THE DANCER &
THE DANCE

Developing Theatre Dance in Ireland

A Report prepared by
Peter Brinson with
Andy Ormston

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O body swayed to music, O brightening glance,
How can we know the dancer from the dance?

Among Schoolchildren
W. B. Yeats, (1928).
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Foreword

The Dancer and The Dance is a report of particular significance for the arts in Ireland. It presents a detailed scenario necessary to the development of theatre dance in this country. Because dance is a microcosm of the arts in Ireland — “a cinderella among cinderellas” to use the language of the report — the issues raised, including funding, education and training, have broad application to the development of the arts generally in Ireland.

For some years the Arts Council has been concerned to ensure that the development of theatre dance should be fostered with due regard to the diversity of dance forms and to the social and economic realities of this country. The Council was keenly aware of the growth of interest in dance through the 1970s and early 1980s and accordingly sought to reflect that interest in its policies and practice. The Arts Council recognised the need for a major study on theatre dance in Ireland to evaluate existing provision and prescribe for future development.

In 1984 the Council commissioned Mr Peter Brinson, Head of Research and Community Development at the Laban Centre in London to undertake such a study and write a report on the development of theatre dance in this country. We were indeed fortunate to obtain the services of so eminent an expert as Peter Brinson. His career has been distinguished by his authorship of several major reports on dance, on the arts generally, and on the arts in education. For many years he was Director of the United Kingdom branch of the Gulbenkian Foundation, renowned for its seminal work in the arts. During that time he developed close associations with the Irish arts world generally and the dance world in particular. Not only has he experience as a dance academic and theoretician but he also has ten years of practical experience, having been the founder director of The Royal Ballet’s Ballet for All Company. In the course of a decade with that Company he wrote and produced all their productions.

Peter Brinson engaged Mr Andy Ormston as his research assistant for this study. The result of their work is, we believe, a report of great significance which will provide reliable guidelines for the development of theatre dance in Ireland in the coming decade. In that context, the valuable work of Arthur Lappin, Dance Officer of the Arts Council from 1979 until March 1985, must also be acknowledged.

The Arts Council formally adopted The Dancer and The Dance in April 1985. The decision to adopt and publish the report is an indication of the Council’s recognition of its responsibility as outlined in the report. It is the sincere hope of the Arts Council that the other agencies and bodies identified as having responsibility for the development of theatre dance will recognise that responsibility and respond accordingly.
The present report reminds us in its opening chapter that “Dance is part of the history of human culture”. Properly understood therefore, The Dancer and The Dance is a report of significance not alone for the quality of our artistic life but also for the quality of our life as a twentieth century civilised society.

Mairtin McCullough,
Chairman, The Arts Council.

May 1985.
Preface

In September 1984 I was invited by the Arts Council to study and report by February 1985 on the development of classical ballet and modern dance in the Republic of Ireland. My terms of reference are set out at the beginning of this report.

A number of considerations appear to have led to this commission. First, it was the view of the Arts Council, as it had been when commissioning the Richards Report in 1975, that “the Inquiry would best be placed in the hands of someone not directly concerned with dance in the Republic albeit having some knowledge of the subject. This way could preserve detachment and avoid judgements influenced by prior involvement in the issues which would need to be discussed”. Second, I had practical experience of artistic direction, the administration of dance companies, collaboration with choreographers in creating dance works, dance education and dance-in-education. Third, I had undertaken already in the last ten years five other national studies of this kind in different parts of the world, the most recent being New Zealand in 1981 where many dance problems are similar to those of Ireland. Fourth, I had achieved some experience of different aspects of dance in Ireland through an association with the Richards & Benson reports while director of the Gulbenkian Foundation in London, through three years’ service on the Arts Council’s dance bursary scheme, through early association with what has become the Dance Council of Ireland and through various community arts ventures and conferences, mostly in Dublin. Fifth, my present responsibilities at the Laban Centre for Movement and Dance in London allowed me to supplement administrative resources provided by the Arts Council with research resources available at the Centre.

I engaged Andy Ormston as my assistant and we have made eight visits of varying lengths to Ireland in the five months of our inquiry. My first duty, therefore, is to acknowledge his work and commitment without which so large a commission could not have been fulfilled in the time allowed, and to thank all the organisations and individuals listed in Appendices A & B. We travelled from Northern Ireland to the South of the Republic and from East to West always receiving helpful advice, interest and cooperation. In particular, in keeping with our terms of reference, we gave the greater part of our time to the dance companies seeking to balance different aspects of performance, interview and discussion. We aimed, for example, at two performance aspects for each company. We saw the Irish National Ballet in a full evening work at the Olympia Theatre, Dublin, as well as a programme for country tours. We saw Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre in a dance-in-education plus evening performance situation in Northern Ireland as well as its latest work specially presented in Dublin. We saw Dublin City Ballet in its latest Sokolow programme and a presentation by its Youth Dance Ensemble. We were unable to see the Company in a classical role because a presentation of The Nutcracker, for which time was set aside in our programme, was withdrawn. We did, however,
receive from Dublin City Ballet particularly comprehensive documentation and spent more time with its director, Louis O’Sullivan, than with other company directors.

I must thank also the Chairman and Director of the Council, not only for helpful advice but for allowing us to use 70 Merrion Square as our headquarters. Arthur Lappin, the Council’s drama and dance officer later joined by the newly appointed education officer, Martin Drury, was an essential element in this arrangement. Arthur, in particular, gave us quantities of his time and experience and responded without complaint to endless demands for services, information, contacts and the organisation of visits. We are greatly in his debt.

Third, I must acknowledge our debt to the documentation listed in Appendix C. The submissions, memoranda and other details provided by the companies and other dance organisations in Ireland were crucial to the formation of judgments about often uncomfortable facts and situations. This documentation was supplemented at a later stage by comments from the principal dance organisations concerned to whom we circulated copies of our first draft. As a result we were able to amend, where necessary, as well as add points of view to achieve a more balanced argument. We are grateful for this process although we are surprised that none of the companies, especially those for whom grant reductions reluctantly have had to be recommended, seem to have grasped our principal point. This is that the main source of their difficulties is the inadequacy of Government support. In the generality of our arguments I drew stimulus and some ideas from the Richards and Benson Reports, The Arts in Schools (especially in Chapter 5) and on my own reports Dance Education and Training in Britain and Dance in New Zealand. Finally, we thank the many people of all ages in all parts of Ireland who wrote to us in response to our appeal for help. Their ideas, and especially their concern, confirm our belief that the people of Ireland will fashion in their own time their own forms of a vital and Irish theatre dance.

April 1985

Peter Brinson
Terms of reference

1. To identify the nature, provision, standards and administration of professional classical and modern dance forms currently available in the Republic, with particular reference to The Irish National Ballet, Dublin City Ballet and Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre.

2. Suggest ways to improve choreographic and associated artistic skills at professional level including stage, costume and lighting design; live and recorded music; dance on film and video; and technical and administrative support skills.

3. Refer as appropriate to vocational training for dance and dance education at primary, secondary and tertiary levels, including teacher training.

4. Within the context of professional provision, consider particularly the place and needs of community dance with particular reference to the Barefoot, Camaeleon, Liberation Dance Workshop and Theatre Omnibus dance companies.

5. Refer as appropriate to the relationship between professional and amateur dance.

6. Make recommendations with particular reference to audience access and funding from all sources.
Definitions

The definitions used in our report are the same as those used in the arts reports listed in Appendix C.

(i) **Dance Profession** embraces all those earning a living as full-time dance performers, alone, in a group or company; as a dance teacher, repetiteur or producer attached to a professional dance company; as a choreographer; a dance notator; a dance animator or community dancer; or a qualified private teacher of dancing. This is the totality of the theatre dance profession.

(ii) **Dance-in-Education** is provided by those elements of the dance profession who work in an educational context.

(iii) **Dance Education** is that which is given in state or private schools as part of the general education of young people.

(iv) **Dance Training** comprises vocational training for dance and/or special dance study undertaken by young people of all ages, usually in private studios by arrangement with private teachers, often following a syllabus of study proceeding through grades and major examinations laid down by a recognised examining body in Ireland or the U.K.

(v) **Theatrical Dance** means dance specially created and presented to an audience by groups of dancers or solo performers, usually with supporting costumes, scenery and lighting, to music already existing or specially commissioned. Nowadays the movement vocabularies used in theatre dance draw principally on the traditions of classical ballet, modern or contemporary dance, and jazz dance. These are supplemented often by reference to the steps and rhythms of other, non-theatrical, forms of dance and movement where dancers dance or move for their own enjoyment rather than for an audience.
1 National considerations

1.1 Responsibility of the Report

The responsibility written into our terms of reference is to theatre dance in Ireland, not to any one section of the dance community. It is to study and recommend a policy which can produce balanced development of theatre dance with maximum opportunities for professional dancers, choreographers, dance teachers and the public to share in this development. Strategically we recognise the need to build a career structure for dancers in Ireland within a dance profession able to offer career alternatives on the basis of an interested, informed and expanding audience. We have not been asked to report on traditions of Irish dance which have their own separate development.

1.1.1 National Attitudes

In fulfilling this responsibility we have encountered a major problem of public and private attitudes towards dance. These derive from many elements in Irish culture — attitudes towards the body, for example; the lack of an indigenous tradition of theatre dance in Ireland largely due to Ireland’s history; prejudices against male dance. These attitudes have become part of a circle very difficult to break. They create a climate in which dance occupies the lowest rung on the ladder of Irish education and the Irish arts. In turn this strengthens attitudes which discount dance as a significant element of Irish life.

1.1.2 Low Status of Dance

The low status of dance is manifest, especially in funding. Essentially our study and the re-distribution of resources we feel compelled to recommend, are caused by exceptionally low Government support for the arts. The arts receive through the Arts Council 0.037% (sic) of gross national product, one of the lowest subventions in Europe. In this context, any balanced development of theatre dance in Ireland today cannot be the result of national planning based on modest funding and nourishing modest growth. It has to be a result of the cruelly severe pruning suggested in this report. Later on we show that the difference between available funds and the annual subsidy necessary to keep alive existing dance institutions in Ireland at their present level is about £400,000. Our first duty, therefore, is to draw attention to this crisis with the strongest recommendation that the Irish Government should, as a matter of urgency and equity, reconsider its attitude to the arts, include development of the arts in its national plan and, to this end, increase immediately its annual subventions to the Arts Council with consequential benefit to dance. Since no short term solution to underfunding seems in sight however we are compelled in this report to assess what sacrifices will be needed to achieve the objective of a balanced theatre dance profession able to contribute with increasing vigour to cultural life in Ireland.

1.2 Rationale for Theatre Dance

Any development of theatre dance must rest upon sound conceptual reasoning to justify allocations of money and resources. In the case of the arts as a whole in Ireland this reasoning has been undertaken by many of the arts authorities quoted in Appendix C. They show the arts to be an essential element of national wealth, integral to education and one of the
principal means of expressing a national identity. The arts translate into sight and sound the qualities which make the Irish people different from any other. Dance, as one of the arts, possesses all these qualities, but in its own way and with its own properties. “Dance”, notes the Gulbenkian Report, Dance Education and Training in Britain, “is part of the history of human movement, part of the history of human culture and part of the history of human communication. These three elements are brought together and realised through dance activity”. It follows that dance, in all its basic forms, is part of the cultural history of a nation. Not to study and acknowledge this history as a significant element of national identity and the general education of young citizens is not to study one’s own people and their culture. This is important particularly in Ireland where traditional forms of dance contributed at one time to sustain national identity. Theatrical dance, however, did not flourish in the same way. Rosemary O’Neill (1984) and others have shown how theatrical dance in Ireland up to the establishment of the State in 1922 was dominated by productions imported mostly from London. Very little encouragement was given to the development of indigenous Irish theatrical dance forms. In the last 60 years the under-development of a theatre dance profession in Ireland, particularly of dancers, dance teachers and choreographers has guaranteed continuance of the same outside influences. These are reflected, for example, in the number of British, American and other dancers and choreographers working in Ireland compared with those born in Ireland, and the strong influence of British dance education practices and British vocational training. It follows that there appears to be a special case for the support of theatre dance in Ireland at this time if the legacy of the past is to be overcome and dance is to achieve anything like parity with the other arts. Already, as we shall show, important beginnings have been made but these need to be matched by long-term plans to nourish choreographic creation and to train dancers and dance teachers in Ireland to produce truly Irish forms of theatre dance.

1.2.1 Towards Irish Dance Forms

We believe that Irish theatre dance will develop because the great Irish literary tradition is rooted in poetry and song, and because Irish music especially has retained a living, unbroken tradition. Although the Euro-American forms of theatre dance now taking root in Ireland — classical ballet, modern dance, jazz — all derive from elsewhere, history shows that these forms assume in time the characteristics of the nation where they take root. It will happen in Ireland when Irish physiques and temperaments have had time to absorb from classical and modern theatre dance traditions those qualities most appropriate to them, and when Irish music has been able to confirm the symbiotic relationship which always exists between music and movement. Then Irish dancers will perform the world’s legacy of theatrical dance as something which is their own and Irish choreographers, drawing on this inheritance, will communicate the Irish spirit and Irish ways of life through dance styles they have made truly, fundamentally Irish. A new dimension will have been added to Irish culture and Ireland’s stature. All this can happen only over many years as a result of policies devised to nourish Irish theatrical dance through
training of teachers and choreographers and the encouragement of dance talent within Ireland. Positive support for dance of this kind depends on the funding priorities devised to support it.

1.3 Resources for Dance

The means from which to develop an indigenous Irish theatrical dance now exist in terms of people and institutions. There is an established Irish National Ballet in the classical style, one group — Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre — in the modern style, and Dublin City Ballet whose repertory so far has combined classical, modern and jazz styles. There are organisations of dance teachers, community dance groups, a growing network of venues, the beginnings of technical, design and administration services, and some recognition in the education service of the importance of dance in the development of young people. Ireland also does not lack for talented composers. The development to maturity of these resources depends on three factors: changing public attitudes, mostly through education, discussed in chapter 5; adequate finance; and the capacity of the Arts Council to apply this finance to nourish creative dance companies.

1.3.1 Dance and National Finance

Ireland is not alone among western nations in providing for the arts an wholly inadequate level of subsidy. It cannot be said often enough that the arts in all countries at every period of history have always needed subsidy. The level of subsidy has depended upon the perception of public benefit seen to accrue from the arts by each particular society. Therefore the case for increased funding of the arts is essentially political, depending upon a thorough understanding of what the arts contribute to national life and national wealth. It appears not to be understood in Ireland that the real wealth of any nation lies in the imagination of its people. The arts, more than most other disciplines, being trainers of the imagination, are therefore contributors to national wealth on a potentially huge scale. Low priority based on insufficient understanding creates or magnifies most of the problems of developing the arts in Ireland today and underlies most of the difficulties and deficiencies to which we draw attention in Ireland’s theatrical dance. Insufficient resources limit efficiency and inhibit the development of effective programmes. This constraint is a recurrent theme in the annual reports of the Arts Council. “A proper level of funding has never been provided for arts activities, either at local or at national level”, declared the Report for 1977. Not much has changed today. The Arts Council’s annual expenditure per head of population is still shamefully far below that of England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland and the dance companies illustrate clearly a direct connection between the level of arts funding and the level of achievement in each arts profession. When we represented this situation to the Minister of State for Arts and Culture he emphasised to us in interview that 1986 and 1987 will be years of little growth in financial terms.

1.3.2 Implications for Dance

The Arts Council therefore has no option but to set its dance allocation for 1985 at €375,000, supplemented by whatever can be raised by companies from other sources such as commerce and industry, private funding, community enterprise. Government funded programmes like the Youth Employment Schemes,
Government departments like Education, and Government agencies like Bord Failte and An CO. There might also be some benefit, the Minister told us, from the proceeds of a national lottery, tax relief provision under section 32 of the 1984 Finance Act; and/or EEC finance. None of these other sources, we think, should cloud the issue of inadequate direct finance of the arts by central government through the Arts Council. This is the principal cause of the financial crisis now affecting all dance development in Ireland. If the arts are a cinderella of government funding, dance is a cinderella among cinderellas. It follows that Arts Council policy is caught in the contradiction between tight financial constraints on the one hand and growing public interest in dance on the other. This increased public interest is a phenomenon common to industrial nations around the world although in Ireland, and one or two other countries such as New Zealand, it is not translated into rapidly increasing audiences for classical ballet and modern dance. Rather, it finds expression in performances at amateur and community level, often of quite high standard; in the popularity of discos and breakdancing; and in the spread of ‘Fame’-type dance classes. The Arts Council has to respond to this range of professional and community dance interests. Our commission is one part of the response. Another is the appointment of an officer with special responsibility for dance at the Arts Council. Another is the allocation of 7.3% of its budget to dance. All this derives from the Council’s strategic objective “to promote the arts” under the Arts Acts 1951 and 1973. The Council, in sum, is required to foster Irish dance talent and devise as balanced a programme of national dance development as Government constraints allow to serve a small nation of limited means and 3.5 million people spread over 26,600 square miles on the Western border of Europe.

1.3.3

Arts Council Options

It has to do this within a further contradiction of very limited advice — in two senses. First, we note the absence of any member with dance knowledge within the Council itself. We recommend, therefore, that the Minister should move to correct this deficiency as soon as possible and that Council membership in future should always include someone possessing dance knowledge. Second, however dedicated the present officers, they are not dance specialists. Accordingly we recommend the appointment as soon as possible of a dance officer at the Council. How to balance the claims of cultural, geographical and dance diversity and take account of professional standards as well as economic and social realities? How to respond to the increasing significance of urban areas in the changing rural/urban balance of Irish life? Such questions raise issues of enormous significance for the development of performance dance which flourishes principally in urban areas. Should available resources be concentrated, for example, mainly in a few institutions — say one touring classical ballet company, one touring modern dance company and a number of community arts centres in major population areas, or should they be spread more widely? If concentrated, where should these institutions be located and what about accessibility, alternative choice and opportunity, encouraging innovation and so on? If diversity wins the day is there not a danger of spreading inadequate resources so thinly that nothing worthwhile can be
achieved in professional terms? Just to ask such questions draws attention to the Arts Council’s own lack of dance expertise. Without doubt, however, the low level of government arts funding in Ireland compels an emphasis on the first option, on concentration, on supporting a few dance institutions. But there must come a time when low funding begins to be counter-productive, when a proper spread of opportunity and stimulus across the country cannot be provided out of available funds and when funding becomes divisive as dance institutions compete for crumbs with each other while the Arts Council competes with other Government agencies. We believe such a situation has come about and that the dance profession itself must now begin to address these problems through the Dance Council it has established with Arts Council support.

14
Dance Council of Ireland

The Dance Council of Ireland was initiated at a national seminar on July 25, 1981. Two years later it was launched formally after legal discussions had produced a constitution and articles of association acceptable to a constituent committee. As a result, it began to receive modest Arts Council funding making possible the part-time appointment of Gaye Tanham as administrator from September 1, 1984. Covering Northern Ireland as well as the Republic, the Dance Council began its activities in 1983, developing important summer courses which introduced a range of dance specialists from outside Ireland. It has made a submission on dance education to the Curriculum and Examinations Board (reproduced at Appendix D), is compiling Ireland’s first dance directory and now has put forward plans not only to develop its national courses to raise dance standards, but also to establish a national dance archive for Ireland and form a working party to initiate dance research. Essentially it is showing the potential to be an information resource, a teaching resource, a liaison centre between dance interests in Ireland, and ultimately, a national dance ‘voice’. To undertake these additional responsibilities, however, its staff will need to be strengthened for which we recommend an appropriate increase in Arts Council support.

1.4.1
Immediate Priorities

While we have no wish to prescribe Dance Council policy, we think that among its priorities at the moment it should:

(a) Invite dance institutions of every kind to combine to press their case on government, recognising that lack of government policy and support is their central problem;

(b) Initiate in association with the Arts Council, discussions to establish some standing liaison committee whereby all relevant resource agencies such as government departments, local authorities, the Youth Employment Scheme, AnCO, various branches of education and business interests can be brought together with dance interests to plan the best use of resources to help develop the dance profession and theatre dance in Ireland;

(c) Discuss with relevant regional authorities the establishment of regional dance development committees where dance animators, venue administrators and the Regional Arts Officer
can coordinate the specific needs of their region to articulate these needs to central bodies like the Arts Council, Bord Failte, the National Touring Agency and relevant Government departments;

(d) Discuss with the Arts Council the immediate convening of a national conference to establish closer links between the dance and education professions.
2 The dance companies

2.1 Options before the Arts Council

Our terms of reference require us to consider the work of three dance companies — The Irish National Ballet, Dublin City Ballet and Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre — and four community dance groups — Barefoot, Camaleeon, Liberation Dance Workshop and Theatre Omnibus. The issue of community dance is considered in the next chapter. This chapter presents our findings for the three dance companies in the context of developing Irish professional performance in dance. Given the limitations of finance, the options before the Arts Council appear to be three:

(i) Accept that present funds available to the Arts Council are insufficient to allow support for dance in any meaningful way and therefore withdraw support for dance until the funding situation improves.

(ii) Return to its 1982 policy which declared “the Council’s priority in the field of dance is its support for the Irish Ballet Company” (now called Irish National Ballet).

(iii) Reallocate resources to try to develop a more balanced, therefore modest, dance profession with wider choices for dancers and public than at present.

To adopt the first option would be to throw away everything achieved already. In the light of this achievement and of what we suggest below for the future we do not believe, in any case, that nothing can be done for dance with £375,000. To adopt the second option is not realistic for two reasons. First, the Irish National Ballet has presented a grant request for 1985/86 totalling £100,000 more than the total sum available for dance in the Arts Council budget. Therefore, some new policy or approach to dance funding has to be devised. If the Arts Council tries to struggle on, as it has done in the last few years, each year scaling down grant applications in line with available resources, nothing will grow in the dance world of Ireland. All will stagnate or die. Second, the Arts Council’s dance budget is neither sacrosanct nor immovable. It can be scaled up — or down. What is impossible in a general situation of inadequate funding is to take away from other arts the sort of sum required to meet the estimated need, not only of the Irish National Ballet but of other dance clients, together totalling about £400,000 more than the money available. Therefore we conclude the Arts Council must adopt option three. Before applying the implications of this conclusion to each dance Company, however, we think we should underline for the country and the Arts Council the general pre-requisites for any successful development of professional dancers and professional dance companies. Particular needs require to be met without which professionalism cannot be said to exist.

2.2 On Being a Professional Dancer

Certain conditions are common to all who follow a particular calling. All professional theatre dancers, wherever in the world they work, have to be concerned with:

(i) ensuring daily practice of good quality;
(ii) decent and safe spaces in which to practice and perform;

(iii) frequent regular performances;

(iv) a repertory of dance works which challenge and extend them as artists;

(v) teachers, choreographers, musical support and an artistic leadership they can respect and with whom they can communicate;

(vi) contact with other arts and artists to stimulate artistic development;

(vii) an efficient administration maintaining clear aims and performance standards realised through a firmly-stated artistic policy;

(viii) regularly paid salaries reflecting an agreed salary structure supplemented by appropriate allowances for extra expenses incurred while touring away from home.

In Ireland no dance company provides all these conditions at the moment, although, as we shall show, the Irish National Ballet could do so with some reform. Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre, in particular, falls far short in almost all respects, principally for lack of money. The individual salaries of its four dancers, for example, never exceed £100 a week and automatically decrease the more time is given to performance at the expense of time spent earning funds by teaching. We indicate the financial circumstances of professional dancers in Ireland briefly in Appendix E.

2.2.1 Professional Company Needs
To be professional and effective theatrically theatre dance companies require:

(i) A Board enjoying through its chairperson the confidence of public and dancers. Such a board should be vigorous in advancing the company’s cause; in touch with sources of power at national and local level; able to assist fund-raising on a significant scale; sensitive to changing cultural taste; confident enough in dance terms to concentrate on policy matters leaving artistic and administrative detail to its dance staff.

(ii) A good quality, well-balanced dance staff — teachers, choreographers, musical and artistic leadership.

(iii) A continuing relationship with the rest of a nation’s cultural life to encourage company dancers to develop as individual artists and as an ensemble.

(iv) A professional administration able to provide efficient marketing, budgetary control and planning; organise tours and performance venues, including transport; provide regular, effective public and press relations; ensure efficient front-of-house organisation at each performance; handle all correspondence and enquiries.

(v) Technical support so that performances are lit to the best effect, sound levels and sound effects are properly controlled, and the whole stage presentation is well-managed from
get-in through performance to get-out.

(vi) A clear music policy realised by good-quality musicians where live music is used, or good-quality reproduction where tapes are used.

(vii) A circuit of properly-equipped performance venues, accessible and attractive to the public, where performances can be given and which are served by efficient nationwide coordination and information services.

No dance performance organisation in Ireland at present can satisfy all these needs. Indeed, the needs can never be met fully until three national priorities are addressed based on adequate funding: a theatre dance profession begins to be developed in Ireland; some training provision is introduced to help meet specialist administrative, publicity, stage design, technical, and musical needs; an infrastructure is created to coordinate and support the development of theatre dance and its audience.

2.2.2
An Irish Theatre Dance Profession

We have tried to list in 2.2 and 2.2.1 the essential needs of professional dancers and professional dance companies. These needs have implications for an Irish theatre dance profession which should be spelled out. An Irish professional dancer will be someone who earns his or her living within the profession of dancing, preferably in Ireland. To achieve this he or she will require a sound general education which includes an introduction to the arts; a formal education and training in at least one, preferably two, dance styles such as classical ballet, modern dance and jazz. As a professional, such a dancer will expect to continue this training through regular classes and rehearsals to present finished works of dance art in an Irish dance company, primarily on Irish stages. It follows that an Irish dance profession implies:

(i) a career, salary, training and employment structure able to sustain the profession and probably evolved in consultation with Irish Actors' Equity, the dancers' trade union.

(ii) the maintenance of professional standards. These are most likely to be sustained satisfactorily when dancers are guaranteed the necessary training, employment and vocational security to permit them to devote themselves full-time to their art.

(iii) a measure of diversity so that there is more than one centre of employment and more than one dance style in which to be employed. Not all dancers wish to be classical dancers. Consequently dancers need to be able to perceive within Ireland a number of career openings which offer a variety of options where diverse talents can develop.

(iv) the development of at least one modern dance company of quality to balance the classical INB.

(v) the establishment of a national school or dance centre able to train young people of both sexes as professional dancers in a range of dance styles.

(vi) a reallocation of funds to meet these requirements.
2.3

The Irish National Ballet

Known until June 1983 as the Irish Ballet Company, the Irish National Ballet was founded by Government action in 1973 with Joan Denise Moriarty as artistic director. It is Ireland's first professional dance company, arising out of Miss Moriarty's devoted direction of the semi-amateur Cork Ballet Company over the previous 25 years. The original conception was as a touring company for all Ireland to “introduce the art of ballet to every city and to every town in Ireland with adequate stage facilities”. Over the years since the inaugural performance in the Cork Opera House in January, 1974, the company has appeared more or less regularly in some 65 different centres, north and south. It has given regular seasons at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, and the Opera House and Everyman Playhouse in Cork, besides performing in productions of the Dublin Grand Opera Society, Wexford Festival Opera and Cork City Opera. It has toured to Ljubljana (Yugoslavia), London and New York as well as visiting Northern Ireland for special performances as a result of regular cooperation between the two Arts Councils. It has created two full-length works by Miss Moriarty to Irish themes, in addition to a repertoire of one-act ballets; has created similarly distinguished work by Domy Reiter-Softer and guest choreographers; has brought regularly to Ireland for its dancers a succession of guest teachers of established reputation; seeks now to supplement performances before its regular audience with special programmes for primary and secondary school pupils in Cork and elsewhere. Today the permanent staff of the company numbers 26, 16 of whom are dancers, plus two student dancers. Although 12 of the 26 are Irish, a majority of the dancers is not Irish but drawn from England, Scotland, Australia and the USA. The funding of the company represents the main current dance commitment of the Arts Council amounting to 87% of the Council’s dance expenditure. We have pointed out already that the Council cannot meet the company’s grant request for 1985/86 although the company argues that anything less will jeopardise seriously both standards and touring functions.

2.3.1

Financial Constraint

After 12 years of growth the Irish National Ballet seems to have reached a point of confrontation between its own perception of development and the Arts Council’s funding resources for dance. There are other factors complicating this situation. Many people we have consulted around the country question the justification of an institution whose cost leaves only 13% of available funds for all other dance activity in Ireland. We have been surprised at the number of people who do not recognise the company’s national status. Rather, they say, it is regional, based on Cork. The Arts Council’s own attitudes have changed. Three years ago the INB was declared the Council’s main priority. Because of this, other dance projects were denied assistance, like Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre, or restricted, like Dublin City Ballet. Today the commissioning of this report reflects a different climate and different priorities, involving a more balanced distribution of available funds. Yet, given the company’s present structure, its needs seem to us to be fairly estimated and the financial problems real enough. The need to find touring allowances of £30 a night for each dancer whenever the company
appears more than 60 miles from its Cork base is a major constraint on touring, although the allowance is not excessive bearing in mind today’s cost of living and the generally low level of salaries in the INB. There are similar constraints on standards. The Company’s rehearsal rooms are small with no green room for dancers and no adequate changing space for teachers. The projected move to purpose-built accommodation at Firkin Crane, therefore, will be an important element in the argument for raising standards. At present, notwithstanding an excellent technical team backstage, lack of finance, said Domy Reiter-Soffer, the Company’s Artistic Adviser, means there is never time to create proper lighting; and it lowers morale and dance standards that the company should have to appear in a Christmas pantomime to earn the money for salaries. Salaries, too, are affected by finance making it difficult to recruit or keep the dancers the Company wants. In sum, it is true to say that the present level of grant is too small to sustain a national company as at present structured.

2.3.2
Reorganising Finance

Since the Arts Council cannot provide all the grant the company seeks for 1985/86, leaving a short fall of £100,000 not counting an accumulated deficit, the Company appears to be faced with closure or financial and artistic reorganisation. There seem to us to be two considerations governing any such reorganisation. First, the INB’s absorption of most, or even all, of the available dance budget cannot continue if the interests of dance in Ireland as a whole are acknowledged as priority. Not only is the balance of funding grossly inequitable, it also represents a funding practice which guarantees stagnation for all. Nothing can be achieved while this practice continues. It follows that the Irish National Ballet’s current level of grant cannot be sustained while Government funding of the Arts Council remains at its present level. If there is to be an overall growth of theatre dance in Ireland, nourished by some redistribution of existing funding, the grant will need to be reduced from the beginning of the Company’s next financial year in September 1985. This will allow time for consultation with the Arts Council about a new artistic direction and measures to sustain continuity and the core of the Company as well as begin reorganisation. Second, notwithstanding its record and national status, the INB has no automatic right of support. A situation in which the Arts Council cannot now meet the Company’s financial needs and where the rest of theatre dance in Ireland can hardly begin to develop seems to us a moment for drastic measures, not least to preserve the Company and its achievements, provided the Company itself understands the reason for readjustment and accepts responsibility to reassess its policies within the new parameters. This reassessment, we suggest, will need to be directed actively by the Board in four areas:

(i) vigorous fund-raising in which we do not accept the notion that fund-raising for the new Firkin Crane headquarters inhibits fund-raising from other sources for the company itself, its new productions or other needs;

(ii) aggressive, sustained marketing to raise box-office income, possibly in consultation with the National Touring Agency;
(iii) a new artistic policy in line with current artistic development in theatre dance to produce new product for marketing which emphasises its national status;

(iv) restructuring the company to place it within income possibilities from all sources — box-office, fund-raising and Arts Council.

We believe the company’s national status should help a sponsorship appeal and are encouraged by success in this field already. Crucial as money is, however, and even if private funding came in abundance, it would not solve the company’s other major problem. Our study of the company and consultations with a range of people, from company members to members of their audience, suggest that policy, especially artistic policy, is a prime cause of current difficulties.

2.3.3
Artistic Leadership

Central to artistic policy is artistic leadership. Such leadership lies with the Board and the artistic director, Joan Denise Moriarty. It is the same leadership as guided the Cork Ballet Company before 1973 and seems not to reflect now the changed nature and status of the company in Irish cultural life. The Board, for example, is Cork-based rather than national in composition and is inclined, therefore, to see things from an established Cork perspective. The Chairman and members of the Board told us they recognised this limitation and agreed the Board needed reconstruction. Similarly, Miss Moriarty drew our attention to an advertisement for an assistant to herself who might one day become her successor. She pointed out that she has responsibilities also to Cork Ballet Company (still continuing as an amateur company) and to her teaching studios around Cork. On these grounds alone an assistant is important. While we might disagree that the qualities of a good assistant are necessarily the qualities of a good artistic director, we welcome the knowledge that when Miss Moriarty retires from the Irish National Ballet she will be able to continue with the Cork Ballet Company and, much as Dame Ninette de Valois did, continue her teaching. Especially we welcome such open and understanding attitudes by those who have led the Irish National Ballet for its first twelve years. Although we have shown that the company’s critical situation makes change urgent, inevitable and immediate, this understanding should make change easier. A full-time artistic director is needed, able to give all his or her attention to artistic reorganisation and a new repertory appropriate to a smaller company in which quality, nevertheless, remains a priority. Precedents exist to show that reorganisations of this kind can produce exciting artistic results, particularly if the company is allowed to commit itself to contracts longer than a year giving security and some increase of present salary levels to smaller numbers of dancers. A new departure of this kind, however, depends wholly on the quality of the Company’s new board and the successor to Miss Moriarty. The difficult search for such a person may take time so that we recommend it be initiated as soon as possible (some responses to the advertisement have been received already) and that the most up-to-date recruitment techniques be used. It seems logical to conclude that revitalised company practices with a different style and tone might help
reverse the fall in the company’s theatre receipts over recent years and, with improved marketing, might raise income by increasing the number of performances and the size of the national audience. It is really not acceptable that the company should perform, as it now does, for less than half the year, totalling around 160 performances. Similar companies in the UK, for example, give 200 or more performances a year.

2.3.4
Changing direction

A company blueprint of plans for 1984-89 does indeed give attention to the need for new product. Besides arguing for a more representative Board and an assistant for Miss Moriarty, it proposes the introduction of a wide range of new choreographers from Alvin Ailey, Martha Graham, Paul Taylor, Glen Tetley and “some of the works from the London Contemporary Dance Company’s repertoire” to “a type of dance which will appeal to the younger generation”. To make this possible it recommends increasing the number of dancers to 20 and a larger grant from the Arts Council. We have shown that such a vision is unrealistic in financial terms, but it remains perfectly realisable in artistic terms. The international repertory has no lack of distinguished ballets for small numbers of dancers. All the choreographers suggested, for example, are used to creating for small numbers. Besides beginning to build a new repertory, therefore, a new artistic direction would need to concentrate on raising classical quality, improving teaching standards and the quality of music for class, strengthening discipline (always affected by poor conditions) and finding ways to attract the population of Dublin (one-third of Ireland’s people) more regularly and permanently to the company’s box office. This, presumably, will be an urgent concern of the new board since it is a significant way to increase the company’s income.

2.3.5
Conclusions and Recommendations

There is no question that an Irish National Ballet should exist. A standard has been achieved. There is a repertory on which to build even with reduced numbers. Whatever criticisms are made of the INB, Ireland has nothing else in theatrical dance remotely comparable in quality. To lose the INB would be to lose a creation of great value to Ireland (and even greater potential), would destroy the balance of theatre dance so carefully sought by the Arts Council and would throw away the work and expenditure of many years. Present problems are not insoluble and depend, we suggest, on a strategy in which the Irish National Ballet should:

(a) Reconstitute its Board as soon as possible to reflect the company’s national status and build on the achievements of the present board;

(b) Appoint a full-time artistic director to reorganise the Company’s artistic policy within the new parameters of a smaller company;

(c) Institute vigorous fund-raising and marketing drives supervised by the Board, and in consultation with the National Touring Agency;

(d) Review present company structures in line with new policies, finance and numbers;
(e) Consider ways whereby dancers might have more opportunities for personal development by drawing regularly on the cultural resources of Dublin;

(f) Initiate urgent measures to increase audiences and the number of company performances, particularly drawing on the Dublin population as well as touring;

(g) Take measures to strengthen company discipline and reorganise teaching in line with new artistic demands.

2.4
Dublin City Ballet

Dublin City Ballet was founded in 1979 by Louis O’Sullivan and presented its first programme on May 7th that year. The following year it received its first Arts Council grant of £24,000, representing about 20% of the company’s total expenditure. Since then its relations with the Arts Council have been characterised by the Council’s inability to do more than contribute relatively small money to the company’s development. In 1981, 1982 and 1983 the company received £40,000 annually, in effect a declining grant in view of inflation. This contrasts with Dublin City Ballet’s application for £100,000 in 1981, £77,000 in 1982, £84,000 in 1983, £75,250 in 1984 and £91,000 in 1985. Actual company expenditure and income during and since 1983 (as opposed to estimates submitted for purposes of grant application) are unknown because fully audited accounts had not been submitted at the time of writing. DCB is a private company within the meaning of the Companies Act 1963. Its income today comes partly from the Arts Council (£30,000 in 1984), partly from box office income, where it has a good record, occasionally from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland when it tours there, and partly by subvention from Mr O’Sullivan. This subvention is the second most important factor, after box office, in balancing the company’s books. Mr O’Sullivan points out, however, that such a level of private subvention cannot continue indefinitely. Other sources include the Friends of the Company and support for student dancers from the Youth Employment Scheme in the same way that it supports students with the Irish National Ballet.

2.4.1
Artistic Policy

It is not easy to perceive a consistent artistic policy in the variety of dance works and styles which the Company has presented over the years. In 1980 it presented Giselle, staged by Anton Dolin and John Gilpin. The largely classical image it acquired then has been fortified further by productions of Coppelia, The Nutcracker and Les Sylphides. Classical ballet also is the principal emphasis in company training under its excellent ballet master, Babil Gandara. In 1981, however, the annual report of the Arts Council noted “a substantial shift” in Dublin City Ballet’s approach “with a change from the largely classical repertoire of its first year to modern work”. Since then its productions have balanced classical, modern and jazz works drawn mostly from the international repertory. “Within the last two years”, writes Mr O’Sullivan, “the Company has performed three major classical ballets with outstanding success — Les Sylphides, The Nutcracker and Coppelia. It has also performed several major contemporary works including December Poems, choreographed by Anne E.
Courtney; Dreams, Transfigured Night and A Homage to John Field by Anna Sokolow; and a very popular jazz programme. It’s all Jazz and Hot Gossip. Ms Courtney supplements this list by adding other modern choreographers and teachers. So much is Company history which we do not question. We question only an unfortunate tendency in the Company’s self-presentation to make exaggerated claims. This tendency runs through much of its publicity. Les Sylphides, The Nutcracker and Coppelia may have been successful at the box-office, but whether they were successful as works of dance art is another judgement. We were told, too, late on in our enquiry that Robert Cohan, artistic director of London Contemporary Dance Theatre, had endorsed the Company’s artistic endeavours by inviting performances of DCBs new Sokolow programme at LCDTs theatre in London. On investigation we discovered Mr Cohan had never seen Dublin City Ballet; DCB has hired the theatre in London; and the condition of appearance is a considerable amount of pre-coaching by Ms Sokolow. Such claims inevitably stimulate scepticism and undermine the credibility of DCBs planning.

2.4.2
A New Direction

The company plans now an entirely modern repertory strongly argued by its new artistic director, Anne Courtney, as “the ultimate challenge”. On more practical grounds she points out in a document about the future of the company that “to do justice to the classics makes colossal demands on resources, both human and financial ... In Ireland at this present time, our serious lack of funds along with our fledgling nucleus of dancers and skilled dance people makes this an impractical direction”. Therefore, “we plan to develop a repertoire of contemporary dance works that are ‘significant’ as works of art, that will provide a challenge to the dancers, not only technically but more importantly in terms of imaginative and artistic development”. To this end there are plans to base training on Limon and Graham techniques, as a result of Ms Courtney’s negotiations in New York. Clearly then, the Company is embarking on a new artistic direction the nature of which is set out in philosophical and other arguments presented by Ms Courtney not only to us but to the Arts Council in the Company’s submission for 1985.

2.4.3
Arts Council Options

All this, though, is still in the future with no means of judging the artistic level of a repertory yet to be created. Nor is it any diminution of Ms Courtney’s artistic ability to point out that artistic planning should not be confused with artistic achievement. This is the first problem before the Council. The second problem must be the box-office potential of modern dance. Dublin City Ballet’s audience drawing power has been strong thanks to its use of the classics and Mr O’Sullivan’s methods of promotion. In the short term there is no probability, however, that as many people will come to see an evening of Anna Sokolow as came to see Coppelia or The Nutcracker. Therefore, it would seem, the company’s principal income source will be much reduced. Even in England it took London Contemporary Dance Theatre nearly 10 years and the support of a private fortune to build a secure
audience base — and Ireland has much less of a tradition of public dance interest from which to start. On these grounds alone the conclusion has to be that the Arts Council could not sustain out of £375,000 of public money the burden and risks of supporting two modern dance companies, particularly when one of the two is projected on the scale of Dublin City Ballet.

2.4.4

Educational Activities of DCB

It is in the development of educational activities, such as the Irish National College of Dance at Blackrock, the Dublin Youth Dance Ensemble, teacher training and dance-in-education that the organisation is more impressive. The promotional and administrative skills of Mr O’Sullivan and the educational experience and commitment of Ms Courtney and her staff have yielded significant results over a relatively short period of time. The Irish National College is now established as a significant vocational dance training institution in Ireland with a programme of lecture-demonstrations, performances to schools in Dublin and Belfast during 1985, and other outreach activities all of which have been represented to us as self-supporting or grant supported. Indeed, we understand from Mr O’Sullivan that although the company is in need of Arts Council support the school is financially prosperous. This being so, it is the more regrettable that DCB’s capacity for exaggeration again misleads the reality. We have before us a letter from Mr O’Sullivan reporting “final approval from the Department of Education for our full-time course”. This “approval” has been broadcast widely and we took it to mean what it implies i.e. approval for the content of the course after due assessment. When we looked into the matter we found that the approval did not embrace any approval of course content based on the dance merits of the course but is an administrative approval acknowledging that the school’s scheme falls within Dunlaoire Vocational Education Committee’s guidelines for vocational preparation approved by the Department of Education.

2.4.5

Conclusions

Many priorities for the Council’s limited funds have to be considered if the overall strategy of creating an Irish dance profession and support structure is to be achieved. In this context three dance companies do not make sense when the Council cannot support properly even two. The Council therefore faces one of those “stark choices” to which its Chairman drew attention in 1982 as a sad by-product of its work. In the circumstances of limited Government funding there seems to be no way in which funds can be argued to support a company of this size and programme, embarking on a modern repertory yet to be tested artistically and at the box-office. We acknowledge in particular the company’s educational achievements in the last six years and the management skills and commitment of its founder. We hope this work in particular will continue through its school, the Irish National College of Dance and its dance-in-education initiatives.

2.5

Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre

Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre are, essentially, the pioneers of modern dance in Ireland. The company was founded in 1977 by Joan Davis to “teach, perform and tour Modern Dance in Ireland, the UK and Europe”, and has consistently applied itself to
this task since then. Unfortunately, the absence of a contemporary dance practice in Ireland, and the problems of a limited dance budget have severely inhibited the realisation of the company’s aims. Contemporary dance has prospered in most of the western world over recent years, particularly attracting a more youthful audience for dance. The importance of a similar development occurring in Ireland has been emphasised to us repeatedly in interviews at all levels of the Irish arts scene, from the Minister of State for Arts & Culture to educationalists and community artists. In Ireland, however, with a relatively youthful population, the attraction of contemporary dance remains largely unrecognised and unpromoted. It follows that such a situation needs to be rectified if a balanced national dance profession is to develop within Ireland. What contribution can DCDT make to this process?

2.5.1 Rationale for Modern Dance

Before answering that question it may be helpful to ask two others. What is modern dance? Why is it important? ‘Modern dance’ is a term used to designate a variety of contemporary theatrical dance styles, some of which derive historically from central Europe and some from the United States. The characteristic of all these styles is to emphasise the expressiveness of the body as opposed to the dance virtuosity of classical ballet, bare feet as opposed to the balletic pointe shoe, and the use of the floor, the ground, as opposed to ballet’s search for elevation and lightness to explore the air. These characteristics indicate its origins at the beginning of this century in opposition to the classic academic dance d’ecole which had developed since the Renaissance in Italy, France, Denmark and Russia through a succession of master-teachers and choreographers. Modern dance, therefore, is a theatrical dance form of the twentieth century. During this time the dance form has produced its own master teachers and choreographers each bequeathing their own emphasis or style. The last fifty years have seen an increasing interchange between all these forms of dance knowledge so that the training of classical dancers now includes modern dance and vice versa. Many classical companies, including the Irish National Ballet, present modern dance works in their repertory. The ethos of the two principal forms of theatrical dance today — classical and modern — nevertheless remains distinct. It follows that modern dance is important to Ireland as a twentieth century communication which is one half (in some countries more than one half) of all theatrical dance. Not to foster and develop it in any country, like Ireland, which has inherited Euro-American theatrical dance traditions is to deprive young Irish dance artists of one half of their inheritance and one half of the careers which could be open to them, seriously to reduce the choices and expanding dance appreciation of Irish audiences, and to leave Ireland outside the mainstream of theatrical dance development.

2.5.2 Modern Dance in Ireland

We offer this rationale for modern dance at this point because it has been in dialogue with Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre that our thoughts have been most challenged in formulating recommendations for a modern dance policy in Ireland. The Company has been consistent in its efforts to introduce and
spread knowledge of modern dance in Ireland for the last 8 years. Therefore it is through its experience and the resolution of the problems it has encountered that we feel we are most likely to arrive at a realistic plan for the future. The greatest problem, of course, has been money. The Company was first funded by the Arts Council in 1979. Since then its funding has increased slowly (with the disastrous exception of the 1982 allocation), to a 1984 allocation of £10,000 annual grant, and almost £20,000 touring grant. Nearly all of this Arts Council funding has been used for production and touring costs with the dancers earning their income (£82.00 per week in 1984), from their school, the Dublin Contemporary Dance Studio. The School offers elementary, intermediate and advanced technique classes, as well as improvisation and composition sessions, to up to 600 pupils a year at the studio in Harold’s Cross and at Molesworth Hall in Dublin. In other words the school subsidises the Company. Such an arrangement is unacceptable in professional terms because it prevents proper attention to rehearsals and performance. It is also increasingly precarious as a funding source the more aerobics and other fitness fashions make inroads on dance classes. A point has been reached where DCDT can survive no longer in this way. Today the Company comprises four dancers — three women and one man all trained in a variety of techniques which are the inheritance of modern dance the world over. Therefore the technical basis for a company exists. Four dancers, however, cannot be considered a viable group. Our own and many other experiences in directing dance companies dictate a minimum of six, balanced as equally as possible between men and women. Six dancers can cope more or less with the injuries and other problems inseparable from performance and touring. Eight would be safer. But such a group of six or more will only develop into a significant modern dance company if it works consistently over 8-10 months of the year, performing, touring and teaching through workshops. This is the way to build an audience and thus develop the modern dance element of an Irish dance profession. To achieve such an outcome the Company will need also an administrator and technical and wardrobe staff representing a substantial increase in funding that reflects the needs of a modern dance company. We return below to these needs.

2.5.3

Artistic Policy

At present the company is run along cooperative lines, with an artistic policy which aims to promote and ‘demystify’ modern dance throughout Ireland, paying special attention to the cultivation of a young audience. Therefore the company seeks to create as varied a repertory as possible, based on choreography with an Irish identity suitable for both adult and schools audiences. For this purpose the company has invited choreographers regularly from abroad, (beginning with Royston Maldoom, 1980) to create new works, and to develop the company’s technique and teaching methods. Consequently, about half of today’s repertory is the work of company members, and half that of visiting choreographers, whose visits take the form of
residencies, a particularly important element of DCDT policy. In 1984 there were five such residencies from abroad, one being that of Sarah and Jerry Pearson resulting in the company’s major new work to date: Lunar Parables.

In spite of its consistency of policy, however, the company has had something of a dual personality in terms of artistic identity, reflecting the background of the four dancers, two American and two Irish. This divergence of style was apparent to us in such pieces as Minnaw and Coupled Reflections but seems to have been resolved in Lunar Parables. The company appears to have reached a stage in their artistic development where important decisions must be taken. We have argued that if the company is to become a modern dance company for Ireland it must grow in numbers and performance commitments. If it does this the cooperative style of decision-making is likely to prove inadequate for such expansion. For example increased investment by the Arts Council and other sources will need a clearer line of responsibility — a Board, an artistic director and administrator able to make appropriate decisions whether or not the company operates collectively in other ways. The acquisition of a Board may need Arts Council help based on considerations similar to a reconstituted Board for the Irish National Ballet. These include appropriate all-Ireland business and community representation, touring, educational and dancer representation and a knowledgeable, influential and committed chair. It would be the Board’s responsibility to select an artistic director, again probably in consultation with the Arts Council. We suggest also the appointment of a top-level modern dance consultant to the Arts Council, with an international reputation and unquestioned authority to offer advice to the Council, the Board and artistic direction of Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre, and to other modern dance developments as these arise in Ireland. The aim of these changes is very simple and has been expressed to us by some of the dancers themselves. It is to create a company which can inspire people who have never seen dance before to wish to see it again; and to create dance which can appeal to all sections of the population and is well run, accessible, viable and inventive.

2.5.4
Administration

DCDT is primarily a touring company, both within Ireland and abroad, and is the only dance company to use the services of the National Touring Agency. For example, in 1984 the company performed in Dublin, Cork, Sligo, Wexford, Omagh, and as far afield as Harrogate, Edinburgh and Genoa in Italy, always reaching out to schools as well as theatres and giving lecture/demonstrations to pupils of secondary school age. We have mentioned already that the company and its touring activities are increasingly under threat from external pressure, predominantly of a financial nature. The influence of these pressures is apparent at all levels of their activity, both qualitatively in terms of performance, and quantitatively in terms of the amount of company activity. The four members of the company for example find themselves in the position of having to divide administrative
and publicity functions between themselves. This not only decreases rehearsal, class, and performance time for the company, but also means that the administration of the company suffers. For example the National Touring Agency has suggested that the company’s poor audiences when on tour are partially the result of inadequate prepublicity and forward planning as well as a certain earnestness in a repertory which needs more rehearsal time. Another crucial need is to search out alternative funding sources. Although there has been the odd success in gaining sponsorship, DCDT needs to be in a position to take advantage of all potential revenue resources. This implies an administrator able to assume this function. Performance standards have also been inhibited by a number of other factors. The studio at Harold’s Cross is too small for rehearsal, and is in constant use for teaching purposes. When on tour, the company has little and sometimes no, technical assistance. This has serious consequences for an art form requiring good lighting and sound presentation for its full effect. Choreographic potential is also limited while the company is restricted to four dancers.

In their submission to the Arts Council for 1985, DCDT have themselves formulated a short-term strategy to overcome many of their problems. We agree that inadequate funding is the root cause of much of their under-development. It is unrealistic to think, however, that their 1985 application for over £100,000 can be met even though this and more must be found long-term if Ireland is to have a modern dance company.

2.5.5 Recommendations

Therefore we recommend that Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre should:

(i) be given the means to employ a full-time administrator as soon as possible in order to reduce pressures on company members, and improve the organisation and publicity of the DCDT. The administrator will need also to explore alternative funding possibilities to help the company expand. This might include possible collaboration with the Youth Employment Scheme in ways successfully demonstrated by the Druid Theatre company.

(ii) work in close collaboration with the National Touring Agency when planning future tours, giving particular attention to pre-publicity and publicity, and to the enhancement of technical resources, by the use of a mobile lighting rig (see section 3.2).

(iii) be helped to expand by at least one dancer, preferably two, in order to improve the repertory and allow for possible injuries.

(iv) be included in any plans to establish a National Dance School, bearing in mind, the long term aim to cultivate a nucleus of modern dance students with the potential to become professional modern dancers, choreographers and teachers.

(v) be given increased technical support, the bare minimum being a part-time stage manager to support all performance programmes.
(vi) be strengthened in the short term by a policy of inviting choreographers and teachers from abroad, and having the help of a modern dance consultant appointed to the Arts Council.
3 Dance in the regions and community dance

If theatre dance is to develop into a rich part of Ireland’s cultural heritage, an art that the people of Ireland feels belongs to them in some form or other, then an annual visit to a venue by one of the major companies is inadequate. Theatre dance needs to take its place alongside other art forms in any policy which seeks to generate an appreciation of all the Arts through regional initiatives. Only when local people and their children can participate, and feel that they are participating in local dance activity whether by attending a class at a village hall or by preparing costumes for a community dance production, will dance become really meaningful to them. Even following the progress of a local dance group in the newspaper contributes to an awareness and understanding of theatre dance. The Arts Council has realised the importance of localised arts activity for some time, and, over recent years have begun to provide a framework for regional arts development.

3.1 Regional Arts and the Regional Development Organisations

By the time the Richards Report was published in 1976 the Arts Council had begun to support Community Arts, particularly Community Arts Centres. The growth of local Arts Festivals and the necessity to improve regional venues for touring companies emphasised the importance of regional arts development to a point where the Arts Council, in 1977, reduced support for the Dublin Theatre Festival in order to increase support for the regional arts and touring. This regionalisation of the arts also implied a decentralisation of the decision making process for which the Richards Report suggested a framework: a network of Regional Arts Committees based on existing Regional Development Organisations (RDOs). The first of these schemes was developed through the Mid-West RDO in 1977. The Arts Council and the Local Authority shared the costs of employing a Regional Arts officer, who in turn set up co-ordinating committees in most of the towns in the Mid-West region. This quickly became the model for four other similar schemes based on: Galway/ Mayo RDO, South-West RDO, South-East RDO, and County Donegal Arts Committee. These schemes were co-funded by the Arts Council and the RDO, with the aim of stimulating local arts activity and making arrangements for touring arts groups. By 1981 the scheme had proved so effective that the Arts Council itself provided funding of £42,474. The success of the scheme now indicates a need for it to develop into a new and less ad hoc phase. One regional arts officer cannot be expected to service all the artistic initiatives in a whole region. What is now needed is the appointment of arts directors to the 27 county councils, on a ‘matched funding’ basis. This will not only allow existing initiatives to develop more fully, but will provide the basis for arts activity that is truly responsive to the needs of an area. Alongside this process needs to go the development of local venues for the arts, and the servicing of these venues. The Arts Council has tackled the first of these needs by increasing its capital grants to venues over recent years. The Hawks Well in Sligo, the Belltable in Limerick, the Everyman in Cork, the Druid Theatre in Galway, Garter Lane Arts Centre in Waterford,
Siamsa Tire in Tralee have developed into well equipped, second level venues. A number of Community Arts Centres have also been developed to provide a focus for local arts activity.

Unfortunately, there are still many small regional venues which lack the facilities to receive touring companies. Technical problems, such as insufficient electricity for stage lights, or the size of the stage, plus problems of where to seat the audience comfortably and with a reasonable view of the production, hinder the development of many smaller venues. We have seen cases of company and venue organiser working effectively together to overcome these problems. For example the INB's performances at Skibbereen and Killarney. Yet it is becoming increasingly obvious to organisations such as the National Touring Agency that more attention needs to be paid to the development of smaller ‘third level’ venues, if a comprehensive touring network is to arise.

3.2
*The National Touring Agency (NTA)*

The NTA was originally established to co-ordinate the touring of independent productions to the second level venues in Ireland: The Everyman, Belltable, Hawks Well, Druid, Siamsa Tire, and the theatres in Wexford and Waterford. The situation of the theatre scene which confronted them however was one of considerable disarray, leading the NTA to look for ways to consolidate and develop the Irish touring circuit. There is a number of smaller scale venues throughout the regions of Ireland that represent significant audience catchment areas. In the short term the NTA wishes to develop three of these venues: Skibbereen, Mullingar, and Monaghan. A more immediate problem facing the NTA is the lack of co-ordination in scheduling tours causing clashes between companies, reflected in the ad hoc approach to the three existing touring periods, October to December, February to March, and April to May. A lack of forward planning has characterised the marketing of many companies, including the Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre. The NTAs response is fourfold. They seek to expand the funding application process into a more consultative procedure, whereby venues, companies and the arts infrastructure can work together; formulate an annual touring policy (which may include both DCDT and INB), both in terms of scheduling (so that two Irish ballet companies do not perform on the same evening in the same catchment area for example), and in terms of marketing strategy, develop more secondary venues and a circuit of third level venues, like Skibbereen. The aim here is to develop second level venues for visits of three to five nights with third level venues able to offer one night shows, sometimes serviced from the second level. These strategies all depend on improved communication between the organisations involved. To date there has been one meeting between the NTA and the venue managers, but there is no official forum where the Arts Council, the Regional Arts Officers, venue managements and client companies can hammer out a touring strategy for Ireland. Dance companies seeking to improve their touring circuit and box office incomes would need to pay an active role in such a strategy.

3.2.1
*Radio and Television*

Almost 90% of Irish households have a radio and television receiver making broadcasting potentially the most influential
medium in Ireland. Radio Telefís Eireann (RTE) is responsible for Irish broadcasting and the two national orchestras and is thus of major importance for the future development of the Arts in Ireland. Although RTE have increased the amount of material dealing with life in the regions outside Dublin, the Benson Report emphasised that the promotion of the arts could be improved greatly if RTE and the Arts Council were to collaborate on future arts programming, and if supporting material were produced for such programmes. Television has been of particular importance in the ‘dance explosion’ in Britain, through programmes like ‘Fame’ and the ‘Hot Shoe Show’. While these programmes exert a tremendous influence on the young they can give a distorted view of dance, as being mainly jazz or ballet based and therefore alien to Ireland. The approach of RTE needs to offer a more balanced picture by focussing attention on all aspects of Irish Dance, to promote an appreciation of Irish dance companies, as well as promoting participation in local dance activity. Much of this responsibility lies with the Irish dance profession. It needs to keep RTE better informed of existing dance activity, and take the initiative in stimulating collaborative projects.

3.3
The Case for Community Dance

The Benson Report defines Community Arts as “any activities outside of school or adult education which have as their objective the promotion of artistic appreciation or practice in the community”. This in turn serves to improve the quality of life in a community by encouraging participation in creative or recreative arts activity and provides a base for the stimulation of professional arts activity. This is particularly relevant to dance where the benefits of physical, non-competitive and creative dance activity are well known in terms of mental and physical health for all age-groups. A single community dance project, for example, can provide classes in jazz and social dance styles (such as ‘breaking’) for young people, contemporary and ballet classes, Irish dancing, and even ‘ballroom’ dancing for those who want it. The community dance artist can have different skills and training and can put these into practice in a variety of ways, but must be in a position to respond very flexibly to the dance requirements of a community. This inevitably means that the artist must live in the area of his or her work and build up working relationships with all aspects of local activity which may have a bearing on dance in that locality. In the case of dance most community arts activity tends towards the provision or facilitation of classes and workshops for the local population. In some cases this initial emphasis on the process of dance can provide the foundations of local performances. We were fortunate in witnessing one such event in Limerick which included at least four different dance styles. Another aspect of community arts activity mentioned in the Benson Report is work with ‘special needs’ groups, including the physically and mentally disabled. We received persuasive evidence of the need to develop such work in Ireland. Dance has proved to be a powerful therapeutic medium when working with the disabled, and one in which the teacher or artist does not necessarily need years of training to develop successfully. In short, the community dance artist is in a position to promote dance in the community, and, more importantly, to help people throughout the community to improve their quality of life.
3.3.1

Community Dance in Ireland

The Arts Council is attempting to stimulate Community Arts through the Community Arts Centres which it supports. The success of these Centres rests on the quality and appropriateness of the work that occurs in them. In the Irish situation of recent development this often means the ability to respond to and nurture existing arts initiatives such as the numerous community arts festivals and events throughout the country, and in the case of dance, existing dance activity. All the dance companies receiving funds from the Arts Council are, in a variety of ways, attempting to stimulate awareness of theatre dance among the Irish population at large. They acknowledge in this way that if theatre dance is to prosper in Ireland, more people need to experience its qualities, both as audience and through participation.

The major funded companies share similar problems in attempting to service the regions. Touring costs, declining audience figures and unsuitable venues have all worked to curtail their regional activity. This means that the capacity of these companies to overcome the problems of the under-development of theatre dance in the regions through community and educational activities is also severely restricted. Even where companies can visit an area with reasonable regularity there is a problem of continuity. It is one thing for a local population to experience dance occasionally, quite another for theatre dance to put down roots in the culture of a region. The absence of theatre dance from much of the small scale community arts activities in Ireland indicates a need for the dance profession to educate and liaise with the Regional Arts Committees. Some regions are fortunate in having what is usually called ‘community dance’ provision operating either through a community arts centre, as in the case of Wexford Arts Centre and Grapevine in Dublin, or a community dance company, such as Theatre Omnibus in Limerick. The Arts Council funds a number of these activities either directly or indirectly through Arts Centres:

— Theatre Omnibus in Limerick;
— Barefoot Dance Company in Wexford;
— Dance for the West — Arts Alive Association;
— Liberation Dance Workshop in Dublin.

At present these companies receive less than 0.5% of the Arts Council’s dance budget, but some of their achievements in this financial situation have been remarkable.

3.3.2

Theatre Omnibus

Theatre Omnibus have played an important part in the creation of a relatively healthy interest in dance in the Mid-West region, and particularly Limerick. Thomond College of Education is situated in the area of Limerick and includes a dance course as part of its curriculum. The dance teacher at the college, Teresa Leahy, has already taken positive steps to introduce dance into the community via the college, and envisages a strong community dance movement within Limerick. There are also a number of commercial dance schools, including a jazz and contemporary school the Red Apple Studio, run by Yvette Treacy. Along with
the work of the Belltable Arts Centre and the Regional Arts Officer, all these ventures illustrate what can be achieved through co-operation and liaison. All point out though that theatre dance has not yet established an audience in Limerick and furthermore, that it is only through local dance development that such an audience can be built.

Since John and Jean Regan established Theatre Omnibus in 1981, it has been one of the lynchpins of local dance activity in the Mid-West. They have a diverse repertory of dance and mime for use in a variety of contexts, from a dance programme at a major venue, a mixed media show at a community venue, to street theatre and children’s shows. The company’s activities are not confined to the Mid-West, they tour regularly throughout Ireland, and undertake occasional visits abroad. They are a multi-media company working on a community basis. This leads us to recommend that the company is included in the Community Arts budget of the Arts Council.

In addition to Theatre Omnibus, John and Jean Regan began the Limerick School of Ballet, originally the Mid-West Ballet Workshop, in 1978. This provided the foundation of the Mid-West Youth Ballet, both established in 1981. Some 250 pupils attend classes at the school annually and a few pupils have gone on to pursue vocational dance training. Theatre Omnibus is subsidised by the school but avoids jeopardising its touring capacity by employing a dance teacher.

3.3.3

Barefoot Dance Company

Barefoot Dance Company was founded in 1979 by Cathy Hayes as a community and education orientated company. It forms a constituent part of the Wexford Arts Centre, and is funded through the Centre. Originally the Company had three members: Ms Hayes and two of her students. They initiated a dance in education programme called ‘Barefoot in School’, as well as community dance activity at the centre. This activity has included four annual ‘movement months’ providing an intensive period of workshops and performance for modern dance practitioners throughout Ireland, as well as the local community. Barefoot has also collaborated with other artists, both Irish, as in the case of Seamus Dunbar, and American, including the choreographer/dancer Martha Bowers. Cathy Hayes now wishes to expand ‘Barefoot’ to a group of two professional dancers and at least one apprentice. It seeks to perform at professional level while continuing to develop its dance in education and community roles although evidence suggests that the latter roles will be the more important for some time. Barefoot benefits financially and in terms of facilities from its relationship with the Arts Centre, but there are disadvantages. The Centre was not designed to be a dance centre so that Barefoot’s budget is decided by the Board’s directors only in the context of the Arts Centre’s activities. More importantly the demands placed on Cathy Hayes by her role as dance administrator and organiser at Wexford Arts Centre leave little time for her practical role within ‘Barefoot’. The Company have established themselves as a community based company serving the Wexford area. They have stimulated a demand for
dance, particularly in schools that, in their present situation, outstrips their capacity to fulfil it. This raises the question of whether the company should be given some financial autonomy from the Arts Centre. If this were to happen, it may be necessary to employ a dance animator to take over Cathy Hayes’ role at the Arts Centre as events such as the ‘movement month’, the centre’s regular dance classes and the formation of a junior dance company are a priority for expansion at Wexford.

3.3.4
Dance in the West — Arts Alive Association and Camaleon School and Dance Company

Camaleon School and Dance Company were formed in 1980 as part of the ‘Dance in the West’ organisation. Although we have been unable to meet any of the company, we have studied available evidence of its work. The company teaches three evenings a week in Galway Arts Centre, Clifden Town Hall, and Tuam Arts Centre and rehearses in the same venues and Roundstone Town Hall at weekends. Camaleon is therefore based in Galway and Mayo which boasts an active Regional Arts Officer and also a very active and successful theatre company: Druid Theatre Company. More recently (in 1982) the Dance for West-Arts Alive Association was formed to animate all forms of dance in the area. In 1984 the Association offered the region a diverse dance menu, from African dance, Breton Folk dance, a French Contemporary group, to ballet and jazz performances. These performances took place throughout the area in halls and schools and are a good example of a localised community dance initiative. The Association itself emphasises its community basis and wishes to be funded correspondingly.

3.3.5
Liberation Dance Workshop

Liberation Dance Workshop was founded by Kalichi in order to create an original type of movement theatre, incorporating dance, theatre, and T’ai Chi Ch’uan techniques. The workshop is based at, and funded through The Grapevine Arts Centre in Dublin, where classes are offered in the above techniques. Company members have taught and performed (under the name no dance performers’), on a small scale, throughout Ireland and in London. Unlike the three other companies mentioned, and though the company has been around for a number of years, we have received little evidence of a development in the work of Liberation Dance Workshop.

3.4
Dance in the Regions

Community Dance companies, of course, represent only one aspect of regional dance activity, albeit an important aspect. Dance must also take its place alongside other art forms in attempting to generate an appreciation of all the arts through regional initiatives.

At present the dance profession appears to be lagging behind the animation of the Arts in the Regions. The Mid-West is a case in point. Despite a strong team of dance professionals, performers, educationalists, and teachers, and an active regional arts infrastructure the reaction to theatre dance is relatively apathetic. Community dance activity has made an impact in the region, but the local experience of the arts workers in the area could be tapped to provide dance (visiting companies) that would be attractive and marketable to the local population. This can only happen if there is a forum for exchanging and formulating this
information. Touring companies should also consult and collaborate with community groups and Arts Centres prior to their visit to any area, in order to stimulate the maximum of interest in their visit, and of activity during their stay. The four existing community dance groups lead a precarious financial life. These groups need to be strengthened to enable them to increase their animation of dance in the community.

3.5 Recommendations

The Arts Council should:

(a) seek to establish a Regional Development Committee for Dance through which dance animators, Regional Arts Officers, venue administrators, and dance companies can investigate the specific needs and existing resources of the regions and make recommendations and proposals regarding the animation of dance to the centralised bodies, including the Arts Council, the Dance Council, the National Touring Agency, and the broadcast media.

(b) consider its position on community art with a view to a long term commitment, and expansion, and draw up a consistent funding approach to this commitment.

(c) consult with relevant authorities to develop dance provision for special needs; people that are disadvantaged through social and cultural deprivation, or physical or mental disablement.

(d) consider community dance companies for inclusion in the community arts budget as part of a consistent commitment to the development of community dance.

(e) provide resources whereby the Dance Council of Ireland, in consultation with the NTA, can commission a report on the suitability of venues in Ireland for dance companies. This would also give the NTA a clear idea of technical equipment needs for professional touring companies.
4 Vocational training

4.1 Present Situation

In 1979 the Benson Report noted that “there is very little advanced training in ballet or contemporary dance available in Ireland. The Irish Ballet Company can offer a training only to a very small number of dancers because it is primarily a professional and not a training company. Those wishing to make a professional career in dance must go abroad for their training”. This depressing picture has altered little in the last six years but it has altered. We have seen, for example, a number of private schools where a respectable introduction to modern dance can be obtained, often alongside classical ballet. The range of dance classes on offer is wider also than that suggested by Benson. We have encountered jazz dance, disco, tap, Irish and various forms of European national dance as well as classical ballet in four different syllabi, and modern dance in Graham, Cunningham and Limon styles. Here a qualification is necessary. The majority of students in these classes are under 16. The Benson Report speaks of advanced training i.e. for those aged 16 and over. There are very few centres in Ireland which train young dancers to a level which would make them competitive in auditions for classical or modern dance companies abroad and it is against standards abroad that we must look for the moment to measure professional standards in Ireland. Hence young Irish dance talent continues to be sent overseas to complete its training often, as we have said, never to return. An illustration makes the point. Both the male dancers in Janet Smith and Dancers, one of Britain’s leading modern dance companies today, are Irish, one from the North, one from the Republic. They had nowhere to train in Ireland and nowhere to dance when they were trained.

4.2 Necessary Developments

Three developments are needed to change this situation. A long term need as Benson argued, is “a Dance Academy which will provide a centre for the tuition and creative development of ballet, contemporary and traditional forms of dance to a high standard”. Apart from focussing vocational training in Ireland, this would provide a point of reference to which dance teachers could turn for expert advice and against which standards might be measured, much as classical ballet training standards are measured against the Royal Ballet School in Britain. We return to this need in section 4.4 below. A second need is quickly to end the drain of young Irish dance talent to leading dance schools abroad. The only way to achieve this is to bring leading dance teachers from abroad to work consistently in Ireland. They would not replace Irish dance teachers but provide master classes which would provide additional stimulus for students, inservice courses for teachers themselves, vital contacts with foreign experience, and information about the latest teaching styles, methods and developments elsewhere. Such a move might strengthen also the growth of a sense of professional dance unity in Ireland, irrespective of sectional interests, or natural differences between dance styles. Clearly, therefore, a third need is for some overall organisation to draw together the dance profession — teachers and their organisations, dancers and their companies, stage technicians, administrators — so that the profession can speak...
with a strong voice in the national arena. We have recommended (1.4) for this purpose, the Dance Council of Ireland, which is representative already of a wide range of performing and teaching interests in the dance profession.

4.3  
**Private Dance Teachers**

We have been fortunate to meet a number of dance teachers for discussions and seen the work of others in the private studios, hired spaces and few largish private schools where classical, modern and jazz dance are taught in Ireland outside the educational system. Mostly this teaching takes place in towns, and sometimes, as with the Irish Region of the Royal Academy of Dancing, can be accompanied by a well organised annual programme of professional support. The RAD Region offers its 56 teachers in the Republic and Northern Ireland about 4 courses a year for teachers and students, brings teachers from Britain, runs a summer course, holds the odd social occasion and enters about 2,000 children each year for RAD examinations. This means organising about 10 weeks of children’s examinations and one week of major examinations. A record of the Region’s activity over the last three years is given at Appendix G. Other private teachers, nevertheless, have emphasised to us again and again their feeling of isolation, not only geographical, but social. The job and its hours isolate them; the place of dance in Irish society isolates them; often their own intense focus on dance becomes self-isolating. Consequently social and professional contacts become limited to families and other dance teachers within their own discipline. Even contacts with professional bodies like the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing can be infrequent — the odd course for themselves, perhaps, and examination arrangements for their pupils. Among these teachers, inevitably, are those who are inadequate or who even sustain practices which require exposure. We have seen, or had substantiated on good authority, practices which could damage children physically for life, like teaching pointe work to 9 and 10 year old pupils. Clearly there is in Ireland, as elsewhere, a significant ‘grey area’ (as the Gulbenkian dance report calls it) which deserves the attention of some central authoritative body, such as the Dance Council of Ireland, in the interests of parents and children. By and large, though, the majority of private dance teachers in Ireland maintain standards which justify our firm belief in the future of an Irish dance profession based ultimately on their work and that of their colleagues in schools. The importance of the work of these private teachers at the moment is little acknowledged, even by the Arts Council. It ought to be recognised, we think, by the establishment of a modest resource fund, perhaps channelled through the Dance Council, to help teachers attend important enrichment events in Ireland like demonstrations or lectures by visiting experts, the performances of visiting foreign dance companies, summer schools, significant festivals, choreographic workshops and so on. Travel costs now have increased so much that some teachers cannot afford to take advantage of programmes of this kind without help. Or they have to pay another teacher to take classes while they are away.

4.3.1  
**Need for Professional Regulation**

It follows that a second area for attention is the organisation of the profession itself. Here the existence of the Dance Council of
Ireland provides the possibility of the kind of professional regulation which can help resolve some pressing problems we have encountered — the low level of teachers’ salaries, the need to raise musical standards in dance classes, undercutting of some teachers by other teachers, the resistance of parents to mounting examination fees and the cost of items like shoes, all ultimately affecting standards and student access. Particularly we feel we should draw attention to recently introduced practices which are professionally divisive and misleading to parents and students. The practices are of three kinds, all causing considerable resentment and all centred, regrettably, on the Irish National College of Dance. The first two are reported in that organisation’s Dance in Ireland for February 1984. The first was in response to parents who sought the introduction of RAD or ISTD exams at the college and illustrates unjustified or exaggerated claims. “In the opinion of the directors of the College, standards within the College were significantly higher than those set down by either the RAD or the Imperial Society”. There can be no justification or proof for such a claim, especially in response to a reasonable request by parents concerned to establish their children’s dance qualifications overseas as well as in Ireland. The same issue of Dance in Ireland takes a student to task for using the award of a scholarship to study elsewhere than at the College. “In future we will not allow any of our students”, says Louis O’Sullivan, Founder Director of the College, “to participate in any scholarship scheme unless we get a guarantee from them that their scholarship will be taken up in our own College”. We think that the introduction of rules of this kind undermines the value of the scholarship system as well as limiting students’ rights of choice. The third practice is a failure to acknowledge the work of other Irish teachers. It can be illustrated by a chart of some Arts Council awards in 1983/84.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Winner</th>
<th>Trained by</th>
<th>Also trained by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mairne Bloomer*</td>
<td>Since 1982</td>
<td>Jill Wigham to RAD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penny Dormer*</td>
<td>Since 1982</td>
<td>Patricia McCarthy to RAD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tina Gallagher*</td>
<td>Since 1982</td>
<td>S. V. O’Donnell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aideen Goherty*</td>
<td>Since age 17</td>
<td>Patricia McCarthy to RAD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne Heery</td>
<td>Some classes</td>
<td>Marie Cole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kate O’Connor*</td>
<td>Since 1982</td>
<td>May Lydon, Jill Wigham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. Martin Ryan</td>
<td>In England</td>
<td>Patricia McCarthy to ISTD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracey Tubridy *</td>
<td>Some classes</td>
<td>John Regan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Winners marked with an asterisk were claimed by the National College without acknowledgement to other schools which had provided basic training over a number of years. Leading training institutions elsewhere always acknowledge the source of a student’s basic training and this, we suggest, should be adopted as normal professional practice in Ireland.
4.4

A National Dance School

Practices of this kind are not only to be avoided in themselves but will make the development of a coherent Irish dance profession more difficult because of their divisive nature. They illustrate the need not only for an authoritative professional body embracing all dance teaching, but also for a National Dance School to complete the structure of which private teachers provide the base, and to establish standards of professional and teaching practice. Such a school should embrace both modern and classical techniques as well as other forms of dance. There exists, however, a significant difference between education in Ireland and, say, in Britain or the USA, so far as modern dance training is concerned.

In Britain professional classical dancers receive initial training from private teachers or the junior sections of ballet schools, before receiving their professional training from the age of 16 in the Royal Ballet Upper School or some similar institution. Professional modern dancers in Britain often receive their initial training in the school where they receive also a general education. The private teacher of modern dance for young children is a comparative rarity because good dance teaching in state schools is relatively well-developed. Professional modern dance training schools, like the London Contemporary Dance School or the Laban Centre, therefore recruit students direct from schools of general education. In Ireland good theatre dance teaching in general schools is not yet sufficiently widespread or intensive to provide a basis for professional training. Therefore there is a role for the private teacher. Research carried out by the Dance Council of Ireland suggests that this type of teacher in Ireland frequently offers modern dance, jazz dance and sometimes traditional Irish dance as well as classical ballet. The same comprehensive approach would need to be adopted by a National School through departments or faculties of classical ballet, modern dance, jazz dance and other forms of dance. International experience offers a number of models of professional training of this kind assembled under one roof. Alternatively, it may be necessary to begin more modestly with a National Dance Centre, not necessarily under one roof, established at first to offer Master Classes for teachers and students. Notions of a school or centre of this kind for Ireland are not new. It was one of the first recommendations made by Joan Denise Moriarty after the Irish Ballet was established in 1973, and was endorsed by the Benson Report in 1979. It was rejected on both occasions for lack of money. We endorse it again as perhaps the most important single recommendation we can make. There cannot be a significant development of classical ballet or modern dance in Ireland without a national school of good quality.

4.4.1

Its Responsibility

A national school, argued the Benson Report, “will provide a centre for the tuition and creative development of classical ballet, contemporary and traditional forms of dance to a high standard”. Its principal responsibility therefore is to train professional dancers, choreographers and dance teachers for careers in the Irish National Ballet, the Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre, Dublin City Ballet, community dance groups and centres, and the private dance studios of Ireland. This responsibility should rest on the principle that young people with sufficient talent to gain entry
to the school have as much right to vocational training for a dance career as potential engineers, scientists or farmers
have in training for their careers. Clearly the school or centre will be unlikely to fulfil such responsibilities in their full
range from the beginning. A step-by-step approach will be needed, with classical ballet and contemporary dance
training as first priorities. The classical syllabus should be based on the needs of the Irish National Ballet while drawing
also on well-known models in London, Paris, Leningrad and New York. The introduction of modern dance training to
Ireland is less clear-cut. Unlike classical ballet, there is no long history nor experience in paramount schools on which
to draw. Rather the development of a contemporary dance unique to Ireland requires that account be taken by the
School in its teaching policies of the range of modern dance techniques and experience now found in performance
worldwide. Not just Graham nor Cunningham experience, but Limon, Nikolais, Hawkins and ‘post-modern’
techniques. We do not think, therefore, the School should adopt the usual model of teaching classical ballet and one
form of modern dance, most often Graham. That way is arbitrary and ignores the possibility that other experiences and
techniques might be more suited to Irish physiques and temperaments. Contact improvisation, Alexander, and idea-
kinesis, for example, are to be found already in DCDT teaching methods. In other words, a policy of flexibility and care
will be needed so that ‘Irishness’ develops, not through imposing the product of an outside culture, but through a
shared experience and experiment with many products, always acknowledging three major responsibilities — towards
the art; towards the world and its creations; towards the artist himself/herself. In this way an Irish style will evolve from
international inspiration but will be unique because art grows only out of the lived experience.

4.4.2
Its Support

The support of Government through the Department of Education will be needed if a National School of Dance is to be
developed. We do not think the limited funds available to the Arts Council should be drained further by having to
provide major funding for a National Dance School. We hope, rather, that funding might be found through a
consortium of interests, including the Government’s provision to help young people into further training and into jobs
after they have left school, as well as its provision for older groups. Our conception of students at the school embraces
a fairly wide age-range, particularly for modern dance, to train professional dancers, teachers and community dance
animators — not only those who enter at 15 or 16 but young people aged 20-35, provided they satisfy entry
requirements. In any consortium of support, however, the influence of the Department of Education is likely to be
decisive. We have not so far, alas, found cause to think this influence will be exerted decisively on the side of dance.
Indeed, the Department’s view of special learning needs does not seem to give much attention to those with creative
talent in the arts. Consequently the Arts Council and others concerned to help forward the establishment of a National
Dance School or Centre will need to press their case in collaboration with others seeking a larger role for the arts in
Irish education if long-term changes and significant funding are to be achieved. This does not mean that exploratory
talks should be delayed. The step-by-step approach is
flexible and often can reveal along the road ways and means unexpectedly available.

4.4.3
Its Location

Where might such a school be located? On principle we think it must be seen to be independent of particular dance interests and from the beginning maintain higher standards than exist at present in Ireland. This rules out all existing dance schools. At the same time finance and realism rule out a purpose-built home, though we hope one day this can happen. The Benson Report suggested “an existing institution such as the Royal Irish Academy of Music, or one of the schools of music”. We think this is a useful pointer, although we favour the consideration of other kinds of institutions, such as a leading College of Education like St Patrick’s College, Drumcondra or a drama/theatre centre like the recent development in Trinity College in Dublin. It might need to be housed in more than one location, at first, particularly if the notion of a national dance centre rather than a school becomes the first step. Wherever it is located that institution must have the will and commitment to house and develop vocational dance training. Other possibilities might lie in the vocational sector of the educational system through a Vocational Education Committee. Trinity College currently offers a two year Certificate in Theatre Studies that at present has one dance workshop a week in the first year, and a dance option in the second year. Trinity is also developing technical and design components on this course. There is also the possibility of developing drama (including dance) on the Higher Diploma in Education courses at Trinity. Future plans include the construction of a Drama and Performing Arts Centre, scheduled to be completed by 1992, which will include two studio spaces, one performance space, and one smallish dance studio. In addition, of course, “the Royal Irish Academy of Music or one of the schools of music”, remain options. As Miss Moriarty remarked to us, “I don’t mind where they put the national dance school so long as they have one”. We agree with her. The important thing is that exploratory talks are initiated now, supported by interested bodies like the Department of Education, the Arts Council, and the Dance Council.

4.5
Choreographic Development

The development of choreographic opportunity should be a priority within all dance development in Ireland, be it training or performance. Without an indigenous choreographic tradition there can be, in the last analysis, no genuine Irish national style of classical ballet, modern dance, nor any other theatrical dance form. Hence a choreographic course or department would be essential in the National Dance School. But choreographic opportunity needs to be provided at two levels, the professional and the educational. At professional level it can be done through company workshops, choreographic evenings, composition classes, and so on. But individual companies tend to serve only their own potential talent, nor can they usually give much time to this aspect of building the future. Devices are needed also — especially in Ireland where many dance artists have to work independently — to spread the range of choreographic opportunity. One device exists already in the work of the Dance Council of Ireland, another in Wexford’s annual dance months.
Another, tried in the United States, is to develop an independent choreographers’ alliance. The alliance needs modest funding and support and has the responsibility, through a board, of considering projects from independent choreographers/dancers and presenting occasional evenings of new choreography chosen from projects during a year. There needs to be some way both of improving the quality of choreography and of encouraging the diversity and experimentation without which no art form can grow. This is a priority second only to the establishment of a national school. At educational level the base once again lies in colleges and in private and state schools. Many private dance schools, in particular, include some dance composition as part of the training offered to their students. A few, like Marie Cole’s school, sustain youth dance groups.

4.5.1

In the Regions

Regional arts associations should support this movement, and its parallel in colleges and state schools, by assisting occasional presentations of the best choreography from any source within their region. At the same time dance organisations like the Dance Council of Ireland and the Royal Academy of Dancing need to give even more attention to this important area of work, perhaps inviting professional choreographers to work with students and teachers. This would provide a base of choreographic stimulus leading to work in vocational schools, especially the National Dance School, or Centre, and thus to the professional level. The Arts Council has funded Irish talent already to attend the annual International Dance Course for Choreographers and Composers at Surrey University and might consider initiating in time a similar course for teachers in Ireland. The important emphasis in this field is to relate to experience and creative events outside Ireland and, in the organisation of choreographic opportunities, to avoid any sense of competition.

4.6

Set, Costume and Lighting Design

Theatre dance is a non-literary and abstract performing art which depends on set, costume and lighting design for its full artistic effect. These are an intrinsic part of a theatre dance performance. The current paucity of training in dance theatre design in Ireland is reflected in poor quality design at dance performances, because financial constraints work against introducing talented designers from abroad. The Irish National Ballet use the service of the only specialist designer for dance in Ireland, Patrick Murray. One designer, however, cannot possibly service all choreographic activity throughout the country. It is essential that the development of a diverse dance profession and body of choreography is accompanied by the development of a diverse design practice. Choreographers can tackle this in the short-term by commissioning Irish visual artists for designs but the specialist skills of the designer for dance need to be cultivated in the context of the profession as a whole.

4.7

Recommendations

We recommend that:

(i) a modest resource fund be established to enable private teachers to broaden or deepen their own experience and knowledge;
(ii) the Dance Council of Ireland takes steps to regulate the raising of standards and professional practice throughout the dance teaching profession in Ireland;

(iii) the Arts Council initiate discussions with the Department of Education and other authorities to establish a National Dance Centre or School as soon as possible. There cannot be a significant development of classical ballet or modern dance in Ireland without a national school of good quality;

(iv) as outlined in section 4.4 this school should have a number of departments that initially include modern dance and classical ballet but will eventually need to include jazz technique, post-modern techniques and choreography;

(v) exploratory talks should begin as soon as possible over the location and funding of such a school, between a consortium of interests representing the Department of Education (who must play a decisive role in this project), VECs, AnCO, the Youth Employment Scheme, the Dance Council and the Arts Council. Financial limitations indicate that such a school would have to be based on an existing institution, and be funded from outside the Arts Council’s existing budget. We also suggest that a flexible ‘step-by-step’ approach to this project may yield better results;

(vi) develop choreographic opportunity in Ireland at two levels; the professional and the educational. The former might be tackled through the formation of a ‘choreographers alliance’: a Board which would require modest funding to enable it to consider choreographic projects for presentation at evenings of new choreography. We think that the needs of the educational level, consisting of private and state schools, could be met in the short-term by Regional Arts Committees assisting choreographic events in each Region, and in the long term by the Dance Council, in liaison with organisations such as the RAD, staging an annual dance course for choreographers and composers, along the lines of the course run at Surrey University in Britain;

(vii) the Arts Council should consult with appropriate authorities, especially third level educational establishments, about existing theatre design courses. The aim should be to incorporate dance theatre design in at least one such course, and to include design workshops when planning choreographic and dance training workshops.
5 Dance and the educational system

5.1
Reasons for the Chapter

No matter how effective the work of private teachers the development of dance and all the arts in Ireland depends primarily upon the place of the arts in the education system. The 1978 Annual Report of the Arts Council emphasised that “the neglect of the arts in Irish society has its roots in the low status of the arts within our education system. An increase in arts activity cannot be sustained unless it can rely on a public that has learned how to enjoy, appreciate and participate in the experience”. It follows that dance development of all kinds in Ireland depends on a strong relationship with the education system. An informed audience as well as potential dancers, teachers, choreographers and administrators all derive from this system. Where, as in Ireland, a strong relationship has not yet been achieved, most young people’s contact with dance, other than traditional dance, occurs so late, if at all, that talent and opportunity are lost. Late contact also means a lower standard of achievement in performance or teaching, as well as audiences with reduced capacity to appreciate and enjoy dance performances. The Government’s return on whatever investment it makes in dance is thus diminished. This situation will change only if attitudes change. There needs to be a recognition of what the arts can do for individuals and society and the place dance occupies in this process. Conceptual understanding will fortify the will to improve and extend what exists already, will lead, in a word, to action.

5.1.1
Aims of the Chapter

This chapter, therefore, has two aims. First, to argue a case for the arts in education and for dance within that framework. Second, to consider three strategic areas of development: the inspectorate and specialist advisors/teachers; relations with the dance profession and private teachers; teacher training. In this we support arguments made to the Curriculum & Examinations Board by its Arts Working Party. Our approach, however, is different because our emphasis and purpose are different. Nevertheless we endorse the Board’s clear statement that “the general aim of education is to contribute towards the development of all aspects of the individual including aesthetic, creative, cultural, emotional, intellectual, moral, physical, political, social and spiritual development for personal and family life, for working life, for living in the community and for leisure”.

5.2
Arts Contribution to National Wealth

How can the arts contribute to the achievement of this aim? They do so in two ways. First is their contribution to national wealth. Second, is their contribution to education and individual development. The arts in this context overlap significantly with the crafts as well as with new possibilities in what is known now as design education.

The arts are important because, more than agriculture or oil or manufacture, a nation’s wealth lies in the imagination of its people. The arts are not only a way of communicating ideas; they are a way of having ideas, of educating the imagination and creating a national climate within which imaginations can flourish. Creative ideas are as important to the scientist, farmer,
housewife and businessman as to those who seek a career in the arts or guide the national economy. For this reason regular contact with the practice of the arts in education and throughout life, and opportunities for everyone to enjoy the arts, should be a significant element of national policy, particularly where other national resources may be in short supply. Or when traditional concepts of knowledge limited to the ‘written word’ and ‘academic investigation’ are shown to be inadequate to the needs of a society in which the balance of work and non-work is certain to change forever due to technological development and changes in international economic relations. An education which concentrates on the three Rs to the exclusion of non-verbal communication and creativity seriously handicaps future citizens who have to contend with a rapidly changing world. In stimulating creative thought and diverse thinking processes the arts constitute one of the power-houses from which society can draw strength.

5.2.1
Arts Contribution to Education

Developing these notions in the educational field implies adapting to Irish experience, so far as we can, arguments advanced at greater length in the Gulbenkian Foundation’s The Arts in Schools. We commend this document to all educational policymakers at every level. It argues that the arts are important in education for six principal reasons, all crucial to the aims put forward by the Curriculum and Examinations Board.

5.2.2
Arts and Human Intelligence

First, they are necessary to develop the full variety of human intelligence which is manifested through a number of distinctive modes of understanding and communication — not just one. Everyone acknowledges, of course, that the logico-deductive aspects of academic study are important. The problem is that other aspects of intelligence are seen often as less important or even opposed to the academic. The Irish education system demonstrates very well this problem. Yet the uniqueness of human existence consists, above all, in our capacity to appraise and communicate with each other about our various experiences of the world. For this we need all the ‘languages’ of understanding and communication available to us — ‘languages’ of gesture, posture and visual expression; of beauty, grace, harmony and aesthetic judgement; of number; of empirical observation and record; of morals; of religion; and so on. “Human rationality”, points out the Gulbenkian report, “includes all these various forms of thinking, communication and action. If individuals fail to enter into any of these ‘communities of discourse’ the development of their rationality will be, to that extent, lop-sided”. The student will enter life deprived of a large part of the personal resources which could have been available to him or her. Our second reason why the arts are important in education shows that the loser in this deprivation is not only the individual but Irish society as a whole because the arts play an essential role in developing the ability for creative thought and action.

5.2.3
Arts, Creative Thought and Action

As the rate of change accelerates in all areas of life, and as the balance between work and non-work becomes altered forever, two qualities in young people become increasingly important:
those of capability and adaptability. Industry and commerce require those entering employment to show powers of innovation, initiative and application, all pre-requisites both for economic health and for those for whom employment may cease to be an option. This is why we have argued that the arts should be seen as an essential element of national wealth. While creative thought and action should be fostered in all areas of education it is the arts, above all, which can develop furthest imagination and creativity. The Benson Report endorses this view by implication but warns, at the same time, of the danger of a fragmented approach to student needs and abilities “each of which can be dealt with more or less separately by different sets of subjects . . . Science and arts are often conceived of in opposition: sport and art are rarely associated in the popular imagination”. Our third and fourth reasons for the importance of the arts in education develops this part of the Benson argument by showing how intimately linked are thinking and feeling, personal interests and achievements, the activities of life and value judgements about them.

5.2.4
Arts, Feeling and Sensibility

In presenting our third reason, the need to educate feeling and sensibility, it becomes necessary to challenge two prevailing views we detect in Irish education. The first starts from the accepted value of intellectual activity and development (which no sensible person would doubt) but then argues that feelings and emotions disrupt the pursuit of knowledge through the intellect and so should be disregarded in education. The second view holds that the free expression of emotion is essential to healthy development and that the arts as primary means of emotional expression therefore should have a significant place in education. Both views divide intellect from emotion and thus ignore the relationship between them. The arts are not outpourings of emotion but disciplined forms of inquiry and expression through which to organise feelings and ideas about experience. Present day society has many examples of the danger of ignoring the emotions or just giving vent to them in pointless ways. This will continue to happen, however, until it is recognised that the arts provide a natural means for educating feeling and sensitivity.

5.2.5
Arts and Values

Our fourth reason, the exploration of values, develops further this argument. Feelings and values are obviously linked so that the education of feelings is concerned automatically with moral issues and the exploration of values. Changes in social values are among the ways in which the changing times are registered. An education which sets out to help young people make sense of and contribute to the changing world around them must be concerned with helping them to investigate their own values and those of others. Not to do this is to risk increasing the confusion and disorientation in which many young people live already. The arts are a principal means of helping everyone to explore values because, essentially, the process of art has to do with the evaluation and revaluation of the world in which we live. Our fifth and sixth reasons have to do directly with this world.

5.2.6
Arts and Cultural Identity

The arts, for example, are essential to any understanding of cultural change and identity. They are characteristic of any
culture and evolve as part of it. Their role and significance, therefore, should be obvious to an ancient society, such as the Irish, seeking to maintain its cultural identity in a world of new nations. In such a process the schools can make important contributions in two areas. First, the practice and discriminating enjoyment of the arts involve observation, analysis and evaluation of personal and social experience which includes, or should include, Ireland’s cultural inheritance. It follows, second, that the products of the arts are products of the social culture of today and therefore are among the experiences children need in education to help them understand more of their own society.

5.2.7
Arts, Physical and Perceptual Skills

Our sixth reason for the importance of the arts in education is that young people need to be enabled, not only to have ideas about the world, but to act in it, especially today when the range of action can include equally easily long periods of non-work as well as work time. To hope to encounter in any positive way such a changed life balance it is essential to develop physical and perceptual skills far above the level at present posited in Irish education. Natural abilities need to be developed into practical skills. Work in the arts can lead to the development of a range of qualities and skills with a wide application and value for the individual and society. This is a task primarily for education but also, in today’s reality, for the Government’s Youth Employment Scheme, AnCO, the Community Training and Education Consortia (COMTEC) and for all the agencies and proposals on unemployment and social policy put forward in chapters 4 and 5 of the Government’s national plan for 1985-1987, Building on Reality. In these broad areas of national life, but particularly in education, the six reasons we advance suggest an important conclusion. To increase and develop the place of the arts at all levels and in all forms of Irish education and training is now a matter of logical and moral necessity and a national priority. This justifies inclusion of the arts in the national plan and a redeployment of resources to meet such a commitment.

5.3
Prejudice against Dance

The Benson Report, The Place of the Arts in Irish Education, drew attention to misconceptions about the arts built into a stereotype in many Irish schools. “The arts are seen as more suitable for girls than for boys, and for the less intelligent rather than for the more intelligent pupils. They are often judged to be more interesting than useful ...” We hope that what we have argued above demonstrates the falsity of this stereotype. All young people need the arts in education because they and society need what the arts can contribute to education. The case is as simple as that. About no art, however, is the stereotype more pervasive than about dance. There are deep inhibitions, for instance, in Irish and other cultures about the body, its ‘decency’ and use as a communicator. Prejudice decrees that for boys to wish to dance is unmanly. Their role in the use of the body is to apply it to the acquisition of physical skills demonstrating strength, stamina, speed, endurance, daring. To use the body for expressive purposes to communicate feelings or to complement feminine with masculine qualities in movement is contrary to the perceived role (the stereotype) of men in a macho and often
5.3.1 Contribution of Dance

The special place of dance in education is that it is one special and unique form of expression which among others is able to contribute to the educational process all the qualities and abilities in 5.2 above, in ways which are not only unique but particularly attractive to some young people who might not find a means of personal expression so apt in other arts. Therefore, if dance is not included in the curriculum a whole area of achievement and expression is closed to a sector of boys and girls. For some of these young people dance implies performance and the possibility of a career but for the majority it is an enjoyable, rewarding use of the body to communicate their thoughts, feelings and reactions to the world. This is important enough but dance offers two other linked areas of educational significance. First, as we pointed out in 1.2, it is part of the history of human movement, human culture and human communication. Therefore it is part of the history of Ireland in all these aspects. Therefore it is a way of knowing, contributing essentially to:

(a) the nature of knowing, especially affective, non-verbal, sensory thinking;

(b) the nature and practice of communication;

(c) the proper balance of education between mind and body, feeling and action, study and experience.

Other arts and disciplines, it can be argued, have these attributes. The second area of educational significance therefore makes the first unique through the use of the body as the instrument of expression — not pen and paper, not brush, paint and canvas, not violin nor piano, not clay nor stone but the living bodies of boys and girls. Dance is unique because it presents a unique aspect of human experience, understanding and relationship to the environment, unique because the knowing, the communication and the dance activity are through the human body and the process of knowing oneself. In this context it is difficult to understand why dance is not required to play a much larger role than it plays today at each level of education. If dance has the unique and necessary educational properties described above it is a valid subject for study from primary to third level with its own identifiable areas of study and assessment. These are: choreography — its theory, craft and creation; performance; notation and recording; appreciation; relationship to other disciplines such as history, sociology, anthropology, medicine and so on. Each of these areas require to be linked with music and production and each, of course, can be the subject of research and post-graduate studies. Its special needs are library resources; appropriate spaces; and trained staff.

5.3.2 Present Situation of Dance

It is not our job to consider here the whole detail of the situation of dance at each level of the curriculum in Ireland. That requires a
special study, briefer but perhaps along the lines of the Gulbenkian Report, Dance Education and Training in Britain in 1980. The case is presented succinctly meanwhile in a submission to the Curriculum and Examinations Board from the Dance Council of Ireland, reproduced at Appendix D. We are concerned, rather, with the significance and influence of dance in education on the development of classical and modern dance in Ireland. Here the climate of education, of course, is critical. The Benson Report noted the opportunities for change presented by the 1971 curriculum and the experience of the 1970s. In particular Benson pointed out how the new curriculum “has changed considerably the philosophy, approach and atmosphere of primary education”. Similarly in Irish post-primary education there is “a much changed and more favourable framework for the proper cultivation of aesthetic education as part of the pupil’s general education”. This is good news, as far as it goes, confirmed by our own experience. Dance, however, is still only at the beginning of realising the opportunities. It is seen not as a discipline and art on its own but is simply ‘recommended’ within the physical education programme. It is not shown, for example, among the creative and aesthetic studies of the proposed curricular frame-work in the first consultative document issued by the Curriculum and Examinations Board, nor does it figure in any significant way in the chapter on the arts in the Government’s White Paper on Education and Development published in 1980. Rather it is subsumed in both documents under physical activities and sport. But very few primary schools do dance in their one hour a week of physical education. At second level only 50% of schools offer physical education in any form. Within this dance occupies a very minor place. The new post-primary syllabus for Physical Education seems unlikely to change these relationships. The recommended minimum of two hours a week for physical education cannot provide enough time for dance development except where a teacher is given special facilities, such as double periods, a suitable indoor space and appropriate support from the headteacher. This is emphasised by the recommended time allocation within the two hours, one block being given to dance alongside fitness, athletics, aquatics and health education as against three blocks and two blocks respectively for games and gymnastics. On the other hand the new draft dance programme in the syllabus provides a wider range of opportunities than before within the overall context of physical education. What is needed is a different concept of dance as an art and discipline in its own right. If this is to be achieved it can be only through long-term acceptance and application of the conceptual arguments advanced above, plus a shorter term strategy of crucial practical measures embracing the inspectorate and advisors; closer links with dance companies, professional dancers and private teachers; and significant development of dance in teacher training and in-service courses. Without these measures it is hard to see how classical and modern dance can become a significant part of today’s Irish culture.

5.3.3
Inspectorate and Advisory Services

Although there is evidence of some excellent dance work at primary level and of concern for dance on the part of many
physical education/dance teachers at second level it is clear that dance occupies the lowest rung in the Irish education system. The Benson Report argued a need to increase the number of specialist art, drama and music inspectors, the introduction of specialist subject advisors and the extension of the notion of peripatetic instrumental music teachers. We argue a similar structure for dance, starting with a specialist inspector, because we have not found in the Department of Education any clear understanding of dance as a subject in its own right. At present it falls within the responsibilities of the physical education inspectorate, already understaffed. Consequently it is unlikely to develop its potential in the education system without a specialist Inspector. This should be supported, we think, by trained teacher advisors responsible for developing dance in selected schools under the overall guidance of Vocational Education Committees so that network can be developed through the country. There could be a special role for the VECs in this dance area because they have a record of appointing arts education organisers and music organisers. Why not, therefore, dance organisers? At schools level, observed the Benson Report, “there are needs which cannot be met by the class teacher. These are the needs of the talented children” and, we would add, of the disabled and others with special needs. We think that each of these levels of appointment is essential to the proper development of dance in Irish education. Absolutely crucial, however, is the appointment of specialist dance inspectors to lead and stimulate all other dance development at primary and post-primary levels. While this considerable change in departmental practice is being negotiated we recommend that the Department of Education and the Vocational Education Committees consider it a matter of urgency to examine the most basic of other needs by exploring ways to institute pilot schemes of peripatetic dance teachers throughout the country.

5.3.4 Relations with the Dance Profession

In all our experience around the world, especially in the UK, dance in education has not really begun to flourish until there is close collaboration between the dance and education professions. In Ireland the basis of such collaboration is established already. There is a tradition of dance workshops, demonstrations, and school performances by all the companies, encouraged by the Arts Council. There is close liaison between dance animators, arts centres and local schools and some evidence that interest is greater than supply. Both Cathy Hayes in Wexford and Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre, for example, report a greater demand for dance-in-education than they can meet. Therefore we think the time is ripe now to develop these beginnings through a more extensive use of the dance profession and of the expertise of private teachers. First, the educational activities of professional companies still reach comparatively few schools. There is a need for these activities to be stimulated and coordinated further through the Regional Arts Committees and for the education system to acknowledge the dance companies and the dance profession, as important educational resources. Second, individual dancers or choreographers-in-residence might be appointed, particularly in colleges. Third, the skills of recognised private teachers and dance in education companies could be drawn on for
peripatetic teaching, especially to help identify and support gifted children at second level. The good private dance teacher is as much a professional in his or her own right as a teacher in a state school. More should be done to encourage mutual support between these professionals in the interests of dance in each locality. Fourth, regional dance-in-education companies should be established, funded jointly by the Department of Education and the Arts Council.

5.3.5
Teacher Training at St Raphael’s

No area is more important for the widespread development of dance in Ireland than teacher training. Notwithstanding the low level of dance in education today its teacher training enjoyed a high level of stimulus and development during about twelve years from 1959 to 1971 at St Raphael’s College of Physical Education, Dublin. The influence was mostly Laban Art of Movement but broadly interpreted to include performance and regular contact with dance centres in London and Paris to embrace jazz and contemporary dance. The dance programme consisted of six hours a week over three years, much more than is allowed now in teacher training. Technique included classical ballet and national dance studies as well as modern dance in developments of Laban studies. In 1971 St Raphael’s College amalgamated with Ling College and the new Thomond College was established in Limerick, offering a four year degree course for men and women students. It inherited from St Raphael’s an example to which all dance teacher training in Ireland remains indebted today because the example is so closely related to Irish experience.

5.3.6
Thomond College

Thomond College of Education, near Limerick, is today the only college in Ireland to include a specialist dance training within its physical education curriculum although three major Colleges of Education include dance to a lesser extent. Thomond is also the only Teacher Training College to provide second level training. All other colleges provide teacher training for primary level, but teacher training for second level is by diploma in universities. Thomond, with its excellent, if small, dance studio, therefore is an obvious centre where the training of dance teachers might be developed for the Irish education system at post-primary levels. We found at the college a great interest in this possibility and a refreshing sympathy for dance. At present, dance experience and training are offered in each year of Thomond’s four year course, years 3 and 4 being for those who choose dance as one of several options. In year 1 there is an introduction to movement of all kinds for all students integrated with an introduction to all arts through an Artistic/Creative Course. This relatively new and important development suggests the possibility of increasing attention by the College to creative work in all the arts, including dance. In general, students average only one hour a week of dance per term (30 hours a year) within which priority must be given to the fundamentals of creative movement and folk dance. This occupies 20 hours. There is, therefore, not enough time to develop confidence in dance and to give sufficient attention to its creative elements, especially composition. Emphasis has to be placed on skill acquisition in a training which could be said to be too focussed on assessment, attendance and essay writing. In any
move for change, however, the central issue becomes the amount of dance actually taught in Irish schools at primary and post-primary levels. No primary school has a full-time physical education teacher and dance, as we have shown, is subsumed under games and other forms of physical education. It is taught as a skill not an art. At post-primary level many of the 50% of schools which include physical education in their curricula do so only for the first three years and even then concentrate on one or two particular games. The concept of a balanced physical education therefore is not developed. In any case adequate indoor facilities rarely exist so that dance and gymnastics cannot flourish. Thus a chicken-and-egg situation evolves. Until schools give more time to physical education, including dance, the opportunities remain very limited for the employment of teachers specialising in dance. The proposed new physical education curriculum might help this situation because it increases slightly the number of hours recommended for the subject and draws attention to dance as a separate discipline. Thomond’s development of its dance specialism therefore will need to be gradual. Three stages suggest themselves. First and immediately, the introduction to the College on a regular basis of dance artists-in-residence or choreographer-in-residence for periods of weeks at a time. These are not surrogate lecturers but artists practising and sharing their art within College life in ways which can strengthen links between the College and the dance profession, introduce students to professional dance methods and standards, and provide a resource for a range of dance activities within the surrounding community to which the artists might give time. Initial funding might have to be raised privately, possibly from a foundation, but ultimately we hope it can be included in the College’s annual budget. Second, in consultation with the Department of Education and as soon as possible, a continuing series of inservice dance courses is needed for teachers. To this we return below. Third, the establishment in time of a separate, fully recognised dance course at the College to produce the dance teacher specialists Ireland needs. This might be achieved through students taking dance and education throughout their four years instead of dance and physical education. In other words, the introduction of a new course parallel with the existing PE course. Or the addition might be considered of a fifth year of specialist study after the end of the PE course. This poses obvious difficulties for students. In either event money would be needed for more specialists and teachers at the College. We estimate, for example, that a fifth year extension would cost between £30,000-£50,000. Dance and education as a parallel four year course might be less expensive, but would involve significant changes in present conceptions.

5.3.7

Inservice Training

The Benson Report in 1979 emphasised two necessary developments to strengthen the arts element of teacher training and practice. The first was the expansion and lengthening of existing arts courses within Colleges of Education with consequential strengthening of staff and the introduction of more selective courses and integrated courses in the arts. The second was the expansion of inservice and post-graduate training in the arts. The report emphasised the urgency of these measures by pointing out that the majority of teachers in the Irish education
system do not understand the purpose of teaching the arts. This is one reason why we offered an extensive rationale earlier in this report. Three years after Benson the Government’s own Committee on Inservice Education recalled the Benson recommendations on inservice training for primary and second level teachers and endorsed them because “this Committee believes the same need still exists”. The Committee went further than Benson by providing a conceptual basis for inservice training, the notion of teachers as lifelong learners, “the master principle for the renewal of the teaching profession in Ireland”. It also endorsed the importance of summer courses within the conception of inservice training although “the number would have been higher had the finances been provided to enable more courses to be held”. What is true of inservice training in general is triply true of inservice training in dance because of the meagre attention given to dance during basic training. We believe that Thomond College, in particular, should develop a series of such courses with Departmental support, but that there should be liaison also with and support (perhaps from the Arts Council?) for the summer courses organised by the Dance Council of Ireland and the Royal Academy of Dancing. The Dance Council of Ireland’s course has a particular significance and potential because of its range of dance styles and applications. The 1984 course, for example, embraced Dance in Education, Contemporary Dance, Dance for Special Education, Irish Folk Dance, Classical Ballet, Jazz Ballet, Tap Dance, Yoga, Shiatsu, Percussion for Dance and Energy Balancing. The occasional assembly in this way of so many different forms must extend dance knowledge and strengthen the notion of a single Irish dance profession even though we believe that regular inservice dance courses at Thomond College are, to adapt the phrasing of the recent report on inservice training, the master principle for the development of dance by the teaching profession in Ireland.

5.4

Recommendations

The Department of Education should:

(i) Appoint inspectors with special responsibility for dance to lead and stimulate dance development at primary and post-primary levels;

(ii) Discuss with Vocational Education Committees the appointment of dance organisers, or trained teacher advisors, to develop dance in selected schools;

(iii) Encourage the institution of pilot schemes of peripatetic dance teachers throughout the country;

(iv) Design suitable dance syllabi for use in schools, especially at post-primary level;

(v) Improve substantially inservice dance training for teachers, properly supported with resources;

(vi) Provide pupils with the opportunity to specialise in dance so that this should form an integral part of their second level education;

(vii) Improve the supply of resource materials — books, tapes, video, etc.;
(viii) Give special consideration to the needs of the gifted, the less able, the disadvantaged and the handicapped child;

(ix) Make provision for talented and interested students who wish to follow dance as a career;

(x) Institute a comprehensive and authoritative review of dance in the teacher training institutions, particularly, in regard to syllabus content and allocation of time;

(xi) Make special provision to encourage the development of a separate, fully recognised dance course at Thomond College of Education to produce dance teaching specialists;

(xii) Examine the possibility of establishing dance as a degree level subject;

(xiii) Provide inservice courses for school management personnel to increase their awareness of arts education in schools;

(xiv) Organise arts education on interdisciplinary lines to include all the arts;

(xv) Incorporate into the design of all new schools the necessary facilities to develop the arts;

(xvi) Make available resources in existing schools to improve and where necessary provide facilities for the arts;

(xvii) Should financially assist existing dance-in-education initiatives, with the long-term aim of developing regionally based dance-in-education companies;

(xviii) Should ensure that each school has at least one member of the teaching staff with an officially designated post of responsibility for the development of the arts, including dance.
6 Conclusions and recommendations

6.1 General Conclusions

Four points need stressing. First, the responsibility of Government for many of the present problems, and therefore for resolving them. Second, the primary need to develop a balanced dance profession in place of the present focus on the Irish National Ballet. Third, the need for the dance and education professions to work together as allies to achieve for dance, by virtue of its qualities and properties outlined in this report, the position it should occupy in Irish culture and Irish life. Fourth, the great importance of the regional and community sectors in developing a balanced growth for dance throughout Ireland.

6.1.1 Specific Conclusions

Specific conclusions emerging from these general conclusions are:

(a) A need for all dance institutions of every kind to combine to press their case on Government, recognising that lack of Government policy is a central problem;

(b) Acceptance that the primary need is to develop an Irish dance profession comprising professional dancers and dance teachers of several styles appropriate to the development of a balanced theatre dance;

(c) Consequently, the need for a proper career and salary structure for professional dancers and dance teachers;

(d) Consequently, a need to reorganise Arts Council funding to existing dance institutions with consequential reorganisation of company artistic policies;

(e) A reversal of established practice so that expertise from abroad is brought to Ireland rather than Irish talent exported for training, often never to return;

(f) A clearer policy of encouraging visits from foreign dance companies to Dublin and other Irish cities and Irish dance companies to make limited tours abroad;

(g) Recognition that in developing theatre dance in Ireland there is an equal need for good teachers, choreographers, composers and designers as well as dancers, so that training provision should encompass these needs;

(h) A need to review all dance teaching at all levels in Irish education with proposals for curriculum development, more satisfactory syllabi at primary and post-primary levels, improved teacher training, dance studios at degree level, increased inservice training, more resource materials and special spaces, and provision to take account of talented and interested students who wish to follow dance as a career;

(i) Immediate studies and negotiations to establish a National Dance Centre leading to a National Dance School;

(j) Establish closer links between the dance and education professions to which end a national conference of the two professions should be assembled;

(k) The need to develop a national dance archive coupled with more research at third level;
(1) Strengthen existing community dance initiatives and provide a framework for the development of dance in the Regions.

These conclusions might form a programme to the end of the century, endorsed and varied by national discussions.

6.2
Recommendations

Therefore, we recommend that:
To develop theatre dance in Ireland:

6.2.1
The Government
The Government should:

(a) As a matter of urgency and equity, reconsider its attitude to the arts, include development of the arts in its national plan “Building on Reality”; and, to this end, increase immediately its annual subventions to the Arts Council with consequential benefit to dance;

(b) Appoint a member to the Arts Council with experience and knowledge of theatre dance,

6.2.2
The Arts Council
The Arts Council should:

(a) Appoint a full-time specialist dance officer;

(b) Assist the Dance Council of Ireland to acquire a full-time administrator and secretariat;

(c) Discuss with relevant music authorities ways to encourage the composition of music for theatre dance in Ireland, including the introduction of dance awareness courses into Irish music training establishments;

(d) Take steps to help stage, costume and lighting designers, stage technicians and film and video makers to become more aware of the special problem and opportunities in presenting theatre dance;

(e) Similarly, take steps to encourage relevant institutions to develop administrative support skills for dance companies in Ireland and to strengthen and develop dance criticism in Ireland;

(h) Redistribute available finance for dance to create a better balance between the Irish National Ballet and other dance clients;

(i) Work closely with the Irish National Ballet to assist in reorganising and reconstituting the company, emphasising quality in all aspects of its work;

(j) Discuss with the Department of Education a comprehensive review of needs and ways to develop dance throughout the Irish education system;

(k) Appoint a consultant of international reputation to assist in the development of modern dance in Ireland.

6.2.3
Irish National Ballet
The Irish National Ballet should:

(a) Reconstitute its Board as soon as possible to reflect the company’s national status and build on the achievements of
the present board;
(b) Appoint a full-time artistic director to reorganise the Company’s artistic policy within the new parameters of a smaller company;

(c) Institute vigorous fund-raising and marketing drives supervised by the Board, and in consultation with the National Touring Agency;

(d) Review present company structures in line with new policies and numbers;

(e) Consider ways whereby dancers might have more opportunities for personal development by drawing regularly on the cultural resources of Dublin;

(f) Initiate urgent measures to increase audiences and the number of company performances, particularly drawing on the Dublin population as well as touring;

(g) Take measures to strengthen company discipline and reorganise teaching in line with new artistic demands.

6.2.4
Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre

The Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre should:

(a) be given the means to employ a full-time administrator as soon as possible in order to reduce pressures on company members, and improve the organisation and publicity of the DCDT. The administrator will need also to explore alternative funding possibilities to help the company expand. This might include possible collaboration with the Youth Employment Scheme in ways successfully demonstrated by the Druid Theatre company;

(b) work in close collaboration with the National Touring Agency when planning future tours, giving particular attention to pre-publicity and publicity, and to the enhancement of technical resources, by the use of a mobile lighting rig (see section 3.2);

(c) be helped to expand by at least one dancer, preferably two, in order to improve the repertory and allow for possible injuries;

(d) be included in any plans to establish a National Dance School, bearing in mind the long-term aim to cultivate a nucleus of modern dance students with the potential to become professional modern dancers, choreographers and teachers;

(e) be given increased technical support, the bare minimum being a part-time stage manager to support all performance programmes;

(f) be strengthened in the short-term by a policy of inviting choreographers and teachers from abroad, and having the help of a modern dance consultant appointed to the Arts Council.

6.3
Dance in the Regions

To develop Dance in the Regions the Arts Council should:

(a) seek to establish a Regional Development Committee for Dance through which dance animators, Regional Arts Officers, venue administrators, and dance companies can investigate the specific needs and existing resources of the regions and make recommendations and proposals regarding
the animation of dance to the centralised bodies, including the Arts Council, the Dance Council, the National Touring Agency, and the broadcast media;

(b) consider its position on community art and draw up a consistent funding approach to this commitment;

(c) consult with relevant authorities to develop dance provision for special needs;

(d) consider community dance companies for inclusion in the community arts budget as part of a consistent commitment to the development of community dance;

(e) provide resources whereby the Dance Council of Ireland, in consultation with the NTA, can commission a report on the suitability of venues in Ireland for dance companies. This would also give the NTA a clear idea of technical equipment needs for professional touring companies.

6.4

Vocational Training

To develop Vocational Training for dance the Arts Council, in consultation with the Department of Education and other authorities, should:

(a) establish a modest resource fund to enable private teachers to broaden or deepen their own experience and knowledge;

(b) support the Dance Council of Ireland in steps to regulate the raising of standards and professional practice throughout the dance teaching profession in Ireland;

(c) initiate discussions with the Department of Education and other authorities to establish a National Dance School or Centre as soon as possible. There cannot be a significant development of classical ballet or modern dance in Ireland without a national school of good quality;

(d) begin exploratory talks as soon as possible over the location and funding of such a school, drawing together a consortium of interests representing the Department of Education (who must play a decisive role in this project), VECs, AnCO, the Youth Employment Scheme, the Dance Council and the Arts Council itself. Financial limitations indicate that such a school would have to be based on an existing institution and be funded from outside the Arts Council’s existing budget. We also suggest that a flexible ‘step-by-step’ approach to this project may yield better results;

(e) choreography in Ireland needs to be developed at two levels: the professional and the educational. The former might be tackled through the formation of a choreographers’ alliance: a Board which would require modest funding to enable it to consider choreographic projects for presentation at evenings of new choreography. We think that the need of the educational level, consisting of private and state schools, could be met in the short-term by the Regional Arts Committees assisting choreographic events in each region, and in the long-term by the Dance Council, in liaison with organisations such as the RAD, staging an annual dance course for choreographers and composers, along the lines of the course run at Surrey University in Britain;
consult with appropriate authorities, especially third level educational establishments, about existing theatre design courses. The aim should be to incorporate dance theatre design in at least one such course, and to include design workshops when planning choreographic and dance training workshops.

6.5
Dance and the Educational System

The Department of Education should:

(a) Appoint inspectors with special responsibility for dance to lead and stimulate dance development at primary and post-primary levels;

(b) Discuss with Vocational Education Committees the appointment of dance organisers, or trained teachers advisors, to develop dance in selected schools;

(c) Encourage the institution of pilot schemes of peripatetic dance teachers throughout the country;

(d) Design suitable dance syllabi for use in schools, especially at post-primary level;

(e) Improve substantially inservice dance training for teachers, properly supported with resources;

(f) Provide pupils with the opportunity to specialise in dance so that this should form an integral part of their second level education;

(g) Improve the supply of resource materials — books, tapes, video, etc.;

(h) Give special consideration to the needs of the gifted, the less able, the disadvantaged and the handicapped child;

(i) Make provision for talented and interested students who wish to follow dance as a career;

(j) Institute a comprehensive and authoritative review of dance in the teacher training institutions, particularly, in regard to syllabus content and allocation of time;

(k) Make special provision to encourage the development of a separate, fully recognised dance course at Thomond College of Education to produce dance teaching specialists;

(l) Examine the possibility of establishing dance as a degree level subject;

(m) Provide inservice courses for school management personnel to increase their awareness of arts education in schools;

(n) Organise arts education on interdisciplinary lines to include all the arts;

(o) Incorporate into the design of all new schools the necessary facilities to develop the arts;

(p) Make available resources in existing schools to improve and where necessary provide facilities for the arts;

(q) Should financially assist existing dance-in-education initiatives with the long-term aim of developing regionally based dance-in-education companies;
(r) Ensure that each school has at least one member of the teaching staff with an officially designated post of responsibility for the development of the arts, including dance.
Appendix A

Institutions visited or consulted
AnCO External Training Division
Belltable Arts Centre, Limerick
Curriculum and Examination Board — Working Party on the Arts
Dance Council of Ireland
Department of Education
Department of Labour
Department of the Taoiseach
Dublin City Ballet Headquarters and Studios
Dublin Contemporary Dance Studios
Firkin Crane Building
Grapevine Arts Centre, Dublin
Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing, London
International Dance Teachers’ Association, England
Irish National Ballet Headquarters and Studios
Irish National Ballet Trust Fund
Irish National College of Dance
Killarney Town Hall
Leisure Centre, Omagh
Limerick School of Ballet
National Touring Agency
Thomond College of Education
Royal Academy of Dancing, Irish Region
Royal Academy of Dancing, London
Skibbereen Town Hall
Trinity College Dublin
Wexford Arts Centre

Appendix B

Oral and written submissions
Penny Baizer-Feldman — Ex-administrator of DCDT and Assistant Administrator NTA
Ciarán Benson — Author of The Place of the Arts in Irish Education, Education Dept., University College Dublin
John D. Biggs — Independent Film-maker
Martha Bowers — Choreographer and Dancer
Breandán Breathnach — Member of the Arts Council
Aileen Le Brocquy — Administrator, Wexford Arts Centre
Dairine Byrne — Parent of dancer
Margaret Byrne — Member of ‘Barefoot’ dance company
Anne Campbell-Crawford — Dublin School of Classical and Contemporary Dance
Yvonne Carroll — Dancer
Lar Cassidy — Community Arts Officer, The Arts Council
Marie Cole — Dance Teacher and Founder of the Irish Youth Ballet
Robert Connor — Member of DCDT
Michael Corder — Choreographer
Anne E. Courtney — Artistic Director of DCB
Louise Cowman — Dancer
Flora Cushman — Visiting Teacher to INB
The Dancers of the DCB
The Dancers of the INB
Joan Davis — Founder of Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre
Dermot Doolan — General Secretary of Irish Actors Equity
Ella Doran — Private Dance Teacher
Martin Drury — Education Officer of the Arts Council
Brid Dukes — Administrator of the Belltable Arts Centre
Sandy Fitzgerald — Grapevine Arts Centre and CAFE (Creative Activity For Everyone)
Anne Fitzgibbon — Department of Teacher Training, Trinity College
Frances Fleming — Dancer
Claire French — Primary School Teacher
Pearl Gaden — Teacher and Choreographer DCB
Roy Galvin — Co-Founder of Dancemakers
Babil Gandara — Ballet Master DCB
Paddy Glackin — Traditional Arts Officer and Officer for the Regions, The Arts Council
Lesli Good — Marketing and PRO for NTA
David Gordon — Ballet Master of the INB
Desmond Graham — Company Manager of the INB
Cathy Hayes — Founder of Barefoot Dance Company
Dr Ken Hill — Head of PE Department, Thomond College of Education
Finbarr Holland — Chairman of the National Fund Raising Committee of the Irish National Ballet Trust Fund INB
Chairman and members of the Board
Kalichi — Liberation Dance Workshop
Hilary Kelly — Primary School Teacher
Helen Kelly-Hunt — Dance Teacher and freelance choreographer, part-time at St Patrick’s College, Drumcondra
Arthur Lappin — Drama and Dance Officer of the Arts Council
Muriel Large — Administrator of the INB
Teresa Leahy — Lecturer in Dance at Thomond College of Education
Anica Louw — Shawbrook School of Ballet
Iseult McCarthy — Curriculum and Examinations Board
Dr John McCormick — Head of Theatre Studies at Trinity College
Mairtin McCullough — Chairman of the Arts Council
Michael McDaid — External Training Division of AnCO
Michael McDonagh — Inspector of Physical Education, Department of Education
Catherine McMahon — Student, London Contemporary Dance School
Joanne Moles — Thomond College of Education
Dinah Molloy — Acting Music Officer of the Arts Council (until November 1984)
Iain Montague — Irish Actors Equity
Olive Morgan — Specialist Dance Teacher
Joan Denise Moriarty — Artistic Director of the Irish National Ballet (INB)
Adrian Munnelly — Director of the Arts Council
Appendix C

Documentation

Arts Council
Annual Reports since 1976

Arts Council
Provision for the Arts (The Richards Report) 1976

Arts Council
Living and Working Conditions of Artists

Arts Council
The Place of the Arts in Irish Education (The Benson Report) 1979

Barefoot Dance Company
Barefoot in School

Brinson, Peter
Dance in New Zealand, 1981

Breandan Breathnach
Dancing in Ireland, 1983

Anne E. Courtney, DCB
Dance in Education — Programme for Ireland

Creative Activity for Everyone (CAFE)
Seminar Report
The Dance Council of Ireland was constitutionally founded in September 1983 with the aim of bringing together people involved in the professional and educational aspects of dance and to promote and aid the development of dance throughout Ireland. It acts as a medium of communication within the dance community and between this community and government agencies or other relevant organisations with a view to promote a greater understanding of the potential of dance and to seek support in developing this potential. It is a highly representational body in that its membership is drawn from all areas of dance and all of Ireland — North and South.

The Dance Council of Ireland welcomes this opportunity to contribute to the national debate on education. Dance in the educational system of Ireland has in the past been virtually ignored and access to dance education has been limited to those students who have had a Primary or PE teacher with a special interest in dance or those fortunate few whose family background or financial resources encouraged and permitted attendance at private classes. In primary and secondary education dance is firmly part of physical education and suffers at tertiary level in teacher training from the absence of any corresponding
department in a university. Broadly speaking dance receives little more attention in Irish schools than a wet weather subject. Only a little over 55% of schools in Ireland have a physical education teacher. This teacher may or may not teach dance. Therefore at least 45% of schools have no contact with physical education or dance. Consequently, students arrive for training as teachers with no knowledge of dance from their school days. Audiences, moreover, are unprepared by their education to appreciate dance as an art and respond to its form of non-verbal communications. There is a need to develop dance at every level of Irish education up to and including degree level studies.

This submission should be seen as an initial input to the work of the Board. We have documented in purely notated form some of the problems and recommendations we wish to put to the Board and would like to see a continuing dialogue develop between appropriate members of the Board and the Dance Council.

**Present Problems:**

**Primary Level:**
1.0 The Council acknowledges that some efforts were made at the time of drafting the new primary school curriculum to give dance a stronger place.

1.1 It deprecates the fact that the implementation of recommendations laid down by this curriculum is impossible at present due to insufficiencies in primary teacher training.

1.2 It deprecates also the lack of facilities of space and resources in many primary schools.

**Secondary Level:**

1.3 There is very little dance at all being included at this level.

1.4 There is no syllabus of work available for teachers to follow.

1.5 Staff, i.e. PE teachers, have had insufficient training in dance.

1.6 There are no opportunities in Ireland for specialist dance in education teacher training.

1.7 There is no specialist dance inspectorate for schools.

**Third Level:**

1.8 PE graduates cannot under the present system have sufficient training in order to become proficient teachers of dance in education.

1.9 Entrance requirements to third level education do not place enough emphasis on creative/aesthetic areas with resultant problems in the field.

1.10 Resources are inadequate at this level in terms of personnel, timetables, finances, etc.

**Department of Education:**

1.13 There is no specialist inspectorate for dance.
1.14 There is insufficient inservice training provided for teachers at all levels.

1.15 There is insufficient inservice training for school management to build an awareness of the potential and needs of the arts in education.

1.16 The department’s building unit is insensitive to the needs of the arts in education.

**Recommendations:**

**Primary Level:**

2.0 Teacher training must be improved.

2.1 Inservice training must be improved.

2.2 Facilities within schools must be improved.

**Secondary Level:**

2.3 Aesthetic education should be central to the whole process of education and an interdisciplinary approach to learning be adopted. A core curriculum to include creative/aesthetic studies should be designed and that dance be a part of this.

2.4 Resource materials — books, videos, etc. — should be made available for teachers.

2.5 Suitable syllabi must be designed for use in schools, especially at secondary level. The Council has researched this and have available syllabi which have recently been introduced with great effect into the British school system.

2.6 That special provision be made for the gifted and handicapped child.

2.7 Provision must be made for those students who wish to devote a large measure of school time to dance, without detriment to their general education/certification, etc. — to ensure that career options remain open.

2.8 Vocational preparation and training should be made available through second level education as in other countries.

2.9 A proper career structure be established for peripatetic teachers of dance serving a number of schools.

**Third Level:**

2.10 A course of studies for the training of specialist dance in education teachers should be established at some suitable college and this course should be staffed by suitably qualified lecturers.

2.11 Entrance requirements to third level should include a greater awareness of aesthetic education.

2.12 Existing courses should be restructured to give dance and other arts areas realistic time-tableing and resources to develop abilities and awareness of aesthetic education within our future teachers.
Department of Education:

2.13 Inservice training at all levels should be increased.

2.14 Inservice courses should be held for school management personnel to increase awareness of aesthetic education in schools.

2.15 A specialist inspectorate for dance should be appointed.

2.16 Specialist subject advisors should be appointed on a regular basis and this region should be of a realistic area and include sufficient resources.

2.17 Sabbatical leave for further study in the arts must be made available to teachers wishing to pursue post-graduate studies.

The Dance Council of Ireland looks forward to a response from the Board and to a continuing dialogue which will further the cause of dance within our educational system, with the aim of enriching the lives of our school-going population and providing opportunities for their aesthetic education which to date has been sadly lacking.

Muriel Large  Irish National Ballet Company
Louis O’Sullivan  National College of Dance
Teresa Leahy  Thomond College of Education — dance lecturer
Joan Davis  Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre
Jennifer Bullick  Dance Teacher — RAD (Belfast)
Deirdre Smith  Dance Teacher — RAD
Imelda O’Loan  PE Teacher — Secondary Level
Mary Brady  Neighbourhood Open Workshop — Belfast
Olive Morgan  Dance for Special Education
Jean Regan  Theatre Omnibus

Co-opted onto the sub-committee for preparation of this report were:

Maire O’Loan  Department of Education — PE Inspector
Bernadette Cleary  Midland Arts Officer - VEC
Maire O’Loan  Lecturer in Dance in Education — Laban Centre
Bernadette Cleary  Signed on behalf of the National Executive:
Maire O’Loan  Gaye Tanham, Administrator

Appendix E

Financial Circumstances of Professional Dancers

The salaries of professional dancers have never been high in relation to other professions, and often involve factors unknown to or overlooked by those not in the profession. The training is lengthy and costly, for example, and most dancers finish their performing careers by the age of 40. Most other performing artists can continue to the normal age of retirement or beyond. In justice, therefore, dancers’ salaries should be much higher than
they are to compensate for short careers or should lead to pensions on retirement as they do in Denmark and other European countries.

In this context the case for adequate touring allowances is undeniable. 'Adequate' means that they should cover the full cost of subsistence and accommodation when dancers tour away from home. Dancers of the Irish National Ballet told us that their £30 overnight allowance is just about adequate at the moment, although inflation constantly erodes it. Some allowances in cash or kind are provided for Dublin City Ballet dancers on tour although the dancers told us that usually they end up slightly out-of-pocket. No similar support is provided for Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre so that its dancers will need to consider this whole issue as part of the administrative reorganisation of their company.

Although INB dancers are not well paid, they are the best paid professional dancers in Ireland. We invited them, therefore, to give us examples of three personal weekly budgets — one at the bottom of the company scale (A), one near the middle (B) and one near the top (C). It should be born in mind that Cork presents particular problems of accommodation, relatively high cost of living and isolation for dancers, especially if they need to see performances by visiting dance companies in Dublin or draw professional enrichment from the cultural life of the capital. We present the budgets exactly as they were submitted to us.

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19th September, 1984

Mr Peter Brinson  
Head of Research and Community Development  
Laban Centre for Movement and Dance  
University of London  
Goldsmith College  
New Cross  
London SE14 6NW  
England

Dear Peter,

I confirm the arrangements made in our recent discussion wherein the Arts Council has commissioned you to undertake an enquiry into professional classical and modern dance in the Republic with particular reference to existing companies but embracing also associated community, educational and other professional matters as set out in the accompanying terms of reference. It is understood that you will begin work now and aim to report by late January or early February 1985.

The official office of the enquiry will be at 70 Merrion Square, Dublin 2, and we will arrange to give you an appropriate supply of stationery. I understand that letters announcing the enquiry will be sent to dance beneficiaries of the Council and that you will also prepare letters to the leading national newspapers and dance journals in the Republic, inviting interested individuals or groups to make confidential submissions to you. The text of this latter letter is to be agreed in advance with the Arts Council before publication.

If you can accept this letter of contract, please sign and return the attached copy.

Yours sincerely,

Arthur Lappin,  
Dance Officer.
15th October, 1984

Dear Sir,

I have been commissioned by the Arts Council to undertake a detailed inquiry into all aspects of professional classical and modern dance in the Republic, and to make recommendations. The inquiry will embrace also related issues such as community dance at professional level; dance-in-education at primary, secondary and tertiary levels, including teacher training; and associated skills in choreography, stage, costume and lighting design, dance on film and video and technical and administrative support skills.

I shall be visiting all the main institutions concerned during October, November and December accompanied by my assistant, Andy Ormston, on the grounds that two judgements are better than one! It is particularly important, however, that individual members of the public should feel free to approach me personally in confidence if they wish. In the half dozen national dance studies I have undertaken around the world I have always found such individual contributions invaluable. May I ask your help in reaching those who wish to write to me c/o The Arts Council, 70 Merrion Square, Dublin 2, marking all letters ‘personal’.

Yours faithfully,
Peter Brinson.

Appendix G

Activities of the Royal Academy of Dancing Irish Region
(N.B. The Region covers the whole of Ireland, North and South).

1983
October 2nd and 9th
Pre-Primary Syllabus
DES Character Levels I & II
Cynthia O Dunlaing; 30 teachers attended.

December 11th
DES Classical Level II
Annette Perkins; 20 teachers attended.
1984

January 21st/ 22nd
Back to Basics on Grade IV & Senior Grade
Pre-Elementary & Elementary Pointe Work
June Mitchell; 25 teachers attended, 20 students.

April
After the Examinations June Mitchell gave a corrections session
26 candidates, 8 teachers attended.

June 10th
AGM
25 members attached.

September 29th, 30th
Back to Basics at Intermediate Level
Pat Macdonald

December 9th
Girls Grade Dances, to be given by Examiner after the session.

1985

January 26th/ 27th
Course on Anatomy to help with the preparation for the Student
& Elementary ETC
Prof. Bunch & John O’ Brien

March 10th
Open class for children to be given by the Examiner after the session.

April
As above but for Majors.

April
25th Anniversary Dinner

June
AGM

July
Student class for Pre-Elementary & Elementary & Intermediate & Advanced
Pat Macdonald

Children’s Examinations Entries for Dublin and Belfast

Summer 1982 - Winter 1984

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>No. Entries</th>
<th>No. of Sessions Entered Each Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>4474</td>
<td>2 - Summer &amp; Winter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belfast</td>
<td>1174</td>
<td>1 - Summer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Number of Entries = 5,648

It is not possible to state the number of entries per town but entries from the following towns usually require the number of examination days indicated:

- Wexford 3-4 days;
- Wicklow 1 day;
- Cork 1 week usually;
- Dublin 3 weeks.

Belfast is slightly different. Although the teachers entering have schools in Armagh, Bangor, Co. Antrim, etc., the examinations are held in one studio in Belfast and this would be for a period of approximately 2-3 weeks.