

DECLARATION OF LAUSANNE

FIRST INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON THE TRANSITION OF PROFESSIONAL DANCERS

Dance is an important component of the cultural life of every society. In utilizing movement, the most honest form of human communication, professional dancers play a vital role in reflecting society to itself and others. Dancers also contribute economically through their work. The career of the dancer is intense and of short duration and, despite regional and cultural variations, every dancer must face the reality of transition.

I. DANCERS CONSTITUTE AN IMPORTANT RESOURCE FOR SOCIETY.

Their passion and dedication to their art are valuable skills which are transferable to various other fields, both within and outside the artistic world:

- the dancer is a competitive, goal-oriented, hard-working, disciplined professional with a high level of motivation;
- the dancer has an engaging presence and stamina;
- the dancer is skilled in working effectively both independently and as part of a team.

2. SOCIETY SHOULD ACKNOWLEDGE THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE DANCER TO SOCIETY IN PRACTICAL WAYS.

Because society benefits from the dancers' art during their dance career and from their activities after transition, society should assist in the transition process:

- the profession of dancer must have an appropriate legal status in each country;
- the dancer must benefit from social security, health insurance, disability and sickness pension, and retraining schemes available to other citizens, regardless of whether he or she is an employee or independent contractor;
- a dancer whose transition occurs due to injury must receive equivalent benefits to those accorded to other injured workers;
- each government must help to ensure that the financial needs of the transition process can be met;
- as a result of the international mobility of dancers, it is important to develop and maintain an international structure to coordinate transition programs and encourage the development and financing of new ones;
- access to re-training and counselling professionals sensitive to the unique concerns of dancers is crucial and necessary as a tool for successful transition; the most effective means to deliver this support in a confidential manner is an agency whose sole function is the support of the transition of professional dancers.

3. PREPARATION FOR TRANSITION MUST BE AN INTEGRAL PART OF A COMPREHENSIVE TRAINING PROGRAM.

Training is an integral part of the transition process for dancers. During training, the dancer should have access to programs in professional dance schools which provide comparable and comprehensive technical and academic training.

- academic education should result in a formal degree comparable to degrees received by other students at age 18-19;
- training must include practical skills useful during and after the performing career, such as oral and written communication skills, business skills, assertiveness training, etc.;

This declaration was prepared following the First International Symposium on the Transition of Professional Dancers, under the patronage of Unesco at the University of Lausanne (Switzerland), May 5-7, 1995. It is based on the conclusions of professionals of 17 countries in various fields of dance (medicine, psychology, artistic direction, fundraising, corporate sponsorship, journalism, labor relations, education, and performance) who attended the Symposium.