancers

4. MISSION STATEMENT/GOALS

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the proposed American Dance Museum will be to generate, collect, preserve, interpret and exhibit video/film, fine art and manuscript collections, which document American contemporary modern dances as they are being created and performed and to educate the public about American contemporary modern dance in order to widen its audience, thereby increasing its funding.

GOALS

The purpose of the proposed American Dance Museum will be to accomplish three major goals.

A. Provide a major residence and performance facility for American contemporary modern dancers and choreographers located in New York City at a historic site related to the arts

B. Preserve creative/choreographic processes and performances of new American contemporary modern dances by documenting them through various fine arts media as well as video, film and manuscript collections

- C. **Educate** choreographers, dancers, visual artists and the general public through onsite archives and exhibitions programs linked to the residency and performance programs
- Subsequently, the proposed American Dance Museum will also encourage creativity, initiate collaborations between visual artists and choreographers and provide jobs for visual artists, arts administrators and theater personnel, thereby boosting the morale of the arts community in New York City in this time of little funding for the arts in America.
 - In addition, since contemporary modern dance will be used as subject material for fine art, which will be exhibited onsite, dance audiences will blend with fine arts audiences, thereby widening the audience for both.
 - This new, broad audience, educated through the four linked programs offered by the proposed American Dance Museum (Dance Residency/Performance, Documentation, Archives and Exhibitions), will be a potential source of advocacy for public and private funding for the

arts. These will be donors, voters, corporate employees and managers, and other people who affect decision-making about public and private funding for the arts.

5. BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

LINKED PROGRAMS OVERVIEW

- A. Dance Residency/Performance
(Creative Development/Presentation)
 - B. Documentation
(Preservation)
 - C. Archives
(Education)
 - D. Exhibitions
(Education)
- The proposed American Dance Museum's board of directors will choose independent choreographers and dance companies to create new works in its rehearsal space and perform these works in its theater.
 - Creative/choreographic processes as well as finished performances will be documented through various media including videos/films, photographs, paintings, sculptures, drawings and manuscript collections.
 - The public will be educated through an accessible, onsite archives and through onsite exhibitions of the videos/films, fine art and archival material generated at the proposed American Dance Museum.

LINKED PROGRAMS**A. Dance Residency/Performance
(Creative Development/Presentation)****Purpose**

Dance companies and independent choreographers will audition or be invited to reside, create and present new work at the proposed American Dance Museum. In order to represent the history of modern dance, special performances of modern dance masterpieces choreographed by pioneers of American modern dance, such as Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman, will also be encouraged. These special performances of historic dances will affirm the importance of the proposed American Dance Museum, which through its four linked programs (Dance Residency/Performance, Documentation, Archives and Exhibitions), creates, documents, preserves, shows and thereby continues the history of American modern dance in a way that is not being done anywhere else.

Program Links

The choreographers' and dancers' choreographic/creative processes as well as finished performances of the new works created at the proposed American Dance Museum will be documented through various media, such as video/film, photographs, paintings, sculptures, drawings and manuscript collections, which will be housed and maintained in the

accessible, onsite archives and exhibited in the onsite exhibitions spaces. The performances, archives and exhibitions will be open to the public for educational purposes.

Space Needs

1. Rehearsal studios

This space need will be described in more detail in the following section (B. Documentation).

2. Theater

The proscenium stage will be midsized (comparable to the Joyce Theater on 8th Avenue and 19th Street) and equipped with a fly space, orchestra pit and state of the art video, sound and lighting equipment. This space need will be described in more detail in the following section (B. Documentation).

3. Administrative office space

LINKED PROGRAMS**B. Documentation
(Preservation)****Purpose**

To preserve the ephemeral art of dance, visual artists will document the creative processes of choreographers and dancers as they create new work, rehearse and perform at the museum.

Program Links

See above (A. Dance Residency/Performance)

Space Needs**1. Rehearsal Studios**

Artists will document the rehearsals from a specially designed space, which will run along the sides and back of the rehearsal studios. This will allow the artists to view the dancers from three sides without interfering with them. As tradition dictates, the front of the rehearsal studios will be equipped with full-length mirrors and will aid not only the dancers, but also the artists in this case. In addition, the rehearsal studios will be equipped with video cameras in several different locations.

2. Theater

The theater will also be equipped with video cameras in several different locations.

See above (A. Dance Residency/Performance)

3. Administrative office space

LINKED PROGRAMS

C. Archives (Education)

Purpose

All documentation will be housed onsite in the archives and will be made available to the public for research and educational purposes. While a portion of the collections will relate to the historic site itself, the portion related to dance will be a unique repository of primary sources that document American contemporary modern dance. Furthermore, these primary sources will be generated solely by visual artists and dancers working at the museum. Thus, the proposed American Dance Museum will build an institutional history reflecting trends in American contemporary modern dance. Over time, then, it will be possible for researchers to review trends in American contemporary modern dance based on these specialized collections.

The collections will include the following:

- videos
- films
- musical scores and recordings
- photographs
- paintings
- sculptures
- drawings
- illustrations

- sketches
- costume renderings
- manuscript collections
 - performance programs
 - copies of grant proposals
 - notes and diagrams
 - written descriptions
 - critical writings
 - monographs
 - discussions/interviews
 - poetry

Program Links

See above (A. Dance Residency/Performance)

Space Needs

1. Storage space for collections meeting the latest professional standards in collections storage and management
2. Space for researchers to view collections
3. Administrative office space

LINKED PROGRAMS**D. Exhibitions
(Education)****Purpose**

The artwork and objects to be included in the exhibitions will be drawn exclusively from the primary sources on file in the onsite archives. Exhibitions will be open to the general public for educational purposes and to audiences who have come to the museum to see dance performances. Special exhibitions of visual art by professional choreographers and dancers will also be held.

Program Links

See above (A. Dance Residency/Performance).

Space Needs

1. Permanent exhibitions galleries
2. Changing exhibitions galleries
3. Workshop for exhibitions designer and installer including objects preparation space
4. Administrative office space

6. MARKET

MARKET SURVEY RESULTS

Distribution

- In October 2000 one hundred and fifty market surveys (see Appendix A) for the proposed American Dance Museum were distributed to choreographers, dancers, artists, academics (curators, archivists, professors, lecturers, journalists, critics) and administrators in the field of dance in New York City.

- An overwhelming 49% of the surveys were completed and returned.
 - Choreographers were highly motivated to complete the survey with 83% responding.
 - Dancers and artists were also very interested with a nearly 60% response rate.
 - Though showing lesser interest, about a third of academics and administrators replied, which is still a large amount.

(See Appendix C, Table 1.)

MARKET SURVEY RESULTS**HIGHEST INTEREST BY VOCATION**

Respondents rated each question on a scale of one to five, one being the lowest point on the scale and five the highest.

Choreographers (Appendix B, Graph 1)

Highest interest shown in a new dance rehearsal and performance facility with exhibitions of art documenting dance created and performed onsite (question 3 - average response 4.9, question 5 - average response 4.75)

Dancers (Appendix B, Graph 2)

Highest interest shown in a new dance rehearsal and performance facility that is also a historic site (question 3 - average response 4.9, question 4 - average response 5.0)

Artists (Appendix B, Graph 3)

Highest interest shown in a new, complete, effective system of dance documentation and in collaboration between artists and dancers (questions 7 and 8 - average response 4.9)

Academics (Appendix B, Graph 4)

Highest interest shown in a new dance rehearsal and performance facility and in the creative processes of choreographers (question 3 - average response 4.6, question 14 - average response 4.5)

Administrators (Appendix B, Graph 5)

Highest interest shown in a new dance rehearsal and performance facility that is also a historic site (question

3 – average response 4.5, question 4 – average response 4.4)

Overall (Appendix B, Graph 6)

Highest interest shown in a new dance rehearsal and performance facility (question 3 – average response 4.7)

MARKET SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

Question 6: How highly would you value this facility if you could use its archive for research?

Choreographers (average response 4.6) and academics (average response 4.5) showed most interest in using the archives of the proposed American Dance Museum for research. Dancers and artists, however, followed close behind (average response 4.4). (See Appendix B, Graph 10.)

Question 11: How highly do you value public access to artistic media that document post-modern dance?

Overall, public access to artistic media that document dance was well valued (average response 4.2) with choreographers and dancers valuing it the most (average response 4.4). (See Appendix B, Graph 14.)

Question 13: How highly do you value exhibitions of manuscript collections, fine art, photographs, video etc., which feature post-modern dance themes?

Artists highly valued exhibitions of manuscript collections, fine art and video/film that feature dance (average response 4.5). Choreographers, dancers and academics, however, also valued exhibitions significantly (average response 4.1). (See Appendix B, Graph 16.)

TARGET AUDIENCE

Choreographers

Will participate in the programs of the proposed American Dance Museum by creating and showing new work while in residence, by utilizing the archives for research, by attending onsite performances and by viewing onsite exhibitions created by the museum staff

Dancers

Will participate in the programs of the proposed American Dance Museum by rehearsing and performing new work while in residence, by utilizing the archives for research and by viewing onsite performances and exhibitions

Artists

Will participate in the programs of the proposed American Dance Museum by documenting the choreographers' creative processes and performances, by utilizing the archives for research and by viewing onsite performances and exhibitions

Academics

Will participate in the programs of the proposed American Dance Museum by utilizing the archives for research and by viewing onsite performances and exhibitions

General public

Will participate in the programs of the proposed American Dance Museum by utilizing the archives for research, by viewing onsite performances and exhibitions and/or by becoming a volunteer or a donor/member of the museum

COMPETITION FOR TARGET AUDIENCE

Bardavon Opera House

Kaatsbaan International Dance Center, Inc.

The National Museum of Dance

Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival

- These four institutions have dance archives and exhibitions programs, but are not located in New York City and neither focus on American contemporary modern dance nor the documentation of creative processes and performances.

New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

- The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center and other collections such as the Harvard Theater Collection also do not focus on American contemporary modern dance. The proposed American Dance Museum would be smaller and therefore,

less intimidating and more user-friendly than these larger collections.

7. BOARD LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

GOVERNANCE

Board of Directors, President and other officers

ADMINISTRATION

Director/Chief Curator

Will oversee Dance Residency/Performance Program, Documentation Program, Archives Program and Exhibitions Program. Will report to the Board of Directors.

MANAGEMENT STAFF

Director of Audience Development

Will oversee development, marketing, advertising and a membership program for the museum. Will report to the Director/Chief Curator.

STAFF

Dance Residency/Performance Program

Curator of Dance

Together with a committee consisting of the Director/Chief Curator and members of the board, the Curator of Dance will choose and organize the dance companies and choreographers to reside and perform at the proposed museum. Will report to the Director/Chief Curator.

Theater Manager

Will oversee the theater. Will report to the Curator of Dance. Stage Manager, Lighting Designer, crew, lighting and sound technicians will report to the Theater Manager.

Documentation Program

Curator of Documentation

Together with a committee consisting of the Director/Chief Curator and members of the board, the Curator of Documentation will choose and organize the artists to document the dance companies and choreographers who reside and perform at the proposed museum. Will report to the Director/Chief Curator.

Registrar

Will oversee accessions, deaccessions, loans and legal matters involving the collections (fine art, video/film and manuscript collections generated by the choreographers/dancers and artists who document them). Will report to the Curator of Documentation.

Archives Program

Curator of Collections

Will manage the collections by overseeing handling, maintenance, preservation and storage. Will report to the Director/Chief Curator.

Archivist

Will be in charge of cataloguing, record-keeping, arrangement of and public access to the collections.

Will report to the Curator of Collections.

Exhibitions Program

Curator of Exhibitions

Will research and implement the exhibitions. Will write the text for the exhibitions. Will report to the Director/Chief Curator.

Exhibitions Designer

Will design the physical logistics of the exhibitions and prepare the objects. Will report to the Curator of Exhibitions.

Exhibitions Installer

Will oversee the installation of the exhibitions. Will report to the Curator of Exhibitions.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this thesis proposes the following recommendations for meeting the four needs of American contemporary modern dancers and choreographers stated above: first, the creation of an affordable, well-equipped, midsize performance and rehearsal facility in New York City at a historic site related to the arts; second, the creation of a new, complete, effective system of documentation of the creative processes and performances of existing contemporary modern dance companies and independent choreographers; third, augmentation of public education about contemporary modern dance through dance-related archives and exhibitions programs linked to dance residency and performance programs; fourth, the creation of a collecting methodology and the determination of the scope of the collections for the archives; and fifth, the assemblage of a visitor/audience profile for the linked programs. The proposed American Dance Museum would carry out these recommendations, thus making a unique and

necessary contribution to the field of dance in a competitive arts marketplace.

1. B. Robertson, "The Museum and the Democratic Fallacy," *Art in America* 58 (July-August 1971), quoted in Marie C. Malaro, *A Legal Primer on Managing Museum Collections*, 2d ed. (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998), 3-4.

2. The New American Webster Handy College Dictionary, 1981.

3. In the process of developing the research for this thesis a market survey (Appendix A) was developed and distributed to one hundred and fifty professionals in the field of dance in New York City. Many of the respondents included written comments on the surveys. This statement is from an anonymous market survey respondent who is a curator, lecturer, editor, critic, journalist, historian and teacher of dance history.

4. Madeleine Nichols, interview by author, New York, NY, 15 November 1999.

5. Ibid.

6. Bentley Roton, interview by author and Pamela Herrick, Tivoli, NY, 27 January 2000.

7. Ibid.

8. Nichols, interview, 15 November 1999.

9. Roton, interview, 27 January 2000.

10. Ibid.

11. Doug Gibbons, interview by author, New York, NY, 24 October 2000.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Brett Fowler, interview by author, New York, NY, 16 November 2000.

15. Maurice O'Connell, interview by author, New York, NY, 3 November 2000.

16. Roton, interview, 27 January 2000.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.