# A HISTORY OF AUSTIN BALLET THEATRE AT THE ARMADILLO WORLD HEADQUARTERS

A DISSERTATION

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BY

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DEDICATION

To my magical daughters, Gwendolyn and Genevieve.
Thank you for all the hugs.
May you always live life to the fullest.

To all of the voices who could not be included.

And, to Stanley, standing in the wings. “My dear, you did it!”

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this qualitative historical inquiry is to investigate the performances of Austin Ballet Theatre at the Armadillo World Headquarters in Austin, TX from 1972 to 1980. Austin Ballet Theatre was an amateur ballet company performing classical and contemporary works at the Armadillo World Headquarters, a psychedelic music club. In addition to allowing for the composition of a historiography of this unusual pairing, the dissertation research results in multiple insights into an important, although largely unknown, period of cultural history in the Austin community. It also highlights how connections among diverse groups of people and practices not only iterated through the situation of practice then but continue to influence historical narratives about the ballet and how it is remembered.

The research was conducted using an oral history methodology with 19 participants representing a variety of perspectives on these ballet performances. These interviewees included dancers, mothers of the dancers, visual artists for both the ballet and the Armadillo, Armadillo staff, the lighting designer for the ballet, a dance critic for the newspaper, and audience members. Some documents, mostly newspaper reviews and

articles along with playbills and broadsides, also emerged from the archives of the Austin History Center and the dancers' private collections.

The use of open-ended oral history methods resulted in a constellation of analytical themes surrounding what the participants identified as the most important aspects of this history: learning through performing, and making ballet accessible to the community. Further investigation of these themes resulted in the questioning of socio-cultural frames of ballet and how Austin Ballet Theatre's practices functioned for dancers and audiences in this time and place.

The dissertation also investigates the narrative, discursive condition of history composition through the creation of a historiographic metafiction about Austin Ballet Theatre at the Armadillo World Headquarters. The metafiction, included as an appendix, provides an alternative way of experiencing the data towards fulfilling the research purpose of representing the multi-layered processes of qualitative historical inquiry.

This research therefore supports a world-making view of dance practices and considers how such a perspective impacts historical narratives.

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# CHAPTER I

# INTRODUCTION

## Background: From Oral History

This dissertation arose from a chance comment made during an interview. As a volunteer with the Austin History Center recording oral histories with local dancers, I was interviewing Kate Warren at her home in Austin, Texas, about her extensive life experiences in modern dance. She was talking about something else entirely when she said, as an aside, "That was when Austin Ballet Theatre was performing at the Armadillo."[1] As a native Austinite, that statement stunned me. Ballet? At the Armadillo?

Perhaps no institution is more infamous in the public history of Austin than the legendary, psychedelic music hall called the Armadillo World Headquarters (AWHQ), a venue which was also the inspiration for the long-running PBS show *Austin City Limits*. In business from 1972 to 1980 before being razed to the ground to become a parking lot, the Armadillo remains a community icon for a city that builds its cultural identity in part on the slogans "Live Music Capital of the World" and "Keep Austin Weird." The commemorative AWHQ website describes the club as follows:

> The room held about 1,500 people, most of whom would just sit on the big floor in front of the stage covered with sections of carpet pieced together. The place caught on fairly quickly as the little haven where the anti-establishment types could feel at home, and develop what was becoming their hedonistic music/pot/beer-based lifestyle.[2]

Despite the AWHQ's legendary status as a music venue, however, one aspect of its history remains virtually unknown and uninvestigated: the ongoing presentation of ballet. Austin Ballet Theatre (ABT, and the company enjoyed the humor in sharing that acronym with the prestigious American Ballet Theatre) was a local, amateur company that performed concerts of mixed classical and contemporary ballet repertory almost every month for eight years to enthusiastic audiences of 1000 to 1200 people. The successful pairing of the two organizations seems as unlikely as it is unexpected. What may have been going on during these regular performances of a ballet company at a venue infamous for drugs, "outlaw country" music, and psychedelia?

My initial reconnaissance into the history of Austin Ballet Theatre at the Armadillo turned up very little documentation. The one article that materialized was written in 1973 and appeared in the magazine *Texas Monthly.* The author of that article, Dr. Suzanne Shelton Buckley (under her maiden name, Shelton), also intrigued me, because her biography of dancer Ruth St. Denis sat five feet away on my bookshelf. Buckley's magazine article, "Armadillos in Toe Shoes," was full of both fascinating descriptions and informed insights into the utter uniqueness of the ABT dance phenomenon. Her article confirmed my suspicions that this history had multiple dimensions of interest, including the diversity of the crowds, the glamorous background of ABT's director Stanley Hall, and the typical run on the bar for beer and nachos before the opening ballet. Given the disappearing nature of this history along with the lack of textual documentation, the time seemed to be fortuitous for an oral history research project from which details of this unique pairing of beer and ballet could reemerge.

## Statement of the Research Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative historical inquiry is to investigate the performances of Austin Ballet Theatre at the Armadillo World Headquarters in Austin, TX from 1972 to 1980. In addition to allowing for the composition of a historiography of these events, the dissertation research results in multiple insights into an important—but almost lost—period of cultural history in the Austin community. It also highlights how connections among diverse groups of people and practices not only iterated through the situation of practice then but continue to influence historical narratives about the ballet and how it is remembered.

This inquiry is guided by the following research questions:

- What information can be found about the Austin Ballet Theatre and its founder and director, Stanley Hall? How was this historical record formed and by whom? What information can be found about the Armadillo World Headquarters with respect to the ballet? How was this historical record formed and by whom?

- Through their oral history stories, how do research participants describe what it was like to be involved in the performances of the Austin Ballet Theatre at the Armadillo World Headquarters?

- How do the participants describe the contexts of the performances as they experienced them in the past? What connections and meanings do they associate with these events? How do participants describe their experiences in terms of personal, social, and cultural relationships?

- How do the research participants describe what happened when the ballet began to perform at the Armadillo? How do the participants describe the impact of these events on themselves and the community? How do the participants describe what happened when the Armadillo World Headquarters closed? How do the participants describe the impact of this event on themselves and the community?

- How do these stories create a unique image of the ballet world in Austin, Texas—a world that could only be experienced in a particular place and time? To what

extent might the concept of "only in Austin" have meaning related to these events? How do these stories affect how the history of this time period is constructed, questioned, remembered, and reimagined?

## The Meaning of Meaning

Because I often refer to the concept of *meaning* in my research purpose and inquiry, I will define this term within the research context. The quest for meaning—or how people feel a sense of meaning and how that, in turn, functions in their lives—is a key feature of qualitative research in general. Research theorist Sharan Merriam summarizes such an approach: "Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences."[3] Merriam further defines *meaning* as "how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world."[4] Educational theorist Elliot Eisner agrees, adding that the "facts never speak for themselves."[5] Eisner posits that opening up facts to meaning involves relationships between people and their surroundings: other people, the environment, history, and culture.[6] Thus, although Eisner concedes that a definition of the word *meaning* is elusive, meaning itself "still counts" within a qualitative research approach.[7]

## Overview of the Scope of the Study

The data for this historical research were collected mainly through oral history methodology. The research design included interviewing selected participants and conducting archival research in many different settings. Nineteen people who were involved with Austin Ballet Theatre at the Armadillo World Headquarters in some capacity were interviewed. I attempted, as much as possible, to include interviewees who

represented a wide variety of types of participation, such as dancers, Armadillo staff, and audience members. In addition to oral history interviewing, I scoured available archival documentation about Austin Ballet Theatre and the Armadillo World Headquarters, and I found new documentation in dancers' scrapbooks. Analysis of these data sources, which is described in Chapter II: Methodology, led to the creation of a historiography of ABT. In addition, the themes that arose from the data developed into lines of inquiry that connected this dissertation to the work of other scholars in history, dance, and performance studies.

## Importance of the Study

Dance historian Alexandra Carter writes that activities or periods of time that "don't fall neatly under prescribed labels don't fall anywhere at all."[8] Along these lines, a gap in knowledge exists about the history of Austin Ballet Theatre at the Armadillo: music scholars investigating the Armadillo World Headquarters do not know how to address ballet, and ballet scholars tend not to look at "cosmic cowboy" music clubs. This dissertation addresses the discursive problem that Carter identifies by building a historical inquiry for one of those activities and periods of time. Through the lens of a research purpose that focuses on how participants describe their experiences rather than one defined by discipline, this historical inquiry creates its own connections in the spirit of grounded theory.

The research comes at a crucial time for data gathering and generation. The events of the study began just over 40 years ago, so while the interviewing of some of the participants remains achievable now, some of these individuals are entering the later

stages of their lives. Also, the documents and photographs related to Austin Ballet Theatre have largely remained in private collections. The attention brought by historical research has prevented these sources from eventually disappearing, the impact of which is discussed further in Chapter II.

This dissertation makes significant contributions to several arenas. On a community level, the research reintroduces the history of ABT to public conversations through generating and archiving oral histories for the public record. In doing so, the study revitalizes an awareness of the importance of dance to the public history and cultural identity of Austin. The impact of conducting interviews has already changed how the city's cultural legacies are remembered. For example, as a direct result of this research, Stanley Hall, the founder of ABT, was inducted into the Austin Arts Hall of Fame in 2013—almost 20 years after his death.[9]

In addition, this study has implications beyond Austin with regard to how the themes that emerged from the data may resonate across disciplines. In Chapter IV, when the dancers describe learning to perform through performing, the insights and theorizing connected with those experiences may prove helpful not only for dance and performance studies but also because they illustrate the educational praxis of "learning by doing." The theme of audience behaviors, which is discussed in Chapter V, challenges sociocultural assumptions about art and access to art in a way that has relevance for art theory as well as for audiencing, cultural studies, and sociology.

This study foregrounds a unique iteration of dance practice to demonstrate how such practices emerge in relation to their situations of action; in other words, all dance is

local. Historical inquiry that focuses on experience and how dancing functions—within an individual, a group, or a community—has implications that undermine modernist narratives of evaluation. Such inquiry may activate the potentials inherent in multiplicity by activating new centers for dance to iterate in the past, the present, and the future.

## Structure

### Chapter Organization

Following the introduction, Chapter II covers the oral history methodology, research design, methods, analysis, representation, and ethical concerns related to this research. Chapter III provides a succinct historiography of Austin Ballet Theatre at the Armadillo World Headquarters as well as a historical framework for situating the data chapters. The next chapters investigate two themes identified by participants as being "the most important to know" about these events: Chapter IV focuses on the dancers and the significance of performing frequently, and Chapter V focuses on audiences and how ABT brought ballet "to the people." Chapter VI explores why ballet at a beer hall seems so incongruous by exploring a binary of "high culture" versus "low culture" operating in the narratives of this history. Chapter VII identifies the connections that emerged from the data regarding how ABT at the Armadillo relates to a specific context of time and place: Austin, Texas, during the 1970s. Finally, Chapter VIII summarizes the questions and considerations that this study raises with regard to dance, culture, and history.

The Appendices

**Appendix A: Oral History Narrators**

Because I refer to the 19 interviewees—or narrators—often, it may be difficult to keep track of who they are. Therefore, Appendix A is a reference list of the oral history narrators in this study which provides a little background information about each of them. Readers can refer to this list as necessary to situate the voices of the data.

**Appendix B: Photographs**

This appendix provides a selection of photographs to illustrate and support the text. These images are referred to within the text.

Appendix C is a copy of the acceptance letter from Texas Woman University's Institutional Review Board.

**Appendix D: Historiographic Metafiction**

This section presents the most experimental writing of the dissertation. Appendix D is a work of historiographic metafiction entitled "A Typical Day for Austin Ballet Theatre at the Armadillo World Headquarters." An explanation of this short story, along with its justification and the scholarship behind historiographic metafiction, is provided in Chapter II: Methodology. The purpose of this fictional work is to provide an alternative historiographic platform that brings forward multiple experiences of what "a typical day" was like when Austin Ballet Theatre performed at the Armadillo.

Readers may read "A Typical Day…" at any point during their reading of the dissertation: before, during, or after reading the more traditional chapters. In this way, the story becomes an interactive, paratextual device through which readers can choose how

to generate their experience of the dissertation text. When read after this introductory chapter but *before* the other chapters of the dissertation, "A Typical Day…" introduces the oral history narrators who were interviewed for this research, the AWHQ as the space where it all happened, and many details that inform the study in narrative form. Hopefully, this will provide readers with a sense of recognition when they encounter the data in the dissertation chapters proper. Likewise, a similar sense of recognition may occur when readers choose to read "A Typical Day…" *after* reading the other chapters. In that situation, the story serves as a culminating textual performance in which the data is choreographed.

Historiographic metafiction purposely reminds the reader of its fictive nature through various devices of going "meta": revealing itself as a construction. Through being both "not" the way it was and "not *not*" the way it was, the text demonstrates a "secondness" or doubleness that characterizes a site of performance, as proposed by theatre scholar Richard Schechner.[10] The relationships between the more conventionally written historiography of Chapter III and the historiographic metafiction of "A Typical Day…" demonstrate the problematic nature of historical knowledges and their representation.

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[1] Kate Warren, interview by author, Austin, TX, December 16, 2009. All interview quotes in this dissertation are transcribed as said unless otherwise indicated, including any grammatical errors.
[2] Rush Evans, "The Decade of the Dillo," Armadillo World Headquarters, accessed April 12, 2011, http://www.awhq.com/info.htm.
[3] Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation* (Indianapolis, IN: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 3.
[4] Ibid, 13.

[5] Elliot W. Eisner, *The Enlightened Eye: Qualitative Inquiry and the Enhancement of Educational Practice* (New York: Macmillan, 1991), 39.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid, 35.
[8] Alexandra Carter, *Rethinking Dance History: A Reader* (London; New York: Routledge, 2004), 11.
[9] Robert Faires, "Austin Arts Hall of Fame: Class of 2013," *Austin Chronicle*, May 3, 2013, accessed June 23, 2016, http://www.austinchronicle.com/arts/2013-05-03/austin-arts-hall-of-fame-class-of-2013/.
[10] Richard Schechner, *Between Theater & Anthropology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 37.

# CHAPTER II

# METHODOLOGY

> History so-called is not "what happened" but what has been constructed out of events, memories, records: all shaped by the worldview of whoever—individually or collectively—is encoding (and performing) history. To "make history" is not to do something but to do something with what has been done.
>
> —Richard Schechner, theatre scholar[1]

In this chapter, I outline and summarize the structure of the research process used in this inquiry. I present this information in the form of an inverted triangle, from the bigger picture to procedures specific to this dissertation. The more general philosophy of the research approach informed the research design, which in turn shaped the data collection, analytical strategies, and final presentation. Throughout, I consider some of the choices I made that shape the research and its representation in writing. The second half of this chapter continues this reflection on the interplay between historical inquiry and its textual representation by providing a justification for the fictional story entitled "A Typical Day for Austin Ballet Theatre at the Armadillo World Headquarters." This fictional account accompanies the dissertation in an appendix.

## Toward a Research Approach

In her text *Situational Analysis: Grounded Theory Past the Postmodern Turn*, qualitative researcher Adele Clarke identifies remnants of modernist metanarrative influences in how research is analyzed.[2] To get past this persistence, Clarke reconsiders sites of research as "situations." Situations, as theorized by Clarke, emphasize ever-

inclusive, generative relationships of connection that are always in the process of becoming. Clarke's purpose is to push grounded theory methodologies around the "postmodern turn" to embrace differences and multiplicities or, rather, assume a generative condition of multiplicities.[3] She approaches the definition of the term *situation* through the intersections of many scholarly voices; however, in accordance with the subject, she never reaches a single definition. Research into "the situation of action" analyzes data *as* the process of research. The appeal of this perspective, for me, is that an approach that investigates the *research situation* of Austin Ballet Theatre (ABT) at the Armadillo World Headquarters (AWHQ) assumes ever-changing knowledges of difference and welcomes its limitations and inadequacies, thus leaving space for new voices and knowledge generation.

I particularly appreciate how Clarke articulates that there is no such thing as context. To really commit to postmodernism, she asserts, one has to consider how "the important so-called contextual elements are actually *inside the situation itself*. They are *constitutive* of it, including structural and power elements, and we can map and analyze them as such. [emphasis in the original]"[4] With respect to this philosophical stance, I originally attempted to avoid the word *context* when writing the dissertation. However, trying to impose some variant of *situation* became unreadable, especially for an entire chapter devoted to what has traditionally been called *context* (Chapter VII). Therefore, I have chosen to use the term *context* with an understanding—based on Clarke's theorizing—that what I discuss as context does not mean "with the text" but elements *that are and that create* the situation of action.

Moving toward historical inquiry along similar lines, Elizabeth Ermarth (building on the work of historical theorist Keith Jenkins) continues to influence my approach. However, she retires the term *postmodern* (which she feels is too vague and contentious) in favor of *the discursive condition.*[5] After dismissing the concepts of neutral space and time, Ermarth advocates looking for congruencies in historical phenomena rather than modernist continuities.[6] The result, according to Ermarth, is an "anthematic recognition" that creates spaces for detail and multiplicity without modernism's linearity or rationalizing agendas.[7] For me, the way Ermarth uses the term *congruencies* allows new meanings to emerge when contemplating the past, which emphasizes possible connections across seemingly disparate discursive realms.

Finally, in proceeding from a philosophical outlook that considers intersections within dynamic ecologies, my research perspective is further influenced by philosopher Michel de Certeau and community dance scholar Judith Hamera. Hamera builds upon de Certeau's scholarship concerning performative, repetitive, "everyday" behaviors in his text *The Practice of Everyday Life.*[8] Hamera extends these ideas to dance:

> [D]ance techniques, however codified or "elite," are routine tactics for living, not simply abstract grammars for moving. As practices of everyday community life, they build connections between what dancers do onstage and off, how they feel about their work and their lives, and ways they reflect on their relationships to their bodies, to history, to the ineffable, and to one another.[9]

In other words, what is presented onstage does not exist independently from its situation. Investigating ABT from this perspective involves a dispersing process that is open to activating and relating new centers, such as unrepresented voices.

## Oral History Methodology

Modern oral history practice values individual experiences and involves recording people's memories of their lives, with an emphasis on those persons previously excluded from traditional historical notice and documentation. Both philosophically and pragmatically, I found oral history methodology to be most supportive of my research purpose to create a history of the Austin Ballet Theatre at the Armadillo World Headquarters. Oral history falls into two basic categories: *life history* interviewing investigates the narrative of an individual's life, and *project-based oral history* interviews persons who experienced the same event or episode with the intention of gaining multiple perspectives. The latter corresponds with the purpose of this dissertation. Oral history methods facilitate the telling of memories by individuals; the subjects describe their life experiences, with an emphasis on meaning-making and the intention of sharing with others.

Pragmatically, oral history methods seemed called for at the outset of my research because text documentation appeared scarce. As it turned out, over time, many more text documents surfaced. Still, the majority of these emerging documents were programs and newspaper articles embedded within their own situated agendas. Therefore, personal interviews continued to move the process towards generating data that were in alignment with the research questions about multiplicities of history and meaning.

As an oral historian, I am influenced by theorists including Lynn Abrams and methodologist Valerie Yow. Abrams advises the oral historian to adopt an open, informal, and semi-structured approach to the interview to facilitate "creative, discursive,

and lengthy replies."[10] With this in mind, rather than creating a survey of mandatory questions, Yow advises interviewers to compose an interview guide, which I did. The interview guide is a flexible plan for the interview covering the topics the interviewer will pursue while offering narrators the freedom to create their own connections of meaning to these topics and to suggest new dimensions of inquiry.[11] In this way, oral history interviewing employs prepared questions as directional suggestions only and uses them more like improvisational structures to keep the interview focused on the research purpose. At the same time, oral history methodology stresses that narrators be allowed to lead the telling of their own stories as much as possible and to emphasize what they feel to be important rather than submitting their narrations to the form and valuing of the researcher.

Nonetheless, oral history theorists today acknowledge that the interview is a site of "shared authority." This seminal term was coined by oral historian Michael Frisch in 1990.[12] With shared authority—defined by Frisch as "dynamics and shareability of cultural power"—between the interviewer and the interviewee, both participants construct the content of the interview as both authors and authorities.[13] The interview is not considered a simple transmission of historical knowledge from narrator to interviewer. Rather, it is a unique site that facilitates knowledge creation between two people. Yow explains Frisch's term this way:

> In the new view, power may be unequal, but both interviewer and narrator are seen as having knowledge of the situation as well as deficits in understanding. . . . The interviewer thus sees the work as a collaboration. . . . [T]he term used to describe this dynamic is "shared authority."[14]

An excellent example of how this theory plays out in practice arose when I interviewed dancer Jone Bergquist Hallmark. She lamented, "[Laughter] God. It's really wild to think about it, and it was really something. I wish I could just take what's in my brain and hand it to you."[15] Hallmark's remark encapsulates the challenges of trying to communicate between people. Theoretically, the interview itself generates historical knowledge as actions of creative interrelating. Thus, in this dissertation, the overall theoretical framework informing the research design reveals each step as always already a creative process.

## Data Collection

### Austin History Center

The formal research protocol began through my exploration of the archives at the Austin History Center (AHC). I targeted these archives as an appropriate place to begin data collection with the goal of gaining important available information to support the needs of the interview process. Such an approach follows best practices in oral history methodology advanced by researchers such as Yow. Although Yow presents the counterpoint view that advance preparation biases the interviewer, she still generally favors the approach of seeking out what information has already been generated about the research subject.[16] I discuss researcher bias later in this chapter.

I began working with the AHC in 2008 as a volunteer recording oral histories with the Austin dance community. At that time, I established a working relationship with archivist Molly Hults, who then assisted me in 2012 with the process of finding and accessing archival documents concerning Austin Ballet Theatre director Stanley Hall.

Because she knew of my plans for this dissertation, Hults proved to be an invaluable intercessor between the archives and me. For example, when ABT visual artist Kate Bergquist donated her papers to the AHC, the collection included multiple copies of ABT programs and posters. The Austin History Center only archives one copy of these types of documents, so Hults contacted me to let me know they would be for sale in accordance with their standard practice for duplicates. I immediately drove to the AHC and purchased them all, and I have been able to consult and analyze these documents repeatedly and conveniently as a result.

When I initially consulted the archives at the AHC, the files were in some disarray. This is not entirely surprising given the convoluted history of ballet companies in Austin. Equally important is that the AHC has limited staff considering the vast number of archival duties they fulfill. Accordingly, because of my needs, Hults was able to prioritize the procurement of student interns over the summer of 2012 to organize the Austin Ballet Theatre archival files. When I returned to the archives after 2012, the files contained additional documents and photographs that were much more accessible and better organized.

These sources proved invaluable not only for their content but also for their situated position in the archive. Some, like personal notes, were not available in any other location and revealed both information about and meaning for the people who donated these items. Documents arrive at the Austin History Center in various ways. Many of the documents in the Austin Ballet Theatre files were donated from various Austinites within boxes of unsorted estate papers. That multiple donors, who are often unidentified in the

archival files, chose to keep these programs, reviews, board of directors documents, and newspaper clippings suggests that the ballet had lasting significance in their lives. For example, one ABT program in the archives had an unattributed handwritten memo on the cover: "First performance at Armadillo of newly formed Company" (see Appendix B, Figure 1).[17] The writer clearly wanted to identify and preserve this particular program for future notice, although whether this was for personal remembrance, community history, or both will likely never be known.

I found the newspaper clippings, in particular, to include meaningful information from unrelated articles and advertisements related to my targeted content on Austin Ballet Theater. Most often, I discovered this information by turning a clipping over to see its reverse side. I did not foresee this important source of contextual data in my original research design, but the surprises I found while handling the original documents—rather than reviewing the digital scans or microfilm of the articles for which I was looking—added fresh insights to the inquiry. For example, an article about the Austin Ballet Society in the 1960s came from a section of the newspaper titled "Mostly about Women," and its reverse side featured advertisements for society events, face cream, and women's undergarments.[18] By comparison, two later articles about the Austin Ballet Theatre from the 1970s had, on their reverse sides, articles about the Armadillo World Headquarters and postmodern dancer Deborah Hay.[19, 20] The situated nature of these texts indicates how ballet had shifted significantly in the community discourse within a decade from being identified as mostly a society women's interest to that of an innovative or even experimental artistic practice. Such examples add situated local connections to more

general narratives of how the 1960s and 1970s were a time of changing cultures in the United States.

## Oral History Interviews

### Finding Participants

Because this research involves human subjects, I first obtained approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Texas Woman's University. As part of this process, I drafted a detailed research plan and a form for participants to sign explaining the project, its potential risks, and the rights of interviewees.

The process of finding people who had experienced Austin Ballet Theatre at the Armadillo World Headquarters was, in a variety of ways, far easier than I had anticipated. I began with dancer Greg Easley, the inheritor of Hall's estate; I had interviewed him previously as a gatekeeper for recommending dancers that I should contact. Easley knew and had contact information for several dancers in the Austin area, and being able to refer to him as someone who could vouch for my trustworthiness helped to establish my credibility with new contacts. This is clearly not random sampling but rather an established technique in qualitative research known as *snowball sampling* or *chain referral sampling.* Although referral sampling presents some challenges in terms of overcoming bias in the data, such a process is sometimes unavoidable when dealing with "hard-to-reach" or specialized populations.[21]

To address possible bias, I did not rely solely on Easley's contacts. I sought out additional names that I discovered as part of my reconnaissance preparation in the AHC archives. I particularly searched for possible interviewees who had not been dancers, such

as Armadillo staff and audience members, to align with my research goal of featuring multiple voices and points of view. Although the internet did not have a lot of information about the Austin Ballet Theatre that could assist me with my data collection, I was able to track down the addresses and telephone numbers of several possible contacts, including dance critic Suzanne Shelton Buckley in India. I mailed, e-mailed, and called these contacts, and all but one of those whom I succeeded in reaching readily agreed to be interviewed.

Patience, persistence, and initiative worked in my favor, particularly when contacting the South Austin Museum of Popular Culture. The managers of the SouthPop, as it is also known, are Leea Mechling and Henry Gonzales, two leading figures in the Armadillo scene. Their contacts in the AWHQ community helped me to gain access to seminal Armadillo figures Eddie Wilson and Jim Franklin. Wilson commented that he gets multiple requests almost every day for interviews, but he readily agreed to mine because he had not been asked to talk about the ballet before and thought it was a great story.[22] It took several tries to meet with visual artist Franklin at the SouthPop, but his perspective as the creator of the armadillo image for the AWHQ was particularly insightful regarding the context of those times. Similarly, reaching out to ABT visual artist Kate Bergquist proved fruitful. Bergquist introduced me to several of her friends who were the mothers of dancers or who had been in the audience for the ballet at the Armadillo.

One contact was the result of chance. I met dancer Ken Owen in a yoga class I attended at the YMCA. While chatting with a classmate who had taken ballet classes

from ABT director Stanley Hall at the University of Texas, we were overheard by the yoga instructor, who interjected, “Ken, didn’t you dance with them?” A week later, I was interviewing Owen, and his perspective proved invaluable as a counterpoint to many of the other dancers.

Ultimately, I interviewed 10 dancers (6 women and 4 men) and 9 non-dancers (6 women and 3 men). Although I did not ask these individuals about their ages, they seemed to range from their 50s through their 80s. The decision to stop interviewing after 19 interviews with 19 participants—while necessary—definitely made clear the infinitely unknowable nature of multiple truths in historical inquiry. For example, all of my participants were Caucasian, despite my best efforts to track down Austin Ballet Theatre’s one African-American dancer, Rosemary Thomas. While the lack of racial diversity in my data reflects the subject of study, Thomas’s perspective would have added unique data that could have presented an even more nuanced portrait of these times.

**The Interview Process**

Interview Techniques

I prepared a detailed consent form for the participants in accordance with IRB guidelines. I arranged for a separate initial in-person meeting to go over the form and to give the participants a chance to ask any questions or voice any concerns, although some participants asked to skip this step. Due to the voluntary nature of the project and the assurances in writing that anything could be taken off the record at any time, no one had any concerns (nor have any been raised since).

In accordance with oral history methodology, I used a semi-structured approach. I began each interview with the question, "Just to get the ball rolling, when do you first recall hearing about [Stanley Hall, Austin Ballet Theatre, that there would be ballet at the Armadillo]?" This question was designed to put the interviewee at ease in several ways: first, with the reassurance that I would cue them with questions; second, with the phrase "just to get the ball rolling" to make the recording seem less formal; and third, with the emphasis on "recall" to introduce the idea that I welcomed the inexact processes of remembering rather than expecting only verifiable facts. This type of initial question is a technique I developed from my own experiences as an interviewer.

When they spoke, I let the interviewees elaborate for as long as they desired, then I waited for several seconds of silence to pass. This technique is used widely in oral history methods as an effective tool for giving interviewees the time to generate their own lines of discussion. However, the interviewer has to test the use of silence to see whether it supports the speaker or annoys him or her and then adjust the interview process accordingly.[23] As much as possible, I attempted to proceed with follow-up questions about something mentioned by the interviewee, as long as we stayed within the subject area.

I also used the oral history technique of asking the participant to "describe a typical day."[24] Although no such thing exists, this technique is useful when discussing repetitive experiences, such as those of an ongoing job or task. This request relieves the anxiety of asking an interviewee to recall specific instances (after 40 years, in this study)

in favor of assembling constellations of many memories. Such a flow of general description often leads to very specific memories that emerge easily.

For example, the following unedited excerpt from an interview transcript with dancer Easley demonstrates some of these oral history techniques: letting the speaker lead the course of the conversation, discussing a "typical day" as a method of accessing very specific memories, allowing silences, and asking follow-up questions cued by the interviewee. We had been discussing the "typical day," and Easley had just finished talking about packing up the costumes after the show. After a few seconds, I mentioned that my understanding was that some people went to cast parties, which resulted in the following conversation:

> Greg Easley: I think. I think we did. I, I honestly can't remember back then, the Armadillo days. I remember one day. I came out after a show, and I was driving a 1971 gold metallic Impala with a gold interior—had been my mom's—and the battery was gone.
>
> Caroline S. Clark: Oh.
>
> Greg Easley: Someone had just opened the hood—'cause the hoods didn't lock back then.
>
> Caroline S. Clark: Mm-hmm.
>
> Greg Easley: You just reached under it—and stole my battery.
>
> Caroline S. Clark: Oh.
>
> Greg Easley: [Laughs] So I was like, "Well…" And do you know, the next day we—'cause you didn't dare miss class the next night—they—the dancers, the company, walked in with a envelope with $40 in it . . .
>
> Caroline S. Clark: Aww.
>
> Greg Easley: . . . to help me buy a new battery.

> Caroline S. Clark: Oh.
>
> Greg Easley: Never forgotten that. Never forgot that.
>
> Caroline S. Clark: Wow. [Pause] So you had class on the Monday after the Sunday show.
>
> Greg Easley: You—and you'd better be there.
>
> Caroline S. Clark: Okay.
>
> Greg Easley: You better be there.
>
> Caroline S. Clark: [Laughs]
>
> Greg Easley: It—I mean, we frowned on each other if you didn't show up, show up.[26]

This passage opens with a rapid transition that is typical of the non-linear processes of memory by jumping from the general to the specific: "I honestly can't remember back then, the Armadillo days. I remember one day." Also, within the flow of conversation, rather than forcing the issue of cast parties, I pick up on a cue from Easley ("you didn't dare miss class the next night") to follow up with the question about having class on Mondays. This was information that I did not have at this point in the data collection process, despite having already interviewed several dancers. The information speaks to me about both a sense of dedication as well as the emotional and social relationships among the dancers as a group who would pool together to pay for one member's new car battery while at the same time frowning on each other for missing class. Although my decision left lacunae in the data concerning Easley's experiences with cast parties, I gained different data about which I would not otherwise have known to ask.

Toward the end of each interview, I prompted, "Is there anything we haven't discussed yet that you think is important or that you would like people to know?" Again, this is a standard oral history technique that stems from a research philosophy of grounded theory and listening to what the interviewee values.[27] These values, in turn, constellated into themes that are discussed further in the data analysis section.

Transcription

I transcribed the first interviews myself, but as the scope of the project became more clear, I realized that this was a bigger job than I could do alone. I adjusted the plan and received IRB approval to include transcription services by Verbal Ink (Los Angeles, CA) after the company signed a privacy agreement. Given how often I subsequently read and rigorously coded the data, I do not feel that there was any significant loss in my familiarity with the data as a result of not performing the transcription myself.

After receiving the transcripts from Verbal Ink, I proofread them for errors. Most of the changes I made were in the spelling of proper nouns and French ballet steps, although occasionally I disagreed with how the transcribers' decisions regarding punctuation changed the emphasis of the statements and altered those accordingly. I then mailed or hand-delivered to each participant his or her transcript, along with an audio CD of the interview. I reminded everyone that they were free to change or recuse any part of the interview at any time, and I invited participants to call or meet with me again if they felt that they had more to say or any concerns. Only two interviewees wanted to make changes: one for the spelling of several names, the other to edit out all the "ums" and "ahs." I honored both sets of changes.

## Memorabilia as Emerging Documents

Memorabilia offered by the dancers provided a significant source of information that I did not foresee when preparing my original research design. When I first conceived my dissertation research process, I focused on orality, driven by what I thought would be scant documentation in the archives; however, I was surprised by the extent of the documents offered to me by the participants. Also, my training in oral history methods (particularly that with Martha Norkunas) discouraged the use of photographs and documents at the outset of an interview.[28] Because such artifacts already have narratives embedded in them, they can actually be a hindrance to the generation of information in the present moment of an interview. I knew I would have limited time with each interviewee, and I wanted to focus first on what the interviewee had to say without the mediating intervention of documents and photographs. However, I found a useful compromise in promising at the outset to look at the memorabilia at the end of each interview. In this way, I could collect the data from the discussion both without the artifacts and then with the artifacts.

The circumstances of the interviews seem to have had some correlation with the emergence of memorabilia. First, almost all of the items—in the forms of scrapbooks, photos, videos, and boxes of unsorted documents—were offered by the dancers and not from other people, with the exception of visual artist Kate Bergquist. Second, these data sources only emerged when I interviewed participants in their own homes. I always offered first to come to participants' houses in accordance with oral history best practices. Two of the dancers preferred to meet at my house instead, and they did not bring

anything with them. Third, the interviewees who did offer memorabilia had all prepared for my visit by finding and bringing out their materials ahead of time. There seemed to be an assumption that, as a researcher, I would be interested in these items (as, indeed, I was) although I never mentioned anything other than the interview process when first contacting these individuals.

Each personal collection included at least one data source not available anywhere else. This was usually in the form of a newspaper clipping, but other examples included board of directors documents, personal correspondence, and programs. In particular, Greg Easley has in his personal collection the estate papers of artistic director Stanley Hall. These papers were the only documents that provided clarification and confirmation of oral data surrounding Hall's life prior to Austin Ballet Theatre as well as some of the lesser-known machinations that resulted in the formation of ABT.

Certainly, memorabilia are important as documentary evidence, but discussing these collections with the dancers also revealed the meaning Austin Ballet Theatre had for them. Again, according to qualitative researcher Clarke, postmodern methodology advocates for critical investigation into how the data exists "in gestalt," or its own situation.[29] That the dancers kept their newspaper articles, programs, posters, and "have a good show" notecards for 40 years indicates that the ballet had some importance in their lives. Some documents were carefully arranged in scrapbooks; others were unsorted in boxes. The "relationality" of the dancers with their collections—to use Clarke's word—creates significance that opens space for reflective thought.[30]

## Photographs and Video

Photographs and a limited amount of video became available through archival research and emergent memorabilia. As was the case with the documents, data from these sources included not just the content of the images themselves but also information derived from their situated nature. In other words, I analyzed *how* these sources existed and came forward during the research process.

The collection of some limited video data was very unexpected. Despite my exploratory research into Austin Ballet Theatre before beginning this dissertation, no video seemed to be available of the Armadillo years. According to testimony, Hall had purchased a VHS videotape camera with his own money at some point when such technology first became widely available, but the location of any recordings he made was unknown.[31] However, during my interviews with Judy Thompson-Price and the Larsons, VHS tapes from their personal collections were offered for me to view. In both cases, Hall had edited together segments of footage from his camera himself to create "highlight reels" of moments featuring Thompson-Price for the video she received and of Kenny Larson for the video Hall gave to his parents. Again, the fact that Hall extended himself to make these videos indicates that he felt that he created meaningful relationships with the recipients through the ballet. With the participants' permission, I had these VHS tapes professionally digitized and transferred to DVDs due to the fragile nature of VHS tapes and the lessening availability of VCR devices that can play them; I also gave copies of the created DVDs to Thompson-Price and the Larsons. Although the quality of the original videos was sometimes poor (being that they were second-generation copies, at

best), they made available for analysis not only some of the dancing at the Armadillo but also the stage space and audience reactions.

## Data Analysis

### Analytical Processes

Formal analysis began with coding the interview transcripts, documents, and visual data. I employed the coding techniques outlined by Johnny Saldaña in his text entitled *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers,* beginning with initial coding.[32] First, I coded for historical narratives and recurring words. Thus, the first chapter I wrote was a historiography, which became Chapter III. When writing that chapter, I connected the data from oral testimony and text documentation with external sources that addressed ballet history and Austin history to identify areas of convergence, divergence, and silence.

The initial coding also demonstrated the overwhelming presence of the words *beer* and *nachos,* which turned out to be memes replicated in every oral history and every newspaper review of Austin Ballet Theatre before the arrival of new dance journalists from out of town in 1978. The presence of these words demanded my attention and led to several lines of analysis related to the situation of activity, including those covered in Chapter VI regarding the binary paradigm of "high" (ballet) and "low" (beer) cultures and those reviewed in my concluding thoughts in Chapter VIII about the construction of an "Austin" public identity through this unique site of dance practices.

My analysis seemed to gain new life when I employed Saldaña's processes of coding for "values" and "emotions." These processes clarified the data toward

investigating the research questions related to the significance and meaning of ballet at the Armadillo for those involved and how participants remembered those events. For example, the repetition of the emotion codes "excitement," "hints of danger," "fun," and "humor" suggested that interviewees foregrounded these emotions, even among narratives of "anger," "sadness," and "disgust." Although they did not exactly downplay the difficulties they experienced, most interview participants seemed motivated to communicate that the more important story in these events, according to their values, was the good in what transpired.

Value coding particularly illuminated the more political, cultural, and social dimensions of the data. It helped me to untangle the complex feelings expressed by the interviewees, who were attempting to reconcile the merits of being an inclusive performing company (that is, welcoming of all people wanting to dance) with the desire to be a "good" ballet company. These value codes led to important critical theorizing about the potential political, cultural, and social functions of ballet throughout the dissertation, but particularly in the section about political context in Chapter VII and in Chapter VIII when I discuss how ballet at the Armadillo was and is evaluated.

One line of inquiry from the oral history methods mentioned in the data collection section earlier asked, "Is there anything we haven't discussed yet that you think is important or that you would like people to know?" The analysis of the responses to this question, along with value-coded data throughout the interviews, led to two overarching themes:

- The dancers got to perform frequently at the Armadillo, which led to the positive benefits of fun, excitement, and the rapid progression of their dance skills.
- Performing at the Armadillo brought ballet "to the people," especially to many people who would not otherwise have seen ballet.

My decision to organize thematic construction in this way comes from the nature of my research design, which is grounded in and honors the data frequency and values expressed by the participants.

For the visual data, which included program illustrations, photographs, and video, I utilized the praxis of a critical visual methodology outlined by Gillian Rose in her text, *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials*.[33] Rose asserts that three tenets are essential in the critical approach to visual culture: 1) taking images "seriously"; 2) thinking about "the social conditions and effects of visual objects"; and 3) considering "your own way of looking at images."[34] Throughout the analysis, I kept these admonitions in mind. My perspective regarding the photographs and videos seemed to be influenced by my training as a choreographer and dance teacher with regard to the discernment of technique, line, form, spacing, costuming, and aesthetics that my background affords me. By contrast, I do not have the expertise to consider the quality of the photographs and videos themselves and how that information affects the data other than in general ways, such as how the video was not professionally filmed and what that situation implies.

## Trustworthiness

The following previously published quotes from Armadillo founder Eddie Wilson (who was also interviewed for this dissertation) explain the dilemmas inherent in trusting historical sources in Wilson's succinct and inimitable style. In the first quote, Wilson points out the fallacy of privileging written documentation during an interview with musician Michael Murphey. In this excerpt, the two are discussing Jan Reid's 1974 book *The Improbable Rise of Redneck Rock* and how the text chronicles their lives:

> Eddie: He comes in talking about how I run a beer joint? He don't know nothin' about running a beer joint. . . . The a-hole that wrote that book is a groupie, and he quoted a junkie about how I'm trying to operate to keep alive. And it's in hardback, so it's history; there ain't nothing we can do about it.
>
> Michael: There is one person sitting in this room that can do something about it.
>
> Eddie: You go to the library in ten years. And if you're in the eighth grade and you're writing a paper on the Austin music scene and you pull that book out, no matter how many reviews I write, it's history.[35]

Such a realization about the need to view historical accounts critically, as human compositions, applies to both textual and oral testimonies.

Yet, in a second quote from a different interview, Wilson addresses a different way of viewing reliability in regard to oral testimony: "There are stories told by various people at the Armadillo that . . . contain an incredible amount of inaccuracy, but not the kind that changes the essence of anything."[36] Here Wilson addresses a gentle, flexible evaluation of the truth that takes into account how storytelling functions. This type of credibility resonates with oral historian Alessandro Portelli's assertion that the truth of a situation is what the narrator believes to be true, because (for him or her, functionally, in

that moment) that *is* what really happened.[37] Oral history projects allow for multiplicities that accommodate difference and change; memories may vary on the basis of subjective experience, changing recall, and intended audiences.

Through these statements, Wilson has encapsulated years of discourse exploring the nature of multiple truths in research. Both quotes suggest consideration of what the telling of history *does*. In any given circumstances, an important critical question may not be so much whether an account is right or wrong but rather how it is useful to the teller and the situation of which it is a part.

Researchers must therefore rely on ethical, transparent, and responsible design when engaging in historical inquiry and its representation. Sharan Merriam counters quantitative researchers' standards of "validity" and "reliability" with qualitative "trustworthiness" and "rigor."[38] She asserts that qualitative researchers must openly reveal frameworks, methods, and theorizing through the expressive voice of the researcher to establish credibility when investigating people's constructions of reality.[39] In the postmodern era, there is no ultimate version for the researcher to judge as "the truth."

## Reflexivity and My Role as Researcher

Ergo, ethical research design includes reflexive processes. I practiced rigor by writing memos of my responses to the data and developing ideas. This reflexivity proved invaluable for the identification of analytical themes. Perhaps more importantly, Merriam asserts that researchers also establish "external validity" by revealing their reflexive processes.[40] Reflexivity provided me with the opportunity to scrutinize how I construct

knowledge, and I challenged myself to consider other epistemological lenses. It also led me to consider how, through the process of research, I altered the recorded history of the Armadillo and the ballet.

## My Positionality

My background as a native Austinite who grew up in the city during the 1970s undoubtedly affects the results of this research. In some ways, I had the "insider" advantage of sharing public knowledge in such a way that facilitated the flow of conversation in interviews. For example, when narrators referred to places (such as when Wilson discussed Threadgill's), I often had enough familiarity with these names to be able to continue the conversation without stopping to discuss what they were, where they were located, or how to spell them. Given that my experiences of Austin were not the same as those of my participants, however, I tried to be aware of my assumptions and to ask clarifying questions when necessary to serve the research purpose.

It is important that I also fully disclose my preexisting relationships related to this study. I was born in 1966, and I studied and performed ballet with the ABT's rival company, Austin Civic Ballet, during the Armadillo years and beyond. The rivalry between these two companies emerges in the research as a significant factor in this historical situation. I discussed my personal history with my interviewees, and some of them even remembered seeing me perform. However, my situatedness did not seem to be a detrimental factor during the interview process. I was a child during the time of the Armadillo and not aware of Austin Ballet Theatre's performances there, nor did I ever go to the Armadillo. The interviewees seemed at ease with me as a historian of their

legacies, and this was demonstrated even more so when those who experienced feelings of competitiveness or even bitterness described how intense the rivalry could be. However, it is possible that some data were withheld because of my past involvement with ballet in Austin.

## Shared Authority and Changing Recorded History

According to oral historian James Fogerty, historical knowledge begins to shift the moment the researcher conceives of the project.[41] Along the same lines, oral historian Alan Wong has pointed out that the data generation process begins with initial contact, because the very fact of being asked to share information stimulates the narrator to think about the past and anticipate what might be asked.[42] Thus, my interviewees and I thought about our interviews ahead of time, both actively and passively, as evidenced by the many times participants revealed that they had been thinking more about Austin Ballet Theatre since I contacted them and wondering what I would ask and what they would say.

As my familiarity with ABT's history increased over the course of this research, I experienced an ethical dilemma in interviewing related to Frisch's negotiation of shared authority. I found myself increasingly in the position of having different kinds of knowledge than my interviewees. This knowledge came mostly in the forms of having more recent contact with dates and names and having multiple perspectives on certain events. Although I always strove to follow the narrators' leads and to honor their versions of their stories as "true" for them, the dilemma arose when they asked *me* questions of clarification (for example, "Did the Armadillo close in 1980 or 1981?" or "What was the

name of that piece of music by Stevie Wonder?"). I felt no ethical issues in answering their questions; if anything, simple answers to such questions of fact alleviated some narrator anxiety in the process of recall and facilitated the flow of conversation. Occasionally, however, I had to negotiate ethics in the moment. The most recurring example of this type of experience surrounded the discussion of Hall's parting of ways with Austin Civic Ballet. As discussed in Chapter III, Historiography, "what actually happened" has always been obscured by differing accounts and perspectives. When several participants asked me whether I could elucidate those events for them, I replied that I was not supposed to talk too much during the interview but that I would be happy to discuss this topic when the interview was complete. In those instances, I later shared what was "on the record" in an attempt to moderate the inherent power imbalance in an interview situation.

Another dimension of impact is the fact that this research instigated a process of continuing fluctuation in the archives. In the data collection section of this chapter, I described how documentation at the Austin History Center changed as a result of my research when the staff prioritized the organizing of the files in which I was interested. In addition, the archives will continue to change even now that this dissertation is complete. As part of my research design, I gave interviewees the option of donating recordings and transcripts of their interviews to the Austin History Center to be available in perpetuity. This step required the signing of a separate "deed of gift" to the AHC, with the understanding that such donations were not a requirement to participate in the dissertation research. Although all but one of the interview participants expressed to me their

willingness to have their interviews archived, thus far only a handful have signed the consent form and mailed it to me. I believe that this is due to the obstacle of having an extra step to complete: reading the form, signing it, and mailing it back in the self-addressed, stamped envelope I provided.

All of this is to say that future researchers will have access to at least some of the interviews that were conducted, and several study participants subsequently donated their personal collections of text documents to the Austin History Center. I did not raise the subject of document donation myself, but when interview participants asked about the AHC, they were relieved to discover that such a place existed and that it provided archival services. In each case, participants felt that their documents were in some way important enough not to throw out yet not doing any good disintegrating in their storage closets. These donors were glad to know that the programs, clippings, and photos that had been important to them would be professionally archived in such a way that would be useful to others yet still accessible to themselves.

## Representation

### Chapter Organization

I chose not to expound on several significant lines of inquiry within this dissertation due to length considerations. Given their relevance, however, I interwove these themes throughout the chapters. One such was the theme of humor. I could have readily written a lengthy chapter on the presence of humor in the story of Austin Ballet Theatre at the Armadillo World Headquarters as well as in the evolving research process. Ultimately, I had to make choices about which chapters to include. I decided to honor the

methodology by organizing the chapters based on what the participants identified as the most important things to know. Accordingly, the data chapters constellate around the following analytical themes:

- Chapter IV: Dancers and the benefits of performing frequently
- Chapters V and VI: Audiences and bringing ballet to the people
- Chapter VII: Relating ABT to Austin and the 1970s

This organization represents my best effort to serve the research purpose and questions by creating a history of Austin Ballet Theatre at the Armadillo World Headquarters. Related lines of inquiry not foregrounded in this dissertation will continue to be addressed in papers and articles submitted for future publication or presentation.

## A Note on Verb Tenses

As I wrote these chapters, I faced a decision about which verbal tenses to employ, depending on the data source. Texts are referred to in academic writing in the present tense, as in this example: "Author Adele Clarke asserts…." However, I found that I could not accept this convention with oral history interviews. Upon reflection, I realized that, according to shared authority theory, even if I were to ask the same person the same questions, I would get different answers. Therefore, "Interviewee Greg Easley says…" feels inconsistent with oral history methodology, because he might not say the same thing time and time again. With further investigation, I also took into consideration the fact that the Chicago/Turabian formatting of my dissertation cites interviews conducted by the author without page numbers; in these instances, the citation does not refer to the transcript but rather to the conversation itself. Given these points, I decided that, in this

dissertation, any reference to a quote from an interview would be in the past tense: for example, "Interviewee Greg Easley said…." This practice is debateable, but I feel consistent in my choices.

## Alternative Representation

In this section of the chapter, I discuss the creation of Appendix D: "A Typical Day for Austin Ballet Theatre at the Armadillo World Headquarters." This work of fiction emerged from both reflective inspiration and scholarly theorizing. As historiographic metafiction, the story reveals the data, the constructed nature of any historical narrative, and my expressive voice as the researcher. As explained in Chapter I, readers may choose to read the fiction at any time as an efficacious disruption, or they may choose not to read it at all.

### Inspiration

When analyzing the research question that collates the data surrounding how participants experienced dancing at the Armadillo, I began to realize that I had been envisioning what these experiences were like based on the intersection of the data and my imagination. Again, I had never been to the Armadillo World Headquarters, so my imagination constructed an assemblage based on the relationships among the data collected through photos, oral history stories, and documents. I knew that any creation of an imaginary version of ballet at the Armadillo would certainly differ from how it played out for someone in reality. However, I began to wonder how this imaginary construct affected my study, for of course it did; such a "creative entanglement" (to employ Tim Ingold's term) is inescapable for any researcher.[43] Therefore, I wondered how I might

reveal this dimension of my analytical process. It was with this thought of describing my imaginative assemblage of Austin Ballet Theatre at the Armadillo World Headquarters that a textual performance of the data emerged.

My fictional world of ABT at the Armadillo centers in the oral history prompt, "Describe a typical day of Austin Ballet Theatre performing at the Armadillo." This question is, in and of itself, overtly asking the interviewees to create a fictional narration based on their synthesis of many similar experiences. As described earlier in this chapter, the prompt stimulates a description of their experiences and their recall of singular, salient memories within the flow of conversation. After many interviews, I realized that each narrator added more dimension to the fictional day that was beginning to assemble in my imagination. After making the decision to engage in overtly fictional writing as part of historical inquiry, I investigated scholars who have theorized such methods.

**Literature Review**

History scholar David Lowenthal states, "Like theme parks in the present, the landscape of the past as we see it is, by and large, an artifice, an invention, a construct, an illusion."[44] Similar to Lowenthal's concept of the past as an imaginary theme park, theatre history scholar Bruce McConachie, in his article "Reenacting Events to Narrate Theatre History," writes that all historians use "imaginative reenactment" in their process of making sense of history, whether those historians admit it or not.[45] Joining the conversation is dance historian Alexandra Carter, who asserts, "[H]istory is a creative activity…. It involves the imaginative piecing together of various accounts in order to produce meanings; it may necessitate speculation where there are gaps and asking

questions as to why there are gaps."[46] Along these lines, when history is a creative activity, what are the implications for writing historiographies?

Stephen Banks: The Argument for Fiction

Historical anthropologist Stephen Banks promotes fiction in his chapter for *Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research,* published in 2008:

> This chapter advocates using literary fiction as a mode of expression in reporting scholarly research…. [W]riting literary fiction can be a productive, even revelatory, practice for communicating scholarship, and as such fiction writing should be taught, used, and appreciated as a form of research reporting.[47]

Banks first scrutinizes the terminology used for reporting qualitative research data, particularly the terms *findings* and *results.* "Findings," Banks argues, presumes the existence of things to be found, while "results" implies that research has closed the questions with definite answers. Yet, Banks counters, "what are counted as 'data' are invariably selected and named by the investigator; in most cases the phenomena under analysis are created by the investigator."[48] This outlook on data generation is also one of the principle tenets of oral history methodology: shared authority. Given such a critical turn regarding text and research, Banks proposes that researchers investigate fiction as a platform for sharing understandings. His caveat is that scholars must "declare" their intentions in the creation of such works due to the expectations of academic audiences and publishing platforms; then, after the declaration, the scholar historian must write boldly outside of normative writing structures.[49]

Banks identifies four foundational premises for his position:

1. "Writing itself must be theorized as a generative research practice."[50] In other words, writing up the data and their analyses co-creates the data and their analyses.
2. "Theorizing writing also invites a critique of the received practice."[51] Banks here refers to critical theory that challenges scientifically minded attempts at objectivity and objective rhetoric.
3. "Narrative is unavoidable."[52] Banks builds this foundational premise on how narratives are the means through which humans make sense of experience.
4. "Literary fiction can profitably be used for scholarly writing tasks."[53]

It is to this last point about the utility of fiction that I now turn.

Banks's discussion about what fiction can do for research resonates with many of my intentions for this dissertation research. My research questions are structured to create a history of the ballet and to explore participants' experiences along with the meaning that ballet at the Armadillo had for them. One of my hopes is to reintroduce their histories back into the community. By contrast, my fear has been that I might render their histories flat, lifeless, and inaccessible through my data analysis and use of language. I have also been aware throughout the process of the many voices I have not heard, the lines of inquiry I have not followed, and how I do not want my choices to foreclose the subject.

Therefore, my intentions for writing a fictional history align well with Banks's reasons for scholarly fiction[54]:

- To evoke an "awareness of the subjective aspects of participants' experiences"
- To share "the researcher's own subjective response to the participants' experiences and other research materials"
- To reach broader audiences than those in academic "tribes"
- To provide "immediacy"
- To provide representation without imposing theoretical categories and language
- To remain open to new interpretations and avoid closure

Thus, Banks's arguments for scholarly fiction explore the frontier where rigor, ethics, and communication strategies reinvent themselves.

Linda Hutcheon: "Historiographic Metafiction"

One of the seminal scholars who is developing a postmodern perspective on the literary construction of historical knowledge is Linda Hutcheon, author of the 1988 text *The Poetics of Postmodernism* and its 1989 companion text *The Politics of Postmodernism*. Hutcheon asserts that postmodern perspectives reconsider earlier, nineteenth-century academic views in which "literature and history were considered branches of the same tree of learning."[56] Postmodern practices, she continues, remind us that the very terms *history* and *fiction* are historically situated and ever-changing signifiers.[57] With this in mind, Hutcheon emphasizes that historical inquiry inherently

raises the "important postmodern question: how exactly is it that we come to know the past?"[58]

To problematize the terms *history* and *fiction,* Hutcheon coins a phrase that has subsequently been adopted and debated in wider literary discourse: *historiographic metafiction.* This compound term begins with reference to scholarship by supporting the use of *historiography* to signify writing about the past.[*] The use of this term instead of *history* distinguishes the constructed nature of text as a written version of knowledges gained through historical inquiry. Then, the word *metafiction* refers to text that purposely reveals its constructed nature through literary devices.[†] By combining the two terms, *historiographic metafiction* references the past through writing that reveals its own constructed, fictive nature. Such an approach, according to Hutcheon, "open[s history] up to the present, to prevent it from being conclusive and teleological."[59]

Leah McCormack: Historiographic Metafiction in Practice

Creative writer and literary scholar Leah McCormack provides strong theoretical foundations for scholarly fiction and its inclusion in this dissertation from critical studies in literature with her 2013 journal article, "Reclaiming Silenced & Erased Histories: The Paratextual Devices of Historiographic Metafiction."[60] Launching from Hutcheon's

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[*] An excellent summation of this scholarship can be found in Keith Jenkins, *Re-Thinking History* (London; New York: Routledge, 1991).

[†] In her 2013 text *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction*, Patricia Waugh establishes that "metafiction is a term given to fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact [sic] in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality." See Patricia Waugh, *Metafiction* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 2.

theories on historiographic metafiction—which McCormack acronyms as "H.M."—McCormack considers a trend in H.M. of "fraudulent artifacts": overtly fake documentation with historical referents, such as fake letters, diaries, and grocery lists.[61] This type of historiographic metafiction draws attention to questioning the nature of documents themselves as sources of information. The authors of such documents, she asserts, reveal a type of honesty in their "rebellious," self-aware fraudulence.[62]

Although my process does not include fraudulent artifacts, my work of H.M. does circulate data sources from my research. McCormack's theorizing reveals how, even with non-fraudulent documents, *persons known and unknown* authored these sources—including newspaper reviews, programs, and letters—as creative acts. Moreover, persons known and unknown also created more meaning with these artifacts by choosing to archive them in scrapbooks, boxes, or public archival files and making the decision to share them. Therefore, sources of historical knowledge represent inherent creativities as potential situations of action. Such potential aligns with open historical inquiry into ABT as a lost history. Citations emphasize the presence of paratextual data sources. Such a device also creates another dimension of "meta" by invoking another plane of existence.

In addition, the H.M. approach resonates with the spirit of ABT and its tongue-in-cheek, self-aware practices as well as its political dimensions, which decentered ballet performance practices socially and aesthetically; these themes are explored in Chapters VI and VII. Although they were deeply committed to dance through their artistic and technical labors, everyone working with the company accepted that their circumstances at the AWHQ were strange, incongruent, and weird; however, they were also cognizant that

there were significant possibilities and humor in this incongruity. The use of historiographic metafiction to represent this rebellious spirit seems apt.

McCormack further postulates that the use of multiple voices in H.M. creates a sense of community and collaboration through the text, especially for marginalized or "ex-centric" groups.[63] Her statements on this have helped me to perceive that, in my composition of H.M. I feel a sense of shared endeavor and community with the characters, even with those from different years whose paths did not actually cross—myself included. Through their participatory choices, all of the ABT narrators brought a piece of the story forward (even as they might have been holding something back). Through their collaborations with me, and, by assemblage, with each other, a sense of community infusing ABT's historical past forms in the text.

A third function of multiple voices in H.M., as identified by McCormack, involves the relationship of the reader with the text. Conflicting perspectives, she contends, ask readers to make their own decisions about the narrative rather than just trusting the author.[64] In this way, readers engage in a more conscious "meaning-making process" with the text.[65] Although readers are always already engaged in a meaning-making process, McCormack's point is that conflicting narratives activate skepticism of any "official" version of history.[66] Scholarship such as McCormack's that analyzes the methods and functions of H.M. provides further justification for the use of such an approach in the representation of oral historical data.

## The Process of Writing Historiographic Metafiction

### Multiple Voices and Points of View

I began the writing process by coding the oral histories and documents for "a typical day." Next, I created an assemblage of accounts from these different sources that followed a roughly linear timeline throughout the course of a day. Putting these accounts into conversation created spaces of both convergence and irreconcilable difference. Also, I realized that the oral history prompt asking about a typical day is meant to invoke memories of specific incidences. With this data, I needed to make a decision whether or not singular stories had any place in a "typical" day. With the use of oral history methodology, I decided that, yes, the knowledge-generating philosophies that underlie this research design support the mixing of the overtly fictional, generalized descriptions of a typical day with "real," specific anecdotes.

The most experimental voice, which was entirely constructed from my imagination, is that of the smelly carpet of the Armadillo. The carpet, which saturated the data through the participants' memories, did not have its own voice in the first draft of the fiction. I was inspired to "drop" this voice into the text, to use McCormack's description of such a fictional insertion, by my 10-year-old daughter, Gwendolyn Clark.[67] For a humanities assignment, Gwendolyn put together a presentation on the moon landing of 1969. Unbeknownst beforehand to her teacher or me, she incorporated a section that retold the events from the moon's point of view. Switching the narrative frame of reference had both revelatory and humorous effects on her audience. I decided to try a similar exercise. I kept in mind a seminar from a doctoral residency in 2011 with

Texas Woman's University art professor Terry Barrett, in which he discussed adopting the points of view of different elements in a painting as part of its analysis.[68] The biggest challenge was in confronting how a carpet would not make sense of reality in the same linguistic terms that I do. I approached its voice, therefore, as an exercise in empathetic imagination, but this was not dissimilar from how people might imagine any historical voice.

Verb Tenses

Another challenge that was revelatory to me as the author was the switch from subjunctive past tense ("On a typical day, Terri Lynn would have arrived at noon.") to present tense ("Terri Lynn arrives at noon."). Elizabeth D. Ermarth, in her text *History in the Discursive Condition,* proposes using the present tense as one of fifteen devices in the writing of history that "acknowledges the fictionality of the enterprise."[69] All of Ermarth's devices promote difference, interruption, and opening possibilities in the text regardless of logic and time. The use of the present tense foregrounds the idea that the narrative functions as a specific iteration in the process of constellating historical knowledges. In my process, I found that the present tense is also powerfully effective for repositioning the reader again and again as multiple perspectives collide in the narrative. At first, I was faithful to bracketing all of my changes in verb tense to signal to the reader that I had interceded as the writer ("Terri Lynn arrive[s] at noon.") Although the punctuation served the purpose of disruption, the constant intercessions became unreadable. I eliminated the brackets, but, in the endnote citations, I acknowledged that the verb tense changed from past to present.

Creating Space for Details

One feature of qualitative studies, as defined by research scholar Elliot Eisner, "is their *attention to particulars* [emphasis original]."[70] Rather than abstracting a phenomenon to numerical data for statistical treatment, qualitative studies describe the phenomenon's distinctive characteristics. As Eisner proposes, "qualitative studies provide a sense of the uniqueness of the case; the best make the case palpable."[71] Details aid in making the case more tangible, yet oral history interviewing generated the recall of many more details than I could include in my thematic analysis. The fictional writing practice created a space where I could present data that had nowhere else to go, whether those data had overwhelming presence in my analysis (like the smell of stale beer) or stood as outliers (like when "that boy" came to the door and talked with Jone and then ended up dancing on television and Broadway).

Placement in the Dissertation

The decision of where to place "A Typical Day…" meant weighing its function for the reader. On one hand, I felt that placing it before the data chapters assisted readers with feeling more familiar with the data, thus making those chapters more effective. On the other hand, this piece of fiction also works nicely as a culmination to the dissertation that simultaneously disrupts the idea that the results are fixed. By placing the fiction in an appendix, readers can choose to encounter the fiction whenever they like or even not at all. In this way, the historiographic metafiction enacts another dimension of meta.

## Conclusions

In the program notes for Stanley Hall's ballet *Dracula*, which was performed at the Armadillo World Headquarters as well as other theaters, a statement appears underneath the title: "Taken from fact, fiction, and choreographer's license."[72] This methodology chapter presents a holistic look at the research process of creating this dissertation, which included problematizing how historical situations are created and represented. Throughout this chapter, I outline my process so that the integrity of my endeavors can be evaluated. Hall's program note also applies to the methodology I employed in creating the work of historiographic metafiction entitled "A Typical Day for Austin Ballet Theatre at the Armadillo World Headquarters." I wrote this work of fiction as a means of bringing forward the experiences of the participants while simultaneously disrupting the narrative to create space for future voices to add to the story.

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[1] Richard Schechner, *Between Theater & Anthropology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 50-51.
[2] Adele Clarke, *Situational Analysis: Grounded Theory After the Postmodern Turn* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2005).
[3] Ibid, 19.
[4] Ibid, 30.
[5] Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth, *History in the Discursive Condition: Reconsidering the Tools of Thought* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 4.
[6] Ibid, 8.
[7] Ibid, 66.
[8] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley, CA; London: University of California Press, 2002).
[9] Judith Hamera, *Dancing Communities: Performance, Difference, and Connection in the Global City* (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2007), xi.
[10] Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (London; New York: Routledge, 2010), 124.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Michael H. Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990).

[13] Ibid, xxiii.
[14] Valerie Raleigh Yow, *Recording Oral History: A Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences,* 2nd ed (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2005), 1-2.
[15] Jone Bergquist Hallmark, interview by author, Austin, TX, February 18, 2015.
[16] Valerie Raleigh Yow, *Recording Oral History: A Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences,* 2nd ed (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2005), 69
[17] Austin Ballet Theatre program, October 1, 1972, Austin History Center archives, box D0200, file 7.
[18] Lois Hale Galvin, "Austin Ballet's 'Hornsby Bend Legend'," *Austin American-Statesman,* February 14, 1965, F1.
[19] Marc Chricton, "Armadillo Headquarters: C-W Mu…," *Austin American-Statesman,* Austin History Center archives, box D0200, file 7. All newspaper clippings with incomplete information will be cited as if unpublished with information as to where they can be found.
[20] Stanley Hall, "Straightening out the facts," *Daily Texan*, November 22, 1976, Austin History Center archives, box D0200, file 7.
[21] Rowland Atkinson and John Flint, "Accessing hidden and hard-to-reach populations: Snowball research strategies," *Social Research Update* 33, no. 1 (2001): 1-4.
[22] Eddie Wilson, personal communication, Austin, TX, August 30, 2014.
[23] Martha Norkunas, oral history training workshop, University of Texas, Austin, TX, January 30, 2009.
[24] Jeffrey Friedman, Legacy Oral History Program, San Francisco, CA, August 4-6, 2011.
[26] Greg Easley, interview by author, Austin, TX, October 14, 2014.
[27] Martha Norkunas, oral history training workshop, University of Texas, Austin, TX, January 30, 2009.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Adele Clarke, *Situational Analysis: Grounded Theory After the Postmodern Turn* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2005), 23.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Greg Easley, interview by author, Austin, TX, October 14, 2014.
[32] Johnny Saldaña, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (London; Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2009).
[33] Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials,* 2nd ed. (Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications, 2007).
[34] Ibid, 12.
[35] Quoted in Jan Reid, "Rednecks, Armadillos, and Me," *Texas Monthly*, April 2004, http://www.texasmonthly.com/content/rednecks-armadillos-and-me, (accessed March 15, 2015).
[36] Quoted in Brad Buckholz, "It all happened at the Armadillo," *Austin American-Statesman,* December 11, 2000, E1, E4.
[37] Alessandro Portelli, "Tryin' to Gather a Little Knowledge: Some Thoughts on the Ethics of Oral History," in *The Battle of Valle Giulia: Oral History and the Art of Dialogue* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), 67.

[38] Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation* (Indianapolis, IN: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 209.
[39] Ibid, 213-229.
[40] Ibid, 215-229.
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[42] Alan Wong, "Conversations for the Real World: Shared Authority, Self-Reflexivity, and Process in the Oral History Interview," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 43.1 (2009): 248-249.
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[45] Bruce McConachie, "Reenacting Events to Narrate Theatre History," in *Representing the Past: Essays in Performance Historiography,* eds. Charlotte Canning and Thomas Postlewait (Iowa City, Ia: University of Iowa Press, 2010), 378.
[46] Alexandra Carter, "Destabilising the Discipline: Critical Debates about History and their Impact on the Study of Dance," in *Rethinking Dance History: A Reader,* ed. Alexandra Carter (London; New York: Routledge, 2004) 14.
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[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid, 161.
[50] Ibid, 156.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid, 157.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid, 160-161.
[56] Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* (London: Routledge, 1988), 105.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Linda Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism* (London: Routledge, 1989), 88.
[59] Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* (London: Routledge, 1988), 110.
[60] Leah McCormack, "Reclaiming Silenced & Erased Histories: The Paratextual Devices of Historiographic Metafiction," *Making Connections: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Cultural Diversity* 14, no. 2 (Fall 2013): 37-54, (accessed May 20, 2015).
[61] Ibid, 38.
[62] Ibid, 39.

[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid, 52.
[68] Terry Barrett, (lecture, Department of Dance doctoral cohort, Texas Woman's University, Denton, TX, June 17, 2010).
[69] Elizabeth D. Ermarth, *History in the Discursive Condition: Reconsidering the Tools of Thought* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2011), 111.
[70] Elliott W. Eisner, *The Enlightened Eye: Qualitative Inquiry and the Enhancement of Educational Practice* (New York: Toronto, 1991), 38.
[71] Ibid, 39.
[72] Austin Ballet Theatre program, Armadillo World Headquarters, Austin, TX, 1977. Privately held by Judy Thompson-Price.

# CHAPTER III

# A HISTORIOGRAPHY OF AUSTIN BALLET THEATRE AT THE ARMADILLO WORLD HEADQUARTERS

Austin Ballet Theatre's articles of incorporation, which were found in a stack of Stanley Hall's assorted estate papers, list the start date of ABT as February 25, 1972.[1] This date is significant in that it occurs only a few weeks after the seismic event of Hall's firing from Austin Civic Ballet. That the vision for a second ballet company could come to fruition so rapidly suggests that conditions were ripe for its assemblage. This chapter presents a data-driven history of Austin Ballet Theatre, including its inception, its years at the Armadillo World Headquarters, and its final years after the Armadillo closed. It will also introduce the unique circumstances, personalities, contexts, and histories that intersected to create these events, which will provide a referential framework for the thematic analysis that follows in subsequent chapters.

## Mid-20th Century Ballet History in Austin

### Austin Ballet Society

The earliest mention of any ballet company in the archival records at the Austin History Center is Austin Ballet Society (ABS), which was formed in 1956 by Barbara Carson. Carson studied with George Balanchine and was a soloist with the New York City Opera Ballet.[2] In 1953, Carson left New York City with her husband and opened a ballet studio in her home in Austin. Carson's contributions to dance history extend well beyond Austin, however. She was a leader in the regional ballet movement during the late

1950s and 1960s, and she co-founded the Southwest Regional Ballet Festival, a division of the National Association for Regional Ballet (NARB). Austin Ballet Society was the first host of this annual event in 1963.[3, *] Carson's involvement with NARB raised the profile of ballet in Austin to regional and even national levels: NARB's members included the New York–based editors of national magazines *Dance News* and *Dance Magazine* as well as the leaders of Capezio, the principal pointe shoe maker in the United States.[4] In addition, ABS enjoyed the NARB designation of "National Honor Company" for multiple years during the 1960s.[5]

Carson also implemented in Austin what has become an annual tradition for so many cities in the United States: performances of *The Nutcracker* ballet. Like many of the canonical, large-scale, classical ballets, *The Nutcracker* originated with the creative team of Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov, choreographers, and Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, composer, who were commissioned by the Imperial Ballet in St. Petersburg, Russia. However, beginning with its poorly received premiere in 1892, *The Nutcracker* never gained widespread popularity as a ballet until Russian émigré George Balanchine choreographed his version for the New York City Ballet in 1954. Balanchine's

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[*] Regional Dance America, formed from NARB, states on its website, "Scarcely two generations ago, viewing beautiful, powerful dance performances were often limited to urban centers across this country. However, the national dance landscape began to change in 1956 through commitment, hard work and a vision set by the National Association for Regional Ballet. Its prime purpose, continued by Regional Dance America since 1987, has been to decentralize dance throughout the United States by creating standards and fostering quality at all levels of development in order to provide pre-professional performance opportunities for dancers and audiences throughout the United States and Canada."

*Nutcracker* swept the United States several years later when television network CBS broadcast a short version in 1957 and a full-length color version in 1958. These landmark dance broadcasts generated a nationwide familiarity with *The Nutcracker* that provided the opportunity for ballet companies across the country to perform their own versions to receptive audiences during the winter holiday season.[6] *The Nutcracker* rapidly became—and remains—a ubiquitous Christmas production in the United States. Austin Ballet Society presented its first *Nutcracker* in 1960, and since there were no male ballet dancers in Austin at the time, ABS hired guest artist George Zoritch of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. Because Zoritch would not partner with a local "amateur," Carson came "out of retirement" to dance the role of the Sugar Plum Fairy herself.[7] Thus was born Austin's annual *Nutcracker* tradition, which survives to the present day.

In addition to *The Nutcracker*, two newspaper clippings from the Austin History Center archives provide some insight into the kinds of ballets that ABS performed before Stanley Hall's arrival. The first clipping describes a 1965 ballet by Carson called *Hornsby Bend Legend,* which was staged at Austin's Municipal Auditorium, a multi-purpose performing arts center in the middle of town. The narrative of the ballet came from the history of the Austin area and involved early white settlers and their skirmishes with "very savage Apache Indians."[8] The photograph that accompanied the preview article shows four dancers at a ranch location: two men relaxing with a gun and a stick in the foreground, and four women posing prettily in the background amid the ruins of an old homestead (See Appendix B, Figure 2). The photograph and the description of the ballet—a legend about "actual Texas pioneers, whose descendants still live in or near

Austin" during "the early 1830's [sic], when Texas was still a province of Mexico" and "Indians a real danger"—reinforce a narrative designed to appeal to those white descendants. With music by Aaron Copland, a composer known for ballets that celebrate a frontier spirit in an idealized American West, *Hornsby Bend Legend* promotes white cultural narratives of history, local pride, and Euro-American aesthetic techniques of ballet.

In the second clipping, a 1966 newspaper preview article titled "A Program of Ballet for Laity" describes an upcoming "dance-demonstration" by the Austin Ballet Society entitled *Enjoying the Ballet,* which was held at the Garden Center (an enclosed pavilion at the Zilker Botanical Gardens).[9] This program traced the "evolution of the dance from its birth in Italy," and it seemed to have an educational slant: "The program is designed to enrich the viewer's pleasure in seeing ballet, and to bring the layman up-to-date on such fine points as the recent development of regional ballet in America."[10] The use of terms like *layman* to describe the audience suggests a perceived need to educate the general public about viewing ballet as a pleasurable practice when fueled by privileged knowledge; the tone of the unnamed author reads as slightly patronizing. Also, the "fine point" of burgeoning regional ballet in America indicates Carson's involvement with NARB. The article included the honors that the company had garnered through that organization, and NARB's national and New York ties granted a sense of legitimacy or even caché that the Austin company was able to claim for its own endeavors.

**"Mainly About Women"**

Equally meaningful is the recurring placement of these and other contemporary articles about the ballet in a section of the *Austin American-Statesman*, the main daily newspaper, titled "Mainly About Women." Although the archived clippings are out of context, the flipsides of these clippings consist of articles about the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, the Colonial Dance society ball, and advertisements for Oil of Olay, wigs, lingerie, and cosmetics of various kinds. The only named author of an article about the ballet, Lois Hale Galvin, has the byline "Women's Staff," whereas most often other articles about the ballet from this period do not list an author at all. This segregation of the ballet into a women's section suggests that, for Austin during the 1960s, ballet is a women's activity that is not important enough for men to know as well.

These articles also emphasize white society women and their participation as patrons. In one example, a newspaper caption describes how the dancers perform to the "delight" of the Ladies Medical Auxiliary at the Austin Women's Club.[11] In the spread about the *Hornsby Bend Legend* performance, the photograph of the dancers is shown alongside two photographs of female patrons whose names appear prominently; there is also a photograph of Miss Exa Hornsby and her sister, Mrs. Tom Kluge, looking on with calm pride at the ballet taking place on their land to "ponder over land where Indians once roamed free."[12] The accompanying article states that the evening of ballet featuring *Hornsby Bend Legend* will include a pre-curtain fashion show of "New York Capezio Company's collection of authentic copies of lavish costumes from Broadway musicals" modeled by "Austin women."[13] Carson may well have used her connections with Capezio

through NARB to arrange this show featuring women patrons of the ballet. Their use of "authentic copies" from New York lent both glamour and a sense of connection to the epicenter of dance culture at the time. That an evening of dance would include a women's fashion show is further indication of a female-centric, culturally-elite situation for the ballet.

Important to the context of Austin ballet during the 1960s, then, is its association with middle- and upper-class white women and their endeavors. In many cases, these women were the college-educated wives of prominent professional men, politicians, and University of Texas professors. After marrying, many women gave up employment to devote themselves to home, family, and charitable work.[14] A photo clipping called "Party for Young Dancers" illustrates this scenario succinctly.[15] The dancers are not in this photo at all. Rather, the photograph presents three women who are part of the "hostess committee" surrounding a silver tea service on a gleaming wood table. The text underneath the photograph lists their names, along with the names of the rest of the committee members, exclusively in the format of "Mrs. [Husband's Name]." Although this may have been standard practice at the time, this wording reveals a cultural code that identifies these women in relationship to their husbands.

I was not able to look up all of these women's husbands' histories due to time and research focus, but the name "Mrs. Lowell Lebermann" jumps out at the end of the list. Mr. Lowell Lebermann was a fixture of Austin politics and business, eventually serving as an Austin City Council member, a University of Texas regent, and a board member of the symphony, other major arts organizations, and several banks. Lt. Gov. Ben Barnes is

quoted in Lebermann's obituary: ". . . there were very few things that happened that were really important to Austin in the '70s, '80s and '90s, [sic] that Lowell Lebermann didn't play a significant role in."[16] Given the context of Austin ballet suggested by all of these data, it is no wonder that local dance critic Steve Hogner scathingly described this era of ballet practices as "a compendium for social registers and a training ground for petite ingénues."[17]

**Transition**

During this period, professional ballerina Nora White Shattuck similarly moved to Austin when her husband, Roger Shattuck, became a professor at the University of Texas. Like Carson, Shattuck had also attended the School of American Ballet in New York City. She then joined the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo company. After moving to Paris in 1947 "just to be in Paris," Shattuck joined Roland Petit's new company Les Ballets de Paris.[18] She became engaged in 1949, which led to her retirement from the stage and her eventual move to Austin, where she opened a ballet school called The New School. Shattuck is essential to this narrative as the person who brought Stanley Hall to Austin. She and her husband were planning a year-long sabbatical to France, and she needed a replacement. Shattuck's sister, the famous ballerina Patricia Wilde, crossed paths with Hall by chance in Hollywood and mentioned her sister's dilemma; Shattuck and Hall had known each other from dancing together in Les Ballets de Paris. Hall came "as a favor to Nora" in 1966, according a newspaper interview, and at that time he only intended to stay for a year.[19] With Hall's arrival, Shattuck changed the name of her enterprise to the short-

lived Texas Ballet Concerto.[*] Hall later secured a position teaching ballet in the Required Physical Education department at the University of Texas through Roger Shattuck's colleague John Silber. Hall actually brought his personal friend, the famous ballet director Robert Joffrey, to a meeting with Silber to discuss the importance of offering dance classes at the University of Texas.[20, †] This position ensured a financial livelihood for Hall while he remained in Austin.

The archives for the years of 1967 through 1970 are somewhat confusing. I will summarize as much information as I can here; additional research in archives outside of the focus of this dissertation would be necessary for the clarification of certain points. I was able to determine that Barbara Carson left Austin in 1967 with her family when her husband found a career opportunity in Washington state. A truncated newspaper clipping in the Austin History Center archives dated July 15, 1967 states that Carson will be "on a year's leave of absence" and announces the arrival of Dariusz Hochman of the Warsaw Ballet Company to be her temporary replacement.[21] I located Hochman in New York City, and he kindly e-mailed to let me know that, although he did not remember quite what happened, he never came to Austin, because the arrangements never worked out.[22] This seems to place Carson's company in a bind in the middle of the summer in 1967: Carson was leaving town, Shattuck had not yet returned from France, and Hochman was not coming. Although I find no record of any earlier relationship between Carson's

[*] The only records for the Texas Ballet Concerto, according to the Austin History Center, are located in the Kate Bergquist collection from the personal papers of Roz Forrest.
[†] Hall and Joffrey had danced together in Les Ballets de Paris.

Austin Ballet Society and Shattuck's Texas Ballet Concerto, both women had studied with George Balanchine and probably knew of each other as Austinites.

Regardless, ABS merged with Texas Ballet Concerto at some point during this period, with Stanley Hall remaining as artistic director and retaining the name Austin Ballet Society. The Carsons did not end up returning to Austin, so Hall continued to lead the company, gaining recognition with a favorable review in *Dance Magazine* by Julliard's Martha Hill at the 1969 Southwestern Regional Ballet Festival and a $1000 National Endowment for the Arts grant for his choreography in 1970.[23, 24] Shortly thereafter, in 1970, ABS changed its name to Austin Civic Ballet (ACB). President of the board Mrs. David Himmelblau described the reason for the name change in this way: "The recognition granted us in past few weeks by the city, the state and the region has made us reconsider our image."[25] Although Mrs. Himmelblau does not say exactly what this means, the implication is that the company has grown from an amateur ballet society doing demonstrations at the Garden Center into a civic endeavor representative of and beneficial to the city and performing on regional stages. A significant number of the regional companies in NARB had adopted the "Civic Ballet" designation already (for example, the Tulsa Civic Ballet).

Shattuck's role at this time is uncertain, but she is not mentioned alongside Hall in any capacity involving artistic direction. However, the Shattucks became embroiled in very high-ranking political wars at the University of Texas when their friend John Silber was fired by Frank Erwin, an ally of Texas Governor John Connally and U. S. President

Lyndon Baines Johnson.[26] Subsequently, Roger Shattuck resigned, and the couple moved in order for him to teach at the University of Virginia in 1971.

A few documents from this era demonstrate the kind of interesting fit—or lack thereof—Hall had with Austin during this time. In a local magazine article, Peggy Van Hulsteyn opens with mentions of the Austin Civic Ballet's designation as a NARB National Honor Company and an awardee of a National Endowment for the Arts grant. She asserts: "The dynamo behind this jewel of the Southwest is Stanley Hall, artistic director."[27] However, Van Hulsteyn continues, there were some aspects of the Austin community that Hall just did not understand:

> In the first year Stanley Hall was in Austin, a lead dancer broke his leg just before a spring performance, and, there being few men dancing at the time to step in, Hall rescheduled the performance for a Saturday in September. Shuddering to think about his near fatal mistake, Mr. Hall recalls: "Several irate members of the Ballet Board of Directors marched in one day and announced that I had done the unforgiveable—scheduled the ballet on the same day as a Texas football game." The board members informed the artistic director that while they were loyal patrons of the ballet, they were afraid they couldn't attend a performance when it interfered with a football game. To paraphrase Gertrude Stein: "A ballet is a ballet is a ballet, but football after all is FOOTBALL!"[28]

Stanley Hall's cultural mistakes notwithstanding, by 1971 the Austin Civic Ballet was enjoying recognition on a regional and even national level under his leadership. In this situation, Hall worked for a board of directors whose president was one of Austin society's powerful women, Betty Himmelblau. Her husband, David Himmelblau, was a distinguished University of Texas professor; the couple had moved to Austin in 1957. Betty Himmelblau was a member and leader of the American Association of University Women. During the 1970s, she played key political roles in determining the course of

Austin through her membership on the City Planning Commission from 1973 to 1975 and the Austin City Council from 1975 to 1981.[29] Betty Himmelblau emphasizes her appreciation of the ballet via a thank-you card addressed to Hall dated October 12, 1970:

> We are most appreciative of what you do for Austin Civic Ballet—the untold hours spent on each production not only in the studio, but at home or driving back & forth—always thinking and choreographing, constantly striving for perfection in all aspects and all you do . . . We have had a long road, but thanks to you it's smoother & getting better all the time.[30]

Important to the story of ballet in Austin, however, is the fact that, as 1971 came to a close, Betty Himmelblau and Stanley Hall could no longer work together.

**Stanley Hall: A Short Biography**

> It was like there was a star in town that no one knew about . . . we would see him in passing, and you could just look at him and tell he was somebody. He wasn't just part of the scenery like everybody. He carried himself in a way that you can just look at him and go, "Oh, that must be him . . . You could just tell. He just had that look about him. He didn't look like he was from Austin, maybe is the way to put it. —Greg Easley, dancer[31]

Stanley Hall came to Austin from a life that intersected with some of the most dramatic and harrowing challenges of the 20th century and that had been filled with many glamorous and prestigious opportunities in dance. Like a backup singer who was always just a few feet away from stardom, Hall worked with many of the more famous personalities in Euro-American dance, Hollywood, and Broadway from the 1930s through the early 1960s. He—along with many others—generated prominent performances that became very well known, but as an individual he remained relatively anonymous to the general public (See Appendix B, Figure 3).

Stanley Hall was born in Birmingham, England, on June 21, 1917, but not much is known about his early life. According to Greg Easley, although Hall often shared stories about himself, he rarely discussed his childhood: "That, he did keep close to the vest."[32] Most of the people I interviewed got the impression that Hall's family was not well-off financially and that his childhood was troubled. However, in an undated, fragmentary transcript from an interview with journalist Debi Martin from sometime during the 1980s, Hall provides a bit more information: a track and field coach encouraged him to take up dancing as a supplement to sprinting, and Hall "grew up around the theater" with a sister in musical comedy dance and an uncle who worked as a stage electrician.[33] What is known is that he began to study ballet at the age of 12 in London at the Vic-Wells Ballet while living with an aunt or aunts.[34, *] He became an apprentice with the company and began supporting himself at the age of 16, thus becoming independent early in his life.[35] The Vic-Wells provided Hall with a dynamic early training ground during the 1930s. It was there that he danced under the directorship of Dame Ninette de Valois and worked with Sir Frederick Ashton in several of Ashton's seminal choreographies. British ballet at this time was on the rise due in part to the artistic partnership of de Valois and Ashton.[36]

Hall joined the Royal Navy early on during World War II serving on the *H.M.S. London* as a signalman.[37] During the three years that he served during the war, his ship spent 14 months in heavy North Atlantic seas escorting Russian convoys from Iceland to

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[*] The Vic-Wells Ballet became the Sadler's Wells Ballet (1939), then the Royal Ballet (1956), although its history includes a few additional branches not listed here.

Mermansk. Then, he told a reporter in 1970, he "hit the beaches in Sicily": "I was at Anzio. I came out alive. I was lucky."[38] Hall's war service also included joining the Indian Ocean Fleet where he acquired a certificate for crossing the equator,[39] something he treasured throughout his life and displayed in his home.[40]

After the war, Hall returned to London and his previous employment with the ballet company, which had in the meantime been renamed the Sadler's Wells Ballet.[41] Much of the data about Hall's life from WWII and through his life in Hollywood comes from a unique document in Hall's estate papers: undated personal notes made by reporter Debi Martin that appear to be from an interview she conducted with Hall.[42] Most of the resulting narrative that I present here up until the Austin years comes from those notes. By 1948, Hall performed seven times a week for three months in *The Sleeping Beauty* as a courtier and partner for prima ballerina assoluta Margot Fonteyn in the famous "Rose Adagio."[43] However, in Sadler's Wells he felt he was not progressing as a dancer because the company was focused on building repertory rather than "developing its minor dancers."[44] Added to this, oral testimony also recounts that he did not get along with company director Ninette de Valois and found her personality overbearing.[45]

Then, more opportunities to perform were offered to him by the newly formed Metropolitan Ballet Company, founded by Celia Franco in London. There, Hall was able to assume many of the roles noted ballet star Erik Bruhn had first danced for the company, including leads in *Les Sylphides* and *Swan Lake, Act II.*[46] However, the Metropolitan Ballet did not last more than a couple of seasons. Hall subsequently joined

Roland Petit's new company, Ballets de Paris. Again, the exact sequence of events is unclear, but Martin's notes hint at good luck and a glamorous career:

> Margot Fonteyn guested first season. [Hall] Was invited into that company (series of lucky phone calls and being in right place, right time) . . . he replace [sic] this time another notable, Maurice Bejart. good opportunity for him. no corps, 15 dancers, all did principal and solo work . . . toured whole of europe, denmark, norway.[47]

Hall and Fonteyn had worked together in London, so it seems likely that this connection helped Hall into Petit's company, where he worked for over three years until it, too, disbanded. Yet, Petit's Ballets de Paris had a "smash" hit with Roland Petit's 1949 *Carmen*, and Hall performed it in London every night for three months in addition to touring this ballet extensively for a couple of years.[48]

A turning point in Hall's life came when, despite *Carmen*'s success, the company became stranded in Seattle, Washington when its presenters backed out in the middle of the company's American tour. According to Martin, "Fate struck again. Petit's friend, Howard Hughes, sent a plane for the company which took them to Hollywood, CA. Hughes wanted to film Carmen at RKO studios, which he owned."[49] For a short while, Hall and the other dancers lived a comfortable life of being shuttled to the movie studios in limousines. But, the movie production closed down somewhere in the middle, leaving Hall at loose ends in Hollywood during the early 1950s when an era of lavish, colorful Hollywood movie musicals was just beginning. Hall's lucky break into the movie industry came when Roland Petit was hired to choreograph such a film: *Hans Christian Anderson*, directed by Charles "King" Vidor and starring Danny Kaye and Petit's wife,

ballerina Zizi Jeanmaire. As Hall explained it to another Austin newspaper reporter, John Shown, this was another in a series of being in the right place at the right time:

> [A]n industrial show I was in sent me to San Francisco, and when that was over I went to Los Angeles on vacation . . . I walked into Michael Panieff's studio where I was going to take a class, and they said, "Oh, you've come to rehearse for the movie *Hans Christian Anderson*." And I said, "No, I don't know anything about it." They called Roland Petit and he said, "Well, hire him!" They did, and I stayed in Hollywood for ten years, it was sheer luck.[50]

*Hans Christian Anderson* got Hall into Central Casting and the (now defunct) Screen Extras Guild. This launched his prolific career in motion pictures, Broadway musicals, television specials, and nightclubs, which lasted for more than a dozen years.[51] Hall worked with and alongside many famous names during this era: Agnes de Mille, Hanya Holm, Eugene Loring, Bella Lewitzky, Gwen Verdon, Jack Cole, Gene Kelly, Marilyn Monroe, Mary Martin, Bob Hope, Betty Grable, Jane Russell, Liberace, Cyd Charisse, Abbott and Costello, and many others.[52] Although Hall was never the star attraction, he nevertheless worked rigorously as shown by this quote attributed to Hall in Martin's notes:

> It was very sad. We worked so hard. But Hollywood was Hollywood. The dancers were regarded as nothing. And the first thing that was cut was always the dance sequences. In *Designing Women*, we did some of the most difficult dance numbers I've ever done, and all you see is little bits here and there, behind Gregory Peck and Lauren Becall [sic] talking. The dance ended up all over the cutting room floor.[53]

Hall's interviews with newspaper reporters, like Martin, Shown, and others, are peppered with tidbits of insider knowledge like this. Later, in Austin, when socializing with the Austin Ballet Theatre dancers at his home, Hall liked to reminisce about the behind-the-scenes world of the glamorous companies, people, and places of his earlier days.[54]

From 1962 to 1966, Hall expanded his dance career into teaching and choreographing in California. A list of his credits from an untitled document in his estate papers lists his first choreography as *Pirates of Penzance* at the Redlands Bowl in Redlands, CA, in 1962.[55] A number of teaching, choreography, and direction credits from this period seem to stem from Long Beach and a period as the artistic director of the Royal Academy of Dancing Production group of Southern California.[56] The Royal Academy moniker suggests an affiliation with Hall's heritage in the Royal Ballet company, but I can find no further information about this group. In 1966, Hall received a telephone call from Patricia Wilde, who was performing in the Greek Theatre in Los Angeles.[57] He subsequently learned of her sister Nora White Shattuck's interest in finding a director for her company in Austin, TX. Hall recounted that his initial response was, "Where's *that*?!"[58] During her interview, Shattuck told me that she believes Hall was not just helping her out as a favor. She remembers that Hall was 49 years old and ready to retire from performing; his knees were suffering in part from jazz dance choreographer Jack Cole's signature knee slides.[59] Employment in Austin offered Hall the opportunity to teach and choreograph. His subsequent position at the University of Texas provided financial stability for a future beyond the job-to-job lifestyle of a career dance performer.

Thus, Hall's public career transitioned neatly into a new era in Austin. The next phase of this historiographic narrative, however, turns on Hall's private life and his identity as a homosexual. Dance critic Suzanne Shelton Buckley in her *Texas Monthly* article attempts to give an impression of what Stanley Hall was like: "The man who

inspires [such] devotion is enigmatic. Only heaven knows his age, and only a kamikaze pilot would ask. He's an isolated man with a veneer of camp humor, a curious blend of movieland theatricality and genteel restraint."[60] Whenever the dancers imitate Hall in the oral history interviews, their performances are strikingly similar: They elongate their postures, wave an imaginary cigarette in the air, and intone, "My dear!" with the performative codes of camp.[*, †] Hall's mannerisms suggested his homosexual identity in an era when homosexual behaviors were illegal. Before his arrival in Austin, Hall lived in worlds that created spaces for homosexuals within society. For example, during his reminiscences over dinner with the dancers Hall loved to recount his friendship with Marilyn Monroe (who "loved the gay boys and . . . would hang out with them on the set")[61] and tours with the ostentatious Liberace, and he knew of (but did not participate in) covert homosexual liaisons with Rock Hudson at the studio lot.[62]

So, into the fold of the carefully nurtured, female-centric ballet community in Austin arrived "a star . . . that no one knew about."[63] Hall came to Austin as a survivor on many fronts, public and private.

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[*] Much academic discourse surrounds the use of the term "camp," and I use it with respect to that discourse. See for example Moe Meyer, ed., *The Politics and Poetics of Camp*, New York: Routledge, 1994.

[†] Hall may have been influenced in his affectations during his early years socializing with Frederick Ashton and the Bloomsbury set. The Bloomsbury set, or Bloomsbury Group, were a collection of upper class intellectuals in early 20th century England who devoted themselves to art and polyamory. See Jennifer Homans, *Apollo's Angels: A History of Ballet*, New York: Random House, 2010, 416-417.

## The Split from Austin Civic Ballet

Despite the credit and appreciation Hall received from ACB, tensions were escalating. The newspaper archival records lack information here, seemingly skipping from Hall's successes with Austin Civic Ballet to the formation of Hall's new company, Austin Ballet Theatre (ABT), and ACB's proud announcements of the hiring of new artistic directors. As discursive sites, these newspapers only broadcast the knowledge that either side wished to reveal in order to promote the most positive narratives. Various oral testimonies, however, produce accounts that describe layers of difficulties that led to seemingly inevitable confrontations.

The incident that ostensibly caused a major fracture was that Hall canceled *The Nutcracker* scheduled for December 1971 and replaced it with *Cinderella*, a ballet he knew well from his Sadler's Wells days as the traditional British Christmas ballet. As mentioned previously, *The Nutcracker* became established during the late 1950s as an annual Christmas tradition in the United States with the Austin version being *the* primary annual production for its ballet company since 1960. As such, *The Nutcracker* served as Austin Civic Ballet's primary source of ticket revenue in addition to being an annual re-generator of community identity, pride, and audience building. Publicly, Hall gave his reasons for the change as being in the best interest of the dancers; *Cinderella* afforded them more beneficial performance experiences.[64] I speculate, however, that Hall was also asserting his authority to direct the company by challenging the ballet's board of directors, specifically its president Betty Himmelblau. As Hall recounted his exasperation years later, "You've hired me because of my talent and background and now you want to

tell me what to do."[65] In any event, the production of *Cinderella* provided public grounds for Hall's dismissal shortly thereafter due to "artistic differences."[66]

Although *Cinderella* was successful, at the next meeting of the board it was understood that Hall would be fired.[67] A "faction" of the board, led by Rich and Betty Adams, opposed Hall's imminent dismissal.[68] To protest the loss of Hall, the Adamses "invited the dancers to come to that board meeting, so many, many of the dancers were there, and, also, the dancers' mothers."[69] According to oral testimony, Betty Himmelblau, in anticipation of this uprising, attempted to have the meeting closed to the public. However, Betty Adams "contacted the city" and affirmed that such a meeting must be open to the public,[70] but an announcement was made as the meeting began that only board members would be allowed to speak.[71] There may have even been police officers in attendance in case things got out of hand, although the details of their presence (or lack thereof) are unclear. Dancer mother Helen Spear remembered,

> [Himmelblau's group] were afraid because there was so much support for Stanley; they were afraid. I don't know what they were afraid of, but whatever it was, it was ridiculous. Can you imagine ballet fans causing some kind of riot and breaking furniture? [72, *]

Although riots, in fact, did not break out, the interviewees describe how the evening did turn "very ugly"[73]: "[T]here was a very angry and antagonistic feeling at the meeting;"[74] "It was just terrible, you know."[75]

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[*] After their interviews, Spear and Kate Bergquist had been in conversation about the board meeting trying to recall how everything had happened, and Spear called to impress upon me that any police presence was uncertain in detail.

The extreme nature of the tensions that existed in this situation was not entirely the result of artistic disagreements, however. Many participants assert that, although these differences may have existed, Hall was actually fired for the manner in which he conducted his personal life, even though this was never overtly stated by ACB.[76] I cannot determine with certainty if there was a specific indiscretion that occurred during this period. Journalist John Bustin hinted at scandal in his "Show World" column for the *Austin American-Statesman,* writing that Hall became "crossways with some outspoken members of the ACB board of directors over matters of artistic direction (reports on the actual dissent vary widely and wildly, depending on whom you're talking to)."[77] Hall's homosexuality was the unspoken subtext, but it was clearly a factor as these testimonies demonstrate:

> I think that most of the board of directors and dancers felt that that [Hall's homosexuality] was probably the underlying cause and that the other causes were somewhat trumped up . . . I remember [board member name omitted] giving an impassioned speech . . . "Your Stanley Hall is not lily white," he said, and left it at that, I believe. So you can see the kind of feeling that was going around. Nothing specific was said except that he had gone against the wishes of the board in staging . . . *Cinderella*.[78]

> I think Stanley got fired for personal reasons . . . And I'm sure it was richly deserved . . . But it was all kind of under the table, and . . . whatever was being brought up as the grounds at that meeting, it felt like it was not the real story.[79]

> They were trying to fire Stanley Hall. And I think because he was gay.[79]

Hall's dismissal at this meeting was primarily a foregone conclusion. Both his opponents and supporters knew that this was on the agenda. Bergquist paints the procedure as "prearranged" when she describes the process, ending with Hall's supporters all leaving. She narrates,

> [T]hey were going to say something and he was going to say something and that would be the end of it, in other words. He would not be following their criteria, whatever, at which point, all the parents got up and left and all the dancers got up and left.[80]

And, with this exodus, Hall's supporters—"The Friends of Stanley Hall"—immediately located studio space and began plans to teach classes and form another company with Hall as artistic director.[81] In the split, Hall walked away with several board members, all but two of the ACB dancers, at least two other ballet instructors, and many of the older students of the academy.[82] Hall's well-known popularity as a teacher was a loss to ACB, despite the ramifications of any of his lesser-known behavior.

A month later, Austin Ballet Theatre was formed, with the Articles of Incorporation dated February, 1972. The continuing ill will and divisiveness between ACB and ABT contributed to a highly charged rivalry that shaped Austin Ballet Theatre throughout its existence, as discussed in Chapter VII. Although the new company located a studio for classes and organized quickly to perform in the Zilker Park outdoor amphitheater in June 1972, without funding ABT could not afford to rent an indoor theatre during its early years.

**The Armadillo World Headquarters**

> During its 10-year run—from Aug. 7, 1970 to Dec. 31, 1980—the Armadillo was widely recognized as Austin's social, musical, and artistic hub. The notion of our city as a "live music capital" was born there. Founded by an eclectic band of hippies and artists, the Armadillo started off as a ragtag counter-culture haven and grew into something celebrated by the mainstream. *Rolling Stone* wrote about it, sure. But so did *Time* magazine. Bikers went there. Rednecks went there. Students went there. The mayor went there. —Brad Buckholz, journalist[83]

Although a small group of musicians, supporters, and visual artists seminal to the Austin scene during the 1970s founded the Armadillo World Headquarters (AWHQ), Eddie Wilson sometimes calls himself the "finder" of the Armadillo.[84] In a legendary-sounding tale often recounted in sources such as music scholar Jason Mellard's *Progressive Country*, Wilson was attending a music show at the Cactus Club, a place that alternated honky-tonk evenings with occasional psychedelic and folk music acts. The plumbing was out of order, so Wilson was outside relieving himself. Mellard writes, "Amid an auto repair lot, cafeteria, and roller rink, he spied a hulk of an abandoned structure."[85] Wilson described to me in an interview how he got curious and investigated:

> That's how I found the building, standing on the outside of it, behind the little beer joint next door, looking up and seeing these broken windows in some cases, but at the top of about a 20-some-odd-foot cinderblock wall. So I knew that there had to be a large room on the other side.
>
> [A] mechanical drawing class [I took] at McCallum [High School], I think, was the tip that gave me reason to go around, find a door, pick a lock, get into this big space that was completely dark except for the little light coming through from the parking lot of the place that I'd seen it, and pulled my car through a garage door and made a lot of racket, couldn't be quiet. I knocked over some paint cans or something, just definitely bad audio right off the bat, and then discovered this huge room.[86]

As the manager of the psychedelic music group Shiva's Headband, Wilson was on the lookout for hippie-friendly spaces where the band could play. Although a few small spaces existed, larger music venues catered primarily to a "redneck" country music scene that could be antagonistic toward the counterculture to a point of harassment and violence.[87] A shift in country music was burgeoning, however, with influences from 1960s folk and psychedelia and cultural roots throughout Texas (including Czech dance

halls).[88] Austin provided the base for its development with the Armadillo World Headquarters.

According to Mellard, Shiva's Headband was "perhaps the most important band in managing the transition between this countercultural underground and the progressive country-helmed ascent of the scene in the city's life."[89] The band was led by Spencer Perskin, who was involved with the University of North Texas student Folk Music Club in Denton, TX.[*] This club was founded in 1963 by University of North Texas English professor Stan Alexander, who had been involved in the music scene of Austin while a doctoral student at the University of Texas. Author Jan Reid describes the Sub—the University of North Texas student union where the club met—as "Threadgill's North," in honor of Austin's Threadgill's music club, where Janis Joplin and many blues legends played.[90, †] Of the students there, Reid writes the following: "It was an audacious, musically directionless gathering of aspiring performers and hangers-on, but [they] were bound for a musical reunion" in Austin after disbanding when Professor Alexander moved from Denton a couple of years later.[91] Members included Eddie Wilson and other musicians who went on to notable careers, including Steve Fromholz, Ray Wylie Hubbard, and Michael Murphey, in addition to Perskin.[92] Wilson became the manager of

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[*] Details of this Denton period can be found in Jan Ried, *The Improbable Rise of Redneck Rock: New Edition*, Austin: The University of Texas Press, 2004, 57-59. I especially include Denton in this dissertation because my own doctoral school, Texas Woman's University, is located there. This section from Reid's book opens on page 57 with: "If someone had set out in search of a music nativity in the autumn of 1963, the campus of North Texas State University in Denton might have seemed an unlikely place to look."
[†] Eddie Wilson now owns Threadgill's.

Shiva's Headband after Perskin unexpectedly showed up at Wilson's house in Austin and stayed for six weeks.[93]

In addition to having connections with Denton, Austin served as an intersection for numerous other counterculture wayfarers from Haight-Ashbury. Willie Nelson, country music star, attested in an interview with scholar Joshua Long: "There was a strong Austin to San Francisco axis in those days. The towns reminded me of each other. If San Francisco was the capital of the hippie world, then Austin was the hippie Palm Springs."[94] As Mellard summarizes, "As with other college communities across the country, a strong Austin-San Francisco migration stream buttressed developments in both communities," with Janis Joplin being Austin's most famous participant in this scene.[95] (Shiva's Headband opened for Joplin in her last concert in Austin in 1970, a few months before her death.[96]) Joplin's biographer Alice Echols explains the appeal of Austin in the context of folk music during this time period:

> In more urban places like Cambridge, Berkeley, and Greenwich Village the search for authenticity led folk music mavens to seek out obscure records and songbooks. But in Austin authenticity was considerably less hard to come by. Texas was a region still alive with 'real' music, including country and western.[97]

The populism of the 1960s thus supported investigations into cultural influences outside of metropolitan privileging, and Texas provided a large, diverse, and storied rural landscape to explore.

Thus, Shiva's Headband found a place to play at AWHQ during the same year as the band's appearance with Joplin. As a plumber's stepson, Wilson knew the large structure had potential as a venue when he saw the bathroom facilities: "The fact that it

was made as a sports center for large crowds meant that we had great auditorium-like restrooms, men and women's rooms. That was what made it possible."[98] He also credits his mother and stepfather for making the venture possible through their volunteer labor: "[M]y stepfather was a plumber, and if there's anything that is just absolutely not affordable and you look back at what we did, it would've been the plumbing."[99] Wilson and Perskin envisioned the building as a place for Shiva's Headband to "call home," and the band's contract money with a California label provided some early funding.[100]

The building at 525½ E. Riverside Drive was, by all accounts, a large space that could accommodate 1500 people for a variety of uses; however, the space was never noted for its glamor. Although Armadillo legend waxes great, Reid writes of another perspective:

> Armadillo reality was another matter. The armory was cavernous, filled with acoustical dead spots, and was hindered by lack of comfort, atmospheric misery in winter and summer, and managerial inexperience.[101]

In some ways, the facility was a work in progress relying on both staff and numerous volunteers. Over the years, these workers built the "Delightful Beer Garden," moved the stage from one end of the hall to the other, improved the acoustics, installed heaters and air conditioning, and expanded the bar and kitchen service (See Appendix B, Figure 4).[102] Jim Franklin, as artist-in-residence, painted murals featuring armadillos throughout the venue. At the same time, the building always retained a casual, hand-to-mouth feel that

became part of its identity. For example, for music performances, the stage was covered with carpet scraps, and the musicians loved it:

> Most places you play you're standing on a hardwood stage and it's all very unfamiliar. It's like the band fragments into separate entities because of the unfamiliarity. But that carpet at the Armadillo gives a band cohesiveness. You can dig your heels into it and make believe you're playing at home.[103]

To give another example of the facility's eccentricity, patrons had to find the entrance by walking around the side of the building from the street. And, the parking lot was so rough that artist Franklin described it as the "craters of the moon."[104]

A diverse group of people all had important roles in the establishment and running of the Armadillo World Headquarters over the years; to leave any of them out of a historiographic account is a travesty to those who were there. Nevertheless, for the scope of this dissertation, I have chosen to focus on Eddie Wilson, Jim Franklin, and Mike Tolleson: Wilson, because he was the manager with whom Stanley Hall partnered in offering the venue to the ballet; Franklin, because he brought the armadillos to the AWHQ; and Tolleson, because his vision of a "community arts laboratory" enabled the inclusion of the ballet at the Armadillo.

Shortly after Wilson leased the property, visual and performance artist Jim Franklin "moved his mattress into the new attic" and took up residence as the on-site visionary.[105] Described by Reid as "a hardcore freak and eccentric," Franklin had also been the artist-in-residence at Shiva Headband's former home venue, the Vulcan Gas Company, where he generated visual art and "much of the defiant spirit"[106]:

> [Jim Franklin] is nearly universally described by his peers as the resident genius of the Headquarters. His work covers the walls of the hall and outdoor garden,

> and his studio behind the stage is something to behold, filled with large murals, armadillo shells, mannikins [sic] and interesting pieces of trash.[107]

Although Franklin was not the first artist to adopt the armadillo as a hippie symbol,[108, *] his dedicated immersion into the depiction and lore of armadillos became "a psychedelic genre all its own" in concert posters, album covers, and comics,[109] so much so that a New Yorker article in 1971 dubbed him "the Armadillo Man."[110] Early on, Franklin described the relationship of hippies and armadillos: "They dig underground. We're underground."[111] But others have expanded on Franklin's original statement. Consider this oft-cited statement by journalist and author Bud Shrake, a seminal member of the AWHQ founding group, for a 1971 *Sports Illustrated* article about the venue:

> [Armadillos] love to sleep all day, then roam and eat all night. They are gentle, keep their noses in the grass and share their homes with others. Perhaps most significant, they are weird-looking, unfairly maligned and picked on, and have developed a hard shell and a distinctive aroma. They do far more good than harm, and yet the usual social reaction toward an armadillo is to attempt to destroy it.[112]

Franklin's armadillos also reflected his political sensibilities. In his drawings, armadillos "counterattacked riot police . . . staged raucous music festivals, copulated with the Texas capitol building, flew over dangerous roadways . . . and 'balled' for Charles Manson."[113] The armadillo as an anti-establishment symbol gained traction with many college students at the University of Texas, and a populist initiative to change the school's mascot from the iconic longhorn to an armadillo passed the student senate but did not go any further.[114] As Wilson was establishing his new venue, he was taken with

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[*] This is often attributed to Glenn Whitehead and Tony Bell at the University of Texas humor publication the *Texas Ranger*.

the idea of incorporating armadillos into the name: "The armadillo itself is a symbol that I and Jim Franklin and other hippies liked."[115] He conceived of the name *Armadillo National Headquarters* in reference to how the building was configured by the owner with the intention of being leased as a National Guard armory, but co-founder Shrake, who was keeping in mind the troubling contemporary context of the Vietnam War, suggested *Armadillo World Headquarters* to give a more global perspective to the name.[116]

Another founder who was integral to the AWHQ—and especially to the establishment of a mission that led to its eventual hosting of the ballet—was Mike Tolleson. Tolleson came to Austin from a background that included a law degree, experience in the music industry, and significant music-related counterculture experiences in London.[117] He was inspired by a late-1960s London experiment called the Arts Lab, a cinema and live event space that featured artists such as John Lennon (whom Tolleson met) and Yoko Ono.[118] In this, Tolleson was part of an "Arts Lab movement" that spawned similar efforts in Britain, Amsterdam, Paris, and other places.[119] The Arts Lab movement envisioned spaces that could present any variety or combination of arts (film, dance, theatre, music, or happenings) and even serve as a "crash pad" for the counterculture community.[120] Tolleson's vision for the Armadillo World Headquarters was that of a "community arts laboratory," not just a music venue.[121] Although the AWHQ was largely a place for music, the venue was interested in hosting other types of activities, and this is evident from its inception. Events at the Armadillo included craft fairs, fundraisers and conferences for progressive causes, a performance by the San

Francisco Mime Troupe, and lectures by Guru Ram Dass. After ABT made the venue their home, AWHQ accommodated a small number of performances by local modern dancers and classical musicians as well.

The years of the AWHQ's history in music are well documented elsewhere.[*] To summarize, hundreds of music acts played there. Some were well known at the time, some were on the road to fame, and some were (and remained) more obscure. Shiva's Headband opened the AWHQ and played there often, but the venue eventually hosted a wide variety of headliners, such as the Pointer Sisters, Bette Midler, AC/DC, Bruce Springsteen (as a virtual unknown), Count Basie, Patti Smith, the Police, Frank Zappa, Taj Mahal, Jerry Garcia, Ted Nugent, the Clash, and others too numerous to list here.[†] The Armadillo World Headquarters is also salient in music discourse as the birthplace of a musical genre known as "cosmic cowboy," "progressive country," "outlaw country," or "redneck rock."[122] The AWHQ became known as the place where "goat-roper met hippie," and the two factions of conservative country music fans and liberal hippie folk music fans met peaceably to develop "the Austin sound."[123] *Texas Monthly* journalist Spong opened a retrospective with this summation:

> Forty years ago, Willie, Waylon, Jerry Jeff, and a whole host of Texas misfits grew their hair long, snubbed Nashville, and brought the hippies and rednecks

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[*] Sources include the Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas at Austin, the South Austin Museum of Popular Culture, the Austin History Center, the scholarship of Jan Reid and Jason Mellard, archives of the *Texas Monthly* and the *Austin-American Statesman*, and others.

[†] A helpful reference list based on archival documents can be found online at the Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas at Austin website: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/taro/utcah/00031/cah-00031.html.

> together. Country music has never been the same . . . the pivotal year was 1972, and the place was Austin.[124]

Music historian Mellard pins "the origins of progressive country to a single performance, that of Willie Nelson at the Armadillo on August 12, 1972."[125] Willie Nelson—along with other country music artists he coerced to play at the AWHQ during the early years, such as Waylon Jennings and Kris Kristofferson—found in Austin a new center from which to disrupt the country music industry in Nashville, with its strict production and distribution parameters. The experimental philosophy of the AWHQ provided this opportunity.

Wilson recalls that, before the Armadillo World Headquarters opened, he invited anyone to pitch ideas to him about the new venue: "I was like the Grand Pooh-Bah, listening to everybody's plea for space . . . . Everybody wanted to do something that they didn't have a place to do it in. And so—I listened to more bad ideas than you can ever imagine."[126] But, one of the first ideas he thought was viable was the installation of Austin's first organic bakery and a kitchen facility.[127] The Armadillo eventually evolved to offer a full menu that included inexpensive vegetarian and non-vegetarian fare and an outdoor beer garden, which made the venue a place where people could comfortably spend many hours relaxing.

Some of those hours might have been spent stoned. The AWHQ had such a reputation for marijuana use that the place and the practice remain nearly synonymous in the public imagination: "If you remember the Armadillo, you weren't there."[128] Yet the

staff I interviewed—Wilson, Mechling, and Franklin—all felt that the use was fairly discrete in light of the drug's illegal status:

> Jim Franklin: And actually, there wasn't really a free, out-in-the-open smoking of pot happening at the Armadillo. I mean, it has the reputation of that.
>
> Caroline Sutton Clark: Right, it does, yeah.
>
> Jim Franklin: But it was illegal, and you could get busted. You know?
>
> Caroline Sutton Clark: Mm-hmm.
>
> Jim Franklin: So, no one really displayed it. The only times when rock and roll audiences were smoking is when there was such a big show that the police couldn't possibly bust everyone.[129]

In addition, Wilson had to make a show of discouraging its use: "[O]f course, I had to get on stage and act like I was the hard-ass and tell everybody, you know, not to do that."[130] But he freely admits that smoking marijuana was still a part of the AWHQ culture: "Cheap pot and cold beer is what got the whole thing started."[131]

He further recounts the following anecdote with Ann Richards, before she became governor: "Ann Richards used to say, 'How do you keep from getting busted?' looking out and seeing 1,500 people smoking pot. And I answered her, and I really meant it, 'Ann, we're not doing anything wrong.'"[132] Within the various histories of the AWHQ runs a narrative thread that suggests that the police never raided the AWHQ for marijuana use because the potential for complications and backlash outweighed the law among a group that was otherwise behaving peaceably. Perhaps this recurring claim originates from Reid's 1973 text, *The Improbable Rise of Redneck Rock,* which states the following:

> [Although] the sight and smell of marijuana smoke was known to stop Armadillo newcomers in their tracks, the Austin police left the place alone, possibly because

> they knew if they raided the place riot might ensue, and some politicians and off-duty policemen might be among the take.[133]

Other illegal drugs also had some presence at the AWHQ. In David Menconi's master's thesis about the AWHQ, he quotes a staff member recalling how, when Quaaludes came out in 1973, there were "passed-out teenybops in the parking lot stacked like plywood."[134] However, in this research, the only drug to emerge in the data was marijuana.

The Armadillo World Headquarters remained open for 10 years and, during that time, began to symbolize Austin. Journalist Anthony Astrachan, writing for the *New Republic* in 1976, declared the following: "The city's best-known monuments are the Lyndon B. Johnson [Presidential] Library and the Armadillo World Headquarters."[135] The AWHQ's success was a result of many factors, including early and ongoing national attention from *Rolling Stone* magazine.[136] The club famously provided the inspiration—although not the venue—for the PBS television show *Austin City Limits*, which remains the longest-running show in the network's history. When Reid's book about "redneck rock" was published in 1973, the director of programming at the Austin PBS affiliate was persuaded after reading it to propose a show featuring the Austin sound.[137] The pilot was filmed with Willie Nelson in 1974, and national airing began in 1975 with sponsorship from the Lone Star Brewery. The theme song for the show was originally Gary P. Nunn's 1973 "London Homesick Blues," with a chorus that begins "I wanna go home with the armadillo," in honor of the AWHQ. The character and support of Austin audiences became legendary among touring acts, as Reid chronicles:

> [T]he most obvious plus was the crowd: mobile [not in chairs], shouting, native-costumed people young people beside themselves with beer, music, and the thought of being Texans. The dress wasn't exotic like in San Francisco; the style ran to boots, jeans, t-shirts, long hair, and cowboy hats. The bellowing mobs scared the daylights out of Bette Midler, exacted a smile of karmic delight from John McLaughlin and the Mahavishnu Orchestra, enticed Billy Joe Shaver to play several times for free, and subjected John Prine to the stifling early-summer heat of the Armadillo. People in the audience said Prine was too drunk to play. Actually he was on the verge of a heat stroke, but he had nothing but kind words for Austin and the Armadillo after his performance.[138]

These audiences reflected the lyrics of Nunn's song about wanting to go home with the armadillo to a Texas bar with "the friendliest people and the prettiest women you've ever seen."[139]

Despite its many successes and accolades as the birthplace of Austin's live music scene, the Armadillo World Headquarters struggled financially through many of its years. Indeed, for many, the narrative of its financial woes seems to be part of its nostalgic charm. Some discuss an idealistic philosophy of keeping ticket and beer prices low as a sort of sacrifice for the community.[140] Tolleson recounts, "A lot of people have very good ideas and want to put those ideas in motion, but many young people have very negative perspectives towards money and business."[141] The Armadillo was often on the brink of closing; its history is full of close calls, angels stepping in to help financially, volunteers and staff generously giving of their time without pay, and a very patient landlord, M. K. Hage. The AWHQ even declared bankruptcy in 1976 only to reorganize and keep going for four more years. In 1976, Wilson detached himself from managing the venue, and his feelings represent the behind-the-scenes difficulties of running such a place: "People don't remember this part: months and months of drudgery. People talk about the

Armadillo like it was a huge success, but there were months where hardly anyone showed up."[142] In addition, he said, "It wasn't as much fun for me as it was for everybody else."[143]

Eventually, despite operating in the black financially during its final years, the Armadillo World Headquarters closed its doors. Hage received a large offer for the land and gave the AWHQ a year's notice that their lease was up. On New Year's Eve 1980, the Armadillo gave its farewell concert. Shortly thereafter, it was razed to the ground to make way for a parking lot—one without the craters of the moon.

**Austin Ballet Theatre at the Armadillo World Headquarters**

About two years after the music hall opened and just before its big boom as the home of progressive country music, Hall and a few dancers walked through the front door to investigate performing ballet there. Austin Ballet Theatre was formed in February, 1972 and had its first performance at the outdoor amphitheater at Zilker Park in June of that year, but the company was still trying to find an indoor theatre that they could afford with almost no budget. Sarah Wisdom, a dancer with the company, was a regular at the Armadillo and conceived of the idea. Stanley Hall displayed his typical dry sense of humor when recalling this origin story for a newspaper interview in 1978: "Sarah Wisdom (a former ABT member) said, 'I'll call up Eddie Wilson and see if we can use the Armadillo.' . . . I just looked at her like everybody else—you must be out of your mind! I'll get contaminated!"[144]

A small group from Austin Ballet Theatre went to inspect the space: Hall, Wisdom, and Wisdom's friend and fellow dancer Ken Owen were among them. Owen

recounted, "I was there when we first went and looked at the Armadillo to see if it was possible. So we went down there and looked at it, and I was like, oh my God, this place is awful."[145] There were no wings, no proscenium, and no chairs. Despite any misgivings, Hall saw the potential of the space for ballet when he evaluated the height of the ceiling. As he explained for the newspaper, "[D]ancers appear to a visual advantage if the audience has the illusion of freedom provided above the stage."[146] Hall and Wilson struck a deal: The ballet could perform on Sunday evenings (typically a slow night for booking musical acts), and they would split the ticket income 50/50, which meant that ABT did not have to outlay any money for space rental. Although the ticket prices would be low, the Armadillo World Headquarters received some financial stability as a result of ticket income and beer and food sales. Thus, a mutually beneficial arrangement began.

Austin Ballet Theatre's first concert at the AWHQ was on October 1, 1972 (See Appendix B, Figures 1, 5). The doors opened at 5 PM for dinner in the Delightful Beer Garden, admission for adults was $1, and the show began at 7:00 PM. Thereafter, the ballet company performed on the second Sunday of the month from October through May, skipping January due to a lack of rehearsal time over the winter holidays. In June, ABT performed a free concert at the Zilker amphitheater, and the company did not perform in July or August; Hall traveled during these months to New York City and Europe. The company would reassemble in September and begin to rehearse for the October season opener at the Armadillo. This typical schedule created a total of around seven AWHQ shows each year. The company gradually added performances in more traditional venues and some regional touring to its roster, which made for a busy season.

Hall choreographed the majority of the ballets, with a prolific output that offered new work every month. A tally of the company repertory indicates that Hall choreographed 70 to 75 ballets during the company's eight years at the AWHQ. Some of these were re-stagings of classical works such as the "Bluebird pas de deux" from *Sleeping Beauty*, but many were original ballets.[147] Hall generally presented a mixed repertory evening of three to five ballets in a variety of styles. During these years, ABT dancers took class on weeknights, rehearsed over three weekends, and performed a full show on the fourth weekend. Such a schedule works out to eleven rehearsals for a company of 25 to 40 dancers before a full dance concert of three to five works every month, with no weekends off.

Austin Ballet Theatre changed and evolved unevenly along the way as dancers improved in their skills, with some leaving to pursue professional careers while new dancers arrived. Toward the end of the 1970s, a sea change occurred for the ballet company in synchrony with the closing of the AWHQ. A publicly-funded United States Bicentennial tour during 1976 allowed the company to tour 27 small towns in Texas, such as Fredericksburg, Fort Stockton, and Paris, TX. The dancers performed in a variety of theaters and, for the first time, received a small amount of pay. ABT was also gradually able to rent proscenium theaters in Austin, such as the Paramount Theatre and the University of Texas's Hogg Auditorium. Although the company appreciated its roots at the Armadillo World Headquarters, as a result of these other experiences some dancers began to yearn for more conventional ballet venues and for a more professional operation that was able to pay its performers. Although the closing of the AWHQ was bittersweet,

the company also hoped for new opportunities in more traditional theatrical settings. Its last performance at the Armadillo World Headquarters was December 7, 1980. Hall invited anyone who had ever been in the company to join in for the closing number, and the show ended with a balloon drop and a chorus of *Auld Lang Syne.* One of the dancers penned the following tribute on a dressing room wall:

> once in love with 'Dillo
> always in love with 'Dillo
> once we had found her
> couldn't do without her
> make her a hotel, we can't stay!
>
> once you've danced at 'Dillo
> forget the Met, it's 'Dillo!
> dance for the bikers
> and the ballet-likers
> sitting next to Mom & the kids
>
> you're munching on a plate of 'Dillo nachos,
> and tacos, and beer . . .
> then reading the graffiti in the bathroom
> NO PLACE LIKE HERE!
>
> once in love with 'Dillo
> always in love with 'Dillo
> though she'll be leaving
> we will still be grieving
> 'cause we can't deny it, you see
> that 'Dillo's been the heart of ABT![148]

And, without its heart, the company struggled to survive. The loss of the Armadillo placed Austin Ballet Theatre in direct competition for theater space with its longtime nemesis and competitor, the Austin Civic Ballet. Austin was not a big enough city to support two ballet companies with similar agendas, including presenting a theater season, becoming a professional organization with salaried staff and dancers, and seeking

financial support through similar fundraising tactics. Although ABT had some successes as the "other" ballet company, ultimately it could not compete with an organization that had been building steadily through public and private funding,[149] nor could it necessarily contend with the company that provided Austin with *The Nutcracker* as an annual Christmas tradition. Austin Civic Ballet changed its name to *Ballet Austin* in 1983 to signal its upcoming shift from amateur to professional (salaried) dancers for the 1983-1984 season. By this time, Hall was also ready to retire, and he hoped to shift ABT's artistic directorship to a successor.[150, *] Although an internal document exists that outlines an ambitious plan for Austin Ballet Theatre to focus on community outreach from 1986 to 1992, the company folded in 1986.[151]

So, while ballet at a beer hall may at first glance seem incongruous, an investigation into the history of the two organizations reveals how they found common ground as socially marginalized artists: Stanley Hall as a homosexual with artistic, cultural, and personal differences contesting the social world of Austin ballet, and the hippies of the Armadillo as a self-identified counterculture that faced struggles of its own against prejudice and social injustice. Along these lines, by all accounts Hall and Wilson got along extremely well, and their acceptance of each other facilitated the long run of the ballet. As Wilson explained in 1973, "We were as different as night and day, but we were

[*] Although former ABT dancer Ricardo Garcia succeeded Hall as artistic director to some extent, Hall remained at ABT, and the shift to Garcia never fully gained traction. Also of note is that the student author of the article referenced in this citation, Septime Webre, danced with ABT and is now Artistic Director of the Washington Ballet.

perfectly suited for each other . . . One band of renegades found another," and monthly ballet at the Armadillo World Headquarters was born.[152]

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[143] Eddie Wilson, interview by author, Austin, TX, August 30, 2014.
[144] Cynthia Milne, "ABT:…beer and ballet at the Armadillo," *The Daily Texan,* September 11, 1978, 7.
[145] Ken Owen, interview by author, Austin, TX, March 21, 2014.
[146] Cynthia Milne, "ABT:…Beer and Ballet at the Armadillo," *The Daily Texan,* September 11, 1978, 7.
[147] Stanley Hall, curriculum vita, [1972?]. From the personal collection of Greg Easley, Austin, TX.
[148] Photograph, Austin History Center archives, box D0200, file 7.
[149] Debi Martin, interview notes, 4. From the personal collection of Greg Easley, Austin, TX.
[150] Septime Webre, "Austin Ballet Theatre Remains Youthful," *Daily Texan*, May 4, 1984, Austin History Center archives, box D0200, file 7.
[151] Stanley Hall, curriculum vita, [1972?]. From the personal collection of Greg Easley, Austin, TX.

[152] Quoted in Suzanne Shelton Buckley, "Armadillos in Toe Shoes," *The Texas Monthly*, October 1973, accessed February 28, 2012, http://www.texasmonthly.com/cms/printthis.php?file=performance. php&issue=1973-10-01.

# CHAPTER IV

## THEMATIC ANALYSIS: DANCERS AND PERFORMING

In Chapter II: Methodology, I described my decision to organize the data chapters on the basis of what the participants identified as the most important things to know about Austin Ballet Theatre (ABT) at the Armadillo World Headquarters (AWHQ). This chapter investigates a theme foregrounded by the data sources: how the dancers had the opportunity to perform frequently and the benefits that they experienced as a result. One of the dancers described this as follows:

> When Austin Ballet Theatre started, a lot of the focus on performing was **teaching dancers to perform through performing.** And [Hall] wanted to give dancers, ah, an opportunity to perform frequently in order to get that experience [emphasis added]. —John Logan, dancer[1]

Thus, while pursuing the research purpose of creating a history of ABT at the Armadillo, I found that the excitement that dancers expressed about performing frequently became part of the narrative. Accordingly, while analyzing the data for this project, a recurring memo developed: "Stanley Hall knew dancers love to dance." The oral testimony that supports this simple statement is substantial. This chapter explores the questions: How did ABT manage to perform so frequently? How did the dancers experience dancing differently because of these monthly Armadillo shows? And, how can these insights be useful to the field?

## Frequency of Performances

A striking feature of Austin Ballet Theatre concerts at the Armadillo was their frequency, with the company performing on second Sundays except during January and the summer months: June, July, and August.[*] In addition, ABT performed occasionally at other theaters in Austin and in other Texas communities. Given that the dancers only rehearsed on weekends,[†] this loaded production schedule attests to how the whole endeavor benefitted from an enthusiasm among Hall, other artistic staff, dancers, volunteers, and families to make these ballet performances happen. By contrast, most dance companies of any size that self-produce need to plan ahead for months or years in advance to obtain funding, rent venues, strategize marketing, make costumes, and attend to other areas of dance production in addition to the creative work in the studio of choreographing and rehearsing the dances.

The Armadillo World Headquarters, however, did the business of concert production differently. Armadillo manager Eddie Wilson presented the local, fledgling ballet company with the same kind of opportunity he might offer to a local, fledgling rock band: splitting the ticket income 50/50 for a Sunday night show, which would otherwise be an off night. Thus, ABT did not have to expend rent or deposits; it just received the income.

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[*] January was skipped due to the winter holidays, June because the company performed a weekend of free shows at Zilker Park that month, and July and August because the families took summer vacations and the heat was too much for the Armadillo's air conditioning to ameliorate sufficiently.

[†] Rehearsals occurred on Friday evenings and during the day on Saturdays and Sundays.

## A "Repertory Company"

With such limited rehearsal periods and inexperienced dancers, ABT had to have strategies for being able to perform frequently. For example, Stanley Hall introduced his idea of a "repertory company" as the means by which the company could stage shows monthly. Hall's definition of a repertory ballet company was a troupe that kept several ballets in rehearsal consistently and performed these works repeatedly each season, occasionally adding new works to the repertory and putting others on hiatus.[2] Such practice was in contrast to an amateur regional ballet company model of this era, which presented two to three shows total per year (including *The Nutcracker*) with entirely different programs. Hall's repertory concept came from his own experiences with companies that performed the same ballets repeatedly and often: Hall had trained with the Vic-Wells in London, which presented repertory constantly at Sadler's Wells Theater and Covent Garden; Hall toured *Carmen* with Roland Petit's company for months at a time; and the original Broadway shows Hall danced in later, such as *Oklahoma!*, ran for weeks, months, and years (although Hall rotated in and out of these casts). In several newspaper features discussing the early formation of the company, Hall explains for the public how ABT is a "repertory company," a phrase that became a persistent code in the oral history data as well. An article in the daily newspaper from the early days of ABT—"Ballet: Stanley Hall's Dream Now Reality"—presents Hall's perspective of how repertory companies function:

> According to Hall, the repertory concept is working. "You cannot build a repertoire by doing two performances a year . . . . You have to create big ballets for your best dancers, and when they leave, you've created something specially

> made for somebody and it's difficult to replace them." In a repertory dance theatre, Hall continued, a built-in platoon system alleviates this problem. "If you have a repertory company, you train people continually in these roles and you keep several smaller ballets in constant rehearsal." . . . Hall's idea is to keep his group of approximately 20 dancers performing regularly . . . providing professional experience for his dancers.[3]

The repertory model, then, served the function of providing learning opportunities for the dancers through repeated experiences. According to extensive data, Hall privileged performances as an important part of the process of learning ballet, and Austin Ballet Theatre primarily served as a vehicle for his dancers to learn. Newspaper articles from the time confirm this idea:

> The goal of ABT . . . is to give all company members a chance to perform.[4]

> [Hall's] purpose for the company and the school is to train dancers for a professional career.[5]

Anecdotes from the oral history data also reflect this theme:

> He really wanted to have a repertory company that had frequent performances, gave people a chance to grow in roles.[6]

> He had that idea of it being a very open, um, kind of training ground for young dancers to understand stagecraft.[7]

> We didn't talk about things like business models then, but I think it was part of his overall plan was to . . . educate individual dancers.[8]

Thus, the functions and practices of an identity as a repertory ballet company are remembered as a core mission for Austin Ballet Theatre.

The self-identification of ABT as repertory company with a mission of learning had a political function within the context of the Austin ballet community as well. When Hall split from the Austin Civic Ballet, he championed the development of an identity for

Austin Ballet Theatre as a repertory company to distinguish it from ACB's singleton practices, which were in line with the regional model. The article quoted above ("Ballet: Stanley Hall's Dream Now Reality") appeared in the *Austin American-Statesman* in 1972, after ABT's first performance at the Armadillo and before its second. In addition to explaining the functions of a repertory company, the article establishes Hall as a teacher first and foremost, and it presents the repertory model as ABT's unique contribution to the city. When Hall realized the "range of talent" in Austin, the article explains, he dreamed of creating a company to foster such dancers and therefore initiated "repertory ballet, an unusual concept for a city the size of Austin."[9] Hall also disseminated a narrative for his firing from Austin Civic Ballet that painted him as an advocate for the dancers at the expense of his own job.[10] For those not privy to information about any of the alleged clandestine maneuvers of the Board—which were believed to have happened because several Board members felt that Hall needed to go as a result of his homosexual behaviors—this narrative is generally understood to explain Hall's leaving.[11] An example that illustrates the narrative privileging Hall's dedication to providing the best teaching/learning environment for the dancers comes from ABT audience regular Helen Spear:

> They wanted him to do *Nutcracker* every Christmas, and he said he didn't want to do that because he didn't think it was enough of a challenge for his dancers, and a lot of time and energy and money goes into *Nutcracker*, and he didn't think it was the best kind of thing for his dancers in terms of their own personal development and growth—or professional development and growth.[12]

Although it may well have been true that Hall envisioned his idea of a repertory company for the benefits that frequent performances could afford the dancers, such a beneficial

mission also served to organize the fledgling company's identity and to engender public sympathy for Hall and his unique endeavors with ABT at the Armadillo.

In summation, Hall's vision of a repertory company made the frequency of shows at the Armadillo achievable. During every concert, some of the ballets had been performed the month before, but new works were also rotated in. The dancers, then, could feel their confidence building with the more familiar material while also experiencing the excitement and challenge of the newer dances. Some ballets were even repeated so often that the dancers became tired of them, whereas the new works might be successes or flops.[13]

### Judy Thompson-Price and Her Role in the Frequency of Performances

Although Hall got the majority of the credit for Austin Ballet Theatre's success, a previously overlooked voice has emerged from the data. Dancer Judy Thompson-Price proved to be vital to the company's ability to execute new choreography every month. Thompson-Price (whose name was Judy Thompson during the Armadillo years) was an assistant director in function if not always in title, and she had a rare gift for remembering choreography. The dancers who were participants in this research, along with Thompson-Price herself, described her role as "Stanley's right-hand man." During her interview, after humbly demurring, Thompson-Price described her ability to remember movement:

> But I think it was just a God-given little talent that I had that I could remember things pretty easy because somehow I managed to know pretty much what everybody was supposed to do, be, and if anybody forgot, it was "Judy, what's the step?" And so, I, I, I don't know. It was just something that just came natural.[14]

According to unanimous testimony from the dancers, Thompson-Price knew everyone's choreography and could be relied upon to cue other people through their roles, even when she herself was onstage. Self-identifying as a *regisseur,* Thompson-Price began writing the choreography on index cards in a style of memoing that she developed for herself.* During our interview, Thompson-Price escorted me to a storage container in her bedroom and pulled out index card boxes full of these notes, which were made in tiny handwriting; she clearly put considerable effort into maintaining Hall's choreography and still felt responsible for keeping the cards after 40 years.

As Hall produced new ballets month after month, Thompson-Price was literally at his side, recording his ideas with her gift for remembering movement. She was then able to teach repertory to the dancers and to remind Hall of what he had done. The dancers came to her when they needed help learning sequences of steps; they also followed her lead and got cues backstage and onstage during performances. In this way, Hall and the dancers truly depended on Thompson-Price. Oral history methods reveal that her "God-given little talent" for memorizing choreography and everyone's parts played a crucial role in making monthly performances possible with the company's limited rehearsal schedule.

* A *regisseur* in ballet is someone who restages a ballet, re-teaches the choreography, or directs rehearsals of a ballet but is not considered the choreographer. The term is sometimes interchangeable with *répétiteur*.

## Learning Dance and Adolescence

Betty Hendrix was a participant I interviewed as someone who attended the ballet concerts regularly but who was not otherwise connected to either Austin Ballet Theatre or the Armadillo World Headquarters. When I asked her if any other impressions of "the ballets, or the crowd, or the place" came back to her, Hendrix had this to say:

> Well, the dancers were mostly youngsters, so I remember just thinking how wonderful it was that these young people were able to perform and willing to work the amount of time it takes to accomplish this dancing. . . . It was a good outlet for these young, amateur dancers.[15]

Hendrix's observations bring up several points. Although a handful of the company members were in their late 20s or 30s at the time, a decided majority of the dancers in Austin Ballet Theatre were adolescents or young adults who were performing as teenagers or college students.[*] For example, male dancers Kenny Larson, Greg Larson, and Greg Easley performed when they were 13 years old, and female dancers Jone Bergquist Hallmark and Terri Lynn Wright performed lead roles when they were as young as 14 years old. While investigating their experiences towards assembling a history of ABT and how it operated, I began to feel that scholarship in adolescent learning might be relevant. Hendrix stressed how "wonderful" it was that these youths found an "outlet" through which to discover focus and hard work. But how did these

[*] According to the American Psychological Association, there is no absolute standard for defining adolescence. Although the age range roughly occurs between the ages of 10 and 18 years, the physical, cognitive, and behavioral characteristics can begin earlier or later and last into the early 20s, depending on the individual. "Developing Adolescents: A Resource for Professionals," The American Psychological Association, accessed August 7, 2015. https://www.apa.org/pi/families/resources/develop.pdf.

dancers relate their experiences to that stage of their lives, and how might those insights contribute to an understanding of how adolescent dancers learn and what may motivate them?

## Motivation and Adolescence

I believe a useful point that has arisen from the data of this project reflects the interrelationships between classes, rehearsals, and performances, particularly for adolescents. Because the dancers in this study had the unusual opportunity to perform ballet frequently, they are in the unique position to recognize how recurrent performing may have affected their learning. From the first interview that I conducted, a theme arose regarding the excitement of performances driving the dancers' motivation to stick with the discipline and hard work required by their ballet technique classes. These adolescents made a hefty commitment to take a 90-minute dance class every day after school; they also gave up every weekend during the school year for rehearsals, which means that they often missed other activities such as school events and parties. As 17-year-old Byron Johnson laments in a 1972 newspaper feature titled "Summer Means Ballet Practice": "Sometimes I want to go messin' around with the fellows and work on cars."[16] Without the excitement and immediacy of recurrent dance concerts, participants admitted that they might not have made such a commitment during that time in their lives. In that first interview, dancer Arletta Howard-Logan looked back on her experiences:

> So I think it's really helpful and, you know, from a teenager's perspective the performing is what kept me interested in my studies. If I had just studied and didn't get a chance to perform very often I think I would quit after a while. I think I would've gotten bored.[17]

This discussion helped to cue me in on the youth factor in the population of this study. Although dance classes and rehearsals may have intrinsic rewards and be experienced as enjoyable, participants also expressed how training could be repetitive and tedious. To explain: ballet classes have a traditional series of steps that defines their practice. Ballet dancers do their pliés, tendus, and other exercises in every level of technique class. Dance education scholar Susan W. Stinson raises a vital point by stating that, when dancers take classes during adolescence, they end up doing exercises that they have done numerous times before; at this point, some children who have enjoyed dance previously become disengaged.[18] These preteens and teens may only experience performance goals during the occasional recital.

One of the most recent resources regarding dance and pedagogical processes is dance scholar Judith Lynne Hanna's 2015 text *Dancing to Learn: The Brain's Cognition, Emotion, and Movement.*[19] She asserts the importance of learners being interested in why they are learning: "Certainly, *motivation* is critical to the successful acquisition of knowledge [emphasis original]."[20] The many potential benefits of dance that Hanna elucidates can only happen, she stresses, when learners invest in participating. While what motivates people to dance and learn dance in general is a complex area of investigation, this dissertation concerns ballet training during adolescence. Stinson provides an important cautionary statement regarding adolescent dance students: "[A]ll too often, adults set the long-term goals and then expect students to automatically be willing to make the sacrifices" to achieve those goals.[21] She explains that adolescents—more than adults—need more immediate intrinsic motivators such as enjoyment and the

satisfaction of personal progress as well as extrinsic motivators such as institutional grading.[22]

Performances provide another type of extrinsic motivation. Assurance from older adults that "this is important" provides little motivation to adolescent learners when they themselves do not comprehend the relevancy of the work in which they are engaged. Indeed, Stinson begins her section "Not Fun" about students who did not enjoy dance classes with the sentence, "It became clear to me that learning is fun to students only when they consider that learning to be relevant."[23] Her participants valued "learning 'stuff that you use in life'."[24] In other words, motivation to learn and participate more fully in dance class involves the perception that participation will be useful in some way. For the performers of Austin Ballet Theatre, that usefulness had immediacy and clarity in the full, evening-length, real-life performances in which they participated every few weeks. They were highly motivated to learn.

## Functions of Dance During Adolescence

> It was a little above some people's level of performance, but it was *fun*, and it was so challenging for them. I mean, like I said, I think Kenny would've been bored to death probably with kind of [a] traditional dance training. I used to teach at [name omitted], and the big problem was teenagers would just get so bored because they weren't allowed to perform, and they didn't have any outlet. They—there was no goal. They'd just go to class and keep learning these tortuous exercises.—Eve Larson, dancer[25]

At the beginning of the above excerpt, Eve Larson linked "fun" with appropriate challenges that were "a little above" what the dancers could do. The Armadillo performances provided environments that allowed the dancers to attempt those challenges. In other words, these teenagers could take risks.

Risk-taking is a key factor in adolescent behavior.[26] Although the processes of transitioning to adulthood are complex, adolescents engage in risk-taking as part of healthy mental and social development. Of course, some risks are more beneficial than others. In a 2011 workshop report on this subject from the Institute of Medicine and National Research Council Committee on the Science of Adolescence, scholars considered how risk-taking might help or hurt four crucial "tasks" that adolescents must accomplish to transition into adulthood:

- To stand out—to develop an identity and pursue autonomy;
- To fit in—to find comfortable affiliations and gain acceptance from peers;
- To measure up—to develop competence and find ways to achieve; and
- To take hold—to make commitments to particular goals, activities, and beliefs.[27]

With this perspective in mind, the research reveals that performing at the Armadillo World Headquarters afforded teenagers and young adults the opportunity to engage in risk-taking that aided in the accomplishment of these four tasks.

The first task, to stand out, was accomplished simply by being onstage in front of more than 1000 people per show. Dancers developed their identities as members of Austin Ballet Theatre, even to the extent of having their names shouted from the audience. Youth theatre scholars Jenny Hughes and Karen Wilson, in their extensive research in England, point out that for young people transitioning to adulthood participation in youth theatre offers a supportive place for individual identity exploration that is neither home nor school.[28] Thus, theatre groups offer a safe place for the

development of the sense of autonomy that is essential to the task of standing out. Austin Ballet Theatre functioned similarly by providing young dancers with an endeavor outside of home and school structures where they could develop identities and behaviors different from what those other structures afforded.

In addition, the dancers could engage in the first task in another way: by playing characters onstage. Jone Bergquist Hallmark, who danced in leading roles from a young age, apprehended that dance offered her ways of exploring her identity and practicing autonomy. She was able to temporarily embody different ways of being:

> I think it was also what—what was frustrating for me, I was really insecure, but I could go on stage and I could be somebody else. So even if I didn't like who I was all day long, I could get on stage that night and be somebody else. [Laughter] And I loved that. [Laughter] So—and, you know, junior high and high school, that's a real big deal to be able to like what you do. And even if you don't really like yourself very much, you could still be somebody that you—that you could—you could be something else for a little while. And that was huge for me. That was huge for me.[29]

The meaning that such opportunities to try on other personas during this stage of life had for Hallmark is clearly evident in her testimony. Dancers John Logan and Greg Easley described similar sensations when learning to embody the character of a prince onstage; they felt a sense of confidence and authority that radiated outward.[*] For theory on playing characters, I turn briefly again to Hughes and Wilson's research in theatre studies. In youth theatre, playing roles gives participants an opportunity to try out different characteristics of identity. By connecting this with the psychological concept of role

[*] Even while speaking about it during their interviews, Logan and Easley seemed to elongate their spines and open their chests, creating a feeling of presence.

theory, they hypothesize, a benefit to young actors may be a greater awareness of social relationships among different types of people that fosters "personal and social development."[30] During the literature review, I could find no research concerning how adolescents experienced character roles in dance performance. However, Stinson's research on how adolescent dancers in her study associated their participation in dance with freedom from other social roles that they played at school and elsewhere may apply. To paraphrase one of her participants, they could transcend normal.[31]

Furthermore, Hughes and Wilson concluded that youth theatre groups offer not only support to individuals but also opportunities to share common endeavors and create community.[32] This fulfills the second task of adolescence: to fit in. Austin Ballet Theatre was well known for its spirit of inclusiveness and for giving everyone a part, so dancers could trust they would be folded in to the company somehow. Dancers also knew that they were fitting in by the warm acceptance and thunderous applause they received from over a thousand people in the audience every month.

In such a way, these performances also gave dancers the opportunity to experience success in the third task: measuring up. From their first appearance in the background, dancers increased their confidence in their skills and felt a sense of achievement. Finally, by committing to goals, dancers achieved task number four: to take hold. In their research, Hughes and Wilson agree; they identify "taking part in a work-like, disciplined and committed process" as a fundamental benefit offered by successful youth theatre groups.[33] ABT dancers devoted the majority of their time outside of work and school to dance, and these dancers identified "working hard" and discipline as

important traits they learned during these years. I will address how they recount working hard later in this chapter.

Thus, for the dancers who chose to work in this risk-taking environment, performing ballet benefitted their psychosocial development during adolescence. While dance discourse does not typically describe dance practices as risky, I can perceive at least two types of risk in most ballet performances: the physical risk of the steps themselves and the social risk of dancing in front of an audience. Although dance literature per se does not address risk-taking by adolescents, the aforementioned 2004 youth theatre study by Hughes and Wilson considers similar circumstances.[34] In their fairly extensive research of youth theatre organizations in England, with populations ranging in age from 12 to 30 years, a strong theme of risk-taking emerged as part of a beneficial process of transitioning to adulthood. Hughes and Wilson describe risk-taking onstage like this:

> Performance involves young people placing themselves in situations of high risk—where their ability to hold their nerve, trust themselves, communicate their thoughts and feelings and stand out is put to the test in front of audiences of peers, significant adults and the wider community. Young people powerfully describe the adrenalin [sic] rush of performance in their accounts of taking part in youth theatre. Good youth theatres ensure that this risk taking happens in a safe context, where young people are thoroughly prepared and supported.[35]

Throughout this analysis, the researchers identify and appreciate the social dimensions of risk in performance. The heightened levels of adrenaline indicate a fight-or-flight response to the challenges of being onstage in front of an audience. Add the physical risks that dancers take—such as a double *tour en l'air* landing to a kneeling position—to these social risks, and the performing situation demands the utmost effort and attention

from a performer. But again, the challenges must be present yet not overwhelming to create the best learning environment, and Hall is widely acknowledged in the data for being able to perceive a dancer's needs and create choreography to facilitate appropriate challenges.

Moreover, when these young dancers had talent, Stanley Hall often featured them so that they could keep gaining experience. Dancer Lucia Uhl describes how she saw this:

> He had some—a handful of very talented people that—talented dancers that worked with him, and sort of—enough that he could build a performance around just a tiny, tiny group of kids. But, um, they were sort of in the spotlight, and everyone else was sort of doing their bit around them.[36]

Although this practice demonstrates Hall's vision of providing learning opportunities for his dancers, it also resulted in more than a few awkward moments and ruffled feathers. For example, Eve and Dave Larson recalled that, when their son Kenny and other young dancers began to dance in featured roles (instead of older and more experienced male dancers), the other company members had hard feelings that contributed to workplace dramas.[37] Sometimes the teenagers came across as too young for their lead roles to be believable, such as when a 13- or 14-year-old boy might play a character who was flirting with a woman twice his age.[38, *] However, these featured

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[*] Dance critic Nancy Kaufman, in an undated review from one of the later Armadillo years, wrote: "Right now this is a company where most of the male principals are teen-agers, and many of their ballerinas much more mature. … Watch Michie Magyar leap across and into the arms of two of the younger men. What a gimlet eye she fixes on them before she leaps, her smile never so much as quivering." Nancy Kaufman, "Cortege crowds stage," *Austin American-Statesman.* From the personal collection of Mary Claire Ziegler.

young dancers learned through performing that they could stand out successfully. As dancer Terri Lynn Wright avowed: "[T]he Armadillo seemed to like me okay. That must have helped me go out into the world."[39]

A unique type of association also emerged for adolescent dancers with regard to the Austin Ballet Theatre situation at the Armadillo. The data show that the general public perceived the Armadillo as an unconventional venue with a reputation for illicit behaviors. Performing there connected adolescent dancers to those narratives, even though the dancers felt safe there. For example, dancer Greg Easley, who was in high school at the time, recalled feeling a certain "caché" among his peers when walking down the halls at school because of his association with the possibly-disreputable Armadillo World Headquarters.[40] To return to the above excerpt from Hughes and Wilson, then, the Armadillo provided the "safe context" and supportive audiences for dancers to take physical and psychosocial risks toward "personal and social development."[41, *] These adolescent dancers had a place to experience both safe danger and respectable notoriety.

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[*] Hughes and Wilson clarify that "personal and social development refers to the skills, qualities, capacities and resources that help young people make successful transitions to adulthood, that is, lead healthy, confident and independent lives wherein they can fulfill their potential." Jenny Hughes and Karen Wilson, "Playing a Part: The Impact of Youth Theatre on Young People's Personal and Social Development," *Research in Drama Education* 9, no. 1 (March 2004): 58.

## Fun and Performing

> When I got to do it, I was, like, "Oh my God. I get to be in this . . . I get to be in that ballet." And I, I still—it lights me up just talking about it. —Greg Easley, dancer[42]

When I analyzed the oral history interviews for this project using coding that was based on the emotions dancers expressed, meanings in the data became more vibrant and I experienced greater engagement as a researcher—and more fun, too. Often a sense of joy permeated the dancers' testimonies about performing at the Armadillo even when mixed with memories of hard work, difficult dramas, and making do with challenging circumstances. The dancers' feelings of excitement, happiness, and fun constellated towards several identifiable themes: novelty, deep endeavor, positive feedback from audiences, and the oddball variety of challenges met at the Armadillo.

### The Excitement of Performing as a New—But Manageable—Experience

Some dancers remember the excitement of performing ballet as an entirely new experience in their lives. Stanley Hall had a tendency toward including everyone, and often dance reviewers for the newspapers criticized him for cramming too many people onto the stage. Many of these people were beginners who did little more than walk and pose in the background in a supernumerary role. Dancer Lucia Uhl, who began ballet as a young adult, recalled her first stage appearance: "It was a big ensemble piece, and I was very much in the back row, very much holding a position while everyone else danced."[43] Yet the dancers were still excited to be there; Uhl continued:

> It was really very flattering to be included . . . it was real inspiring to just be, just have a little part and watch these other people . . . .[44]

Dancer John Logan recalled the following:

> [I was] in Armadillo shows before the end of that year . . . I was having fun with it . . . it was all very exciting and new.[45]

Having these introductory roles helped beginners become used to being on stage in performance situations. Both Uhl and Logan, who were young adult beginners, remembered how their initial performances included negotiating some stage fright.[46] However, the frequency of shows afforded them the opportunity to become increasingly comfortable with being on stage as each experience was rather quickly reinforced by the next. Over time, the dancers' enjoyment of performing began to match and increase their excitement. As Kate Warren, who attended several performances and studied with Hall, emphasized, "It's like they all looked really thrilled to be there, you know. That's what I think about when I see them [verb tenses original]."[47] Such enjoyment is also reflected in this newspaper review:

> Perhaps the most engaging aspect of ABT's Armadillo performances is the enthusiasm with which the performers dance. Though the work put into each production is long and hard, the performers always seem to be full of energy. And the joie de vivre is infectous.[48]

Dancer Arletta Howard-Logan provides an excellent example of someone who learned to perform through performing with ABT. At the age of 11, Hall asked her if she could do a somersault. She could, so she had a cameo appearance that month at the Armadillo.[49] From there, she continued to join the company onstage in roles that challenged her but that did not overly exceed her growing levels of ability. As soon as she was tall enough to fit in with the adults, she recalled, she joined the *corps de ballet* in Frederick Ashton's *Façade*. However, the corps did not dance their roles *en pointe,*

which made the experience much easier. Howard-Logan added a significant insight when she mentioned that, because *Façade* was a comedy, if she "messed up," her mistakes would be all part of the fun and probably not noticed by the audience amidst the other hijinks. "It was not a high pressure performance by any stretch of the imagination," she attested.[50] Howard-Logan's comment reveals that Hall's routine model of programming for the Armadillo World Headquarters—closing with an upbeat comedy—not only sent the audiences out with a smile but also made available opportunities for novice dancers to attempt low-pressure stage experiences. Hall himself explains, "What audiences don't understand is that dancers are their own worst critics. [Sometimes] at the end [of the show], they need to do something they won't worry about too much; something they can enjoy and have fun with."[51]

The counterpoint to this spirit of inclusivity was the occasional criticism that Hall crowded the "barely adequate" Armadillo stage with too many dancers.[52] The photograph of "Aurora's Wedding" in Appendix B, Figure 6, illustrates such congestion; the dancers on the far left side of the photo clearly overlap each other. While early dance writers mention the crowding from time to time, later dance critic Nancy Kaufman took Hall to task on the practice:

> It's one of those Hall dances that makes one wonder whether he's decided to ignore the size of the stage at the Armadillo in indulging his urge to create on a large scale. Part of the crowdedness can be attributed to the very size of the company. It's dear and admirable that he includes them all, but two of the results are unfortunate for the viewer: there's no room for anyone to dance, not everyone on stage is a performer.[53]

Assessment of Hall's inclusive tendencies, then, depends on the frame of reference one is using and the functions of what the dancing *does*.

Fun and Challenges Unique to Performing at the Armadillo World Headquarters

Another category of fun that arises from the data analysis of the interviews interrelates the challenges of performing at the Armadillo with experiences of fun. This quote from dancer Ken Owen illustrates a common sentiment:

> Ken Owen: As far as the Armadillo goes, the best. It was the best of everything. It was hard work, but it was the best.
>
> Caroline S. Clark: What kinds of best?
>
> Ken Owen: Just the best of all fun. It was so much fun, that we call bad experiences.[54]

In other words, the "bad" contributed to—rather than detracted from—dancers' reminiscences that performing at the Armadillo was fun. Owen's remarks exemplify how participants discussed two kinds of challenges in this way: the demands of hard work and the creative spontaneity that can take place when making do with varying conditions. When thinking about the hard work, dance class participant and audience member Kate Warren related working hard to enjoyment:

> You worked hard, but it was not begrudgingly so. If anything, it brought out the joyfulness of what ballet can be. They took it seriously but they had a good time while they did it. Like I said, they didn't, they weren't slackers or anything. They all worked really hard but it was play.[55]

In another excerpt from the data, when asked what she would like people to know about Austin Ballet Theatre, dancer Terri Lynn Wright immediately brought up the integrity of the company's work ethic:

> It was an incredible training ground for dancers . . . . Experience and knowledge that I'm sure would help anybody no matter what they did. And very few became dancers, but the work ethics and respect, I think that everybody gained a lot. It was a valuable time, and I think that they probably were able to use that in their futures no matter what they chose to be. Working with groups, working with each other and respecting themselves and working and working and working and working some more and loving that.[56]

As dancer Owen—who is quoted above regarding "the best kinds of fun"—reflected on his years with ABT, he wrapped up his interview with this summation of what he learned: "Don't be lazy. Work hard at your job. All those guys . . . Work hard. Don't be lazy.[57] Similarly, dancer Greg Easley describes his hard-working experience:

> And you just—once you got there at noon, it was just shot out of a cannon until, you know, 9:30 or 9:00, whenever we finished. It was great. Great. Uh, it was exhausting. It was truly exhausting, but, boy, what a rush . . . I, I don't ever, ever remember it not being fun—ever.[58]

All of these participants relate working hard, as part of the overall ABT experience, to fun.

A second type of challenge that the dancers identified as being fun was how everyone had to "make do" with unpredictable situations and limited resources. Some of the making do involved sacrifices to accommodate the Armadillo itself as a venue with a smallish stage that was not built for the purpose of presenting ballet or providing traditional backstage areas. This was especially challenging because ABT, with its practices of inclusivity, always had large casts. A hint of chaos and near misses seems to wind its way through the dancers' memories, provoking gleeful storytelling. The dressing rooms were always a crush of people negotiating with each other to get ready. Dancer Easley reminisced: "So you warmed up in that little, tiny hallway. And, uh, it was fun. It

was just fun. And it's, like, there were several rooms. I mean the men were all in one room, and then ladies were—filled up the other rooms, and it was just fun."[59] All of the dancers mentioned pandemonium on the stairwells on either side of the stage, which served as the two entrances and exits. While some dancers exited, others might enter, and pile-ups regularly occurred. In addition, Howard-Logan recalled falling off the front lip of the stage; this was a 5-foot drop, but she chuckled at the memory.[60] This excerpt from Jone Bergquist Hallmark's interview is another example of how the memories of making do were immediately followed up by an identification with fun:

> I mean we complained, I'm sure. I don't remember. I just—I remember it being a really incredible experience. And—and the stage was not the easiest to get on and off of. [Laughter] There were stairs going down either side, and it was—it was high up there, and it was interesting. And the dressings—dressing rooms were cramped. But it was really fun. It was really fun. I'm so glad I had that experience. I really am.[61]

Several dancers recounted how, especially during closing numbers with large casts, people would end up in disarray, with dancers not in the lines where they were supposed to be and random accidental collisions occurring among dancers.[62] In addition to space issues, making do applied to many of the sets and costumes: thrones were made out of cardboard, skirts were made out of trash bags, and sometimes costumes were not quite finished. Yet, the dancers endeavored always to cover these challenges and present an illusion of effortlessness and perfection akin to that of ballet performances in more traditional settings and with more resources. As Easley stated, "They knew how to perform when they were just pinned into their costume and not ever show. I mean, 'cause there were just so many things that happened that nobody ever knew about [Laughs]."[63]

Both "working hard" and "making do" reflect how the dancers/participants in this study devoted themselves to ABT's performances. These stories are also excellent examples illustrating theatre scholar Richard Schechner's definition of fun: fun occurs when the release of energy exceeds the effort necessary to overcome challenges.[64] Oral testimonies suggest that the challenges of the Armadillo afforded the dancers of Austin Ballet Theatre this kind of fun.

**Learning Outcomes Related to Frequent Performing**

In an interview for an Austin newspaper, Hall connects his own frequent performance experiences in London with his pedagogical philosophy:

> Frequent public performances are also essential as sound ballet training, says Hall, and that's why he insists on ABT's ardous Armadillo schedule. "Take at performance at the Royal," he explains. "If you do 'Giselle' only [once] every eight weeks, it's like another first night every time. You can't do it. Nerves and the whole thing. You worry more about getting through than dancing the character."… "That's why my dancers get jobs," he says proudly. "They're used to performing. And they can pick up fast."[65]

Risk and fun both stimulate learning environments. However, if ABT dancers learned to perform by performing, what performance skills do they feel they learned? This section presents data analysis concerning the things that interviewees identified as learning outcomes from their frequent performances at the Armadillo World Headquarters. In a newspaper interview, Stanley Hall outlines three skills that his dancers learn through performing: "Austin Ballet Theatre offers potential professional dancers the opportunity to perform regularly under realistic conditions, Hall says. 'They have to *pick up fast*, *work under pressure*, and *adapt to different audiences and reactions* [emphasis

added].'"[66] This section investigates these three skills through the data that emerged from participants' oral histories.

"Pick Up Fast"

A skill that dancer-interviewees identified as beneficial to their professional careers—perhaps even *the* most important skill—was how Austin Ballet Theatre dancers developed the ability to "pick up" choreography quickly. In other words, ABT dancers learned choreography sequences in classes and rehearsals very rapidly, and they accepted responsibility for knowing them. All of the research participants who were dancers mentioned this ability as a skill common among ABT company members and one that distinguished their training. This skill was borne of necessity due to the quick turnaround times of their performance schedules. The following are examples of how four dancers connected the skill of learning quickly, which they attributed to performing at the Armadillo, to their subsequent careers with salaried ballet companies:

> Well, I feel like that as a young dancer at the time, I don't know that I actually grasped how important it was just to be having a regular place to dance and every month having new pieces to dance. So what it gave me personally for my career was unbelievable. Because before that, we would have, you know, a performance for two nights two or three times a year maybe . . . Armadillo once a month was, "Okay. We've got at least three new ballets to learn. Unless we're pulling *Les Patineurs* in again for—you know, and so we have two new ones for that one and brush up on this one." But the experience it gave me for a professional career was extraordinary, I see in hindsight.[67]
>
> [Regarding learning choreography quickly in rehearsals] And in that sense, you really did learn how to work as a professional, I think.[68]
>
> I'll tell you one thing about Stanley's dancers. Every one of us picked up really fast. I mean, I got jobs depending on how fast I could pick up choreography . . . . But we all learned really quickly . . . all those boys—Rick, me, Byron—picked up really fast. Which is a great skill, man.[69]

> But I think without the experience at the Armadillo, I wouldn't have been able to step in as quickly as I did when I was dancing. Just because you didn't just stand around. You always were working and learning parts. And somebody said, "Well, do you know this?" "Sure."[70]

The final quote demonstrates an association between the themes of learning quickly and working hard, as previously discussed in this chapter. Performance seasons at the Armadillo provided these dancers with the opportunity to develop the ability to both work hard and learn fast supported by the motivation to accomplish both actions.

"Work Under Pressure"

This chapter previously addressed how dancers with little to no stage experience gradually grew more comfortable with performing in front of large crowds as a result of Hall's ability to match appropriate challenges with less experienced dancers and the supportive nature of the Armadillo audiences. Stage fright, which is also known as *performance anxiety,* can be a disruptive psychological challenge for dancers as well as for people in other fields.[71] The transfer of skills from one context to another can prove disorienting and overwhelming. ABT dancer Wright brought this up in her interview and displayed compassion for her colleagues:

> Some dancers that I met over the years when I was working would be gorgeous dancers but would tighten up and could never really—they would do better performances in rehearsal than you'd see on stage with an audience and it was such a shame. And I had met dancers in Europe, some of them gorgeous technicians but never got to do choreography, and could only do class, but they couldn't really put anything else together 'cause they just never had the opportunity until they finally got a job. And then it's kinda too late sorta.[72]

Here, Wright observed that "tighten[ing] up" interfered with dancing skills. Although I have not found much discussion in the dance literature about stage fright, scholars in

other disciplines such as psychology, music, and physical education provide helpful research results and theorizing.

Music researchers Glenn D. Wilson and David Roland contributed a chapter entitled "Performance Anxiety" for the edited text *The Science & Psychology of Music Performance: Creative Strategies for Teaching and Learning*.[73] Wilson and Roland amusingly explain that the effects of adrenaline on the body are well known as the "fight-or-flight" reaction, but performers do not usually have the option of attacking their audiences or running away. Although these reactions may serve people well when facing a tiger in the jungle, "they are less useful when we are faced with an audience who expects us to entertain them."[74] Yet, they continue, "human pride is apparently such a powerful human motive that the fear of humiliation or disgrace can produce a similar degree of emotional panic."[75] While some nervousness enhances performance by increasing a state of arousal that results in greater engagement with the activity to be performed, too much anxiety has detrimental effects. This widely accepted phenomenon is called the *Yerkes-Dodson Law*, and it takes the visual shape of a bell curve: arousal increases performance to its highest level at the middle of the curve, but performance then decreases (or even crashes) with too much anxiety.[76]

Wilson and Roland relate the desirable apogee of this curve to Mihalyi Czikszentmihalyi's conditions for flow. The optimal conditions for flow include appropriate challenges that engage skills without being either too easy or too difficult.[77] Wilson and Roland suggest therapies such as drugs and psychotherapy, but they conclude that "there is no way for the beginning performer to become acclimatized to live

performing other than by actually doing it repeatedly and in many different types of performance situations."[78] Moreover, Wilson and Roland continue, a focus on process that includes cycles of repetition and feedback (rather than product) affords repeated occurrences of the desired optimal flow state in performance.[79] Austin Ballet Theatre practiced a frequency of performing that allowed dancers to experience these cycles of process and repetition while progressing through appropriate levels of challenge. Thus, the company's dancers worked in conditions that supported flow states as described by Csikszentmihalyi and, based on the oral histories, consequently performed with immersion rather than panic.

Dancer Terri Lynn Wright made one more noteworthy point with regard to feeling comfortable onstage and developing her performing skills. She connects a certain level of acclimation to stage performance with an ability to take risks while dancing:

> I think that I had learned how to control my nervous energy and that's important. And I'd learned how to take chances. I think, yes, you want technique to where it's you know—you don't have to hang onto the edge of your chair hoping that you won't fall on your face, but I think that there's something to be said for dancers that can—that will surprise you and surprise themselves, that *makes* performances. And certain dancers, I think, are more fun to watch because you don't know quite what you'll get. They don't play it totally safe.[80]

Again, the code "fun" emerges, this time in relation to dancers who approach performing with the kind of engagement or somatic attention of immersed risk-taking that enables new experiences to transpire. Wright's insights in this quote suggest a sense of openness to such experiences—a sense of adventure and play. To watch such a dancer, she avowed, is fun because of how the dancer approaches performance and not necessarily what you get as a result. Getting to this approach, she continued, was a matter of getting

to perform the same dance repeatedly. In her experience, "you get to where you can really sink your teeth into it and go beyond."[81] Dancer Greg Easley connects such repetition and investment with the identity of ABT:

> That was one of the big things that Ballet Theatre could say was, like, "You know we—our dancers perform every month. They get to perfect," and I think Stanley said—and I agree—that's what helped people get jobs so easily. They knew how to perform.[82]

Wright further expressed how she felt sympathy for many current dancers now that ballet companies do not tour as much as they did during the 1970s and 1980s: "They rehearse so much and then they just get a shot, one weekend at it, and then it's over."[83]

"Adapt to Different Audiences and Reactions"

The final skill Hall mentions as a learning outcome relevant for professional dancers is the ability to be responsive to or negotiate interactive relationships with different audiences. Throughout this dissertation, examples abound of dancers, families, volunteers, and audiences adapting to practices generated from ballet performance at the Armadillo. Earlier in this chapter, dancers described how adapting to the AWHQ was part of the fun of performing. Participants who had gone on to professional careers shared many funny anecdotes about how they could handle almost any unexpected or less-than-ideal circumstance that came their way during their careers thanks to learning to adapt at the Armadillo.

However, dancers also gained experience with different types of audience reactions as well. A certain percentage—perhaps even a majority—of the audience members were a core group of regulars. Such friendly audiences created a "forgiving"

environment that contributed to how comfortable and confident the dancers learned to feel onstage, as dancer Logan elaborated:

> I know Stanley had this concept of Armadillo being a more forgiving environment, and he was less afraid of presenting pieces that were not finished. He would sometimes label pieces as works in progress. When you're doing shows once a month, for a group that's rehearsing almost just entirely on the weekends, things were a little bit sloppy sometimes, you know. And, so, he had this concept of Armadillo as being a more forgiving environment.[84]

In addition to these regulars, however, a diverse group of newcomers also attended each performance, and the dancers described a spectrum of interactions with their audiences.

To illustrate, Easley remembered during his interview how it was possible to feel a sense of communication with audiences through their responses: "We knew we were doing something right. And we also knew when it wasn't maybe as right as we hoped it had been."[85] Overall, however, that longitudinal contact with diverse audiences fostered within the ABT dancers a sense of how to adapt in the negotiated site of changing encounter that constitutes the performer/audience relationship. I continue investigating the data related to ABT audiences, the co-creators of this relationship, in the next chapter.

## Conclusions

When asked about the closing of the Armadillo World Headquarters, Easley explained, "Our performance season just shrank dramatically. It was two or three performances a year going down from every month, which was huge. I remember not liking that part of it."[86] Both despite and—as this chapter has demonstrated—because of the challenges of the Armadillo, the dancers enjoyed performing frequently and the benefits of learning, motivation, fun, and excitement that came from those shows. Often

dance education in Western theatrical practices such as ballet and modern dance consist of a large proportion of classes and rehearsals with perhaps only two or three performances a year. This research suggests a reconsideration of how performing functions in dance education with an emphasis on how students learn as adolescents, including the important role of motivation.

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[5] Cynthia Milne, "ABT:…Beer and Ballet at the Armadillo," *The Daily Texan.* September 11, 1978, 7.
[6] Lucia Uhl, interview by author, Austin, TX, October 16, 2014.
[7] Dave and Eve Larson, interview by author, Austin, TX, February 5, 2014.
[8] Lucia Uhl, interview by author, Austin, TX, October 16, 2014.
[9] "Ballet: Stanley Hall's Dream Now Reality," *Austin American-Statesman,* November 12, 1972, 27.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Helen Spear, interview by author, Austin, TX, January 16, 2015; Arletta Howard-Logan, interview by author, Austin, TX, January 22, 2014; Judy Thompson-Price, interview by author, Austin, TX, May 4, 2014; Terry Lynn Wright, interview by author, Austin, TX, June 27, 2014.
[12] Helen Spear, interview by author, Austin, TX, January 16, 2015.
[13] Judy Thompson-Price, interview by author, Austin, TX, May 4, 2014; Greg Easley, interview by author, Austin, TX, October 14, 2014.
[14] Judy Thompson-Price, interview by author, Austin, TX, May 4, 2014.
[15] Betty Hendrix, interview by author, Austin, TX, September 22, 2014.
[16] "Summer Means Ballet Practice," *Austin American-Statesman*, June 4, 1972, Austin History Center archives, box DO200, file 7.
[17] Arletta Howard-Logan, interview by author, Austin, TX, January 22, 2014.
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[21] S.W. Stinson, "A Question of Fun: Adolescent Engagement in Dance Education," *Dance Research Journal* 29, no. 2 (1997): 63, accessed August 7, 2015, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1478734.
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[23] Ibid, 56.
[24] Ibid.
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[28] Jenny Hughes and Karen Wilson, "Playing a Part: The Impact of Youth Theatre on Young People's Personal and Social Development," *Research in Drama Education* 9, no. 1 (March 2004): 64-65.
[29] Jone Bergquist Hallmark, interview by author, Austin, TX, February 18, 2015.
[30] Jenny Hughes and Karen Wilson, "Playing a Part: The Impact of Youth Theatre on Young People's Personal and Social Development," *Research in Drama Education* 9, no. 1 (March 2004): 68.
[31] S.W. Stinson, "A Question of Fun: Adolescent Engagement in Dance Education," *Dance Research Journal* 29, no. 2 (1997): 60, accessed August 7, 2015, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1478734.
[32] Ibid, 64-66.
[33] Ibid, 63.
[34] Jenny Hughes and Karen Wilson, "Playing a Part: The Impact of Youth Theatre on Young People's Personal and Social Development," *Research In Drama Education* 9, no. 1 (March 2004): 57-72.
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[36] Lucia Uhl, interview by author, Austin, TX, October 16, 2014.
[37] Dave and Eve Larson, interview by author, Austin, TX, February 5, 2014.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Terry Lynn Wright, interview by author, Austin, TX, June 27, 2014.
[40] Arletta Howard-Logan, interview by author, Austin, TX, January 22, 2014; Greg Easley, interview by author, Austin, TX, October 14, 2014.
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[43] Lucia Uhl, interview by author, Austin, TX, October 16, 2014.
[44] Ibid.
[45] John Logan, interview by author, Austin, TX, January 26, 2014.

[46] Lucia Uhl, interview by author, Austin, TX, October 16, 2014; John Logan, interview by author, Austin, TX, January 26, 2014.
[47] Kate Warren, interview by author, Austin, TX, January 15, 2015.
[48] Marian Smith, "Hall makes ballet fun for dancers, crowd alike," *The Austin Citizen*. November 5, 1979, 11.
[49] Arletta Howard-Logan, interview by author, Austin, TX, January 22, 2014.
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[67] Jone Bergquist Hallmark, interview by author, Austin, TX, February 18, 2015.
[68] Greg Easley, interview by author, Austin, TX, October 14, 2014.
[69] Ken Owen, interview by author, Austin, TX, March 21, 2014.
[70] Terry Lynn Wright, interview by author, Austin, TX, June 27, 2014.
[71] Betty Kelman, "Occupational Hazards in Female Ballet Dancers," *American Association of Occupational Health Nurses Journal,* 48, no. 9 (September 2000): 430-434.
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[74] Ibid, 47.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid, 49.
[77] Betty Kelman, "Occupational Hazards in Female Ballet Dancers," *American Association of Occupational Health Nurses Journal,* 48, no. 9 (September 2000): 430-

434; S.W. Stinson, "A Question of Fun: Adolescent Engagement in Dance Education," *Dance Research Journal* 29, no. 2 (1997): 63, accessed August 7, 2015, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1478734.

[78] Glenn D. Wilson and David Roland, "Performance Anxiety," in *The Science & Psychology of Music Performance: Creative Strategies for Teaching and Learning,* eds. Richard Parncutt and Gary McPherson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 65.

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[82] Greg Easley, interview by author, Austin, TX, October 14, 2014.

[83] Terry Lynn Wright, interview by author, Austin, TX, June 27, 2014.

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# CHAPTER V

# THEMATIC ANALYSIS: AUDIENCES

Data sources foregrounded a second theme related to Austin Ballet Theatre at the Armadillo World Headquarters: bringing ballet "to the people." In this chapter, I consider who "the people" were by analyzing narratives arising from a historical inquiry concerning audience populations, audience practices, and how the interactive relationships between ABT and their audiences generated meaning and identity for both dancers and viewers. My data include testimonies from dancers and Armadillo staff about how they perceived the audiences, accounts from audience members themselves about their experiences, and how journalists storied audiences in text for presentation to the public. Throughout the chapter, a multiplicity of perspectives challenges any attempt to galvanize the data into one historical picture. However, as established in the methodology chapter, the gaps between allow for generative spaces that allow for open-ended meaning-making to emerge, which Michel de Certeau terms "the task of history."[1]

## Who Were the Audiences?

### Uncertain Diversity

> Overall, people of all kinds of tastes, backgrounds and philosophies were welcome at the 'Dillo and were encouraged to mix, mingle and benefit from the cultural diversity the hall offered to all who passed through its doors.—Henry Gonzales, artist[2]

Although such diversity may have existed for music concerts at the Armadillo World Headquarters, oral and written testimonies about audience diversity for the ballet

vary. Investigation of these data reveals a spectral multiplicity in subjective perceptions about who attended the Austin Ballet Theatre shows. Narratives about diverse ballet audiences emerge repeatedly in the research but without fixed frames of reference regarding race, ethnicity, gender, age, or socioeconomic status. Instead, the data demonstrate many different perspectives on what constitutes diversity in ballet audiences and how those various perceptions influence meaning-making. With so many disparate accounts, there is no clear truth here regarding how diverse ballet audiences may have been. Rather, multiple truths generate an inherent, irresolvable, and ever-changing complexity regarding who these audiences were and how this may have mattered.

The majority of people whom I interviewed with primary ties to Austin Ballet Theatre—dancers, their families, and ballet fans—emphasized that the audiences at the Armadillo were very culturally and socioeconomically diverse. The code term *mixed* appears in all of the following accounts from the ABT group:

> There's a very mixed crowd of the balletomanes. You know, the society kind of people who are interested in the ballet, and then the people who were just hippies, basically. Who were, you know, big time Armadillo fans. So you'd see very mixed . . .[3]

> They'd sit and eat their nachos and drink beer, watch ballet, and they would be all sorts of mixed. I mean, they'd be all ages, and they'd be all, um, I wanna say styles, if that makes sense, you know, biker to perhaps maybe, you know.[4]

> Well, that's what I was saying was so interesting, I thought it was a real variety of people who were dedicated to ballet, and people, you know, I guess they might have been coming to the beer hall for all these different things and saw the thing on Sunday and it was inexpensive enough to get in, and so it was a very, very mixed crowd. There were a lot of hippies and local people from small towns around who had children who were interested in dancing.[5]

Stanley Hall himself was quoted in the local newspaper in 1985 describing such mixing and how delighted he was with it: "[E]ntire parties end[ed] up at the performances. Sorority and fraternity people all mixing with these bums; it was marvelous!"[6]

Contemporaneous newspaper and magazine articles describing the Armadillo audiences for Austin Ballet Theatre repeatedly put into public circulation a narrative of diverse, spirited crowds, variously mentioning "the motley audience"[7] or "lively octogenarians to very young balletomanes."[8] Consider dance scholar Suzanne Shelton Buckley's intriguing representation for her *Texas Monthly* article: "Chains of old ladies holding hands, giggling and calling each other girl. Families with squirmy, sweaty kids. Clusters of teenyboppers. University types. Blacks, chicanos, [sic] and dyed-in-the-wool wasps [sic]."[9] I believe Buckley opens her article with this portrayal of a diverse crowd as a device to pique the interest of her potential readership, precisely because such a multiplicity would not necessarily be expected to gather for an event anywhere, much less a ballet performance. (I discuss this idea further in Chapter VI when addressing a functional binary of high and low culture.) Therefore, an author looking for a "hook" might well describe a seemingly incongruous diversity to interest readers. University of Texas student journalist Carrie Schweitzer adopts a similar strategy in her writing, describing ABT's "loyal following of little old ladies, college students and professors, and suburbanites. Even the West Austin crowd in evening dress have made their way into the dark hull of Armadillo for ballet and beer."[10, *] As presented by newspaper journalists,

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[*] The "West Austin crowd" refers to the white, wealthy social class in Austin who live both west of I-35 and west of downtown.

Armadillo audiences for the ballet were a great melting pot of ages, ethnic backgrounds, and socioeconomic classes.

By contrast, oral history testimonies from the Armadillo staff and the unaffiliated audience members whom I interviewed—as opposed to dancers, ballet community members, and dance reviewers—painted a different picture. After interviewing the dancers and reading the articles, I was surprised to hear the counterpoint of Armadillo staff member Leea Mechling's perspective:

> Caroline S. Clark: And, um, what were the diversity of the audiences like, and do you recall them being different than in other kinds of shows?
>
> Leea Mechling: Well, they weren't all that diverse.
>
> Caroline S. Clark: Okay.
>
> Leea Mechling: I don't remember really noticing a lot of cultural diversity and who was attending those performances, and it was really kind of a WASP-y crowd, even our part of the group that came. Now, that's generalizing, of course.[11]

Mechling further explained that, because she was used to more variety among patrons who attended the music concerts at the AWHQ, the ballet audiences seemed, from her frame of referential experiences, much less heterogeneous.[12]

Similarly, when asked if the ballet's crowd was diverse, manager Eddie Wilson replied as follows:

> No. No. Well, they had a larger core of, uh, you know, similar-minded people because of the family connections with the dancers. That group was probably a large percentage of the audience, and everybody else was just kinda sprinkling and spice on the top of that.[13]

Wilson remembered a "large percentage" of patrons being similar to each other—mostly white and middle-class—with some, but not much, ethnic or social diversity. Again, no

quantitative data exist to assess who might be more "right" about audience diversity. However, the meanings people made of a perceived diversity—or lack thereof—shaped their varied experiences of Austin Ballet Theatre shows at the Armadillo World Headquarters and thus shaped their storytelling.

## Families and Friends

As Wilson expressed in the previous quote, families seem to have made up a good portion of the ballet audiences. Significantly, *all* of the interviewees emphasized the attendance of families. In addition, those interviewees who also attended music events at the Armadillo mentioned the presence of families as a distinguishing characteristic of ballet evenings in contrast to the other shows, so something about the phenomenon of ballet there attracted families.[*] Resident AWHQ artist Jim Franklin explained, "[I]t seems like it was more family oriented. You know, people who wouldn't bring their family down to see shows—you know, a regular show—they weren't the nightclub or the rock-and-roll hall audience."[14] Austin Ballet Theatre lighting designer Mark Loeffler, who also operated lighting during some of the music concerts, corroborated that the audiences contained more families than other events at the Armadillo did:

> Well, they were totally distinct from other Armadillo audiences because they were families, so lots of kids, and they tended to sit cross-legged, way down front. There'd usually be a band of them three deep or so, lots of parents and grandparents and neighbors and friends of the dancers, so that made up a big part of the audience . . . . But I think most of the dancers—many of them came from

[*] An important note here is that there were some families and children present at many of the music concerts and other events at the AWHQ. Some hippie-culture families hung out at the Armadillo to the extent that their children were around the facility somewhere most of the time. Families attending the ballet, on the other hand, typically came to the Armadillo intentionally to see the ballet and included many ages of children.

> Austin and had extended family and lots of friends, and so it was a real casual family affair.[15]

Betty Hendrix's testimony provides a supporting case in point. Hendrix regularly took her family to the Armadillo because her oldest daughter was a friend of dancer Jone Bergquist from Austin High School. Because she had six children and was watching her budget, Hendrix could feel comfortable with the price and the informality of being able to sit on the low, carpeted stairs where her younger ones could play around. She further appreciated having an event that she could not only take her children to but also enjoy herself:

> Caroline S. Clark: Um, just thinking back on the audiences, um—what different kinds of people do you remember attending these performances?
>
> Betty Hendrix: Somehow I think of them as, um, mostly young—young families, similar to mine. It was an interesting outing for all of us.
>
> Caroline S. Clark: There were other kids?
>
> Betty Hendrix: Mm-hmm. Yeah, it was just an interesting thing to do to kind of end the weekend.[16]

Helen Spear, whose daughters studied with Hall, told a similar story: "We loved ballet, both my husband and I did, and so here was something that we could take five children to and it wouldn't break the bank. And so it was a wonderful, wonderful experience for us."[17] Likewise, dancer Greg Easley remembered attending the ballet often as a younger child with his mother, before he began ballet studies of his own. They were specifically there to support his older brother, Russell, when Russell danced with ABT. Then, when Greg Easley began to perform at the Armadillo and his high school friends found out, they, too, started attending regularly to enjoy the scene and support him.[18]

With such a substantial core of the audience having pre-existing family relationships or friendships with the dancers and Hall, it is no wonder that audiences were often described as warm and supportive. In Chapter IV, I discuss how the dancers perceived that sense of encouragement from the audience. Members of the staff and the audience were also aware of how enthusiastic and supportive the audiences seemed to be. For example, artist Franklin observed that ABT enjoyed "continually strong attendance" from their regulars.[19] After remarking how the shows were a "family affair" in the quote excerpted previously, lighting designer Loeffler continued:

> [ABT] drew a really dedicated, kind of warm, friendly audience that always seemed to enjoy it . . . I mean, ABT had this loyal audience. You could count on [them] . . . . There were the ones that were the usual benefactors and well-wishers, and there'd be parents, and some people from UT would show up. [20]

Dance critic Suzanne Shelton Buckley described this devoted group as "an ABT army" in several articles, and she repeated that term in her 2014 interview with me.[21] And, reviewer Judi Hazlett defines the type of devotion an ABT army displays: "[T]he company has certainly acquired a loyal following over the last seven years. An ABT fan is fiercely, unquestionably loyal. An ABT fan freely gives standing ovations and demands encores."[22]

An interesting side note that came up in the research introduces a cultural influence that may be useful to broader audience studies. Gonzalo Barrientos, a state house representative, asserts in a 1976 *New Republic* article that the phenomenon of having entire families attend shows at the Armadillo World Headquarters, specifically, is due to the influence of Mexican immigration and heritage. He states that it was "the

Chicanos who gave anglos [sic] the custom of bringing small children and grandparents to the same public occasions."[23] Thus, the family-friendly environment at ABT shows may reflect this part of the Armadillo's cultural conventions. Although the presence of Latino families did not emerge in the data for this study, Barrientos' assertion regarding the origins of family audience practices at the AWHQ may have relevance to scholars who are studying audience populations.

## Sprinkling and Spice

In addition to the regular Austin Ballet Theatre crowd of family, friends, and balletomanes, who provided the "sprinkling and spice" in the audience as Eddie Wilson described earlier? Overall, data sources suggest that any sense of diversity or new audiences for ballet came from the Armadillo side of the partnership. Returning to staff member Mechling's comment about a lack of audience diversity, she includes a telling phrase: ". . . even our part of the group that came." In these words is a point of view that runs throughout the testimonies and texts involved in this dissertation:

- The Armadillo attracted its own group of people.
- These "Armadillo people" were a different population than Austin Ballet Theatre would have had at another venue.
- These audience members were more attached to the Armadillo as a place than to the ballet as an event.
- To varying degrees, this Armadillo group begat a sense of there being new, more diverse audiences for the ballet.

Oral testimonies suggest that the Armadillo "part of the group" attended Sunday evenings at the ballet because they wanted to be at the Armadillo World Headquarters regardless of any performance going on. There was a general, good-natured understanding among research participants that this happened to some degree at every show. Consider the sentiment represented by this example from dancer Arletta Howard-Logan: "[A] lot of people came because they liked the 'Dillo because there was almost always something going on there, and they might've expected to see, you know, some rock band or something. Instead it was ballet, but nobody ever left [laughs]."[24] Within the parameters of this research, no data emerged to suggest that sometimes people felt disappointed, ill at ease, or that they departed altogether when they discovered that the ballet was scheduled to perform that evening rather than a live band; such data might be difficult to accrue in any event.

The Armadillo World Headquarters was a destination in its own right both for Austinites desiring the experiences that the club might afford and tourists drawn by its reputation. Those who paid admission at the door and bought their beer and nachos without knowing the schedule participated in and further generated that eclectic experience of place. Certainly the duration of ABT's tenure at the AWHQ over eight years, until the club closed, indicates a successful compatibility with the Armadillo's regular mix of "our part of the group": clientele who might also attend other events.

Accounts about the sprinkling and spice within ballet audiences identify several sub-groups of patrons. Many sources allude to hippies and the relaxed, casual environment for audiencing that hippies created.[25] This is not surprising given the venue,

and journalist Cynthia Milne describes the result as the "pleasant association of ballet with the famous arena of hippie culture."[26] The Armadillo also had an affiliation with country music as the place "where goat-roper met hippie" as described in Chapter III.[27] Student dance journalist Carrie Schweitzer provides a nod to the audience's Texan identity: "We converted cowboys are not the only ones that are finally seeing and enjoying dance."[28] Music discourse about the AWHQ audiences often delves into details about "rednecks," pseudo-rednecks, cosmic cowboys, and other taxonomies of Texan masculinity in the audiences, so such Texan, masculine associations from the venue may have transgressed into ballet audience identity-making.[*]

However, an exceptional group that represented diverse audience populations for ballet in the data were motorcycle bikers, possibly Hell's Angels. Hell's Angels and groups like them were (and still are) organized motorcycle clubs with fearsome reputations.[†] During the 1970s, Hell's Angels and other motorcycle "gangs" were associated with counterculture movements, although the relationships were complicated and fraught with illegal activities and the shadows of violence.[29] Yet, their presence was often accepted by different types of anti-establishment, diversity advocates, such as those at the Armadillo.[30] Although it is not clear how often the Hell's Angels themselves may

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[*] See Jason Mellard, *Progressive Country: How the 1970s Transformed the Texan in Popular Culture* (Austin, The University of Texas Press, 2013) and Leigh Clemons, *Branding Texas: Performing Culture in the Lone Star State* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 2008) in particular for scholarly inquiry. *Texas Monthly* also has several popular journalism articles in its archives devoted to these topics.

[†] During the writing of this chapter, a controversial shootout that gained national attention occurred between law enforcement and the Hell's Angels in Waco, TX, on May 17, 2015.

have attended the ballet, the following accounts illustrate two different perspectives on bikers as audience members. Dancer Greg Easley related how the motorcycle groups brought a dimension of diversity to the audiences that he truly enjoyed recalling:

> Uh, there were, you know, bikers that would wander in. It was just—it was great . . . they were these big old tattooed, you know, Hell's Angels applauding you . . . but if you had walked out and needed help from one of those guys, they would've stopped and helped you had they just seen you perform.[31]

However, Armadillo manager Eddie Wilson had an additional angle on the interaction:

> In fact, some of my fondest memories are several rows of folding chairs filled with parents and grandparents looking up at their little darlings dancing on the stage at the Armadillo, with two or three rows of gnarly bikers behind them looking at the same girls with a completely different look in their eye.[32]

When put into conversation, these two accounts illustrate subjectively-centered multiplicities of perception that complicate and enrich the composition of history.

**Audience Practices**

The following anecdote, which originated in or around 1975, is part of Armadillo World Headquarters legend. This is how Mechling told the story to me in our interview:

> We had some Russian [Soviet] journalists what were brought by Kay Northcutt who was editor of the *Observer* at that time. And so we were, you know, kind of used to having people from everywhere come through there. . . . [B]ut they spent the whole afternoon and evening there, and when they were leaving what they said through their interpreter was they didn't want to go. They actually wanted to stay longer and come back the next day and they couldn't, but their remark was, "This is the freest place in the world."[33]

How might ballet audiences at "the freest place in the world" have navigated opportunities to audience differently and generated new ways of doing so? Data analysis of historical narratives brings forward several practices that coalesce into circulatory and defining characteristics that are unique to audiencing Austin Ballet Theatre at the

Armadillo World Headquarters. Participants identified being able to eat, drink, wear the clothing of their choice, and move about freely with an "informality" at the AWHQ that provided a more "comfortable" environment as compared with other performing venues. Although audience practices do not necessarily become part of the story while researching other ballet companies, for Austin Ballet Theatre they constitute a significant part of historical narratives. Audiences in these narratives are portrayed as practicing freedom by transgressing expectations of how ballet audiences behave.

### Drinking Beer and Eating Nachos

> There's a run on the bar for nachos and beer to last through the opening ballet.—Suzanne Shelton [Buckley], dance critic[34]

> Typically, beer and nachos flowed freely and fans were not in the least disappointed.—Judi Hazlett, dance critic[35]

I introduce this section on ballet audience practices at the Armadillo with perhaps the most tangible elements that evoke those behaviors: beer and nachos. Beer materializes everywhere within the data as one of the most prominent and repetitive codes applied to ABT audiences, and it is often accompanied by nachos. Certainly every participant I interviewed mentioned beer, and the way narrators routinely brought up beer and nachos in conversation seemed to be a meme connected with many nuances of meaning in the generation of historical knowledge regarding ballet at AWHQ. The following quotes address not only eating nachos and drinking beer but also the

relationships of those behaviors with context, affective impact, economics, family, and individual freedoms:

> I just didn't really get it at first. It was weird. It was so weird. It was such a strange juxtaposition because you saw these people dancing on stage. You're eating nachos, drinking beer. You're smelling marijuana. I mean, the whole thing just seemed bizarre to me.[36]
>
> They'd sit and eat their nachos and drink beer, watch ballet . . . [laughter].[37]
>
> You see, the one thing they did do, they did sell beer and they did sell nachos, so that was one of the ways that I think Eddie Wilson and, you know, could feel as though well, we're earning some money while we're doing it. I think that was the compromise that they would be able to sell—it was mostly nachos, maybe it was more, but I just remember plates—big plates of nachos and beer.[38]
>
> Well, my mother didn't drink, so she—we never had beer. I don't think we ate either [laughs], but I think my oldest brother came a few times, and I remember him thinking, "Well, this is great." He could have a beer and a nacho and, you know, whatever else they were serving . . . .[39]

There was a casualness when discussing these concessions that echoed both the informality of the environment at the Armadillo and the obviousness of such a club serving beer; simultaneously, I felt a sense of winking at the humor involved in the cultural incongruity of beer and nachos at a ballet performance. Thus, beer and nachos were at the same time completely expected and completely unexpected at the intersection of two frames of cultural practices. Consumer culture featuring beer and nachos supported an experience that crossed and mixed associations of sociocultural protocols; this theme will be investigated further in Chapter VI. Such an environment supported how Austin Ballet Theatre at the Armadillo World Headquarters functioned in a similar transgressive way through dance.

## Wearing Whatever

Dancer John Logan connected informal clothing with the beer, nachos, and ballet meme: "Austin Ballet Theatre crowds, because it was a relaxed venue, people were out there dressed in shorts and t-shirts and drinking beer and having nachos."[40] Clothing choices also emerged frequently as a data analysis code related to audience informality. For example, dancer Greg Easley recalled audience apparel as being emblematic of the audience's diversity: "[T]here were people in furs, and then there were people not in furs."[41] The idea of wearing furs, in this discursive situation, refers to a moneyed upper social class and a cultural tradition of dressing formally to attend ballet concerts.

As I discuss in Chapter VI, clothing, jewelry, and other status elements of personal appearance enacted discriminatory agendas to restrict access to certain art forms, such as ballet, from working social classes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the United States. "Dressing up" in finery takes money, time, and energy, which are not always available to working populations. However, the sociocultural changes in the United States that were initiated during the 1960s introduced new possibilities for access to the arts, particularly in combination with a new informality in clothing that spread during the 1970s. Still, such clothing diversity at the ballet was clearly unusual enough that participants continue to emphasize in interviews what audiences wore and, importantly, how that spectrum of attire facilitated greater access to and enjoyment of the ballet. With personal agency to engage in performatives of identity and desire in dress—whether wearing furs, biker leathers, or denims—audience members

came to the ballet on their own terms. Dancer Terri Lynn Wright observed how such freedom of choice in clothing increased a sense of welcome at the ballet:

> . . . [F]or others it'd be the only time they could walk in and see a ballet. Otherwise, maybe they never would have done at all. Because especially back then, you still dressed up to go to the theater. These days pretty much anything goes, but I think if they could wear their jeans and have a beer that they thought, "Well, sure I'll go check out the ballet."[42]

Easley specifically mentioned jeans, and so did Wright: "[T]here were well-dressed people there as well as, you know, the dress of the day—blue jeans and whatever."[43] Blue jeans, like beer and nachos, have special cultural significance in the context of Austin in the 1970s and, again, reflect both the counterculture and a Texan identity.[*] However, for the purposes of this chapter, I emphasize how audience members were free to choose what they wore to Austin Ballet Theatre concerts. Cultural studies scholar Sam Binkley asserts that, during the 1970s, more variety in dress and personal appearance allowed for more of a sense of acceptance of the self and others and reflected new freedoms of individualism and the body.[44] Armadillo ballet audiences could thus feel

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[*] Beverly Gordon chronicles how jeans originated as a counterculture symbol in the 1920s and continued to function as such in different ways in the United States through each subsequent decade. Denim blue jeans were connected to working classes and transgressed gender. See Beverly Gordon, "American Denim: Blue Jeans and Their Multiple Layers of Meaning," *Dress and Popular Culture* (1991): 31-45. For a discussion of beer and rural, masculine, and Texan identities, see Jason Mellard, *Progressive Country: How the 1970s Transformed the Texan in Popular Culture* (Austin, The University of Texas Press, 2013) and Leigh Clemons, *Branding Texas: Performing Culture in the Lone Star State* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 2008); for a discussion of nachos, see Amy Bentley, "From Culinary Other to Mainstream American: Meanings and Uses of Southwestern Cuisine," *Southern Folklore* 55, no. 3 (January 3, 1998): 238-252.

more comfortable with how they wanted to attend the ballet, whether they were in furs or in jeans.

## Making Noise and Moving Around

According to data, ABT audiences also experienced freedom and informality that transgressed behaviors for attending ballet at other venues, particularly with regard to how loudly expressive they were and their ability to get up and move around freely at any time. Again, as with perceptions of diversity, the degree of noise depended on the narrator's frame of reference. Data from those affiliated with Austin Ballet Theatre promote a narrative that audiences for the ballet at the Armadillo developed a situated practice of being louder with their responsiveness than at other ballet venues. For example, as dancer Ken Owen attested, "It could be pretty wild, you know. They'd be real rowdy."[45] To further illustrate, dancer Easley connected making noise with feeling "free": "[T]he audience just felt really free. They were in a band bar, and they were drinking beer. 'Yay! [cheering],' you know. They'd whistle and hoot and holler."[46] Dancer John Logan shared an insightful perspective as someone who attended his first ballet performances in the audiences at the AWHQ:

> It was instrumental to me, too, or instructional, for me to see a ballet audience. Because I hadn't really been exposed to much ballet as a kid. I hadn't been exposed to any. Um, and so, the Austin Ballet Theatre crowds, because it was a relaxed venue . . . they would cheer, or they'd clap and they'd whistle. And they'd make noise, you know. They didn't sit there like at the Bass Concert Hall going, "[in a mannered voice] Oh, that was lovely, lovely." You know, they were, they were, they'd cheer. And, "Aaahhh! [cheering]." They were making noise. So that was kind of fun [chuckling]. Um, it was a more boisterous crowd. So. It's just human nature. You let people relax and get their hair down and drink a beer or two, and they're more likely to be vocal.[47]

Likewise, dancer Eve Larson explained an ABT phenomenon of audience members shouting out the names of individual dancers:

> And the audience was generally very enthusiastic, I think. It got to be funny at times because you would get kind of a [*cat meowing*] clique going for some dancer. You know there would be [Kenny's] fans [laughs] who would—he'd come on stage and everyone starts cheering and clapping. So sometimes the audience was just a little out of control, but, um . . . . Yeah, it sometimes turned into more like a football game, but, um . . . [laughs]. It was informal and nobody minded, you know, expressing themselves, so they would cheer for their dancers of choice [laughs] you know, so it was funny. Very, very funny experience.[48]

The ways in which the enthusiastic noises of the audiences supported the dancers in their endeavors and made performing fun are explored in Chapter IV.

At the same time, a counter-perspective regarding the effects of noise as audience practice came from audience member Kate Warren. Her testimony adds variety to the generation of historical knowledge different from the dancers' experiences, and her point of view serves as a helpful reminder that, sometimes, transgressive behaviors cause degrees of discomfort. When she was sitting in the back rows, Warren found that as ABT performed people around her began to gossip about the dancers: "Oh, yeah. It was, it was weird. It was the strangest thing. It was strange because people were talking [while the dancers were onstage dancing]."[49] In this example, Warren illustrated a deviance of audience behavior during a ballet concert from an ostensible focus on the dancing, which demands at least the outward image of attentive silence from observers. For Warren, the freedom uniquely afforded by the Armadillo to talk during the show felt strange and even unsettling because of the departure from cultural convention.

In addition to creating situated standards of noise levels, Austin Ballet Theatre audiences at the Armadillo also had opportunities to move around that demonstrated more freedom and informality. The data divulged four ways of moving about that were unique to the ABT concerts. First was an acceptance of children being able to play. Dancer Eve Larson, who was already a mother herself during the Armadillo years, was attuned to how family-friendly this practice was: "[T]he seating was so informal that kids would be able to move around, and I think that was a great thing for the parents and the kids."[50] The example of the Hendrix family playing on the stairs mentioned earlier illustrates how younger children could occupy themselves by climbing up and down during the ballet, allowing parents to relax while audiencing.[51] Then, at times when the ballet dancers onstage were not performing, children danced freely in a clear area between the seating and the stage. Audience member Helen Spear evoked the scene:

> It was wonderful, because at intermission time, all the little girls in the audience…would go down to the front and they'd start twirling around. It was just so wonderful. You see, the stage was up here, and then there was a space before the chairs started, and so all these little girls were twirling around, with what they had seen, they were so enchanted with it.[52]

Journalist Stephanie Chernikowski connects this kind of dancing to other events at the Armadillo: "Enraptured kids flock to the stage—just like at a rock-and-roll show—then leap and twirl during intermission."[53]

A second type of audience movement occurred when Hall sometimes choreographed an interactive finale during the crowd-pleasing closer of the show wherein the ABT dancers came into the audience and invited attendees to dance with them.

Although the dancers had mixed feelings about having to do this, the interactions usually worked out generally well with the assistance of a few willing supporters.[54]

Third, some adult audience members danced on their own, regardless of any intentionally interactive choreography. Armadillo staff member Mechling remembered that some of the staff—the "twirly girls"—liked to join in at the end and that occasionally other audience members danced when they felt like it:

> Leea Mechling: And on staff were, um, some women who had danced and they would usually join in. Um, and we had the women we called the "twirly girls" that at any performance they would just get up in front of the stage and do this freeform swirly-twirly with their skirts and arms. And I can remember people even during the performances themselves, they wouldn't, like, be distracting in the front, they usually were over to the side, but they'd be doing their own version of what was going on on stage.
>
> Caroline S. Clark: Ah, so maybe they weren't seated, but they were in that peripheral area.
>
> Leea Mechling: There was a whole area, you know, between where the stage was and where the chairs would be set up. It was probably, I would say, 10 to 15 feet wide, and, um, we kept that kind of buffer too for seated shows, um, regularly, and then that whole area would get used by people just getting up and dancing.
>
> Caroline S. Clark: And that happened during the ballet concerts?
>
> Leea Mechling: They would do that during the ballet as well, especially people who, you know, would come to the club regularly because they were used to dancing to whatever was being performed.[55]

Here, audience behaviors reflected what the participants were acculturated to do. AWHQ regulars were likely to dance because they often danced during music concerts; in doing so, they shifted possibilities of movement for all ABT audience members.

A fourth way that audiences could experience new freedom of movement during the ballet concerts was by having the liberty to leave and return at will. For me, this is the

most intriguing difference in audience movement conventions as compared with normative concert-going. My experience has been that, in a proscenium theater in the United States, ballet audiences generally sit quietly for the duration of any particular dance and leave only in response to a personal emergency or extreme disapproval of the content onstage. Audience members participate in a type of ritual performance themselves, that of paying attention, whether or not they are actually being attentive to the ballet. As cultural scholar Lawrence Levine espouses, these behaviors mimic those of congregations in sacred spaces.[56] At the Armadillo, however, such codes of behavior had flexibility. Audience members did not have to sit in the folding chairs lined up in rows in the main seating area or around the cable spool tables on the periphery, although patrons who chose to sit in the center rows generally did stay seated during the ballets, in accordance with convention.[57] However, everyone was allowed to move freely at any time.

Mechling, who was usually stationed at the bar in the back, had more of a sense of how people moved in the peripheral areas during the ballets: "Some people would be out, go back, just, literally, they wouldn't take a seat. They would just split their time between standing there watching and then going out to the beer garden to do whatever you do in a beer garden, and then they'd come back in."[58] Audience members seem to have had more personal agency for choosing their experiences at the Armadillo.

By some accounts, then, Austin Ballet Theatre audiences were a lively, even raucous bunch. However, such a view is tempered by perspectives from the Armadillo World Headquarters narrators: artist Franklin, manager Wilson, and bartender and staff

manager Mechling. Although these individuals all seemed to be gratified by the ways in which the AWHQ allowed the ballet audiences to "let their hair down," relax, and enjoy themselves, those attending the ballet behaved in a calmer way than many of their live music clientele.[59] Franklin described the audiences as "well-behaved,"[60] and Mechling elaborated:

> Let's face it, when a rock-and-roll show was happening, people are usually getting a head start on their imbibing of whatever it is they're imbibing before they get there, and then they really would start recreating, and, you know, we would always play music beforehand, taped music beforehand, and it was loud. And so there was just this certain—frantic is really the wrong word for it, but it was just such a more, it was a just a really strong, kind of overwhelming raucous energy, and it was just so super nice on [ballet] Sundays that people would be coming in, and, you know, quietly finding their places. Most people tend to sit in their same favorite spots around the room. Um, and it was just pretty serene which was, well, lovely.[61]

Although there was some audience movement, noise, and eating and drinking, on the basis of what these Armadillo narrators considered to be a frame of reference, the ballet audiences were quiet, seated, and serene.

## Smoking Marijuana

To conclude this section on audience practices, I examine the data concerning one of the most infamous behaviors associated with the Armadillo World Headquarters: marijuana use. Smoking marijuana is so conflated with the Armadillo's legacy that, in 2014, Austin's National Public Radio station, KUT-FM, advertised an upcoming event with the phrase, "If you remember the Armadillo, you weren't really there" as an homage to similar slogans regarding the 1960s and recreational drug use.[62] In public histories, the Armadillo World Headquarters' reputation for pot and other drugs is often hinted at

obliquely with both nostalgic affection and shadows of tragedy, and personal histories outside of this research offer countless anecdotes of specific drug-related experiences there. Along these lines, when ABT arrived on Sunday mornings, the dancers and volunteers usually found the remnants of marijuana cigarettes:

> Roaches, and they were not bugs, but cigarette—you know, joints, when we'd go clean up.[63]
>
> So there'd be trash everywhere on the floor, and we would have to like go over the floor, you know, pick up trash. You'd find all kinds of interesting things. Oh, lots of—lots of weed.[64]
>
> And the pot on the floor! You could get high just from the roaches![65]

However, data from this research indicate that marijuana and other drug use may have been significantly less prevalent during the ballet evenings than it was during other events. As lighting designer Mark Loeffler, who worked music shows as well, expressed, "But it was nothing like being there for a regular concert, which was all young people [laughs] in various states of inebriation or sobriety."[66] When considering this line of inquiry, it is important to remember that, owing to the nature of data gathering, any extent of drug use may be kept quiet and lost to history. Participants only brought up marijuana; they did not mention other drugs that have sometimes been associated with the club, and pot was mentioned as part of a generalized, peripheral context. In other words, its use was taken for granted and not exactly known or shared with me, and there were very few specific testimonies of anyone partaking in marijuana. Although the newspaper articles and reviews were certainly enthusiastic about the beer and nachos, they categorically do not mention any occurrence of illegal activity. Even after many years, the narrators may

have withheld some information, either for privacy or a desire not to distract the conversation—a conversation creating historical knowledge for public use—from a focus on dancing.

Regardless, marijuana use during the ballet seems to have been negligible or peripheral. Warren remembered smelling it, as mentioned earlier, but the odor often lingered in the facility alongside the smell of stale beer.[67] The dancers had some knowledge that marijuana was part of the scene, but their ideas about it varied, as shown in these examples:

> I knew that people smoked pot at the Armadillo. But it didn't seem—it didn't bother me and I hoped that—it seemed like we were still getting an audience. I don't think they smoked pot at the ballet. I don't really know. I wasn't out there in the audience. But I don't think so.[68]

> And no doubt half was smoking weed. Not during the show, but you know . . . . So . . . they were always very lubricated.[69]

Again, the Armadillo staff had their own perspectives on the practice, but they attest that any marijuana use during ballet performances was much less than what occurred at music events. Mechling observed that the AWHQ regulars kept it discrete:

> People were pretty respectful of that. They understood that was a different group of people. There was a place in the back of the room . . . . That's where people went if they just had to smoke a joint during the show. No one could see them, and, um, you know, if anybody noticed the smell they couldn't tell where it was coming from. But for the most part, [they] really didn't do a lot at the ballets.[70]

The "different group of people" at ballet concerts to whom Mechling referred in the above quote included the families who were discussed earlier, as she affirmed:

> Leea Mechling: And, you know, one reason, I think, that there was so little of that is 'cause there were children there. Now, you know, I have to say the kids of the

> ‘Dillo were more aware, but there were little kids there. I’m sure we refrained and went somewhere more private because of that.
>
> Caroline S. Clark: Because there were kids attending the ballet shows?
>
> Leea Mechling: Mm-hmm, and the dancers.
>
> Caroline S. Clark: And the dancers. A lot of them were teens or young folks.
>
> Leea Mechling: You know, we did have some sensibilities about us.[71]

Thus, marijuana use during the ballet may have been diminished by the presence of youth. AWHQ founder Wilson also alluded to the presence of families: “It’s amazing how well we minded our manners. It’s not an age group . . . it typically doesn’t perform well unsupervised. But, just having the moms and the grandmoms and all those folks around, I mean, it was just nice having a self-riding boat.”[72, *] Similarly, artist Jim Franklin remembered seeing a lot less pot on ballet evenings because, in general, there was a different population, with many people coming specifically to attend the ballet. He continued, “Now, if there was anyone smoking during a ballet, I wasn’t aware of it . . . . As far as just sitting there puffing and passing the joints while they’re dancing, I don’t remember any of that.”[73, †]

To sum up, for those narrators and writers who compared behaviors of audiences at the Armadillo World Headquarters to other ballet audiences of the time, the patrons

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[*] The self-riding boat image is not explained exactly here, but based on the context surrounding this quote, I interpret it to mean that the ballet was self-sufficient and those concerts did not present many problems.

[†] Franklin also charmingly admitted, “I don’t remember if I ever got stoned when I watched ‘em. I don’t remember getting stoned at all, ‘cause I guess I was stoned all the time.”

were rowdy (although in a way that was supportive of the company) and making the most of consumables not usually offered in ballet settings, such as beer and nachos. For those Armadillo regulars who compared the behaviors seen during ballet performances to those that occurred during music concerts, the audiences were much more sedate. All agree, however, that ABT audiences at the AWHQ enjoyed more freedom in the process of creating a unique situated phenomenon.

## Connecting Audience Practices to Discourse

The new possibilities afforded to ballet audiences at the AWHQ fit well with a larger contemporaneous trend toward personal agential discovery in the U.S. during the 1970s. Cultural scholar Binkley identifies and surveys such a cultural turn in his 2007 text *Getting Loose: Lifestyle Consumption in the 1970s.* Binkley states that social transitions of the time negotiated change between a previous generation's directive toward keeping order in the body and a new generation's interest in experiencing a sense of "authentic living" through the body:

> [W]hereas the Fordist [industrial era] compact . . . demanded the production of "docile" bodies, smiling organization men happy in their modest functions as appendages of large, remotely administered bureaucratic machines, the culture of post-Fordism demanded the insurrectionary body of the swinger, living in the immediacy of his consumer choices, an endlessly original, personal, and expressive body of insatiable needs and manifold sensualities.[74]

Through the lens of Binkley's thesis, patrons of ballet at the Armadillo who decided to pursue their individual interests and bodily desires by moving about freely, drinking beer, eating nachos, making noise, and so on participated in larger trends of "lifestyle consumption." These audiences had more choices available allowing them to customize

their experiences. Some of those choices transgressed cultural norms of behavior for ballet-going and generated more salience in historical narratives about ABT as a result. Paradoxically, those transgressive practices then became a new normal and an identifier of attending performances of Austin Ballet Theatre, as Buckley describes when she opens her review of a new season: "The beer flowed, the ballets enchanted and ABT's army of admirers settled back for another season of monthly ballet at Armadillo."[75]

Sociologists Benjamin D. Zablocki and Rosabeth Moss Kanter explore some of the same ideas about transgressive sociocultural choices in an article written in 1976. The authors provide contemporaneous observations regarding how consumers of the "counterculture" transgress class in pursuit of lifestyle, a historiographic fit especially relevant to the ecological dynamics of culture and status at the Armadillo.[76] Zablocki and Kanter assert that, during the industrial era, lifestyle choices were based on sociocultural circles developing out of work life and affordability. Due to a loss of what they term "value coherence" from social upheavals during the 1960s, lifestyle during the 1970s offered additional choices not necessarily associated with work or economic status.[77] Zablocki and Kanter describe this phenomenon as follows:

> The emergence of the counterculture and life-style experimentation has taken place among people for whom identity has come to be generated in the consumption rather than the production realm . . . . Individuals are relatively free to make a range of independent, even hedonistic, consumption decisions little constrained by their productive roles.[78]

This passage, which uses the words *life-style* and *hedonism,* corresponds incredibly well with the description of the patrons of the Armadillo World Headquarters from its legacy website (also cited in Chapter III):

> The place caught on fairly quickly as the little haven where the anti-establishment types could feel at home, and develop what was becoming their hedonistic music/pot/beer-based lifestyle. "The lifestyle itself was an accepted art form in Austin and people set out to outdo everyone else with their own maximizing of daily pleasure," says [founder Eddie] Wilson.[79]

Although the usage may be coincidental, the matching of these word codes reinforces the idea that this pleasure-seeking way of life was a possibility for those who desired it at the time. Furthermore, Zabocki and Kanter claim to represent a new (for 1976), non-judgmental approach in sociology to the counterculture, because research previous to theirs had focused on the transgression of class normatives as deviant behavior.[80] This outlook sheds light on some of the sociocultural context in which the Armadillo operated and how some factions in the community may have viewed the club negatively.[*] The Armadillo created a space for transgressions, both large and small, to occur.[†]

**What Happened as a Result: Building Knowledgeable Audiences**

Both oral history narrators and the archival literature emphasize that the freedoms of practice offered to patrons through these shows built new audiences for ballet. In doing so, the collaboration manifested an idealistic vision that was shared by both Austin Ballet Theatre and the Armadillo: making art accessible to all. ABT audiences who returned to

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[*] Interestingly, Zabocki and Kanter specifically mention that, in their surveys of alternative lifestyles, they did not research such groups as "ropers and dopers." Although they did not define this moniker, the country-and-pot connotations strongly suggest the "cosmic cowboy" scene at the AWHQ.

[†] As such, the AWHQ may have been an iteration of Michel Foucault's heterotopic spaces. See Peter Johnson, "Unravelling Foucault's 'Different Spaces,' *History of the Human Sciences* 19, no. 4 (November 2006): 75-90.

the AWHQ frequently had the opportunity to become familiar with the discursive legacies shared by director Stanley Hall. As Hall himself asserted in a newspaper interview, "It brought ballet to a lot of people who would otherwise not see it."[81]

## Educating Audiences

In this same newspaper interview, Hall described how ABT audiences learned through repeated attendance over time:

> As for the faithful following, they learn the dancers' names, maybe pick out a favorite number, and start looking at details. "A monthly performance builds a knowledgeable audience. They see the dancers progress and improve their technique and performance," Hall explains.[82]

Journalist Chernikowski chronicles the same phenomenon, making a connection to the culture of the venue: "The regulars have the same kind of identification that rock regulars feel with the house band . . . . They have attended repeatedly, watched the company mature, themselves matured in their perception."[83] Several interviewees discussed how Hall created a situation that fostered audiences due to his savvy perception of the situation in Austin:

> [H]e was a clever man in, in many ways. I think he, um, assessed the situation here in Austin. He came into Austin, and Austin was not a terribly cultural place at the time. And so, I think he realized that he had to not only train his dancers, but he had to train an audience as well.[84]
>
> The idea was we were learning from them, and the audience was learning from us . . . . So he was—again, it was part of his—we didn't talk about things like business models and—then, but I think it was part of his—his overall plan was to, to educate an audience as well as to educate individual dancers.[85]
>
> They could come and eat nachos while they were watching ballet! [Laughter] But they got really good dance. They didn't just get, you know, podunk whatever. It was—they were really seeing something great . . . . And they were learning also,

> and Stanley was brilliant in that, that he could offer that to people and they didn't even know what they were getting and then they got it.[86]

No data indicate that Hall initiated shows at the AWHQ with a *pre-existing* mission to bring ballet to new audiences. Oral history testimony does establish, however, that Hall identified and made the most of the opportunity offered at the Armadillo to welcome novice ballet-goers.

As part of this effort, Hall realized that the company needed to reach new audiences by providing information along with beer, nachos, and entertaining finales. A survey of the many programs, i.e. playbills, for these concerts provides additional proof of this intention. Some ABT/Armadillo programs—although not all—contain program notes with a few sentences of information that might help audience members to engage with each dance more or teach a little dance history, as in these examples:

> *La Peri (excerpt):* Created for Carlotta Grisi (who made the ballet "Giselle" famous) this romantic style ballet involves Achmet's dreams of the Oriental sylph, La Peri.
>
> *Sylvia Suite (excerpt):* . . . In the scenario of the Ballet "Sylvia" [sic], Diana shoots Orion with an arrow to protect the lovers. In this version, Diana makes up to Orion so this Suite is not to be taken too seriously.[87]

In the second excerpt, the program notes also indicate the affective tone of the dance, perhaps so that audiences who previously believed that ballet was meant to be staid could be advised that they were allowed to find the dance light in tone and even humorous.

The program notes for Hall's frequently repeated comedic closer, *Parody of Isms*, provide explanations such as these so that everyone could get the "in" jokes:

> *Balanchine-ism*: George Balanchine, one of the famous choreographers of our time. Musically impeccable, he uses the dancers rather like instruments. The dancers complain that "there always seem to be too many steps to fit the music."
>
> *St. Denis-ism:* Ruth St. Denis, a mother of modern dance, a beautiful woman with beautiful rippling arms.
>
> *Tharp-ism*: Twyla Tharp, master of dance camp, tends to do the same choreography to different music.
>
> *Duncan-ism*: Isadora Duncan, the mother of modern dance, hated ballet. "Dancing," she said, "comes from the solar plexus."
>
> *Nikolais-ism*: Alwin Nikolais, the genius of dance, lights, and electronic music.[88]

No author is credited for any program notes, but to my mind they come directly or indirectly from Hall, who took inspiration from his vast career and his continuing travels to New York City and Europe each summer. Although *Isms* was a series of parodies, these dances actually exposed and educated audiences (as well as the dancers themselves) regarding the wider world of theatrical dance practice in the United States in the spirit of homage.

Hall also used the show's order of ballets tactically as a way of reaching audiences through variety. Hall's usual programs provided something for everyone: classical opening numbers, contemporary middle ballets, and comedic closers. Hall discusses his view on the need for variety in an interview:

> Hall . . . admitted that programming for these monthly performances is a difficult task. "You need a delicate balance," Hall said, "Programming is always a problem, even in big companies. To me the one problem with the New York City Ballet is that you see and come out and want to scream."[89]

The comedy, in particular, reached new audiences and shattered any preconceived ideas they may have had about ballet always being aloof or stuffy. Audience member Spear articulated how programming helped to attract new audiences:

> And Stanley put together a very good program; I mean sometimes he'd do a whole ballet, but sometimes they were acts from things, and then he would throw in some modern things toward the end, and he always had a real crowd pleaser at the end, so I think he really knew how to program a thing. So I think that he, again, drew a lot of people in that might not have—you know, might have thought, "Ballet? Why would I want to go see ballet?"[90]

In a magazine article, dance critic Buckley sums up how Hall's approach, as a result, "paid off, and an increasingly loyal and knowledgeable audience began reveling in anew [sic] and rich experience."[91] Journalist Marian Smith also attributes ABT's burgeoning audiences to Hall's directorial savvy:

> How, with no advertising to speak of, can a ballet company keep filling the house at a huge place like the Armadillo in a town where even professional touring companies don't always draw a big crowd? The answer can be found in the artistic instinct of ABT's director, Stanley Hall. He has been able to choreograph pieces that are not only highly watchable, but that are suited to his dancers who are vastly disparate in talent, technical competence and experience." [Both Sadler's Well's and Ballets de Paris], says Hall, made a practice of finishing their performances with a "light-hearted ballet—something that would send the audience home smiling."[92]

The idea of programming leads to another theme about a growing audience connoisseurship which I found unusual. The data suggest that audiences learned that they were free *not* to like a particular dance. Austin Ballet Theatre presented such a variety of styles during their Armadillo concerts that it was accepted that some people would prefer certain styles over others, such as classical over contemporary ballet or vice versa. To be sure, many in the ballet world—and in Western art in general since postmodernism—

understand this. However, dancer Terri Lynn Wright drew my attention to how a conscious acceptance of differences in receptivity during Austin Ballet Theatre shows led to a specific type of learning:

> And I think that to present that [variety] to the audience and you bring in that many more people, because they're all unique and different and there's something there for everyone, whether it's Isaac Hayes or *Dante's Inferno* or Sugar Plum Fairy. And it was good for them to get to see a little bit of different—exposed to different types of dance besides just [classical] ballet. Because, just ballets can get boring. I mean, you know, it's just nice to have variety. And then you don't have to like everything, but *I think the audience learns that they don't have to like everything and it's all right.* But just to be exposed to that is good for everybody. [emphasis added][93]

Wright's insight that Armadillo audiences learned "that they don't have to like everything and it's all right" rings true with my experiences. An accruement of attendance to dance concerts over time builds perspective regarding one's own tastes and tolerances within a growing frame of reference. However, newer audiences, who may be discouraged by unsatisfying or confusing encounters, may not return to engage in this process.

Perhaps the freedoms afforded to patrons at the Armadillo reassured novice audiences for dance that they had choices and agency in this situation such as those made visible by the behaviors of those around them. For example, it was accepted that an audience member may take a break and do something else for a while, as described earlier, because he or she simply did not like the ballet being performed. The freedom to move around during a ballet at the Armadillo World Headquarters was not only acceptable but a marker of ABT's identity praxis there. In this way, Austin Ballet Theatre manifested a philosophy that people were free *not* to like the ballets onstage and that

focusing on the ballet was a personal choice. This quote from AWHQ staff member Leea Mechling illustrated such a philosophy in practice:

> I liked the variety of the different dances that Stanley would produce. And because they really ran a wide gamut, and if you didn't like a particular one they were doing, then you could decamp to the beer garden for a while and then come back.[94]

Or, as Buckley wrote in a review, "Some Sundays a single ballet appeals, while the other works send you diving for beer and nachos."[95]

Dancer Easley suggested that audiences may have been more interested in attending *because* of the uncertainty:

> I think when Stanley took those risks—whether you liked the ballet or not [laughs], people never knew what they were going to see. *And there was a certain amount of intrigue for that.* 'Cause if you didn't like it this month, you'd go back next month. See something else. So it was great. [emphasis added][96]

The following quote from Hall himself confirms his flexible approach as a director with regard to the Armadillo audiences: "And if they don't like one of the dances on the program they can go have a beer and nachos. And why not?"[97] His good humor and unique subversion of cultural mores in this statement suggests not only an attitude of tolerance but even a bit of glee in promoting individual choice over conventional audience behaviors.

Overall, the data construct an identity for Armadillo audiences that has a sense of being unfinished, and by doing so, creates room for multiple kinds of growth. Hall

invokes his own heritage as a form of legitimacy for this model of ballet performance practice:

> "In some ways," he continues, "it's like the early days at Sadler's Wells. The audience became familiar with the dancers…and they liked to watch their progress. We've built up an Armadillo crowd that likes the same sort of thing—they become familiar with the dancers, and notice the improvements. They also seem to enjoy watching works in progress."[98]

Through the public conversations of the media, Hall continues to promote acceptance for how Austin Ballet Theatre at the AWHQ does audiencing differently.

Making Ballet "More Real" for Audiences

In our interview session, artist Jim Franklin compared any cultural associations of ballet being "stuffy" with Austin Ballet Theatre at the Armadillo: "The stuffiness was, you know, just was out the door."[99] Then, Franklin expressed the meaning he found in this statement, finding the words in the moment of the interview: "And, and, and—and it made ballet something that was more real . . . . Why should it be completely separate from all the other aspects of culture? You know?"

Binkley, author of the text *Getting Loose* that was cited earlier, also addresses such a sense of being more real. Binkley delineates how counterculture discourses of the body migrated from the fringes during the 1960s into mainstream culture throughout the 1970s. A new narrative emerged that the "loosening of the self" from square, establishment culture meant releasing and relaxing the body toward a "flow of sensation."[100] He explains,

> The looser self spoke of a new livelihood, excavated from the stony edifice of tradition and the routines of conventional life. The looser life promised to release submerged, primordial energies long held in check—energies that when freed

> would empower one with a new capacity to act in and on one's own life. Loosening invoked the idea of a more authentic, innocent, and original source of the self and promised a way of living that was more primary and immediate but also more active and creative . . . . It was lived in the immediacy of *the now*—a real life one could really experience. [emphasis original][101]

Binkley's assertion is that bodily freedoms explored during the 1970s led to an increased sense of individual agency, such as that explored in this chapter with Armadillo audiences of the same time period. In addition, living with these freedoms and agency led to a sense of experiences feeling more "authentic" in "a real life one could really experience." Thus, when Jim Franklin spoke of the stuffiness going out the door and, as a result, the ballet feeling more real, his observations correspond to discourses initiated in the hippie movement relating feelings of authenticity to freedoms of the body.

## Conclusions

This chapter covers how audiences are represented in the data, including who attended the ballet, how Austin Ballet Theatre shows may have constituted a site of learning for audiences, and how audiences generated their own culture of audience behaviors. To add perspective, when asked about changes after his years at the Armadillo and the move to a traditional proscenium theater, dancer John Logan had this to say:

> But, you know, your audience sits there, comfortable clean seats, and, as a consequence tends to be a little bit more reserved. And, I think Stanley had a good idea of stage craft in that, um, he realized that audiences are different depending on the environment . . . . They're not as likely to cheer wildly.[102]

Stanley Hall himself sums up many of the points covered in this dissertation in a newspaper interview, "Armadillo farewell: Ballet Theatre will miss friendly stage":

> There's no silver lining to this cloud: the loss of the Armadillo. You could perform there and charge very little, with ticket prices in the realm of everyone. I

> built an audience—if the shows weren't polished, I could perform work in progress. This is going to be the big, fat problem…repertoire and finances." Hall sees a direct connection between the two, not wishing to offer repeat programs like those at the Armadillo at the higher prices other auditoriums will necessitate. "I don't think you can ask patrons to pay that much and repeat . . . . The Armadillo is a different kettle of fish."[103]

In whatever ways the diversity and practices of the audience members are remembered, all narrators agree that the departures from conventional ways of audiencing ballet at the time afforded by the Armadillo World Headquarters attracted and retained new audiences in various ways. Binkley's scholarship suggests that such "loosening" of the physical self while audiencing was entirely in keeping with the times. The growth of audiences and their enthusiasm for the ballet functioned to problematize and generate an alternative to the high culture/low culture binary, the theme explored in the next chapter.

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[16] Betty Hendrix, interview by author, Austin, TX, September 22, 2014.
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[40] John Logan, interview by author, Austin, TX, January 26, 2014.
[41] Greg Easley, interview by author, Austin, TX, October 14, 2014.
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# CHAPTER VI

## CULTURAL "CONTACT HIGHS" AS HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

> Austin Ballet Theatre performs at the Armadillo World Headquarters, where the high and low cultures meet . . .—"Armadillos in Toe Shoes"[1]

In 1973, dance scholar Suzanne Shelton Buckley introduces her *Texas Monthly* readership to Austin Ballet Theatre with these words. In doing so, she establishes a narrative theme: ballet at the Armadillo as an intersection of high and low cultures. While her "Armadillos in Toe Shoes" metaphor creates an effective textual hook, it also reveals an interpretive cultural lens that splits the ABT/Armadillo partnership into a specific type of binary. In this chapter, I demonstrate how narrators and authors make sense of Austin Ballet Theatre at the Armadillo World Headquarters through the use of this high culture/low culture schema.

First, I define my terms by establishing how a paradigm of "high" versus "low" culture operates within this situation as a legacy from earlier art and entertainment practices in the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I then consider how the research data demonstrate this paradigm by categorizing the ballet as a high culture activity juxtaposed with the music club as a low culture venue. Rather than proving incompatible, however, a narrative of collaboration between high and low in this situation developed into the making of the company's success and identity as a seemingly transgressive phenomenon. I will then present a thematic analysis arising from this collaboration—"ballet for the common man"—that sources describe when making

meaning of how these two worlds came together. The chapter concludes with a section exploring how a high/low binary influences narration about relationships among the people involved. Overall, I argue that a culturally constructed binary of high versus low culture shapes historical knowledge related to Austin Ballet Theatre at the Armadillo.

**Origins of a High/Low Culture Binary**

Cultural studies scholar Lawrence W. Levine examines the development of concepts about "high" and "low" culture in his 1988 text *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America*.[2] Throughout his text, Levine asserts that ballet—along with classical music, "legitimate" theatre, opera, and "fine" art—was part of a concerted effort to establish a dominant social class in the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Up until the mid-nineteenth century in the United States, designations of art and entertainment, along with who engaged in these pursuits and where and how they did so, were much more mixed culturally and socially. During this time, Levine says, programs featuring broad variety, such as Shakespearian orations interspersed with a monkey doing tricks onstage, had been standard practice; audience members could talk, move about more freely, eat, and drink when attending music, theatre, dance, and visual art events. However, during the latter half of the nineteenth century, theaters and museums began more segregated programming to appeal to the sociocultural aspirations (privileging aristocratic Western Europe) of their industrial-era donors. Levine argues that the boom in the creation of specialized spaces to contain art encounters during this era in the United States, such as museums and concert halls, facilitated the separation of social strata between "high society" and "low." Socially

privileged patrons began to apply pressure to the management of the venues to alter behavioral normatives for audiencing.[3, *] Levine terms this polarization of artistic practices the "sacralization" of culture in America.[4] Within temple-like theaters, concert halls, and museums, audiences initiated into appreciation of the arts attended in silence with a growing cultural admonition to devote oneself to the purpose of the place: the art. Aesthetics alone, Levine writes, "cannot account for the mores and institutions that accompanied the developing high culture," including ballet.[5] Levine's thesis does not intend to detract from art per se, but it does draw attention to the mutability of and the ideology that shaped the cultural practices regulating art encounters in the United States.[6]

Levine further locates the origins of the terms *highbrow* and *lowbrow* from around the same time period in Victorian England. These words, Levine writes, stemmed from phrenology, a discredited science that measures people's skulls with the purpose of understanding race and character traits. Phrenologists shaped their findings to promote an unabashedly racist agenda. Through widely circulated diagrams, phrenologists demonstrated that apes and indigenous peoples had lower, more sloping foreheads, while white Western Europeans had higher, more bulging foreheads (the farther north and west the geographic region the more so, with Britain as the pinnacle of highbrowed-ness). From phrenology, these concepts shifted into vernacular usage, which associated "highbrow" with highly intellectual and aesthetically refined persons in contrast with the binary opposite "lowbrow." Levine writes of their discursive functionality: "[These

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[*] Levine describes how pressure also came from European immigrant musicians who were used to different, quieter standards of audiencing.

terms] were openly associated with and designed to preserve, nurture, and extend the cultural history and values of a particular group of peoples in a specific historical context."[7]

Similar to Levine's observations of how phrenological concepts served the cultural history and values of a dominant group, a pseudoscientific framework of racist discrimination manifested in the United States during the second half of the nineteenth century when dominant art institutions resisted an influx of European culture brought by immigrants.[8, *] Levine writes of a firm insistence from established arts organizations and newspapers that arts from Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, and Native Americans "hardly qualified as culture."[9] In one of his supporting examples, Levine quotes a 1918 newspaper article that describes these non-Western-European arts as coming from "down in the basement, a kind of servants' hall," where one finds "the native dances of the world."[10] Upstairs, the article maintains, can be found the "great assembly hall of melody" and "inner sanctuaries of harmony," where the select few can enjoy "truly great music."[11] Here, an architectural metaphor attempts to rationalize agendas for the containment of newly arrived immigrants and minorities by literally suppressing them

[*] For example, the Metropolitan Opera Company in New York City refused to perform any Italian or French operas during the 1880s and 1890s; even after this period, the company insisted on keeping these performances to a minimum and translating them into German. See Levine citation.

down in the basement.* The ideas of high and low are employed to create a kind of logical sense—false though it is—that maintains cultural stratification.

For this dissertation, now that the terms *high culture* and *low culture* have been unpacked, I will discontinue the use of quotation marks and italicization for ease of reading. However, in so doing, I refer to their discursive use without promoting any of their essentialist values.

This paradigmatic binary dominated the institutions of cultural power throughout the twentieth century, although not for lack of challenges along the way. Those challenges that transgressed practices of high and low culture, such as jazz music and jazz dance, tended to be passed over by historical notice and the academic canon until the late twentieth century. It was during the sociocultural upheaval of the 1960s and 1970s that alternatives to the high/low binary of culture gained recognition with the support of a new generation of emerging critics.[12] These alternatives, such as free performance "happenings" on college campuses, Andy Warhol's pop art, and Twyla Tharp's use of popular music for modern theatrical dance mixed and defied taxonomies of social access and artistic evaluation such as those described in Levine's historical narrative of art in the United States. New York City dance critic Marcia B. Siegel writes about the creative environment of "downtown dance" during this period:

> The democratizing ideals which inspired the Judson and postmodern dancers to invent "people dances" . . . have, ironically, assisted in the gradual erosion of high art across American culture. Formalism and experimentation, seen as properties of

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* It is also undoubtedly significant (although not directly to this dissertation) that the body, through dance, exists in the basement, whereas disembodied, abstract elements of Western European music exist upstairs.

> an elitist and excessively serious art, declined in direct response to the populist imperative.[13]

Austin Ballet Theatre, then, which emerged during the 1970s, fits very neatly into this wider historical situation in the way that it creatively challenged the high/low binary. Throughout the data, narration of the partnership between ABT and the AWHQ relies on the intersection of high and low culture as a way of understanding how these two organizations created functional relationships with each other. This understanding becomes, in turn, an interpretive historical lens. The next section of this chapter investigates this lens further.

**ABT + AWHQ: Ballet for the Common Man**

> The casual atmosphere of the Armadillo blends well with one of Hall's goals, of providing dance for a general audience. His programs are meant to appeal to a broad audience, to people who may not know much about ballet."—Cynthia Milne, journalist[14]

> It was the common man's ballet company . . . because of its environment.—Arletta Howard-Logan, dancer[15]

> Covent Garden it ain't. But artistic director Stanley Hall has shaken many ivory tower notions of ballet . . . . Hall rebels against the "snobbish thing about ballet." —Stephanie Chernikowski, journalist[16]

In Chapter V, I presented the way that a sense of informality for audiences at the Armadillo, along with variety in programming, attracted and retained new audiences for ballet. Data sources link informal audience practices with low culture (specifically as practiced at the AWHQ), in contrast with the high culture world of the ballet. When making meaning of how these two worlds came together, an analytical theme arises of "the common man's ballet," an in vivo code arising from the quote above during the first

interview I conducted for this research with dancer Howard-Logan. Stanley Hall himself identified such a populist sentiment in a 1991 interview (11 years after the Armadillo closed) when he proclaimed: "We were the first to bring ballet to the masses."[17] Dance critic Suzanne Shelton Buckley called it "bringing dance to the people."[18] Given that the terms *common man, masses,* and *the people* cannot be defined, analysis must turn toward how these terms emerge and are described by the research participants as discursive meaning-making. This section considers how the ABT performances are depicted as transgressive acts across social class structures.

Ballet and Beer

> And, I think a lot of his focus for shows at Armadillo in particular was to make it appealing to the common man, the guy out there that likes to drink some beer and eat some nachos and see some young people dancing about. —John Logan, dancer[19]

John Logan's observation about "the common man" progresses promptly to a connection with beer and nachos. Their consumption, in the presence of a ballet performance, perhaps best signifies the meeting of low and high cultural practices in a history of ABT and the AWHQ. Beer is mentioned by every narrator in this research and in most of the newspaper articles. As such, the intersection of beer and ballet is a significant generator of historical perspective. To demonstrate the pervasiveness of this association in the data, here are some examples—all from different writers:

> These believers make a monthly pilgrimage to Austin's Armadillo World Headquarters for an improbable brew: Ballet and Beer.[20]

> Armadillo has also been interlarding its assortment of rock, blues, country and raga (not to mention Shiner's beer and barbeque) with the fare of Stanley Hall's

> Ballet Theatre . . . . The next time it's working, I think you'll enjoy stopping by Armadillo to watch it perform (You may also enjoy the Shiner beer, too).[21]
>
> This symbiotic relationship allows ballet to be performed in the same palace where beer flows and nachos sizzle.[22]
>
> The audience cheered, the dancers beamed, the beer flowed, as usual.[23]
>
> Typically, beer and nachos flowed freely and fans were not in the least disappointed.[24]
>
> [B]eer and ballet have become cult items in Austin.[25]

In Chapter IV, I discussed how drinking beer and eating nachos were practices though which audience members could enact freedoms of the body. Such a sense of freedom or transgression could only have been afforded by the perceived restrictions imposed by a high/low binary. In this chapter, I touch upon beer as a signifier of low culture or culture of "the common man" in general. When discussing beer at the ballet, writers and interviewees employ the beer meme as a rhetorical device that operates to bridge the schema of high and low culture in this situation.

It falls outside the scope of this dissertation to trace wine as a preferred libation of ballet audiences, and, frankly, not much specific scholarship exists.[26, *] However, it is important for a narrative of the high/low binary within this history to establish a cultural frame to assert that beer most certainly was *not* associated with watching ballet during the 1970s. Sociologists Benjamin D. Zablocki and Rosabeth Moss Kanter examine

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[*] I did find that wine has long been a sociocultural status symbol in Euro-American heritages of culture, as made evident from how the ancient Greeks denoted status when upper classes brought their own wineskins to drink from during theatre presentations. See Wiles citation.

relationships among lifestyle, economics, and cultural consumerism in their 1976 journal article, "The Differentiation of Life-styles."[27] If only economics mattered, they argue, all people would want the exact same things and differ only in their abilities to afford them. However, other factors are at play:

> The consumption patterns of a status group, on the other hand, involve the factor of prestige . . . . A higher status group will consume more theater and *ballet* than a lower status group, but less bowling, more wine and liquor, and less *beer*. What distinguishes a status collectivity from other life-style collectivities is the degree of consensus in the prestige market concerning the ordering of values associated with these tastes [emphasis added].[28]

From this sociological perspective, the connection of wine to ballet relates to higher values in prestige markets than beer. Thus, beer seems entirely out of place in a narrative about ballet performances.

Beer at the Armadillo World Headquarters, however, was an entirely different matter. To illustrate, according to a pamphlet about the AWHQ in the archives at the Austin History Center, Lone Star Beer sales at the Armadillo were second only to those of the Astrodome sports arena in Houston in the state of Texas; this is an astonishing statistic given the difference in crowd capacity (the Astrodome sold out at 48,000 [depending on the configuration] versus the Armadillo's 1200).[29] Of the drinks available at the AWHQ, patrons for the most part drank beer, and it became an essential economic and cultural partner to music in the Armadillo endeavor. Music historian Jason Mellard quotes an employee of the AWHQ during an interview he conducted for his research on the music there: "'If music [was] the soul of the Armadillo, beer [was] certainly its blood.'"[30] The decision to serve beer came from economic necessity; at first, the

Armadillo never intended to serve alcohol at all.[31] It then did so for a short while without a license, demonstrating its continuing ability to work around certain legalities. In part because the Armadillo provided beer cheaply, patrons purchased large amounts that helped to sustain the club economically.

Beyond affordable prices, however, were cultural factors that may have influenced how patrons made decisions about drinking beer at the Armadillo. Several websites, such as the one created by the Texas State Historical Association, provide summaries of the history of beer brewing in Texas. Special relevance to this dissertation are the works of two scholars who explore the importance of beer to Texan identity-making.[32] First, music historian Mellard addresses beer with relation to the Texas music industry during the 1970s. Brand loyalty to certain beers served as identity markers toward the creation of lifestyle affiliations and corresponding musical affinities. For example, Mellard cites a 1970s article in *Texas Monthly* that situates drinking Budweiser with being a "true redneck" in contrast with the folks who drank Shiner at the Armadillo World Headquarters and who demonstrated a "pseudo-redneck" affectation.[33, *] Mellard continues, "In addition to boots, hats, and hair, the expressive function of brand loyalty to Texas beers such as Lone Star, Pearl, and Shiner in the regional subculture should not be underestimated," particularly since 1970s regulatory laws still restricted interstate commerce of beer.[34] Beer consumption could therefore be associated not only with local

[*] The word *redneck* is sometimes—but not always—a derogatory term used to describe rural dwellers. Based on context, I interpret the neologism *pseudo-redneck* to mean city dwellers in Austin enacting their fantasies about being connected to rural life.

sourcing and state loyalties (an especially strong factor in Texas) but also with personal and community histories and identity-making. Patrons at the AWHQ had "blustery attachment" to Lone Star, Pearl, and Shiner beers,[35] and this anecdote from Armadillo bartender Leea Mechling, which is inscribed in Mellard's text, sheds light on the strength of these attachments:

> Male bartenders claimed that women did not have the discriminating taste to tell the difference between finely crafted Texas beers, each of which had its own rabid partisans. As an experiment, employee Leea Mechling switched the lines to the Lone Star and Pearl taps. No one noticed for days . . . the attraction owed not to taste but to cultural capital, the beers' association with working-class lifestyles and country music.[36]

As Mellard asserts, this story shows how identity-making and culture shaped the drinking behaviors of patrons more than any inherent product qualities of the beers themselves.

The second scholar exploring beer culture is Leigh Clemons who includes beer in her consideration of how the Lone Star—the symbol of Texas held aloft by the Goddess of Liberty statue on the state capitol building—functions as a catalyst of meaning and identity.[37] She states that the Lone Star refers to the individuation of Texas from the rest of the country in much the same way that a Lone Star also suggests the image of a cowboy-like Texan: a white, male inhabitant of a small Texas town who is "strong, loyal, brave, but a bit behind the rest of the country."[38] Low culture, in the form of eschewing the big city life, is not only embedded in such an image. It is also embraced as part of the maverick cowboy identity. Clemons explains: "The Lone Star is not only a form of branding—Lone Star beer is 'the national beer of Texas'—but also a performative brand created out of Texan cultural identity" into an "easily marketed" image.[39]

Clemons's assertion of the performative dimensions of drinking Lone Star beer relates to Mellard's description of drinking beer in connection to culture and identity-making. While individual reasons for drinking beer undoubtedly vary, these scholarly observations suggest that desires to participate in cultural imaginaries and schema, and thus feel a sense of connection to these imaginaries and schema, may have significant influences in practices of consumption.

In addition to these sentiments of state pride, other cultural influences that are circulated in this context link beer with lower social classes in the United States.[40] To summarize, in the United States during the late nineteenth century, breweries such as Anheuser-Busch could aspire to national markets with the advent of pasteurization and refrigerated train cars. One result of their capitalist expansion was the new availability of cheap beer—subsidized by the breweries—in working-class neighborhood saloons. These saloons then catered largely to lower-wage workers and immigrant populations, depending on location; they also functioned as de facto men's social clubs.[41] Thus, these drinking trends in U.S. history, economics, and culture helped to form a functional collective perception that associates beer with lower classes, cheap escapes, and masculine interests.

By drinking beer during ballet performances at the Armadillo, then, audiences activated creative relationships of meaning that were significant enough to warrant continual re-performance in interviews today. By imbibing in beer, the drink of the Armadillo, patrons could engage in a type of creative deviance from normative ballet-going practices while relating with cultural narratives celebrating the maverick cowboy

and Texan identity. Thus, beer mediated the high culture world of ballet with a specifically Texan low culture.

**Nachos**

Although some newspaper articles mention food other than nachos, nachos specifically came up often in the oral history interviews. An important thing to understand, Armadillo founder Eddie Wilson imparted to me, was that these were *not* the nachos that are served today.[42] First, they were not made with tortilla chips; these were toasted, round tortillas about 4 to 5 inches in diameter. Each one was individually smeared with a layer of refried pinto beans and topped generously with cheese and pickled jalapeño slices. Armadillo staff Leea Mechling related how huge trays of nachos had to be prepared in advance to meet popular demand during concerts.[43]

Many of the same cultural elements related to beer also relate to nachos in that nachos are generally not eaten during a ballet performance. Nachos, however, also have other cultural associations that interplay with the themes of this dissertation. Nachos were served at the AWHQ because of an ongoing and unique affiliation between Austin and Tex-Mex cuisine. Tex-Mex food during the 1970s, despite—and, as suggested by cultural scholar Peter Swirski, maybe *because of*—its popularity, was not considered high-class food.[44] Although it is much beloved, that same style of cooking is still not regarded with the same esteem as "authentic" Mexican food. As a central Texas phenomenon, Tex-Mex food represents a complex coming-together of Anglo, Spanish, indigenous Mexican and American, and German cuisines; cultural scholars who investigate food have created a

rich discourse debating its appropriation and authenticity.[45, *] For example, food scholar Amy Bentley asserts the ways in which the personal is political when consuming food: "[W]hile food can be an intensely personal experience it is also a political statement, regardless of the eater's intentions or comprehension."[46]

Tex-Mex cuisine generally represents a food made by Mexican immigrants traveling into Texas and using inexpensive ingredients (such as corn, beans, and rice) and easily accessible cooking equipment and techniques. Bentley perceives a white cultural perspective that associates these foods with a poverty-class, non-white, "culinary Other."[47] If we keep in mind Bentley's admonition to consider the political aspects of consuming Mexican food, then eating nachos at the Armadillo during the 1970s could have included a mix of meanings. Their consumption did not just fulfill a biological need; it potentially facilitated cultural appropriation, encounters with socioeconomic and cultural Others, and connections to place and community.

In summation, to attend the Armadillo afforded people with the opportunity to consume beer and nachos, which in turn afforded them an enhanced "Armadillo experience" also situated with 1970s Austin. Thus, through the consumer culture at the AWHQ, patrons had the potential to mix encounters with differences in culture and social

[*] The German influence can be seen in the use of more beef, new cheeses, sour cream, and sausage.

class. Such an environment supported how Austin Ballet Theatre at the Armadillo functioned in a similar way through dance.[*]

## Programming and High/Low Aesthetics

In presenting ballet to "the common man" (a theme introduced in Chapter V), dance critic Buckley writes that Austin Ballet Theatre delivered "the democratization of dance in a way that makes ballet as palatable as beer."[48] The gamut of aesthetic styles Hall presented offered a wider range of possible ways to engage more people. This section investigates data from the narrators that emphasize how programming and aesthetics functioned strategically to connect with audiences in ways that transgressed high/low cultural stratification.

To review, Hall's monthly Armadillo performances almost always consisted of a mixed repertory program with three to five separate dances of markedly different styles. The first was a "light" classical, semi-abstract ballet,[49] such as Hall's restaging of Sir Frederick Ashton's *Les Patineurs* or his original *Birthday Waltz,* a piece set to music by Tchaikovsky and described by one reviewer as "a harmless bit of pleasantry."[50] Then, for contrast, the middle offering was a serious-themed, contemporary/modern ballet, such as *The Rites of Joseph Byrd* set to music by rock-jazz musician Joe Byrd; occasionally a classical *pas de deux* followed. To finish the evening, the closer was usually a crowd-pleasing comedy.[51]

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[*] To clarify, I am not addressing how dance may or may not be a consumer product. An ecological perspective takes into account how the dancers and staff are also fulfilling needs or consuming as well.

In Chapter V, I addressed how the variety of aesthetic styles in ABT's programs attracted and retained new audiences for ballet by providing something for everyone. Following a related analytical theme, interviewees and reviewers often describe such variety as an intersection of high and low culture in dance. Hall arrived at this variety through trial and error with AWHQ audiences. For ABT's first concert at the Armadillo, Hall attempted to reach out to the Armadillo's patrons by presenting works that could be described as "contemporary ballet," with the idea that the venue's hippie clientele would be more interested in progressive, serious themes than classical aesthetics or comedy.[52, *]

This strategy proved unsuccessful, as Hall attests in Buckley's "Armadillos in Toe Shoes":

> The first show was so serious in theme that it was "something of a fiasco, from a programming point of view. We lost some of our audience right there, families, children, that I hadn't expected to attend," Hall said. "I think by now they've come back."[53]

Hall explains further that this first show at the AWHQ was "too cerebral" or "too top-heavy…By top-heavy, he meant serious, profound, and even modern."[54] Dancer Eve Larson recalled that first performance at the Armadillo in our interview and discussed how, from her point of view, the programming just did not work:

> It was certainly a noble attempt. I think Stanley's first performance there, he, um, geared to a more modern idea of dance because he thought it would appeal to the young people at Armadillo. So he didn't choreograph anything in classical ballet. And that was when he did a ballet called *Dante*, and he did a couple of other, you know, pseudo-modern type things, but . . . most of the audience actually came up and said, "Stanley, we miss your ballets. We want ballet."[55]

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[*] *Contemporary ballet* is a contestable term. I have written previously about how a focus on what contemporizing ballet does—rather than what contemporary ballet is—may be a fruitful conversation.

By this account, then, some audience members wanted dance that fit their aesthetic expectations of a ballet concert. Attendance expanded after Hall recalibrated his programming to incorporate a classical style of ballet to open the show and a comedy to end it.[56]

Historical narratives discussing the variety of these programs tend to describe the dances within high/low frames of understanding. Throughout the data, sources designate the more classical ballets as high culture, the middle contemporary ballets as artistic innovation, and the comedies as low culture. Although the openers were light in tone, inevitably they were danced to classical music and involved classical ballet movement schema (See Appendix B, Figure 6). A notable example of this kind of touchstone to high culture was *Les Patineurs,* which Hall often presented as an opener. This dance about a pleasant ice skating party introduced a ballet from a knighted choreographer with the prestigious Royal Ballet of London. Likewise, Hall's adaptation of *Graduation Ball*, David Lichine's showpiece that has been performed by many prestigious companies around the world, offered similar associations with high culture. Both of these ballets presented worlds that, to Austin audiences, may have seemed like fantasies from faraway, high-class settings: fur-clad couples ice skating (especially in the Austin heat, with the Armadillo's inadequate air conditioning) and formal boarding school parties. Other openers choreographed by Hall usually adopted similar compositional aesthetics: classical movement with large casts; occasional breaks into solos, duets, trios, and so on;

the use of traditional, classical ballet music; and simple themes explored in mostly abstract ways.

Several interviewees from the audiences remembered enjoying the openers because of how these dances related to a type of ballet with which they had previous experience as children, either as students in ballet classes or as audience members:

> I preferred the classical, and that was the ballet that I had studied and had attended at professional performances in my hometown.[57]

> And I had grown up in a family that, my mother was really into the arts and theaters and had season tickets to the symphony in Corpus and to the ballet that they had . . . I think that all little girls want to be a ballerina, and so even though I was beyond that, I just loved to watch [the] dancers.[58]

> I grew up in New York so I saw a lot of ballet in New York, and we lived in Cambridge, Massachusetts, so we would go into Boston and I saw a lot of ballet . . . and we were so fortunate to have our children exposed to so many different performances, the classical ballets, they saw all of them, you know? I mean it's just really a wonderful thing.[59]

Thus these opening dances positioned ABT in the classical ballet domain, providing cultural touchstones to the past that were associated with childhood memories, fantasy, and cultural values.

By contrast, Hall's middle contemporary ballets featured attributes transgressing certain cultural and aesthetic matrices that some Armadillo audience members, many of whom were attending ballet for the first time, may have assumed about ballet. Although some of these ballets succeeded more than others, such works provided divergent aesthetic experiences as compared to the opening ballets. These contemporary ballets were so aesthetically distinctive and their programmatic ordering so routine that narrators could refer to them as a group, or "the middle ballets" (See Appendix B, Figure 7).[60]

In these dance works, a salient characteristic for even the novice ballet-goer was the departure from traditional-sounding classical ballet music, with most of the middle ballets choreographed to twentieth-century modern classical, blues, or jazz. Also, Hall incorporated movement from outside of the classical ballet canon in his middle ballets to include modern dance, jazz, "pop-disco," and, in the case of a ballet about youth-culture interests in Eastern spirituality, "Hindu postures."[61] When devising movement, Hall could draw upon his own breadth of personal movement experiences across genres (ballet, modern dance, and jazz) as well as his exposure to dance in London, New York, Paris, and Los Angeles. Hippie audiences who might have had preconceived ideas that ballet was "square" had new experiences with the overt sexual drama and violence of Hall's *Tregonelle* or the tantric physicality of *The Rites of Joseph Byrd*. It is also worth noting that some audience members responded enthusiastically. In a 1972 review by local newspaper journalist Carol Nuckols, she states that of the three dances in the repertory concert she saw, people responded the most to the middle dance, the dramatic *Dante:* "Beatrice danced to eerie music through Hell and Purgatory to Earthly Paradise, to the audience's shouts of delight."[62, *]

Furthermore, Hall's own vision as a choreographer and how others saw him as an artist seem to be discursively situated in these middle ballets rather than in his openers or closers. Such discursive appraisal constellates around Western cultural metanarratives

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[*] Interestingly, the *Dante Sonata* was also Frederick Ashton's most popular ballet for the Sadler's Wells during World War II. Perhaps the theme of redemption of the damned appealed to those who were feeling outcast or displaced during times of upheaval.

that value artistic innovation as a key component of high culture.* The public rhetoric that surrounded Hall's contemporary ballets promoted these middle ballets as the "meat" of the program—or at least the most substantial pieces to chew on—whether or not these dances were individual audience members' favorites.

The analysis of newspaper and magazine articles reveals an interesting trend among reviewers during this time period. They frequently explained and often championed the weird middle ballet of the program, even if they did not agree on what to call it: "contemporary ballet,"[63] "modern ballet,"[64] "presentation,"[65] or "experimentation."[66] In this example, dance critic and scholar Buckley advocates for Hall's middle ballets through a subjective, narrative description:

> [*The Rites of Joseph Byrd*] has been added to the program at audience request. The lights dim, and that weird electronic music swells through the darkened Armadillo. Onstage, a transparent sac, an embryo, rises to reveal a clump of bodies. They begin to move in the imperceptibly changing patterns (like one of those toy kaleidoscopes with colored rocks) that mark the best of Stanley Hall's choreography. The program notes, 'The children that represent the new generation believe they will change the world' . . . . And from this tension, this unbearable concentration of bodies, escapes one dancer, like a butterfly, looping free, and you're thinking, my god this is brilliant—and it's over.[67]

In another example, journalist Steve Hogner disseminates the message that Hall's "modern ballet of the '70s, a rarity indeed," demonstrates his "growth as an artist."[68] A 1977 review from Hogner goes further by asserting that "crowd pleasers shackle" ABT,

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* A helpful review of how innovation plays into artistic values in the West is Herbert Gans, *Popular Culture and High Culture: An Analysis and Evaluation of Taste (Revised And Updated)* (New York: Basic Books, 2008). Such metanarratives promote the idea of truly great artists working creatively despite a lack of popular recognition or financial support. This development grew out of political revolutions in Europe during the late eighteenth century that overthrew the patronage system of the arts.

and such ballets are something to "sit through" in order to experience Hall's more significant, contemporary works.[69] In such ways, writers sanctioned Hall's middle ballets by expressing their personal appreciation of them.

Then, there were the "zany" closers.[70] During our interview, Buckley theorized about these dances being designed to send audiences home on an upbeat note:

> Suzanne Buckley: Stanley's choreographic style was enthusiastic, and, you know, he had that old movie aspect to him, so he had a lot of showmanship and—so it wasn't a refined, classical, high-toned evening at all. [Laughter] But it was fun. And, and actually, knowing Stanley's British roots, you know, it probably goes back to old musical kind of, uh, atmosphere also. He fit well with that venue [the Armadillo], actually, where you can't see other people doing that.
>
> Caroline S. Clark: And how would you describe that fit?
>
> Suzanne Buckley: Well, Stanley was not a strictly classical dancer. You know, he had done movies and he had done—he was a hoofer. He was a dancer. And, um, so I think that being a kind of a lowbrow venue, it fit him. I mean, he knew what to do with it. He knew how to get the crowd happy . . . . He did do some classical things, but Stanley was an entertainer, and I think that's what fit well . . . . [I]t was deliberately, um, lowbrow in the sense of that nobody was pretending to be, uh, a rarefied artist there. They were trying to entertain people and have people enjoy it.[71]

Buckley's choice of words—*high-toned, lowbrow,* and *rarefied*—manifest the high/low culture binary that emerges when attempting to reconcile the ballet and the Armadillo through narrative. Buckley further suggests the underlying idea that entertainment and enjoyment belong to the domain of lowbrow culture; this theme will be explored later in this chapter.

In another illustration, dancer John Logan described his experiences of being entertained as an audience member through Hall's theatrical savvy before Logan began to dance himself:

> [Hall] was not going to attract a big audience by doing tired old boring ballets . . . . Whereas, um, you know the wham, bam, little girl getting thrown around in the air and flipped three times, oh, wow, that's exciting! I'm paying attention now. And so he would put that out there. And then he'd end it with a comedy. And, you go out laughing and enjoying it.[72]

Thus, the variety of programming Hall presented and its aesthetic transgression of a seeming high/low binary supported a mission that could be identified as ballet for the common man.

**Historical Precedents: Ballet in London During the Blitz**

"Stanley's British roots"—specifically Hall's experiences in London during his tenure with the Vic-Wells/Sadler's Wells ballet company—may indeed have prepared him to envision highbrow ballet at a lowbrow venue as Buckley surmised in the previous section. Hall makes the association himself in a 1973 newspaper article when he expresses how the Armadillo's "informal setting" is similar to that of Covent Garden, the Vic-Wells performance home before World War II.[73] Artistic Director Ninette de Valois founded the British company in 1931 with the tenet that ballet "must be a democratic art" for people of all social classes.[74] In this way, Hall's early experiences in ballet were shaped by de Valois's intention to reach everyone with dance.

With the outbreak of second World War, Hall was one of many male ballet dancers to join the military service. As mentioned in Chapter III, scholar Karen Eliot documents how controversy arose when attempts were made by upper-class friends of the ballet to exclude male ballet dancers from military service with the argument that the dancers served the country by distracting Britons from "the bleak realities of daily life."[75] Hall alludes to this contentious time in a published interview when he recalls a

photograph published in a London newspaper of the male dancers, himself included, in the hunting scene with crossbows from the opening of "Swan Lake." The caption read: "Should these bows be called up?"[76] Yet Eliot contends that the dancers' military service functioned in part to counter possible backlash from the general public against elitism, a lack of patriotism, and perceptions of "effeminacy" among male ballet dancers.[77] In other words, Eliot chronicles how the powers-that-be determined a need for ballet dancers to join in solidarity with the general public.[78]

Throughout the war, these dancers-turned-soldiers often checked in with the ballet when on leave in London, as documented by balletomane and author P.W. Manchester in 1942:

> The young men come home on leave and make straight for the theatre. Sometimes they even dance, popping up in the most unexpected places, and the welcome they receive from the audience, out of all proportion though it may be to the actual merits of the performance *as* a performance, shows them that they are not forgotten.[79]

The data confirm that Hall visited Sadler's Wells Ballet in a similar fashion at least once during the war. Dancer Greg Easley related a story to me that Hall often told about being in London on leave:

> I know one time he [Hall] talked about being on leave and he, I think the ballet, what was left of the ballet, was performing in a basement of a building or something . . . . They would perform wherever they kind of could, and one of the patrons was a wealthy young man, and invited everyone back to his mother's house for a party, and when they got there, the house was gone. It had been bombed . . . .
>
> And I said, "Well what did you do? What did y'all do? You're standing out in the street and this . . . ." I said, "I cannot imagine." He said, the guy looked at us and said [Easley adopts dry British accent]: "Mother is going to be very unhappy." [laughter] . . . And then, I think [Hall] walked back to the, the ship. You know, he,

> it was dark, no lights were on. He said, "I just walked back, had to go through some country." And, just walked back.[80]

The narrative from this oral history about performing in a basement, being invited to a party by a wealthy young man, the instant destruction of a house, the young man's punchline understatement, and Hall's hiking across the countryside—whether or not these details are strictly true—still conveys a sense of meaning and attitude regarding how the British had to create new venues for performance while managing unpredictable upheavals that affected everyone.

Although Hall was a soldier during the war years, he stayed in touch with the company, rejoined the company after the war, and would have known a great deal about their experiences. During the war, the ballet company changed practices in ways that resonate with analytical themes that arose from the data generated about ballet at the Armadillo. Sadler's Wells Theater was converted into a rest home for air-raid victims, and the ballet lost its performing home.[81] The newly renamed Sadler's Wells company embarked on extensive tours throughout the country and performed in London exhaustively, sometimes up to six shows a day in varied places such as parks, cafeterias, and airplane hangars.[82] The fact that the ballet company with which Hall performed had to conceive of alternative spaces to present dance and then manage with difficult conditions offers a precedent in his life for the unconventional environment at the Armadillo.

Rather than suspending operations during the war, Sadler's Wells performed more than ever in an effort to provide a refuge of fantasy and entertainment for the war-weary

people of England.[83] Stanley Hall emphasizes this time of intense performing in the article mentioned above: "One of the strangest paradoxes of life in Britain during this time was that although the Second World War was in progress, the performing arts flourished as they had not done for centuries in spite of the war effort."[84] Ballet historian Jennifer Homans describes how such frequent performing helped the full-time dancers of Sadler's Wells—some of whom, like Margot Fonteyn, were as young as 14 years old—develop very quickly.[85] Again, the experiences of these British ballet dancers are reflected in Austin Ballet Theatre in the way that Hall stressed the need for frequent performing opportunities so that the dancers could learn by doing, a theme investigated in Chapter IV.

These war performances transformed public perceptions about the ballet from that of an exclusively high-culture domain to a practice that was at one with the community. The Sadler's Wells troupe faced shortages and difficult conditions along with everyone else. Dancers carried on through bomb explosions in the Blitz and with very meager provisions, performing with cardboard crowns, feet bleeding through completely spent pointe shoes, and sleeping on suitcases and in overhead luggage racks on trains throughout the war years. Such sacrifice shared in common with the people of England transformed attitudes about the ballet among the general population. Ruth Styles, addressing this era of history for the *Daily Mail Online* in 2014, explains:

> But it wasn't until war broke out in 1939 that de Valois' fledgling ballet company truly came into its own—transforming the art from a niche pursuit for the posh into an everyman pleasure in the process. "I think for highbrow audiences [before the war], ballet was well established," adds [Royal Ballet historian Anna] Meadmore. "But for the man in the street, it was still very much peripheral,

> exotic, something they wouldn't consider going to themselves. It was for the tiara set, not mass entertainment and certainly not understood as being part of national culture at all."[86]

The war years, therefore, seemed to function as a great equalizer for changing perceptions of ballet from an elitist practice to a practice for all British people: from something for "the tiara set" to something for the everyman.

To summarize, the Vic-Wells/Sadler's Wells Ballet seems to have had much in common thematically with Austin Ballet Theatre: unusual venues, little money, young dancers trying to learn their craft, and a mission to bring ballet to the people by defying elitist structures and perceptions. Thus, as a participant in these experiences, Hall had a background that may have prepared him for an alliance with the unusual venue found in the Armadillo World Headquarters. As compared with World War II, any difficulties that Hall encountered with the Armadillo, shortages in funding, or enemies in the social environment of Austin, although frustrating, must not have seemed so insurmountable by comparison.

Moreover, the war years perhaps influenced how Hall was able to make a crowd happy. Dance scholars Homans and Eliot in their assessments of British ballet during World War II referenced earlier stress the importance of how Sadler's Wells served their audiences by meeting a need for entertainment through ballet. Such purposefulness demonstrated that the "highbrow" artistic dimensions of ballet can also include the "lowbrow" experience of entertainment. Homans writes of this era in *Apollo's Angels*: "British ballet's debt to the music hall was ongoing, and the tension between classicism and more popular theatrical traditions would be one of its most distinctive features."[87]

That "debt to the music hall" was often referenced in the work of Vic-Wells's resident choreographer Frederick Ashton. Although Ashton displayed a gentler, often nostalgic classicism in some of his ballets, in others he gave his impish side free rein by employing parody, burlesque, and in-jokes in his choreography.[88] Ballet historian Homans describes one of Ashton's most well-known parody ballets that ABT performed many times—his 1931 ballet *Façade*—as "a send-up of popular social and theatrical dances" of the era.[89] Similarly, Ashton's influence resonates in Hall's own closing ballets with his use of parody, burlesque, and in-jokes, as in his parodies of Hollywood *(Flickers I* and *II)*, dance styles *(Parody of Isms)*, and cultural narratives *(Centennial Rags)*. To illustrate, *Centennial Rags,* which Hall choreographed for the American bicentennial in 1976, opened with the Statue of Liberty twirling a baton. Further, a photo of *Rags* from Hall's archive presents a kickline of female dancers with stars highlighting their breasts, thus showcasing a burlesque and irreverent humor (See Appendix B, Figure 8). In a newspaper interview, though, Hall explains the strategy of the closer in reference to his past: "[Both Sadler's Wells and Ballets de Paris] made a practice of finishing their performances with a 'light-hearted ballet—something that would send the audience home smiling.'"[90]

A few of the dancers I interviewed also associated Hall's ability to entertain audiences with his experiences from a wide-ranging, successful past in dance. Both of the following testimonies describe how Hall experienced dance in the twentieth century as an interplay among artistry, popularity, and entertainment:

> I think his years in Hollywood really opened his eyes to what was possible, and I think when he was on tour with *Carmen*, and the fact that they played the Winter Garden on Broadway, you know, he really paid attention. Like, in the Toreador dance, he said, it just brought the house down every night. The evening just stopped because they'd never seen that many men doing that kind of movement, and it was the music and the story.[91]
>
> And I think [the Armadillo] appealed to him because of his background. You know, he'd danced for, in his later life, he'd danced for nightclub acts. Vegas kind of acts. With some movie stars that had backup dancers. And I think it just appealed to his sense of sort of a guerilla ballet movement, if you will, that wasn't so elite.[92]

According to this narrative, Hall's involvement with dance in the entertainment industry as represented by his experiences in Hollywood, Broadway, and Las Vegas taught him that dance had the potential to reach audiences in meaningful ways, irrespective of the structures—inherently mixed with agendas of power—that attempted to place some sort of artistic hierarchy on these experiences.

**A Theory of Nobrow Aesthetics: "Artertainment"**

Hall's work corresponds with other practices of arts and culture that defy neat categorization and thus have no standing in discourse shaped by a binary value system. Literary studies scholar Peter Swirski provides a critical look at the high/low binary and the agendas of power that drive such stratification in his 2005 text about literature titled *From Lowbrow to Nobrow*. Swirski scrutinizes and then criticizes a cultural view associating novels that are popular with content of less quality. He states: "[A]ny demarcation of a field that leaves the majority of its subjects outside the gates must appear methodologically shaky."[93] The message of such exclusion, he continues, must be that "[p]opular equals bad because if it were any good it would not be popular in the first

place."[94] In other words, the greater the number of people who like a creative work—in Swirski's argument, a novel—the more it must cater to a lowest common denominator of disciplinary standards. It follows, then, that the greater a work of art, the less "accessible" it must be. The British humor magazine *Punch* makes further fun of such an idea in 1925: "The BBC claims to have discovered a new type—'the middlebrow'. It consists of people who are hoping that some day they will get used to the stuff that they ought to like."[95] *Punch*'s satirical "middlebrow" draws attention to how a classist privileging of art and culture can disregard and even denounce experiences of enjoyment.

However, once one adopts Swirski's "Nobrow" perspective, the focus of inquiry shifts from status taxonomies to how creative works function in people's lives. Swirski surveys repeated instances of absurdity in how poorly written novels from high-status authors retain their place in an established canon of literature, whereas well-written novels from "genre" authors (for example, mystery and science fiction authors) never fully achieve the canon. Swirski also observes how authors of popular fiction and elite literature borrow from each other frequently and inextricably influence each other; however, the machinations of publishing, along with cultural expectations, classify and separate otherwise interrelated types of writing.[96] To confront this, Swirski advocates not only for the dissolution of highbrow/lowbrow literary categorization but also for a political activism that he terms "Nobrow aesthetics."

In the Nobrow approach to writing, authors deliberately defy literary schema. According to Swirski, "Nobrow, in my view, is not merely a matter of crossover reception but, rather, an intentional stance whereby authors simultaneously target both

extremes of the literary spectrum."[97] Part of the aesthetics, then, serves to reveal the act of targeting both extremes. From this theoretical standpoint, Hall's consistent presentation of variety in programming from classical to contemporary to comedic could be considered strategic acts of Nobrow aesthetics, especially given his sentiments about eradicating the "snobbish thing about ballet."[98] Yet Hall did not seem to rank the artistic value of his different dance styles. As Hall says in an interview with student journalist Chernikowski, he has no problem mixing up the genres in his programs, because "[d]ancing is dancing."[99]

Another scholar who explores how entertainment functions in theatrical productions is Richard Schechner. Schechner conceives of an "efficacy entertainment braid" in 1988's *Performance Theory* and an "efficacy entertainment dyad" in 2002's *Performance Studies: An Introduction.* In his view, efficacy relates to transformative rituals, while "entertainment means something produced to please a public."[100] Schechner states "no performance is pure efficacy or pure entertainment," and in his schema the two seem to be inversely proportionate to each other.[101] However, Schechner is considering fairly defined examples of ritual and theatre. Swirski's proposed outcome of Nobrow aesthetics, *artertainment*, allows for more nuanced and complicated mixtures in how a creative work is received by the reader despite the structures of identity and access imposed by the publishing industry and academic canonization.[102]

Austin Ballet Theatre's programming, with its variety of offerings, follows Swirski's notion of artertainment by providing dances that functioned as art, education, entertainment, and/or titillation, depending on the audience member. Most important to

ABT's stated mission of making ballet accessible to everyone was that Hall's embracing of entertainment in his programming crossed dance genres, almost without much seeming concern for artistic propriety.

Throughout the data, clues from Hall's background hint at how previous experiences may have influenced his transgressions of genre irrespective of concerns about art versus entertainment. For example, in a newspaper article he "gleefully" recounts "an evening spent with Darius Milhaud during which the composer entertained his guests with South American rhumbas on the piano."[103, *] With this bit of anecdotal name-dropping, Hall implies that contraventions of art and entertainment were not only permissible but embraced in well-known artistic circles outside of Austin.

**Narratives of Cultural Contacts Among Participants**

> And I think it accomplished what should be happening with creative groups, they should come together and help each other because prosperity is more than just money, and prosperity, creative prosperity brings success for everyone. Anyway, that's how we always looked at it, and, you know, it's a good thing. It's so much better to work together and be happy than to argue and push each other away.—Leea Mechling, Armadillo staff[104]

Mechling's statement reintroduces the idea that segregating concepts of high and low culture do not exist outside of their manifestations by people in action, and those actions take place in social relationships. Although there are potentially many analytical perspectives with which to consider personal relationships in this historical situation, some of which are explored in other chapters, this section explores data that associate

[*] Darius Milhaud was a French composer of twentieth-century modern classical music. He was known for his appreciation of jazz, especially as Dave Brubeck's teacher.

"people with Austin Ballet Theatre" as representative of high culture versus "people associated with the Armadillo World Headquarters" as representative of low culture. Significantly, in the data for this project, it was discovered that not many people considered themselves to be part of both worlds. Of the interviewees, only Jone Bergquist Hallmark discussed going to music concerts at the Armadillo, although that was peripheral to her discussion of the ballet. According to a newspaper account and testimony from dancer Ken Owen, it was dancer Sarah Wisdom who made first contact between the two organizations, because she attended concerts at the AWHQ.[105] Without Wisdom as a bridge—not as the gatekeeper but rather the gatemaker—the shows would never have happened.

The Leaders: Stanley Hall and Eddie Wilson

The entire enterprise that partnered ABT with the Armadillo was made possible by a functional partnership between the leaders of these two organizations: Stanley Hall and Eddie Wilson. Dance scholar Buckley sets up an early narrative of the two that locates them within the high/low binary:

> . . . Stanley Hall of Austin Ballet Theatre and the Armadillo's Eddie Wilson discovered that they needed each other. Hall and Wilson are an incongruous pair: Hall, a witty and vulnerable* British–born dancer, veteran of Hollywood musicals and the Sadlers Wells Ballet, a University of Texas dance professor and artistic adviser to Austin Ballet Theatre; Wilson, a teddy-bearish cross between Fidel Castro and Gene Shalit, the ambitious, loquacious manager of The Armadillo, an armory-turned-rock hall which is fast becoming known as the Fillmore East of Country Music. The two proposed an unlikely marriage, a merger between Wilson's massive barn, some of today's proletarian rock, and Hall's classical ballet, a high-culture art form which developed out of the formality of the French

* It is my opinion, based on context, that the word *vulnerable* here was a typographical error and that the word should have been *venerable.*

> court of Louis XIV. "We were as different as night and day," Wilson confessed, "but we were perfectly suited to each other."[106]

Buckley's epigrammatic word choices in this passage—*incongruous pair* and *unlikely marriage*—set up an understanding of Hall and Wilson's personal relationship echoing their respective institutions. She introduces the pair by connecting Hall to the glamorous points of his career and the French court; then, by contrast, she compares Wilson to communist Cuban leader Castro and popular movie critic Shalit while describing his club as a "barn" for the "proletariat." However, Wilson's humorously paradoxical statement at the end, about night and day, describes a complementary relationship despite this seemingly oppositional alignment.

By all accounts, Hall and Wilson truly did get along very well no matter their differences in age (Hall was approximately 30 years older than Wilson), sexual orientation, nationality, and affiliations with prestigious dance cultures versus fringe genres of rock and country music. When looking at their relationship outside of the binary narrative of high and low artistic practice, the data suggest a different perspective from which these two ally on the same side: that of operating in resistance to social prejudice. Wilson and his co-founders opened the Armadillo as a sort of refuge for Austin's hippie counterculture, members of which were maltreated not only by the social establishment but also by Texan iterations of rural conservatism.[107] Yet Wilson had already challenged practices of bigotry in other forms by the time he arrived in Austin. He had tried a stint as a schoolteacher in south Texas, where he was fired for introducing

progressive literature to his white high school students and for building relationships with African-American students in Texas's segregated educational system:

> I had, you know, been fired as a schoolteacher by white people because the black kids that I was assigned across the road from, we actually got along really great, and we had a lot of camaraderie and a lot of *esprit de corps* build up in the black school. White people had to get rid of me quick.[108]

When Hall came to the Armadillo, he had also been fired for countering the establishment, although for different reasons. Undoubtedly the discrimination he must have faced as a homosexual in certain arenas throughout his life and specifically with Austin Civic Ballet had attuned Hall to how prejudices could operate. It would seem that both men had their own insights into the machinations of sociocultural agendas and prejudicial power structures; both could see, in circumstances of prejudice, abundant hypocrisy and injustice.[*] When Hall ventured into the unknown by being open to the Armadillo as a venue, he found a sympathetic figure in Wilson. Wilson recalled this during his interview:

> Eddie Wilson: I just remember how Stanley seemed to be really pleased that I was not slightly off-put by anything that I had heard or anything that I experienced in our, uh, our relationship. I mean, it was just, you know, man to man, and, bam, it was good solid stuff, and he seemed to really get a kick out of us being as receptive as we were.
>
> Caroline S. Clark: What were the different ways that you saw that "being receptive"?
>
> Eddie Wilson: Oh, well, just from him making a suggestion and me immediately saying, "Yes, yes, let's do it," you know, 'cause I mean, he had—he had evidently been kicked around a little bit before that. And so just from the very first hint of

[*] I base the hypocrisy statement on data from interviews about certain members of the Austin establishment who were closeted homosexuals at the time of these events.

> the idea, I was one hundred percent for it. And so we always seemed tight after that. Yeah, he was cool.[109]

When Wilson described their relationship as "man to man, and, bam, it was good solid stuff," he smacked his hands together to indicate an excellent fit, with no odd angles or obstacles between them. Other interviewees picked up on the friendship between the two men, and this sense of ease that made the collaboration between ABT and the AWHQ work as well as it did. As dancer Hallmark described, "I don't remember specifically what [they] would say, but there was something cool [good] about the relationship between Stanley and Eddie. They—they clicked somehow."[110]

The Dance People and the Armadillo People

Hall also created good relationships with other staff at the Armadillo. This excerpt from an interview with Leea Mechling, AWHQ bartender and staff person, brought illuminating insights into the nature of Hall's relationships with the people who worked there:

> He didn't look down his nose at us hippies. He, you know, he got it. We were all well-educated, by the way, and we all just were very simpatico together. He was—with us anyway, he was really chill and laid back. Now, you know, the night of the performance he was way focused, and, you know, had that angst we all get when we're doing that, but he was just—I just remember him being—having a wonderful smile, and being friendly, and, you know, he'd come, hang out and have a nacho, and we really felt like he was part of our group and was letting us be part of his. Um, he didn't seem unhappy that he was having to hold his performances in a rock-and-roll club . . .[111]

Several remarks stand out in this passage as being related to the high/low binary, beginning with how Hall "didn't look down his nose at us hippies." By following this remark with "he got it," Mechling described the sense she had that Hall accepted how the

people of the Armadillo fostered alternative, creative lifestyles while resisting "the establishment." As proof of Hall's friendliness, Mechling stated that Hall could "hang out" with them and "have a nacho." Hanging out suggests an ease of relating without any functional agenda other than the relating itself. That Hall ate nachos with them—as opposed to eschewing such food for the kind of fine dining associated with ballet in a cultural imaginary—meant that "he was part of our group."[*]

In accordance with Hall and Wilson's lead, data indicate that, in general, most people from Austin Ballet Theatre and the Armadillo World Headquarters got along very well. From the dancers' perspectives, the Armadillo staff supported them not only by being friendly but also by supplying big trays of freshly made nachos and cookies from the AWHQ kitchen after the shows. As Greg Easley recalled, "They loved us. They just loved us."[112] Similarly, ABT lighting designer Mark Loeffler also remembered, "Yeah, it was just so welcoming. You came in and they were glad to see us."[113] Armadillo staff Mechling and Wilson raised a pragmatic reason that may have contributed to these amiable feelings: it was an easy workday for the AWHQ because ABT largely took care of its own production needs. Mechling described this as follows:

> You know, we never had a problem with them. Um, they were, it was such an easy, it was so much easier than normal productions we did. They did not, you know, we weren't unloading any semi-trucks. They probably had some scenery that they would bring in from time to time, but no big deal. Um, and everybody got along with each other. I know that sounds like a fairytale, but it was just not a problem.[114]

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[*] This case suggests future research regarding how ballet dancers and directors traverse across sociocultural strata, often earning only modest income but operating in high culture domains.

The ABT volunteers took care of much of the production work themselves, from sweeping the stage and rolling out marley flooring to operating lights and sound rather than expecting the Armadillo staff to do it all for them. The company was, in Wilson's words, "a self-riding boat" that was largely self-sufficient.[115] Although none of the dancers I interviewed discussed having any particular friendships with the Armadillo staff, they seemed to have had a good-natured attitude toward the AWHQ community and to have appreciated the people there. The testimony of the Larsons represented a spirit of good-natured tolerance similar to that of all interviewees when they described how hippies would hang out in and around the building at all times, "crashing" at the Armadillo: "Crashing—yes. You never knew when you would come across someone sleeping [laughter]."[116] Two specific incidents of theft from the dancers' belongings (one of a treasured item) emerged during interviews, suggesting that a certain level of caution was necessary in such an open environment of people having access to the building. However, the narrators seemed to hold no grudges against the Armadillo community in general for the actions of a couple of unknown individuals.[117] In fact, data generated from ABT participants and newspaper sources describing the personal relationships between the seemingly disparate sociocultural groups of ABT and the Armadillo were unilaterally positive.

Close analysis of the data also suggests a pervasive assumption that any accommodations being made to get along were made almost entirely by the ballet people. Certainly, ABT dancers, staff, and audiences *did* make great efforts to adapt to their unusual environment, and they did so most visibly. Armadillo staff member Mechling

recognized those efforts in her interview: "[The ABT] folks were able to put a lot aside and open themselves up to this unusual pairing, because it was definitely a hardcore rock-and-roll club."[118] In many ways, public narratives about Austin Ballet Theatre rest primarily on their abilities to make the most of their lowbrow venue.

Inversely, public narratives do not assume that the Armadillo folks had to make accommodations to get along with the ballet. I was taken entirely by surprise, then, to hear Mechling describe ballet audiences: "The bar staff hated the ballet people as they called them because, guess what, they were coming to see the performance, and they weren't coming there to necessarily drink . . . and be big tippers."[119] An epistemological view that considers how the ABT/AWHQ groups interacted in relationships of economy shifts the narrative from a story privileging artistic practices to one that includes the pragmatic concerns of the staff. Whereas the Austin Ballet Theatre dancers and crew were all volunteers, the Armadillo staff were there not only to support the artistic mission of the club but also to get paid. Therefore, many of the bartenders would not want to work on ballet evenings because the cultural practices of the ballet audiences with regard to how much they drank and tipped the staff compared poorly with those of the Armadillo's typical music audiences.[120, *] Nonetheless, Mechling was willing to bartend on these nights; she enjoyed the ballet evenings due to some experience with ballet in her

[*] Interestingly, tipping amounts in general in the United States grew upward during the 1970s, from 10% at the beginning of the decade toward 15% to 20% at the end. Perhaps some ballet audiences—being less diverse and more WASP-y, as discussed in Chapter V: Audiences—followed the older tipping practices of the more privileged classes, whereas the music audiences tipped more generously as an empathetic or egalitarian practice.

background, and a few other staff people enjoyed working during the ballet evenings as well. She explained:

> And so I had friends on the bar staff that liked it, and so there was usually two or three of us that would sign up to work . . . . But the staff who would sign up for those shifts really wanted to be there . . . . It was a great event for us because there's not a lot going on Sunday nights, so it really helped the workers kind of round out their week with hours, plus you got to see some dancing.[121]

Mechling added that, "[T]he kitchen people didn't mind them so much because they were buying food. Everybody loved the nachos, so [the kitchen staff] were a little more happy about it."[122] The nuances of language that Mechling used, such as the phrase *didn't mind them so much,* hint at some level of discontent—even if minor—with how the ballet community entered into the Armadillo staff's domain once a month.

The oral histories of Armadillo staff members Wilson and Mechling revealed another area of tension between the ballet people and the Armadillo people with regard to the interactions between AWHQ staff and the "ballet moms." Again, the data indicate that this was an aspect of the dynamics between the two organizations of which ABT was unaware yet constituted an area in which the AWHQ personnel had to make accommodations. Like the one involving tip money, this tension may have been the result of people with the ballet enacting an unconscious acculturation toward privilege. Mechling related how, during the course of one Sunday when ABT volunteers worked all day at the club to prepare for a show, the mothers of the dancers "were a little high-handed with the staff":

> Honestly, the only thing that really rubbed the staff the wrong way were the dance moms who they just treated everybody like their help. Um, which later kinda, it made sense to me. My mom probably would've done the same thing. She'd say,

> "They had very high expectations," and they were kind of demanding about getting stuff from the kitchen. Um, I mean, naturally, all the dancers were provided with refreshments and we had water there for them . . . and that was not a problem. But the moms were always wanting a snack: "Do you have a snack for us?"[123]

The way in which Mechling referred to her own mother indicates that such behavior may have been a generational characteristic, with the older generation enacting social normatives of class in contrast with the more youthful counterculture in the kitchen, who had ideals that subverted those normatives.

This situation culminated in one of my favorite stories from my research, which Mechling thought had probably never been told to anyone outside of the Armadillo kitchen:

> Kitchen people had just had it up to *here* with those moms, and the dishwasher, [name omitted], he could hear all this, and sensed their conflict. So they decided they were gonna bake up a big pan of marijuana brownies, so he donated the pot. And, you know, they were actually good about it. They didn't just give them the whole pan. They did make a tray with one per person. They made sure that they gave these to the moms when the rehearsal was going on, and the children [the dancers] had already had something else, and they were gonna get nachos when they got done with their rehearsal. So they were mindful that children didn't get ahold of them, but they did feed marijuana brownies to the mothers, and, uh, gave them wine. And after about an hour we went back to check on them, and they were all back there doing each other's hair and makeup and they were dancing and laughing, and we never told them . . . but it was really kind of a fun thing to do to get back at these moms, and then to have that secret too.[124]

Keeping the secret among themselves therefore became a practice of resistance and a mediation of workplace tensions through humor and camaraderie among the AWHQ staff. Armadillo founder Wilson brought up the incident as well and assessed it this way: "The mothers tended to help themselves to whatever was available. I mean, it was such an open sorta place that—[laughs] they finally got their comeuppance."[125] With the secret

now out in publication, this story of comeuppance—an instance of literal cultural contact highs—changes the historical understandings of the past.

## Conclusions

> "We're a honky-tonk where you can see ballet."—Eddie Wilson, 1976 State of the Armadillo assessment[126]

As dance scholar Buckley continues in the article introducing this chapter, "Armadillos in Toe Shoes," these shows inspired the public to develop a "common appetite" among diverse segments of the population, a "newfound desire for culture—make that Culture."[127] The capital "C" in Buckley's wordplay designates a high-level status for ballet, and the "common appetite" in her statement suggests how ballet at the Armadillo crossed a culturally constructed high/low binary. Such a view certainly makes for entertaining narratives, as in Judi Hazlett's newspaper review titled "Foot Stomping Good:" "The usual passel of loyal foot stomping fans 'bellied up to the barre' at Armadillo World Headquarters Sunday night."[128] Paradoxically, how writers and some interviewees describe these experiences as unusual reinforces a high/low cultural binary as a lens for understanding the endeavor. However, I have come to view Austin Ballet Theatre and the Armadillo World Headquarters as creating an emergent world together, one that negotiated the affordances each could uniquely offer the other. This shared world resulted in the development of efficacious programming, practices, and relationships.

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# CHAPTER VII

## AUSTIN IN THE 1970s: THEMES OF HISTORICAL CONTEXT

This chapter presents themes from the data about how ballet at the Armadillo World Headquarters created connections with its time and place in such a way that context becomes a significant aspect of the Austin Ballet Theatre's historical narrative. Certainly potential investigations into connections of situation or context are infinite and ever changing. This chapter, therefore, is limited to those themes that emerged from the data. Within interviews and on the page, interviewees and writers create meaningful associations between the ballet, the Armadillo, Austin, and the 1970s. These themes include:

- Relationships between Austin Ballet Theatre and the University of Texas at Austin;
- How a history of ABT includes its competitive situation with Austin Civic Ballet;
- How economics unique to Austin generated an army of volunteers who made ballet at the Armadillo possible; and
- How sources relate ABT to national trends.

Data analysis shows how "creating history" in this study includes the ways in which individuals connect the ballet with its context in meaningful ways. Thus, various cultural and economic characteristics of Austin influence a history of ballet at the Armadillo.

## Austin in the Twentieth Century

Before the late 1960s, Austin was by no means a large city. According to the Texas State Historical Association, the state capitol and University of Texas dominated Austin's city life and its economic, political, and social networks.[1] Unlike many other cities, Austin lacked a primary economic foundation in agricultural and industrial sectors; the land surrounding Austin did not generate sufficient crops to be a significant economic interest,[2] and the Colorado River proved inadequate for attracting industrial factories.[3]

Given these geographic realities prohibiting the development of industry and agriculture, the first Austin City Council designed a city plan in 1928 privileging Austin's white residential, cultural, and educational sectors supported by burgeoning funds from Texas oil.[4] Although Austin was not located directly in the geographical area of the Texas oil boom in the first half of the twentieth century, as the state capital, Austin nonetheless benefitted from oil's huge economic windfall. In addition, UT-Austin owned previously worthless land in northwest Texas that turned out to be oil-rich.[5] With this influx of revenue plus infrastructure measures taken during the 1940s to control the town's periodic, cataclysmic floods, population rapidly expanded by 35% to 40% each decade thereafter.[6] Coming into the 1960s, then, Austin had already been shaped into a city favoring its white educational and cultural lifestyles.

In his 2010 text entitled *Weird City: Sense of Place and Creative Resistance in Austin, Texas,* Joshua Long describes the late 1960s as a "watershed" period in the city's history.[7] During the 1960s and into the 1970s, continued population growth produced

significant social and economic changes for the city.[8, *] As Austin expanded its identity as a government and education center, the number of government workers tripled from 1950 to 1970, and the student population of UT-Austin doubled during the 1960s, reaching 39,000 by 1970.[9] Local civic leader Elizabeth Christian, whose parents were active in city politics during the 1970s, was recently quoted as saying, "I think a big reason the '70s were so seminal to Austin's development is purely demographic." She continued:

> Everyone talks about the 1960s in this country. But Austin was still a very young town then. The population had been relatively small and stable for a long, long time. Then the Baby Boomers of the 1950s started graduating from high school and college in the early '70s.[10]

In Texas, those high school, junior college, and bachelor's degree graduates migrated toward the state's largest public university: UT-Austin.

## Town and Gown: Connections with the University of Texas at Austin

### An Influx of Students

The surge of students in Austin is especially relevant to this inquiry. As student populations at UT-Austin doubled during the 1960s, *Weird City* author Long continues to describe Austin witnessing "the emergence of a vocal counterculture community and radically hybridized music scene."[11] A university student counterculture of political and social activists, hippies, and "freaks" created a liberal community identity that was centered in the Armadillo World Headquarters.[12] Dancer Arletta Howard-Logan's recollections evoked the coming together of old and new cultural influences in Austin,

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[*] According to city statistics, Austin's general population increased by more than 35% during the 1960s and by more than 35% again during the 1970s, from 251,800 in 1970 to 341,504 in 1979. Many of these new inhabitants were young adults.

stimulated by a large influx of students to the University of Texas:

> What I remember about the Armadillo in the '70s and Austin is the freeness, the hippie quality about this town. In some ways it was a very sleepy kind of quiet, conservative town if you spoke to this group of people, but if you were anywhere near the university it was this free-thinking, trying to get away from the norm, the old; what's new, what's progressive, and that laid back quality that everybody likes about Austin, which I'm not sure is still around anymore, was really pronounced, I think. I guess it started being born in the late '60s, early '70s, but it was really grabbing hold in the '70s.[13]

After finding a liberal-minded oasis with pretty natural settings and a low cost of living, many students opted to stay in Austin after graduation. ABT lighting designer Mark Loeffler reminisced:

> But Armadillo just had that—it was such a crazy community . . . . You know, it was that usual thing about Austin. They came from someplace and liked Austin and then kinda settled for the job that was cool, that paid them a little bit, and they got to see the music for free and basically all the nachos you can eat [laughs]. So that's how Austin—back in the good old days of Austin, that's how it worked is you came to UT and you decided, "This is where I wanna be," so then you'd find your niche and kind of snuggle in and make a living.[14]

Likewise, Armadillo artist Jim Franklin compared Austin to another liberal college town—Madison, Wisconsin—and to the most famous epicenter of hippie culture, Haight-Ashbury: "Madison was similar to Austin. Madison, and then San Francisco. Anyway, it was a lot easier to live here [chuckle]."[15] Franklin's statement that it was easier to live in Austin referred to a comparatively low cost of living and mild weather. Such an influx of youth culture fueled the creation of the Armadillo World Headquarters and began to reshape the cultural ecology of the city.

In addition to hippie lifestyles and music, Austin absorbed related liberal activism on the UT campus. Journalist James Thomson, writing for the liberal periodical *New*

*Republic* in 1976, again connects the progressive Austin city government to the San Francisco Bay Area and Madison, Wisconsin. Thomson describes how the political landscape in Austin mirrors that "in Berkeley and Madison that students and minorities helped elect . . . bothering the hell out of the WASP real estate operators and merchants who used to run things."[16] The basic reason Austin "feels good," Thomson continues, is because its two "best-known monuments are the Lyndon B. Johnson [Presidential] Library [located on the UT campus] and the Armadillo World Headquarters," with both places being centers for what he terms "progressive" politics and culture.[17]

It is not surprising, then, that Armadillo staff Leea Mechling recognized how the AWHQ connected with "the university audience"[18] or that dance critic Suzanne Shelton Buckley, in her *Texas Monthly* article "Armadillos in Toe Shoes," refers to "university types" in the ballet audiences mixing with a diversity of others.[19] The presence of the University of Texas, its students, and its progressive, youth-oriented campus culture cross-pollinated with the Armadillo and helped to generate a creative, open-minded venue that welcomed the ballet.

University of Texas Faculty Families

A lot of girls, their fathers were at UT. —Ken Owen, dancer[20]

Data analysis from this project's oral history interviews reveals that many of Buckley's "university types" mentioned earlier were the families and friends of the teenage and young college-age women who largely comprised the female dancers onstage. In many (although certainly not all) cases, the adolescent ballerinas had fathers who were professors at the university and educated mothers who paused their careers

when the children came along. These families arrived in Austin when the father secured his faculty position at the University of Texas. One of my interviewees, whose daughters danced with Austin Ballet Theatre, explained it as follows:

> You know how when you come to a new town and you're involved with the university, people in your department say: "Oh, well this is the neighborhood you should live in, this is the best school your children should go to, this is who you should go to as a dentist, this is who you should . . ." and so on and so on. And so for the people that were interested in the arts, well, you know, this is the ballet school to go to.[21]

This informal networking among the UT faculty and faculty spouses not only provided orientation to the community but also privileged development of the community along faculty interests. Thus, these UT families sent their daughters to Nora White Shattuck's ballet school because she was the wife of prominent professor Roger Shattuck.[22] When Nora Shattuck handed the reins over to Stanley Hall, the UT connections followed.[23]

University politics may have subsequently fueled the split between Austin Civic Ballet (ACB) and Austin Ballet Theatre. Chapter III provides an overview of how a tumultuous time at UT during the late 1960s and early 1970s affected ballet in the community and Stanley Hall personally. Although the oral histories are somewhat vague and documentation scarce within the scope of my research, data indicate that some families from the university aligned with either ACB or ABT, depending on their UT affiliations. For example, dance critic Buckley recalled how the one board member who remained with ACB after the split worked in administration for the Humanities Research Center on the UT campus, while the board members who left with Hall had husbands

who were faculty, and so "it just kind of split down the middle like that" between the different factions of UT represented on the ballet board.[24]

The grassroots venture at the Armadillo saw many UT-affiliated parents volunteering on the board of Austin Ballet Theatre and pitching in with manual labor in support of their children. One such family was the Bergquists. I was able to interview both Kate Bergquist and her daughter Jone Berguist Hallmark, and I outline their story briefly here as an illustration of how the histories of UT faculty families become intertwined with that of Austin Ballet Theatre. Carl Bergquist joined the UT faculty in the School of Architecture in 1959. His daughter, Jone, began studying ballet with Nora White Shattuck, and his wife, Kate, was asked to join the ballet board of directors. After Hall's firing from the Austin Civic Ballet in 1972, the Bergquists helped form Austin Ballet Theatre. Jone began performing in featured roles at the Armadillo at the age of 14.[*] Kate, who was a visual artist, began illustrating the posters and programs for the company and writing out the credits in calligraphy; this work was a true labor of love as these had to be produced every month. She also created the company's signature logo of an armadillo in pointe shoes. The volunteer labor of the Bergquists—along with the Zieglers, the Adamses, the Spears, and other UT-affiliated families—made the ballet venture possible.

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[*] In another Austin connection, Jone received scholarship money to study ballet in Germany from a memorial foundation established in honor of University of Texas dance major Claudia Rutt, who was killed in one of Austin's most tragic events: the 1966 Charles Whitman shootings at the campus tower.

## University of Texas Male Dancers

Another connection between Austin Ballet Theatre and UT involves the male dancers in the company. During the 1970s, male ballet dancers faced—as they still do—numerous challenges in the United States, and considerable research already exists investigating the historical and cultural factors from which largely homophobic prejudices emerge. Yet, Austin Ballet Theatre featured unprecedented numbers of male ballet dancers, especially for a regional ballet company. How did ballet in Austin go from no male ballet dancers to perform *The Nutcracker* in 1960 to dozens performing with ABT during the 1970s?[25] This was primarily the result of Stanley Hall's faculty position as instructor of ballet and jazz at UT, which afforded an opportune connection with male students who might not otherwise have been exposed to dance.

At the time of Hall's hiring, the University of Texas had a physical education requirement for all undergraduates. Because of the demand to fulfill this requirement—as well as some university politics that reached all the way up to U.S. President Lyndon Baines Johnson—Hall was hired into the Department of Required Physical Education rather than the dance program of the Department of Theatre.[26] His co-ed dance classes were therefore held in the gymnasium, a comfortable and familiar space for male students as compared with the dance studios in the theatre building.[27] In addition, Hall taught enjoyable classes that were fun, exhilarating, and attracted a lot of attention from students just passing by. Hall recounted in a newspaper article that, although during the late 1960s and early 1970s male athletes began to approach him about taking classes from seeing them through the windows and the open door, they still felt that they had to do so

surreptitiously: "[T]he men would sneak up to me and register to get around the coaches."[28]

At UT, Hall invited the male students who enjoyed his classes to try his classes at the Austin Ballet Theatre studio free of charge and watch the company perform in the laid-back atmosphere of the Armadillo World Headquarters. The beer hall/music club may have proved much more accessible and familiar to men who had never been to the ballet before, as compared with the traditional proscenium theater. It was usually not long before a male UT ballet student found himself joining the company on stage, standing somewhere in the back in a beginning-level role and enjoying the wild applause of 1000 or more enthusiastic fans. Thus, the recruitment of men from UT to ABT contributed to a functional ecology existing between the university and the community.

**Austin Ballet Theatre and Austin Civic Ballet**

An important factor in this historical inquiry regarding Austin Ballet Theatre at the Armadillo World Headquarters is its messy and complex relationships with the other, long-established ballet organization in Austin: Austin Civic Ballet. Austin Ballet Theatre formed more or less immediately when Hall and most of the dancers, staff, and board of directors left Austin Civic Ballet. Throughout its existence, then, Austin Ballet Theatre defined itself in an antagonistic relationship to Austin Civic Ballet. Everyone involved was aware of the animosity between the two companies and how their competition and rivalry influenced each other for the 14 years of ABT and beyond. Although competition between two amateur companies may seem like a small matter from an outsider's perspective, the participants identified this situation as a major—or perhaps even the

principal—concern driving not only the origin of ABT at the Armadillo but also feelings that shaped both companies and continue to influence dance in Austin to the present day.

## Politics

At the beginning of her oral history interview regarding Austin Ballet Theatre, dance critic Buckley emphasized that first it was "important to understand the dance climate in Austin at the time."[29] By this, Buckley meant the sociopolitical factors involved in the generation of ABT, its identity, and its practices. She continued by describing how ballet in Austin essentially polarized into two opposing forces with these events: "Austin Civic Ballet was really the only game in town . . . . [Hall's firing] was a big event, and it split the dance community down the middle. There were a lot of dance politics in those days."[30] Buckley identified one side, that of ACB, as "the old guard of dance" that was heavily invested in the regional ballet movement.[31] Supporters of Hall and his ABT dancers formed the other side of the split. So, she attested, "It was kind of a political statement to go to the Armadillo and support [Hall's] company."[32]

Being an audience member at the Armadillo thus became a political action protesting both the machinations of power perceived as interfering with artists and a covert but operative prejudice against homosexuals. Armadillo staff member Leea Mechling's perception was that Hall "was kinda trying to stick it to the man in his own way because of the difficulties he had encountered with his col—well, they weren't really

colleagues were they?—but, people in the Austin Civic Ballet."[33, *] Likewise, dance critic Buckley described attendance at the ABT shows at the Armadillo as a "thumb-against-nose at the establishment" action, a sentiment that was very much in line with her own liberal outlook as a college student and activist during the 1960s and 1970s.[34] She summed up the differences between the two factions of ballet participants as she perceived them, along with some of her own torn feelings as a ballet enthusiast, in the following anecdote:

> I can remember one performance; this old-guard delegation arrives. You know, Jane comes, and she had my ballet teachers, who I revered quite a lot, Frank and Irina Pal, who were the directors of Wichita Falls Ballet Theatre, and very big in the regional ballet movement, strong people there. I remember my teacher, Jane, and a little delegation coming in and sitting very stiffly at a cable-spool table and being very uncomfortable with it, you know, in the way—the, the climate, so—and you notice things like that. You know, it was like "the enemy camp is coming" sort of a thing.[35]

Armadillo co-founder Eddie Wilson also affirmed a similar point of view of the political situation in Austin with his typical sense of sincere yet world-weary humor:

> It was the Austin [Civic] Ballet, and it was somehow or another associated with the city. And [Hall] got crossways and offed. And I didn't know—I just assumed it had to do with him being flagrantly gay. And I never asked and it was never told, but it put us in kind of a common category, because we were hippies and we were outcasts. And so here was someone else who was on the outs with the establishment, coming to us as, you know, a possible—as a possible source of aid for his situation. And so, I just assumed that he would be crossways, you know, with the establishment, and that meant that we were gonna get along just fine.[36]

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[*] Mechling's remark about colleagues stems from an earlier remark she made about Hall having a prestigious background in dance whereas the members of the Austin Civic Ballet board were not dancers.

Wilson's first sentence in this quote, how the Austin Civic Ballet was "somehow or other associated with the city," represents a widespread belief among participants that ACB participated in what constituted Austin's "establishment" at the time but without clarity as to how.

ACB was a non-profit arts organization with no formal ties to the Austin city government. Its informal ties, however, branched out through people who not only cared deeply about how ballet functioned in Austin but who also had significant influence in civic affairs. These influences developed through bonds of marriage, family, upper social strata, and prominent places of employment, such as the University of Texas. As ABT mother and program artist Kate Bergquist testified, "I think the social aspect was very important with the Austin Civic Ballet but not with Austin Ballet Theatre."[37] Dancer Owen named it more candidly:

> It was a rivalry for sure. Those people hated each other. Like boards of directors that [Hall] had gotten in conflict with. You know, social rich. I don't know how rich they were, but they were very active in being on boards of directors of things like ballet and opera. That kind of people.[38]

Austin Civic Ballet had already established itself in residence at the city's two major theatrical venues of the time, the Municipal Auditorium and the Paramount Theatre. ACB also secured funding from the city and the private donations of patrons. In support of this, two of the narrators in my research pointed to ACB Board President Betty Himmelblau's political clout as a probable facilitator of city arts funding and access to the auditorium, although I have found no archival documentation in support of this

assertion.[39] During the early years, Austin Ballet Theatre certainly *felt* that city funding was not accessible to them as a result of a bias that favored Austin Civic Ballet.

Although City Councilwoman Betty Himmelblau did much good for the city of Austin with regard to civic projects, data from both oral testimonies and archival documentation suggest that she had a private vendetta against Austin Ballet Theatre and anyone associated with the company. Chapter III details how Himmelblau attempted to get Hall fired from his position at the University of Texas, and subsequently Hall retained a lawyer who acquired an agreement from her to desist. In addition, Himmelblau attempted to have Kate Bergquist—ABT visual artist and mother of featured dancer Jone Bergquist—dismissed from working as a contract artist for the Austin library system, without success. This occurred when Bergquist featured drawings of ballet characters related to a ballet that ABT was performing that summer in her illustrations for the public library summer reading program.[40]

It is important to balance what may come across as a unilateral bifurcation along sociopolitical strata between these ballet companies. Although the narratives seem polarized, the research for this dissertation suggests that the situation was—as situations usually are—much more complex and intertwined. Buckley's *Texas Monthly* article details how Ada McIlhenney brought the "West Austin" set, which continues to be local vernacular for wealthy and socially connected, to ABT's shows at the Armadillo. Buckley further portrays this as a pivotal moment when suddenly attendance at these performances became "fashionable" for some networks within Austin's well-heeled

society.[41, *] In addition, UT-Austin faculty families were involved with either of these companies, and, in those days, being a faculty member at the local university held a position of some prestige and influence in university towns such as Austin. So, both ballet companies had ties to the university and influential social networks. Eventually, Austin Ballet Theatre did receive some funding from the city, although it was always a lesser amount than ACB received. Thus, although divisions between Austin Ballet Theatre and Austin Civic Ballet were entangled, the sociopolitical climate of Austin at the time continues to be perceived as part of the ballet companies' different identities and histories.

## Different Identities, Different Functions

ABT mother Helen Spear considered the functions of dance in her community when discussing Austin Civic Ballet and Hall's firing: "I can see where both of them are coming from . . . . I don't think these people [Austin Civic] were bad people. I just think they had a different vision for the ballet."[42] Spear continued by saying that Hall may have also caused ill feelings by asserting his authority on the basis of his distinguished background:

> Stanley was very independent and he had his own ideas about how ballet should be run, and he had trained himself in England in a very fine company and so on, and these other people were Philistines as far as he was concerned. Who were

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[*] This designation of "fashionable" brings up some interesting theoretical connections with the practice of "slumming." Some helpful references include the following: Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); Robert M. Dowling, *Slumming in New York: From the Waterfront to Mythic Harlem* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2008); and Chad Heap, *Slumming: Sexual and Racial Encounters in American Nightlife, 1885-1940* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

> they to tell him how he should run his company? . . . Stanley [said], "I know what's best." I mean, Stanley had an incredible ego, and it was wonderful, I loved him, but, "I know what's best for ballet . . . ." And he did know what was best for giving his dancers the opportunity to grow.[43]

I can only imagine the clash of visions between Hall, with his international credentials and different cultural values, and the ACB board of directors, a group of non-dancers to whom he was supposed to answer.

The situation detonated with the *Cinderella*/*Nutcracker* debacle of December 1971. Ostensibly, Hall was fired because he broke with a relatively new American tradition of presenting *The Nutcracker* and instead produced *Cinderella*, the British traditional Christmas season ballet. The reason Hall gave for this substitution was that *Cinderella* provided more diverse opportunities for the dancers to learn and perform, in keeping with the mission of ABT explored in Chapter IV. The board of directors of ACB had an entirely different agenda, promoting *The Nutcracker* as a city tradition rather than as a platform for the dancers. The differences between the two ballets, in this way, can be viewed more as differences between what the two companies intended to do with dance. In this transcript excerpt, Spear considered the interconnections of identity, agenda, and money between ACB and Austin made manifest by *The Nutcracker*:

> Helen Spear: If something is being supported by a lot of people in the community, because a lot of money went into supporting this whole thing, there is an obligation to the community. And if you're thinking in terms of a community and your responsibilities to the community, I'm glad that the yearly whatever-the-thing-is went on, because I think for a community, that's a good thing to have . . . . *The Nutcracker* was pretty amateurish to start with, and eventually it involved the orchestra, things like that, and I'm sure Betty [Himmelblau]'s connections in the city helped to do that whole thing.

> Caroline S. Clark: Do you have a sense of why *The Nutcracker* was so important to the board at the time?
>
> Helen Spear: Oh yes, well, I think there were people that realized—and *The Nutcracker* is still going . . . all over the country . . . and probably the world. And so I understand that it's a civic issue, the community says we need to have this every year: It's very good. They don't care whether these children are going to develop into fine dancers and directors and so on, that's not their interest. And you know, at some level, that wasn't *my* interest [as the mother of ABT dancers], but that didn't mean that I couldn't respect Stanley's opinion.[44]

*The Nutcracker*, therefore, demonstrated to the civic leaders that Austin had attained a level of substance in both size and sophistication valued by regional America in the wake of Balanchine's version on television. That the ballet's narrative takes place during Christmas Eve additionally provides cities with public ways of celebrating a Christian holiday as an annual tradition, a quality that *Cinderella* could not match. Thus, the differences between Austin Ballet Theatre and Austin Civic Ballet can be seen as relating to larger, rather underexplored conversations about how ballet can function as a way of creating and defining the character of a community.

In light of the preceding differences in how the two communities were creating their identities and thus their functions in the community, Austin Ballet Theatre immediately set out to define itself as what I would call, in some ways, a "grassroots" company, in keeping with the times.[*] To be sure, ABT was not a cooperative or a democracy. Stanley Hall was its monarch, and his word ruled.[45] However, the company

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[*] The term *grassroots* originated earlier, but, during the 1960s and 1970s the word applied to sociopolitical efforts coming "from below." In other words, these were efforts instigated by broad bases of people who were not in positions of political power in order to effect change.

often promoted itself as an organization with the primary mission of putting dancers first (with Hall knowing how best to do so), operating as a result of the efforts of a broad base of volunteers. Newspaper articles about ABT, including Buckley's "Armadillos in Toe Shoes," describe a cooperative atmosphere making the shows happen while the dancers followed their dreams.[46] This overall message of cooperation was appealing to many supporters, especially the numerous family members and friends of those dancers. Of special interest toward the company's identity formation as a grassroots effort is how ABT became the company that—in the words of many interviewees—made ballet "accessible" to diverse audiences and to the "common man." This theme connects back to the data analysis and theorizing of Chapters V and VI.

The different identities and functions of the companies also manifested through their aesthetic practices. Austin Ballet Theatre offered diversity across dance genres, whereas Austin Civic Ballet strove for a more formal classicism. Dancer Ken Owen described the artistic differences between the companies in this way:

> [ABT audiences] were more interested in new stuff. We weren't going to do *Nutcracker* for Christmas. You know, [the ACB directors], they were doing schlock. Old ballet routine schlock. They weren't choreographing anything. Nothing was new. Stanley was all new, and you know, fresh ideas. He was always trying stuff. Avant-garde. Lots of avant-garde stuff. Different kinds of music.[47]

Journalist Sharon Hood further explores these aesthetic agendas in an article for *The Daily Texan* in 1976. About ACB, she writes, "members like to think of themselves as THE classical company in Austin."[48] The capitalization of the word *THE* indicates a strong sentiment of self-identification and discrimination.

Dancer Greg Easley expressed how aesthetic differences between the companies developed in relation to the disparity in how often the companies performed. Austin Ballet Theatre appeared at least eight times a year at the Armadillo plus a varying number of shows in other venues; Austin Civic Ballet performed four times per year total. In this passage, Easley remembered a particular type of group identification, that of getting to perform frequently, shared by ABT dancers:

> You know it was great, too, the kind of rivalry between ABT and Civic Ballet. That was one of the big things that [Austin] Ballet Theatre could say was, "You know, our dancers perform every month. They get to perfect," and I think Stanley said—and I agree—that's what helped people get jobs so easily. They knew how to perform.[49]

Easley also described how the ABT dancers carried themselves with a sense of ease, an embodied quality developed through consistent performance:

> They had this sense of glamour, and certainly the principals, Terri Lynn and Byron and Victor and Jone, and all those people, just carried themselves differently than what I thought I was seeing at Austin Civic Ballet. Not better or worse; it was just different. It was just a different air in the way they took a posé or finished a pirouette . . . . They really knew how to carry themselves. Even if they weren't the best dancers, they knew how to carry themselves . . . . Just even the corps de ballet. They were very human, I guess. It got so comfortable, I think, performing every month. I think that had probably had a lot to do with it, like, "We're back. We're back."[50]

This ease with performing was identified by several ABT narrators in contrast with a more uptight physicality that they perceived in Austin Civic Ballet dancers, who were sometimes depicted as "stiff" and "scared" when dancing.[51] These characteristics also emerge in this 1976 review by Melissa Toomin that compares performances of the two companies: "Furthermore, [Hall] worked with what he had, and he did not choreograph

beyond the capabilities of his dancers; consequently they performed with a much greater ease than the people of ACB."[52]

In summation, the participants in this research, who were all associated with Austin Ballet Theatre, emphasized different identities for the two companies during the Armadillo years. From their perspectives, members of the Austin community who desired ballet to function principally as a touchstone to traditionally recognized standards and practices of Euro-American culture were attracted to Austin Civic Ballet. Although Austin Ballet Theatre was also well connected to those standards and practices through the presence of Stanley Hall, the company perceived itself as a more people-centered endeavor that functioned *for* its dancers and a wider, more diverse community. While many of the ABT adults took pride in their socially transgressive performing practices, dancer Terri Lynn Wright remembered how the dueling company identities affected her as an adolescent: "[I] would want to look respectable and like I wasn't some sort of hippie, but that I was a serious dancer. Even if I wasn't with Civic, it didn't mean that I was derelict."[53] Here Wright seemed to struggle somewhat with how she felt she might be perceived as less "serious" about ballet because of her affiliation with ABT.

## Competitiveness

From its inception, ABT was the "other" ballet company in town, as Easley attested from his experience: "That pervading sense of . . . we were the "other" ballet company. That, that never—that was always present at some level, at some level."[54] Easley's comment describes an environment in which the competition was felt but not necessarily acknowledged freely, directly, or publicly. Austin Civic Ballet was the

establishment company that received public funds and performed in theaters where ballet would be expected to perform; Austin Ballet Theatre was the "other" company or, as Debi Martin phrased it in a review, the "second" ballet company in town.[55] I sincerely doubt Hall would have viewed his company as an underdog, especially with these insights, as explained by audience member and dancer Kate Warren:

> I never felt like Austin Civic Ballet was professional and Austin Ballet Theatre was not. And that, to me, that came from Stanley. To me, the difference between him and [Austin Civic] is that Stanley, he knew who he was and where he came from and didn't feel it was necessary to talk about it. I may be completely wrong but I never got a sense that he felt like he had to prove anything. And yet, we all knew there was an undercurrent of competition. We all knew that, those of us sitting in the lobby. It was just common knowledge in town, you know, as a dancer.[56]

Thus, although the rivalry between the two companies was not necessarily acknowledged openly, their competitive situation was nonetheless relatively common knowledge in the dance community. In its later years, ABT tried to capitalize on this pervasive sense of competition with a promotional campaign. In a newspaper advertisement frequently used by ABT, two female ballet dancers prepare for class near a studio barre, with one whispering in the other's ear under the text banner, "Austin's best kept secret."[57] This slogan relates ironically with ABT's nearly lost history at the legendary AWHQ.

**Connecting to Discourse**

Although scholarly literature about competition proliferates in sports, sociology, biology, and business discourses, little exists in the field of dance. What literature does exist in dance tends to focus on the negative effects that competition may have on the

individual. An exception is JuanAnn Tai's 2014 article about her research investigating dance competitions in Taiwan.[58] Within this article, Tai addresses how group identities form as a result of the "propelling force" of competitive events.[59] Although Tai's research is grounded in an entirely different dance culture than Western ballet, her conclusions nonetheless resonate with ABT and ACB with regard to how competition may stimulate the creation of unique group identities in relationships of antagonism.

Scholars that research competition in fields other than dance find that participants can experience both positive and negative effects.[60, *] While some investigate the biological origins of competitive drives in human beings as an evolutionary advantage, an alternate sociological model developed by Rainer Martens defines competition as a process that takes place in socially constructed environments and is then subject to social evaluation.[61] In other words, competition is a learned process that: is shaped by one's relationships to self, others, cultures, and environments; is not inherently positive or negative nor productive or destructive; and is used and assessed by participants.[62] Intergroup competition, such as that between ABT and ACB, can be useful when people use competitive events to facilitate outcomes that those groups have identified as productive; examples include better performance against standards or enjoyable intragroup bonding. In these situations, groups assist each other by providing each other with an antagonist. As sports psychologists Robert S. Weinberg and Daniel Gould explain, virtually no situations are purely competitive or cooperative but rather a mixture

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[*] Some theorists feel that the term *competition* refers only to beneficial effects; negative effects are referred to as *decompetition.*

of both.[63] For those who thrive with competition, the stimulus that such situations provide supports both improved personal performance and the healthy psychological benefits of feeling a sense of belonging with a group.

With the preceding ideas in mind, Austin Ballet Theatre and Austin Civic Ballet may have assisted each other toward both increasing technical advancement overall and galvanizing the members of each company. Dancer Lucia Uhl elucidated her experiences of these outcomes through competition: "They sort of kept each other honest though, I think, in a way. You know, defining each other by the competition, I think it raised the level of the dancing."[64] In addition to acknowledging how competition raised the technical level of the dancing, I particularly find Uhl's use of the phrase *kept each other honest* intriguing. Through "defining each other by the competition," the companies practiced difference as self-identification.

The competitive situation also stimulated some feelings of drama and intrigue. Some of the drama could be exciting and even entertaining. For example, Hall would never attend any of the Austin Civic Ballet shows himself, but he always had knowledge about them. How he did so was a mystery of sorts, because some ABT dancers and loyal supporters attest that any attendance at an ACB performance caused some scandal. ABT mother Spear described this situation: "None of us would dare to go to see a performance of *Nutcracker*."[65] Wright gave the dancers' perspective: "[S]omebody would notice and report if there was someone from the other company that had showed up."[66]

The following passage from an interview with dancer Ken Owen made the emotions behind this intrigue particularly clear:

> Caroline S. Clark: Do you know if any of the Austin Civic Ballet people ever came to the Armadillo to watch the show?
>
> Ken Owen: I doubt it. I doubt it.
>
> Caroline S. Clark: Did you all ever go to see one of their shows?
>
> Ken Owen: Are you kidding?
>
> Caroline S. Clark: No.
>
> Ken Owen: Never. That would have been treason. And Stanley would have found out somehow. I mean, he had spies everywhere. He knew everything that you did. I'm serious. He knew everything that was going on in your life. He would know everything. He was just a very intelligent guy.[67]

When Owen uses the words *spies* and *treason,* he reflects a context in which dancers also used the word *defect* to describe leaving one of these companies to join the other. These potent words echo the type of discourse surrounding Cold War relations between the United States and the Soviet Union at the time and how prominent ballet dancers such as Rudolph Nureyev, Mikhail Baryshnikov, and Natalia Makarova made international news when they defected from the Soviet Union and joined Western ballet companies. That such evocative words from international-level scandals were used and employed as normal to describe city-level company membership speaks to how immersed the dancers were with company alliances.

Some of the alleged skullduggery between the companies had more serious implications than drama and excitement, however. Two of these incidents of bitter rivalry against Hall involved intellectual property rights: Hall's use of Joseph Byrd's music for *The Rites of Joseph Byrd* and his restaging of Sir Frederick Ashton's *Façade*. Easley related these events with the caveat that "it was always a little unclear" what might have

happened.[68] During the 1970s, it was not uncommon for small companies to use music without permission; in fact, this practice persists today, although it is illegal. It was also not uncommon for ballet directors to restage classics on the basis of their memories of having danced in those ballets themselves—a practice that Austin Civic Ballet's directors partook in as well. However, someone somehow alerted the Joseph Byrd estate and the Royal Ballet of London concerning Hall's use of Byrd's music and his restaging of Ashton's choreography. Easley emphasized that, in the days before the Internet, this knowledge could only have come to the attention of these far-away organizations deliberately:

> How anybody knew that this little, podunk, ballet company was using that music, or was performing *Façade* . . . . Who alerted the Royal Ballet? . . . But that was all part of that machination to try to bring him down and bring down Ballet Theatre, you know, from the other side.[69]

Although Easley was certain that the artistic directors of Austin Civic Ballet, Eugene Slavin and Alexandra Nadal Slavin, had nothing to do with any schemes against ABT, he attributed these actions to "the whole rivalry and really bitter, bitter battle between Stanley and Civic—not all of Civic, but some of the powers that be, that were just out to get him, out to get him."[70] Journalist Steve Hogner uses strong words in the undated article "City of Dance" to illustrate his assessment of the situation: "[T]he battle wounds still lie festering underneath the surface of the main dance community."[71]

Ironically, although ABT and ACB clearly felt a fierce sense of competition, most Austin residents outside of the dance community did not seem to be aware that there *were* two separate companies. Dancer Eve Larson explained:

> [T]he average person did not know the difference, I would say. And so I always used to think it was very funny. All the dancers were so hyper-aware of their differences, but the general public couldn't see any difference at all [laughter]. It was all just, you know, those Austin ballet things.[72]

This confusion outside of the field of practice is understandable. For one thing, the names were similar save for one word. In addition, although ABT did continue for six years after the Armadillo, the loss of ABT's unique home changed the company's identity such that Austin Ballet Theatre performed in the same venues as Austin Civic Ballet and engaged in virtually identical fundraising tactics. Later, Austin Civic Ballet changed its name to Ballet Austin, thereby further complicating the scene. As mentioned in Chapter II, Methodology, even the Austin History Center's archives demonstrate a confusing conflation between the histories of the two companies.

To briefly address the aftermath, it seems that many members of both organizations eventually resolved their differences. A symbolic reconciliation took place in 1989 when Stanley Hall was invited to perform the role of Drosselmeyer in Ballet Austin's *Nutcracker*, which he accepted.[*] Many of the people who had previously been involved were, by this time, not involved anymore and Ballet Austin consisted of new directors and dancers.[73, †] During the 1990s, some of the ABT dancers who left Austin for

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[*] Probably few people aside from Hall himself understood just how significant this particular invitation was given the role that *The Nutcracker* played in Hall's being fired from that same company years earlier.

[†] The new Ballet Austin director, Lambros Lambrou, had heard of Stanley Hall before moving to Austin. Lambrou stated, "I was overjoyed to find him here . . . . From my European outlook, to come here and find a kindred spirit from the Royal Ballet—well, it gives one a sense of continuity." Quoted in Sondra Lomax, "Hall brings global perspective to Ballet Austin work," *Austin-American Statesman*, March 20, 1991, E11.

performance careers returned and began teaching for the Ballet Austin academy, as did some who never left.

Although today the companies' legacies are completely intertwined and their differences largely no longer part of public memory (if indeed they were ever known), during the Armadillo years, their rivalry fueled both passion and practice. Journalist Hogner sums up as much for his aforementioned article "City of Dance": "[T]he split, as bad as it may have been at the time, has opened the Austin dance scene to experimentation and original works that may not have been possible otherwise."[74]

## Economics

### Affordability

> It was a good time to be in Austin. There were eight or nine years there where it was cooler to be a hippie than to be in a frat . . . . And it allowed for more weird things to happen. You could live cheaply back then. You could be a slacker, and that gave you time to do something weird. Austin was very unmaterialistic in its Golden Age. —Red Wassenich, originator of "Keep Austin Weird"[75]

The above quote is an example of the kind of widespread anecdotal data that narrate how Austin entered a new era of creativity in the 1970s due to a low cost of living. With housing remarkably affordable and a community of young adults devoted to self-realization and supporting others to have the same experience, artists of many genres found Austin to be a favorable environment in which to settle and work.[*] This "Golden

[*] My assertions here come in part from a symposium that I attended in honor of Deborah Hay on April 7, 2010, at the University of Texas at Austin. She attributed her moving to Austin from New York City as a vital part of the development of her art because she and her dancers could afford to spend generous amounts of time in the studio. In her workshops, dancers often participated five hours a day for months at a time because they could support themselves with part-time jobs.

Age" to which Wassenich refers, which involved embracing weirdness and eschewing materialism among a sector of Austinites, took place during the years when Austin Ballet Theatre performed at the Armadillo. In her interview, AWHQ staff member Leea Mechling recounted how such an economic climate was vital to the development of Austin's indigenous music scene. She recounts that it was "just easier to pursue your passions back then because you really didn't need to be bringing in a lot of money."[76] In support of this statement, Mechling recalled examples such as apartments renting for $60 a month and some musicians managing economically by donating plasma twice a month as source of income.[77] This affordability made the AWHQ possible as a venue: the rent was low, and the location was maintained by a landlord who was forgiving of irregular payments.[78] In addition, with more free time, people could volunteer the many hours of labor it took to keep the place going when only beer, food, and marijuana were available as payment.[79, *] As discussed in Chapter III, the club's perpetual financial perils and bankruptcy are almost as much a part of the nostalgia surrounding its memory as its music and infamy.

The Ballet Helping Out the Armadillo

To some degree, the monthly performances of Austin Ballet Theatre helped to stabilize the Armadillo World Headquarters financially, although data vary as to what extent. Dance critic Buckley's *Texas Monthly* article from 1973 indicates that the two organizations "needed each other," and income from the ballet was vital to the Armadillo

[*] In addition, during a period in bankruptcy in 1976, the staff went without pay for around 16 weeks to keep the club open.

remaining in business. Buckley summarizes the codependency of the two institutions: "Austin Ballet Theatre was homeless . . . Armadillo was broke. Having exclusively courted the freak-rock trade, the hall desperately needed a broader audience."[80] I asked Armadillo staff Mechling, who had managed the financial books at one point, whether the ballet really could make a difference to the club economically when the Armadillo booked touring musicians who attracted large audiences. She confirmed that the ticket income, which was split 50/50 with ABT, did indeed help "because it was regular."[81] Mechling continued:

> [W]e knew that their [ABT's] core fan base would be there no matter what. *We would take chances on bands* that you have to spend money on and maybe nobody would come . . . . Um, so I don't doubt that that regular once-a-month really [helped], 'cause we did payroll on Mondays, so it was a really big help. So it was probably good that Stanley couldn't afford a different place to perform [emphasis added].[82]

More insight into this economic situation regarding how the Armadillo could "take chances" on bands because of the ballet comes from Hall himself and dancer Buddy Treviño in a 1985 interview:

> Buddy Treviño: It was packed at every performance. Sometimes they could make more money on the ballet [on a Sunday] then they could with a rock performance on a Friday night.
>
> Stanley Hall: As a matter of fact, we bailed out a Bette Midler performance here.[83]

Adding together the data from Wilson, Mechling, Treviño, and Hall, an understanding emerges that regular ticket income from the ballet allowed the Armadillo to meet payroll for its employees on Mondays and to present music acts that might not make money. Many of those acts would have been local artists, because, as Wilson

asserted, there was little demand for local music during the early years of the club.[84] The Armadillo World Headquarters, he continued, "worked really hard to *make* that [a demand for local music] happen [emphasis original]."[85] Undoubtedly, then, hidden within the enormous industry and identity of Austin as "the live music capitol of the world" with a thriving local music industry is the economic stability provided by Austin Ballet Theatre.

## Austin Ballet Theatre and Its Economic Situation

ABT undeniably had little to no money for producing their performances; that is *why* they were at the Armadillo. The agreement to split ticket income from the door meant that ABT did not have to pay out rent to use the venue. Consequently, by keeping expenses down, ABT's AWHQ shows could sustain themselves financially as a result of fans attending the shows in droves. Lucia Uhl addressed this in a 1983 monograph for the ABT Board of Directors: "ABT made it in spite of lack of support by wealthy patrons, because as far as Austin's artistic and intellectual community was concerned, when it came to ballet, ABT was where it was at."[86]

In addition, ABT did not receive public funding for its first few years and historical data indicate that the personnel at ABT were convinced this was due to its rivalry with Austin Civic Ballet and ACB's socially powerful network. A newspaper article from 1974 described the situation as follows:

> [ABT] gets no supporting funds from the state, which Hall sees as purely political—the loudest social voices get the money—and none from the city, which he finds equally irritating. "I think if you give anything to the arts at all, give the same to all, not huge sums to only a few."[87]

The following account from dance critic Buckley's "Armadillos in Toe Shoes" illustrates the kind of bias that funding agencies had against Austin Ballet Theatre: "Erik Stocker of the Texas Commission on the Arts and Humanities came to one performance (in safari regalia), sat through one ballet, pronounced it 'tepid,' and made his exit."[88] It seems Stocker was putting on a bit of a high culture/low culture show himself by arriving in safari gear.

In the absence of much private or public funding to draw upon, some oral history data exist revealing how board members and Stanley Hall himself occasionally buoyed the company financially in times of economic shortfall. When the board convened and the company needed money, it was common practice to "pass the hat."[89] Although records do not exist regarding how Hall may have donated money to the company budget, the narrative that he did so remains pervasive, as this testimony from dancer Owen demonstrates: "[A]s far as the money went, we never had any money, really. I bet Stanley funneled his own money into it, to tell you the truth."[90] Hall also often helped the dancers survive by feeding them regularly with meals that he prepared in his home, dropping off bags of food, or giving them his old clothes.[91] Buckley mentions such personal generosity from Hall in her article: "[He] has been known, more than once, to slip a few dollars to one of his dancers needing new toeshoes [sic]."[92]

Yet, Hall was never paid, at any time, for his work with the performing company of Austin Ballet Theatre, living primarily off of his faculty salary from UT-Austin. Buckley explains: "Stanley Hall teaches dance classes at the University and at ABT Dancer's School, then spends his weekends in all-day rehearsals. He accepts not a cent

from Austin Ballet Theatre."[93] Hall's precise financial and contractual arrangements with ABT and its associated school cannot be determined from the documentation available in the archives, but there seems to be a lot of uncertainty based on the fairly casual understandings of the company's early days. A manila folder held in a private collection contains a letter from 1986 in which Hall formally lambasts the ABT administration for threatening to withdraw his contract as director. When ABT was initially formed, Hall states, he was made artistic director for life:

> I am the Founder of the Austin Ballet Theatre and in the original Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws I was Artistic Director for life unless I chose otherwise. There has never been a contractual agreement between the Board of Directors and myself, simply because it was not necessary as I have never been paid one cent for my duties as Artistic Director.[94]

Hall continues this letter by stating that he initially taught without pay at the ABT Dancer's School for "six to seven years" and that, even after that time period, he was the lowest paid teacher in the school.[95] The same folder contains a statement requesting back pay of $2,400 for the year 1986 from the ABT Dancer's School.[96] Since 1986 was the year ABT folded, these documents undoubtedly chronicle some of the internal difficulties that contributed to the company's demise. However, the document also attests to Hall's generosity with volunteering his time and energy choreographing for and directing the company during the Armadillo years.

## Austin Ballet Theatre Volunteerism and Making Do

### Hall as the Catalyst

As mentioned previously, Hall frequently invited the dancers to his home and created delicious dishes out of whatever fresh ingredients he had on hand.[97] I began to see

these data as a metaphor for Hall's work in Austin: making the most of the local resources and creating the best ballets he could with the skills he had. In doing so, Hall inspired those around him to join in the endeavor, and the whole often proved greater than the sum of its parts. Although there is no doubt that Hall provided the catalyst—the "spark"—that assembled into Austin Ballet Theatre, he did so in a dynamic environment, with many agents.[98] Therefore, the story of Austin Ballet Theatre at the Armadillo World Headquarters is not told in historical narratives without mention of its many volunteers.

The very first newspaper article about ABT that I have found to date highlights teenage dancers Terri Lynn Wright and Byron Johnson giving up their summer vacations for rehearsals, thus establishing from the outset a narrative of how work for the company was a labor of love.[99] A couple of months later, when the regular Armadillo shows began, family members and friends presented themselves to assist with whatever needed to be done behind the scenes. Dancers Eve and Dave Larson described the "grassroots" level of the AWHQ shows:

> Eve Larson: We had Sunday, basically, and [*cat meowing*] so Sunday morning we would go in, and everybody pitched in to clean up and then we got underway with rehearsal. And we just rehearsed until time ran out, and then we put on the show [laughter]. So talk about a grassroots, you know: "Come on kids. Let's put on a show [laughter]." It was really just about that level.
>
> Dave Larson: That's right. Yes.
>
> Eve Larson: So, um, I think that Stanley was able to capture the imagination of a great many people.[100]

Dance critic Buckley, in her "Armadillos in Toe Shoes" article, likewise credited Hall with providing a vision around which so many volunteers could constellate. She

writes that the people who volunteer "participate in ballet at Armadillo because they're dancers, frustrated dancers, parents of dancers, or simply hams. And also because of their fierce loyalty to Stanley Hall."[101] Furthermore—and important to this chapter on Austin—is how Austin was home to a wealth of residents with creative skill sets and a predisposition towards activism.[102] As Buckley asserts, "The strength of ABT and its democratic flavor derives from the galaxy of creative Austinites who get into the act as stagehands, costume designers, publicity flaks, and technicians."[103]

Families and Friends

The families of the dancers figure prominently in the data as production volunteers. The oral histories pay particular homage to the cadre of mothers (and friends) who learned to sew costumes over the years, finding ways to fashion tutus, crowns, unitards, and countless other costume pieces in very little time and with no budget. Their names are spoken with great fondness and respect: Marguerite Wright (mother of dancer Terri Lynn Wright), Mary Alice Ziegler (mother of dancer Mary Claire Ziegler), and Kathleen Gee, among many others. Their creativity transformed scraps of muslin, cardboard, and even Hall's curtains into whatever costumes were needed, from royal finery to can-can skirts. These mothers, however, sometimes had to tolerate Hall's drama being directed at them and their children while sewing under pressure. Dancer Wright characterized this resilience in her own mother:

> [Hall] could be demanding, but she felt it was worth it, because she thought that he was really a talented man and he was doing so much for her kid that she could put up with a little bit of attitude when it came to criticizing her costume or something, when she would have like to have said, "Well, you can find somebody

> else to sew this if you can't talk nicer to me." He was demanding with the volunteers, but they got over it.[104]

ABT mother Helen Spear further confirms the true commitment she witnessed from the costume crew:

> I know as far as everybody was concerned, Stanley's word was God, but I can't imagine that there might not have been some kind of issues between the women who were so active whose children might not have ever gotten starring parts . . . . Stanley would just never do anything like that—that because the mothers were working so hard, their little daughters were going to get starring roles. So it's kind of nice to think that they were able to deal with it. Whether there were feelings, I don't know, but they never quit working because their daughters weren't getting top parts.[105]

When I asked Spear whether she thought that volunteering for ABT could be an outlet for these mothers to be involved in work they found meaningful, she had this to say:

> Yes, yes, absolutely, absolutely. But you know, we all had other outlets, too. I mean, as I said, I was very interested in politics, I did a lot of telephoning for candidates, I did a lot of envelope stuffing, I mean, we all had outlets, and so nobody had any time to be bored . . . . But they were outlets that were very fulfilling. I think you're absolutely right about that.[106]

The gendered socioeconomic structures of the 1970s afforded a situation in which skilled, competent women could do volunteer work regularly for outlets that they found "fulfilling" away from home life. The data demonstrate conclusively that Austin Ballet Theatre was able to produce shows successfully at low cost because of this group of female homemakers supporting the efforts of their daughters. In this way, the life histories of women in the 1970s become part of the narrative.

Men also had regular volunteer duties. Judy Thompson-Price's husband, Lee Thompson, was an audio engineer by profession and handled all of the music recording

on reel-to-reel tapes. Fathers built sets, rolled out the marley, and swept the floors, perhaps sharing a few beers during the course of a day.[107] Dancer John Logan elaborated on some other examples of volunteerism practiced by fathers, male dancers, and male production crew members. Logan joined the company several years after ABT began performing at the AWHQ, and by that time many strategies for loading in, production, and loading out had developed into efficient yet inexpensive routines. From a newcomer's perspective (and particularly that of an engineer) he found some of these accommodating practices for technical work at the Armadillo "weird."[108] For example, to raise a scrim, someone would fetch a long pole to raise up a hammer tied to a rope, thread the hammer through a ring on a spar 25 to 30 feet up over the stage, lower the hammer back down, then pull on the rope. Although unorthodox, such a strategy saved the company the trouble and expense of trying to find a ladder that would reach that high. In hindsight, Logan admitted to the efficacy of these routine strategies—"It worked, you know?"—and chuckled at their eccentricities.[109]

In another example of saving money with the use of unusual strategies and volunteerism, Logan was one of several volunteers who at some point drove a U-Haul truck back to the rental lot late at night after each show. ABT had arranged a "crazy system" whereby if the truck was parked at the curb and the keys thrown over the fence near the gas pump, the company would only be charged for one day's rental.[110] Such examples reflect a context of looser, complementary accommodations in Austin that helped to support the ballet's endeavors.

According to one early newspaper article, the dancers pitched in with wardrobe duties as well. The text, which has no author listed, is titled "Ballet Dancers 'Sew Their Own'," and it seems to primarily be a publicity piece for an upcoming Armadillo show in 1972.[111] It opens with describing ABT as a ballet company with a "do-it-yourself attitude."[112] Throughout, the company is portrayed as an upbeat group of young people hoping to do their best, as in this example: "Even the male dancers get into the act, and Buddy Trevino [sic] confessed, 'I can work a sewing machine and know how to sew elastic on shoes.'"[113] The implication seems to be that Treviño is so motivated to help that he and other male dancers have overcome the seeming impediments of gender in order to do so. In addition, the article continues, "Austin Ballet Theater [sic] dancers scavenge garage sales and second-hand shops for everything they can find" to make costumes.[114] The article promotes a plucky, grassroots political image of the ballet; ABT comes across as an unpretentious, locally-sourced endeavor.

Summing up, historical narratives about Austin Ballet Theatre at the Armadillo inherently address the economics of living and working in Austin at the time. Austin Ballet Theatre was able to operate on limited funds due to Austin's low cost of living, a segment of city culture that privileged creativity and alternative lifestyles through cooperation and sharing, and a financial arrangement made with the Armadillo of splitting ticket income rather than having to pay rent. Consequently, the ballet company could not have existed without its dedicated volunteers, which included Stanley Hall and the other dedicated individuals who functioned in all aspects of the organization.

## Larger Contexts: Connecting Austin Ballet Theatre, Austin, and the 1970s

### The Dance Boom

Student journalist Carrie Schweitzer, writing about Austin Ballet Theatre in 1973, includes a statistic that serves as an especially apt illustration of the excitement surrounding dance during the 1970s: "In January, *U.S. News and World Report* wrote that dance is the fastest-growing theatrical art in the country, drawing larger crowds than rock concerts."[115] The reference to rock concerts is felicitous in reference to ABT at the Armadillo. Ballet historian Jennifer Homans, writing nearly 40 years later, summarizes with hindsight that the 1970s was a dynamic time for ballet in the United States; it was a period of excitement that, in her opinion, has not been seen since.[116] She goes on to state that there was a perception, during this era known as the "dance boom" that ballet was exciting, relevant to youth culture, and popular.[117] Although Homans focuses more on the influence of New York City Ballet's George Balanchine as the force behind a dynamic American ballet scene, the 1970s saw a confluence of numerous cultural phenomena that energized theatrical dance nationwide.

*Regional ballet*—a vernacular term used to denote ballet outside of New York City—began to flourish as a result of concerted efforts begun during the 1960s. Writing in 1973, dance critic Buckley directly connects local audience interest in Austin Ballet Theatre at the Armadillo with this regional dance boom. Not only have dance audiences during the 1960s multiplied nationally from 1 million to 6 million, she explains, but these new audience populations inverted from 70% New Yorkers to 70% regional.[118] Student journalist Schweitzer emphasizes the same point in *her* 1973 article about ABT: "Less

than twenty years ago, the United States boasted only half-a-dozen dance companies, concentrated in large cities. Today dance is decentralizing with 126 professional troupes for an audience of eight million."[119] These two journalists, writing in the first year or so of Austin Ballet Theatre's performances at the Armadillo, include such statistics to place the ballet company within a larger national trend of thriving regional dance and perhaps to account for some of ABT's great popularity.

Television and popular culture assisted with the spreading of dance practices across the country. Dancer Arletta Howard-Logan recalled how the emergence of more dance in the national media—including programs such as "Dance in America" on the relatively new Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), which began broadcasting in 1970—influenced ballet on the Armadillo stage:

> I remember wanting to do all the cool tricks, and wasn't it the '70s when *Turning Point* came out?* 'Cause George Stallings was still with us and we were always doing crazy lifts. He'd watch KLRN/KRLU [the local PBS station]. This was way before the Internet, and he'd look at stuff and he'd figure out how to do the lifts and he'd go, "Come here!" And we'd practice them when no one was watching, and then when we got good at them we'd do them. We'd practice them when people *are* watching [laughs], and it worked. It ended up in choreography a lot.[120]

Dance in the media also especially benefitted male ballet dancers, as dancer Easley recalled:

> There was that great surgence of men in ballet. You know, with Nureyev still on the scene, and then Baryshnikov, it really became a thing to do, and was far more accepted than it had been probably the year before once you started seeing these big celebrities at Studio 54 and on *The Mike Douglas Show* and Johnny Carson. I mean they became celebrated people in the mainstream. And then, of course, *The Turning Point* came out, which just perpetuated all of that.[121]

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* *The Turning Point* (1977) was a popular movie about ballet in New York City starring Shirley MacLaine, Anne Bancroft, and Mikhail Baryshnikov.

As Easley mentioned, it was during the 1970s that the high-profile defection of Mikhail Baryshnikov from the Soviet Union occurred; Baryshnikov became known for his impressive musculature and high jumps as well as his fathering a child out of wedlock with actress Jessica Lange, and his actions struck twin balletic blows to the United States' Cold War enemy and negative American associations of male ballet dancers linked with effeminacy and homophobia.

Further challenging gender stereotypes of movement practice during these years were football players, such as Lynn Swann, who were publicized on national television taking ballet classes as an optimal training regimen for a professional-level sport perceived as highly masculine.[122] Men began to show renewed virtuosity and pride when dancing in public arenas with the growth of the 1970s disco era, launched into popularity by the movie *Saturday Night Fever*. In addition, as discussed in Chapter V, during this time, experimentation with freedoms of the body through movement in a quest for more "authentic" experiences of life, usually through "loosening up," flourished.[123] Thus, the cultural climate of the 1960s and 1970s in the United States generated spaces for men to dance more freely, and the following statement indicates that the Armadillo World Headquarters was one of those spaces during music concerts: "[The Armadillo is] the only place outside of Harlem where the men dance as well as the women."[124] This context of the 1970s being a time when men could dance with more cultural acceptance, along with the influx of male ballet students from UT-Austin, as discussed earlier, frames the following statement from interviewee Spear: "And the young men, I mean I'm still

kind of just, you know, amazed at the quality of the male dancers that he had here in little old Austin, Texas, because that's what it was at that time, little old Austin, Texas."[125]

In summation, the 1970's dance boom—as expressed in ballet, social dance, and changing cultural relationships with the body—that frames ABT's historical situation may have supported a renewed but complex enthusiasm surrounding human movement.

**Changes in Context**

> It was really sad when it went. You know, it was like a big event in Austin when the Armadillo died. —Suzanne Shelton Buckley, dance critic[126]

When the Armadillo closed on December 31, 1980, Austin Ballet Theatre lost its unique performance home. ABT then had to compete for the same venues as Austin Civic Ballet and, more importantly, to pay for the use of these venues. The change resulted in far fewer performances, substantially increased ticket prices, and a shift in audience behaviors toward more traditional dance audiencing practices. How dancers describe these changes in context illustrate, by contrast, some of the unique aspects of the situation they experienced at the Armadillo.

Transposition to the traditional venues for ballet coincided with a shift in culture at Austin Ballet Theatre, especially among the dancers. Dancer John Logan, at first, reminisced about how a more formal theater was a pleasant change when asked what was different after the Armadillo shows: "Well, we went into Hogg Auditorium, and that is a more formal theater. You know, there's no beer and nachos . . . Cleaner dressing rooms. No smell of beer and stale beer when you went in there."[127] Such a venue aligned with how many ABT dancers embraced the idea of becoming more "professional" during the

early 1980s.[128] Dancer Arletta Howard-Logan described this time as a "changing landscape [in which] people were expecting to be paid more and more every year.[*] They were expecting classier environments to perform in, better rehearsed pieces."[129] Howard-Logan struggled to reconcile a shift toward becoming a more professional-looking company—which may be considered an improvement within some frames of assessment—with something special she felt about the company from the leaner Armadillo years. Although this is a lengthy and unedited excerpt, I find meaning in her determination to articulate a certain something that she wanted to express, as if she needed to invent a new discursive frame to speak about ballet at the Armadillo. She began with noting how the company as a whole changed its objectives for performance:

> You know, they, they weren't, they weren't just hippies that took ballet for grins, you know, although those people, I don't know, those people were good in their own right. Um, I'm trying to, I'm trying to pinpoint something and I can't really pinpoint it . . . I guess, I guess it's just, if you go to the Paramount and you charge $30 a seat there is an expectation of a level of professionalism in the costumes, in the sets, in the lighting, as well as the technique of the dancers and the quality of the choreography, and maybe at the Armadillo you didn't know what to expect and, you know, I, I'm making it sound like it wasn't very good. I thought it was very good. I thought especially some of the pieces were amazing. Some of the works that he did were, were really progressive for their day and some of the dancers he had on that stage were amazing and, you know, could hold their own and did hold their own in regional companies all over the place, so—and a few in some international companies. Um, but I don't know. A formality, maybe that's what I'm trying to say. You know, that hippie, open, relaxed atmosphere became more formal. Maybe that's what I'm trying to say, more formal, more rigid.[130]

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[*] The dancers began to receive a little per-performance pay when the company received a grant to tour small towns in Texas as a Bicentennial feature in 1976. After this, the principal dancers occasionally received some small amounts of per-performance pay, but usually not for Armadillo shows.

Howard-Logan makes connections here among dancers, audiences, and contexts in Austin. This suggests that, as a co-creative process, all of the elements in a ballet performance interrelate in such a way that a shift in place, including its economics, changes everything about the performance as a human site of action, including how the dancers danced.

Dancer Logan, while remembering the more pleasant surroundings of Hogg Auditorium, also had this to say about the change: "In some ways it was better, in some ways it was worse."[131] Audiences behaved more formally, he stated, and standards of performance practice shifted with the need to meet different goals:

> I remember [Hall] talking about . . . "We need to be more professional-looking. We need to up the game here a little bit. It's a nice theater. People are paying more money. It needs to be a more professional show." He felt more of that pressure on getting the piece polished. Getting all the arms right. Getting the lines straight. Getting the spacing right.[132]

Thus, after the AWHQ closed, the company developed ballets over a longer rehearsal period to perform three shows per year (as compared with 10 or more) that were more well-practiced. Whereas ABT's mission at the Armadillo had valued frequent performing experiences as part of a dynamic process, ABT's approach thus began to focus on getting it "right" in accordance with a perceived economic value, which resulted in a shift in the company's relationship with the Austin community.

## Conclusions

In 1977, the University of Texas student yearbook, the *Cactus*, includes the following excerpt in a section chronicling the times for posterity:

> In the 1970s, Austin has developed into a home for dance, full of growth possibilities which have satisfied both artists and patrons. The year 1976-1977 found Austin an especially fertile ground for local dancers and guest artists to perform to an audience whose awareness of and interest in dance multiplies with each performance. Companies stationed in Austin have had many opportunities to perform locally. Austin Ballet Theatre has continued its monthly performances at Armadillo World Headquarters, a unique tradition that fits the phrase "Nowhere but Austin."[133]

Salient in this narrative are several points: dance audiences are booming in Austin, Austin Ballet Theatre is the first dance company mentioned as a part of this upswell, and ballet at the Armadillo supports a uniquely Austin identity. Along similar lines, during our interview, dance critic Buckley had this to say:

> I think Austin in the 1960s and '70s was a very alive and vital place to be . . . it was kind of a humble kind of a town when I came there in 1963—it just was creative. There were a lot of creative initiatives. It's not surprising there was ballet at a rock music venue. I mean, that's just the way Austin was at that time . . . . And, it was quite successful for a time, had a lot of energy.[134]

The context of time and place influences a re-interpreting of history in such a way that stories about Austin Ballet Theatre at the Armadillo World Headquarters also generate stories of Austin during the 1970s. From this perspective, the sentiment of many sources that ballet at a rock club could happen "nowhere but Austin" seems justified: "Nobody thought anything about it, you know. But, that's Austin."[135]

If all dance is local (as dance scholar Judith Hamera asserts) and manifests its uniquely local affordances, then it follows that certainly Austin Ballet Theatre could happen nowhere but Austin.[136] Nonetheless, the story of Austin Ballet Theatre can potentially relate to everywhere and everywhen through the creative connections of historical narratives.

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[2] Joshua Long, *Weird City: Sense of Place and Creative Resistance in Austin, Texas* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 2010), 24.
[3] David C. Humphrey, "Austin, TX (Travis County)," *Handbook of Texas Online,* Texas State Historical Association, accessed March 15, 2016, http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hda03; Joshua Long, *Weird City: Sense of Place and Creative Resistance in Austin, Texas* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 2010), 48-49.
[4] David C. Humphrey, "Austin, TX (Travis County)," *Handbook of Texas Online,* Texas State Historical Association, accessed March 15, 2016, http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hda03.
[5] Vivian Elizabeth Smyrl, "Permanent University Fund," *Handbook of Texas Online,* Texas State Historical Association, accessed March 15, 2016, http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/khp02.
[6] David C. Humphrey, "Austin, TX (Travis County)," *Handbook of Texas Online,* Texas State Historical Association, accessed March 15, 2016, http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hda03.
[7] Joshua Long, *Weird City: Sense of Place and Creative Resistance in Austin, Texas* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 2010), 24.
[8] "Austin: The 70s," Historical Highlights of the Capital City of Texas (Number 12), City of Austin Public Information Department, Austin Files Collection, Austin History Center archives, folder AF A8275.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Quoted in Michael Barnes, "Austin in the 1970s set stage for Austin in 2010s," *Austin American-Statesman,* April 10, 2016, D6.
[11] Joshua Long, *Weird City: Sense of Place and Creative Resistance in Austin, Texas* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 2010), 25.
[12] Henry Statten, "Armadillo World Headquarters," *Texas Observer,* February 12, 1971, 18-19.
[13] Arletta Howard-Logan, interview by author, Austin, TX, January 22, 2014.
[14] Mark Loeffler, phone interview by author, February 16, 2015.
[15] Jim Franklin, interview by author, Austin, TX, November 21, 2014.
[16] James Thomson, "Feelin' Good in Austin," *New Republic*, July 17, 1976, 11.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Leea Mechling, interview by author, Austin, TX, July 30, 2014.
[19] Suzanne Shelton [Buckley], "Armadillos in Toe Shoes," *Texas Monthly*, October 1973, accessed February 28, 2012, http://www.texasmonthly.com/cms/printthis.php?file=performance.php&issue=1973-10-01.
[20] Ken Owen, interview by author, Austin, TX, March 21, 2014
[21] Helen Spear, interview by author, Austin, TX, January 16, 2015.

[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Suzanne Shelton Buckley, Skype interview by author, January 25, 2014.
[25] Jeanne Claire van Ryzin, "Meet the woman who brought 'Nutcracker' to Austin." *American-Statesman Statesman,* December 7, 2012, accessed February 25, 2015, http://www.statesman.com/news/entertainment/ arts-theater/meet-the-woman-who-brought-nutcracker-to-austin/nTNgH/.
[26] Dick Holland, "Roger Shattuck in Austin." *Texas Observer,* January 26, 2006, accessed November 25, 2015, https://www.texasobserver.org/2130-roger-shattuck-in-austin/.
[27] Nancy Kaufman, "Armadillo farewell: Ballet Theatre will miss friendly stage," *Austin American-Statesman,* Austin History Center archive, AR.1999.008, box 4, folder 1.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Suzanne Shelton Buckley, Skype interview by author, January 25, 2014.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Leea Mechling, interview by author, Austin, TX, July 30, 2014.
[34] Suzanne Shelton Buckley, Skype interview by author, January 25, 2014.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Eddie Wilson, interview by author, Austin, TX, August 30, 2014.
[37] Kate Bergquist, interview by author, Austin, TX, January 9, 2015.
[38] Ken Owen, interview by author, Austin, TX, March 21, 2014
[39] Kate Bergquist, interview by author, Austin, TX, January 9, 2015; Helen Spear, interview by author, Austin, TX, January 16, 2015.
[40] Kate Bergquist, interview by author, Austin, TX, January 9, 2015.
[41] Suzanne Shelton [Buckley], "Armadillos in Toe Shoes," *Texas Monthly*, October 1973, accessed February 28, 2012, http://www.texasmonthly.com/cms/printthis.php?file= performance.php&issue=1973-10-01.
[42] Helen Spear, interview by author, Austin, TX, January 16, 2015.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Greg Easley, interview by author, Austin, TX, February 17, 2012.
[46] Suzanne Shelton [Buckley], "Armadillos in Toe Shoes," *Texas Monthly*, October 1973, accessed February 28, 2012, http://www.texasmonthly.com/cms/printthis.php?file= performance.php&issue=1973-10-01.
[47] Ken Owen, interview by author, Austin, TX, March 21, 2014
[48] Sharon Hood, "Ballet companies contrast classical, modern dance," *The Daily Texan,* August 6, 1976, 2C.
[49] Greg Easley, interview by author, Austin, TX, October 14, 2014.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ken Owen, interview by author, Austin, TX, March 21, 2014; Kate Warren, interview by author, Austin, TX, January 15, 2015.

[52] Melissa Toomin, "Music and Dance Celebration." *Austin-American Statesman,* Show World, October 2, 1978, 10; Greg Easley, interview by author, Austin, TX, October 14, 2014.
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[56] Kate Warren, interview by author, Austin, TX, January 15, 2015.
[57] Austin Ballet Theatre Records (AR 1999-008), Austin History Center archives, AR.1999.008, box 4, folder 18.
[58] JuanAnn Tai, "Identities and dance competition: Re/discovering the force from within," *Research in Dance Education* 15, no. 3 (September 2014): 303-315.
[59] Ibid.
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[61] Ibid, 103-104.
[62] Ibid, 107.
[63] Ibid,103.
[64] Lucia Uhl, interview by author, Austin, TX, October 16, 2014.
[65] Helen Spear, interview by author, Austin, TX, January 16, 2015.
[66] Terry Lynn Wright, interview by author, Austin, TX, June 27, 2014.
[67] Ken Owen, interview by author, Austin, TX, March 21, 2014
[68] Greg Easley, interview by author, Austin, TX, October 14, 2014.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid.
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[73] Sondra Lomax, "Hall brings global perspective to Ballet Austin work," *Austin-American Statesman*, March 20, 1991, E11.
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[76] Leea Mechling, interview by author, Austin, TX, July 30, 2014.
[77] Ibid.
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# CHAPTER VIII

# CONCLUSIONS

This dissertation investigates the history of Austin Ballet Theatre (ABT) at the Armadillo World Headquarters (AWHQ) in Austin, Texas, using qualitative research methods. Oral history interviews with people who were there and who participated in a variety of ways provide multiple perspectives. In addition, programs, newspaper articles, photographs, and broadsides—some of which were professionally archived and some that have been stored in personal collections—document much of the discussion and visual culture surrounding these events. When assembled together, these data sources create a historiography of a place and time that still capture the imagination. Although the phenomenon of ballet at the Armadillo cannot be replicated, how people did things with dance in this situation, to paraphrase dance scholar Rebekah Kowal, opens lines of inquiry for new conversations about how dance functions within people's lives, communities, and wider contexts, including historical narratives.[1]

## What Participants Identified as the Most Important Things to Know

Themes from the data analysis interplay throughout the chapters. Chapters IV and V, moreover, reflect the two most prevalent things participants identified as what they would like readers to know about Austin Ballet Theatre: 1) how the dancers learned to perform by performing frequently, and 2) how ABT built new audiences for ballet. These

chapters address one of the primary research questions of this dissertation: What connections and meanings do sources associate with ABT's Armadillo performances?

Chapter IV: Dancers and Performing covers how the dancers valued their monthly performances in front of large, enthusiastic crowds and what they felt they learned as a result. The ABT dancers, most of whom were adolescents, were highly motivated to learn both ballet technique and choreography as a result of being onstage in front of 1000 or more loyal, cheering audience members every four weeks. By connecting these stories with dance education scholarship, the dancers often experienced motivated learning as both hard work and fun; the unpacking of what constitutes "fun" leads to aspects of learner engagement and the methods that promote them. A disconnect seems to occur in the process of learning dance during adolescence, however, when opportunities for teenagers to perform may decrease below a personal threshold of motivation to maintain the rigors of continual training over time. This is especially true when performing the same ballet exercises that have been part of their regimen since childhood. The ABT dancers and those who observed their progress in ballet offer insights from their oral histories that illustrate these ideas.

Specifically, the dancers' perceptions point toward underexplored issues regarding how performance may function within a curriculum and as a learning environment in itself. Thus, Chapter IV has significant implications for dance pedagogy and for education in general. Dance performance in ballet and other Western theatrical forms is traditionally composed of interrelated experiences involving studio classes, rehearsals, and stage performances. A pedagogy of performance reveals those

relationships to involve a cyclical process through which dancers engage as motivated learners. The ABT dancers serve as an example of the "learn by doing" educational approach in action. The dancers repeatedly circulated their dance training through performances for very supportive audiences. Given these insights from the past, how might performance function effectively within a current-day dance curriculum?

Chapter V: Audiences presents a second theme that was identified by the participants as being most important to know about Austin Ballet Theatre: fostering new audiences for dance by bringing ballet to the people. Such a conversation addresses the cultural issues that surround who attends ballet performances, why, and how they do so. This kind of investigation is surprisingly rare in scholarly ballet discourse that addresses performance, which tends to focus on the action onstage. The discussion that does exist often focuses on marketing and the continuing conundrum of how to increase audience size. However, a more sociocultural approach that includes performance studies asks what ballet performances *do*, what needs they fulfill, and how they function.

This socio-cultural approach may well create new connections with communities that ultimately result in increasing attendance at ballet concerts, as was the case with ABT. Although ABT's methods of bringing ballet to the people operated within the context of the 1970s, the group's endeavors have resonance today for dance companies looking for different ways to operate in their communities. Perhaps, just as dancers need the motivation of "fun" from time to time to invest in a long-term commitment to dance, so do audiences. How do audience members have fun? Moreover, when do they feel free *not* to like a dance in such a way that they would want to return for the next concert?

Yet, despite Austin Ballet Theatre's success with audience building, the company did not survive long after the demise of the Armadillo and Stanley Hall's retirement. New questions arise as a result. Was ABT's situated practice too situated to survive the loss of the Armadillo World Headquarters? How did its identity as "the common man's ballet company" generate benefits and challenges, especially towards ABT's long-term survival? In addition, how do we assess when dance companies and their communities are engaging with each other successfully?

**Making Connections and Theorizing**

To further such discussion of sociocultural situations and dance, Chapter VI: Cultural Contact Highs presents theorizing related to a prevalent high culture/low culture binary and how this paradigm affects historical narratives of Austin Ballet Theatre at the Armadillo. The relationship between the ballet and the music club/beer hall truly lies at the heart of this inquiry. Without a doubt, a project that addressed the history of Austin Ballet Theatre—even if the company had *not* performed at the Armadillo—would be interesting for its own reasons. However, such an inquiry would have different themes and implications. With ABT perceived as being representative of high culture and the Armadillo World Headquarters perceived as being representative of low culture, the stories surrounding their successful collaboration express a sense of transgressing sociocultural schema. Such a narration foregrounds how people continue to make sense of these events through the lens of a persistent high/low binary that divides—by social class—activities, behavior during these activities, and even emotional responses to these activities. Yet, the coming together of "the ballet people" and "the Armadillo people"

opened spaces for differences in activities, behaviors, and emotional responses that enlivened both groups. In many ways, the experiment of ballet at the AWHQ enacted the ideals of freedom and equality that arose in the United States during the 1960s and that were taking hold during the 1970s. At the same time, a high/low cultural divide was necessary to frame ABT's identity, practices, and aesthetics *as* an enactment of freedom.

Throughout the narratives, the contradictions of the situation as defined by the high/low binary often emerge as humor. The incongruity theory of humor has been debated from the time of Aristotle and has recently reemerged as a leading theory in philosophy and psychology.[2] In the theory's current discourse, humor is viewed as one of many possible subjective responses to incongruity (which is defined as the "violation of our mental patterns and expectations") *if* a person *enjoys* perceiving a state of incongruity.[3] For those who enjoy contemplating ballet at the Armadillo, the humor of the situation is interwoven throughout the narratives.

The high/low cultural binary persists in such a way that its operations affect many areas that remain unexamined. As the scholars whose work I reference in this chapter elucidate, this paradigm is now so deeply embedded in institutions of power that the awareness brought about by transgressive practices, such as those of ABT, may be vital to the avoidance of harmful or even cataclysmic outcomes. This chapter, again, promotes asking the question of function: How might ballet be useful, and to whom?

Chapter VII: Context addresses the research questions of this dissertation related to the environments in which these activities occurred and the connections generated by ABT as a situation of activity. Although such connections are infinite, Chapter VII

focuses on those identified by the data sources in this research, such as the relationships between a city and its university, being in a competitive situation with another ballet company, civic economics and politics, and national sociocultural trends. These sources express how context influences and becomes part of historical narratives. The philosophical framework of this dissertation establishes that elements in this context did not *cause* this history but rather are iterated *with* and *as* its history. As such, these elements may also iterate in connection and relationship to other times and places that prove useful to the research of other scholars. For example, the 1970s has the reputation of being a great decade for dance in the United States. However, copious scholarship exists bemoaning how awful the 1970s were politically, economically, and culturally. I move forward from this study wondering about the relationships between these two narratives. How might changing bodily praxes have helped to negotiate other cultural factors of the times and vice versa?

I am also intrigued by questions of gender identity that did not necessarily serve this study's purpose of creating a history but might prove valuable in future scholarship. Chapter VI cites music scholar Jason Mellard's ideas about how the Armadillo provided a home for new iterations of Texan masculinity that mixed cowboy culture and counterculture. Chapter VII connects the '70s dance boom and a newfound popularity for men in dance with the unprecedented large numbers of male dancers in ABT. Putting all of these ideas together: How might the club's affordances for performing a Texan-masculine identity when desired, such as drinking Lone Star Beer and wearing blue jeans, have mediated cultural prejudices against men participating in ballet practices, either as

audience member or dancer? And, as touched upon in Chapter VII, how might the resurgence of men dancing in the U. S. during the 1970s relate to the women's liberation movement?

Context may have been so much a part of the data because of the nature of the methodology that I used. Very little data about the ballets themselves, such as their choreographies, were generated through my research questions and oral history interviewing methods. However, this approach did generate abundant connections and meaning-making from the research participants. Perspectives from a diversity of data sources in this study offer contributions toward a more intersubjective, multivocal, and nuanced portrait of the past. To illustrate, the interviewees and texts often emphasize the many people in addition to the dancers who were part of the ABT endeavor. From this research, I have gained an even greater appreciation of how volunteers and families have significant roles in dance performance. The next step, for me, is integrating Judith Hamera's scholarship addressing how the discursive matrix of dance technique organizes bodies and relationships.[4] How does dance constellate a community such as a dance company with its families, staff, and volunteers? How does it affect segments of a city's population?

And, how does dance continue to do so through the synchronizing processes of memory and experience? Throughout my research process I have been witness to many stories of reconnection. One such story concerns when one of the featured ballerinas of ABT was low in funds later in life. Eddie Wilson reconnected with her by chance and invited her to join his free "breakfast club" whenever she liked at his current restaurant,

Threadgill's, just to make sure she had a meal when she needed one.[5] In another, Kate Bergquist went to a new massage therapist at her fitness club and said, "I believe I know you." It was dancer Greg Easley.[6] However, I was perhaps most astonished when interviewing Jone Bergquist Hallmark during a visit to her mother in Austin. We discovered during conversation afterwards that my family owns a condominium in Santa Fe, NM, *next door* to a condo the Bergquists own. We have been neighbors for several decades without knowing it. Incidences of synchronicity have also added sparks of attention and humor throughout the research. One of the most unexpected was that of researching the conjoined twins Daisy and Violet Hilton as a result of interviewing Eve Larson about her favorite ABT role, that of a conjoined twin, inspired by the Hilton sisters. The day after investigating their history, the national news featured a revival of *Side Show*, a musical about the Hilton sisters, opening on Broadway. Such connections of worlds create and re-create meaning differently as a result of dance and inquiry.

**Only in Austin**

The concluding section of Chapter VII presents several examples of data sources that link ABT at the Armadillo with a lifestyle/identity of Austin itself. Suffused throughout the data are pithy, reflective comments, such as, "Where else [but Austin],"[7] "Nowhere but Austin,"[8] and "[T]hat's Austin."[9]

Such remarks demonstrate how historical narratives about ABT include the ongoing recalibration of a community identity. Today—perhaps more than ever—Austin, Texas, prides itself on its mix of conservatives and liberals, its music industry, and its "weirdness." The legacy of the Armadillo World Headquarters as a semi-disreputable

music club and beer hall lives on as the progenitor of this identity. Even visitors who arrive at the Austin airport pass by large reproductions of AWHQ music posters on their way to baggage claim. This presence resonates with Mellard's characterization of the club as "the central representation of the 1970s Austin scene."[10] As recently as April, 2016, Austin's daily newspaper, *The Austin American-Statesman*, further echoed this iconography when it ran a feature article by Michael Barnes entitled "Austin in the 1970s set stage for Austin in 2010s":

> Many of our respondents use three words to sum up the strange melding of cultures in the 1970s: "Armadillo World Headquarters." The odd, half-outdoor, extremely eclectic venue tucked behind other buildings at South First Street and Barton Springs Road seemed to embody the possibility of cultural disruption.[11]

It is my belief that Austin Ballet Theatre's performances represent the epitome of this statement. Armadillo founder Eddie Wilson suggested such a view, when, during his interview with me, he identified the ABT shows as *the* act that most fulfilled the AWHQ's "cultural arts laboratory" mission; these shows were foremost in his mind as an example of what made the Armadillo so inclusive and eclectic.[12]

The result is a public legacy that Luci Johnson, the daughter of U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson, reflects on the Austin of the 1970s in Barnes' article: "Art was no longer the subject for the wealthy and elite…We all were discovering its magic…It surely was the time when Austin decided to embrace art and artists in all of their diversity."[13] Thus, the historical narratives being shared today about the Austin of the past directly reflect cultural transgressions that ABT spearheaded, despite the later disappearance of the ballet from those narratives. In a city that embraces its art as well as

its eclecticism, why has the Armadillo World Headquarters been elevated to mythic status in Austin's public identity and history, while what may have been its most eclectic feature—the ballet—been all but forgotten? Such a question challenges any complacency in the creation of histories and identities. How much does disciplinary isolationism affect the narrative? What about cultural values and economic industries? How does what Peter Swirski calls "the politics of memory" affect who gets remembered and who does not?[14] It may be that, without the economic stability provided by the ballet and its ability to generate large, regular crowds, the AWHQ would not have survived as long as it did. Therefore, in certain respects, the music industry of Austin may owe its existence in its current form to an amateur ballet company that folded 30 years ago.

## Historical Evaluation

> One of the things I remember Stanley Hall saying that really struck me was that you're always going to be able to find a dancer who can do more pirouettes than you can, who can jump a little higher, whose leg is a little higher, and he said it really doesn't matter. Your job is to find out how to be the best dancer you can be for yourself and your own gift, so find the dancer inside and give that expression and don't worry about everybody else. —Lucia Uhl, dancer and photographer[15]

This quote from Lucia Uhl relates well to ballet at the Armadillo. The purpose and methodology of this dissertation do not lead to asking if Austin Ballet Theatre was "good" or "bad" in terms of evaluating technique or choreography against some external standard to justify its importance as a subject of historical inquiry. If such a question were to be investigated, then the tricky problem would arise of whose standards to use. In the historical narratives, although data sources present mixed impressions of some "good" performances and some "bad" ones, a thread runs throughout that the performers always

attempted to present a high quality of ballet performance and choreography, as they understood it, to the best of their abilities. This testimony from dancer Arletta Howard-Logan illustrates:

> I'm making it sound like it wasn't very good. I thought it was very good. I thought especially some of the pieces were amazing. Some of the works that [Hall] did were, were really progressive for their day, and some of the dancers he had on that stage were amazing.[16]

To be sure, the positivist critical assessment of technique and choreography can be an effective way of bringing attention to dance artists, and doing so serves complex functions within the field. However, for the purposes of this dissertation, I join performance and cultural studies scholars in affirming that it is not the only way. From a functional point of view, I believe that this study is most useful for exploring what the ballet did in its time through the lens of what the generation of its history does now. Consider dancer Greg Easley's comment:

> It was the best example I have ever witnessed, and been part of, at making dance accessible to everybody, even those unwilling souls who didn't know what they were walking into. . . . *When you just speak on that level about it*, it was just brilliant, brilliant. [emphasis added][17]

The actions of the ballet at the AWHQ were, and continue to be, brilliantly operative.

Rather than determining the company's place in history, I am more interested in the direction of inquiry expressed by one of this dissertation's guiding philosophers, Brian Massumi: "The question is: what new thoughts does this nexus of productively experienced relation make it possible to think?"[18] If Austin Ballet Theatre is evaluated as such a nexus, then it continues to excel in its generation of new thoughts and actions.

## New Directions in Historiography

Finally, the theoretical framework of this historical inquiry guided me toward writing the piece of historiographic metafiction found in the appendix, "A Typical Day for Austin Ballet Theatre at the Armadillo World Headquarters." In doing so, I extend one of the research questions of this dissertation: How do these stories create a unique image of the ballet world in Austin, Texas, which could only be experienced in this place and at this time? By proposing such an alternative way of representing history, my hope is that this work of fiction makes the data feel alive and sparks individual reader engagement with the subject. What I particularly appreciate after having created this work of historiographic metafiction is how the unknown haunts the narrative through the story's disruptions. That sense of mystery also invites voices and interpretations from the past, present, and future to enter into a historical conversation as a changing and change-making enterprise.

It is my hope that this historical inquiry into Austin Ballet Theatre at the Armadillo World Headquarters inspires further research into local iterations of all kinds of dance by, to paraphrase a maxim of qualitative research, making the familiar, weird, and the weird, familiar.

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# APPENDIX A

## Oral History Narrators

Bergquist, Jone: See Hallmark, Jone Bergquist.

Bergquist, Kate: Visual artist for Austin Ballet Theatre. Created original artwork for numerous programs and handbills, many of which were hand calligraphed as well. Mother of featured ballerina Jone Bergquist Hallmark. Interviewed at her Austin home, January 9, 2015.

Buckley, Suzanne Shelton: Dance Ph.D. scholar who wrote numerous reviews of Austin Ballet Theatre at the Armadillo World Headquarters under her maiden name, Suzanne Shelton. Also took ballet with Stanley Hall. Moved to India in 1986. Interviewed via Skype between Austin and India, January 25, 2014.

Easley, Greg: Dancer with Austin Ballet Theatre. Went on to a professional performing career with the Atlanta Ballet. Teaches ballet in Austin. Considered Stanley Hall like a father/grandfather and inherited his estate. Interviewed at his Austin home October 14, 2014. Also interviewed for pilot research project February 3, 17, March 23, and 30, 2012.

Franklin, Jim: Resident artist at the Armadillo World Headquarters and originator of the armadillo as AWHQ's hippie symbol. Interviewed at the South Austin Museum of Popular Culture, November 21, 2014.

Hallmark, Jone Bergquist: Featured ballerina with Austin Ballet Theatre. Began performing at an early age. Received Claudia Rutt Memorial Scholarship (dance major killed in Charles Whitman UT tower shootings of 1966) to study ballet in Germany. Danced professionally with the ballet in Basel, Switzerland. Daughter of Kate Bergquist. Interviewed in her mother's Austin home, February 18, 2014.

Hendrix, Betty: Interviewed as an audience member with no direct affiliation to either Austin Ballet Theatre or the Armadillo. Hendrix had six children and brought most of them monthly to see ABT. Her oldest daughter was good friends with Jone Bergquist Hallmark from Austin High School. Interviewed in her home, September 22, 2014.

Howard-Logan, Arletta: Dancer with Austin Ballet Theatre. Began studies as a child in the early years of the company. Directed a company and school with husband John Logan after ABT folded. Currently teaches ballet in Austin. Interviewed in her Austin home, January 22, 2014.

Larson, Eve and Dave: Married couple and dancers with Austin Ballet Theatre. Sons Kenny and Greg also danced with the company at the Armadillo and went on to professional performing careers. Eve Larson taught and directed ballet education for many years in Austin. Interviewed in their Austin home, February 5 and 12, 2014.

Loeffler, Mark: Lighting designer for Austin Ballet Theatre. Learned the craft at the Armadillo and began studying lighting design at UT. Lighting design for theater turned into a career. Currently directs a sustainable lighting design company in New England. Interviewed over the phone, February 16, 2015.

Logan, John: Dancer with Austin Ballet Theatre. Began ballet studies with Stanley Hall at UT. Directed a company and school with wife Arletta Howard-Logan after ABT folded. Interviewed in his Austin home, January 26, 2014.

Mechling, Leea: Staff member and bartender at the Armadillo World Headquarters. Currently manager of the South Austin Museum of Popular Culture. Interviewed at her Austin office, July 30, 2014.

Owen, Ken: Dancer with Austin Ballet Theatre. Left for a professional performing career in Germany. Teaches Pilates in Austin. Interviewed in the author's home, May 4, 2014.

Shelton, Suzanne: See Buckley, Suzanne Shelton.

Spear, Helen: Mother of two daughters who danced with Austin Ballet Theatre. Connected with the university community and the ACLU. Interviewed in her Austin home January 16, 2015.

Thompson-Price, Judy: Dancer and assistant director of Austin Ballet Theatre—Stanley's "right-hand man." Known for remarkable talent for remembering choreography. Teaches and directs dance at Southwestern University near Austin. Interviewed in her Austin home May 4, 2014.

Uhl, Lucia: Dancer with Austin Ballet Theatre. Also a dance photographer and administrative worker for the company. Interviewed October 16, 2014 in her Austin home.

Warren, Kate: A modern dancer who was also a student of Stanley Hall's. Attended several shows at the Armadillo World Headquarters. Later directed the Austin Ballet Theatre School. Interviewed in her Austin home, January 15, 2015.

Wilson, Eddie: One of the founders of Armadillo World Headquarters and also its early manager. Current manager of Threadgill's restaurants, one of which houses an

Armadillo World Headquarters collection and is across the street from the Armadillo's former location. Interviewed at his Austin home, August 30, 2014.

Wright, Terri Lynn: Early featured ballerina with Austin Ballet Theatre. Danced with ABT during her teenage years, then went on to a professional performing career in Germany and with North Carolina Dance Theatre. Teaches ballet in Austin. Interviewed in the author's home, June 27, 2014.

# APPENDIX B

## Photographs

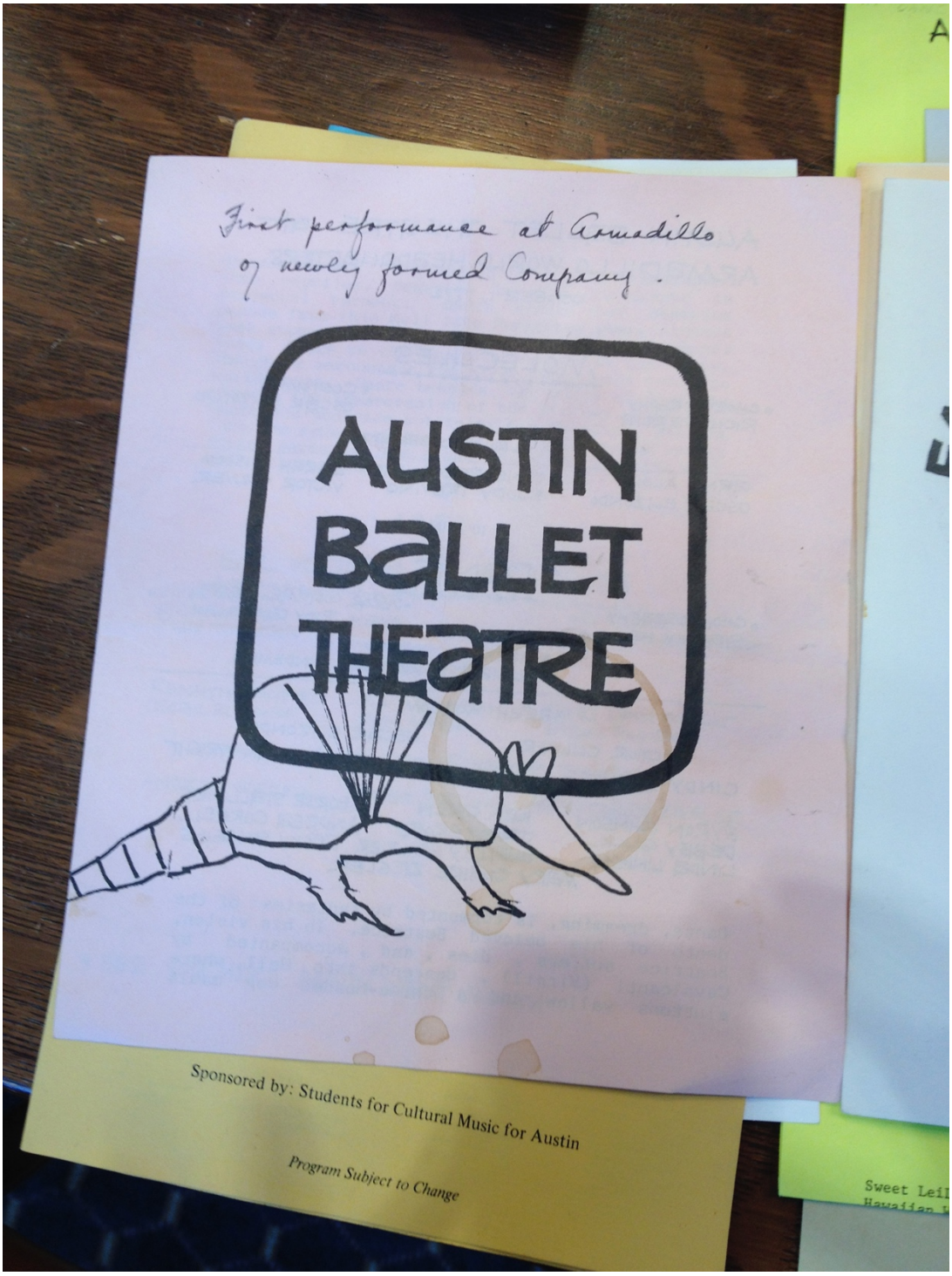


*Figure 1*: Program, Austin Ballet Theatre, October 1, 1972, Armadillo World Headquarters, Austin History Center, Austin, archive file DO200, box 7. Photo taken by the author.

# Austin Ballet's "Hornsby Bend Legend"

By LOIS HALE GALVIN
Women's Staff

The Austin Ballet Society will score again with a premiere, when it presents another original ballet—"The Legend of Hornsby Bend"—by its artistic director, Barbara Carson.

Not only is the ballet an original choreography, it is also one which should appeal to both the veteran balletomane and the audience who thrills to the exciting tales of early pioneers and savage Indians, for Miss Carson has translated the rugged drama of the one into the classical form of other.

The legend on which the ballet is based has long been a familiar one, and stems from our own locale during the early 1830's, when Texas was still a province of Mexico—and, Indians a real danger.

The central plot has to do with Sarah and Reuben Hornsby, Texas settlers, and the scalping by Indians of a young United States Cavalry officer, Josiah Wilbarger—all actual Texas pioneers, whose descendants still live in or near Austin.

The time and mood are set in the prologue, which will contain many people portraying the populace characteristic of this era of Texas history: a Mexican general, a Spanish padre, the military governor of the area, very savage Apache Indians, typical pioneer settlers and their children, scouts and trappers. Wilbarger will be in the uniform of the Federal regiment in which he was a colonel.

Complementing the time and mood with authenticity will be the pioneer inspired stage settings and costumes designed by Mrs. Fagan Dickson.

Music will be excerpts from Aaron Copland's "Music for the Theater" and "Bad Pony Suite."

The pictures on this page, depicting this early Texas period and locale were taken on the farm of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Gentry at Garfield Community—not too distant from the actual scenes of these chronicled events—and, contemporary in time, for their land was actually settled by pioneers.

The "Legend" scene begins at the Hornsby cabin, which is located in Central Texas at a bend in the Colorado River. Just southeast of their cabin is the El Camino Real, the road leading from Mexico City to the missions of East Texas—and, along which passed all manner of men.

The Hornsby cabin is a stopping off place for the men who come to Texas in search of headrights—and the Hornsbys' nearest neighbor is Wilbarger, who had come to Hornsby Bend to lead a party of men in search of new land.

While on a scouting party Wilbarger and two of the men are wounded and scalped when attacked by Indians. The two surviving members return to Hornsby Bend with the tragic news of the massacre.

However, Wilbarger is not dead even though scalped. He sees his sister in a vision, urging him to hold out through the night and that help will come. At the Hornsby cabin, after Sarah Hornsby is twice visited by the same vision, she is able to persuade her husband and some men to Wilbarger's rescue.

The Thursday night performance, which will be in the Municipal Auditorium, will include some "plus attractions."

Another original ballet, "Bush Party," the Allegro Ballet from Wichita Falls, Gaylord Ballet and a showing of New York Capezio Company's collection of authentic copies of lavish costumes from his Broadway musicals. These will be modeled by Austin women at 7:30 p.m.

Ballet curtain time is 8:15 p.m. All seats are reserved. Tickets are $3.50, $2.50, $1.50 and $1.00, and are available at Dillards, Kara-Vel on Congress, and the UT Hogg Auditorium Box Office; or by mail to Box 420, Austin, Texas.

They may be obtained at the Municipal Auditorium on Wednesday from noon to 6 p.m., and on Thursday from 10 a.m. to 8:15 p.m.

Pioneer-inspired costumes, old log cabin capture atmosphere of early Texas in this photo of some members of the cast for the Austin Ballet Society's "Legend of Hornsby Bend." From left, they are Ross McDaniel, Margaret Dolgener, Ann Galloway, Elizabeth Guinn, Janice Amelna and Art Hore.

Photographs by American-Statesman/Bernard Cleary

Am. St.
Austin, Texas Sunday, February 14, 1965

Tyra Menzies, portraying the "vision" in the "Legend," poses in costume for Mrs Fagan Dickson, center, designer of the costumes, and Mrs. John A. DeBois, Ballet Society president.

Miss Exa Hornsby, left, and sister, Mrs. Tom Kluge, great-granddaughters of Rueben Hornsby, and Barbara Carson, Ballet Society's artistic director, ponder over land where Indians once roamed free.

*Figure 2*: Lois Hale Galvin, "Austin Ballet's 'Hornsby Bend Legend'," *Austin American-Statesman,* February 14, 1965, F1. Photos: Bernard Cleary. Austin History Center, Austin, archive file DO200, box 7. Photo taken by the author.

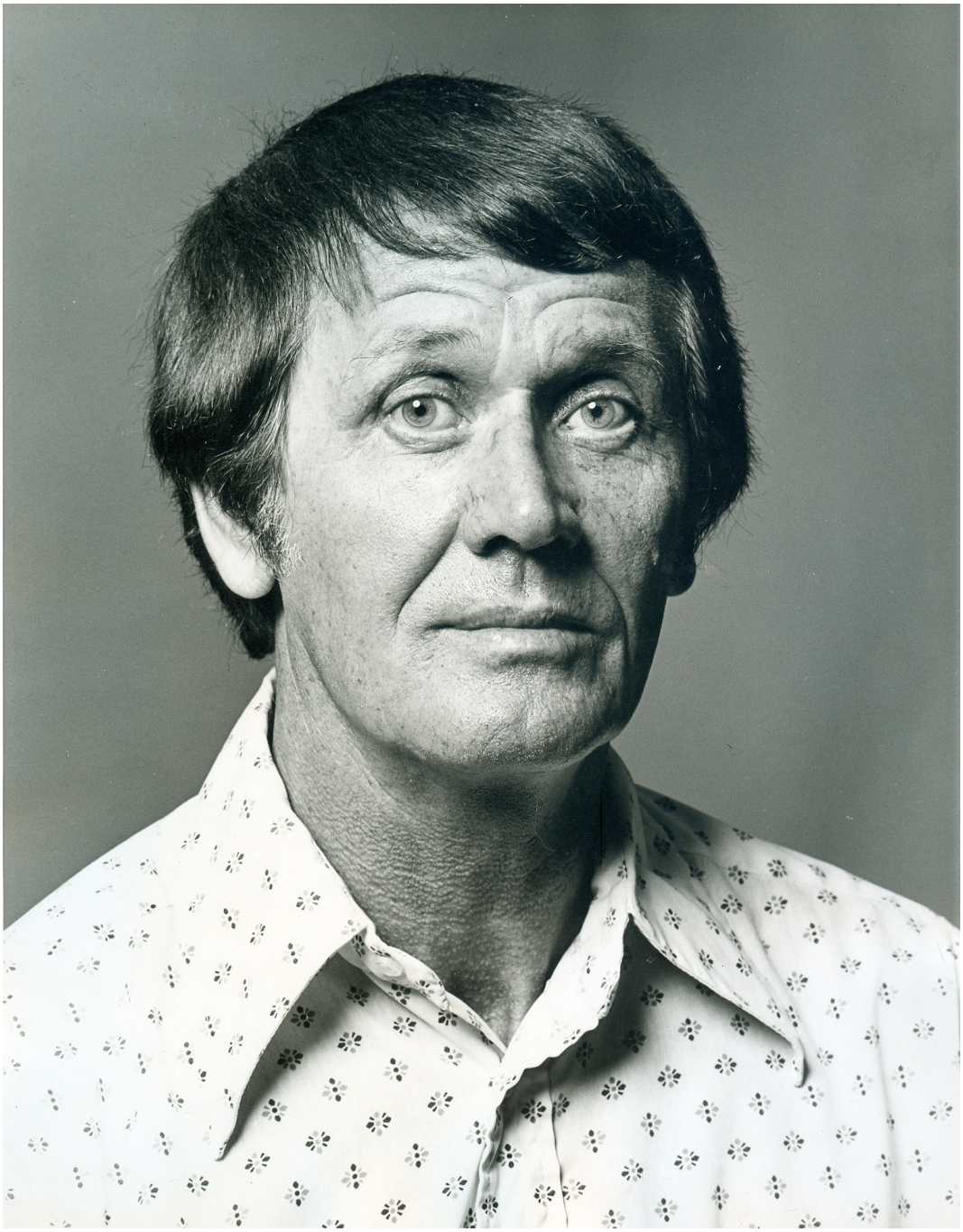

*Figure 3*: Stanley Hall. Photo: Bill Records, Austin. From the private collection of Greg Easley. Used with permission.

*Figure 4*: Armadillo World Headquarters, "Armadillo World Headquarters," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armadillo_World_Headquarters, accessed April 12, 2011. Photo: Jim Richardson. Used with permission from Eddie Wilson.

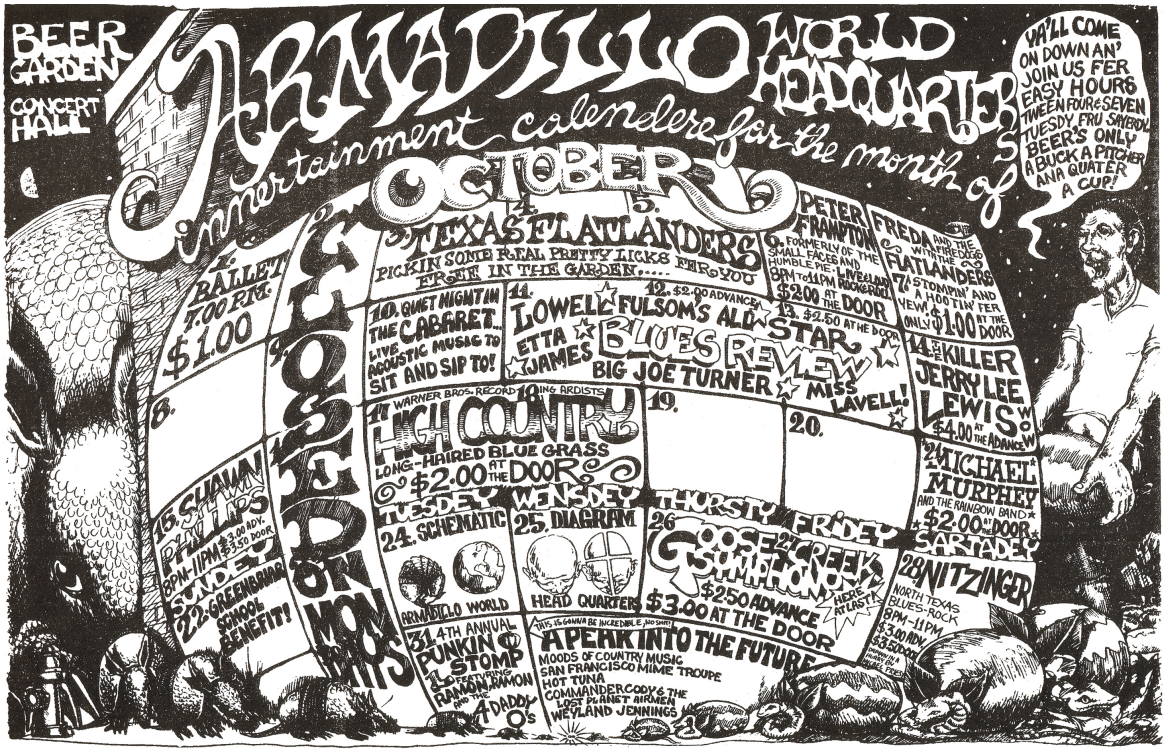


*Figure 5*: Michael Priest, "Armadillo Monthly Calendar," *The Rag*, advertisement, Austin, October 9, 1972. The ballet is listed on October 1. Used with permission from Eddie Wilson.

*Figure 6*: "Aurora's Wedding," *Sleeping Beauty*, choreography Stanley Hall, Austin Ballet Theatre, Armadillo World Headquarters, Austin, TX, photo: Bill Records. From the private collection of Greg Easley. Used with permission.

*Figure 7*: *Snowflakes Are Dancing*, choreography Stanley Hall, Austin Ballet Theatre, Armadillo World Headquarters, Austin, TX. From the personal collection of Greg Easley. Used with persmission.

*Figure 8*: *Flickers*, choreography Stanley Hall, Austin Ballet Theatre, Armadillo World Headquarters, Austin, TX. From the personal collection of Greg Easley. Used with permission.


*Figure 9:* Program, Austin Ballet Theatre, December 7, 1980, Armadillo World Headquarters, Austin History Center, Austin, archive file DO200, box 7. Photo taken by the author.


*Figure 10:* Historical marker, Armadillo World Headquarters, Austin, TX. Photo taken by the author.

APPENDIX

IRB Acceptance Letter

TWU
EXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY
DENTON DALLAS HOUSTON

**Institutional Review Board**
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
P.O. Box 425619, Denton, TX 76204-5619
940-898-3378 FAX 940-898-4416
e-mail: IRB@twu.edu

August 8, 2013

Ms. Caroline Sutton Clark
12541 Sir Christopher's Cove
Austin, TX 78729

Dear Ms. Clark:

*Re: A History of the Austin Ballet Theatre at the Armadillo World Headquarters (Protocol #: 17410)*

The above referenced study has been reviewed by the TWU Institutional Review Board (IRB) and appears to meet our requirements for the protection of individuals' rights.

If applicable, agency approval letters must be submitted to the IRB upon receipt PRIOR to any data collection at that agency. A copy of the approved consent form with the IRB approval stamp is enclosed. Please use the consent form with the most recent approval date stamp when obtaining consent from your participants. A copy of the signed consent forms must be submitted with the request to close the study file at the completion of the study.

This approval is valid one year from August 8, 2013. Any modifications to this study must be submitted for review to the IRB using the Modification Request Form. Additionally, the IRB must be notified immediately of any unanticipated incidents. If you have any questions, please contact the TWU IRB.

Sincerely,

Rhonda R Buckley

Dr. Rhonda Buckley, Chair
Institutional Review Board - Denton

cc. Mary Williford-Shade, Department of Dance
Dr. Linda Caldwell, Department of Dance
Graduate School

APPENDIX D

"A Typical Day for Austin Ballet Theatre at the Armadillo World Headquarters"

Mark Loeffler, a teenager and recent high school graduate, opens the door to the infamous Armadillo World Headquarters music hall early on a Sunday morning. The cavernous space yawns with last night's rock and roll concert put to bed just a few hours before. Mark meets his friend Cappy, another teenager about a year younger, to help him hang lighting instruments for the ballet concert tonight; Mark doesn't really know anything about lighting, but he helps Cappy out every show.[1] The two teens prop the doors open to let in some fresh air, air the place out.[2] "It's fine as long as the weather isn't too terrible, 'cause we open it up and let the place breathe all day long. Yeah, so that helps get the beer stench out."[3] Two men from the Armadillo staff, cleaning up from Saturday night, greet them with a "hello." These guys always assist with the production tech, and they're "good and professional" at their jobs even if tired from working past midnight.[4] Rob and "whatever this other guy's name" is, they clearly have some training and experience with tech equipment, and Mark really likes working with them.[5, *]

Lucia Uhl wakes up on Sunday morning and has "an enormous breakfast" of steak and eggs, "as much as I can possibly eat," to prepare her for the long day to come dancing at the Armadillo.[6] Along with her ballet shoes, tights, and make-up in her dance bag, she carefully packs her camera and film to take photos of the show. Her camera

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[*] Loeffler felt that these two men were very important to the success of the operation and wanted to supply their names so that they could get recognition for their contributions. However, Mark could not recall them clearly after 40 years. Their names, according to programs, may have been Rob Dorris and David Parker.

takes 12 exposures per roll, and she can only afford two rolls of film per show.[7] Lucia enjoys taking photos of her fellow dancers for her own "pleasure and interest," but she is beginning to "realize that most photographers aren't trying to capture that moment that dancers work so hard to achieve, that sort of pinnacle perfect moment."[8, *] She hopes she can "capture that for them."[9] Creativity inspires more creativity—the Armadillo does that for a lot of people.[†]

"The Larson Family Circus" is trying to get out the door to go to the Armadillo.[10] Dancers Eve Larson, her silky, blonde hair gathered in a twist, and her husband Dave, a latecomer to ballet in his thirties but in "pretty good shape," call out to their sons: "It's time! Come on!"[11] Greg and Kenny, young teens and fiercely competitive, fight over a pair of tights: "No, these are mine!" "They're mine! Let go!" The wrestling gets out of hand, and Greg pushes Kenny towards the window, and the glass…shatters! Kenny falls a couple of feet to the ground below, but he's not hurt or bleeding. Eve steps in: "Boys, that's enough! Hop in the car now. We're going."[12] On the way, the Larsons stop by Sativa Perskin's house to give her a ride. Her father, Spencer Perskin, is the front man for the music group Shiva's Headband and the person who fronted the money for the

---

[*] Verb tense in interview transcript excerpts changed from past to present throughout this story.

[†] This sentence is inspired by two sources: One, how Uhl's future career as a dance photographer came from these early days at the Armadillo; and, two, a discussion at an Armadillo retrospective art exhibit panel about how the environment of the Armadillo fostered a variety of people to find and pursue creative endeavors. See Lucia Uhl, interview by author, Austin, October 16, 2014; Jim Franklin, Jason Mellard, Eddie Wilson, panel discussion, "Armadillo Rising," the Wittliff Collections, Texas State University, April 19, 2015.

Armadillo World Headquarters to open in the first place. The band apparently had a gig last night because people are "sacked out on the floor" at the Perskins'.[13] Sativa, "a very talented little dancer," steps lightly between the bodies and joins the Larsons in their car.[14]

Young teenager Arletta and her father depart together from home and make the short drive across town.[15] After parking, they walk in across the expanse of ancient carpet in the cavernous hall that is "pretty icky with beer."[16] Squishy noises accompany their footsteps: *squish, squish, squish*.[17, *] The place reeks of "stale beer and human fluids."[18]

A car pulls into the lot and out emerges Rosemary Thomas, the company's only black dancer.[†] Her father parks, and, "dressed impeccably," always takes care to deliver her to the door, "just in case."[19]

Everyone arrives around eleven/noon/one.[‡] One of Arletta's idols, young Jone Bergquist, walks in with her parents, Kate and Carl, and marvels, "God, it stinks in here," as she does every month, while her mother good-naturedly grins at the smell, setting a box of program copies on a small table by the door.[20] Kate makes the program master copy by hand every month, drawing Austin Ballet Theatre's signature logo of an armadillo in pointe shoes in a circle motif on the front cover that varies every month,

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[*] Howard-Logan makes the squishy sound on the audio recording by sucking her tongue and teeth for humorous effect.

[†] I chose to use the term "black" as an empowering term of identity for African-Americans in the 1970s.

[‡] The majority of narrators identified noon as the arrival time, but the text here represents discrepancies in the data. Throughout the rest of the story, forward slashes indicate similar discrepencies.

custom-created each concert depending on the season and dances being presented, along with all of the interior program notes and names in her beautiful calligraphy.[21, *]

*Caroline handles the documents at the Austin History Center carefully. Mixed in with the ballet programs and broadsides are Kate's artwork for the Austin Public Library with her distinctive calligraphy. Caroline pauses over one large library poster for the children's summer reading program. It is a line drawing of an oceanscape, and next to it are drawings of ocean creatures that kids could lick the back of and stick in the ocean. You could get one sticker for every book you read over the summer. Caroline and her sister loved these stickers and competed fiercely to collect them. Seeing them again after 40 years suspends her in time, feeling oddly displaced, needing to remember to breathe.*

Lucia enters and notices that "literally the floor is covered with beer bottles or beer cans, and the floor is really sticky from people who had spilled beer on it."[22] She takes a deep breath…

> Hey, what you're smelling is history, man. You got to get down, and then you'll see it from my point of view. While y'all are buzzing around up there and everywhere, I'm the sweet, rooted carpet that keeps it all real. I absorb your footsteps and move underneath, supporting you wherever you care to roam. Walk all over me. Like Mother Earth, I spread my rolling self to the horizons, and everybody is all right with me. I've been right here with the epic bands and epiphanies, with the newcomers and nonsense. And it's all deep in my fibers: sound, smoke, sloshing, laid-back, dancing. That wet on your shoes, it's fermenting memory, and y'all're welcome. Because long after I'm gone, man, the memory of stale beer smells, and pot, and squishy times will linger. I'm your memory-maker. Peace.

The dancers go around the side of the stage to drop off their bags in the back dressing rooms, near resident artist Jim Franklin's studio. "His studio behind the stage is something to behold, filled with large murals, armadillo shells, mannikins [sic] and interesting pieces of trash."[23] The backstage is a "warren" of small rooms.[24] "You just

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[*] Numerous examples of Bergquist's posters and programs can be found at the Austin History Center, Austin, TX, in the Carl and Kate Bergquist archives.

never know what you are gonna find in the dressing room from the night before."[25] Is that…a beer pitcher full of urine?[26] Everyone gasps and giggles in surprise when reaching the dressing room. It's been cleaned up since last month; the Pointer Sisters came to perform, and the Armadillo not only neatened up that "gross" dressing room area, there was a new-to-us sofa and the staff even put up mirrors with light bulbs around them![27] The dancers still have to use "beer crates that are stacked up for a little table," but now they have mirrors and that is "kinda cool."[28] There's not quite enough room for everyone's everything—shoes and always way too much stuff.[29] You have to bring everything.[30] Plus, "you never know when you will come across someone sleeping [*laughs*]."[31]

Arletta's dad stays to help with the many jobs necessary for the day, including rolling out and taping the portable Marley flooring.[32] John Logan, Ken Owen, and/or a few of the other male dancers pitch in to help with the floor.[33] They bring in rolls of densely heavy, ABT-owned black Marley from the U-Haul. (Stanley Hall was the first person to buy Marley in Austin because the company really needed it for the scruffy stage at the Armadillo. It's pretty cool.)[34] Before warm-up class, John, Ken, a few other dancers, dads like Carl Bergquist and Rick Adams, and staff roll out the floor, tape it down with black Marley tape, hang a white scrim on the upstage pipe, sweep up, and clear beer cups and other trash.[35] Woah: "Dog turds."[36] There's even lots of weed on the floor;[37] "you can get high just from the roaches."[38] Over time a system has been developed for hanging the scrim: "Someone takes a hammer, ties it on a rope, ties the rope to the cross member of this scrim and then somebody takes a long pole and sticks

the hammer up to where it drops through the ring and then drops down the other side. Then someone grabs the hammer and hauls the thing up and then hauls the scrim up."[39] John sees this maneuver for the first time and thinks: "Wait, you're gonna stick a hammer through that thing and it's gonna do what? Who thought this up??"[40] Meanwhile, Kathy Gee and some of the mothers bring in their sewing machines and find places to set them up so that they can continue working on costumes up until the last minute.[41]

The dancers assemble for warm-up class on the carpet so that the crew and volunteers can continue work with the stage and lights; the pipes are hanging down and lighting instruments adjusted.[42] John Logan wears his "worst, old, ratty ballet shoes" for class on the "nasty, old carpet."[43] Greg Easley comes tromping out, then stops and exclaims, "My shoes are wet. It's beer!"[44] The other dancers say, "Yeah. We forgot to tell you. You might wanna put your tennis shoes on over your ballet shoes."[45] Jone finds a spot where it doesn't feel "quite as wet on the carpet [*laughs*]."[46] Dancers hang onto a chair or the edge of the stage as a barre.[47] Judy Thompson leads warm-up[48]/Stanley Hall leads warm-up with no music, just clapping and counting: "And one…"[49]/Warm-up is not very organized; "you kinda have to warm yourself up."[50, *] After barre work, the dancers run a few "across the floors" to conclude warm-up class which lasts about an hour total—so, not a full class.[51] After all, it's a long day, when all is said and done.

Mark calls out directions to the Armadillo crew who are up on ladders, making small adjustments to focus the instruments.[52] Now that the lights are hung and focused,

---

[*] This is an outlier account of warm-up; the other dancers remember Thompson and/or Hall leading a short class.

more or less, he makes his way to the tech booth for dress rehearsal. The Armadillo only has about a dozen instruments, so there's not much that can be done with lighting; the makeshift control panel consists of six household rheostats on a wooden board.[53] "At [some] point we're up to about 24 instruments and a board that would handle 12 presets or 12 channels with two presets, so I could actually do some sorta fancy lighting."[54] The tech booth is more like a "wooden stockade," centered and about "two-thirds of the way back" in the large hall, butted up against wooden risers.[55] Mark hops up on a riser and climbs through a little door into what, for all intents and purposes, is a little "fort" designed for "protection" during "regular rock 'n' roll shows."[56] He peruses a few cue sheets that Cappy, "or should I say Carter Capps White," gave him before departing for Oberlin to become a lawyer.[57] Mark, now in his second season in charge, is "able to scrounge together some more equipment so I can do side lighting and low, dramatic shin busters and things like that."[58] But:

> the limitation at the Armadillo is the lowest you could put something is you can C-clamp a light to the top of a side panel that is concealing the offstage wings. And so that is at about seven feet above the floor, and you can get some light, but instead of like in a regular proscenium, …where that light then travels and goes off into the wings, this light goes up the dancer but then casts a shadow across to the other panel, and so it is really, really tough. [59]

He "tests out the ideas on Stanley and tells him what he's thinking about doing, and makes it dramatic by washing it with blue from one side and a little bit of amber shin kickers from the other side."[60] "Anytime [the ballet is] slow and romantic," Stanley wants blue lighting.[61] "Anytime [the ballet is] full corps and upbeat," Stanley wants white lighting.[62] Lee Thompson, Judy Thompson-Price's future ex-husband, has recorded the

reel-to-reel tapes for the show at the radio station where he works, and he also runs sound for the ballet shows.[63] There's just enough room for Mark to sit in the middle operating lights with the "little, crazy control board" on his lap, Lee sitting on his left running sound, and Stanley on his right explaining cues.[64]

The dress rehearsal following class is not a full dress. Stage make-up isn't necessary, and only people who have costume concerns (such as partnering with tutus) wear costumes.[65] Greg wears full make-up and costumes for photos.[66] The transition from studio rehearsals to stage involves a whole different topography for entrances and exits. There's just one entrance and exit on each side of the stage, which is like a giant platform with a 5-foot drop-off at the downstage e

d

g

e.[67]

Arletta tries coming out

the backstage door and

running up the side stairs in her pointe shoes

to the stage for her entrance:

up, up, up, and

boom!

She's immediately onstage in front of

the "immense" speakers, "and a good

loud blast from them will knock you

off the stage if you aren't standing on

your leg well because they are meant

for rock concerts."[68]

No wings or masking.[69] Flats have been set up to create masking.[70]

The dancers have been keeping the unusual set-up at the Armadillo in mind during rehearsals based on last month, months, years of experience here; they know that "you can make an entrance in front of the speakers and then you can make an entrance and move upstage and start from the corner and do a diagonal or something, but yeah, everything comes from these two little doors [*laughs*]."[71] Exiting is often harder, because "there's a big piano on stage left offstage that you have to avoid and no wings, only stairs you have to climb down, but you have to make it look like you're running off into lots of space."[72] Terri Lynn sometimes runs into the piano as she exits, but makes it look like she's exiting gracefully.[73] Eve makes a plan with other dancers for them to catch her as she exits with a grand jeté into the stairwell leading down off the side "[*cat meows*]."[74] While not built for dance with a sprung surface, the stage is nonetheless very friendly for jumps since the whole stage "flexes."[75] When the entire company dances on stage, 30-40 people, the floor rebounds, "sending dust up in the air."[76]

Meanwhile the Armadillo staff go from job to job and occasionally watch throughout the afternoon.[77] Armadillo bartender Leea Mechling, checking on the beer taps behind the bar, notices how the young dancers run around with so much energy while the older, more experienced dancers "just really focus on their moves."[78] The ballet

is “so much easier than the normal productions” she works because the company basically comes in and does its own thing.[79]

The staff at the Armadillo are “so friendly and so kind.”[80]

Dress rehearsal finishes, and the company has a one- to two-hour break.[81] It is “very kinda laid back” during break.[82] Some of the dancers have brought their own food and stay at the Armadillo; some, like Greg, go to the Miramont cafeteria down the block.[83] Some of the dancers buy their food from the Armadillo kitchen.[84] Jone munches on food from home that she has in her bag, and she hangs out with others at the Armadillo, doing whatever.[85] Jone spends time alone, concentrating on the roles she will be dancing.[86]

> Kate Bergquist: Mm-hmm. And I, I, I, I remember Jone talking to this young kid out at the back door. What was his name? He wanted to be a dancer.
>
> Caroline S. Clark: Hmm.
>
> Kate Bergquist: And so, she invited him to come in and watch the performance and, eventually, started taking classes. And he ended up, um, going to New York. I'm afraid you're talking to someone whose memory is right there at the hilt.
>
> Caroline S. Clark: Oh, that's fine. That's fine.
>
> Kate Bergquist: He was in that, that movie about – oh, we can ask Jone. What is my daughter's phone number?
>
> Caroline S. Clark: [Laughs] Oh, I can also ask her.
>
> Kate Bergquist: Yeah, ask her.
>
> Caroline S. Clark: But he went to, uh, he went to New York and was in, uh, this would have been, uh, '70s or '80s maybe?
>
> Kate Bergquist: I don't know exactly when it was but he was in that movie. What was the name of that woman?

Caroline S. Clark: Given the time frame, are we talking about maybe Flashdance or I think it would've been too early for Turning Point? Was it a dance related movie?

Kate Bergquist: Yes. It was a dance related movie.

Caroline S. Clark: Okay. Dance related. There's Turning Point, Flashdance…

Kate Bergquist: Flashdance. [Talking to Jone on phone.] "Jone, your phone works. Good. Yes. Caroline is here. What was the name of that kid that you saw out on the steps at Armadillo and he went on to New York and was in that movie? Rocker."

Caroline S. Clark: Oh, Rocker. Yeah.

Kate Bergquist: Rocker Verastique. "And what was that movie?" Oh, he was in the TV show Fame.[87]

*Caroline walks down her parents' hallway. She's moving past some pictures when she stops dead in the water. Something's odd. She looks at a portrait of herself when she was two years old, drawn in charcoal. The signature. Kate Bergquist. Caroline suspends in time, needing to remember to breathe, again.*

Judy sits with Stanley and a few others outside, having a glass of wine and a bite to eat.[88] Mark heads across the street to Sandy's. He "has a little time to [him]self and maybe studies [his] cue sheets, and has a cheeseburger and a Coke and some crinkly fries, and then goes back…maybe about a quarter to 7:00."[89] John goes to his apartment to try to relax. He is pretty "amped up" with adrenaline because these are his first performance experiences.[90]/John no longer has the quite the same amount of stage fright he used to deal with after several years of performing.[91] Terri Lynn "must be eating something," but mostly she is focusing on the show.[92] Greg is excited to get fitted for his costume; he finally gets to dance one of the roles he has been watching for years! The costume needs some repair, however, because "a lot of the spangles and glitter have fallen off."[93]

Volunteer Kathy Gee, who created the costume several years ago, assesses the situation, and while Greg is wearing the costume she picks up her hot glue gun and gets to work "sticking on" more spangles and glitter.[94] "She has a cigarette in her mouth and an ash *t-h-a-t* long."[95] "Well, let's just put it here," she declares, squeezing on hot glue as Greg holds still with the cigarette ash -*this*- far from his face.[96] "This'll be fine."[97]

The staff and volunteers set up folding chairs in the main floor seating area in front of the stage. There are also chairs around cable-spool tables in the back on a raised "cabaret" area. Stanley Hall rents the chairs and brings them in, because ballet audiences don't want to sit on the carpet like audiences do for the music concerts[98, *]/The chairs belong to the Armadillo.[99, †] Once the house doors open to let audience in, the dancers can no longer go onstage "to practice" because there is no front curtain to hide them from view.[100] The women weave around each other in their "cramped" dressing room.[101] It's "tiny, crammed," and "people who had been there the night before were maybe not so tidy as you'd wish."[102] "I mean, it's not the swankiest place to perform, but I guess you've heard that."[103] Little kids, children of the staff and folks who more or less lived on the premises, wander into the dressing rooms occasionally and watch the dancers dress.[104] Arletta puts on her stage make-up; it only takes her five minutes because she has gotten so much practice at it.[105] The men "banter" among themselves and joke around.[106]

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[*] The question of where the chairs came from has never been resolved. Hall does state in a newspaper article that the first performance they did not have chairs, and this experience demonstrated the need to rent them for future shows.

[†] Loeffler, as the technical director, states that ABT did not bring in chairs.

"[Name omitted] never washes his clothes, and he smells so bad!"[107] "The boys are merciless about stuff like that."[108]

The audience members, "the usual passel of loyal foot-stomping fans," begin to arrive, the early ones around 5 p.m. to enjoy some time in the Delightful Beer Garden prior to the show.[109] After entering the lot and avoiding the worst of the potholes, there are plenty of places to park. Folks walk from the street along the side of the building to enter towards the back—it's like a "speakeasy."[110] "The Armadillo is hidden from the street in such a way as to make you think, when you walk into the beer garden, you have stumbled into a real Hollywood-worthy version of the Hole-in-the-Wall gang."[111] Austin Ballet Theatre volunteers handle their own box office; Helen Spear sits at a table and sells tickets.[112]/Helen Spear arrives with a group of excited young girls and ushers them up to the table to purchase tickets from a ballet volunteer for the show.[*] It's her youngest daughter's sixth birthday party, and, after supper at the Spear house and packing the girls into several cars, they're here to see whatever the ballet is performing.[113] After her group gets ushered in, the next few people waiting in line purchase their tickets, grinning because they are about to enjoy an evening at the Armadillo. After paying and receiving their tickets, they ask, as an afterthought, "Who's playing tonight?" "The ballet? Oh, cool."[114]

The dance critic for *The Daily Texan* student newspaper, Suzanne Shelton Buckley, arrives as she does most months. She enjoys the relaxed atmosphere and seeing

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[*] Here, Spear, in this text, encounters herself sitting at the table. This is an example of "typical day" patterns encountering an episodic event.

such a diversity of people: "Blacks, chicanos, dyed-in-the-wool wasps [sic]."[115] "Little old ladies holding hands and calling each other "girl.""[116] She heads to the bar for a beer and a plate of Armadillo nachos: three large tostadas to a plate and enough for a meal.[117] Being here is a nice change of pace from working on Chapter [infinity] of her dissertation on Ruth St. Denis…*Ruth St. Denis…Denishawn…Hollywood…India*… Beer acquired! Suzanne spies Stanley chatting with other folks across the room, and after placing her cup and plate on a cable spool standing on end, serving as a table off towards the side of the space, she strolls over to say hello.[118] Then, "Stanley, when you worked with Jack Cole in Hollywood, did he ever talk about Ruth St. Denis?" she pounces eagerly.[*]

> Caroline S. Clark: Here we go. Now it's recording. I appreciate your generosity very much in speaking with me today.
>
> Suzanne Buckley: Sure, I'm happy to.
>
> Caroline S. Clark: And, um, just for the recording, um, this is – let's see – January 25th, 2012 [2013], and, um, this is Caroline Sutton Clark, and I'm speaking with Suzanne Shelton Buckley. We're speaking via Skype, um, and Dr. Buckley is in India. [Laughter]
>
> Suzanne Buckley: Right.
>
> Caroline S. Clark: So far, my farthest-flung, uh, participant. I sure do--
>
> Suzanne Buckley: Okay. I'm always the farthest flung of everything. [Laughter][119]

[*] This conversation is entirely conjecture by the author. It seems highly likely that Hall and Buckley would have discussed Ruth St. Denis, the subject of her dissertation and book, and Jack Cole, Hollywood choreographer with whom Hall worked extensively. Cole studied with St. Denis and was a founding member of Ted Shawn's company. Hall subsequently parodied St. Denis in his ballet *Isms*.

Leea lines up cups for beer at the bar. She likes how "serene" the ballet audiences are before the show.[120] "You know, people aren't sitting there silently, but they are really into what they are coming to do.…It's just so super nice on Sundays that people are coming in and quietly finding their places."[121] Leea also observes that the crowds, as usual for the ballet, "aren't all that diverse…really kind of a WASP-y crowd."[122] After "bellying up to the barre [sic],"[123] people gravitate towards their places that they usually like to sit since there are no reserved seats.[124] "Typically, beer and nachos flow freely."[125]

Betty Hendrix arrives with her children. While Betty pays for tickets, her oldest daughter investigates the program to see which pieces Jone will be dancing in tonight; they are friends at Austin High School, and she loves to come support Jone every month.[126] As they enter the "cavernous" hall, Betty's two little boys gallop towards the long, low, green-carpeted stairs that run the length of the central seating area on either side.[127] The Hendrix family always sit on those two or three stair steps, which are more like low, carpeted bleachers, so that the boys can climb up and down during the dances, "thoroughly enjoy[ing]" themselves and staying entertained during the show."[128] It's easy for Betty to keep an eye on them while she "thoroughly enjoys watching ballet," plus she could "eat nachos and have a beer."[129] Before the show, there's space for the kids to "run around and play" in front between the stage and the first row of folding chairs, too.[130] Betty notices Stanley Hall chatting with people and welcoming them to the show.[131]

Greg Easley, twelve or thirteen years old, also "sees him in passing," and just by looking at the way Hall carries himself thinks, "Oh, that must be him."[132] Greg and his mother find their regular seats midway back.[133] They have come to watch his older

brother Russell dance with Austin Ballet Theatre.[134] Greg looks for *The Rites of Joseph Byrd* in the program. When they "go back month after month, he's like, "I hope they do that again," because it is just magical, and just the movement is different, and—it is so unique."[135]

Kate Fisher arrives by herself.[136] Although most of her interest is in modern dance, she's been taking ballet with Stanley Hall at the ABT studio. She spies a few other students with whom she takes class, like Nina Martin, "because all the students come," and makes her way over to sit with them.[137, *]

The dancers, ready for the first number, do their own re-warming-up in the "little, tiny hallway" backstage.[138] A "long-haired, bearded guy walks through on his way to the office."[139] Another long-haired, bearded guy, resident artist Jim Franklin (the visionary behind the armadillo icon) strolls down from his loft upstairs.[140] He tells a friend: "You know, when the ballet is here, and I am here, I – I always go down and watch, 'cause – 'cause it is – it is not – you know, it is not – it is a standard thing to see. You know?"[141] Usually he emcees the musical acts, often in creative costumes he assembles out of bits and pieces, sometimes in roller skates, sometimes as Mr. Peanut in roller skates, but for the ballet he just gets to wander and enjoy the show. He always looks forward to it if he's around; "the dancing is great," "beautiful," "ironic."[142] "That is always – that is kind of a

[*] Nina Martin and Kate Warren took ballet classes together from Hall, but Warren did not mention Martin specifically at the Armadillo. Nina Martin has confirmed by email that she did attend ABT performances there, however.

– a – a thought that is in his head when he is there watching that is, "You know, it's interesting these people probably wouldn't be here if it wasn't for the ballet." [*Chuckle*]

Mark and Lee get on headsets. Hall climbs through the little door into the tech booth and settles in. Mark tells the stage manager, "Stanley's here and ready to go,"[*] and she replies, "Okay, the dancers are ready to go. Cue the music."[143] The show begins! "If it's Sunday night at the 'Dillo, this must be Stanley Hall and his kaleidoscope of dance styles, music and surprises interpreted by the dancers of Austin Ballet Theatre."[144] Tonight's show is "the typical format: a classical piece to start, a modern piece in the middle and the closing number which in [Hall's] words "sends them out humming.""[145]

The lights come up white and bright on the opener, a (neo)classical number with pleasant, classical music. Eve and the other corps de ballet dancers keep an eye on Judy Thompson since they've only had a handful of rehearsals for this piece.[146] "Honest to God, the corps de ballet often do not know what we are supposed to do. We get out on stage, and we just hope that Judy Thompson knows what she's doing because *we* are watching *her*."[147] The dance looks tighter and more well-rehearsed at the end of the season.[148] Back in the booth, Stanley whispers to Mark, "telling me what to do, and I sometimes obey him and sometimes" don't because "I know my cues."[149] Mark makes occasional adjustments "while Stanley whispers and surreptitiously drinks whatever he is drinking down in the booth."[150, †]

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[*] "Well, my dear, after you fetch me a cigarette."
[†] "Wouldn't *you* like to know?"

Greg Easley gets a rush seeing his friends' faces from onstage; it's exciting to have the audience so close.[151] Eve and Dave's sons, Greg Larson and Kenny, stretch high into the air on their leaps, each trying to outdo the other.[152] A sewing pin darts dangerously close to a ballerina's skin under layers of satin and tulle while she smiles; one of the mothers is taking matters into her own hands, maybe probably.[153] A hint of darkness.

Stephanie Chernikowski, a student journalist at the University of Texas and no stranger to the Armadillo, is coming to see the ballet there for the first time. She:

> drives up a little late to find about half a dozen police cars parked at the entrance. This [i]sn't some rock and roll show with an audience of dope smoking freaks, it [i]s a ballet. Nor would you expect ballet followers to be in a fight. What's it all about? Armadillo owner, Eddie Wilson, stroll[s] by as [she stands] hesitantly outside. He [is] beaming, so [Stephanie] screw[s] up [her] courage and ask[s] what [i]s going on. Turns out the regular cop on the beat had been making rounds and was so taken with the idea of a ballet in Armadillo World Headquarters, Austin's funky rock parlor, that he called a bunch of the boys to come have a look. There they st[and] fascinated, just inside the door stunned.[154]

Leea enjoys watching the ballet in between serving up beer. The beautiful dancing is such a nice change of pace from the other nights she works.[155] That's why she doesn't mind working the ballet shifts, even though some of the other staff won't work those nights because the ballet crowd are "such lousy tippers."[156] The choral director from Arletta's high school smiles; the "classical" piece is "always his favorite."[157] The young birthday party group with the Spears sit with wide eyes, "enthralled."[158] Armadillo manager Eddie Wilson, leaning against the back wall, grins at what *he* sees:

> …several rows of folding chairs filled with parents and grandparents looking up at their little darlings dancing on the stage at the Armadillo, with two or three

> rows of gnarly bikers behind them looking at the same little girls with a completely different look in their eye.[159]

As soon as Byron Johnson comes out on stage, people around Kate Fisher start "gossiping. They know everybody's story."[160] So while people are dancing on stage, in the back of the audience everyone is talking *during the show*: "what was going on, just romantically between people, and who might be on the outs in the company."[161] Kate finds this to be "the strangest thing."[162]

At the back of the hall in the tech booth, Stanley Hall implores Mark: ""Can [you] make it more blue? Can you make it brighter?"" "He always wants a little bit more."[163] Mark whispers back: "It's as blue as it goes," and he "tweaks the dials."[164] Stanley shrugs.[165] He also "sort of mutters to himself when somebody falls out of sync or drops a ballerina [yikes] or whatever, so it is a running commentary back there."[166]

Onstage, dancer Ursula Parks runs across the stage and jumps into Greg Larson's arms, and "he does a fish with her."[167] Her father, a UT professor, and her mother hold their breath. "That's about $2,000 worth of hardware on her teeth."[168] But the dive is beautiful, and afterwards everyone exhales.

During intermissions and pauses in the program, it's pretty easy to get in and out of the restroom. That's one thing the Armadillo *does* have: "great, auditorium-like restrooms."[169] While using the restroom, audience members can stare at the murals on the facilities' walls: a foul-mouthed soldier painted by Jim Franklin for the men ("*If I catch any of you pussies beatin' off in this bathroom*…"), and a magical beast with dragonfly

wings for the women painted by Marian Royal.[170] "Everybody" seeks out Stanley Hall in the tech booth, visiting and saying hello.[171]

Betty's youngest son asks her about the giant painting above them off to the side of the stage.[172] In the painting, an armadillo bursts out of a black man's chest while he plays guitar, the musician's eyes scrunched tightly in ecstasy or pain, blood dripping off the armadillo's shell.[*] Betty's son is "more interested in the artwork than the ballet," so she replies to him that the armadillo paintings were "done by an artist, and he, too, can be an artist if he wants to."[173]Also during intermission, "all the little girls in the audience go down to the front and they start twirling around. It is just so wonderful. You see, the stage is up here, and then there is a space before the chairs start, and so all these little girls twirl around, with what they had seen, they are so enchanted with it."[174]

The middle ballet begins.[175] It is weird/modern ballet/contemporary ballet/experimental.[176] Stanley Hall is trying out something more artistic. It is brilliant.[177] It is dark.[178] The audience gasps in wonder.[179] A few of the audience members stroll out into the beer garden, waiting for better things.[180]

*Hot, hot*—it is hot in here with the costumes, and the lights, and the people.[181] There's no air-conditioning, or if there is, is there air-conditioning?[182, †] "The boys are just dripping."[183] The boys turn, and sweat goes flying towards the audience and hits

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[*] This painting was by Jim Franklin of musician Freddie King.

[†] There was no consensus among participants as to whether the Armadillo World Headquarters had air-conditioning at any given time. At some point it was apparently installed, but it was entirely inadequate. In the winters it could be cold, but dancers only bring up the heat in my interviews.

people in the front row.[184] The blonde girls' faces flush red.[185] The dancers constantly fix their running make-up backstage between dances in front of the portable fan someone has brought.[186] "Marguerite and Stanley are sloshed" from drinking "gin and tonics."[187] But, Stanley "is never off balance" during the shows.[188]

The final number is a big closer meant to put a smile on everyone's faces and send the audience home "hollering and humming."[189] One by one or in small groups the dancers enter in character with fun, sometimes ridiculous costumes and upbeat music.

*Caroline Sutton Clark: Research Journal, February 25, 2014*

*Yesterday brought up a fascinating line of inquiry: Siamese twins. I was reading clippings from the Howard Logan files, and I came across one from the* Lamar County Echo *out of Paris, TX that gave some background into the Siamese twins section of Centennial Rags of which Eve spoke – it was her featured role, I believe, in her ABT years. Turns out it was based on Daisy and Violet Hilton, who are also the subject of a new, hot off-Broadway show. Well, I looked into that, thinking it was a distraction. Turns out it was layer upon layer. They were a vaudeville/curiosity act from the early 20th century, born in England, with quite a career of exploitation in the stage circuit. Danced with Bob Hope in a stage act. They lived for a while in San Antonio. There's a book and some documentary footage, although that documentary was tied with burlesque.*

*I emailed Eve, and she thinks Hall's choreography was about the Hilton sisters but also after Roland Petit's ballet Les F-something (it's in my email). Some internet digging turned up that there was a "souers Siamoises" section in that ballet. So several points of connection where SH may have connected with the Hilton story:*

*England, early 20th century*
*Hollywood, film Chained for Life (1950) – dream sequence of separation same as in SH's ballet*
*Roland Petit's ballet: Stanley would have danced in it, probably*
*Stanley also danced in shows for Bob Hope*
*Buddy and Susan Treviño in San Antonio?*

*Petit hung out in Parisian cafes post-WWII with some of the old Ballets Russes people, like [name in Eve's email] who was a "librettist" for Diaghilev's company and responsible for the narratives of some of the famous ballets. I had no idea that the choreographers didn't come up with them all on their own, or in collaboration with the composers and so forth. This guy also came up with the narrative for Petit's Les F, so it may have been* ***his*** *idea to include Siamese twins.*

*Kind of bizarre that this story celebrated the U.S.A. Bicentennial. Certainly couldn't get away with tongue in cheekiness today surrounding public money funding art that*

*celebrates American heritage. I think there was room in those days for some sense of humor, some lampooning, since the sixties crumbled the illusions of unified national narratives and identities.*

*Kind of bizarre that an Englishman with a flair for parody got the job to create a ballet celebrating American heritage to tour small towns in Texas in the first place. Not really the focus of my dissertation, but still. The ballet was birthed at the Armadillo and played there often.*

*From Paris, France to Paris, Texas—conjoined twins.*

By the last section of the dance the stage is mobbed with everyone—30 people or more. Arletta strikes a pose downstage and holds it; by her feet on the edge of the stage, she spies a plate of nachos that someone has accidentally left behind from intermission.[190] Unexpected things are always happening, often just because there are so many dancers and "no room to do anything."[191] "Someone ends up in *this* line when they're supposed to be in *that* line because just the stage is so small."[192] Multiple toes get stepped on, Greg catches an elbow in the back, and the dancers just grin, cover the mistakes, and work it out because the Armadillo performances are "always like that."[193] Stanley is:

> back in the booth running the light board, so that [Mark] can be down front. [They] have rigged up a special platform right in front, and that's where all the little kids sit. So [they] put three slide projectors on this platform, this wooden thing that [they] nailed to the front of the stage, and [Mark] has to sit with – it is carousel slide projectors. So [Mark] sits there with – as the dance was going, [Mark] is clicking through – [Mark] is changing the slides while he sits there with the little kids in the front, and asking the little kids not to knock into the slide projectors 'cause that would bump them out of focus.[194]

Mark's future wife is "sitting down front" with a friend who dances ballet, and she sees "this guy with a ponytail asking the kids politely not to run into the slide projector."[195] One day they meet and remember this show. On the side, some of the women on the Armadillo staff, the "twirly girls," venture out and join in with "their own version of what is going on on stage."[196] "They're used to dancing with whatever is being performed"

anyway, and they "do this freeform swirly-twirly with their skirts and arms."[197] Some of the children in the audience get up and dance around in front of the stage, too.[198]

At the end, the audience erupts in applause, "whistling and whooping and hollering."[199] They cheer on their favorite dancers by name: "Kenny!" "Byron!" "Terri Lynn!"[200] One the female dancers steps elegantly to the side stairs, and draws Hall onstage by taking his hand. He comes out to take a bow gallantly with the company—all holding hands, smiling, and glowing with relief and perspiration.[201] Mark grins; "at Armadillo it is always so great when you have that final cue and it is all done and they are taking their bows and everybody's giving them a standing ovation."[202] Suzanne mentally frames her newspaper review for tomorrow: "*In many ways it was a typical evening. The dances included a romantic waltz, a dramatic fragment, a campy film spoof. The audience cheered, the dancers beamed, the beer flowed, as usual*."[203] The "Armadillo nacho ladies" bring back "huge trays" of nachos and chocolate chip cookies to the dressing rooms for the dancers.[204] "Stanley, the dancers, me – [everybody] is absolutely ravenous and so relieved that they'd gotten through the evening, that it is a big backstage relief."[205]

The Marley gets rolled up, and it and any set pieces, which are purposely minimal for the Armadillo, get loaded out into the U-Haul truck. The dancers get dressed and gather everything to go.[206] Mark receives his pay for being technical director, lighting designer, and light board operator at the end of the night: a check for $25, plus Shiner beer and nachos.[207] He "is working really, really hard on those Sundays and totally exhausted and happy to go home when it is done, 'cause it is such a long day, and I'm

doing something that I'm kinda learning on the job."[208] Jone doesn't get to go to the cast party because it's a school night/Jone gets to go to the cast party since this is a special performance.[209] John drives the U-Haul truck back to the ABT studios where someone meets him to help unload into the studio. Then John drives the truck back to the rental center around 10:30 p.m.. The office closed hours ago, but the ballet company has worked out a system to return the truck after hours and only get charged for one day. After parking, John pitches the keys in an arc over the fence towards the gas pump.[210] He walks to his car that he parked earlier on the street/Arletta has followed him to the U-Haul lot to give him a ride.[211]

Finally, John shows up at the cast party. It's usually at someone's, such as a member of the board of directors, house. The cast party continues on until midnight or 1 a.m..[212] Arletta, in her mid-teens, tries to have a glass of wine, but puts it down after receiving a stern look from one of the older male dancers. She feels like she is "surrounded by mother hens sometimes!"[213] Thinks she's "gonna die a virgin."[214] Ken Owen gives the overly inebriated Mr. Hall a ride home.[215]

John is a little hung over at work the next day, Monday.[216] Ballet class is back at the studio around 6 p.m. Monday, and everyone is there. "You better be there," because the dancers "frown on each other if you don't show up. Show up."[217, *]

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[*] "I never missed a show, my entire career. Ever!"

[1] Mark Loeffler, telephone interview by author, February 16, 2015.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Lucia Uhl, interview by author, Austin, October 16, 2014.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Dave and Eve Larson, interview by author, Austin, February 12, 2014.
[11] Dave and Eve Larson, interview by author, Austin, February 5, 2014.
[12] Dave and Eve Larson, interview by author, Austin, February 12, 2014. The boys' quotes are my own creation. Eve Larson's quote is a direct quote.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Arletta Howard-Logan, interview by author, Austin, January 22, 2014.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.
[18] John Logan, interview by author, Austin, January 26, 2014.
[19] Terri Lynn Wright, interview by author, Austin, June 27, 2014.
[20] Jone Bergquist Hallmark, interview by author, Austin, February 18, 2014; Kate Bergquist, interview by author, Austin, January 9, 2015.
[21] Kate Bergquist, interview by author, Austin, January 9, 2015. Numerous examples of Bergquist's posters and programs can be found at the Austin History Center, Austin, TX, in the Carl and Kate Bergquist archives.
[22] Lucia Uhl, interview by author, Austin, October 16, 2014.
[23] Marc Chricton, "Armadillo Headquarters: C-W Mu…", Austin History Center, AR.1999.008, box 3, folder 7.
[24] Eddie Wilson, interview by author, Austin, August 30, 2014.
[25] Greg Easley, interview by author, Austin, October 14, 2014.
[26] Yes, it is. Arletta Howard-Logan, interview by author, Austin, January 22, 2014.
[27] Ibid., Terri Lynn Wright, interview by author, Austin, June 27, 2014.
[28] Terri Lynn Wright, interview by author, Austin, June 27, 2014.
[29] Jone Bergquist Hallmark, interview by author, Austin, February 18, 2014.
[30] Ibid., Terri Lynn Wright, interview by author, Austin, June 27, 2014.
[31] Dave and Eve Larson, interview by author, Austin, February 5, 2014.
[32] Jone Bergquist Hallmark, interview by author, Austin, February 18, 2014.
[33] John Logan, interview by author, Austin, January 26, 2014.
[34] Ken Owen, interview by author, Austin, March 21, 2014.

[35] John Logan, interview by author, Austin, January 26, 2014; Terri Lynn Wright, interview by author, Austin, June 27, 2014; Lucia Uhl, interview by author, Austin, October 16, 2014.
[36] Dave and Eve Larson, interview by author, Austin, February 5, 2014.
[37] Ken Owen, interview by author, Austin, March 21, 2014.
[38] John Shown, "Stanley Hall," *Forum*, September/October, 1985, 21. From the personal collection of Judy Thompson-Price.
[39] John Logan, interview by author, Austin, January 26, 2014.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Lucia Uhl, interview by author, Austin, October 16, 2014.
[42] Ibid., Mark Loeffler, telephone interview by author, February 16, 2015.
[43] John Logan, interview by author, Austin, January 26, 2014.
[44] Greg Easley, interview by author, Austin, October 14, 2014.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Jone Bergquist Hallmark, interview by author, Austin, February 18, 2014.
[47] John Logan, interview by author, Austin, January 26, 2014.
[48] Arletta Howard-Logan, interview by author, Austin, January 22, 2014.
[49] Jone Bergquist Hallmark, interview by author, Austin, February 18, 2014.
[50] Greg Easley, interview by author, Austin, October 14, 2014.
[51] John Logan, interview by author, Austin, January 26, 2014.
[52] Mark Loeffler, telephone interview by author, February 16, 2015.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Judy Thompson-Price, interview by author, Austin, May 4, 2014.
[64] Mark Loeffler, telephone interview by author, February 16, 2015.
[65] John Logan, interview by author, Austin, January 26, 2014.
[66] Greg Easley, interview by author, Austin, October 14, 2014.
[67] Arletta Howard-Logan, interview by author, Austin, January 22, 2014.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Mark Loeffler, telephone interview by author, February 16, 2015.
[71] Ibid. The laugh is from the transcript.
[72] Terri Lynn Wright, interview by author, Austin, June 27, 2014.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Dave and Eve Larson, interview by author, Austin, February 5, 2014.

[75] Ken Owen, interview by author, Austin, March 21, 2014.
[76] Ken Owen, interview by author, Austin, March 21, 2014.
[77] Jone Bergquist Hallmark, interview by author, Austin, February 18, 2014.
[78] Leea Mechling, interview by author, Austin, July 30, 2014.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Jone Bergquist Hallmark, interview by author, Austin, February 18, 2014.
[81] John Logan, interview by author, Austin, January 26, 2014.
[82] Jone Bergquist Hallmark, interview by author, Austin, February 18, 2014.
[83] Arletta Howard-Logan, interview by author, Austin, January 22, 2014; Greg Easley, interview by author, Austin, October 14, 2014.
[84] Ken Owen, interview by author, Austin, March 21, 2014.
[85] Jone Bergquist Hallmark, interview by author, Austin, February 18, 2014.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Kate Bergquist, interview by author, Austin, January 9, 2015.
[88] Judy Thompson-Price, interview by author, Austin, May 4, 2014.
[89] Mark Loeffler, telephone interview by author, February 16, 2015.
[90] John Logan, interview by author, Austin, January 26, 2014.
[91] Ibid.
[92] Terri Lynn Wright, interview by author, Austin, June 27, 2014.
[93] Greg Easley, interview by author, Austin, October 14, 2014.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Terri Lynn Wright, interview by author, Austin, June 27, 2014.
[99] Mark Loeffler, telephone interview by author, February 16, 2015. Loeffler, as the technical director, states that ABT did not bring in chairs.
[100] Terri Lynn Wright, interview by author, Austin, June 27, 2014.
[101] Jone Bergquist Hallmark, interview by author, Austin, February 18, 2014.
[102] Lucia Uhl, interview by author, Austin, October 16, 2014.
[103] Judy Thompson-Price, interview by author, Austin, May 4, 2014.
[104] Arletta Howard-Logan, interview by author, Austin, January 22, 2014.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Ken Owen, interview by author, Austin, March 21, 2014.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Ken Owen, interview by author, Austin, March 21, 2014.
[109] Judi Hazlett, "Foot stomping good: ABT puts on a celebration," *Austin Citizen*. From the personal collection of Greg Easley.
[110] "Ballet Evening Closes Season," *Austin American-Statesman*, May 6, 1973, 19.
[111] Eddie Wilson, interview by author, Austin, August 30, 2014.
[112] Helen Spear, interview by author, Austin, January 16, 2015.
[113] Helen Spear, interview by author, Austin, January 16, 2015.
[114] Leea Mechling, interview by author, Austin, July 30, 2014.

[115] Suzanne Shelton [Buckley], "Armadillos in Toe Shoes," *Texas Monthly*, October 1973, accessed Feb. 28, 2012, http://www.texasmonthly.com/cms/printthis.php?file=performance.php&issue=1973-10-01.
[116] Ibid.
[117] Eddie Wilson, interview by author, Austin, August 30, 2014.
[118] Suzanne Shelton Buckley, interview by author, Skype, January 25, 2014.
[119] Suzanne Shelton Buckley, interview by author, Skype, January 25, 2014.
[120] Leea Mechling, interview by author, Austin, July 30, 2014.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Judi Hazlett, "Foot stomping good: ABT puts on a celebration," *Austin Citizen*. From the personal collection of Greg Easley.
[124] Leea Mechling, interview by author, Austin, July 30, 2014.
[125] Judi Hazlett, "Foot stomping good: ABT puts on a celebration," *Austin Citizen*. From the personal collection of Greg Easley.
[126] Betty Hendrix, interview by author, Austin, September 22, 2014.
[127] Carol Nuckols, "Beans and Rice and Ballet Go Together at Armadillo," *Austin American-Statesman*, November 13, 1972, Austin History Center, Austin, archive file AR.1999.008, Box 3, folder 7.
[128] Betty Hendrix, interview by author, Austin, September 22, 2014.
[129] Ibid.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid.
[132] Easley, interview by author, Austin, February 3, 2012.
[133] Greg Easley, interview by author, Austin, October 14, 2014.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Kate Warren, interview by author, Austin, January 15, 2015.
[137] Ibid.
[138] Greg Easley, interview by author, Austin, October 14, 2014.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Jim Franklin, interview by author, Austin, November 21, 2014.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Jim Franklin, interview by author, Austin, November 21, 2014.
[143] Mark Loeffler, telephone interview by author, February 16, 2015.
[144] Judi Hazlett, "ABT's turnover causes night of highs, lows." *Austin Citizen*. From the personal collection of Greg Easley.
[145] Ibid.
[146] Dave and Eve Larson, interview by author, Austin, February 5, 2014.
[147] Ibid.
[148] Steve Hogner, "Sadness among smiles in ABT performance," *Austin-American Statesman*, February 17, 1976, 11.
[149] Mark Loeffler, telephone interview by author, February 16, 2015.

[150] Ibid.
[151] Greg Easley, interview by author, Austin, October 14, 2014.
[152] Dave and Eve Larson, interview by author, Austin, February 5, 2014.
[153] Greg Easley, interview by author, Austin, October 14, 2014.
[154] Stephanie Chernikowski, "Austin Ballet Theatre: Grace and Innovation," *Austin Sun*, November 14, 1974, 17.
[155] Leea Mechling, interview by author, Austin, July 30, 2014.
[156] Ibid.
[157] Arletta Howard-Logan, interview by author, Austin, January 22, 2014.
[158] Helen Spear, interview by author, Austin, January 16, 2015.
[159] Eddie Wilson, interview by author, Austin, August 30, 2014.
[160] Kate Warren, interview by author, Austin, January 15, 2015.
[161] Ibid.
[162] Ibid.
[163] Mark Loeffler, telephone interview by author, February 16, 2015.
[164] Ibid.
[165] Ibid.
[166] Ibid.
[167] Dave and Eve Larson, interview by author, Austin, February 5, 2014.
[168] Ibid.
[169] Eddie Wilson, interview by author, Austin, August 30, 2014.
[170] Leea Mechling, email message to author, November 7, 2014.
[171] Mark Loeffler, telephone interview by author, February 16, 2015.
[172] Betty Hendrix, interview by author, Austin, September 22, 2014.
[173] Betty Hendrix, interview by author, Austin, September 22, 2014.
[174] Helen Spear, interview by author, Austin, January 16, 2015.
[175] Judy Thompson-Price, interview by author, Austin, May 4, 2014.
[176] I discuss this terminology in Chapter VII in the section on aesthetics and programming.
[177] Steve Hogner, "Another diversified evening of Austin Ballet," *Austin-American Statesman*, November 18, 1975, 16.
[178] Ken Owen, interview by author, Austin, March 21, 2014.
[179] Helen Spear, interview by author, Austin, January 16, 2015.
[180] Steve Hogner, "Sadness among smiles in ABT performance," *Austin-American Statesman*, February 17, 1976, 11.
[181] Ken Owen, interview by author, Austin, March 21, 2014.
[182] Jim Franklin, Jason Mellard, Eddie Wilson, panel discussion, "Armadillo Rising," the Wittliff Collections, Texas State University, April 19, 2015.
[183] Ken Owen, interview by author, Austin, March 21, 2014.
[184] Ibid.
[185] Ibid.
[186] Ibid.
[187] Ibid.

[188] Mark Loeffler, telephone interview by author, February 16, 2015.
[189] Judi Hazlett, "ABT's turnover causes night of highs, lows," *Austin Citizen*. From the personal collection of Greg Easley.
[190] Arletta Howard-Logan, interview by author, Austin, January 22, 2014.
[191] Greg Easley, interview by author, Austin, October 14, 2014.
[192] Ibid.
[193] Ibid.
[194] Mark Loeffler, telephone interview by author, February 16, 2015.
[195] Ibid.
[196] Leea Mechling, interview by author, Austin, February 16, 2014.
[197] Ibid.
[198] Helen Spear, interview by author, Austin, January 16, 2015.
[199] Greg Easley, interview by author, Austin, October 14, 2014.
[200] Dave and Eve Larson, interview by author, Austin, February 5, 2014.
[201] Betty Hendrix, interview by author, Austin, September 22, 2014.
[202] Mark Loeffler, telephone interview by author, February 16, 2015.
[203] Suzanne Shelton [Buckley], "Ballet season opener: A typical yet different evening," *Austin-American Statesman*, October 16, 1978. From the personal collection of Judy Thompson-Price.
[204] Mark Loeffler, telephone interview by author, February 16, 2015; Lucia Uhl, interview by author, Austin, October 16, 2014; Wright.
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