

The aDvANCE Project Declaration of Monaco

December 18, 2004

“In every culture and in every time people have danced—to celebrate and to mourn, to entertain and to enlighten, to affirm the spirit and the body, and to create moments of transcendent beauty and transformation. Temporal and fleeting, dance communicates powerful messages that resonate across language and cultural barriers. Reaching beyond words, dancers embody powerful messages about the central dramas of human life—be they spiritual, intellectual, aesthetic, or political. . . .

“Career transition is inevitable, and therefore an integral aspect of a dancer’s life.”

--Mindy N. Levine, Beyond Performance: Building A Better Future For Dancers And The Art Of Dance (2004).

In the past ten years there has been growing international awareness of the multiple dimensions of career transition. In addition to the growth and development of the four formal transition programs that were organized between 1973 and 1986 (United Kingdom, Canada, United States, and The Netherlands), initiatives have been taken in a number of countries to improve the circumstances of dancers and their ability to address career transition issues.

Major challenges remain. The aDvANCE Project was formed to commission an international research study and a companion advocacy document. The following observations emerged from the process:

“We know of no other occupation that requires such extensive training, which is held in such esteem as a contribution to culture and pays so little. . . .

“In the long-run, the vitality of dance activity itself requires attention to the welfare of those engaged in it. . . .

“The inadequacy of transition support not only creates significant challenges for individual dancers, but also imposes a social cost in the form of wasted human capital.”

--William Baumol, Joan Jeffri and David Throsby, Making Changes: Facilitating The Transition Of Dancers To Post-Performing Careers (2004).

Participants from fifteen countries gathered in Monaco from December 16 to 18, 2004, to discuss and reflect upon these documents. The participants embraced the conclusions and recommendations of these reports, and agreed on the following:

- Career transition assistance is a key indicator of the degree to which a particular community values the art of dance and the professional dancer.
- Dancers, dance schools and educators, dance companies and their staff, unions, other dance organizations, governments and their agencies, funders, the audience, and the larger society all share a responsibility to deal with transition challenges.
- The professional dancer has a set of highly developed transferable skills that are of great value to the job market and society in general.

Accordingly, the participants resolve:

- To work together to develop methods of providing dancer-driven transition services appropriate to the particular circumstances of each community and to all professional dancers in that community, and to support each other internationally in these efforts.
- To collect and share information—such as examples of best practices, specific program models, research and other tools—through the International Organization for the Transition of Professional Dancers and its website, www.iotpd.org.
- To promote transition solutions through existing relationships and new partnerships within and outside the dance community.
- To advocate:
 - For recognition that dancers should enjoy equivalent status to other professionals, including compensation and other terms and conditions of employment.
 - For recognition that dancers also have career-specific concerns requiring targeted solutions.
 - For necessary financial support and for acknowledgement that investment in retraining dancers is an ethical imperative, part of the cost of supporting dance, and one that benefits the dancer and the society in the long-term.
- To reconvene in 2006 in collaboration with the 20th Anniversary of the Dutch Retraining Program.