



Landslide: Innovations  
in Service for Dance in  
Canada

## Executive Summary

Arts service needs to explore new approaches in parallel to existing activities or risk becoming increasingly irrelevant to the experiences of more and more Canadians. Profound changes are disrupting social and economic life, and the arts must position itself within these broader conversations to remain relevant and to find allies outside of the cultural or public sector.

Service for dance is defined by two issues that must be addressed if organizations such as the Canadian Dance Assembly hope to remain relevant now and in the future. Firstly, service disproportionately goes to forms that derive from Western European traditions. Secondly, resources in the sector are currently inadequate to support even a modest living for most dancers and dance companies.

Service organizations, such as the Canadian Dance Assembly, must move beyond incremental improvements in service delivery and inclusivity. New approaches to service must be considered that entail system-wide structural changes that centre values of self-management and equity. Additionally, resources must be sought outside of traditional government funding. Enrolling new stakeholders in the dance ecology will ask dance to reinterpret the higher-order challenges that the form is able to address.

This document outlines a potential new structure and a potential new stream of funding to support dance in its evolution. Dance service organizations must invest in innovative structures to deliver service. Arts service organizations in Canada are structurally homogenous and collectively draw on the same pool of resources. While the models described here will likely not supplant existing institutional actors in the short term, they offer a hint of a new marketplace for solutions and a prototype for what the next version of arts service organizations in Canada could look like.

Rather than asking service organizations to determine the appropriate services for a diverse and geographically dispersed milieu, the structure proposed here allows a self-identified community to determine what services are appropriate based on existing efforts to achieve creative ambitions. The intention is to bypass many of the micro-transactions that reinforce colonial systems and assumptions. By making service explicitly about meeting the needs for cultural expression of those most dislocated by technological change, relative power of different dance traditions is equalized. All forms of dance that allow for meaningful participation will be necessary. The desired outcome is a system where dance discipline or cultural identity is not statistical predictors of success.

Resources to develop new structures for service should be sought from those similarly concerned about the depersonalizing of economic and social life. Trends such as artificial intelligence and automation threaten structural unemployment and increasing risks of social unrest. Cultural practices, such as dance, offer an avenue for those dislocated by technological change to express themselves and a means of rehumanizing public life. Just as resource extraction created environmental and social impacts that, in time, needed to be addressed, Artificial intelligence and automation are creating seismic shifts in communities that will require cross-sectorial action and coordination.

What is included here is a sketch and just one of many possible futures. Your feedback and responses will continue to be critical in exploring the possible structures and activities of service for dance going forward.

The design outlined here is an effort to address two long-standing issues in service for dance in Canada.

1. Systems have been established that privilege Western European forms and tastes and that systematically exclude non-Western approaches from infrastructure development, venues, training, presenting networks, resources, and services.
2. Dance is defined by resource scarcity, particularly at the level of the individual dancer or dance company. Public funding is unlikely to be adequate to provide for the broader livelihood of the dance sector, even before accounting for those systematically excluded from full participation.

# Background

Canadians have always danced. However, the public framing and institutionalization of dance has been significantly shaped by European colonization. The elevation of European forms and traditions has positioned dance as a predominately theatrical form. Unsurprisingly, dance forms that echo a theatrical understanding, such as ballet or Western contemporary, have benefited greatly in terms of public support and attention, particularly as related to infrastructure development, venues, training, presenting networks and service organizations.

A research project conducted in parallel with this service design process describes the impact of colonization as follows:

“This privileging of Western theatrical dance forms and displacement of other dance forms has been upheld not only by the sector itself but also by national policy. Perhaps the earliest such example is the banning of potlatch by an amendment to the Indian Act from 1884 to 1951; however, it has also been systemically embedded in the institutions that govern the arts in Canada through the recommendations of the Report on the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters, and Sciences, better known as the Massey Report (1951).

The Massey Report advocated a new form of “Canadianism” that was grounded in “unity” between English and French Canada. The cultural institutions that it created to implement this policy, including the Canada Council for the Arts, were exclusively concerned with Western art forms. Indigenous arts were not so much overlooked as intentionally quashed, with the report suggesting that they should give way to the “more advanced civilization and infinitely superior techniques” of the white man, and there is virtually no mention of arts by other minority groups”.

Public attitudes toward pluralism have evolved due to education, advocacy, and activism by Indigenous people and people of colour. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015) has highlighted the need to attend to the enormous harm done by colonizing forces and institutions to the Indigenous people of Canada. On July 19, 2017, the Government of Canada affirmed that it will “continue the process of decolonization and hasten the end of its legacy wherever it remains in our laws and policies” (<http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/principles-eng.pdf>). Despite increasing calls for decolonization, the concept lacks a clear, shared definition.

**The Decolonizing Canadian Dance project argues for decolonization as a direction, rather than as a destination.** This document is not intended as a research report, but rather a sketch of what service for dance might look like when viewed through a decolonizing lens. The iterative nature of a service design approach is central to the ongoing success of this project. Both successes and missteps become opportunities to learn and improve the institutions and systems we create and enact.

## RE-IMAGINING SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS: DECOLONIZING CANADIAN DANCE

## RE-CRÉER LES ORGANISMES DE SERVICE: DÉCOLONISATION DE LA DANSE AU CANADA



Canadian Dance Assembly  
L'Assemblée canadienne de la danse



Nigel Grenier/Photo by Derek Dix

Shifts in attitudes are only reflected in systems and institutions when attention and effort is applied. Assuming that systems will catch up with changing ideas fails to recognize the recursive patterns of behaviour and decision making that sustain institutional and systemic inertia. A design for service is meaningless unless it is applied.

The policies of the arts funding bodies have been established over time to respond to the ongoing needs of the dance sector. The framing of those needs has been mostly unchanged over the past 30 years as reflected in the report, *The Growth of Dance in Canada Over Three Decades* (prepared for the Canada Council for the Arts, April 2004, T.J. Cheney Research Inc.)

Those needs were understood as:

- the need to provide continuing professional development beyond initial, pre-entry training for dancers
- the need to sustain excellent, peer endorsed choreographic and performance talent
- the importance of providing affordable accessible space for rehearsal and creation
- the low primary demand from the public for dance as an art form
- the challenge of building and sustaining touring networks, including support for presenting organizations that regularly present dance
- the problem of low remuneration for dance practitioners, and career insecurity

There is a growing recognition that while the needs of professional dance haven't changed, the framing of what constitutes 'professional' dance may need to be updated to reflect those who use movement as a form of cultural expression, yet have been traditionally excluded from opportunities for public support or attention. Furthermore, the values that define "excellence" are also based in Western values of beauty and "universality"; so that who constitutes a peer also need to change across the decision making landscape of dance in Canada.

## Key Terms

**Decolonization:** This process understands decolonization as the dismantling of structures and systems that privilege colonial ways of thinking about, functioning in, comprehending and valuing the world. Additionally, Indigenous decolonization necessarily involves sovereignty and an inherent right to self-determination by and for Indigenous people.

**Representation:** Engagement was broad and extensive during this process. Each participant belongs to various communities, institutions, and practices. Those engaged in the process were asked to bring relations and relationships into the conversation. Additionally, participants were asked to not rely on affiliations when determining how to participate.

**Diversity:** Diversity was understood as a feature of life, rather than as an endpoint. The process registered difference as a contribution to a common purpose rather than as an outcome to be achieved.

**Co-Creation:** Co-creation is a process whereby each participant contributes to the visualization and actualization of something new. The work, then, has been in service to the thing being created and individual and collective interests inform how we frame that contribution.

“Respondents also observed that the focus in certain parts of the dance service ecosystem on professional dance leads to the structural exclusion of those working in marginalized dance forms, such as Aboriginal/Indigenous, folk/traditional, racialized, and urban/street dance, due to definitions of a “professional” that have been designed to fit Western theatrical dance forms”.

- Doeser and Wong

## Role of National Art Service Organizations

In exploring the range of models available to organize service in the arts, two dimensions surfaced as particularly relevant for this exploration.

1. **Internal vs. External Focus:** Art service organizations balance a desire to address the well-being of their members (whether individual or organizational or both) with communicating with those outside of the membership on the interests of the members (government, funding bodies, audiences)
2. **Needs-based vs. Catalytic:** Services are often understood as addressing gaps or needs in a community or sector. A deficit is identified, and resources are allocated to address this deficit, either indirectly or directly, until the deficit is erased or until resources are depleted. Another approach to services develops platforms of exchange to facilitate interactions that advance community interests. In the first case, increased demands on the system quicken depletion. In CADA, for instance, the offer of a professional training subsidy becomes untenable if scaled and scoped for the massive diversity of practice in the country. It is only tenable in an arts service organization that responds to a smaller cross-section of the broader field, such as ballet or European contemporary, where there are already foundational training institutions that offer other resources. In the second case, increased participation strengthens the system as the available interactions increase. An example here is a knowledge base that increases in efficacy as more and more information is added and indexed.

# Intentions

This document outlines a potential design for service in dance. What follows should not be understood as research or as an argument for a particular point of view. Rather, what follows is a potential design based on nine months of interviews and observations across the dance ecology in Canada and elsewhere, and an intense two-day retreat in September of 2017 in Toronto, Ontario.

There is near-universal desire for a dance sector in Canada that better-represents the population and that embraces a process of reconciliation with Canada's Indigenous populations. Some participants in this process have argued for greater inclusivity in existing systems for those that have been traditionally excluded. Others argue for greater self-determination within specific programmatic areas to address specific community or disciplinary needs. While inclusivity is intended to increase comfort for a greater number of people, it does little to increase the level of control for those invited into the existing structures. Self-determination provides much higher levels of control but conditions remain unchanged outside of the boundaries of the programmatic intervention.

Ideally, service for dance will create conditions where everyone can feel comfort and where one's cultural background or disciplinary focus is not a statistical determinant of success. A service design process was deemed best-suited to imagine a structural reformation of service for dance.

Service design is a process to plan and organize people, infrastructure, relationships and resources to improve the effectiveness of a service and the quality of the interactions among the service provider and its users. Service design centres the needs of users, rather than the interests of the existing system. It is an iterative process based on observations, interpretations, insights, prototyping and implementation.

The design outlined here is an effort to address two long-standing issues in service for dance in Canada.

1. Systems have been established that privilege Western European forms and tastes and that systematically exclude non-Western approaches from infrastructure development, venues, training, presenting networks, resources, and services.
2. Dance is defined by resource scarcity, particularly at the level of the individual dancer or dance company. Public funding is unlikely to be adequate to provide for the broader livelihood of the dance sector, even before accounting for those systematically excluded from full participation.

The Canadian Dance Assembly has initiated a multi-year investigation to re-imagine service for the dance sector and an organizing structure to deliver on that service. The intention has been to transform service for dance to be radically open, equitable, and more reflective of Canada's identity. Incremental changes are unlikely to lead to positive transformation.

The design that follows departs from both a focus on inclusivity in existing systems and self-determination within isolated pockets of activity. Furthermore, the structure draws on higher-order challenges and opportunities that span cultural, social, and technological dimensions of Canadian society.

The design aims to address areas of duplication and gaps in service, while creating new opportunities for under-served communities. The design reflects evolutions in the current social and political landscape, while aspiring to truly serve the national sector.

This document sketches out a potential path forward.

## Values

- Honour the history of the sector while recognizing that history is only a meaningful context for interpretation for those already included in the professional dance community
- Organize around a post-colonial understanding of culture and service that questions and reinvents the way dance is viewed and framed
- Honour Indigenous voices and values throughout the process
- Question demarcations and categories that define who and where to act
- Focus less on new efficiencies and more on new opportunities

The aim is to initiate and accompany long-term, sustainable learning and renewal processes to make the dance ecology more viable, successful and efficient through the consolidation and reinterpretation of national service for dance.

## Key Assumptions - Validated

- Framing dance and service for dance as a professional activity exacerbates exclusion and resource scarcity. Dance does different things in different contexts.
- If we understand dance as the 'currency' then some currencies are valued more highly than others
- A system is required where all 'currencies' are valued equally by design
- Markets defined by generosity and reciprocity are better able to manage power differentials in the long term
- A shared membership structure that supports dancers, presenters, choreographers and others in the dance community is feasible, viable, and desirable.
- Dance must speak to opportunities and challenges that are shared across different societal sectors if it hopes to access the resources to support transformation and sustainability.

## Approaches to Equity

In the course of this project, we interviewed a wide range of stakeholders about what a decolonizing process might look like and how Canadian dance would be different as a result of that process. To analyze the responses, we borrow the "Racial Equity Mapping Tool" (REMT), a conceptual framework developed for the City of Seattle's Office of Sustainability & Environment by Equity Matters ([www.equitymattersnw.com](http://www.equitymattersnw.com)).

The REMT is a two-by-two matrix that helps racial equity program planners map their practices, strategies, and actions along two axes, namely comfort and control (see diagram below). Along the vertical axis is the level of "comfort" Communities of Color (CoC) experience in a particular system or programmatic context. Along the horizontal axis is the level of "control" that CoCs experience over what happens in that system or programmatic context. These two axes delineate four different types of experiences.





Quadrant 1, or “Business as Usual”, describes systems and contexts that uphold the power of a European/white power structure that—at most—pays lip service to equity, but in no way actually values it. The dominant belief in a “Business as Usual” context is that day-to-day work is “race neutral”, and therefore there is no urgent need to build real relationships or trust with Communities of Colour (CoCs). As a result, the leadership, programs, budgets, and data for decision-making are centered on the needs and preferences of white stakeholders, with engagement of CoCs being perfunctory at best. Few stakeholders in this process indicated a preference for a Quadrant 1 approach.

Quadrant 2, or “Access & Inclusion”, describes systems and contexts that still uphold a European/white power structure, but where CoCs have some influence over the power structure. This influence is a result of placing some people of colour in decision-making roles, and also via an intentional process of engagement with CoCs. Engagement may include translation of materials into languages other than English, focus groups, interviews, surveys, program accommodations (e.g. childcare, tokens for transportation), volunteer (non-paid) advisory boards, and collaborations with organizations run by CoCs. While “Access & Inclusion” may better reflect CoCs, people of colour are engaged largely after programs have been designed and major decisions made. Many solutions and current successes offered by existing service and presenting organizations in dance could be described as “Access & Inclusion”. These might involve initiatives such as creating scholarships for non-white dancers, inviting Indigenous dance troupes to open a ballet performance, and the hiring of interns and recruitment of board members from under-represented communities.

Quadrant 3, or “Programmatic Racial Equity”, describes systems and context that value the dismantling of institutional racism through “race conscious” conversations in daily work and a commitment to the leadership of Communities of Color. The programs, budgets, and engagement of CoCs in this quadrant are truly equitable. However, this equity is experienced only within limited areas of the dominant white power structure. A desire for self-determination in funding and service is a Quadrant 3 approach, particularly when the presenting and touring opportunities exist outside of the boundaries of the community.

Quadrant 4, or “Structural/Organizational Racial Equity”, describes systems and contexts where racial equity is realized system-wide and is reflected in shared power and outcomes. Racial equity, as defined by Racial Equity Tools, is “the condition achieved when one’s racial identity no longer predicts, in a statistical sense, how one fares.” In Quadrant 4, the system has been redesigned through race-conscious conversations, policies, and actions that address the root causes of structural racism, and do not intentionally or unintentionally lead to the alienation of CoCs. People of all cultural backgrounds easily, fully, and meaningfully participate across the entire system. Quadrant 4 solutions are disruptive and conceptually difficult to imagine as they operate from a different set of embedded values and serve as a substitute for existing systems and structures.

## Our Approach

Throughout this project, stakeholders in Canadian dance spoke to interventions that would move service out of Business as Usual and into other quadrants, or in some cases, a desire to see a complete inversion of the existing hierarchy for dance.

The vast majority of these interventions fell into the “Access and

Inclusion” quadrant or the “Programmatic Racial Equity” quadrant. Few pointed to Quadrant 4 of “Structural/Organizational Racial Equity”.

We suspect this gap is a result of the fact that interventions in Quadrant 4 require a wholesale re-imagining of the current system. Indeed, they require a radical departure and are therefore challenging to conceive, much less execute.

Still, we believe it worthwhile and critical to spend time exploring Quadrant 4 and what a corresponding intervention in Canadian dance might look like. This document offers one such intervention, not so much to argue for that particular strategy but to show that interventions in that space are within reach.

Ideally, any selected model would not only help decolonize Canadian

dance (among different forms of dance) but also decolonize dance as a form of human activity (among different types of economic, professional, or leisurely pursuits).

# Trends in the professional dance sector

Research undertaken by Melissa Wong and James Doeser in parallel to this design process offer a compelling and urgent account of the dance sector in Canada in 2017. A much fuller exploration of the past and present of the dance sector can be found there and is highly recommended as an accompaniment to this document. Doeser and Wong's work is quoted at length here. However, it should be remarked that Doeser and Wong focused primarily on issues of inclusivity (quadrant 2) with only some attention committed to redistribution and self-determination (quadrants 3 and 4). This reflects the conversations they had with existing institutions and institutional actors and the lack of available, viable structural alternatives. We should also acknowledge the limitations of the language available to the researchers as they built on flawed models of categorization of dance in order to have data that could be compared to past data.

Finally, we should be explicit about what "support" means in the context of this work. Many embedded in the existing structure are unaware of the range of supports being considered. For the purposes of this project support includes, but is not limited to; infrastructure such as venues, proscenium stages, and training institutions; standards of training; standards of professionalism; dance creation resources like residencies, commissions, and professional development opportunities; and presenting networks.

## ON THE COMPOSITION OF THE DANCE SECTOR

### 3.2.3

... diversity includes changes to the demographic profiles of both dance professionals and dance audiences, set against a backdrop of changes in Canadian society: the rapid growth of Indigenous and visible minority populations, increasing urbanization, and the aging population. Additionally, De Rosa and Burgess cautioned that due to the limitations of the existing methodologies for measurement, minorities and equity-seeking groups of many kinds are likely to be underrepresented in the existing literature.

## ON THE DERIVATION OF CURRENT SERVICE OFFERS

### 3.3.5

Broadly speaking, current service offers were developed to support mainstream dance companies working in Western theatrical dance forms such as ballet and contemporary/ modern dance, and there remains an expectation that other dance forms should seek to fit into these models. This has been critiqued roundly by advocates for these marginalized dance forms. In a report for IPAA, Candace Brunette calls this expectation "a colonial encounter which serves the interest of those in power and systematically undermines Aboriginal people who are forced to work within it.

## ON THE CHANGES UNDERWAY IN SERVICE

### 4.14

On the whole, when asked about their improvements in the areas of equity, inclusion, and diversity, dance service organizations were more likely to cite examples of instances where their services had benefited specific under-served groups or individuals, rather than these systemic changes to their organizational values, culture, communication, practices, and services. This suggests that while dance service organizations have made improvements in diversity and inclusion, they are still a far way from equity.

Multiple service organizations support the dance sector in Canada. Each focuses on a particular aspect of the broader milieu. However, there is an underlying sense that services are being duplicated and concern that important and significant parts of the sector are not being represented in the activities of these numerous service organizations.

# Design Themes

Based on findings from the nine months of interviews and observations, any approach to service for dance needed to centre relationships among the various components of the dance system in order to support implementation and intra-sectoral cooperation.

Throughout the nine months, insights were presented and validated through online meetings open to all participants in the design process. The insights were augmented by the survey and interview research conducted by Wong and Doeser. Finally, the two-day retreat in Toronto, Ontario generated a large number of potential designs to consider and integrate. The core themes derived from the designs created during the two-day retreat are summarized here. We recommend that any future solutions generated through this process should acknowledge the themes below.

**Reciprocity at the heart:** Most models created and presented at the retreat focused on the relationships within the sector and with external bodies with an influence on the success of the sector. Relatedly, relationships were framed as both the solution and the problem. Low mobility in senior roles and the recurrence of patterns of behaviour made adapting to new conditions difficult. However, relationships would also be how new models could be instantiated and new works created and performed.

**Measurement burned in:** There is little excess capacity to measure the impact of work being done in dance, and even were there to be resources available, there are few approaches that are broadly satisfactory in capturing the impact of the work. For this reason, sketches tended to have measurement built into the operation of the system. In other words, the operation of the service structure generates the metrics that then inform its work and the needs of stakeholders responsible for its support.

**Membership implies responsibilities:** One of the key contradictions of the current ecosystem for dance is that resources are becoming scarcer yet greater numbers are seeking access to the service for dance. This suggests that distributive or needs-based approaches are inadequate. The engine to sustain dance in Canada will derive from the energy and generosity of those participating in the dance community. Service can then be understood as a means of catalyzing and scaling contributions and facilitating a marketplace for exchange.

**Transformation:** Service for dance, in almost all conceived designs, focused on improving the well-being of individuals, communities, and systems. Often, these improvements derived as part of a structure of support to realize creative ambitions of artists and collectives of artists.

**Services embody assumptions:** Traditional member service and even many newly presented services received mixed receptions. The belief here is that the types of services offered are a product of assumptions, principally colonial assumptions, about what is legitimate dance and what is therefore legitimate support for dance. Examples in this category include on-line support for reporting/management, shared office space, vouching, project management, creation subsidies, capacity building, risk capital, or even advice. This isn't to suggest that needs-based services are inappropriate, just that the service body should respond to needs in the dance community rather than make assumptions based on the service organization's interests or even that of its membership, as the memberships are products of decades of systematic exclusion.

**Co-creation at the Core:** Another theme that emerged across designs was a need to erase the distinction that separates the servers and the served. There was a consistent desire to address generously the false tension between leaders and the led. One way that this was made evident was a professed desire by both those working in dance and those leading dance service organizations to shift away from doing things that people have become good at doing toward work that aligns with intention but that may require new capacities, and in some cases, new faces.

# The Design

**We recommend the creation of an alternative marketplace for those that feel like existing structures are incapable or unwilling to help them achieve their creative ambitions.**

**We recommend financing this marketplace through contributions from activities that generate technological unemployment (artificial intelligence, automation) to both offset the negative implications of increased unemployment and to provide those excluded from economic life meaningful opportunities for cultural expression.**

Currently, there are more presentable dance works than presenting opportunities. Moreover, power is concentrated in the hands of a small few. Resources in support of professional dance are dwindling and a career in dance is increasingly defined by precarity.

What is required is a more liquid understanding of who is best served by dance. Stable work is becoming less available to more and more. Service for dance in Canada has an opportunity to both reflect these changes and prepare for a world defined by high levels of unemployment and increasing needs for avenues for cultural expression for those dislocated from economic activity.

The role of service in dance can be understood as more than solving problems. The Canadian Dance Assembly has an opportunity to create contexts where different approaches can be tested, new resources solicited to drive change, and new participants added to what is understood as the dance community.

Practically, the Canadian Dance Assembly would undertake three core activities:

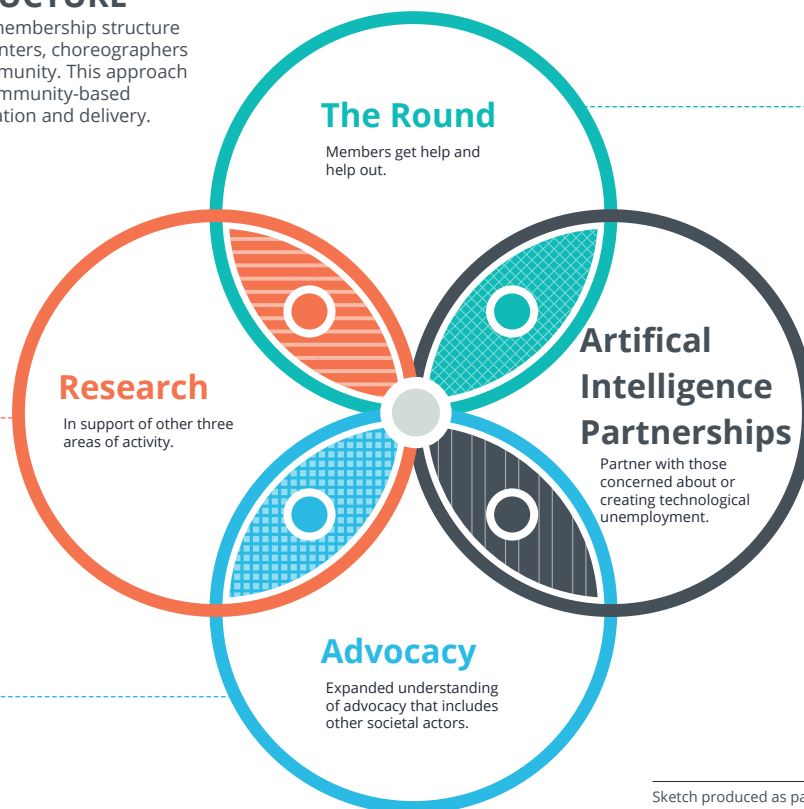
- Advocacy (including advocacy for dance as a means of buffering against broad unemployment and the depersonalization of economic life)
- Administration of a community-based service structure (self-managing) called, for our purposes, the Round (constant process of imagining and enacting the community)
- Research (to both inform the other two and measure their activities)

# LANDSLIDE: INNOVATIONS IN SERVICE FOR DANCE

## SKETCH OF STRUCTURE

We are proposing a shared membership structure that supports dancers, presenters, choreographers and others in the dance community. This approach represents an alternative, community-based approach to service identification and delivery.

- Service Delivery
- Validation
- External Stakeholders
- Financing



An alternative marketplace for those that feel like existing structures are incapable or unwilling to help them achieve their creative ambitions.



Artificial Intelligence partnerships, where any capital investment made in AI or automation is echoed by an investment in cultural expression, introduces new resources to the sector while addressing a higher-order societal concern (the need for ways to ensure that humans remain relevant and a buffer against a dehumanized economic system)



Research that focuses on role of culture in addressing broader societal trends and the efficacy of different approaches to service.



This would include advocacy for dance as a means of buffering against broad unemployment and the depersonalization of economic life.

Sketch produced as part of Decolonizing Canadian Dance project commissioned by the Canadian Dance Assembly (2017)

# Service Redesign: The Round

We are proposing a shared membership structure that supports dancers, presenters, choreographers and others in the dance community. The principal manifestation of this structure will be digital and on-line. A similar project addressing isolation for the elderly in the United Kingdom demonstrates the potential for this model, even within communities that are traditionally more averse to technological solutions.

The intent is to engender strong local and national social bonds while helping members take care of practical needs. This approach represents an alternative, community-based approach to service identification and delivery. The core features of the structure are:

- Dance service organizations work behind the scenes to offer a unified point of service for members
- Service delivery prioritizes peer support and mentoring to foster capabilities, reduce social isolation and limit unnecessary use of direct services
- Efficient allocation of public and private money as funds are allocated to advance projects only where contributions of the broader community are inadequate
- Focus on creative ambitions rather than deficits – requests are framed as support for work to be completed rather than deficits to be addressed.

The nature of the marketplace favors new collaborations and opens up new opportunities for participation in dance. The marketplace is addressing a growing social need for access to cultural expression. This higher-order need transcends dance and its existing audiences and will increase the social impact of the art form (seminars, residencies, children, prisons, communications, locations) while introducing new groups to dance.

Service for dance has come to privilege the preferences of the service institutions over the needs of current and potential users. The Round structure is intended to begin addressing this by letting the community dictate the types of services on offer and by reducing barriers to entry into the dance community.

The Round centres on relationships among elements of the dance ecology and the role of service in facilitating connections, matching pragmatic needs, lobbying for resources and support, and producing research to support the activities.

## The Round summary





### **How does this structure move toward decolonization?**

The types of services offered by service organizations and the approach to lobbying presently reflects long-held assumptions about what should be included in 'dance' and the types of services that contribute to that understanding. The Round allows a self-identified community to determine what services are appropriate based on real efforts to achieve creative ambitions. The Round bypasses many of the micro-transactions that reinforce colonial systems and assumptions. By making the Round explicitly about meeting the needs for cultural expression of those most dislocated by technological change, relative power of different dance traditions is equalized. All forms of dance that allow for meaningful participation will be necessary.

### **How does the Round work?**

The 'round' would be run as a social enterprise administered collectively by participating dance service organizations. The CDA would be the primary administrator of the service.

Members pay an annual subscription which also grants membership in all the participating service organizations. A dedicated 1-800 number and on-line chat channel are the primary points of contact. Requests to the Round can either be budgeted (the user has funds to support a solution) or unbudgeted (looking for general support).

The core services offered by the Round will necessarily evolve over time but initially would reflect those identified in consultation; a social calendar of opportunities to engage with others in the community; practical support, provided both by members themselves and by paid support within the member service organizations; and access to collaborators, mentors, presenters and other community members to support the advancement of creative ambitions.

Needs that are easily met will be quickly and cheaply addressed through the community. Harder to meet needs will require committed support by service organizations and others. Over time, real needs will become clear and systems optimized to reflect the evolving marketplace for dance.

Decisions are made locally, but over time, those decisions accumulate to describe a system and to make clear where attention is best applied.

The Round will achieve its objectives by building an alternative community outside of the established dance system and by attracting younger and marginalized professional, non-professional, and semi-professional members of the dance community. By addressing a broader social issue, new stakeholders, new funders, and new participants can be accessed, particularly those most-impacted by technological disruption.

The core theme in promotion is a shift from professional and needs-based services to an open and community-centered approach that builds new capabilities in members. To avoid reinforcing systemic patterns of inequality in dance, members are not evaluated based on their existing relationship to dance or the dance tradition to which they claim membership but rather their immediate needs and the capacity of the community to support them. Service meets members where they are and encourages social and practical relationships among members.

### What gets measured?

- Number of new relationships created because of the platform
- Participation levels (overall)
- Institutional engagement
- Matches made (total and success rates)
- New needs identified
- Qualitative evaluation of efficacy of solutions
- New resources committed to the model by external stakeholders

Rounds can be viewed locally, regionally, or nationally depending on the type of request and the appropriateness of different requests based on geographical or other factors. Filters and other identifiers will also allow geographic or disciplinary distinctions to be made and narrow the potential recipients of requests.

Any individual or group can come forward with a request for assistance around a creative ambition they are holding. Several outcomes are possible.

- Another member meets the request (budgeted or unbudgeted)
- Administrators in the Round (paid CDA staff and/or volunteers) intervene to connect that request with someone able to support that request (budgeted or unbudgeted)
- Administrators intervene to connect the request with someone able to support it. In cases where the budget available for a request is inadequate, Round, service organization, or other funds may be applied to subsidize the activity to allow for requests to be met.
- Participating service organizations meet the request directly or through a partner service organization
- Members or administrators offer directions or resources outside of the Round

### An Example

*Janice, a Manitoban artist, is looking to bring a developed piece to Southern Ontario. One show has already been booked in London, Ontario and adding additional shows strengthens an application for funding from the Canada Council and offsets costs.*

*A request for presenting venues is made to the Round (budgeted – conditional). Several presenters are members of the Round, and one non-traditional presenter (a small cultural festival) offers Janice a staging opportunity. The local festival has little experience staging dance pieces like Janice's.*

*The local festival then generates its own request for support from the Round in how to accommodate Janice at the event (unbudgeted). Advice is offered which leads to paid production support at the festival. Janice is still seeking at least one more presenting opportunity and no other matches appear.*

*A paid administrator of the Round, working for the CDA, forwards the request to a list of presenters, some*

*of whom are members of the Round, some of whom are not. One of these presenters is interested in Janice's piece and CDA introduces the two, outside of the Round, to make arrangements.*

*There is a small financial gap between Janice and the third presenter which could be met by a successful CCA application. The CDA applies a small amount of discretionary funds to make up the difference with Janice agreeing to repay the amount should the CCA travel application be successful.*

The multiple requests generated by this particular need become important data points for the kinds of needs that the broader milieu may have going forward. Presenting opportunities and mentoring to small festivals to accommodate different dance pieces feed into the next cycle of funding and resourcing. The system generates its own evidence which is useful internally and in terms of garnering support.

The types of requests possible in the Round are limitless, and the structure of the design needs to support a capacity-based approach to meeting creative ambitions. Rather than highlighting what is missing, the Round shines a light on what is necessary to meet creative goals. Examples might include support for reporting, shared space, opportunities for community and connectivity, mentorship (particularly outside of the particular discipline), vouching, liaising, project management, training, creation subsidies, risk capital, advice, and needs that we haven't begun to identify.

Essentially, we are proposing an alternative marketplace for individual dancers, presenters, choreographers, and others, which can provide a prototype for the future of dance, a substitute for those alienated from legacy structures, and a recipient of investment for those wanting to see new models.

### **Why this model?**

The following themes are central to the proposed sketch:

- New resources will require a contribution to a higher-order concern that transcends dance and the arts and that invites other partners into collaboration
- Regardless of mergers, those in the dance community need the perception of a single unified experience of service
- The model centres on relationships among elements of the dance ecology rather than solely meeting professional and pragmatic needs
- The model is predicated on generosity and the enabling of long-term networks of reciprocity and support
- The model is inspired by recent social innovations (Circle in the United Kingdom, described later) and Indigenous approaches to market-clearing activities (the various ceremonies organized under the pastiche of potlatch in the Pacific Northwest, for example)

Service for dance needs to create contexts for those in the dance milieu to support one another to realize creative ambitions and a sustainable livelihood. This doesn't mean that the dance milieu should be left to fend for itself. Additional resources from public and private sources are necessary and warranted. However,

how those resources are allocated, and the types of services delivered, need to derive from the experience of a more open and less professionalized framing of dance in Canada.

### **Isn't a case by case approach to addressing needs inefficient?**

Yes, at least initially the Round generates solutions on a case by case basis. However, the lack of efficiency is a strength of the design. Solutions offered by dance service organizations have become ossified over time and reflect old and unsuitable assumptions about what qualifies as culture. Service for dance may need a period of inefficiency to better start reflecting the new reality on the ground.

The model reflects a desire to see more co-creation among the servers and the served and to address generously the false tension between leaders and the led. A marketplace (a non-capitalist one) becomes an alternative way of allocating resources without unduly weighting the bias of those making determinations about service.

### **Is this just another service?**

The proposed design is intended as an alternative to mainstream service for dance. Individuals and institutions can and will exist in both systems. Precarity, weak resourcing of professional dance, and demographic shifts will increase the strains of traditional dance systems. New models will supplant legacy approaches, sometimes quite suddenly, like the metaphorical landslide that opened the retreat in Toronto. We believe that traditional service structures will either be forced to adapt to shifts innovated in the Round or will be replaced by the Round and other innovative approaches to service delivery. It is unlikely that the Round will be the final answer. However, the Round can serve as a prototype and evidence that different approaches are possible.

### **If this is open to everyone, then how can excellence be assessed?**

Until service better reflects the broader population then partitions need to be present to eliminate the temptation to privilege familiar or habitual patterns of service.

### **Who else is doing this?**

Participle, a service design firm in the UK, developed the Circle program and shared their outcomes in July 2014. Circle was developed as a means of addressing isolation and service delivery to elderly people and their families in Southwark, South London in 2007. The goal was to support, "members aged 50+ to build and sustain strong social bonds and take care of their practical needs". The initial Circle involved 250 older people and was intended to demonstrate the efficacy of focusing on capabilities rather than deficits in the provision of services. Circle was designed with national scale in mind and as of 2009 the Circle network hosted 5,000 members.

While the needs of members differ from those in the dance milieu, Circle demonstrates the power of an alternative community-based approach in meeting social goals, facilitating new connections and reducing unnecessary access to services. The London Circle closed in 2014 due to an inability to secure suitable funding or implement a sustainable business model. Other Circles continue to thrive, however, and offer ongoing cases on alternative approaches to service provision.

## How will this be paid for?

There is broad recognition of good intentions to address imbalances within the service ecosystem and acknowledgment of recent progress, but a residual skepticism about the ability to effect meaningful change in the future. Leadership and resources are seen as potential problem areas. Without the strategic thinking, capacity, and funding to deliver this change, it will be difficult to achieve. This is where the role of funders and policymakers will make a difference.

Dance does different things in different contexts. When considered as a professional, economic activity, it quickly becomes apparent that the inequalities of the underlying economic system only serve to exacerbate the inequalities among different forms of dance. Indeed, the various inequalities share their roots in colonialism—they are manifestations of the inequality of capitalism in different domains.

At its birth, capitalism represented a departure from prior systems in that production became “abstracted” from the intrinsic value of the activity. So, bakers no longer baked bread for the purposes of metabolic survival, but for indirect purposes related to survival, i.e. to generate the currency used to purchase the means for survival (to buy food from someone else who grew that food not only for personal consumption but also to sell for food, shelter, clothing, etc.).

As an economic system, capitalism—through the invisible hand and market forces—generates a “natural” hierarchy among economic actors. This hierarchy has emerged because of colonialism, technological might, and the concentration of wealth. Over centuries, as the capitalist model has played out, these forces (colonialism, technology, concentration of wealth) have led different actors to realize differing levels of economic productivity. By productivity, we refer to the concept in a purely physical and economic sense (who can bake the most bread in the least amount of time with the fewest and cheapest resources).

The actors who have driven capitalism the longest have had the most time to reap the greatest benefits of the technological advances and economic efficiencies made possible by capitalism; and the accumulation of those benefits have made domination of less economically productive and technologically advanced actors possible. It should be noted that this trend has only been offset by counter-movements such as the human rights movement that argues that every person enjoys certain inalienable rights regardless of that person’s level of economic productivity.

Because capitalism, through the market economy, rewards the most economically productive actors, white, European males have risen to the top of the economic hierarchy. And those initial advantages become a self-reinforcing loop as capital gains accumulate. Europe is the origin of capitalism, and so Europeans have historically excelled in the capitalist system. Historically, physical brawn was an important factor in economic productivity. As such, males have enjoyed an economic advantage in a system that rewards productivity.

Is it no wonder then that Canadian dance struggles for funding, and that the more commercially productive forms of dance like ballet are the forms that tie their cultural roots to Europe and the economic actors who can subsidize its continued practice? Is it no wonder then that within the Canadian dance industry, non-European forms of dance struggle for mere survival even on a voluntary, non-professional basis? Is it no wonder that the male-dominated roles within Canadian dance are remunerated at a higher rate?

For these reasons, we argue that decolonizing dance (including moving away from a capitalist-funded dance

industry) must entail a move away from the incremental approaches of “diversifying” Canadian dance by flattening the hierarchy of forms and dancers; or creating “non-colonial” spaces by carving out safe spaces within the hierarchy. Instead, we argue for a financing model that disrupts the very forces that create hierarchy in the first place.

We suggest harnessing the tectonic forces disrupting capitalism as it has been practiced to date to fuel Canadian dance’s transformation. Among these forces is automation and the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI). A recent UN report highlights the potential short-term impacts of technological disruption on labour markets. “New technologies are contributing to increasing inequalities – both between different groups of workers and between labour and firm owners. While they do not cause widespread loss of jobs, they do change the demand for certain skills and contribute to a shift towards more flexible but precarious “contingent work” arrangements.”

There is increasing recognition that the labour disruptions of artificial intelligence and automation will need to be addressed. Over time, large numbers (60% by some estimates) of unemployed or underemployed individuals present real social and economic risks. Living wage projects, such as those launched by the Silicon Valley technology incubator, Y Combinator, show a real commitment to getting ahead of these disruptive impacts.

These forces render moot the historical struggle between labour and capital and now raise the question of the struggle between human and non-human. As our economic system and productivity become predicated on a very narrow sliver of humans who control the software and hardwares that produce our food, shelter, clothing, and so on, the question becomes what do humans do? What are they good for? What value do they offer? Getting past the obvious answer that humans are valuable intrinsically and not just as economic actors, there is another perhaps surprising answer: they are valuable in that they keep our human systems human.

Dance, as a form of human expression, becomes the response and antidote to an increasingly non-human economic system. It offers the opportunity to re-humanize daily life, to make sense of the dizzying changes and disruption of a planetary economic system that groans under the weight of unsustainable system pressures of climate change, mass migration, cultural clashes resulting from globalization, and conflict involving the threat of nuclear weapons.

Dance offers value to the economic system and those actors who push for greater investment in non-human economic productivity. Large corporations, Silicon Valley, governments pushing for increased economic competitiveness all need a response to legitimate concerns that they are squeezing humans out of the human economy.

Our response is to harness its energy to create new sources of financing for Canadian dance that integrates actors from different sectors of society in common purpose.

# Process



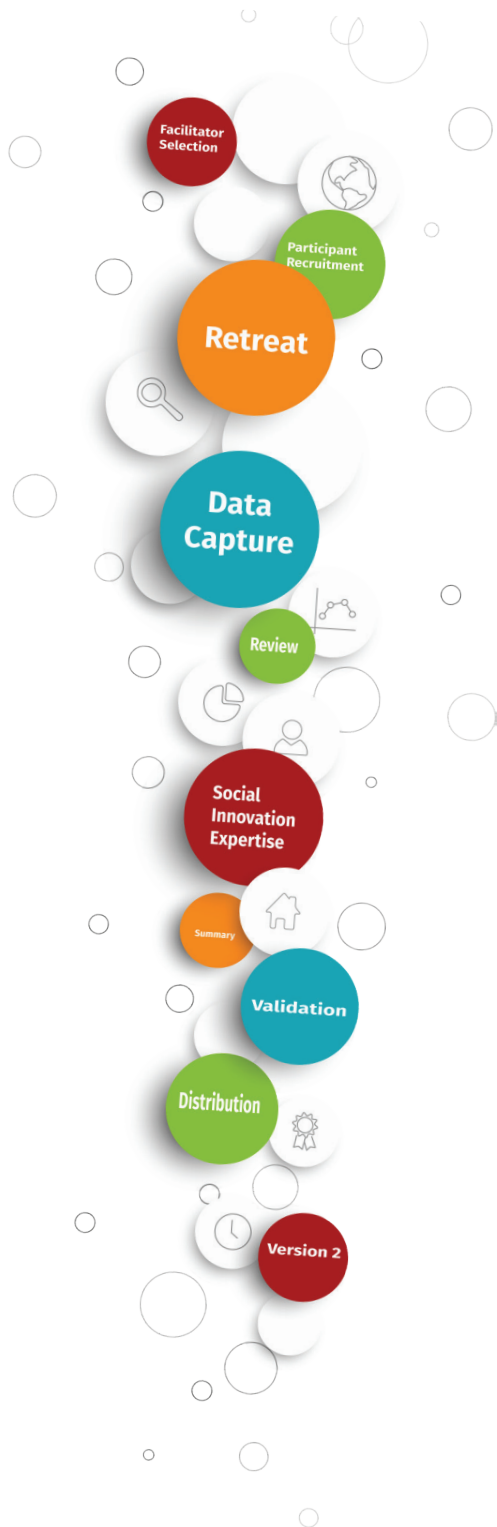
The Decolonizing Canadian Dance project applied a process of systemic intervention and service design. Six months of interviews and observations were interpreted through collective feedback sessions and other sense making activities. These interpretations were consolidated into a set of insights which informed the selection of participants and the framing of activities for a 2-day retreat where different elements of the dance ecology were convened to begin mapping out opportunities and rough sketches of models for service for dance.

Most innovation takes place within the frame of the existing system. That means that although solutions may be innovative, they often serve to bolster an approach that is already out of date – they react to conditions, not to root causes. Focusing on users allows us to step outside the frame of the existing power structure and imagine radically new models.

For example, an early intention to support mergers of dance service organizations represented a line of thinking that inadvertently reinforced the unnatural privileges of ballet and Western contemporary dance. Overwhelmingly, small dance service organizations were oriented to the needs of ballet and Western contemporary dance. Mergers simply optimize the delivery of service to the same narrow cross-section of the dance community. The approach would have reacted to conditions rather than stepping back and incorporating a strategy of decentering colonial assumptions about dance.

Service design is a process to look at problems from the point of view of the user, not the priorities of the system, institution or organization. Service designers understand people in context to understand their complex experiences, needs and wishes, and then integrate and champion those needs through the design process. Over 100 interviews were conducted with various stakeholders within the dance milieu in order to understand their lived experience of dance systems and to generate responses to insights generated through previous phases of exploration.

The primary goal has been to understand and explain national service in dance while describing a future structure for service that might better serve the needs of the broad dance ecology.



However, this process embodies reflexivity, as the process of explanation refers to and disturbs the entity under examination. The system is changed through the process of understanding it. The nine months of observations and collective sense making was not a linear process of description and design. Rather, the community engaged in a process of ongoing exploration that generated responses that informed (and will continue to inform) the next 'loop' of action.

Furthermore, the process supported deliberate collaboration and solutions-oriented thinking while involving new voices and perspectives in the creative process. Evaluation of interpretations occurred collectively. The retreat was explicitly an effort in design, rather than dialogue. An early commitment was made to ensure that a majority of participants in the retreat identified as people of colour and that a quarter of participants identified as belonging to one or several Indigenous communities.

Most importantly, the project was predicated on the belief that organizations can learn not only from distress and pressure from outside, but also proactively, by actively and creatively transforming themselves and their respective environments.

Areas for process improvement exist. Disability and integrated arts were under-represented in both the observation phase and in the retreat. Regional discrepancies were clear, with over-representation from Ontario and under-representation from rural and Northern communities.



# Profiles



**Canadian Dance Assembly**  
**L'Assemblée canadienne de la danse**

## The Sponsor

The Canadian Dance Assembly (CDA) is the voice of the professional dance sector in Canada and promotes a healthy, sustainable environment in which professional dance practice can grow and thrive. CDA cultivates a strong national voice for Canadian professional dance and supports the development of resources for this field of artistic expression. Through conferences, workshops, and networking events they connect the dance community from coast to coast, building a cohesive and dynamic milieu.

## The Retreat

The retreat was hosted at the Old Mill in Toronto, Ontario, Canada on September 7th and 8th, 2017. Participation was by invitation and included a range of participants from across the country and the dance milieu. More than half of the attendees identified as people of colour and 1/4 of attendees identified as Indigenous.

The stated intention of the two days was to generate several potential models for service in dance going forward.

The primary questions provided by the Canadian Dance Assembly to be addressed at the event were:

1. Should the CDA continue to exist or what does a national service organization for dance look like?
2. How can we move beyond scarcity to a place of strength?
3. What would partnership look like?
4. How do we best serve the needs of individuals vs. organizations ?

The process was supported by facilitators and designers from Intervene Design. Elder Duke Redbird, Anishinaabe Elder and wisdom keeper, offered both the opening keynote and ongoing support and guidance through the process. Artists invited to participate received an honorarium in recognition of their contribution of time and energy.

“Respondents reported that this bias is reflective of the hierarchy of dance forms within the sector and that contemporary/modern dance and ballet form the aesthetic ideals in relation to which all other dance forms have to position themselves. They believed that dance service organizations further perpetuate this hierarchy by privileging the needs of contemporary/modern dance and ballet in their service offerings”.

- Doeser and Wong

# Conclusion

Resource scarcity and the privileging of theatrical dance traditions has systemically excluded large numbers of dancers and dance organizations from access to supports and service. The institutions responsible for supporting and serving the sector are built on colonial assumptions. Most attempts at developing programs to serve communities of colour assume that inclusivity and access into existing systems are desirable endpoints. Others value self-determination, but in restricted areas of the larger system.

This document offers a first sketch of a structural change in service for dance that differs from approaches that favour inclusivity or localized programmatic solutions. A radical shift is proposed that involves the creation of an alternative marketplace driven by reciprocity and relationship building. Current service offers in dance reflect long-held assumptions about what should be included in 'dance' and the types of services that contribute to that understanding. The Round allows anyone that identifies with dance, and not necessarily dance as an art-form, to express their creative ambitions and receive support. The Round would eliminate the routines of existing service organizations that reinforce colonial systems and assumptions.

We recommend financing this marketplace through contributions from activities that generate technological unemployment (artificial intelligence, automation) to both offset the negative implications of increased unemployment and to provide those excluded from economic life meaningful opportunities for cultural expression. There is a long history of transferring wealth from economic actors causing dislocation to those affected by those dislocations. Canada's energy and real estate sectors offer current evidence of this activity.

This document offers a potential design for service in dance but is not final.

Designs are social entities and a way to put forward a tentative concept. This should be the first of many attempts to describe a future for service in dance in Canada.

Sketches are early design methods that are best suited to demonstrate potential capabilities and to inspire refinements, questions, and responses. Imagining the model outlined below as the final solution is not the intention. The sketch is disposable yet offers opportunities to imagine new approaches and to incorporate features or capabilities that may be suitable for future iterations.

Through several sketches, we can offer a range of representations that can be considered, compared, and integrated.

Your feedback and engagement with the ideas herein will be critical to shaping a possible future for service in dance in Canada.

# Appendix : Insights

Face to face and virtual interviews with over 100 members of the dance ecosystem supported the creation of several interpretations. These interpretations were shared broadly, and several feedback sessions convened to validate and interrogate the interpretations. Several interpretations provided critical insights that informed both subsequent phases of inquiry as well as the structure of the retreat in Toronto. The guiding insights are enumerated below:

## 1. Walking the Talk

There is a consensus that dance institutions and dance service need to be more inclusive and representative of the broader Canadian population. However, there is some ground to cover between declaring this view and an individual or institution's ability or capacity to change day-to-day activities to advance this idea. The focus will need to be on changing systemic routines rather than on changing mindsets.

## 2. Dance Education Alienates

The economics and historical development of dance studios reinforces the separation between Western forms and diasporic dance approaches. Dance is often a part of young people's individual, family and community identity but dance studios habitually exclude these identities as wrong or inappropriate . A successful point of view for Canadian dance will require intersection, connection, and co-creation and this is best supported through dance education .

## 3. Changing How We Do Things

The sense of exclusion in dance is a product of thousands of micro-decisions which are often invisible to the decision makers. The design of spaces, the use of language in advertising, the hiring decisions made internally and in external contracts suggest a bias toward Western, able-bodied forms. Addressing these local decisions rather than broad conceptual arguments is more likely to generate meaningful systemic shifts.

## 4. People Need to Eat

Ultimately, service for the dance sector needs to create contexts where those committed to dance can reasonably aspire to make their living in dance. A decolonizing strategy will make it more difficult for existing professionals to acquire necessary resources without a correlate increase in the perceived value created by the Canadian dance sector.

## 5. Inclusion Means New Audiences

The general agreement that the sector needs to be more inclusive is incompatible with a mindset of scarcity around resources and audiences. Greater participation in dance presenting and performance places greater strains on existing public money yet few are talking about new models of engagement with dance audiences and publics.

## 6. What is Decolonization

The United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization describes decolonization as a process of increasing self-determination by colonized people. Others understand decolonization as the decentralizing

of authority to support multiple forms of expression. Our process has generally leaned toward the latter interpretation. However, a collective willingness to pursue a particular interpretation of decolonization, or to learn about multiple interpretations and the value of holding them in relation to each other, will be critical for successful implementation.

## 7. More than Money

Currently, money is implicitly accepted as the determiner of what qualifies as professional or amateur dance. Many argue that more than money is capable of qualifying culture. As there is a long history of financially favoring Western European forms, a financial metric over-values disciplines that have been traditionally privileged.

## 8. This is Still about Mergers

Decolonization is the frame by which service will be understood. The core objective of this process – to consolidate and improve service for dance - remains central. No one is trying to do “everything for everyone” but we need to be critical about what structures exist and to whose benefit. The opportunity is to renew systems to align with new attitudes and the world we live in.

## 9. Self-Determination

The ultimate objective of this process should be a structure for service that supports full ownership of cultural life within communities. “Diversity” alone is an inadequate objective if the fundamental assumptions about what qualifies as professional dance remain unexamined.

## 10. The ‘Excellence’ Contention

Some have expressed concern that decentralization and self-governance of dance communities will weaken the quality and excellence of the work. Standards of adjudication allow for high-quality work to be advanced and decentralized structures make excellence harder to find and share.

## 11. Regional Differences

There is some anxiety that an evolution of service for dance will exacerbate the gap between ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’ regionally and between rural and urban communities. Attention in dance focuses on Vancouver, Montreal, and Toronto and self-determination does little to shift the focus away from these centres. We must take care to avoid inflating local interests with national interests and repeating past mistakes in new directions.

## 12. The Role of Presenters

Presenters play an important role in determining what work is supported and celebrated. Many describe an adversarial quality to relationships between creators and presenters. When asked to project future trends, some see presenters being forced to adapt to more diverse audiences, others see digital presenting disintermediating live presentation, and others feel that change in attitudes in presenting will only slowly evolve.

### 13. Prototype to Learn

We need to understand decolonization as a direction, rather than as an end. The work underway will suggest opportunities to assess and apply new approaches to service from which we can collectively learn. Some of these will be administered by existing arts service organizations, but many will be owned by communities and supported elsewhere. A framework for evaluation will allow us to better understand what to look for. A communication strategy can ensure that learning is shared.

### 14. Creating Power

Our task is not to determine where to place power, necessarily, but rather how to develop power and ensure that it is sustained. Questions of power and position are central to service in dance. Self-determination for Indigenous people and the dismantling of systems that privilege colonial understanding and ideas are ultimately questions of power. However, understanding this work as zero-sum is misleading and likely to slow progress.

### 15. Problems of Scale

Currently, service in the arts doesn't scale easily. Dance service organizations are oriented to meet the unmet needs of professional members directly or indirectly. Scale will require networks that are supported by member interactions rather than direct service interventions. This is a fundamental rethinking for dance service organizations and existing systems are not structured to support the catalyzing of support across larger numbers and struggle even at current levels of intensity. Any significant shift in how service is understood will be disruptive to current recipients and organizations.

### 16. Problems of Duration

There is a natural tendency to understand service in the short term. Grants, events, and employment contracts draw attention to annual cycles or shorter. However, the necessary transitions required to re-imagine service for dance must look back to a longer history of dance and movement as cultural expression and forward to the implications for future generations of the choices made now. Unfortunately, systems are not incentivized to support long-term thinking in planning or design. New incentives must be introduced to support different time frames for action.

### 17. Who Belongs?

All lines that delineate inclusion in and exclusion from eligibility for service are fundamentally arbitrary. Over time, arbitrary lines become solidified and systems are set up that support the arbitrary lines that have been drawn. Redrawing lines or eliminating them altogether requires not just an act of will, but the dismantling of systems that identify with old borders and boundaries. A desire for new models is meaningless unless new patterns of relationships are established that reflect a new understanding of participation.

**WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE IN OUR TWO DAYS TOGETHER?**

- I have no idea
- Listening without trying to conform language and insights to a common way of interpreting dance.
- Success in our two days together would be the overall sense of hope for the future of dance in Canada and ideas on how we might support the art form and its dance artists.
- I never try to define success before I reach it. It doesn't have a look. So, I suppose if we process something by the end of our two days, then we are having some success.
- A shared sense of urgency in change making, a desire to work together and a vocabulary for collectively advancing ideas.
- Trust. Joy. Release.

**WHAT DO WE KNOW TO BE TRUE ABOUT DANCE IN CANADA?**

- Artistic, manager and presenter leaders are incapable of agreement on much at all
- I know that it is incredibly difficult to summarize all of dance in Canada into one thought, or one idea.
- That it is evolving
- Canada has a rich and growing cultural heritage.
- Canadian dance is seen as white contemporary and Euro-centric in nature. Varying genres / forms are for a lack of better terminology placed in the "otherness" that Edward Said mentions in academia. Challenge becomes what defines Canadian dance? Is it dance created in the country?
- It is vibrant, diverse, plentiful... it is happening in venues of all shapes and sizes, indoors and out...it is embracing professionally trained movers and those who are not...its definition has expanded significantly in the last decades...it is horribly under-resourced as an art practise but there are a number of agencies looking to address this.

**WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE TO BE TRUE ABOUT DANCE IN CANADA?**

- The potential if we can just work together
- The community exists in silos - geographic, cultural, stylistic and, in some areas, generational.
- Forms newer to the Canadian dance scene (i.e.: Hip-Hop) are attracting new/ younger audiences to dance; whereas, forms such as ballet are suffering from aging audiences.
- Our funding models need to move beyond the Massey Commission created over 50 years ago (and political models).
- It is defined in a multitude of ways, it is often the art form leading the charge to cross-over work, fusion, melding different styles ...
- There are different purposes and significance for Indigenous dance that artists are working with

### WHAT DO YOU WISH WERE TRUE ABOUT DANCE IN CANADA?

- I can't help but to wish for a changed past, for less loss, and less disillusionment. I wish that we could offer one another a means to overcome and heal this past through shared embodied practices and shared vision.
- That it was taught to my children in school.
- I wish it were more accessible.
- That we could dispose of the adage that to be an artist is to be poor. We need to focus on paying dancers a living wage or agree that it cannot be a career and accept that it must be considered a pleasure activity.
- I wish there was a strong, widely supported (including within the province of Quebec) national organization to represent the interests of the dance sector at the federal government level and in the national funding conversation.
- More work needs to be done to create bridges across our wide expanse of land and lake to ensure more opportunities for presentation, collaboration, and knowledge exchange between regions.
- That Bharatanatyam bells were just as synonymous with dance as pointe shoes (and for that metaphor to be expanded out in mind-blowing ways)
- Wish we had more support for work in the education field, more professional studios to create in, that the government would continue to endorse artistic endeavours

### WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE IS NO LONGER TRUE ABOUT DANCE IN CANADA?

- We are no longer living in the shadow of public policy that pitted the arts against humanity, instead, we have a government in place who are willing to fund the arts like never before. Now is the time to create unity among disparate groups in order to ensure the most resources are provided to the most number of groups.
- That there is no mass audience for dance that is not ballet.
- We also recognize that meeting one's creative ambitions means being confronted by mentorship opportunities that are new and potentially unsettling.

