

WOMEN LEADERS IN DANCE: SIX WOMEN ARTISTIC DIRECTORS OF
REGIONAL AMERICAN DANCE COMPANIES DISCUSS COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT, DANCE EDUCATION, AND NEGOTIATING
PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

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DEDICATION

For my parents, Shelton and Ritchie, who have always supported my love of dance and inspired my ambitions for learning and leading.

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ABSTRACT

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WOMEN LEADERS IN DANCE: SIX WOMEN ARTISTIC DIRECTORS OF REGIONAL AMERICAN DANCE COMPANIES DISCUSS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, DANCE EDUCATION, AND NEGOTIATING PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

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Women in the United States lead regional dance companies for many reasons and with many artistic and leadership goals in mind. This dissertation research provides insights into the challenges women in these leadership roles face, their strategies for success, and the issues that arise when navigating through differing leadership environments. Women artistic directors' descriptions of adapting artistic practices and leadership approaches for their dance companies to fit the unique needs of the communities they serve, the impact of dance education on financial success, and the need to balance their artistic responsibilities with their personal needs are highlighted. Finally, this dissertation provides insights into how women in leadership positions describe their motivations for continuing their work, given the challenges/state of funding in the current American dance field. The purpose of this dissertation, therefore, is to explore connections between differing theoretical conversations concerning the issues women face as leaders in general and the descriptions provided by women leaders of successful dance companies more specifically. These theoretical conversations are then put in connection to the specific voices of the dissertation research participants as they describe their personal structures of

support, leadership, and artistic strategies for their dance companies' continued success within the contexts of the communities they serve.

The dissertation research employed a multisite, qualitative study of six women artistic directors of regional dance companies, specifically those identifying through their dance companies' missions as aiming to connect to their communities through dance. Over a period of fifteen months, interviews and participant observations of the six artistic directors were conducted highlighting their narrated successes, failures, unexpected challenges, support structures, leadership strategies, and reasons for doing their work within the diverse communities they live. These interviews and observations offer important insights into how and why women leaders in dance create opportunities for dance to affect their communities and for their communities to affect their dance making. Further, the ways the participants frame their experiences of leading dance companies offer insights into future research geared toward possibilities for dance education and mentorship to support the work of women leaders and their dance companies.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: THE RESEARCHER AND/IN THE RESEARCH

1991: As a sixth grader, I discovered my proclivity for leadership and my desire to, one day, direct my own dance company and produce my own shows. When my family relocated to Brookfield, Wisconsin, I was an awkward, introverted pre-teen with a consistent babysitting gig for some neighbors' children, Sarika and Shabana. These children were my first "dance company members," and they diligently followed my every command as I constructed a production to present when their parents arrived home. Furniture was moved, dimmer lights were used for theatrical effect, and costumes were pulled from the girls' closets. I selected music, and choreographed three dances that were lovingly received. The experience, etched into my memory, reminds me that I've been planning to direct a dance company all along. . . .

2009: "Lubbock or leave it!" "Do you have an exit visa?" "We've got to get you out of there!" "Just flat dirt and tumbleweeds . . ." When I relocated to Lubbock, Texas in 2009 to take a faculty position in the dance program at Texas Tech University, these were just a few of the comments I heard from loved ones and colleagues about my future home. Once I had acclimated to this new place, however, the climate was much different than I anticipated. An ambitious, pioneering spirit is rewarded here, and the people who are drawn to this community have big ideas and open minds. The vast plains and open skies seem to invite possibility. The spark of excitement and potential is palpable. As the big wind whisks through the thunderous spans of the high desert, the freedom to create and build expands before me.

The landscapes of my home community shaped the ways that dance—and I—belong and contribute.

Experience of Developing and Leading a Dance Company

I founded my dance company, Flatlands Dance Theatre, in 2010, seemingly on a whim. One summer day, a friend of mine and I casually discussed Lubbock's unfortunate lack of professional dance. Before we knew it, the two of us were planning a formal season of concerts, recruiting board members, and divvying up organizational duties

amongst ourselves. As it turns out, this was no whim. This opportunity to build my own dance company in a community that needed one was a career goal I had been waiting to see through at the right time. “This is it,” I thought. “This is my chance to fulfill an artistic dream.”

Those shiny, golden, early days of dreaming and then doing developed into darker days of conflict, restructuring, and developing grit as we grappled with the challenges every new organization faces. These challenges felt like an emotional roller coaster as I learned about directing a nonprofit dance company; the ride only grew more winding and topsy-turvy along the way. My main stumbling blocks seemed to arise from what I perceived as limitations in my community. Lubbock is geographically isolated from other large cities; further, its residents were not accustomed to supporting professional contemporary dance and its reputation for political conservatism challenged my notions of what art was supposed to look like and accomplish in any community. I also grappled with funding, staffing, programming, scheduling, dancers’ and audience members’ expectations, and balancing my work in my dance company effectively with my career as an educator and the needs of my personal life.

Those early challenging days truly tested my ability to continuously learn and grow as a leader, an artist, and as a woman negotiating many personal and professional goals. Ultimately, the challenges are now what hone my focus to persist in a dance field that can meet my artistic goals. Further, in the practice of dealing with these challenges, unexpected and numerous artistic and personal rewards surfaced while leading a company of dancers within this Texas community.

Throughout this dance journey, I encountered other women around the United States who were also becoming leaders in diverse dance companies, many having similar experiences as my own. However, some had many different reasons for creating a dance company with differing results for how the companies took shape. The complexities of their stories led to the questions about women leaders in dance addressed by the participants in this dissertation study. The six dance leaders' stories found in this dissertation, in which they narrate successes, failures, unexpected challenges, support structures, leadership strategies, and reasons for doing their work within the diverse communities they live, offer important insights into how and why women leaders in dance create opportunities for dance to affect their communities and for their communities to affect their dance.

Therefore, the research design proposal for my dissertation develops from my curiosity about and my experience with women artistic directors of regional contemporary dance companies and, more specifically, how they employ various structures of support and leadership.¹ Further, the design of this study allowed me to gather information concerning artistic strategies the participants shared about their companies' continued successes, specifically within the contexts of the communities they serve. My own work as an artistic director of a dance company, therefore, spurred me to seek new ideas and differing perspectives from other women in similar roles. The issues I

¹ The terms "regional" and "leader" are used widely throughout this dissertation. For more information about how these terms are defined and used for the purposes of this study, reference pages 68-69 of this dissertation.

grapple with in this leadership role compel me to ask how I can work more effectively as a leader to maintain the integrity of my artistic goals, and how the culture of my individual community shapes the choices I make, the impact of my work, and goals I set for my dance company.

The goals I have for my own dance company's artistic success and sustainability compel me to seek out innovative methods other women artistic directors have used in companies I admire. Also, as a person raising a family, I contend with how to maintain a balance between my personal needs and the many professional roles I play within my dance company. Since I often choreograph, perform, mentor, and direct my company, my multiple identities as a private and public person can easily become blurred, leading to confusion and, I fear, eventual burnout. Therefore, I hope to open a space in this dissertation for my research participants to discuss how they describe working between the needs of their personal lives and their roles in developing funding, work-life balance, artistic programming, and community relationships within their individual regions.

In the dissertation research process, I hope to gain insights into the challenges women in leadership roles face, their strategies for success, and issues that arise as they navigate through differing leadership environments. I also want to know how they describe adapting their artistic practices and leadership approaches for their companies to fit the unique needs of the communities they serve. Finally, I want to know more about how women in these leadership positions describe their motivations for continuing their work, given the challenges/state of funding in the dance field today.

Relationship of Funding, Gender, and Community for

Developing Dance Companies

As briefly mentioned earlier in this chapter, one of the consistent issues that arises for me as a leader of a dance company revolves around the needed funding to meet basic production needs supporting diverse audiences in the home community as well as the need to develop new audiences in other locations. However, I perceive an inequality in the amount of opportunities available for women leaders in dance when I look at data about who is funded, promoted, and awarded in the dance field. While recent national attention has been placed on a conversation about the gender wage gap and the lack of women leaders in all sectors of the workplace, progress has been slow to narrow this gap, particularly in the dance field. In Chapter II of this dissertation, I will discuss some of these issues in greater detail, but I touch on them in this section in order to introduce one of the cultural obstacles affecting my work as a leader.

Recent statistics from national dance granting organizations illustrate a portrait of American arts in which women are not as well funded as men. For example, the MacArthur “Genius” Grants have been awarded to three dance artists in the last decade—all three were men. Since 1952, the Capezio Dance Award has been granted to 45 men and 21 women. Perhaps the most damning evidence of gender discrimination in funding was reported in 2010 by Arts Fund, which documented that while 70% of all American ballet and modern dance companies are directed by women, 70% of funding goes to male directed organizations (Art Works Fund 2010, 1). Other dance studies writers agree that inequality exists between men’s and women’s status in the dance field, arguing that men

are given more presenting, teaching, and performance opportunities than women, giving them the upper hand in establishing successful careers (Bindler 2014; Van Dyke 1996).

The reasons for gender bias and discriminatory practices in dance have been speculated about in diverse theoretical literature and from differing points of view. Some theorists point to the supposed differences between the choreographic interests of men and women (men's choreography is generally "more aggressive physically" and, therefore, more viewer friendly).² Further, theorists posit that men often receive extra attention during their early dance training, which may then support their ability to be more ambitious and more able to take risks later in their careers.

Theorists have often cited that the incompatibility of women's biological clocks with dance career trajectories is a reason for women's disadvantaged position in the dance field. Other theorists point to biased, culturally constructed perceptions concerning the ability for women to be effective leaders. Dance studies writer Jan Van Dyke blames a pervasive sexist attitude in the field in combination with the aforementioned pressures and circumstances to the unequal treatment of women in dance (Van Dyke 1996, 538). In summary, all of the differing resources read for the purposes of this dissertation point to fewer opportunities for women to succeed as leaders in dance.

² See Luke Jennings's (2013) article "Sexism in Dance: Where Are All the Female Choreographers?" <http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2013/apr/28/women-choreographers-glass-ceiling> and Judith Mackrell's (2009) article "Vanishing Point: Where Are All the Great Female Choreographers?" <http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2009/oct/27/where-are-the-female-choreographers>

While statistics indicate prejudicial bias against women in dance, there are also positive indicators that women, in particular, create important opportunities for dance companies that are community-based, with socially engaged artistic practices emerging in their art works and company initiatives. Specifically, many women share a desire to make dance function for and with the communities they serve by addressing social, political, and cultural factors in their artistic processes and practices. One leader in dance with this goal in mind is Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, who dedicates an entire branch of her dance company, Urban Bush Women, to initiatives directly connected to the needs of the many communities and groups in which she works (e.g., African-Americans, women, emerging leaders, Philadelphians, etc.). Zollar and company conduct dance-based workshops seeking to support community values, history, and identity, thereby challenging through their dance practices underlying racial and gendered ideologies of inequality within the cultures they live. Many other women leaders in dance are noted as working toward similar goals with varying levels and definitions of success. In Chapter II, this dissertation develops connections between the literature focusing on women's leadership issues in general, the practices and theories posited by specific women leading dance companies, and ideas and practices described by my interview participants leading regional dance companies.

With the above in mind, this research will, hopefully, make significant contributions to several important areas of inquiry, including dance studies, leadership studies, community studies, and women's studies. A recent surge of feminist and humanist ideas in the United States points to possibilities for change in the ways women

view themselves as leaders and the ways women leaders are perceived by others. This research provides evidence of women's successful leadership strategies and outcomes, thus helping future women leaders in dance create their own paths for success. Further, in highlighting possibilities for leading and sustaining dance companies, this study has the potential to inspire other women to take the reins of dance organizations in the future.

Purpose of Research

The purpose of this study is to explore connections within differing theoretical conversations concerning the issues women face as leaders in general; the descriptions of navigating these issues provided by women leaders developing successful dance companies; and the specific voices of my research participants describing their personal structures of support, leadership, and artistic strategies for their companies' continued success within the contexts of the communities they serve. To undertake this research, I first studied differing theories of women as leaders emerging from the literature in general, and then, more specifically, the differing published analyses of diverse women leaders directing dance companies. I next conducted case studies of six women artistic directors of regional American dance companies. The connections made between the literature of leadership, the current leaders in dance writing about their experiences, and the ideas emerging from the case studies are important since they provide insights into how women dance leaders create methods for developing successful leadership approaches, especially those women working with regional dance companies. Insights into these connections for developing methods of leadership are important when considering the future needs of

dance companies working within the communities they are serving. The following research questions guided the study:

Research Questions

- What are noted as the main issues facing women undertaking leadership roles in general? How do these connect to or disconnect from the issues faced by women leaders in dance specifically in the areas of funding, audience expectations, and creating balance between their personal and artistic lives?
- How do the descriptions of the leadership practices described by the research participants connect to or disconnect from the theoretical and practical descriptions discovered? Do general themes or insights emerge between these differing connections/disconnections?
- How do women leaders in dance, who describe their work as deeply related to a specific community, sense they are connecting with the needs of the various communities they serve, and how does this impact the goals they set for their dance companies and artistic works?
- How do women leaders in dance sense they are negotiating their own artistic desires in relation to the needs of their communities, families, and careers?
- How might the discoveries made during the research process add to future conversations about the needs of women as leaders in the field of dance? How might these conversations impact how dance is discussed and funded? How might these conversations open future pathways into how women dance artists are trained as leaders?

These research questions, along with other surprising questions that arose in the interview process during data collection, guided my analysis and led me to many unexpected avenues along my research journey. While some of my own experiences are shared with those of my participants, each participant also presented unexpected issues and questions of their own, thus reinvigorating my desire to shine light on their stories. The similarities and distinctions between the participants that were unveiled as the research process progressed added rich data to the dissertation research process. As the participants' experiences, the details of their community landscapes, and their individual professional and personal life situations began to intermingle, I sensed that the depth and complexity of this line of research could sustain an entire career of continued inquiry. Each woman leader's experiences offer important insights into the ways women become leaders in dance and how they manage the often intricately woven parts of themselves to reach goals in their artistry, leadership, family lives, and community relationships.

One of the most fascinating parts of this research process has been discovering that there is not one best way to be the leader of a dance company and to create a leadership style that also works to support the needs of a personal life. The uniqueness of experience, drive, intention, and success captured in these case studies was something I could not have predicted at the outset of this research process. In addition, the way each participant defines success in relation to her community's needs determines the goals she sets for herself, the challenging factors that arise in artistic and leadership practices, and strategies developed for continued successful work in each dance company. Diverse dance company models,

structures of support, and outcomes offer six fascinating accounts of contemporary American dance companies in process through women's leadership.

Overview of Chapters

The process of this research, one yielding ever-expanding layers of meaning, ideas, and questions, demands a dissertation illustrating the complexities, changeability, and “unending-ness” of people's stories and experiences. Since the focus of this research is on six women leaders in dance, their voices are central in the way the following chapters unfold. My own experiences in dance leadership in relationship with current literature concerning women as leaders contribute to the interpretations of my analyses of the participants' voices. Several key issues structure the rest of this dissertation, to include community and geographical particularities, funding issues, perceptions of success, artistic goals, and the multifaceted role of the artistic director. Placing these six women directors in conversation with current literature, with each other, and with me paints a rich portrait of contemporary dance company leadership by women in the United States today, specifically those women working within regional dance companies.

In Chapter II, I begin by giving an historical account of American women leaders in dance during two particularly important points in history over the past 150 years. This history portrays the differing tactics women undertook to lead dance companies overtime in the United States, the challenges they faced, and their strategies for successfully dealing with these challenges. Additionally, social and cultural contexts within the US provide insights into the landscapes these women endeavored to navigate as leaders in the field of dance. In this chapter, an analysis of national and select regional funding, employment, and

award statistics over the past 50 years is also included to give an account of perceived gender inequalities in the arts and in dance. Since my participants all expressed concerns about funding and concerns regarding gender expectation and inequality, I feel it is important to attend to these statistical data sets in the research. Then, I narrow in further, providing additional context by examining women's leadership abilities, styles, and practices in the dance field.

In Chapter III, the methodology chapter, I give an overview of the research design, participant recruitment process, data collection and analysis methods, and ethical issues encountered throughout the process. Case study is the primary methodology incorporated, with each woman artistic director representing a case. However, I chose to organize the data chapters (Chapters IV-VII) by presenting the themes I was specifically focusing on in the dissertation's purpose and which emerged from each participant's discussions. Therefore, their voices are interwoven throughout each of these chapters.

In Chapter III, I also give a specific overview of the participant recruitment and selection process. Biographical sketches of the participants and overviews about their companies and geographical locations are provided to assist in painting a portrait of the pool of participants and the context within each works. I further discuss the interview and observation process in detail, as these were my main sources of data. In addition, special attention is paid to the journaling and memoing notes I made during the participant interview and observation process. Since coding was a major method of data analysis, I highlight the various ways I coded the participant interviews, observations, as well as my own memos for an in-depth analysis of the data set. Finally, there were ethical issues I

anticipated navigating, and others that arose as the research process unfolded. These issues and my responses to them are explored in this chapter as well.

In Chapter IV, I present the data by comparing the experiences of the participants and organizing their commonalities, along with their differences, into themes. Further, I explore the participants' discussions of how the particularities of geographical location and each community's ethos impact their work as leaders of dance companies. Some of the participants and their companies reside in large cities, while others are located in small towns; some participants describe their communities as "conservative" while others describe their communities as "liberal"; some participants are drawn to the natural environments surrounding them, using their geography for artistic purposes, while others take inspiration from the man-made environments that their companies inhabit. As each city or town boasts its own special features, each of the participants in this study describes the particularities of her community and those events, buildings, organizations, relationships that affect the ways her company succeeds and grows. These distinctions offer unique and interesting connections between how these women leaders in dance describe the the social, cultural, and political scene of each community.

Chapter V examines the relationship between artistic directors and their ties to educational institutions, including private dance schools, K-12 public schools, and colleges and universities. In this chapter, I focus on all the participants since each describes relationships with dance education in differing contexts as important to the overall success of their dance companies and communities. One context introduced includes the experiences of one participant as a full-time professor in a university dance program, with

three other participants employed currently or at some time in the past by universities in a part-time capacity. These university-affiliated participants describe the fascinating ways their companies have interacted with or continue to interact with academic institutions. On the other hand, two of the participants own their own private dance schools and offer the unique ways their schools interact and intersect with their dance companies. All of the participants describe the importance of community engagement through differing public dance education initiatives offered by their dance companies. During participant observations, I witnessed these dance education partnerships and relationships at work and, thus, highlight these relationships as very important to the integrity and sustainability of some of the companies. Finally, some of the participants describe feeling isolated from the academic institutions in their home communities and indicate how this separation creates unique challenges and opportunities for future development of the dance companies.

In Chapter VI, I examine the participants' experiences as multifaceted artistic directors who "wear many hats," take on multiple leadership roles, and foster various additional/side initiatives benefiting their dance companies. For example, some of the participants describe doing the job of an artistic director as well as the job of an executive director. Others founded regional dance festivals, in which companies from around the region converge to share their choreography and performance, offer dance classes, and network with each other. Still others note an important connection to children's dance education by founding their own dance schools connected to their dance companies, or by directing educational initiatives in their communities.

In Chapter VII, I continue the analysis of the participants by exploring the issues inherent in directing a company and raising a family at the same time. Three of the participants in this study are mothers to children under the age of 10. Since motherhood was described by these participants as a hugely important part of their lives—one that often competes with the demands of their professional lives—I felt it important to detail these particular experiences. The issues emerging in our conversations were not foreign to me, as they are similar issues that arise in scholarly literature about women in the workforce and women in the professional dance field. Juggling professional responsibilities and family responsibilities is described by the participants in this study as “challenging,” “impossible,” and “worth it.” Therefore, in this chapter, participants describe their strategies for maintaining both professional and personal parts of their lives, to include delegating responsibilities, accepting support from families and friends, and strict scheduling habits. However, even though most felt pulled in too many directions and in need of more support, each parent participant spoke positively about the influence and benefits work with their dance companies have on their families.

Chapter VIII concludes by summarizing the important ideas and concepts emerging during the dissertation research process, specifically in relating the experiences of the participants to the current literature discussing the issues women face as leaders in differing fields and in dance. This chapter also highlights insights introduced by the participants which fell outside the broader issues developed in Chapters IV-VII. For example, two of the participants lead companies that have been sustained for longer than 15 years, while two others have led companies for fewer than five years. Another distinction that split the

pool of participants involved how they sensed the connections between their gender and their opportunities. Some of the participants describe gender inequality in the dance field as deeply affecting their careers as leaders, while others describe feeling empowered and not culturally restricted by their gender at all. Additionally, particular commonalities among all six participants are discussed as offering further future inquiry in this research topic. These commonalities include: how to secure adequate funding for their dance companies to succeed; how to prioritize the artistic needs of the choreography above all else, while also developing greater community engagement; how to create greater collaborations amongst the arts; and how to instigate meaningful delegations of responsibilities among the dance company members.

My hope is that this research will provide new insights and possibilities into women's leadership of dance companies in the United States in order to assist other women in building dance companies in the future. Therefore, in the concluding chapter, I discuss ideas for future research that could fill in some of the gaps that this dissertation study opened.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXTS OF WOMEN LEADERS IN DANCE DURING THE LATE TWENTIETH AND EARLY TWENTY-FIRST CENTURIES

In this chapter, I contextualize the broad experiences of American women leaders in general and then narrow the scope of focus to women leaders in dance in the United States by providing a survey of social, political, and cultural influences that have affected women leaders since the late 1900s. Further, I analyze granting and funding information since the late twentieth century to note trends occurring in who and what is funded in dance. I then highlight leadership approaches and artistic strategies adopted by women leaders in dance during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries in response to the noted cultural contexts and trends as described by scholars and women working in the dance field. Portraits of the artists Liz Lerman, Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, and Pat Graney offer a deeper exploration of how well-known women leaders in dance worked during this time period to successfully negotiate some of the various challenges that the participants in this study also face. These strategies and approaches are reiterated in later chapters of this dissertation in the words of the participants. Finally, I briefly introduce connections made between the discussions brought forth by scholars and women leaders in dance in this chapter and the voices of my participants who discuss similar issues.

Positioning Women and Dance in American Social and Political Landscapes of the Late Twentieth and Early Twenty-first Centuries

Evolving conversations in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries among working artists, funding organizations, and scholars reflected a dynamic and changing social, cultural, and political American landscape. Generally, issues of gender and racial inequality, attention to diversity, and desire for community-based work dominated much of this discussion. In the following, the larger scope of these discussions and the resultant actions taken by artists and funders will be examined.

The status of American politics from the late 1900s to the early 2000s creates a complex picture of how the arts fit into the overall culture.³ According to social scientist Toby Miller, in a 2000 *American Behavior Scientist* article, four major national issues contributed greatly to issues in arts funding during the 1990s: “party politics, constitutional law and lore, the function of art, and debates about sex and race” (Miller 2000, 1432). All of these issues, according to Miller, stemmed from a public debate about what constituted “Americanness.” The late 1900s marked an especially challenging time for arts funding; conservative politicians cut funding dramatically, resulting in struggles

³ The subject of federal funding of the arts in the United States in the late twentieth century is complex, involving social, cultural, and political issues not described fully in this section of the dissertation. For more information on the complexities of this issue, reference the following: “The National Endowment for the Arts in the 1990s: A Black Eye on the Arts?” by Toby Miller, <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/00027640021955973> and “The Contest for American Culture: A Leadership Case Study on the NEA and NEH Funding Crisis” by Cynthia Koch, <http://www.upenn.edu/pnc/ptkoch.html>.

for arts professionals and a nationwide reassessment of the place and value of art. The onus for arts patronage began to fall more heavily on private donors and patrons, and the arts, as a result, became more marginalized in society (Miller 2000, 1435).

A narrower scope of analysis of dance in the late twentieth century indicates a theoretical boom as scholars, dance makers, and educators expanded the boundaries of dance discourse to include new identity politics, questions of representation, aesthetics, embodiment, and pedagogical concerns (Thomas 2003, 1-5). Feminist studies and cultural theory, in particular, greatly impacted dance artists of this time period because of the many national debates happening about gender and race (Albright 1997, 5). Further, university dance programs developed nationwide and several national dance organizations were established to help support the field. All of these developments equated to a growing dance field, ripe for continued development. However, a range of political issues and funding problems presented the field with major challenges.

Scholars like dance studies writer Jan Van Dyke emphasized that “access to funding is critical for both visibility and attracting future funds. Since professional awards and opportunities tend to go to those whose work is known, grants have taken on major significance” (Van Dyke 1996, 536). The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), a major funding source for artists in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, evolved in its published values and goals, as indicated in the organization’s annual reports. A summary of reports from the 1980s indicates support was given to individual artists and professional companies to perform and tour nationally. However, due to a 39% federal budget cut in 1996, the NEA stopped funding individuals, and

grants required matching contributions. Further, the NEA shifted away from discipline-based grants (dance, theatre, etc.) to area-based grants (heritage, education, etc.), creating greater demand for diversity and interdisciplinary collaborations. This restructuring drastically changed the landscape of funding, the purposes of dance in American society, and the way dance was presented in that landscape.

In the 1990s, community-based art began to shift from the periphery of society to a more central place (Bishop 2012, 2). A philosophical desire to overturn the traditional relationship between spectator and performer led to greater interest in repositioning the viewer as a participant—even co-creator—of artistic works. According to author Claire Bishop, this shift reflected a Marxist “aim to place pressure on conventional modes of artistic production and consumption under capitalism” (Bishop 2012, 2). Further, the political and cultural changes previously mentioned demanded the arts evolve by, among other things, embracing cultural diversity and developing stronger ties with every area in the community.⁴ Thus, the NEA and other funding organizations were pressured to incorporate more community engagement initiatives in its funding opportunities during this time period. Once funding for individuals disappeared, organizations found greater success, particularly when aligning with educational institutions and underserved communities (National Endowment for the Arts 1997). The 1998 ArtsREACH program, for example, funded community partnerships between arts and non-arts organizations.

⁴ For a helpful discussion about specific changes arts organizations were encouraged to implement in the late twentieth century, see the article “The Arts Look Ahead” by Alvin H. Reiss (1994).

The 1999 Challenge America initiative “targeted support to arts education, services for young people, cultural heritage, community partnerships and expanded access to the arts” (National Endowment for the Arts 1999). Additional new areas of emergence at the NEA during the late twentieth century included leadership initiatives and folk arts.

Underlying the social and political implications of dance and its place in society during this dynamic time was a climate of inequality that disadvantaged women in funding and employment opportunities. Scholar Jan Van Dyke asserts that the construct of gender in America positioned women and their work as less important, and although they comprised the majority of participants in the field, they were less funded, less often recognized, and less likely to achieve leadership roles and employment. She says, “The strong numerical presence of women in the field clearly has not been sufficient to ensure that women maintain even equal representation in professional leadership” (Van Dyke 1996, 542). One telling set of statistics she cites is a 1993 NEA study on US choreographers that reported “for men, average income from choreography including grants was twice that for women” (Van Dyke 1996, 541). Another example is the conspicuous composition of faculty employed at the 1993 American Dance Festival Six Week School: the faculty comprised 25 men and 14 women (64% male); the student population, meanwhile, included 58 men and 219 women (79% female). These organizations, and many others, according to Van Dyke, stood in stark contradiction to their stated organizational values of equality and diversity, placing unfair disadvantages onto women and minorities.

General Obstacles for Women Leaders in the United States

Many sources cite the same barriers for women leaders, pointing to culturally constructed and biologically gendered inequalities. These struggles, according to business executive and writer Sheryl Sandberg, include isolation and exclusion by colleagues, the pressure of women's biological clocks, unequal domestic work in the house between husbands and wives, and a lesser sense of entitlement in women for leadership roles (Sandberg 2013, 107). Sandberg asserts the myth that women can "do it all" puts undue pressure on *all* women, leading to unreasonable demands and stress on them, unmet goals and expectations, and possible eventual burnout.

Many women face these struggles, particularly when prioritizing both family and career. Although women have taken on many more career responsibilities over the last 30 years, their household responsibilities have not necessarily decreased. A 2009 study indicates, "when a husband and wife are both employed full-time, the mother does 40 percent more child care and about 30 percent more housework than the father" (Sandberg 2013, 106). Further, the professional sphere remains a model built specifically for men in the traditional breadwinner role. Of academia in particular, educational leadership theorist Athena Vongalis-Macrow argues, "Tenure was historically premised on the married male professor as a universal model and the linear career trajectory in academe assumed that someone else would be taking care of family and domestic responsibilities" (Vongalis-Macrow 2014, 92). This literature points to these inequalities as major obstacles for women seeking leadership roles in the workplace.

Those women who did find leadership success in the twentieth century did so by actively working toward unique goals, advocating for themselves, and thus, innovatively forging their own paths. Yet, public attention often highlights the fact of their gender, rather than focusing on their professional successes. According to women's studies theorist Jean Lau Chin, identifying the few women working as leaders has become somewhat of a national spectacle. She says, "Women leaders often make the cover of *Fortune* simply because they hold their position" (Chin 2008, 701). For example, Marissa Mayer recently made national news for being named Yahoo's newest CEO; much of this news focused on the novelty of her gender and her stance on marriage and family issues—not on her business ideas or professional initiatives (Sandberg 2013, 160).

Women leaders often receive public attention for matters that have nothing to do with their leadership roles. For example, news anchors, media celebrities, and politicians who are women are often interviewed about their appearance, being criticized for undergoing plastic surgery, adopting new hairstyles, or wearing unflattering clothes, while their male counterparts are not held to those same standards of appearance; men are, instead, asked about their work.⁵ These examples demonstrate a disregard for women in that they are not taken seriously in their workplace roles.

⁵ Detailed in these articles by Lily Karlin (2014), Elizabeth Plank (2015), and Jennifer Victor (2015): http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/11/17/tv-anchor-same-suit-sexism_n_6170900.html; <http://mic.com/articles/110338/12-women-who-had-the-perfect-response-to-sexist-questions>; <http://www.mischiefsoffaction.com/2015/04/how-hillary-clintons-gender-may-matter.html>

Since women are often shamed for self-promotion, they may be less publicly acknowledged, and less likely to accept recognition comfortably. For example, when Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg was named the fifth most powerful woman in the world by *Forbes* in 2012, she was “horrified” to be listed ahead of Michelle Obama (Sandberg 2013, 37). Sandberg was chastised by a female colleague, who demanded she acknowledge her own success with dignity; it was then that Sandberg recognized her own lack of confidence and self-sabotaging tendencies. Unfortunately, whereas she can now recognize her deservedness, she still credits those who support her, rather than her *own* actions, for her success (Sandberg, 2013, 38). This example demonstrates some women’s ability to be great leaders, while, at the same time, undermining their own strengths.

Main Issues for Women Leaders in the Twentieth and Twenty-first Centuries

According to multiple theoretical sources, the main issues women leaders faced in the twentieth century include prejudice and gender stereotypes about women that dominated the workforce, unbalanced domestic responsibilities between women and men, fewer opportunities for women’s leadership, and skewed perceptions of women in leadership roles (Barsh and Cranston 2009; Chin 2008; Hoyt 2010). These challenges are echoed in the voices of working women leaders. For example, when *TIME* recently asked 12 of the world’s “Most Powerful Women” to identify the most significant barrier to female leaders, they overwhelmingly mentioned a lack of current women leaders to emulate, women’s lack of self-confidence, and a nationwide lack of support for working mothers in the United States (Fastenberg 2010, 2).

Granting Support of Women in the Arts and Dance

In this section, statistical data from local and national American granting organizations will be analyzed, with a particular emphasis on funding and employment opportunities for women. Women's strategies for negotiating the needs of their organizations, along with specific requirements for funding, will add to the complex picture of how women have led arts organizations from the twentieth century to today.

American arts flourished in the mid-twentieth century because of increased public funding and resultant growth and development. However, in the wake of massive federal budget cuts and declining arts attendance in the last two decades of the twentieth century, that growth has since plateaued and, in fact, recessed (Stubbs 2014, 2). Despite nominal increases in funding at the local, state, and national levels since the mid-1990s, public funding of the arts has not kept pace with inflation. Artists forced to reassess the value and stability of their work in relation to what was/is valued by funding organizations and the public, have implemented interesting strategies to meet the needs of their organizations. Women arts leaders, in particular, have adapted in various ways to support artistic excellence, relevance, and sustainability of their companies despite alarming funding trends that point to gender inequality.

The nonprofit arts sector has taken an especially big financial hit from the latter half of the twentieth century to today. According to the National Arts Index, as of 2012, 44% of US arts nonprofits were operating at a deficit. This fact is in no small part because of the 31% (local, state, and national) government funding cut for nonprofit arts since 1992. Arts management expert Michael M. Kaiser speculates these cuts affected

smaller arts organizations at the margins of society. In turn, he says, “We lose the new artists who bring fresh vision and insight. . . . We lose projects that bring vitality to the community. We lose the organizations that push art forms to change and grow” (Kaiser 2015, 34).

Funding Statistics for Women in the Arts and Dance

Recent statistics from granting organizations illustrate a portrait of American arts in which women are not as well funded as men. For example, the MacArthur “Genius” Grants have been awarded to three dance artists in the last decade—all three were men. The Doris Duke Performing Artist Award has annually been given to more men than women; in 2015, for example, 12 men and eight women were granted the award. Since 1952, the Capezio Dance Award has been granted to 45 men and 21 women. Perhaps the most damning evidence of gender discrimination in funding was reported in 2010 by Art Works Fund, who documented that while 70% of all American ballet and modern dance companies are directed by women, 70% of funding goes to male directed organizations (Art Works Fund 2010, 1). One of the exceptions to these trends is the granting activity from the New England Foundation for the Arts, who, from 2008-2015, seems to have funded men and women almost equally. Additionally, although the National Endowment for the Arts has historically shown gender bias in granting practices, the organization made efforts to distribute funds more equitably in the 1990s (Van Dyke 1996, 539).

In the 1996 article “Gender and Success in the American Dance World,” author Jan Van Dyke analyzes women’s disadvantaged position in the dance field in regard to funding and employment opportunities. She claims in festival and master class scenarios,

the student gender ratio rarely aligns with the faculty gender ratio. For example, the 1993 American Dance Festival (ADF) Six Week School included a faculty of 25 men and 14 women, even though its student population consisted of 58 men and 219 women. The 2015 ADF School, in comparison, features a faculty of 23 women and 23 men, and three endowed chairs (two men and one woman), pointing to a more progressive view of gender equity in hiring practices. Van Dyke also underlines university faculty and student ratios to emphasize this point. For example, in 1994, the School of Dance faculty at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro comprised five men and four women, while its student population reflected a group of three men and 77 women. UNC Greensboro's faculty today comprises 15 women and three men, representing a faculty gender composition more closely aligned with its student population.

Presenting organizations communicate values in their practices as well. Dance artist and writer Nicole Bindler investigated gender inequality in contemporary American dance in a 2014 series of articles featured on the *Thinking Dance* blog. Bindler argues that for dance companies, “the bigger the budget, the more men featured in their season” (Bindler 2014, 1). She says that grassroots arts organizations, typically staffed by women, have a more difficult time being produced. For example, American Dance Festival's history of presenting mostly male choreographers prompted Bindler to seek out presenting statistics in her hometown of Philadelphia. She found that of the professional choreographers in the city, 101 are female and 23 are male. Alarming, only “19% of Philadelphia dance makers are men, but they receive approximately 40% of the presenting opportunities” (Bindler 2014, 6). She offers many of the same reasons that

have been cited by other theorists for this incongruity (child rearing challenges, women's lack of assertiveness and self-promotion, etc.).

The reasons for gender bias and discriminatory practices in dance have been speculated about in literature. Some theorists point to the supposed differences between the choreographic interests of men and women (that men's choreography is generally "more aggressive physically" and therefore, more viewer friendly).⁶ Others attribute the extra attention men receive during early training to their ability to be more ambitious and risk-taking later in their careers.⁷ Further, the incompatibility of women's biological clocks and dance career trajectories is often cited as a reason for women's disadvantaged position. Van Dyke and other theorists blame a pervasive sexist attitude in the field in combination with the aforementioned pressures and circumstances to the unequal treatment of women in dance.

Women's Strategies for Leadership Success in Dance

Challenges in budgeting and fundraising have been met by the leaders of nonprofit organizations who are willing to be flexible in their offerings and adapt to growing demands for technological innovation in the arts (Kaiser 2015, 37). For example, moving to a subscription model, in which patrons can purchase an entire season's worth of tickets in advance is one strategy small companies have used. Other strategies include

⁶ See Luke Jennings's (2013) article "Sexism in Dance: Where Are All the Female Choreographers?" <http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2013/apr/28/women-choreographers-glass-ceiling>

⁷ See Judith Mackrell's (2009) article "Vanishing Point: Where Are All the Great Female Choreographers?" <http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2009/oct/27/where-are-the-female-choreographers>

reducing season offerings; staging smaller, more familiar works; and partnering with other entities in education, business, or public service. One of the more recently employed strategies to increase revenue has been broadcasting live performances at movie theatres and other external venues, and offering video content online. Smaller companies have also recently adopted crowdfunding mechanisms like Kickstarter to raise money on a project-focused basis.

One of the major strategies adopted by women leaders and dance organizations hoping to achieve funding is aligning the missions of their companies and related activities with educational and community engagement initiatives. For example, after eight years as a successful performing company, Martha Bowers's Brooklyn-based Dance Theatre Etcetera strategically focused its mission in 2002 toward arts education. Now, the company's entire season is structured around educational partnerships with local public schools. In fact, many arts and dance organizations that target sustainability have done so through cultivating educational and community relationships. Urban Bush Women, for example, developed an entire structure of workshops and classes that focus on specific endeavors such as healthy bodies, spiritual awareness, traditions of the African diaspora, leadership, and personal empowerment.⁸

One area that women have dominated (and continue to do so) is in dance education leadership. Research conducted by the National Dance Education Organization

⁸ Full list of UBW workshops:
https://www.urbanbushwomen.org/create_dance/classes_and_workshops

indicates there are 665 higher education dance programs today.⁹ That many of these university programs have been founded and directed by women is supported by the *Dance Magazine College Guide*, which indicated that in 1994, there were 257 female university dance program leaders and 63 male leaders (Van Dyke 1996, 538). Further, the number of university arts degrees increased steadily since 1997, indicating sustainability in arts education (National Arts Index 2014). Many university programs are also now promoting leadership training and experiences as part of their missions. For example, Columbia College's Dance Program in South Carolina includes a "leadership semester," a capstone internship or project through which students are expected to demonstrate the leadership skills they have gained throughout coursework.¹⁰ This data indicates that not only are women thriving in leadership roles in higher education, it appears as if they are also training the next generation of leaders.

A large population of working choreographers and leaders in the dance field are concurrently employed in academia. Universities provide (for full-time faculty) a supportive environment, facilities, funding, and dancers with which to create and produce work, all while paying them consistent salaries with benefits. Some choreographers have created companies out of university students, some have kept their professional companies running while working as professors, and still others have closed their

⁹ NDEO's U.S. Education Statistics:

http://www.ndeo.org/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=893257&module_id=55774

¹⁰ See more about Columbia College's emphasis on leadership in dance:

<https://www.columbiasc.edu/academics/arts-a-communication-studies/dance-program/leadership-in-dance>

companies in order to work for the university system.¹¹ Further, opportunities exist within universities for partnerships, collaboration, and leadership development and positions. While this paper does not allow for a larger discussion about this topic, the university system has created irresistible opportunities for women leaders in dance to thrive.

Other areas that women have maintained leadership status are in dance research, advocacy, and scholarly writing. As dance became an institutionalized discipline in higher education, national organizations began to emerge, with women at the helm. In the 2010 text *Moveable Pillars: Organizing Dance, 1956-1978*, author Katja Kolcio examines the founding and early years of five prominent dance organizations. Kolcio claims the founding of these organizations “represents the national institutionalization of a platform for intelligent bodily practice, reflecting but also substantiating a radical transformation in the politics of knowledge in academia” (Kolcio 2010, 1). These organizations, like academia, extended dance beyond the stage, expanding its ability to bridge the dichotomy of mind and body. All of the dance organizations featured in Kolcio’s text were founded and led mostly by women, giving them a clear voice and presence as leaders in the dance field. Since their founding, dance educators and researchers have used dance organizations and their sponsored conferences and meetings

¹¹ See Nancy Wozny’s article “Safe House: Dancing in the Ivory Tower”
<http://www2.danceusa.org/ejournal/post.cfm?entry=safe-house-dancing-in-the-ivory-tower-part-2>

as points of intersection with other dance professionals to exchange ideas and publish scholarly work.

In addition to individual strategies implemented by women leaders in dance, the field as a whole has begun embracing leadership as a career trajectory. Recent initiatives to support and educate people who strive to be leaders in dance offer evidence that the field is responding to the needs of its future leadership. For example, the inaugural Women in Dance Leadership conference took place in Baton Rouge, Louisiana in October, 2015. The mission of this conference is “to investigate, explore, and reflect on women’s leadership by representing innovative and multicultural dance work to celebrate, develop, and promote women’s leadership in dance making, dance related fields, and other male dominated professions” (Women in Dance 2015).

In a separate but similar study¹², Art Works Fund interviewed seven women leaders of dance companies in 2010 about strategies they call on to maintain their careers and companies. These women whose companies have been active since the 1980s and 1990s, bring in annual salaries that vary from \$0-\$24,000; two of them have never been paid for their work in these companies, even though they are considered successful and are often awarded and funded. Financial constraints force the dance companies to constantly adapt, often choosing between artistic and administrative goals. A diminished arts writing industry means these women must seek out innovative ways to promote themselves and gain publicity, including social media and other online channels. They

¹² Reference the Art Works Fund study here:
<http://www.artworkfund.org/mapatz/Files/Dance%20Companies.pdf>

spoke of difficulties finding board members with appropriate resources and work ethic for their organizations. Always resourceful, some of these directors share rehearsal space with other organizations to reduce costs and build a sense of community among the groups. Many of these women also take on roles that they have not been trained for, such as marketing specialist and financial analyst, in response to the desperate needs of their dance companies.

Some women leaders in dance reject traditional modes of financial support in favor of the artistic freedom and community connections that come with private sponsorship. For example, *Thinking Dance* blogger Nicole Bindler notes that some women artists actually prefer the control they have over their artistic work when a funding agency does not dictate its structure. Some women choreographers, Bindler argues, prefer to rely on volunteers, individual donors, and community partnerships because the results are “very much an organic outgrowth of the people and artists that make up [the] community” (Bindler 2014, 7). Therefore, according to Bindler, interactivity and participation in the community adds another dimension to any leadership style. She further continues to discuss how being equipped to lead not only a company of dancers, but also non-dancers and complete strangers in participatory community work demands patience, open mindedness, organization, and enthusiasm (Bindler 2014, 7).

Leadership Approaches of Women in Dance

Several leadership centers and institutions feature lists of leadership characteristics proven to be effective for leaders in general.¹³ Some of these traits seem to be inherent qualities of personality (e.g., proactive vs. reactive, open-minded vs. closed-minded) and others appear to be learned or attained characteristics (e.g., ability to continue to evaluate and reevaluate, privilege of being well educated). From the aforementioned studies of women dance company directors noted in this chapter's previous sections, it is easy to see some commonalities among them regarding the leadership characteristics they share. Based on the earlier discussion about the uncertainty of funding and all of the contextual variables that determine a dance company's ability to survive the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, most of the artistic directors indicate great resourcefulness, initiative, and adaptability necessary for the dance company's sustainment. Further, all the women dance leaders researched are noted as opportunistic and strategic in that they actively seek a balance of opportunities to help their organizations succeed, often negotiating several obstacles at once. Though, it should be noted that some of these nuanced leadership traits are difficult to discern through broad and simplistic interviews. Instead, to discover how these less noticeable traits are being manifested, in-depth interviews, observations, and discussion with the leaders and their organizational colleagues should be implemented.

¹³ Two of the most comprehensive sites referenced here are the Holden Leadership Center site: http://leadership.uoregon.edu/resources/exercises_tips/skills/leadership_characteristics and the Purdue Leadership site: <http://www.ansc.purdue.edu/courses/communicationskills/leaderqualities.pdf>

Since most of the female leaders discussed in this dissertation are in the same field of dance, it can be assumed that they may also be dealing with similar issues (funding, staffing, producing) in similar contexts (arts, United States, twenty-first century). However, even among these women, who seem to have so much in common, there are distinctions in leadership traits adopted in order to meet the goals and needs of their organizations. Some of these traits are called on to coincide with the unique missions of each of their companies. For example, Brenda Way credits the feminist movement of the 1960s as the impetus for establishing Oberlin Dance Company's overarching feminist value system¹⁴. Therefore, as a leader, she often calls on human values such as "a taste for adventure and risk, a capacity for problem solving, straightforwardness, [and] a good ear" to lead a company that "provides opportunity, challenge, and security" (Friedler and Glazer 1997, 249). So, whereas some of the women leaders interviewed by Arts Fund in 2010 described their leadership role as multifunctional, in that they take on various administrative roles independently, for Way, "governance and collective vision are one thing" and the dancers often take on as much administrative and creative responsibility as the leaders (Friedler and Glazer 1997, 250).

Other women leaders in dance call on a diversity of characteristics that differ from those previously mentioned. For example, Anna Halprin believes that art is a consequence of the connection between body, mind, and spirit, saying "whatever emotional, physical, or mental barriers that we carry around with us in our personal lives

¹⁴ For more information on ODC, visit the company's website: <http://www.odc.dance>

will be the same barriers that inhibit our full creative expression” (Schorn 2015, 60). In order to create art, and thus, lead, Halprin creates awareness in herself and others to trigger collective creativity and activism. Awareness, perception, emotion, self-reflection, vitality, and charisma are the keys to Halprin’s leadership style (Schorn 2015, 70). These traits stand in contrast to other characteristics important to other women leaders.

Other theorists offer diverse ideas about what constitutes good leadership in arts organizations. However, women leaders mentioned in this chapter do not necessarily ascribe to these traits, hinting that a wide range of tactics can be used for successful leadership. Community studies writer Doug Borwick highlights the importance of “humility” in leadership as a company establishes itself in a community. Borwick’s value on humility stems from an assumption that most community members have deeply held beliefs that the arts are disconnected and elitist (Borwick 2012, 33). None of the women profiled in this chapter refer to this leadership trait or this issue in dance. Sociologist Steven L. Tepper calls for leaders to build “trust” between companies and communities (Tepper and Ivey 2008, 28). While it is likely many leaders in dance do attempt to create a bond of trust with their communities, the women in this chapter do not speak specifically to that trait, except when discussing choreographing on non-dancers. Interestingly, the women leaders in dance who are discussed in this chapter do not explicitly echo the sentiments of these scholars, indicating that what an organization needs from the inside and what it appears to need from the outside may be very different.

Summary of Major Issues for Women Leaders in General and in Dance Specifically

One of the major issues emerging in this chapter is the skewed perception of women as leaders in general and in dance specifically. Women in the twentieth century, and even today, struggle to be perceived as successful leaders in the workplace. According to author Jean Lau Chin, “many women feel they are expected to behave in ways consistent with ‘feminine roles,’ yet they also feel pressure to “masculinize” their behavior to fit a certain leadership profile” (Chin 2008, 712). Studies show, though, that women are criticized no matter which approach they take. Women exhibiting stereotypically feminine behaviors (e.g., crying or displaying a nurturing demeanor) are considered weak and ineffective; however, incongruously, women exhibiting masculine behavior stereotypical of leaders (e.g., being aggressive and direct) are considered overbearing and angry. These perceptions of women potentially equate to an overall lack of disrespect for them as leaders. Further, according to author Crystal L. Hoyt, when women adopt masculinized leadership approaches and/or supervise a higher proportion of male subordinates, they are evaluated as less effective (Hoyt 2010, 304).

Another major issue is American society’s obsession with female appearance; this obsession can undermine women’s ability to be taken seriously, therefore diminishing the strength of their leadership. While women in the public eye (mainly politicians and media celebrities) are starting to recognize and fight back against sexist remarks about their looks, a change in popular opinion has not reached a critical mass yet. Society’s preoccupation with appearance is made more vivid in the dance field, where politicized bodies are the modes of expression, communication, and transformation, further complicating the leadership roles women play in the arts and dance.

As long as women have strived to balance career demands with family demands, there have also been issues emerging concerning their leadership needs. These issues are still as relevant today as they were at the start of the second wave of feminism, when women launched a fight for equality in the workplace. A major concern is the continued and fundamental lack of support for women in the work force who are pregnant or who are mothers. The Family Medical Leave Act of 1993 grants only 12 weeks of (unpaid) leave for women as an alternative form of maternity leave. However, not only can many women not afford to take an unpaid leave, but according to some studies, “those who take time off from their careers often find reentry difficult and often enter at a lower level than the level they left, making it that much more difficult to rise in the leadership ranks” (Hoyt 2010, 308). In addition, women often find themselves taking on more of the domestic duties when in a dual-career household, creating greater challenge for them to achieve higher status at work.

Funding and employment statistics clearly illustrate gender discrimination, giving men the upper hand for leadership and success in the dance field. Whereas about 70% of dance audiences are female, and the majority of participants (students, performers, teachers) in the field are female, men are overwhelmingly granted funding, awards, and producing opportunities (Dance/USA 2011). A survey of 316 NEA dance grant recipients during 1971-1974 reveal that, “although 55% of company members were female, 73% of grant recipients were male. Of grantees receiving \$70,000 or more, 100% were male” (Van Dyke 1996, 539). In 1995, since over twice as many NEA grant applicants were

female, the success rate for men was more than double that for women: a 20% success rate for men and only 8% for women (Van Dyke 1996, 539).

Recent statistics show improvement in the discrepancy of opportunities awarded, however, equality is still not a reality. For example, the American Dance Festival's faculty used to be comprised of a men to women faculty ratio of 3:2 in the 1990s; now, that ratio is 1:1. Coveted USA Fellowships have gone to women and men nearly equally in the last nine years.¹⁵ However, since the dance field is comprised of mostly women, these awards and opportunities still do not present a realistic reflection of the field's gender composition. The many proposed reasons for this gender imbalance are noted in this chapter as including the advantages and support men receive in their training, the tendency of women to avoid self-promotion and aggressive ambition, and the physicality and athleticism prevalent in men's choreography and teaching styles. These proposed reasons for gender bias are also problematic in that they make assumptions and essentialize both genders.

Despite the issues in funding for leaders working in professional performance and choreography, women are finding much continued success in dance education, advocacy, and scholarly work. Some theorists have suggested that, "perhaps because women are in proportionally less demand as performers, they tend to extend their educations in order to sustain an active involvement in the field, and so are more likely than men to have

¹⁵ See entire list of USA Fellows: <http://www.unitedstatesartists.org/fellows/>

graduate degrees” (Van Dyke 1996, 538). This area denotes a successful niche women have created and maintained for themselves as leaders.

Women have adopted a multitude of strategies for successfully leading dance companies in a field that has previously catered to men in these roles. In this chapter, I have discussed how women are noted in the literature as finding innovative work at the grassroots level while also implementing community engagement, site-specific work, partnerships, and collaborations. By working with others in and outside of the arts, women leaders are also noted as keeping dance in the center of society and making creative connections to other fields in order to support sustainability and arts participation. Most importantly, the strategies implemented by women in the past are now creating new opportunities for women currently working in dance. In the following section, I highlight how these opportunities are being implemented by three women choreographers working in the early twenty-first century.

Portraits of Three Prominent Early Twenty-first Century

Women Leaders in Dance

The following portraits of three notable women choreographers working in the early twenty-first century offer evidence of dance’s shifting place in society as related to community and the changing demands of choreographers in producing their work and maintaining artistic standards. The women highlighted below offer a range of contribution to the dance field, with differing definitions of success, artistic pursuits, and influences. Their artistic practices and strategies of locating support for their work provide insights into the ways women have negotiated the changing landscape of society

and the arts by questioning assumptions about who can dance and where dance can happen.

The expanding field of dance in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries included and continues to include a surge of participatory, collaborative, socially engaged artistic practice. For example, choreographers have embraced the viewer's experience in innovative ways, inviting collective, process-based, experiential work that blurs the lines of ownership and performance (Bishop 2012, 2-3). Further, in response to the changing needs of differing communities, choreographers call on a variety of support structures and institutional connections in order to continue and develop their artistic practices. By profiling Liz Lerman, Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, and Pat Graney, women choreographers whose work is currently significant and well supported, this section will identify specific artistic practices that are concerned with engaging individual communities. Further, the roles these women play shed light on strategies for connecting women leaders in dance to support structures and institutions supporting these differing communities.

Liz Lerman

Liz Lerman, acclaimed choreographer, performer, writer, educator, and speaker, founded the Maryland-based Liz Lerman Dance Exchange (LLDX) in 1976. Its mission was to create dances that arise from asking: Who gets to dance? Where is the dance happening? What is it about? Why does it matter? Dance Exchange further prided itself on being an intergenerational company committed to "creative research" conducted in various environments with and for various communities (Dance Exchange 2015). LLDX, under Lerman's leadership, also conducted community-based dance training, community

residencies, interactive performances, and traditional concerts (Dance Exchange 2015). With LLDX, Lerman toured internationally, and was well funded and awarded for her work. However, she stepped down as artistic director in 2011 due to “the financial pressure of sustaining her company [which] limited the kind of work she could do” (Kaufman 2011, 1) and has since taken on several independent community-based, site-specific projects in which she has artistic control and less administrative responsibilities¹⁶.

Lerman’s site-specific, participatory works seek to redefine spaces and educate dancers and non-dancers alike through various choreographic and presentational strategies. According to Lerman, site-specific dance has the capacity to transform spaces, “making it possible for people to undergo a fresh understanding of their surroundings, of an idea, or of their own relationship to artistic experience” (Lerman 2011, 121). Thus, she created works at such varied places as the Lincoln Memorial, a New Hampshire shipyard, senior centers, and various other sites. She asserts when working with non-dancers, that the choreographer’s responsibility is to educate the beginning dancers about choreography while they are in the process of doing it (Lerman 2011, 133). Lerman laments that in the current aesthetic climate, “abstraction is now the only expression

¹⁶ For a fascinating discussion with Liz Lerman about her time as the leader of Liz Lerman Dance Exchange and her reasons for stepping down as artistic director, refer to Dr. Adrienne Clancy’s dissertation in which she interviews Lerman about this topic. Among other reasons, Lerman states that once she decided to step down, she felt free to collaborate more fully without the responsibility of sustaining and protecting her company of dancers. (Clancy, “Sustainable Models of Dance Making Developed and Developing within the 20th and 21st Centuries,” 90-140.)

permissible,” which, for her, is a negative trend that avoids making dance legible. To move against a sense of abstraction, Lerman relies on spoken word, pedestrian movement, and literal gesture, in addition to more stylized postmodern movement (Lerman 2011, 93).

In addition to her prolific work creating projects in and with communities through Liz Lerman Dance Exchange, Lerman published three texts about her work: *Hiking the Horizontal* (2011) contextualizes the scope of her work through personal anecdotes and stories; *Liz Lerman’s Critical Response Process* (2003) offers a method of peer review and discussion that is meant to be applied to anything created; and *Teaching Dance to Senior Adults* (1984) engages the elderly population with modern dance expression. Thus, Lerman has created opportunities for her company based on the differing needs of specific communities, on creating dance education possibilities and materials, and developing performance venues not carrying the excessive costs of professional theatres.

Jawole Willa Jo Zollar and Urban Bush Women

Jawole Willa Jo Zollar’s vision is to reimagine society and identities within identities by challenging racial and gendered ideologies of inequality through dance performance (George-Graves 2010, 6). To accomplish a sense of solidarity and, hopefully, raise social consciousness, Zollar founded New York-based Urban Bush Women (UBW) in 1984. The company adopted a mission “to bring the untold and under-told histories and stories of disenfranchised people to light through dance. We do this from a woman-centered perspective and as members of the African Diaspora community in order to create a more equitable balance of power in the dance world and beyond”

(Urban Bush Women 2014). UBW adopted six core values that shape its artistic processes and explain its community agenda.¹⁷ According to dance and gender studies writer Nadine George-Graves, UBW's works highlight injustice and cruelty, yet emphasize ultimate overcoming and empowerment. George-Graves stresses, "These pieces call attention to the global tyrannies over women and provide strategies for understanding and conquering them with the ultimate goal of moving toward healing" (George-Graves 2010, 134). The company, under Zollar's leadership, has found international success, receiving the highest awards and grants while performing contemporary concert works framed by the culture and traditions of the African Diaspora.

One of UBW's most significant achievements is its extraordinary record of and continued commitment to community programs. Community is important to Zollar because it implies belonging, confidence, and sense of purpose. To help create and maintain communities, Zollar and UBW conduct 12 types of dance-based classes or workshops that seek to support community values, history, and identity.¹⁸ Intended for children and adults of all ages and backgrounds, "the emphasis on learning is vital" in these classes and workshops (George-Graves 2010, 171). Additionally, UBW instituted an annual 10-day "Summer Leadership Institute," which Zollar describes as a "learning experience that leverages the arts as a vehicle for social activism and civic engagement" (Urban Bush Women 2014). Similar to Lerman, Zollar has developed deep connections

¹⁷ For a full list of UBW core values:

https://www.urbanbushwomen.org/about_ubw/mission_values

¹⁸ For a comprehensive listing of classes and workshops, see the UBW website:

https://www.urbanbushwomen.org/create_dance/classes_and_workshops

with the communities she reaches, offers educational workshops that help the next generation continue this work, and creates insights into dance as a vehicle for social and political activism.

Pat Graney

The Pat Graney Company is a Seattle-based contemporary dance organization that “creates, performs and tours new dance/installation works and conducts arts-based educational programming for incarcerated women” (Pat Graney 2015). While the company’s founding date is unclear, Graney herself has been creating interdisciplinary, installation, and site-specific work since 1981.

For the past 20 years, Graney and her company conducted Keeping the Faith—The Prison Project, an “arts-based educational residency program designed to enable incarcerated women and girls to discover a sense of identity and to develop that identity within the context of community—through the vehicles of performance, video documentation and a published anthology of their writings” (Pat Graney 2015). The project offers incarcerated people a chance to explore and affirm their identities by telling their stories and collaborating creatively. According to author Jessica Berson in a 2008 article in *The Drama Review*,

Instead of advocating the transformational power of movement itself, Graney locates potential for personal empowerment in the project’s auto-biographical creative processes and its demands for constructive social interaction. The collaborative work of creating a performance piece grants inmates permission to speak and be heard, to touch each other, and to play, all of which can contribute to emotional growth. (Berson 2008, 91)

In addition to the successful Keeping the Faith program, Graney seems quite invested in her home community of Seattle, evidenced by an active social media presence that advocates a communal support for women and dance.¹⁹ Additionally, her choreography and community work has been sponsored locally and nationally. She has won many national awards including a Doris Duke Performing Artist Award in 2013 and an Artist Innovator Award in 2011 (Pat Graney 2015). Similar to both Lerman and Zollar, Graney has developed a specific and unique niche and space for her choreographic ideas to interact with a specific community. Her work has been commissioned by universities and she has opened dance to be an exciting practice of empowerment for dancers and non-dancers alike.

Definitions of and Relationships with Community

All three of the women profiled in this section note in their dance company mission statements and in discussion about their artistic practices as being specifically involved in community building. However, their definitions of *community* differ. For example, whereas Zollar and Lerman have expanded the definition geographically, pursuing global communities, Graney remains closer to home in the scope of her work, thereby focusing on a specific, local community, though often within differing geographic regions of the United States. Whereas Lerman aims to open local community members to the process of art making, Zollar addresses a global community's needs for

¹⁹ See Pat Graney Company's Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/PatGraneyCompany?fref=ts>

social consciousness raising. Each of the three leaders' target communities is structured differently and, therefore, has different needs.

Educationally, these women choreographers are also invested in differing ways. For example, Zollar's classes and workshops and Lerman's community-based dance training and published texts create learning opportunities for intergenerational dancers. Graney's prison project encourages lifelong learning and personal growth specifically for incarcerated women, which may include young adults to the elderly. Additionally, Zollar and Lerman are currently on faculty at Florida State University and Arizona State University, respectively, and have taught as visiting artists and guest lecturers at academic institutions around the country. Graney has led workshops at educational institutions and worked with higher educational dance faculty; however, she is not affiliated with any one higher educational institution. These differences require differing leadership and administrative needs for each dance company's mission to be sustained.

Whereas all three of the women profiled in this section work toward community building and engagement in some way, they also differ in their target populations. For example, Graney's work in the prison system points to practices that seek out specific underprivileged or disadvantaged populations within existing institutions. Zollar, on the other hand, is more concerned with personal ideology and empowerment, aimed at women and racial minority populations in general. Lerman encourages empowerment in the elderly population through her intergenerational approach and seeks out dancers as well as non-dancers in her choreography. Even though these differing populations may

overlap, each artist has developed a clear definition of the communities with which she works.

How each of the three leaders define and practice aspects of empowerment and self-reflection are other areas in which these three women differ. For example, Zollar and Graney encourage people to share their stories, and by stripping away the standards of the dominant societal narrative, reimagine their identities as empowered citizens. Lerman's work could potentially lead to self-reflection and empowerment, but her dance company's mission does not explicitly proclaim these goals. Instead, Lerman seems to be interested in how people can transform their relationships to their community spaces and perhaps their personal histories. However, while the choreographers portrayed in this chapter differ in some ways, they all share a desire to make dance function for and with the communities they serve by addressing social, political, and cultural factors in their artistic processes and practices. Further, all three leaders achieved notoriety for their work and been awarded numerous grants for their dance companies' continued successes. Looking more deeply at how these leaders manage their companies could provide important information for current emerging dance professionals as they navigate their future paths supported by their artistic ideals. In the later data chapters of this dissertation, the ideas posited by these successful women leaders will be interesting to place in connection to the research participants leading small regional dance companies.

Institutional Contexts and Support Structures

Some artists transport their arts initiatives to target participants. Pat Graney, for example, holds her Keeping the Faith program in prisons, since incarcerated women are

confined there. Graney's work helps incarcerated people visualize their confinement as an opportunity for community building and identity exploration (Pat Graney 2015). Liz Lerman, in contrast, developed a system of feedback called the Critical Response Process (CRP), which she uses as the foundation for seminars and guest lectures she offers to institutional organizations around the world. These events are held for groups of artists in the process of creation, but can also be directed toward anyone who creates: engineers, business people, and scientists have all benefitted from CRP.

Some artists use certain geographical spaces for their work to take place in order to focus on relevant political issues. For example, Urban Bush Women (UBW) relocated its 2015 Summer Leadership Institute to New Orleans because the city expressed, after Hurricane Katrina, a need for collaborative approaches to rebuild its tradition of vibrant arts and culture. Since New Orleans struggled with racial injustices during the aftermath of Katrina, UBW's mission for racial equity makes this partnership particularly effective (Urban Bush Women 2014). The social and cultural goals of the community in need and the mission of the project and company align in this initiative.

However, performance contexts and the relationships of artists to communities can be fluid and adaptable. For example, Graney's prison project and Lerman's community trainings have been presented in various settings and geographies, each with different needs and supporting resources. Zollar, as well, has restructured a program specifically for the New Orleans community; the attendees from the New Orleans programs, then spread Zollar's methods nationally. These examples illustrate how these dance leaders are able to readapt to and create new opportunities for their work to be seen

and to be effective. This adaptability becomes extremely important in a relentlessly changing and acclimating society—a society that citizens are still learning to cope with, as evidenced by the vast changes created after the 2016 presidential election in the United States in which funding and support for the arts underwent major cutbacks. In the following data chapters, the research participants further discuss differing ways they adapted to unexpected circumstances encountered while sustaining their dance companies.

Dance offers a language with which to explore this modern day “precariousness,” as Judith Hamera describes it in the (2007) text *Dancing Communities: Performance, Difference, and Connection in the Global City* (Hamera 2007, xii). Community-based dance forges new relationships, causing new social and political ideas to emerge. However, for Hamera, it does more than this: “It organizes communities around common idioms, rewrites space and time in its own image . . . it is also a template for arranging, deepening, and enchanting communities” (Hamera 2007, 208). In other words, dance can unite communities by bringing to light their best features, imagining future possibilities, and giving community members strategies for empowerment and solidarity. The dance leader, then, must learn how to develop fertile soil for these future possibilities to happen.

Summary

The artistic practices and related historical and cultural contexts explored thus far in this chapter help unpack the multiple layers of meaning, intention, and connections inherent, particularly for women, in dance and dance leadership. Surveying national data regarding women’s leadership and funding in dance as well as profiling the three women

choreographers working in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries above make clear the many challenges women have faced (and continue to face today) in the dance field, in addition to the various ways those challenges are negotiated by current successful women dance leaders. The historical, political, and cultural contexts investigated in this chapter led me to further explore the ways women leaders of regional American dance companies negotiate the political, social, and cultural terrain of their communities. These negotiations provide possibilities for enriching their choreography and for developing new dance company initiatives that can be supported by the communities the dance companies serve.

The American women artistic directors of regional dance companies interviewed for this dissertation face similar challenges and expectations as those women dance leaders discussed earlier in this chapter. However, none of them has reached the national level of success nor have they accumulated the financial grants as have the three women dance artists introduced in this chapter. Nevertheless, all the research participants in this study find that regional and local engagement, rather than a dream of national recognition, provide avenues for their dance companies to succeed.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

Developing a Qualitative Research Design and Process

When considering the best approach to developing a rigorous study of the six women leaders of dance companies highlighted in Chapter I, I found the tenets of qualitative research to be very helpful in underscoring the importance of the individual experiences of the participants. In the following, I will survey the foundational elements of qualitative research that are important in this study, highlighting qualitative multisite case study methodologies.

Author Sharan B. Merriam asserts, “qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (Merriam 2009, 5). Further, Merriam describes qualitative research as interpretive: it “assumes that reality is socially constructed, that there is no single, observable reality. Rather, there are multiple realities, or interpretations, of a single event. Researchers do not ‘find’ knowledge, they construct it” (Merriam 2009, 8-9). John W. Creswell further contends that “qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible” (Creswell 2013, 43). Merriam’s and Creswell’s ideas were important for me to keep in mind as I developed a study that acknowledged the interpretative nature of qualitative research,

while also, most importantly, clearly supported the interpretations emerging through the participants' voices.

At the same time, since my own professional and personal experiences are similar in some ways to those of the research participants', I was very aware of my voice within the research and how my own experiences could shape the analysis and presentation of data. Practitioners Norman K. Denzin, and Yvonna S. Lincoln relevantly describe qualitative research as a "situated activity" that seeks to make sense of or interpret the world, locating the researcher in it (Denzin and Lincoln 2011, 3). Situating myself in this study and acknowledging my own biases and interpretations, therefore, is vital to the integrity and rigor of this qualitative study.

Creswell affirms that, in general, a qualitative research study begins with philosophical assumptions and development of a theoretical framework that shapes the research problem or question(s). Then, from an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, data is collected in natural settings and then analyzed to establish patterns or themes. Finally, the research report includes "the voices of the participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, a complex description or interpretation of the problem, and its contribution to literature or call for change" (Creswell 2013, 44).

Qualitative researchers situate studies within the social, cultural, and political contexts of the participants and places studied. Therefore, studies are conducted in natural settings, and data is collected from multiple empirical sources, to include observations, interviews, visual materials, personal experience, and documents. Creswell emphasizes that data collection and analysis must be sensitive to the people or places under

investigation with the researcher always noted as the key instrument in data collection (Creswell 2013, 44). These strategies, according to Creswell, help to ensure a study that respects participants' perspectives.

Qualitative research designs should be flexible and evolving, and include multiple methods. Creswell notes that "the questions may change, the forms of data collection may be altered, and the individuals studied and sites visited may be modified during the process of conducting the study" (Creswell 2013, 47). He thus underscores the importance of an *emergent* design, since the point of qualitative research is to engage in practices best suited to the participants and places studied. *Their* perspectives should remain at the forefront of the research.

One of the keys to rigorous qualitative research is seeking to represent the participants' perspectives, not the researcher's. Merriam defines this as an *emic* or insider's perspective, as opposed to an *etic* or outsider's view (Merriam 2009, 14). Creswell contends that "learning the meaning that the participants hold about the problem or issue, not the meaning that the researchers bring to the research or writers from literature" should be the focus of a qualitative study (Creswell 2013, 47). The researcher's background, assumptions, and biases are important to note during the research process in order to provide the reader with a sense of how data collection and interpretation developed throughout the study and how the researchers' position may affect the outcomes of the study.

Research practitioners agree that data analysis in qualitative research is interpretive. For a rigorous approach, multiple levels of data analysis are necessary to

organize data into differing categories and themes, both broad and narrow, in order to sense the data from differing points of view. One significant form of data analysis for eliciting these categories is termed coding. Practitioner Johnny Saldaña highlights the importance of conducting several cycles of interpretive coding from which themes eventually emerge (Saldaña 2013, 8). Creswell argues for validation procedures as well to ensure accuracy and credibility; these procedures could include “member checking, triangulating sources of data, or using a peer or external auditor” (Creswell 2013, 54).

The presentation of a qualitative research study must be clear, accurate, and engaging, according to the aforementioned theorists. Merriam says the final product of any qualitative study must include rich description of the contexts, participants, data, and relevant activities to provide a holistic, comprehensive picture for readers (Merriam 2009, 16). Creswell adds that to make a study engaging and believable, researchers must incorporate “verisimilitude,” or persuasive writing, bringing the reader into the research. Finally, Creswell adds, a qualitative research product must reflect the researcher as positioned within the research.

These insights into qualitative research practice highlighted pathways for me to explore in the following dissertation research. Since I am interested in how women lead their dance companies, I sensed qualitative research being essential in bringing their ideas and perspectives to light. Further, since I am also a leader of a dance company, my own insights and experiences were important to consider in the context of the participants’ unique experiences. Since it was very important to have the participants’ words and actions be central in this study, I conducted carefully constructed and open-ended

interviews and used the descriptions from the interviewees to guide my participant observations of their practices. I further employed coding, memoing, and cross-case analysis as methods of data analysis for interpreting the data from different contexts and points of view. In the following sections, I will discuss how these methods were put into practice within the dissertation's research process and design.

Qualitative Multisite Case Study as a Mode of Inquiry

In-depth analysis and rich descriptions are central to this study of women leaders in dance. Further, ensuring that each woman's perspective is represented as fully and accurately as possible is important. The data collection phase of this research was, therefore, framed as a multisite case study, with each artistic director's practices within her company representing a case. In this section, I lay out the goals and parameters of case study as defined by various scholars, and then discuss the specific ways I used case study for the specific goals of this research.

Practitioner Sharan B. Merriam defines case study as "an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system" (Merriam 2009, 40). Many theorists agree that a case is bounded by place and time, and could be an individual, a group, an organization, or even a community. Brent Flyvbjerg adds that case studies should be positioned within real-life contemporary contexts and should evolve over time (Flyvberg 2011, 301). Robert K. Yin adds case studies are often used when the research questions seek to explain the "how" or "why" of a social phenomenon (Yin 2009, 4). Case studies may be conducted in one site or in several sites, as in a multisite case study, which allows for comparison between cases. In this dissertation research process, it was important to feature several sites so the

data could be collected and analyzed from as many different perspectives as possible.

Multi-site case study was also useful when cross-analyzing between the cases in order to see and highlight similarities and differences between the participants' experiences.

Case studies, according to these theorists, further provide a detailed, nuanced view of reality, and are useful for studying educational innovations, evaluating programs, and informing policy. Since the women researched in this study are involved in a wide range of initiatives with their companies (educational, political, artistic, social, etc.) case study as a mode of inquiry encouraged an encompassing view of their multifaceted experiences. The interview and participant observation processes were implemented in a manner to elicit a wide range of descriptions and initiatives practiced by the interviewees.

Case studies aim to provide readers with an in-depth understanding of the cases. Researchers, therefore, must commit to using multiple sources of data, which could include interviews, observations, visual materials, or documents. Merriam adds that since case studies do not necessarily demand any particular data collection or analysis method, any method could be effective. However, Creswell identifies a more structured conception of case study analysis, built in several steps. He notes that researchers must first choose appropriate cases to study based on the guiding research question. Then, they should report detailed case descriptions and themes ("within-case analysis"), followed by a thematic analysis across the cases ("cross-case analysis"), and finally, an interpretation of the meaning of the cases (Creswell 2013, 101). In this research, I opted to take advice from both of the aforementioned practitioners' suggested methods. Whereas I attend to a brief within-case analysis for each case, the bulk of my analysis is spent on cross-case

analysis since my selection of participants and my research questions ask for comparisons between participants' experiences. I describe my methods and process in more detail further along in this chapter.

Merriam suggests resonances between multisite case study research and portraiture. Since portraiture, like case study, involves rich descriptions, the connections between the methodologies can assist researchers in developing deep, engaging representations of cases. According to sociologist Sara Lawrence Lightfoot and educator Jessica Hoffman Davis, portraiture can also help balance the participants' perspectives with the researcher's in data presentation. (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis 1997, 86). "The portraitist attends faithfully to the authentic voice of the subject and is simultaneously and ever aware of the disposition and articulation of her own voice" (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis 1997, 130) in order to acknowledge the assumptions and previous knowledge she brings to the research and then present it candidly. Portraiture, therefore, offers relevant methods that can bridge with and add dimension to case study research. In this study, I have used the tenets of portraiture to frame my positioning in the research and to provide rich descriptions of places and people, thereby giving readers a sense of my experience, but at the same time, keeping the participants' voices the central focus of the study.

According to the research methodology theorists and practitioners consulted for this dissertation, case study research involves several ethical considerations. For example, Merriam describes an "unusual problem of ethics" in that an unethical researcher could potentially select any part of the data she/he wished to highlight in order to sway the

meaning in the final analysis (Merriam 2009, 52). She insists that case study researchers must be aware—and make readers aware—of biases that can affect the final product. Another ethical dilemma is what Flyvbjerg refers to as “the narrative fallacy,” or the “human inclination to simplify data and information through overinterpretation and through a preference for compact stories over complex data sets” (Flyvbjerg 2011, 311). Since humans make sense of the world through storytelling, there is danger in condensing data down too much in order to create a (watered down) story. Flyvbjerg contends case study researchers, therefore, must include dense narratives with thick descriptions, which may not lend as well to neat, formulaic stories.

My own research design employed many of the same aforementioned data collection strategies for developing multisite case studies. In the interviews with artistic directors of regional American dance companies, an in-depth, “responsive” interview process with each artistic director was important to ensure interviews remained conversational, flexible, and individually relevant to each participant. According to practitioners Herbert J. Rubin and Irene S. Rubin, these types of participant-centered interviews, or responsive interviews, allow the researcher to set “the overall subject for discussion and encourages replies that are detailed and in-depth” with the ultimate goal of “making a relationship to help find the answer to a research question” (Rubin and Rubin 2012, 99). Robert K. Yin echoes these ideas, stating also that “fluid” conversations can help dialogue from becoming rigid or stilted. Fluid conversations, he says, encourage the comprehensive analysis that case study requires, and stimulate trust between researcher and participant (Yin 2009, 107).

Since I am interested in knowing how these women led their dance companies in the past and how they currently lead their companies, I formatted interview questions chronologically, by first asking questions about their earliest leadership experiences, then progressing to their current leadership experiences. It was also important for me to allow for flexibility in the order and content of the questions. For example, if an interview did not evolve chronologically, and/or tangential areas of discussion emerged organically, that divergence was welcomed. The aim was for the interviewees to feel that they were in charge of the conversations, thus, building trust and establishing relationships between researcher and participant.

Since I know case study research involves deep investigation of cases, multiple sources of data evidence were important to collect in order to triangulate evidence from multiple sources and provide consistency to the study's findings. To support interview data, therefore, I also explored the participants in action, developing and promoting the work that they discussed with me in the interviews. This supporting data includes descriptions of my participant observations of rehearsals or classes; my perusal of published documentation concerning each company, such as dance company websites, social media sites, promotional materials, reviews, videos of the artists and/or their dance companies in interviews or performance; and articles describing how these artistic directors lead and make dance. Further, I developed the historical and social context of each dance company to include how the company was created within the specific community described by each leader. All of this data helped me paint a complex, rich portrait of each woman artistic director within her specific context.

As Merriam states, “multisite case studies can be difficult to manage . . . because there is so much diverse data” (Merriam 2009, 50). Indeed, the data collected from each of the six cases investigated in this study varied greatly depending on what was publicly available to me and what each artistic director offered to share with me. One solution I discovered to managing this complexity issue was to focus on one case at a time, transcribing interviews and doing some pre-coding, before proceeding to collecting and analyzing data for the next case. This strategy allowed me an opportunity to perceive each case as a whole before proceeding to cross-case analysis. I also followed up with participants when I felt like I did not have enough information about them or their dance companies; this additional data collection step helped me to look at all of the cases together providing similar amounts and kinds of information about each.

Additionally, I felt it was important to acknowledge my place as an insider within the research I was conducting in order to remain transparent about my perspectives and biases when interpreting data. Therefore, I made connections between my own practices and experiences as a leader of a regional dance company within the research process and put these in conversation with other dance leaders discussing their practices within differing communities historically and in the twenty-first century (Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, Pat Graney, Jan Van Dyke, etc.). Important similarities as well as differences between my own practices, values, and experiences and those of my participants and other dance leaders could prove to be very helpful to women in dance in the future, as they navigate their own paths toward leadership.

Data Analysis Methods

Coding was one of the most important data analysis methods employed in this study. I coded interview transcripts, field notes from participant observations, and memos and journal entries created during the data collection phase of the study. Also, a session of what Johnny Saldaña refers to as “pre-coding” was helpful as well since I am fairly new to qualitative coding. Saldaña states that pre-coding consists of underlining or highlighting significant passages worthy of further attention (Saldaña 2013, 20). Pre-coding helped narrow down general areas of significance, before coding with more specific goals in mind. For example, when conducting a round of descriptive pre-coding, I discovered that many of the participants discussed connections to academia as very important to the development of their dance companies. That discovery led me to a round of subcoding in order to further tease out the participants’ relationships to and experiences with academic institutions.

I further navigated through the complex interview data by establishing a memoing process. Saldaña describes analytic memos as “sites of conversation with ourselves about our data” (Saldaña 2013, 41). Memoing is a method for the researcher to self-reflexively think about the complex meanings of data by writing notes to herself about themes, patterns, dilemmas, and predictions found emerging from multiple readings of the data (Saldaña 2013, 40-48). Analytical memoing gave me an opportunity to think about the data as I coded it, giving insight into emergent connections between codes, and giving me ideas about additional coding or subcoding methods to try. For example, in observation field notes, many memos included information about how the artistic directors

communicated with their dancers: how formal or informal their language was, whether or not they used metaphors or imagery, and how they asserted authority. These memos provided rich, descriptive examples supporting the ideas coming out of the participants' interview data regarding their relationships with their company dancers. As these patterns, categories, descriptions, and themes emerged, it was essential to transcribe my thinking process when analyzing the data. These transcriptions provided a way to continually check for any biases or assumptions I might have when interpreting the data. As Saldaña recommends, I also dated the memos, a good idea for recording and retrieving process information, particularly as I engaged in cross-analysis of the cases in a multisite study.

Case study practitioner Robert K. Yin offers a variety of data analysis methods specifically useful for case studies. Yin describes cross-case analysis as an in-between phase that can occur after coding, leading into the presentation of data. Cross-case analysis involves establishing overarching issues via coding, and then comparing the cases in relation to those issues that emerged from the data (Yin 2009, 172). It was quite helpful to have Yin's cross-case analysis method to call on post-coding. As the data analysis process unfolded, I realized that cross-case analysis provided the key to perceiving and writing about my participants' shared and diverging experiences. After three rounds of coding, I read through the codes I had created, and when a code appeared in more than one case, I made a note of that code in a separate document. Every time that code reappeared, I would make another citation next to it. At the end of this process, I had created a list of reappearing codes with visual evidence of how many times the codes

appeared in data sets. The codes that weighed the heaviest in my data were then used as emergent themes to include in the cross-analysis of cases. This process uncovered several unexpected areas of depth in the research presentation, areas that seemed very important to research participants.

Designing Case Studies with Elements of Historiography

The complexities of this study called for a research design reflecting the many facets of the women I interviewed. These artistic directors do not exist in isolation; they live and work in specific communities during a particular time in history, and have individual values and beliefs that shape their stories of experience. Their stories and the social and cultural contexts in which they live and work are important to include in this research. Therefore, I sought to include elements of historiography in this study's design. These methods helped me bridge the theoretical conversations about women's leadership in general, and in dance specifically, with the participants' described experiences of directing their dance companies.

Historiography

Historian Keith Jenkins describes postmodern history as constructed, interpreted, and author-centric, telling only one of many possible versions of "what happened" (Jenkins 1991, xii). He asserts no historian can cover the totality of the past and that the historian is always presenting from a certain ideology and purpose. Dance historian Alexandra Carter adds that historians do not record events; rather, they piece together bits of knowledge, creating meaning and structure for readers (Carter 2004, 2). She also

contends historians tell stories from their own modern day perspectives, reinvigorating historical events and people with current assumptions, world-views, and values.

Historiography as a qualitative research method falls under the narrative research umbrella because of its focus on hermeneutics and interpretive storytelling. John W. Creswell describes some of the features of narrative research as they could apply to historiography: “Narrative researchers collect stories from individuals . . . about their lived and told experiences. . . . There may be a strong collaborative feature of narrative research as the story emerges through the interaction or dialogue of the researcher and participant(s)” (Creswell 2013, 71). Since the stories are being co-created, historiography can include what Sharan B. Merriam calls “creative nonfiction,” or creative shaping of data for storytelling purposes; this technique can be useful for interpreting emotion, speech dynamics, or bodily qualities or gestures (Merriam 2009, 33).

The ethical considerations of historiography, as described by these practitioners mostly center on the issues of authority and interpretation of data. For example, Merriam stresses that the researcher should always be considered a co-author; she/he has the responsibility of representing the participants’ accounts in the final research product (Merriam 2009, 34). Creswell agrees, asserting that the researcher must work collaboratively with participants and be willing to work in a self-reflexive manner divulging her/his own personal and political background so the reader can know the context of the histories being told. Creswell adds that issues of power often emerge in historiography, raising questions like: Who owns the story? Who can tell it? Who can

change it (Creswell 2013, 76)? These questions and issues demand a highly self-reflexive, rigorous, conscientious research process.

Elements of historiography were important to include in this research since much of the data includes artistic directors' own stories about their histories as leaders. I relied on the traditional historical obligations of description and interpretation based on data gathered from multiple sources. Additionally, according to Shelly C. Berg in her article "The Sense of the Past: Historiography and Dance," "the core of the dance historiographer's mandate is discovered in the nexus of depiction and exegesis" (Berg 1999, 227). In other words, the complex collating of various source materials into a kaleidoscopic portrait continued to provide support for interpretations I made in my research, thus ensuring greater believability and rigor for the inclusion of rich detail.

Some of the tenets of historiography helped me in positioning myself in my research, creating meaning with and alongside the participants. Since I entered this research from a feminist stance, it was important that I be aware, and make readers aware, of how this stance may affect my interpretation of data. Clearly positioning myself within this research is very important not only to prominently feature participants' voices over my own, but also to position this research with other research in the field and history of dance studies.

Participant Recruitment and Data Collection Process and Methods

The following will provide a step-by-step account of my participant recruitment and data collection processes and methods. Following my study's approval by the Texas Woman's University Institutional Review Board as well as my dissertation committee, I

recruited participants and collected data over a period of one year, with in-person interviews and observations happening between the summer of 2015 and spring of 2016.

Limitations and Definitions

By narrowing a pool of participants to fit the needs of this dissertation, I created limitations on the study. As a researcher, I was looking at women who I sense come from similar backgrounds as I do in terms of education and dance training. Further, I chose companies whose posted online mission statements were similar to that of Flatlands Dance Theatre, the dance company of which I am artistic director.²⁰ In this specific participant search, I did not take into consideration issues of race, sexual preference, or marital status of the participants, but welcomed additional qualifiers of diversity if they happened to intersect with my primary goals of participant selection. I was further interested in collecting data from participants who are currently raising small children at the same time as directing their dance companies; thus, I purposefully included three participants meeting that criteria. This choice was directed by my personal interest in how women discuss navigating their roles as both mothers and dance company artistic directors. Therefore, for the purposes of this dissertation's scope and length and my personal financial limitations, I narrowed the pool of participants both geographically and according to the criteria previously listed. In future research, I would be interested in looking at other specific populations in order to see how that data collection compares to the data collected specifically for the needs of this dissertation.

²⁰ For more information about Flatlands Dance Theatre, reference the following: www.flatlandsdance.org

I chose to use the terms “leader” and “leadership” throughout the dissertation and in its title to best reflect language found in existing literature and in many academic institutions now adding leadership institutions and programs within their student offerings. I felt by staying with the language currently used in the field, people interested in this topic might better access my dissertation through known key words when undertaking searches in this research area. However, interestingly, I want to note that the participants in this study rarely used the term “leader” when describing their roles; instead, they generally all called themselves artistic directors of their dance companies. This fact emerging from the dissertation data points to yet another possible research trajectory in the future. What is the best language when describing the roles of women directing dance companies and how might this language emerge from the women themselves? Hopefully, this dissertation opens new insights into how future language might emerge from the practitioners themselves rather than being imposed on them from past verbiage.

Another complicated language issue I dealt with was in using the term “regional” in relation to the dance companies the participants direct. For the purposes of this dissertation, regional refers to companies whose performance outreach rarely goes beyond the state in which the companies work. The participants and their companies work primarily within the communities they live and these communities are their primary support rather than national funding sources. Again, interestingly, this sense of regional also became complex as two artistic directors are in the process of developing festivals and online information sites that have the possibility of reaching across the globe.

However, for this dissertation, I chose dance companies whose physical concerts and projects happened mainly within the communities and states in which they live. This description also describes the status of Flatlands Dance Theatre and was, thus, important to me in terms of my personal research interests.

The concept of “leadership success” used throughout the dissertation is also very complicated since each participant may, and often did, assume a different definition of both leadership and success. Existing definitions in the literature often define leadership success as specifically connected to financial gain and outcomes. However, for this dissertation’s purposes, leadership success is used to mean that these women artistic directors have sustained their companies over at least five years, that they can consistently support fully-produced dance concerts, and that they regularly work with a group of dancers to realize choreographic works and community engagement initiatives of some kind. When choosing the participants for this dissertation study, I purposefully used this definition of success as criteria for selection. However, it should be noted, that after conducting interviews, I found that many of the participants had their own notions of what success might mean in terms of their and the company dancers’ enjoyment, possible outreach education initiatives in their communities, and overall satisfaction with the balance between their personal and professional lives. Exploring notions of success emerging from the voices of both dance company artistic directors and the dancers themselves might be yet another fruitful future research trajectory for analyzing how accepted language employed in the scholarly literature might be broadened when put in conversation with the voices of dance practitioners.

With these limitations and definitions in mind as I considered a possible pool of participants for this dissertation, I searched online and sought colleague referrals for female artistic directors of small, regional contemporary dance companies in the United States who have maintained close connections to the communities they serve for at least five years. The companies these women direct must emphasize some kind of community engagement initiatives or goals and publicly produce annual seasons of professional work. I also sought dance companies in diverse geographical areas within the United States. Finally, I tried to find participants of varying ages and stages of professional development since I wanted to elicit as many different perspectives as possible in this research.

To further narrow my participant list, I sought artistic directors who seem to be utilizing innovative strategies or unique support structures for their companies' survival and their own success as leaders of these companies. For example, when searching online, I noticed that Martha Brim's dance company is housed within a dance department of a small college only for undergraduate women. While this is not an entirely new type of partnership between dance and academe, the size and gender specific aspect of the college were unique among the participant pool collected. Often large universities with graduate dance programs might have the resources to support a dance company, but how Brim created this partnership within Columbia College's unique setting seemed like an innovative process fitting my research needs.

I next divided the participants into three groups based on particular areas of innovation they engage in and areas of particular interest to me as an artistic director of a

dance company. The first group of participants includes women who founded, directed, and maintained their companies for more than 15 years. Maintaining a dance company for this long is rare, and I thought I could benefit from learning about their strategies for sustainability. The second group of participants includes those working at universities with work blending artistic and scholarly pursuits; my interest was in how they blend these elements and how they relate their companies and their universities. The third group of participants includes women who seem to “have it all,” balancing their artistic values, career needs, and personal responsibilities and goals. Literature and media concerning the difficulties of career women wanting to have it all in terms of family, career, and personal fulfillment paint a bleak picture. Therefore, I wanted to know more about how these women manage their various personal and professional roles.

To find research participants who could fit into these categories, I explored the missions of differing dance companies published on websites and/or in interviews or various published articles or reviews. After much consideration, to include the practical needs of conducting my research, I interviewed and observed six participants.

Biographical Sketches of Participants

Martha Brim is a Professor of Dance at Columbia College and the founder and director of The Power Company Collaborative, both located in Columbia, South Carolina. This company seems deeply interested in making dance accessible and empowering to audiences. I was interested in how Brim’s academic and professional lives intersect, if at all. The Power Company Collaborative was founded by Brim in 2000.

The **Kathy Dunn Hamrick** Dance Company was founded in 1999 in Austin, Texas. Hamrick’s dancers receive a salary and she is noted for her many community projects (e.g., her work with children in Austin and her production of the annual Austin Dance Festival). I was interested in the location and longevity of Hamrick’s dance company.

Jessica Heaton and her Utah-based dance company, Wasatch Contemporary Dance Company, have been participating in many community and performance activities since 2010. Heaton is a married mother of a young child; therefore, I was interested in knowing more about how she manages this part of her life along with the work her dance company requires.

Jan Johnson founded her Colorado Springs-based company, Ormao Dance, in 1990. Johnson has—quite independently—created and maintained her dance company for more than 25 years, and the company seems to have developed in artistic excellence and community engagement. Further, she developed a dance school that is also part of the company members' responsibilities. I was interested in the connections between Johnson's dance company and dance school.

Brooke Schlecte has directed Out On a Limb Dance Company since 2007. She also directs the {254} Dance Festival and the Texas Dance Festival Alliance, while also facilitating an active children's dance school called Dot Buds in Waco, Texas. Schlecte is the mother of two, making her a well-suited participant for this research. I was interested in how Schlecte manages her multiple roles as artistic director, mother, and educator.

Katherine Kiefer Stark founded her Philadelphia-based company, The Naked Stark, in 2010. The company is a very intimate group of five dancers. Stark is married with two small children, and balances this with her artistic director responsibilities. I was interested in how Stark manages her many roles in addition to the challenges she faces founding a new dance company in a large city.

Once I decided on an ideal list of participants, I contacted each of them by email asking if they would like to participate in the research. In the recruitment materials, I described the research questions, my particular interest in each artistic director, and expectations for the research process. If they agreed to participate, I emailed them each a consent form describing the purpose of the study, their role in the research, the research process and procedures, and any risks and benefits affiliated with the study. I also let potential participants know that the research was strictly voluntary, and that they could opt out of the study at any time. Most importantly, I assured them that they would have final approval of all direct quotes and information concerning their interviews and any

data collected about their dance company before the dissertation is published. The participants read the consent forms prior to my visit and then signed prior to my conducting any interviews or observations.

I traveled to six locations to conduct interviews and observations. The interviews all took place in participants' offices, their homes, or in public places of their choosing. All interviews were digitally audio recorded for accuracy with each interview lasting about two hours. Participant observations all took place in dance studios where each participant's company regularly rehearsed and/or took class. Observations were digitally video recorded for accuracy and in order to capture visual information about how each artistic director leads her company of dancers. Information about how each woman speaks, moves through space, gestures, and communicates in unique ways might give further insight into how she leads. I also took notes during the observations of anything that stood out to me that I wanted to remember later as I analyzed the data.

As I made my way to the various locations each of these women artistic directors calls home, I quickly realized how diverse the women are despite the seeming similarities in their work with regional contemporary dance companies. Their specific responses to interview questions, the divergences they took in their conversations with me, and the way each interview dialogue weaved in and out of the same topics in such differing ways was fascinating. One example to illustrate the major differences in the interview experiences was in the differing ways Brooke Schlecte and Martha Brim answered questions I asked. Schlecte was very brief and direct in her responses, often taking between one and two minutes to answer each question, which prompted me to ask a very

elaborate series of follow up questions. In contrast, I asked Brim only two questions over the course of my entire two-hour interview with her. Brim's way of winding through and around the questions I asked ended up covering all the topics I wished to discuss in our interview.

Further, each director's unique ways of being with her dance company in the studio and discussing her practice evidenced her individualized approach to leading the company. For example, Katherine Kiefer Stark seemed interested in the intimacy and consistency a small dance company affords, which I found to be evidenced by her calm approach to company class. Stark leads dance classes in an extremely soft voice with focused attention on individual dancers' experiences both in and out of the studio. In addition to the cultivation of a very specific technical ability, she demonstrates that she cares about the dancers' personal lives and makes efforts to have personal relationships with each of the dancers in her company.

In contrast, Kathy Dunn Hamrick leads her dance company in a more exacting and objective way, indicating an interest in maximization of rehearsal time. She approaches rehearsal with clear daily goals written on paper and taped to the mirror before rehearsal to let dancers know their expectations for the day. She takes her dance company through an almost ritualistic set of procedures in rehearsal, leaving little time for socialization: dancers are charged with specific tasks which they complete efficiently, they work altogether for a while and are then released exactly on time. These differences between the artistic directors working with their dance companies offered additional

support for some of the statements about their goals and challenges they discussed in their interviews.

Despite the differences in the experiences I had with participants and the differences in each of their unique circumstances and approaches, each director overwhelmingly kept pointing to the same core challenges and benefits of directing a dance company: Issues in funding, delegation of labor, and community engagement consistently arose as topics of discussion with this group of participants. The similarities as well as the differences between artistic directors helped me perceive larger cultural issues that may be significant to other women leaders in the dance field.

Data Analysis Process

The data analysis process began and continued throughout the data collection phase of this study because I began to sense connections being made between participants even before interviews and observations were complete. Constructing a fluid, flexible, yet rigorous qualitative research design involves planning for data analysis, yet many of the themes and insights that emerged in this research process emerged from unplanned turns that the research process took. Data analysis processes help the researcher see patterns, categories, and themes emerging from the data, and lead researchers to a pertinent way of presenting findings. I analyzed the data via several rounds of coding. Coding methods that focused on how the participants described their everyday practices and their sense of evolving over time proved to be most effective for this study when trying to elicit differing insights into the participants' lived experiences. In this section, I will describe

my process of analyzing data and the various data analysis methods I found important to my research trajectory.

After transcribing each set of interviews, observation field notes, and memos (typically, within a few days of conducting them), I began with a round of pre-coding for each case's data in which I used Descriptive coding on one side of the document and Attribute coding on the other side. Attribute coding helped me log descriptive and demographic information about each artistic director, research location, dates, lengths of time, and names of people, places, works, and organizations mentioned. Since there are so many sources of data in this study, Attribute coding helped me organize it all. The Descriptive coding, on the other hand, helped me analyze the main topics in the data sets. This "exploratory" coding, as Saldana describes it, helped me perceive the data from a wide view before narrowing in focus to compare and contrast the cases.

After pre-coding, I analyzed all of the data again through a round of Values coding. Values coding is particularly useful in identifying participants' experiences in case studies, exploring cultural values, identity, relationships, attitudes, and beliefs. Since I am interested in knowing about how each director leads within the context of her particular community, and in the framework of her particular professional and personal goals and challenges, Value coding was instrumental in illuminating emerging themes in the data. Values coding also helped me perceive the ways each participant balances and prioritizes the various roles she plays and the decisions she makes.

In Vivo coding, or coding by pulling out significant quoted passages, comprised my third round of coding. This round of coding placed important emphasis on certain

issues and ideas in the participants' lives while, at the same time, honoring their voices and intended meanings. Many of the participants used very specific—and, at times, emotionally charged—language to vividly describe their experiences. As a researcher, I want readers to feel the same sense of urgency and emotion I felt listening to these women artistic directors. The best way to spotlight this passion is through the participant's own words.

As I coded, I began to make a separate list of umbrella themes under which some or all of the participants are situated. For example, one theme that emerged as important in the interview data was the reliance on diverse structures of dance education to support regional dance companies. All of the participants brought up this topic in their interviews, indicating that it is meaningful to them. Further, oppositional themes began to emerge from the data. According to the participants, there are differences between leading new companies and established companies, and different challenges and opportunities inherent in leading in a large city or a small town, for example.

Ethical Considerations

Since qualitative research deals with human participants, there are many ethical considerations: internal and external validity, reliability, and consistency are all very important ethical objectives. Further, ensuring that study participants are properly protected and accurately represented is crucial. Many ethical considerations arose during the course of this study—some that I anticipated and some that I did not. In the following, I outline the steps I took to ensure ethical and reliable research, and I highlight some of the important issues that emerged throughout the process and were handled in an

improvised process in order to suit the particular needs of the participants and the evolving study.

Ethically, I strived to be as prepared as possible to protect the participants in my research and ensure a rigorous research process. Therefore, I carefully developed and implemented a thorough consent form to inform potential participants about the nature of the study and to formally solicit their interest and trust in my procedures. The consent form included a statement declaring that, at any time, participants may withdraw from the research and they had the right to censor any of their information throughout the entire dissertation process. Further, my questions were open-ended, allowing me to listen closely to the participants' interests and to follow their lead in terms of aspects important to those interests. I also checked in with participants at various points during the interviews to ask if everything was going well and to ask if they would like a break. All interviews were digitally audio recorded and observations video recorded for accuracy. The participants were made aware that follow-up interviews may be necessary for reliability and clarity of the research product and, in fact, I did conduct brief follow-up interviews with most of the participants.

Once I completed data analysis and began writing up the research, I provided opportunities for the participants to censor or change any summations made about their interviews, especially in terms of making sure none of the information shared would in any way harm the participants' reputations or relationships with others. My aim was for all participants to feel safe and respected during the entire research process by assuring that accuracy and validity were consistently prioritized. To do this, I sent the participants

drafts of my writing and gave them opportunities to edit or omit any of their own words. This process of participant feedback was especially interesting because while some participants wanted much control over their own words, others were very trusting and simply asked me to decide which of their words would be most important to highlight in the writing. All, though, seemed grateful to have the opportunity to revisit their own words, ensuring their intended ideas and sentiments were represented in the research.

For protection of participants' privacy during the research process, all data collected, including transcripts, audio and video recordings, and field notes, was secured on a password-protected computer that only I have access to in my office. I personally transcribed all interviews and participant observations, and I alone had access to these transcripts. Finally, I obtained research approval from my dissertation committee and the Texas Woman's University Institutional Review Board, ensuring that I was prepared for a rigorous, well designed qualitative research study.

One of the unexpected ethical issues that emerged during the course of this study was in protecting the professional reputations of my research participants. Since I name the participants and their companies in this study, I knew in advance that their words were sensitive and had potential to invoke professional tensions or offense. I come to this research from a place of support of the participants, so I wanted to avoid putting participants in situations where their professional relationships could be compromised. When I read through interview transcripts, some of the participants' words could be interpreted by readers as harsher than I believe they intended their words to be. For me as a researcher, the dilemma centered on whether or not to include language that I might

find provocative, but that the participants themselves did not. My strategy was to take these on a case-by-case basis, and follow-up a few more times with brief emails to participants asking for clarification about intended meanings of certain quotes that I wanted to use in the research, but that could have been misunderstood. Taking the time to check in intermittently with participants was important as I sought to fully and accurately represent them in the written dissertation.

Another ethical issue that arose occurred during one of the participant interviews. I arrived at her home, where she requested to be interviewed, to find a company member also there. The company member remained in the room during the entire interview, which did not seem to present any issues for the participant, but left me with questions about the overall data collection experience. I wondered if the participant's language or opinions or emotions could have been more authentic had this witness to our conversation not been there. I also wondered if the participant simply felt more comfortable with someone else in the room. Since I was not expecting this experience to include a third person, I felt less open to asking sensitive or controversial questions (particularly about her company members); this tension in the interview process has weighed on me since I felt like that interview was less successful than the others. However, I still believe this interview experience helped me sense this participant's particular life circumstances, values, and relationships.

Conclusion

The qualitative research design I implemented and the process of undertaking the research data collection and analysis led me to several surprising avenues of discovery

along the way. Further, the fluid, constantly shifting momentum of the research as a qualitative process invited breadth and depth into my exploration with my participants. The research process was quite enjoyable, and the diversity of experience my participants described only reinvigorated my interest in the research questions with which I began. In the next chapter, I introduce each of the research participants in detail and discuss their differing relationships to each of their unique communities. Finally, since the terms *success* and *community* were central to my participants' described experiences, I seek to tease out these terms in order to give context to the reader about my interpretations of the participants' experiences I write about later in the dissertation.

CHAPTER IV

INTRODUCING HOW THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS INTEGRATE THEIR DANCE PRACTICE INTO THEIR COMMUNITIES

In the following, I introduce the dissertation's research participants, providing contextual information, including brief biographies, an introduction to each artistic director's dance company, and a sketch of the geographical location/community in which each works. Introducing the participants in this way will hopefully lay a foundation for readers as the next three data chapters of this dissertation unfold. These six women leaders live in a wide range of locations, including cities as large as Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and as small as Waco, Texas. Further, they live in locations with a diversity of natural resources, political infrastructures, and social and cultural influences. Learning about who the participants are by placing them in the context of their dance companies and within their communities will give readers a sense of how specific descriptions and issues emerged in my conversations with them.

Martha Brim

Driving through the Columbia College campus where Martha Brim works as a Professor of Dance and where she directs her company, The Power Company Collaborative, I sense my landing squarely in "The Deep South" of Columbia, South Carolina. The campus and the areas surrounding the campus seem to wear the dense sheen of humidity. Each house near the university is outfitted with a wraparound front

porch, and I can picture neighbors gathering for iced tea on a sweltering day. Large, sweeping trees hang over the roads winding through the campus lined with aged, brick buildings, and a sleepy sensation washes over me.

I pull up to the Spears Center for the Arts, a large building with tall windows that line one side. Brim greets me warmly on the sidewalk, ushering me inside. We wind through the hallways of the Spears Center to arrive at her office where I will conduct our interview. Her space is dimly lit by decorative lamps and draped in nostalgic relics of past productions such as thank-you cards from dancers and concert posters. I immediately feel welcomed here, and I can already sense the charismatic electricity sparking from Brim as we begin to talk about her work with her dance company.

Martha Brim's career in Columbia as the founder and artistic director of The Power Company Collaborative, (lightheartedly referred to by Brim as "PoCoCo") and Professor of Dance at Columbia College (CC) has endured longer in one community than any of the other research participants' careers. Therefore, her experiences offer readers a wider scope of how one person and one career can impact and be impacted by a community over decades. Since her career unfolded over the course of 30 years in Columbia, she is able to perceive and describe the influences of the state of South Carolina, the city of Columbia, and the school in which her company is housed on her work with her dance company.

PoCoCo, comprised of eight dancers and six apprentices, is fiscally sponsored by and works out of the Dance Program at Columbia College. According to the company's published mission, "The Power Company believes power can be found in art, dancing,

collaboration, and the spirit of each individual” (The Power Company Collaborative 2016). PoCoCo started as a repertory dance company, and has since expanded to create original works, works of collaboration between company members, collaborations with regional partners, and projects that bridge course work at Columbia College and production work with PoCoCo.

Columbia is the capital and largest city in South Carolina with a population of just under 130,000. The city is home to 11 higher education institutions, an Army base, and an international airport²¹. It is also an active arts hub, housing several professional dance, theatre, and opera companies, art museums, a philharmonic orchestra, and public libraries. In addition to cultural and arts offerings, Columbians value the outdoors with the city boasting beautiful parks and rivers throughout. Further, the diversity of neighborhoods, from historic to modern, from rural to city, and from political to educational institutions, contributes to the city’s overall appeal.

When Brim decided to relocate to South Carolina in 1986 for a position in Columbia College’s Dance Program, part of the appeal, she describes, was the obvious support for the arts in South Carolina. Brim summarizes in the following:

When I came here, we had a governor who was very much into the arts and, specifically, education. I moved here thinking I’d be here for two years. I thought we have this great state arts agency, South Carolina Arts Commission. It’s substantial for the size of our state. . . . It supports arts activities all over the state, so I felt like that was a good reason to be in South Carolina. (pers. communication, March 1, 2016)

²¹ More information about the city of Columbia can be found on the City of Columbia website: <http://www.columbiasc.net>

The opportunity to live in a state supportive of its arts motivated Brim to accept her university position there, and so began her relationships with the various communities supporting her work in dance. She ended up staying much longer than the two years she imagined in the beginning.

She began to investigate the ways the state supported dance and discovered the Dual Home Project, supported by the South Carolina Arts Commission. The Dual Home Project's goals were to bring national modern dance companies to South Carolina for three-month residencies in order to raise awareness throughout the state about modern dance. Brim describes the initiative originating at the national level from the National Endowment for the Arts with the Dual Home Project representing South Carolina's approach to this goal. In the following, Brim describes her experiences helping select companies to commission for the project and the experiences with the companies in residence as highly influential to her future goals:

It was a big deal going to New York and interviewing these dance companies who could come and tour throughout the state to let citizens know what modern dance is. . . . The Dual Home Project was my thing that I did - only because there was funding. It was a huge influence! (pers. communication, March 1, 2016)

Several well-known companies and choreographers were in residence through this initiative, including Dan Wagoner and Dancers, Liz Lerman Dance Exchange, David Dorfman, and Joe Goode. All of these residencies provided significant opportunities for South Carolinians, and Brim's Columbia students in particular, to experience a wide range of professional modern dance. Once the funding for the Dual Home Project dried up, however, Brim says there was suddenly a lack of opportunities for professional dance

to exist in her community. Brim laments that “it was great for our students, but it finished. So, how do you continue this [kind of opportunity for exposure to professional dance]?” (pers. communication, March 1, 2016). Recognizing the importance of opportunities like the Dual Home Project, she thus sought ways to continue traditions of support for professional dance in her community.

Brim describes the Dual Home Project’s closing as one of the main reasons for starting The Power Company Collaborative: the company could provide potential opportunities to her former Columbia College dance students to continue their dance interests in after school activities and after graduating. Brim concludes, “Not only would we have a body of dancers [former Columbia College students], there would be a place for students who decided to stay in Columbia, South Carolina to continue to dance (pers. communication, March 1, 2016). In founding PoCoCo, therefore, Brim claims she was interested in supporting professional dance in her community of Columbia and her community of students at Columbia College. Indeed, the company is comprised of CC graduates who remained in Columbia to teach dance or work in other fields. PoCoCo keeps them dancing.

Brim describes important connections made and obstacles negotiated when integrating PoCoCo within the greater Columbia community. Brim is consistently challenged with finding strategies for how to attract community members who don’t know much about dance to attend contemporary or improvisational dance events.

Of her community's mentality about dance, she asserts,

I kind of feel like, in this community, there is a mindset about what dance is. I get awfully tired of that. It's such a boring and vapid understanding of what dance is, [but on the other hand] you've got to know your audience. . . . You either have to come together, or agree to disagree [about what dance is]. (pers. communication, March 1, 2016)

Brim describes finding herself routinely challenged with educating a general audience about what dance can be and do. She also feels compelled to educate her audience about how to appreciate different kinds of dance, rather than only classical ballet, which, according to Brim, is the kind of dance with which Columbia audiences are most familiar. At the same time, she doesn't want to "spoon-feed" audiences with oversimplified dance that, for her as a choreographer, infringes on her own artistic desires. In the end, she says, it requires maintaining a balance between what she wants to make, what her company is prepared to perform, and what the audiences are prepared for and want to see. Overall, Brim describes the importance of creating chances for community engagement and lifelong learning with PoCoCo. According to Brim, her dance company provides opportunities for her students remaining in Columbia after graduation to continue performing and studying dance, and creates opportunities for community members to learn by watching and making dance with the dance company.

Brim's most recent project illustrating her interests in providing lifelong learning opportunities and possibilities for interactions between community members, students, and company dancers is called The Home Project, a project that is continually evolving with each new group of students with whom Brim works. In practice, The Home Project assembles students annually in Brim's course, Liberal Arts 201, with local nonprofit

organizations and the dancers in PoCoCo to create performance works. The PoCoCo website elaborates on the event's inaugural year and the plans for the 2016 performance, scheduled to take place after my interviews with Brim:

The Home Project began in Columbia, SC in 2015, collecting stories from the community. As [Columbia College students and PoCoCo company members] conversed with residents in transitional housing facilities, PoCoCo gathered a diverse collection of stories about home. The Home Project, Artfields 2016 edition, will continue these conversations in Lake City in a site-adapted performance installation held in the Atlantic Coast Line building in downtown Lake City. Scheduled performances will take place as the installation develops. Throughout the course of the event audience members will have the opportunity to offer their own stories of home to accumulate and be integrated into the project. During the week audience members may travel through a self-guided tour of the installation containing a number of rooms housed in the ACL building. In the kitchen, for example, you might share a favorite recipe and witness it becoming part of the performance. (PoCoCo 2016)

In this project, as with many of the projects and ideas Brim discussed with me, Brim demonstrates her goals for university, dance company, and community to unite in creating, viewing, and discussing art together.

Martha Brim's work with her dance company within the structure of the university in which she also works illustrates how dance leaders can innovatively create opportunities for dance to coexist in multiple spaces for differing and simultaneous purposes. For example, Brim found ways to connect her Columbia College students with her company dancers and community members with a vision for shared ownership of and engagement with dance. Further, she relies heavily on Columbia College for facilities, financial support, and connections to dancers and collaborators for her company.

Brim is invested in dance education as a starting place for art to emerge as a collaborative process. Further, she is committed to lifelong learning as a continued collaborative process; these values pervade her dance company's artistic goals.

Kathy Dunn Hamrick

I arrange to meet Kathy Dunn Hamrick at a busy coffee shop within a large grocery store in Austin, Texas on a warm, bright Saturday morning in October, 2015. I arrive very early, so I order a drink and sit outside at a wrought iron table waiting for her. Before she even looks in my direction or approaches me, I notice someone I assume to be her across the parking lot, her elegant stride and confident expression giving her away as both a dancer and a leader. She makes a beeline for my table and introduces herself warmly with a hug. I am drawn to her vitality as she bounds into the coffee shop to order for herself.

Later that day, as I observe her rehearsing with her dance company at Café Dance studios, I sense the same exuberance as she works with her dancers who clearly adore her. One dancer even exclaimed that the two months of vacation prior to the day's rehearsal had left her "feeling empty" (participant observation, October 3, 2015). The joy and eagerness infusing the studio was palpable as dancers sprang to their feet when Hamrick entered to tape that day's rehearsal tasks to the mirror at the front of the room. Hamrick moves very quickly and deliberately in rehearsal, immediately noticing when something isn't quite right: "That's not it" (participant observation, October 3, 2015). She often gestures in tiny, quiet tics when a movement needs editing. She alternates between demonstrating movement for her dancers and assigning them specific choreographic tasks

to complete with each other while she works in a corner alone. The dancers are along for her ride, they're all in, they seem to believe in Hamrick's vision without reservation. Their intense physical effort paired with Hamrick's dauntless drive for more helped me sense this company's rigorous devotion to their shared dance practice. By the end of the day, my experience with Hamrick left me spent, but gloriously so. Basking in her energy that day, I felt initiated into her very special atmosphere where dance is exalted.

When asked to describe her career path, my first question posed to Hamrick, I realized she does not prefer to look back, saying, "I'm going to start in the middle and then, if you want me to fill anything in from earlier on, I can" (pers. communication, October 3, 2015). Hamrick settled in Austin, Texas with her husband in 1991. She immediately began dancing with an independent choreographer named Kay Braden, who recruited Hamrick as an apprentice of sorts by showing her what it means to be the leader of a dance company. Hamrick shared in choreography, grant writing, media interviews, and performance while in Braden's dance company. So, when Braden decided to move on to other endeavors, Hamrick was well-poised to take over the company as artistic director. Thus, the Kathy Dunn Hamrick Dance Company (KDH Dance) was founded in 1999. In this role, Hamrick has received much acclaim for her choreography in KDH Dance, and is often commissioned for teaching and choreography by universities across the United States. Further, while she did not mention this in our conversation, she holds a BA in Modern Dance from The University of Texas and an MFA in Performance and Choreography from Florida State University. In addition to leading her dance company,

Hamrick founded the Austin Dance Festival in 2015 and directs the regional event annually.

KDH Dance's mission is "to provide engaging contemporary dance performances for the general public and support arts education and community well-being through outreach and enrichment programs" (KDH Dance Company 2015). The company produces at least two formal concerts per season and maintains an active community engagement program in public schools and with community organizations. Recently, Hamrick instituted a program called New Art Kinnections, "a creative movement program for foster girls with histories of severe, trauma, abuse, and neglect" (KDH Dance Company 2015). In total, Hamrick and her company have reached over 10,000 children with their educational and community initiatives, and she describes a continued interest in expanding on this part of her work even more in the future.

Hamrick's first professional priority, she asserts, is her dancers. KDH Dance comprises six female and two male dancers, supported by a rehearsal director, an artistic outreach director, and a technical director. Hamrick notes that the dancers in her company (unlike dancers from any other company featured in this research) receive modest salaries. Hamrick asserts that the responsibilities of garnering money to pay the dancers and at the same time "create space for them to grow as artists" led her to "purposefully and consciously lead this company forward" (pers. communication, October 3, 2015). A big takeaway from my conversation with her is that she values artists' time and work, and makes it her ultimate goal to compensate them for it. She will not commit to projects or performances in which the people in her company will not be

paid. I sense Hamrick's tenacity and commitment to her dancers as a reason her dancers reciprocate with such intense focus and presence in rehearsal. The respect they have for each other is undeniable, and their shared vision contributes to the strength of the organization.

Austin, Texas²², where KDH Dance operates, is a large city of about 931,000 people. Centrally located in the Texas foothills, the city is home to several lakes and rivers, the State Capital, and The University of Texas. Austin is known as the Live Music Capital of the World and, in addition to music, it features a burgeoning visual and performing arts scene. In addition to KDH Dance, Austin is home to a handful of other modern dance companies and a ballet company.

Early on in the company's history, Hamrick realized that in order for KDH Dance to be sustainable in the city of Austin, she would need to formalize a funding strategy. Hamrick felt that "to write grants for anybody, you need to be a nonprofit. That was recognized as being more substantial. So, I became a nonprofit" (pers. communication, September 3, 2015). Status as a nonprofit organization gives KDH Dance grant opportunities, which have greatly impacted the company's ability to remain active in Austin. The company receives annual support from Austin-based organizations like the Cultural Arts Division of the City of Austin and The Creative Fund to support its productions and space rentals.

²² More information about the city of Austin can be found on the City of Austin website: <http://www.austintexas.gov/>

The relationship Hamrick has established with the city of Austin through her dance company over the past two decades is in a continuous state of development and negotiation as the city goes through changes. While larger cities like Austin offer dance companies certain opportunities not afforded in smaller communities, the landscape of a large city presents unique difficulties as well. Hamrick describes her experiences developing her dance company in the Austin community, bringing forward many strong strategies for continuing its growth despite the tightening resources in Austin. The biggest issue, she claims, is the lack of performance space available for KDH Dance productions. She notes the overall overwhelming demand for space in Austin and the city's rising cost of living as greatly impacting her dance company's ability to consistently produce their work in adequate and accessible venues. In the following, Hamrick describes a chain reaction of events occurring in current Austin and how these events have impacted her dance company's season planning:

The big challenge we're having is lack of space. Theatres are closing. As rent goes up, those theatres can't pay that rent anymore, and they're closing so fast—that's an issue. They're going to tear them down and build condos. I think we're probably going to lose the theatre that we perform in. There are other options, but you cannot get in on the weekends; either they're booked, or we can't get in there until after 8:00 pm, and you have to strike every night. It's the first time I'm thinking, I have no idea where we're going to perform next year. . . . It's been an issue in Austin for a long time, but it's getting worse and worse and worse. (pers. communication, September 3, 2015)

Hamrick suggests city funding could assist the remaining theatre spaces, keeping what few venues are still available up and running for the dance companies needing space.

However, so far, such a support structure does not exist in Austin.

In addition to rising costs and vanishing venues, timing productions effectively has been a challenge for Hamrick and her company in Austin. She states,

We have to look at the city's calendar because the hotels fill up so fast. We can't have [a performance] on a weekend when there's a football game, or ACL [Austin City Limits], or South by Southwest [an annual film, media, and music festival in Austin]. And then sometimes there will be [other arts events] downtown and they close the streets. I can't afford to have a season that goes on until July! So, we have to be very strategic about [planning our season]. It's frustrating finding a weekend and space. (pers. communication, September 3, 2015)

In order to meet these challenges, Hamrick implemented some strategies (and has ideas for other strategies) to combat this sense of insecurity and unknowingness about future lack of space and time for her dance company's needs. A new emphasis on long-term strategic planning has helped her develop better season planning: Instead of thinking of only the company's next production, she now thinks about the next *several* potential productions in order to plan months, even years, ahead of time. Hamrick has also considered ideas for how KDH Dance could utilize alternative spaces, describing possibilities for site-specific work and "pop-up dances" (akin to flash mobs) to emerge in the company's repertoire. While the issues of space and time are ongoing and, indeed, quite frustrating for Hamrick, she has no intention of folding or disbanding her dance company, contending she will continue to seek creative solutions to these problems particular to her community of Austin.

In 2015, the company received a capacity-building grant from the city of Austin, which offered KDH Dance and Hamrick a series of consultations from nonprofit arts, marketing, and fundraising specialists. Hamrick describes the experience as eye opening: "It was really good for someone from the outside to come in and look at who you are,

what you're doing, and how you're doing it. To have somebody that was totally new . . . that gave us a new perspective on the company" (pers. communication, September 3, 2015). Through the consultations provided by the grant, Hamrick discovered many areas in which KDH Dance was not working as effectively as it could be. For example, the consultants alerted Hamrick to the fact that she should rethink the size and scope of the company's target audience, contending that while KDH Dance has a very loyal, small circle of patrons, there is room to reach beyond that inner circle. Her dance company, the consultants said, could expand existing community engagement initiatives, thereby building bigger seasons to include more productions and larger budgets. In turn, the KDH Dance audience base would expand. Hamrick credits this capacity building grant with encouraging her to kick start many beneficial changes in the structure and goals of her dance company which have stimulated a fuller, more diversified relationship with the Austin community overall.

In addition to the importance of maintaining KDH Dance's formal seasons of productions and expanding its viewership, Hamrick also discussed the importance of the Austin Dance Festival (ADF) to her in creating a community of dancers in Texas who support one another through continually networking ideas and performance opportunities. The ADF is an annual event Hamrick instituted in 2014. A three-day itinerary of events includes adjudicated performances from dance companies invited from around the country, master classes, and artist interviews. New to the festival is an event called Youth Edition, a series of performances by choreographers under the age of 15. Hamrick describes the ADF as providing wonderful opportunities for networking, introducing new

artists to her Austin community, and supporting other artists in the Texas region as well as around the country.

An overarching theme in my discussions with Hamrick was her description of her work with her dance company as her ultimate career goal. Founding her dance company as well as the Austin Dance Festival initiated her development as an artist and leader. While the community of Austin supports her work as an artist and leader, the recent changes in the development of the city have created challenges she continuously works to meet. She describes her primary interest as choreography and, so far, her work as the leader of her company has led to consistent opportunities to keep making dance her way.

Jessica Heaton

I meet Jessica Heaton at Smash Dance Academy, the space in which she works with her dance company, on a bright, chilly morning in early 2016. Located in The Shops at Riverwoods, an exclusive outdoor mall in Provo, Utah, the newly constructed building sits amid the majestic Wasatch Mountains. Since the dance studios typically hold children's dance classes in the evenings, we approach a darkened, empty facility, yet the energy emanating from the brightly colored exterior is palpable. Heaton and I sit down together in a lounge area where parents wait for their children to finish evening classes. In this room, we are surrounded on all sides by floor-to-ceiling windows. Two sides of the room look out to empty dance studios and the other two open on the vast snow-covered mountains overlooking the facility. Experiencing this visual juxtaposition of dark, quiet studio spaces against a backdrop of a towering mountainscape mere feet away, I realize a similar juxtaposition in Heaton herself as we begin to discuss her career

and family. On the surface, Heaton is calm and poised in demeanor, yet throughout our interview, I sense an undeniable, underlying excitement bubbling when discussing the impact of her family and her dance company on her life.

Originally from San Diego, California, Jessica Heaton moved to Utah for school, earning a BS in Exercise and Wellness and a minor in Dance from Brigham Young University. She is married and has two children, ages four and two. She founded Wasatch Contemporary Dance Company (WCDC) in Provo, Utah in 2010 and served as artistic director since its inception. In the following, Heaton describes her ability to create opportunities for dancers through WCDC's initiatives and programs, especially those bringing in guest choreographers, as the career endeavor of which she is proudest:

Just to see [the company dancers] happy and learning and doing something they've never done before [is satisfying]. . . . They never would have met this person [a guest choreographer] if they hadn't had the opportunity to work with Wasatch, and being able to give the opportunity for guest choreographers to come work with us . . . I'm just so glad. It just makes me happy that out in the world there are 40 people [WCDC dancers and attendees] who I gave an opportunity to. (personal communication, January, 28, 2016).

Through Heaton's leadership of WCDC, the company has achieved 501©(3) nonprofit status, has received regional funding support, and has consistently produced annual seasons of productions, educational initiatives, and community engagement events.

WCDC, at the time of this writing, has been in existence for just under eight years, but has already made significant impact in the Provo/Orem, Utah community.

The dance company currently comprises nine dancers, three of which also serve as associate directors. WCDC is guided by the following mission, as posted on its website:

Wasatch Contemporary Dance Company provides college educated dancers in Utah County opportunities to develop their technical and artistic skills by creating exceptional works of art in the field of contemporary dance. WCDC also seeks to develop Utah County's potential as a hub for the arts by teaching dance in the community, providing accessible and affordable performances for all audiences, and collaborating with local artists of all fields. (WCDC 2017)

The Provo/Orem Metropolitan area²³, where Heaton and WCDC call home, has a population of around 530,000 and houses two large universities and several smaller academic institutions. The Wasatch Range of mountains surrounds the community and attracts visitors to its natural beauty and outdoor activities. Provo is at the south end of a long complex of cities, towns, and suburbs extending in both directions from Salt Lake City. Home to Brigham Young University, Provo has a strong college-town feel. Orem, just north of Provo, is a suburban family community with its own large academic institution, Utah Valley University. Heaton describes Provo and Orem as one connected community with strong ties to dance education and the Mormon Church. Home to the nation's largest Latter Day Saints missionary training center, the community is steeped in Mormon culture, which is reflected in the presence of beautifully ornate temples throughout. Business, culture, and the arts bustle in the area, which features many museums, theatres, shopping centers, and historic and natural landmarks.

²³ More information about the Provo/Orem area can be found on the Utah Valley Information website: <https://www.utahvalley.com/#111111>

Heaton further describes the Provo/Orem area as the community in which her family lives and in which her dance company operates. The stunning natural beauty of her community is, according to Heaton, “one of the reasons I stayed in Utah. I think it’s a beautiful place to live and to be inspired by the geography in which we live” (pers. communication, January 28, 2016). In fact, she named her company after the Wasatch mountain range that extends through and beyond her community since it holds such presence and influence in her and her dancers’ lives. Prior to her founding of WCDC, she asserts,

If you wanted to perform, you’d have to get up to Salt Lake County. But, a lot of us [dancers in the Provo/Orem area] were waiting for husbands to graduate [from Brigham Young University and Utah Valley University] and things like that, so we were just kind of hanging out in Utah County with nothing to do. (pers. communication, January 28, 2016)

She notes the people in her network in the Provo/Orem area as not having significant connections with the dance companies in Salt Lake City, so most of her friends from the Department of Dance at Brigham Young University were not continuing to perform after receiving their dance degrees. She elaborates,

I was seeing my friends graduating and teaching dance to kids and in the high schools . . . [and] those are great ways to use your degree, but we were just a little lacking. We wanted to perform, to keep ourselves in shape, and to physically and artistically challenge ourselves. (pers. communication, January 28, 2016)

When she founded her company in 2010, therefore, it was due to the specific need she saw within her own community of dance colleagues and because of a perceived need for the presence of professional dance in Provo/Orem. Although she appreciates the presence of a strong dance community in Salt Lake City, she contends “it’s really nice to have

dance in your own community and to only have to drive 10 minutes to the theatre” (pers. communication, January 28, 2016). Heaton feels that her dance company keeps dance experiences alive for her peers and brings professional dance to her community.

According to Heaton, the vision of WCDC is shaped by the Provo/Orem community in many ways, including by religion, a particular value system, and by family structures and needs. She describes the community as strongly influenced by the Church of Latter Day Saints, and the choreography her dance company produces reflects the values of the Mormon Church. She notes, “We’ve always tried to keep all of our productions clean and wholesome, and that’s part of our morals, individually and personally” (pers. communication, January 28, 2016). In fact, Heaton’s vision for her dance company very directly aligns with her value system. In the following, she describes how these values stem from her Mormon beliefs and practices:

We want to present something wholesome that a family would enjoy, while still achieving artistic innovation. It’s a fine line to walk . . . but, I will stick to my morals on that. We’re not trying to go out there and make a controversial statement. If that’s what you want to do with your dance career, that’s fine, you’re free to leave and go do that, but it’s not part of our vision. (pers. communication, January 28, 2016)

Heaton, therefore, creates opportunities for her dance company to produce what she deems family-friendly, accessible work. WCDC is still experimenting with what it means to be family-friendly and accessible to its particular audiences.

Heaton has tried many different approaches in order to achieve a balance between being accessible for the community and innovative as artists. She describes,

We've done a tap number before (laughs). We've done things that contemporary companies aren't really known for, and they were fun, but that's not our forte. I would say we're not 100% happy doing that kind of performance. It was good to start out that way, but we're starting to come back to our modern roots and just finding more of a balance . . . using media and technology in our art and pushing the boundaries artistically. (pers. communication, January 28, 2016)

When WCDC choreography explores sensitive or potentially controversial subject matter, Heaton finds audiences are more receptive to it if opportunities for educating them about it are offered. For example, she describes including program notes and projected videos of choreographers explaining their artistic processes and intentions prior to the works' premiere in order to give audiences some clues of what to look for in the work. Striking a balance between work that appeals to their community and work that appeals to the dance company members as artists, therefore, seems to be an ongoing puzzle to solve for Heaton and company.

Heaton further discussed how her dancers commit to maintaining traditional family structures established by the tenets of the Mormon Church, which means she will likely never work with full-time dancers in her company. In fact, she sees herself as somewhat of an outsider in her community in that she and her husband decided to have only two children, unlike many Mormon families who opt to have many more offspring. However, Heaton also sees her dance company as, essentially, a third child: the amount of commitment and work it takes to direct her company, while also raising two children, makes her feel as if she has many more children, since there is so much work to be done.

Heaton also describes a culture of frugality among the families who live in her community. She contends, “We come from a community of large families that have to be frugal and they cannot bring all of their kids and pay thirty-five dollars a ticket” (pers. communication, January 28, 2016). Therefore, since she wants to engage families and increase the inclusivity of WCDC, Heaton works to continue a tradition of reduced-price family tickets to shows. Additionally, she thinks it is important to plan season costs with this community’s family structures in mind. This means WCDC applies for grants specifically to cover the financial loss incurred by offering reduced-price tickets.

Heaton further describes the overall Provo/Orem arts scene as burgeoning; it is becoming a place in which her company can investigate its interests in collaboration and in innovative art making approaches. She describes the exciting arts scene in Provo/Orem as follows:

There are a lot of really cool indie [independent] things that happen here because of the universities—I feel like it’s a cool hub for art and professional dance really just fits in with that. We’re trying to collaborate a lot with local musicians and local artists and trying to support other dance events that happen here. (pers. communication, January 28, 2016)

One of WCDC’s recent forays into collaborative, boundary-pushing work include a site-specific performance at a historic public library in Provo in which the company danced with live music in response to the architecture of the space. Historical images of people in the community communicating together in different ways over time were projected along the columns and ceilings of this library. Heaton describes this work as innovative because her community is not accustomed to witnessing site-specific work, nor do they often encounter live dance, music, and projection in the same space. Through these new artistic

practices Heaton and WCDC are introducing to their community, they are further changing the way dance is viewed, as well as expanding their own artistic practice.

Jessica Heaton is uniquely tied to her community through her personal religious practices, her family, her educational experiences, and her dance company. While the particularities of her community might limit other artists, this is not the case with Heaton since her own values align with many of those in the Provo/Orem area. She creates art specifically for the culture in which she works and lives. This culture includes the large universities in Provo and Orem, from which she further draws artistic inspiration, recruits dancers, and maintains collaborative connections with faculty and former students. A newer company, WCDC is, according to Heaton, still in the early stages of fine tuning its artistic voice by bringing in multiple choreographic perspectives and genres to its productions while also creating accessible performances which engage its family-centric community.

Jan Johnson

As I walk down a darkened, narrow hallway to enter the lobby of Ormao Studios for my interview with Jan Johnson, a warmly lit lobby space opens to welcome me. The first small detail I notice is a bumper sticker placed squarely on a file cabinet against the back wall that declares, “Art Creates Community,” a theme that resounds in my later conversations with Johnson and in my observations of her work with her dance company. The lobby, encircled by chairs, sits centrally within the overall layout of the facility. Classes have already begun for the day, the sounds of pop music, classical piano accompaniment, and a ringing office phone converging to create an atmosphere of

productivity and variety. As I sit to wait for Johnson, I notice one large dance studio to my left with two walls of windows to my left, filled with teenage students taking a jazz class. To my right, younger students who appear to be about seven years old practice ballet positions of the feet and arms in a smaller studio. Johnson breezes into the lobby with a smile and, after greeting several parents and staff members also sitting in the lobby, invites me into her office for our interview. Her bright positivity and warmth immediately clue me into her approach to the people with whom she works, and I can already sense her proclivities for collaboration and leadership.

Jan Johnson founded Ormao Dance Company (ODC) in 1990 in Colorado Springs, with the company established as a nonprofit organization in 2011. Earlier in her career, Johnson studied commercial interior design and took a minor in dance at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Although she was “afraid to live the life of a dancer” (pers. communication, July 16, 2015), upon graduation, dance remained central in her life and she came to realize she wanted to make it her career. She eventually moved to Denver, Colorado where she was able to perform for a brief time before realizing that she preferred to be part of a smaller community. This realization led her to relocate to Colorado Springs, Colorado.

The second most populous city in Colorado, Colorado Springs²⁴ is a city of about 450,000 residents. Situated at the base of Pike’s Peak, Colorado Springs boasts beautiful mountainous landscapes, (winter) Olympic training facilities, a significant military

²⁴ More information about the city of Colorado Springs can be found on the Colorado Come to Life website: <http://www.colorado.com/cities-and-towns/colorado-springs>

presence, and a plethora of cultural and arts activities, making the city an attractive tourist destination. The city's natural beauty, temperate climate, many educational institutions, and strong economy make it an ideal place to live. In fact, it was listed as *U.S. News and World Report's* fifth best place to live in the USA in 2016.

When Johnson arrived in Colorado Springs, she quickly discovered that “there were no performance opportunities. After a couple of years, I thought you know, ‘If you build it, will they come?’” (pers. communication, July 16, 2015). Thus, Ormao Dance Company debuted and, at the urging of local community members expressing a desire for classes, Johnson founded an affiliated school for children and adults called Ormao Dance School. Acting as both artistic director of the dance company and director of the school, Johnson currently and continuously seeks opportunities to enrich the Colorado Springs cultural arts community while also navigating the multiple and demanding roles she plays.

Ormao Dance Company comprises 14 dancers, two of which, Tiffanee Tinsley Weeks and Ballet Mistress Debra Mercer, also claim the roles of assistant director. The company's threefold mission is

to provoke, challenge, and entertain those in our community and beyond through the creative language of dance; to encourage diversity and experimentation in the arts; and to enrich and enhance cultural opportunities within southern Colorado communities and schools by spear-heading initiatives that bring dance to the public and programs that educate people of all ages. (Ormao Dance Colorado Springs 2017)

The company celebrated its 25th anniversary in June of 2016, a significant milestone Johnson attributes to consistent hard work and forward-thinking momentum. When asked

how the company made it to 25 years, she answered, “You just put your head down. . . . I hardly ever look back and think, ‘Oh, let me look back at all the great things we’ve done.’ The great things we’re doing are what we’re doing *tomorrow*, not what we did yesterday” (pers. communication, July 16, 2015).

Before she moved to Colorado Springs, Johnson assumed that for dancers, “the opportunities dwindle every time you move to a smaller community” and, in fact, she says, in the 1980s that was true of the Colorado Springs community (pers. communication, July 16, 2015). When she founded ODC, however, one of the benefits was that there was no competition, a fact that is still true today. She notes that because there are no other dance companies in town, ODC “enjoys a relatively easy way of gathering our audience” (pers. communication, July 16, 2015). This lack of competition also ensures the highest quality of dancers in Colorado Springs will remain with Johnson’s dance company rather than moving to other companies in the area.

While Johnson feels she made a good decision starting her dance company in the community of Colorado Springs, she also notes challenges she faces in her role as artistic director, particularly in the areas of business and finance. She maintains, however, that as long as she can continue to navigate the business side of directing a dance company, an area in which she has minimal experience, she feels confident she has found a community in which she can invest herself as an artist and a leader. One of the ways she navigates business elements, such as funding and budgeting, is by becoming a 501©(3) nonprofit organization. For the first several years of the company’s existence, Johnson notes it would subsist on grant funding awarded to other nonprofit organizations with which

ODC had developed collaborative dance and art projects. In fact, she says, “by the time we got our 501©(3), we had such a reputation in the community already, that the grant funding happened pretty easily. We were already navigating in that funding arena” (pers. communication, July 16, 2015).

The community of Colorado Springs supports ODC quite generously as evidenced by the funding organizations listed on the company website (six local sponsoring organizations and a bevy of individual donation support). Additionally, Johnson describes various fundraising efforts hosted by entities around the community. One of these opportunities is called Indy Give!, sponsored by the *Colorado Springs Independent Newspaper*. Over a period of two months, individual donors can log on to the Indy Give! website and make tax-deductible contributions to any number of nonprofit organizations included on the site. Links to the organizations’ websites and other information about them is included; further, the donors can easily spread out their contributions to a wide range of organizations with a few mouse clicks. Johnson describes this initiative as wildly successful for ODC. For example, in 2015 the company raised over \$9,000 through this campaign alone. Another example of local funding opportunities is ODC’s recent 25th anniversary, which was marked by a very successful matching contribution campaign from the Vradenberg Foundation. Johnson describes this matching fund endeavor as helping them “to expand our individual donors into our [group of past] alums who we’ve maybe disconnected with over the years—to try to ramp that up a little bit” (pers. communication, July 16, 2015). So, not only do local foundations support financially, they also are invested in the growth and development of the organizations they fund.

Overall, Johnson notes, Colorado Springs is supportive of its arts and nonprofits in general, making it a wonderful community in which to develop her dance company.

In addition to the community-led initiatives for supporting nonprofits that Johnson and ODC benefit from, her founding of Ormao Dance School has done wonders for her dance company's sustainability and reach into the community. Johnson didn't initially intend on starting a dance school, but a few years after establishing ODC, she perceived a need to engage more with families in the community. She elaborates in the following:

We decided that [ODC] would create a community piece with kids, as an opener or a finale, I can't remember. We started doing that in every show, and after we did that twice, parents were like, "You really should offer classes." I think our next step, actually, was that we had intermittent student performing groups and the classes supported those kids. And from there, we thought, "We should really just have classes for the community." So we opened, which was amazing, great! (pers. communication, July 16, 2015)

The dance school, says Johnson, functions as a traditional, for profit business, but the crossover between school and company is unique. For example, several ODC company members are the educators in Ormao Dance School, giving them an opportunity to explore their pedagogical interests and the students an opportunity to study from those professional dancers they admire. The dance company and school sometimes share guest artists, costumes, sets, and even performances. This fluidity between the company and school benefits students, ODC dancers, and Johnson as well.

Another benefit Johnson describes of her dance company's relationships in the Colorado Springs community is the freedom for risk taking in ODC's choreography, events, and seasons. She notes ODC's role as a *small* nonprofit organization is

particularly beneficial in this regard. She discusses other community arts leaders'

perceptions of her ability to take risks with the work ODC presents:

I used to be on these arts panels and we used to talk about our community. They try to get a variety of sizes of nonprofits, so I'm always the example of the small nonprofit, and then the [Colorado Springs] Philharmonic [Orchestra] will be on there, and then someone in the middle. I remember this one panelist, Nathan, who is the executive director of the Philharmonic, said to the group, "I want to talk about the difference between what I do and what Jan does because I'm like the big naval ship. And if I want to change direction artistically or if there's some project I want to do, it's gonna take a lot of time and effort to convince everyone this is a new direction we should take. Whereas, Jan has, like, a little boat, so when something really cool comes along, she's like, 'Yea!' and just turns the boat around and does that." And that's really true. It's so easy for me to take my organization down a new road. (pers. communication, July 16, 2015)

Artistically, she says, she couldn't imagine a more perfect set up for creating and presenting her work. Free to take risks, try new things, collaborate with new people and organizations, she is fulfilled in ODC's ability to push innovation and experimentation in the Colorado Springs community.

Jan Johnson's career in Colorado Springs has spanned over 25 years. That longevity, she claims, is due to her ability to "put my head down and get the work done" (pers. communication, July 16, 2015). Bold and decisive, Johnson takes risks with her career decisions and in her art making, and she has developed a reciprocity with her community: her dance school is full of eager students and her dance company is in demand in Colorado Springs. She has uniquely created opportunities for her school and company to rely on each other for the sustainability of both, and the longer she remains in Colorado Springs, she says, the more opportunities come her way for collaborations and innovations in her art making.

Brooke Schlecte

As I cruise through Brooke Schlecte's beautiful neighborhood in Waco, Texas, I sense both history and future in it: massive trees dot the lawns of elaborate homes with brick and stone facades representing generations past, while children in brightly colored clothing whizz by on hoverboards, a nod to innovations of present day. This juxtaposition is mirrored in my conversations with Schlecte as she discusses the many influences that have shaped her work in the dance field and, in particular, the leadership of her dance company, Out on a Limb Dance Company (OoLD). Drawing on resources from the past with a continuous driving momentum toward the future is a strategy of Schlecte's.

I ring the doorbell and Schlecte answers, carrying her young son, Silas. She smiles and welcomes me into her home, designed beautifully in rustic chic décor. Since I am visiting Schlecte in January, I also notice holiday decorations eloquently presented among the furniture and walls as I enter the expansive foyer of the house. She invites me into the kitchen where one of her company members sits on a bench at the island. Just as I sit down at the island and introduce myself to the company dancer, Schlecte begins a discussion with her son about nap time. Almost as soon as she begins speaking to Silas, her phone rings, and she is at once pulled in three competing directions. Whereas the potential chaos of this moment could jostle another person, Schlecte's calm repose is an impressive sight. She tenderly gathers her son in her arms, reaches over to the counter to silence her phone, and quietly tells us she'll be right back. The detailed and delicate dance of juggling multiple demands is something at which Schlecte excels, and her

commitment to multiple projects and leadership roles demonstrates her calculated, thoughtful approach to her professional life.

Brooke Schlecte's story as a leader began with her early experiences as the captain and director of her high school's drill team. She reminisces and relates: "My school was very small and we couldn't afford or keep a drill team director. . . . Being a leader was intriguing and I felt like I had the time management and the organization and, I think, a pretty good ability to work with people—hopefully" (pers. communication, January 15, 2016). She credits this early experience as one that initiated her into leadership roles later in her career. After high school, she attended Kilgore College for two years, then earned a BFA in Dance from The University of Texas, and finally an MFA in Dance from Texas Woman's University (TWU). Schlecte, with the support of a few of her TWU MFA classmates, formed Out on a Limb Dance Company (OoLD) in 2007 during her final year at TWU. She returned to Waco after earning her graduate degree, taking OoLD with her and retaining the original TWU dancers in a long-distance capacity.

Once back in Waco, Schlecte's career as a leader in dance took off. Over the past decade Schlecte has brought to Waco the following initiatives: OoLD, the {254} Dance Festival (part of a Waco annual arts festival), the recent Texas Dance Festival Alliance (a virtual gathering place for dance festival organizers in Texas), and the newly established Dot Buds, a series of creative dance classes for 3-7 year-old children who also perform in the Waco community (Schlecte hopes this series will eventually grow into a dance school). The name Dot Buds, incidentally, offers a connection to the name of the

professional dance company since both groups derive names from the ways trees develop. According to Schlecte, when considering names for the groups, “I was thinking of a bud as something that’s growing and is continuing to grow. . . . I was just looking for an extension [of that theme]” (pers. communication, January 15, 2016). Schlecte has also taught as an adjunct faculty member at Baylor University’s Department of Health and Human Performance (now called the Department of Theatre Arts) in Waco. In addition to her full professional life, Schlecte identifies deeply with her role as wife and mother to two children, describing them as her first priority.

OoLD’s mission is “to enrich the field of dance as an art form throughout Texas as the premier professional contemporary dance company in Waco, Texas.” (Out on a Limb Dance 2016). In the following, Schlecte describes the beginnings and structure of Out on a Limb Dance:

It started in grad school as a way to gather people who I enjoyed and wanted to continue working with after grad school. It’s a new model for a dance company, [wherein] somehow, the dancers and I live far away from each other and continue to dance with one another. . . . [Our geographic distance from each other] explains why we only get to dance together once a month. [The way we work together in OoLD] has always been based on what I could manage in my life. (pers. communication, January 15, 2016)

The dance company gathers once a month to rehearse for whatever project is approaching, including regional dance festivals, commissioned touring performances, community events, or the {254} Dance Festival, an annual commitment for OoLD in Waco. As of this writing, Schlecte had begun the process of incorporating the company and filing for 501©(3) nonprofit status paperwork to be able to apply for grants and accept tax-deductible contributions.

Schlecte describes OoLD's dancer recruitment process as collaborative and intimate. Dancers are typically handpicked by Schlecte, and all come from her own tightknit network of people already known to her. Since the dancers only rehearse altogether once a month, she says, "I don't have time to teach anyone. Not that I wouldn't love to, but we don't have time. Coming in, you have to be able to just [jump] in with what we're doing" (pers. communication, January 15, 2016). In other words, to be a successful member of OoLD, one must be adaptable and must be willing to learn quickly and work collaboratively. Typically, therefore, Schlecte invites dancers on a trial basis as guest artists, with the hope that eventually they will join OoLD. While she does not offer dancer salaries, Schlecte pays for dancers' travel to and from Waco, houses them, and provides food and transportation during rehearsal periods. Covering these expenses for dancers allows Schlecte to include dancers from out of town locations.

Waco, Texas, where OoLD is centralized, sits between the larger cities of Dallas and Austin and has a population of about 132,000. Baylor University, a private Baptist university of nearly 17,000 students, contributes greatly to Waco's economy as well as its predominantly conservative Christian community values. Waco's arts scene is developing, and has (arguably) been slow to take off due to its conservative culture and a history spotted by social and political controversies²⁵.

²⁵ The cultural notoriety surrounding the city of Waco is built upon controversies happening there over the past several decades. The most cited incident is the 1993 federal and state law enforcement siege of the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, as well as more recent incidents happening in the city, including a violent shootout among rival biker gangs in 2015 and ongoing investigations into the mishandling of multiple reported sexual assaults by Baylor University's football program.

When asked to describe her community of Waco, Schlecte first identifies it as “very underserved” (pers. communication, January 15, 2016), going on to hesitantly say that while conservative influences of religion and politics have played into the idea that presenting dance in this community is risky, Waco seems to be at a turning point, now ready to embrace the arts. Schlecte clarifies in the following:

Being in this community, [I feel that] presenting contemporary dance is risky because dance wasn’t . . . It’s not something that’s grown in Waco for a very good reason—because of the Baptist community. Baylor [University] didn’t start a dance program until 1999, so presenting dance in this way is very foreign and a very tricky game to play. It feels appropriate now as I’ve grown into it. . . . People are [now] ready to see something different. (pers. communication, January 15, 2016)

In addition to the challenging political climate of Waco, she also notes that the overwhelming presence of private dance studios in Waco create a culture in which concert dance (similar to what OoLD presents) is not as easily understood or recognized as valuable. However, in our discussions, she again describes Waco as a city in progress, a community becoming more open minded and accepting of differing arts and cultures.

Waco’s growth, due in part to the many new residents relocating into the city from outside geographies, means Schlecte has found a new audience hungry for cultural experiences akin to those experienced in other communities. This evolution in the community’s mindset has opened possibilities for Schlecte and her dance company to introduce new ideas about contemporary dance. She feels that by increasing the number of performances and opportunities for people to see her dance company, she will also stimulate new attitudes and understanding from community members in how they perceive contemporary dance as performed by OoLD.

Schlecte conveys,

The more performances we can do in the community, the more they [the audience] can see what we have to offer and how they can support, witness, and engage. It is a one-woman show getting all that stuff out there and done, [but] little by little, it's getting done and it's getting out there . . . Slowly, but surely. People are ready to see something different. People are willing [to consider new ideas]. (pers. communication, January 15, 2016)

Through free public performances at events like the local farmer's market and site-specific performances in surprising locations around town—events Schlecte refers to as Dance Jams—in addition to OoLD's formal season of ticketed productions, Schlecte senses more of the Waco community recognizing the importance of OoLD.

One of the most significant initiatives connecting OoLD to the community of Waco is Schlecte's 2012 founding of the {254} Dance Festival, a branch of the larger Waco Cultural Arts Festival held every September. The {254} Dance Festival features OoLD in performance alongside other Texas dance companies selected via an adjudication process. Schlecte directs the dance festival every year, describing it as an event that seeks to encourage “adults and children to come witness and experience dance” originating from differing communities in Texas.

At the urging of the Waco Cultural Arts Festival Director, Doreen Ravenscroft, Schlecte performed a solo at the 2011 arts festival on a very small, rickety outdoor stage. After the performance, Schlecte thought, “This is terrible! We [dancers] really shouldn't be performing outside in these conditions” (pers. communication, January 15, 2016). Despite the less than ideal stage space, the performance was a resounding success, according to Schlecte, who received positive feedback from audience members and

festival staff. Viewers seemed to find Schlecte's choreography a refreshing change from dance school performances presented at previous festivals and, according to Schlecte, represented a more abstract, adult way of connecting with dance.

The novelty of experiencing modern dance at the festival stirred up community interest in Schlecte's work. Following that performance, Ravenscroft approached Schlecte about the possibility of starting and facilitating a dance festival that would be connected to the Waco Cultural Arts Festival in the future. Since Ravenscroft is, according to Schlecte, the sort of person who can elicit large donations from a wide range of resources, she knew this new dance festival would be continuously financed through the larger umbrella organization—a rare opportunity in the dance field. Schlecte, therefore, saw this as a wonderful chance to engage the community—even the region—with her company, present work representative of multiple genres of dance, and align dance with other art forms in the Waco community through a well-funded dance festival. In addition to the benefits the dance festival offers the Waco community, Schlecte also describes the performance, exposure, and networking opportunities as beneficial to all of the dance companies invited to perform, including her own.

Since the Waco community is, as Schlecte describes it, “very conservative” (pers. communication, January 15, 2016), she notes being aware of the risks of presenting anything deemed too controversial or sensitive to the community. While Waco is ready for change, she says, the members of the community, especially those who have not been exposed to a wide range of artistic works and practices, could potentially be offended by some of the subject matter Schlecte would normally opt to investigate in her

choreography. For example, in past performances, Schlecte has explored issues of gender with satirical humor, and has played with juxtapositions of traditionally beautiful imagery with grotesque imagery in her choreography. She feels some of the more abstract ideas presented in her choreography could be lost on audiences who perhaps are not accustomed to viewing that kind of work. Therefore, she describes carefully introducing her work and others' work through the {254} Dance Festival in a way that invites audiences in, rather than scaring them away. She relates,

There are some things I just don't show in Waco—yet. I've got a couple pieces I would just never ever show in Waco. I mean, I don't want to scare them away or piss them off. Not that it would make them angry, but it could because it could be so out there that they'd be like, "Why are you doing this to me?" They [Waco residents] just aren't ready yet [for that kind of work]. (pers. communication, January 15, 2016)

Although Schlecte describes choosing to, in a sense, monitor what is offered to Waco audiences, she also acknowledges change can take place, it just takes time in any community. Unveiling new ideas about dance slowly will help gradually introduce these ideas to the Waco community, which Schlecte argues is an inviting way to create long term connections.

Brooke Schlecte has created a unique model for how a dance company can function with dancers from multiple locations and, while much of OoLD's major work is performed outside of Waco, Texas, she has found ways to include her brand as an artist, educator, and leader in her community in Waco. Through founding multiple initiatives related to her dance company, such as the Dot Buds dance classes for children, the {254} Dance Festival, and the Texas Dance Festival Alliance, she maintains different, yet

simultaneously functioning, leadership roles to increase the presence and breadth of dance in her community. Additionally, she finds interesting ways of supporting the various entities she leads, to include personally funding some of the expenses related to her dance company, relying on her professional network in Waco, and calling on her dance network across the United States.

Katherine Kiefer Stark

My friend and former graduate school colleague, Katherine Kiefer Stark, picks me up at my hotel in Philadelphia early one chilly November morning in 2015. Our agenda for the day consists of a class and rehearsal with her dance company, The Naked Stark, which I will observe, and then lunch and our first interview. I haven't seen her in a few years, and she is just as warm and kind as I remember. As we greet each other, she exclaims, "You look like you!" (pers. communication, November 9, 2015). We start across town to Mascher Space Cooperative, where most of the day's events will happen, catching up about our families and careers, the city whizzing by as we laugh together.

Winding through the various neighborhoods of Philadelphia on our way to the dance company class, I notice how much history is packed into the cityscape, each street boasting its own story, each block, its unique idiosyncratic character. This patchwork quality of the city's neighborhoods is inspiring to Stark. As described in the following, Stark relates the excitement engendered by opportunities for inclusivity and intimacy to happen through her choreography within a diverse cityscape; she feels she has carved out a unique niche in Philly for The Naked Stark.

Stark, the founder and artistic director of The Naked Stark, began taking ballet classes in high school, but it wasn't until college that she discovered where she truly belonged in the dance field—modern dance. Stark earned a BA in Dance from Connecticut College. After college, she moved to New York City to start working as a freelance choreographer and performer. Feeling vulnerable about putting herself out there in such a large field of working, experienced choreographers, she realized that to mature as a choreographer, she would have to go back to school. Therefore, she moved to North Carolina to attend UNC Greensboro and attained her MFA in Choreography in 2009. From there, she moved to Philadelphia with her husband and two young sons and subsequently founded The Naked Stark in 2010. In addition to her work as an artistic director of her dance company, Stark also works as an adjunct professor of dance at Stockton University and Bryn Mawr College both located within commuting distance from Philadelphia.

The Naked Stark, a company of five dancers, works from the following mission as defined on its website:

The Naked Stark builds complex dance works that take apart, redefine, and consider everyday experiences of people, ideas, and social phenomenon. The Naked Stark seeks through its performances, community projects, workshops, and classes to move people and cause them to consider and question their assumptions about social norms. (Naked Stark 2016)

About half of the company members, defined as “collaborators” on the company’s website, also take on administrative roles in the company with the added support of a part-time, non-dancer project and development coordinator. The company produces consistent annual seasons of dance productions; however, so far, Stark describes its

seasons as more project-based than calendar-based. That is, the company consistently works on projects that are presented publicly for a specific reason (e.g., a choreographic work is finished and ready for viewing, or a particular festival or event has invited the company to perform). Additionally, Stark and her dance company collaborate with community partners and other artists in the Philadelphia community to create participatory performance events structured around social and cultural issues, such as violence against women and the United States' preoccupation with war and aggression.

The dance company rehearses and performs in a dance studio that converts into a performance space called Mascher Space Cooperative. Stark and company are “members” of Mascher, which means The Naked Stark pays a monthly fee in exchange for 16 hours per month of studio space, marketing and promotions for performances, and importantly, fiscal sponsorship. In other words, since The Naked Stark is not a 501©(3) nonprofit organization, it relies on Mascher Space Cooperative as an umbrella organization, under which the dance company could apply for grant funding. (Incidentally, Stark is working toward attaining nonprofit status for her company so she may take advantage of additional funding opportunities in the future.) In addition to using Mascher Space Cooperative as a rehearsal and performance space, Stark also teaches weekly movement practice classes at Mascher that are free and open to the public.

Stark relocated to Philadelphia after graduate school in Greensboro, North Carolina, having already begun her company there. Two of the North Carolina dancers relocated to Philadelphia with her, and she recruited other dancers once in Philly. According to Stark, one of the most significant challenges in the transition from

Greensboro to Philly involved negotiating a place for a new dance company in a large city already saturated with dance. Philadelphia²⁶, a city of 1.5 million people, is an economic hub of industry, and is home to many universities, historic landmarks, and cultural institutions. Philly is the largest metropolitan area of all of the communities discussed in this research. When discussing the landscape of modern dance in Philadelphia as she sees it, Stark notes famous choreographers and dance companies already thrive there, making it difficult to stake any artistic claim of her own. She describes much financial and audience support for the major companies in Philly, such as Urban Bush Women, yet emerging local choreographers and dance companies receive little to no support from funders or even the area universities. She concludes,

It's interesting in this area because at a lot of the universities that are in Philadelphia, the students have to go see concerts, but often the syllabi will say you have to go see Urban Bush Women [a dance company based in New York City and discussed in Chapter II of this dissertation] and they won't send them to go see the local choreographers. (pers. communication, November 9, 2015)

Stark also describes recruiting dancers in Philly as a challenge, which was never a problem in North Carolina where she had access to a wide network of dancers emerging from the differing university dance programs and actively seeking professional opportunities. She says many dancers in Philadelphia are already overcommitted to other choreographers in long-term contracts, making them unable to commit to her dance company's long-term goals. Stark concludes that these dancers would "rather do a project and not commit to so much" (pers. communication, November 9, 2015). Further, since a

²⁶ More information about the city of Philadelphia can be found on the City of Philadelphia website: <http://www.phila.gov/Pages/default.aspx>

dance career can be inconsistent and unrealistic financially, some dancers in Stark's company have moved onto more lucrative, more stable careers. She mourns the idea that so many in the dance field have drifted out of it, lamenting, "I don't want there to be too many of us to fall away (sad laugh). I do worry a little bit about that" (pers. communication, November 9, 2015). Finally, she emphasizes the importance of long-term season planning in order to rely on access to performance space and booking dates. As noted in the following, Stark finds the busyness of a large city a constant puzzle to solve when attempting to plan for her dance company:

We've got to keep track of the timeline of when to do the press stuff, so we have an audience. . . . We probably always need to be thinking about getting some things on the calendar and applying for future funds and future opportunities. It's a challenge I haven't quite figured out yet. I'm trying to think more long-term, trying to think in the next 1-3 years, so that when one thing is going, there's still thought being paid to the next thing. (pers. communication, November 9, 2015)

In contrast to the many challenges, Stark also describes many benefits to directing a dance company in Philadelphia. For her, the allure of Philadelphia centers on the inherent juxtaposition of the city's layout: neighborhoods tend to be friendly and intimate within the larger scope of a crowded, busy metropolis. In comparison to larger cities like New York, Stark describes Philadelphia as more socially accessible: "It's a place where I come more into contact with potential audience people, sensing different ways that dance could engage communities" (pers. communication, November 9, 2015). Finally, unlike other participants in this dissertation, Stark feels she does not need to educate audiences about modern dance as most have already experienced many genres of dance through the opportunities presented in Philadelphia.

One of Stark's main strategies to develop her newer dance company in a city that already houses a myriad of modern dance companies is to aim for pared down minimalism at every turn. For example, Stark aims to attract specific, small, and, hopefully, loyal audience populations. Locating and recruiting these intimate audience groups is a strategy Stark incorporates successfully with her dance company through initiatives that focus on inclusivity and personal connection. She finds that since she is able to host such intimate events, she can also personally connect with individual audience members. Further, because of that personal connection, these audience members seem to have a deeper appreciation of her work and are more likely to return to Stark's next shows.

According to Stark, her attitude of thinking small extends to the size of the venues she chooses for her dance company's performances. She notes, "I like smaller venues and that intimacy" (pers. communication, November 9, 2015). In addition to offering The Naked Stark opportunities to more personally connect with viewers, these more intimate performance spaces, such as Mascher Space Cooperative, typically have more availability than would a more traditional theatre space. This strategy of selecting small performance spaces allows Stark more time to let her work unfold organically, rather than trying to force her creative output to meet the rental deadlines of larger venues.

In addition to being able to focus on a deep connection to a small audience base and having freedom to gradually develop choreography, Stark continues to relate how working with a small company of dancers has helped her manage her load of administrative work. Working with such a small group, she says, takes much of the

organizational and planning work out of the mix, which frees her up to focus on her art making and presenting. For example, since her dance company is small, Stark only has to juggle a handful of schedules to find common rehearsal times. A final perk of maintaining a small core of dancers in an intimate organization is that Stark can afford to pay each of them more than she would if she had a larger dance company. While her dancers don't receive salaries, they are paid for rehearsals and performances.

One of the largest areas of focus that Stark says separates The Naked Stark from other modern dance companies in Philadelphia is her focus on inclusivity and accessibility. Stark contends that one of the most interesting things about living in Philly is its unexpected patchwork of neighborhoods, each street seeming to boast its own personality. However, she also notes the differences in these neighborhoods basically delineate the haves from the have-nots, often making opportunities for the lower class to engage with dance rare. Stark aims to offer experiences with her dance company to everyone, sensing major benefits to people of all economic classes when witnessing and participating in dance. In the following, Stark describes some of the ways she encourages community involvement with her dance company through free and reduced-price offerings:

When we have a show, the dancers get a comp for someone who couldn't otherwise come because of economics and we can always give them two [tickets since] people sometimes don't want to come alone. So, that's been one way to try to expand and also invite people in and make them feel included. . . . We [also] have a thing in our community called Dance Pass so you can [take advantage of] lower ticket prices, which is nice. (pers. communication, November 9, 2015)

Katherine Kiefer Stark's emphasis in her work with her dance company is in creating the kind of choreography that interests her the most and in delivering her work to a small and intimate audience, rather than appealing to and developing support from a wider community. In her Philadelphia community, Stark has found a small niche within the larger dance scene by creating politically active and, at times, audience participatory work. To develop the appreciation of this intimate audience, she further emphasizes post-production dialogues with viewers about the dances witnessed and the dance making process in general. While Stark has goals to expand on her annual seasons and become a nonprofit organization to apply for additional grants, she also finds her other roles as educator, wife, and mother prevent these goals from being met right away. Still a new dance company, Stark knows the kind of choreography she wants to make, and is continuing to define the kind of leader she wants to be.

Conclusion

The six women artistic directors introduced in this chapter have much in common, yet they also maintain quite distinctive missions, goals, and projects based on the specific communities in which they work. All but two of the companies have achieved 501©(3) nonprofit status, indicating that benefits of this marker may be worth the trouble of the extra work it takes to file with the IRS. Nonprofit status, according to those artistic directors whose companies have it, provide many opportunities to apply for funding without having to go through a fiscal sponsor. Also, those dance companies focused on in this research who are not already registered as nonprofit organizations are working

toward that status. All of the artistic directors discussed funding being a constant issue, whether they had nonprofit status or not.

Since all of the artistic directors heavily discussed funding in their interviews, I aimed to gather more information from them about how they make things work financially. Jan Johnson—fairly bluntly—acknowledged that her affiliated dance school was the big money maker for her, but that her dance company also achieves financial stability on its own through grants and community fund raisers. Brooke Schlecte is working toward a dance school as well to support some of her company work. At this point, Schlecte funds much of her dance company work through her private finances. Martha Brim relies on strong support from Columbia College in order for PoCoCo to survive financially. Kathy Dunn Hamrick's and Jessica Heaton's dance companies are mostly funded through grants, although Heaton describes company fundraisers and contract work in the public schools as what supported them before they achieved 501©(3) status. Katherine Kiefer Stark's dance company is small so that she can afford to pay the dancers through the minimal funding opportunities available in Philadelphia. While Stark does apply for grants, she must apply under an umbrella organization, so the amount is limited. All of the research participants describe also relying as well on private donations from friends, family, and supporters.

Another area of crossover among the dance companies is their interest in connecting with the communities they serve to not only garner more audience support for their productions, but to also to find new ways to interact with and educate people outside of dance by introducing new ways for them to think about and view dance. For example,

whereas Martha Brim aims to make connections between her teaching of university coursework to Columbia College students, her PoCoCo company dancers, and members of the Columbia community through collaborative projects, Brooke Schlecte hopes to reach a general Waco community audience through her work with the {254} Dance Festival and her children's dance classes. Katherine Kiefer Stark aims to create intimate opportunities within the larger Philadelphia community for artists and audiences to dialogue and participate in art making with each other. Jan Johnson founded the only professional dance company and the largest private dance school in her community of Colorado Springs; both school and company support one another and garner support from the community. Jessica Heaton and Kathy Dunn Hamrick seem interested in more traditional ways of interacting with their communities through formal productions and various community engagement initiatives with local schools.

Geographically, the participants face different challenges and reap differing benefits. Katherine Kiefer Stark and Kathy Dunn Hamrick negotiate their places in larger cities (Philadelphia and Austin, respectively), dealing with associated space, time, and financial challenges, yet they also reap the benefits of a population more likely to be familiar with modern dance and have more funding possibilities. On the other hand, Brooke Schlecte, Martha Brim, and Jessica Heaton founded their dance companies in cities with fewer than 130,000 people and, while they negotiate community values and limited funding opportunities, they all describe their companies as burgeoning in these communities. Schlecte and Heaton, in particular, describe their communities as conservative, but while Heaton's personal values match those of her community, Schlecte

describes herself as having more liberal values than what Waco has been known to support in the past. Heaton, therefore, embraces the Mormon values and beliefs in her work with her dance company, while Schlecte perceives her contribution to Waco as opening new and critical insights into dance as a provocative performance space.

One area of commonality among all of the participants is their connections to dance education, either through universities, public K-12 schools, or their own private dance schools. Dance education not only pervades their dance companies' missions, it also financially supports some of the companies, provides jobs for some of the company's dancers, and offers opportunities for the companies to connect with their communities and broaden their audience base. In the following chapter, I detail the participants' experiences with and in dance education to illuminate the deep intertwining of their artistry and their educational interests.

CHAPTER V

PARTICIPANTS' CONNECTIONS TO DANCE EDUCATION AND ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

After introducing the participants and their dance companies explored throughout this dissertation in Chapter IV, I will now discuss how these companies connect to dance education in unique ways. (The reader is advised to return to Chapter IV for overall descriptions of the participants within the context of their surrounding communities.) All of the participants in this study described the relationships between their dance companies and educational institutions in their home communities as important, and they all described offering some sort of public dance education through their dance companies. Further, the significant influence of dance education in the participants' professional and personal lives is also clear. While framed in interviews in a variety of ways, the participants all rely on their personal dance training developed in their educational institutions attended and continue to disseminate some of the tenets of this training by further developing public dance education initiatives through the work of their dance companies.

All of the participants are products of university systems, having obtained undergraduate degrees in dance, with many also earning graduate degrees in dance or dance-related areas. All participants reflected back on those educational experiences as influential in their current lives and continued to elaborate connections to their university

educations in their current roles as leaders of dance companies. Further, the participants recruit many of the dancers that comprise their companies from local university dance programs. The research participants also note that the constant need to search for rehearsal and performance spaces and programming opportunities for their dance companies, something some universities can offer, make these educational institutions strong support systems for the sustainment of dance companies.

Three of the participants in this study have taught in university dance programs, with two (Martha Brim and Katherine Kiefer Stark) currently teaching in higher education. One of the participants (Jan Johnson) owns a private dance school connected to her company, and another (Brooke Schlecte) has begun developing a private dance school. All of these artistic directors lead some sort of regular classes or training for the dancers in their companies. In addition, they all offer public dance education opportunities within their communities. The opportunities and challenges of being deeply committed to dance education and academic institutions weighed heavily in the conversations I had with these six artistic directors. In the following, I describe the differing experiences the participants discussed as important when their work with their dance companies is deeply intertwined with private dance schools, K-12 public dance programs, and/or university dance programs.

Martha Brim

A visual artist early in her education, Martha Brim discovered modern dance in college and earned BFA and MFA degrees in Dance from Florida State University (FSU). From there, she relocated and performed professionally in Washington, DC for a few

years. Then, on one “fateful trip to Tallahassee” (pers. communication, March 1, 2016) to visit a former mentor at FSU, Dr. Nancy Smith Fichter, Brim was thrust into an opportunity to teach dance at Columbia College in South Carolina. At first, Brim assumed she would only be in Columbia, SC for two years. But, then two years turned into three, and as she found her niche in teaching, she described in the interview how three years suddenly turned into 15. She credits her deep love for her students and the chance to act out a dream by founding The Power Company Collaborative (PoCoCo) as her reasons for staying at Columbia College. In the year 2000, the university hired a new Head of the Dance Department, Dr. Susan Haigler-Robles. In the following, Brim describes this relationship with her new colleague as the first step to starting PoCoCo:

The first thing she [Dr. Haigler-Robles] asked the dance faculty was: “Well, what is your dream?” I didn’t really think I had a dream—I had been doing this for 15 years and loved working with the students, but I was also starting to see my students graduate—and some were staying in the community and some were staying in dance. There seemed to be a need for something like what I proposed, which was that I wanted to have a dance company—whatever *that* is. Susan said, “Well, let’s see what we can do about making that happen.” She wanted us to be happy. A happy faculty is a productive faculty, and the students benefit from it. So, I did [start the company]. (pers. communication, March 1, 2016)

Brim’s motivations for starting a dance company were both intrinsic and extrinsic, indicating deep interest in creating opportunities both for students and alumni, and herself. Brim concludes that, “not only would we have a body of dancers [to work with on choreography], there’d be a place for students who decided to stay in Columbia, South Carolina to continue to dance. . . . But also, I wanted to keep that activity going for our students on campus” (pers. communication, March 1, 2016).

Columbia College (CC)²⁷ is a private, liberal arts, women's college with about 1,400 students and about 160 faculty and staff on campus. Its nationally accredited Dance Program, housed in the Arts and Communication Studies Division, offers a bachelor of arts degree in dance studies, a bachelor of arts degree in dance education with teaching certification, and a dance minor. The program houses around 40 dance majors and minors served by five faculty members. On its website, the program boasts many leadership opportunities for students, to include seven arts internships, one of which is an internship with PoCoCo²⁸. In addition to its relationship with PoCoCo, the program houses a second performance company for all its majors called the Columbia College Dance Company; this dance company, unlike PoCoCo, is a student-led organization which performs at college-sponsored events only.

According to Brim, PoCoCo would not exist without its reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationship with Columbia College. PoCoCo was founded and has always been housed in the college's Dance Program. Columbia College acts as PoCoCo's fiscal agent, meaning the dance company did not have to undergo the arduous process of establishing itself as an incorporation nor a 501©(3) nonprofit organization in order to apply for funding. Of course, there is a trade-off in any fiscal relationship of this kind since all proposed initiatives must be approved by the college sponsoring PoCoCo. This

²⁷ More information about Columbia College can be found on its website:

<https://www.columbiasc.edu>

²⁸ For more information about how Columbia College encourages leadership potential in its students through coursework and internships, visit the Dance Program website:

<http://www.columbiasc.edu/academics/arts-a-communication-studies/dance-program/leadership-in-dance>

is important to note because a dance company does not retain complete control over its own vision when it must answer to a fiscal sponsor—something that Brim notes when negotiating her own roles between the needs of CC and the needs of PoCoCo. However, the college provides free rehearsal and performance space to PoCoCo, and assists the company in marketing, promotions, dancer recruitment, technical staffing, and supporting community partnerships. PoCoCo, in exchange, serves as a recruitment and marketing tool for potential students looking for unique opportunities in dance at Columbia College.

Most of PoCoCo's members have connections to the Dance Program at Columbia College, whether as alumni or current faculty. Brim notes that PoCoCo does not offer salaries to dancers at this point, so to support themselves some of the dancers teach in public schools, dance studios, or yoga centers, while others teach in the Columbia College Dance Program as adjuncts or full-time faculty. Since Brim recruits local dancers who are products of the Dance Program at CC, she seems to be interested in maintaining a value system that begins at the college, while also wanting to provide professional performance opportunities for dancers who will continue the values obtained at Columbia College.

Brim notes that PoCoCo offers the university an incredible opportunity for current students as well. Through internships in the dance company, students can be involved in the professional production process at every level. The Columbia College dance faculty created the course Co-Lab in which students can receive credit for working with PoCoCo. In this course, students take a weekly company class, and then choose to either perform or work on related tasks, such as administrative, artistic, or technical assignments,

depending on the student's unique personal interests and experience. The students in Co-Lab are called apprentices, and they actually sign performance contracts with PoCoCo. The students who enroll for this course are not always dance majors, and, in fact, Brim describes working with a few art majors in Co-Lab on a project in which the students and she collaborated to create art installations for the dancers to move through. Brim describes this course as "a cool thing that supports our [PoCoCo's] mission of collaboration" (pers. communication, March 1, 2016).

One of the topics of discussion that seems to excite Brim the most centers on a course she recently began teaching at CC called Liberal Arts 201: Diversity, Gender, and Social Justice. Each second-year student at Columbia is required to take this course and since it rotates among several faculty members, the content and outcomes may look different each semester it is offered, depending on who teaches it. In 2015, Brim saw an opportunity to connect her work with PoCoCo to this course's curriculum. Brim asserts,

What we [PoCoCo] always said we were going to do—and never really got the traction to be able to do—was community arts—to do something beyond just doing a show for the community—to really embrace the community . . . to involve the community in the [art making] process. (pers. communication, March 1, 2016)

Brim structured her version of the Liberal Arts 201 course as a series of interactions between students and community organizations in order to spark discussion, creative possibilities, and learning about issues of gender and social justice through community arts projects. Brim's course requires students complete 15 hours of service with a community organization of their choosing as well as 15 hours of work with PoCoCo during the semester.

The students in Brim's Liberal Arts 201 course, most of whom are not dance majors, work with faculty and community partners to create a large-scale interactive performance installation experience called The Home Project. The concept of The Home Project is to connect undergraduate students enrolled in the Liberal Arts 201 course at Columbia College with local nonprofit organizations that have transitional-housing services as part of their missions. The purpose of the connection is to co-create a performance around the course's mission of diversity, gender, and social justice. The work focuses on the notion of home and, during performances, viewers are invited to share their own stories about their conceptions of "home" as they take a self-guided tour through the site-specific work. Additionally, the Liberal Arts 201 students involved in the project complete volunteer work with PoCoCo during the course, since the dance company supports these performances by dancing in the work.

Students enrolled in LA 201 participate in The Home Project in a variety of ways, depending on their areas of interest and experience. For example, they might be stagehands moving furniture to the performance site, collectors of stories from community members, or even performers in the work. Brim describes the project as wildly successful and meaningful for all involved, asserting that, through this experiential learning process, "the students are learning about the value of service and how the arts can help in that way" (pers. communication March 1, 2016). Brim exudes a sense of pride about the depth of collaboration that this opportunity has afforded between PoCoCo, Columbia College students, community partners, and the CC Dance Program. She

predicts that she will offer the course this way in the future, provided PoCoCo is ready to commit to another iteration of The Home Project.

By producing work like The Home Project, Brim sees her dance company, together with the dance program at Columbia College, as filling a void that exists in the Columbia arts community in terms of engagement and participation in diverse forms of performance. She asserts, “We’ve got three big ballet companies in Columbia—they’re all doing their versions of *The Nutcracker*. There are some other choreographers doing interesting contemporary dance work, but I think this focus on community has made us [PoCoCo] distinctive in this area” (pers. communication, March 1, 2016).

Additionally, Brim describes an ongoing reinvention of the PoCoCo’s approaches to dance making and performance, ideas that typically mirror those of the Columbia College Dance Program. For example, Brim describes how the culture of the Columbia College Dance Program has over the years shifted to include more improvisational and collaborative practices, which can now also be perceived in PoCoCo’s approaches to creating a work. Brim describes how PoCoCo currently includes many improvisational and collaborative processes generated by the CC dance majors and how PoCoCo must “depend on their skills as dance majors to be able to develop material. It is collaborative, and we seek out partners to collaborate with from other disciplines like music and design” (pers. communication, March 1, 2016). The company, therefore, is a cultural product of the Columbia College dance community in many ways, sharing CC’s movement ideologies, approaches to art making, and dancers.

Martha Brim and PoCoCo clearly rely on a partnership with an academic institution for the survival of the dance company and have, therefore, formed an innovative symbiotic relationship benefitting both the college and the dance company. The reciprocity they have established provides students opportunities to work professionally while still in school, offers professional performance experience for Columbia College Dance Program graduates who choose to remain in Columbia after graduation, and creates chances for collaborations to emerge and productions to happen in the community around Columbia. Brim's unique strategies of combining the goals and tasks of her university position and her dance company position have strengthened and expanded the breadth and depth of her work in both organizations, and have provided her opportunities to continue her choreography, which she reiterated in interviews, was always her first love.

Kathy Dunn Hamrick

Kathy Dunn Hamrick's career and dance company, the Kathy Dunn Hamrick Dance Company (KDH Dance), are less entrenched in the developing bonds with educational institutions or developing dance education programs than those of other participants in this study. However, she has made some interesting connections in her community through initiatives specifically targeting underserved children in Austin schools. Further, she developed and currently directs the Austin Dance Festival (ADF), which promotes the needs and provides recognition for other professional dance companies, both small and large.

Hamrick and all but one of her dance company members are products of university dance programs, and these educational experiences are described on the KDH website as currently influential in their performing and dance making practices now. Hamrick, similar to the other dissertation research participants, describes being supported early in her professional dance career by university dance programs which would commission her for residencies and choreographic work. She used these early academic opportunities to gain the recognition and experience needed to then start her own dance company. Had she not gained this early career experience and a confident artistic voice through her work with these university programs, Hamrick posits that she may not have been properly prepared to take on the rigor of a leadership role in her own dance company. KDH Dance company members were educated mostly in Texas universities and some work or are searching for work in academia, K-12 schools, and dance studios in Austin.

While Hamrick did not mention in interviews how her dance company contributes to the academic institutions in Austin, I see her work, particularly her work directing the annual Austin Dance Festival (ADF), as a vital part of dance education in the Austin community. Not only does the festival present work from dance companies (many housed in universities), but also a series of classes and talk back sessions presented through the auspices of the ADF. Further, the dance festival has recently expanded to include works from young choreographers. Thus, an overarching atmosphere of learning pervades the ADF through the opportunities provided to emerging choreographers as they participate

in productive dialogues about choreographic and pedagogical methods with other experienced dance artists and pedagogues.

Hamrick and her dance company have also recently devoted more attention to educational engagement in Austin schools. According to the KDH Dance website, the dance company offers many educational programs and benefits to children. The website further describes these programs:

Since 1998, the dance company has served 10,000 students by conducting dance education assemblies for schools, teaching dance residencies in numerous communities, donating tickets to dance concerts through our Dream Pass initiative, and directing Move It!, a creative movement program for foster girls with histories of severe trauma, abuse, and neglect. (KDH Dance 2015)

Since focusing more attention on educational outreach programs, Hamrick claims she can already perceive greater overall impact of her dance company in the Austin community.

In the following, she further notes the unique opportunities for dance teachers and students compared to those working in other subjects of study by referencing her recent master class experience. Hamrick reflects,

The most recent thing I did was teach a group of 250 kids at one time—3rd and 4th graders—and you see it immediately. That’s the cool thing about dance. You just see it immediately if someone has it or not, whereas you can be teaching math and you’d have no idea if they’re figuring it out. So, when you’re teaching kids [dance] or you get [positive] evaluations from kids, you know you’ve made a huge difference. (pers. communication, September 3, 2015)

Hamrick describes the educational outreach component of KDH Dance as valuable and important to her growth as a teacher, a choreographer, and a leader. She senses her dance company members being positively affected as well at the large number of community children they reach with their programming.

Overall, Kathy Dunn Hamrick seems to value the ways her own dance education has prepared her for her current role as artistic director and choreographer of her dance company. Additionally, she uses her past educational experiences to create opportunities in the Austin community for dance education to happen for others, such as with the annual Austin Dance Festival and several ongoing programs for children in Austin schools. While not as entrenched in a specific academic institution as are other participants in this study, Hamrick, nevertheless, relies on her connections to dance education for the continued evolution of her dance company and herself as a leader.

Jessica Heaton

Jessica Heaton's contributions to dance education in the Provo/Orem, Utah region are significant. In the following, I discuss her dance company's unique partnership with the public school system and the interesting ways two large university dance programs in Provo/Orem affect her dance company. Additionally, her work to bring guest artists to Utah for master classes and workshops, and her pursuit of continued training for her own growth as an artist and educator, demonstrates her commitment to pedagogy and learning.

Heaton describes how her dance company, Wasatch Contemporary Dance Company (WCDC), has found a distinctive niche in dance education in Provo/Orem by consistently engaging children in her community's public schools. She does this by bringing dance into the schools through an annual series of master classes and choreographic commissions supported by the public school system, created specifically to engage children. Heaton values what she describes as the "really incredible standards for dance education in Utah schools" in which students "have to take improvisation and

they have to know the body energies of space and time” (pers. communication, January 28, 2016). Heaton’s classes in the public schools innovatively bridge dance technique, creative expression, and core course content for K-12 students, and are designed to meet the standards for dance education in Utah schools.

Heaton continues to describe how some of the Utah schools receive state funding specifically earmarked for dance education while also offering fundraisers that “reach out to other Utah [dance] companies and teachers [in order] to bring in [and] to expand [the children’s] education” (pers. communication, January 28, 2016). Heaton notes she and WCDC have served and received payment from about 15 public K-12 schools over the years by providing the students with experiences in various dance techniques, choreography, anatomy, and dance history. She concludes that this exchange of dance talent and money is a great way to financially support WCDC, while at the same time, amplifying dance education for children in Utah County. Further, these early dance experiences give the children and teenagers ideas for future paths in their educations and careers; Heaton summarizes:

It’s nice for them [high schoolers] to see my professional dance company, and that this is an opportunity for them—that their high school hobby could become their university degree. This could be a career path. And [becoming acquainted with] the different vocabulary you’d use in a university setting—they’re just getting exposed to that early so they’re better prepared for the future. (pers. communication, January 28, 2016)

The mutual benefits these classes offer children and teenagers in the community, as well as Heaton’s dance company, point to an effective collaboration, illustrating a unique way Heaton’s company is influenced and shaped by her community.

Heaton's location within the Provo/Orem community also places her and WCDC in close proximity to two universities: Brigham Young University and Utah Valley University. Both institutions are large and their significant influence on the region's culture is clear. Provo/Orem definitely seems like one large college town, its day-to-day bustle driven by the activity and magnitude of the university systems. Both university dance programs in the area maintain stellar reputations for excellence in dance and dance education, with a history of important support through the Mormon church and culture.

Brigham Young University (BYU)²⁹, a private university of around 32,000 students, is located in Provo and is home to a nationally accredited Department of Dance within its College of Fine Arts and Communication. The department offers three degrees: a bachelor of arts in dance, a bachelor of arts in dance education, and a bachelor of fine arts in music dance theatre. The Department of Dance describes itself as "one of the largest academic dance programs in the nation" (BYU 2016). Thirteen full-time faculty and more than 40 part-time faculty serve the population of dance major and non-dance major students. Uniquely, in addition to more traditional foci of ballet and modern for its dance majors, BYU places a large emphasis on ballroom, social, and folk dance forms, which allows the department to reach roughly 1,500 non-dance majors each semester. The university also houses a world-class dance team that is consistently awarded national titles.

²⁹ For more information about BYU's Department of Dance, visit the department's website: <http://dance.byu.edu>

Utah Valley University (UVU)³⁰, the largest public university in the state of Utah, is located in Orem and has a student population of about 33,000 students (The University of Utah in Salt Lake City is a close second with about 32,000 students). The UVU Department of Dance, housed in the School of the Arts, offers two bachelor of science degrees in dance education and ballroom dance, a bachelor of fine arts degree with emphases in either ballet or modern, and an associate of science degree in dance. The dance program is comprised of 11 full-time and 25 part-time faculty members.

The eminence of these university dance programs have, according to Heaton, contributed to an environment that could be perceived as less than inviting to a newly established, nonprofit dance company trying to get on its feet. Heaton describes the reputations of BYU and UVU as “hard to compete with” (pers. communication, January 28, 2016). Nevertheless, there are many benefits for a dance company sharing a hometown with such universities. Heaton and WCDC continue to negotiate the pros and cons of a slightly hesitant, yet potentially fruitful, relationship with the two universities in the Provo/Orem area.

Since Heaton is a product of BYU’s Department of Dance, she is in the unique position of knowing the community in a different way than someone coming in from the outside to start a dance company, and she has used her BYU network and influences to her advantage. Her connections with BYU dance faculty have led to invitations for her and her dance company members to teach and guest lecture on campus, which, as Heaton

³⁰ For more information about UVU’s Department of Dance, visit the department’s website: <https://www.uvu.edu/dance/>

acknowledges, is a great opportunity to also promote her dance company. Also WCDC regularly performs in the Ragan Theatre located on the UVU campus, thus allowing WCDC access to a highly professional performance facility, while also creating chances for the dance company to attract audiences from the UVU community. Additionally, the university dance programs are where Heaton recruits her company of dancers. Without the universities in Provo/Orem, Heaton says, WCDC would likely not retain the same caliber or number of dancers in the company.

Finally, Heaton describes the audiences in Provo/Orem as open to innovation in dance, having been primed for viewing many genres and perspectives of dance by the local universities. She says, “We have a strong base in our audience of people who’ve seen dance from an academic, intellectual side, and they are craving that new art—something different” (pers. communication, January 28, 2016). Heaton, therefore, strives to offer to audiences dance experiences that depart from the more familiar dance concert events produced by the universities. WCDC, thus, explores site-specific work, including installations, as well as collaborations with other independent artists in the area.

Along with the many benefits of leading a dance company next door to BYU and UVU, there are also some drawbacks and challenges Heaton is working to overcome. According to Heaton, one of the drawbacks to living in the Provo/Orem area is that, “once you’ve graduated, you’re kind of shut off from the universities and dance [comprised of adult dance makers]. If you want to perform, you have to go to Salt Lake County” (pers. communication, January 28, 2016). She acknowledges that the

universities are not intentionally isolating their graduates, but opportunities for performers outside of the academic institutions did not exist prior to WCDC's founding.

This perceived isolation of graduates from the community's established dance community was one of the reasons Heaton started WCDC in 2010—to create opportunities for dancers coming out of university programs to pursue professional performance and to keep growing as artists. She states, “I still feel that there is a strong need for professional dance—so we can keep those university dancers growing. It's sad when people graduate and the peak of their dance career was in college. I love to see my dancers [join WCDC] and be better than they were in college” (pers. communication, January 28, 2016). Heaton asserts that, although the general public may not perceive a lack of dance in the Provo/Orem area because of the considerable amount of dance they see coming out of BYU and UVU, opportunities for dancers to continue performing post-graduation were nonexistent before WCDC's founding.

Heaton continues to argue that WCDC is in a particular position to push the boundaries of innovation concerning how dance is portrayed and practiced in the Provo/Orem area, specifically in a manner that the university dance programs cannot. For example, since WCDC is not necessarily bound by the same conservative rules and structures imposed on the university dance programs, the dance company has the freedom to create and produce whatever they want. For Heaton, this means delving into more serious subject matter in her choreography, seeking out collaborations with local artists and organizations, and exploring the boundaries of performance and aesthetics. She hopes WCDC will continue to show community members in the Provo/Orem area what

distinguishes professional dance from university dance and how WCDC brings something unique to their community.

Since WCDC is still a fairly new dance company, Provo/Orem residents are still learning about it and Heaton works diligently to attract new audiences who may not know about the type of work the dance company undertakes. Heaton discusses innovative programming and branding of her dance company as important to building audiences in a community that is so entrenched in what the universities offer. She discusses the advantage universities have to create whatever they want because they “have automatic university audiences” (pers. communication, January 28, 2016) who will attend the shows no matter what is produced. Her dance company, on the other hand, has worked to find a balance between innovating and pushing the dance form forward, while also making their work accessible to a general audience—an audience that might not necessarily attend a university event.

Jessica Heaton’s connections to academic institutions further reflect an ongoing and evolving relationship between academia and nonprofit dance companies. Her reliance on BYU and UVU to provide her with a steady stream of available dancers to populate her dance company and provide opportunities for mutual support and potential collaboration indicate a positive interaction between the entities. Further, the alignment of the universities’ values, with the values of the Provo/Orem community and Heaton’s own values, demonstrate WCDC’s symbiotic relationships between university and community as the dance company strives to fit into the community’s existing culture. Similar to Martha Brim’s vision for PoCoCo discussed earlier in this chapter, Heaton’s

strong unified vision for WCDC endeavors to provide opportunities for dancers to continue performing and developing as dancers after graduating from university dance programs. Both Heaton and Brim exemplify this vision by bringing in dancers from their own communities, specifically their communities' university systems. This strategy differs from that of other professional dance companies who purposefully hire dancers from different geographies with different training, styles, and backgrounds. Heaton and Brim, therefore, clearly perceive unique benefits to building dance companies from their local communities, thus reaching inward rather than outward to develop work.

Jan Johnson

Jan Johnson's commitment to dance education is made obvious by her founding and directing a dance school that coexists alongside her company, Ormao Dance Company (ODC). Through the insights emerging from her interview, I feel pedagogy infuses every decision she makes with her primary concern seeming to be mentorship of her students and company dancers. Johnson's descriptions of how academia has shaped her work as a leader of a dance company mostly center on issues of curriculum and career management. In this section, Johnson describes how she shaped her own broad range of interests into a career as a leader, how her dance school and dance company coexist, and how she mentors young dancers.

Johnson credits her broad range of interests during her own college education for her abilities as an artistic director:

There are so many peripheral things [required for leadership of a dance company]. . . . Having a lot of skills has really carried me a long way because I have had to call on those. . . . My college transcript is like business law, art, photography,

dance classes, accounting . . . I don't know how I got out of there [college] with a degree in anything! But, when I look back I think that was a good thing because I had a lot of variety. . . . I've always had a broad interest in things. That broad experience has served me most. (pers. communication, July 16, 2015)

She, therefore, encourages the young dancers to engage in as many interests as possible in their education in order to give themselves greater chances for opportunities to emerge for them in the future. During our interview Johnson described further curricular changes she would like to see happen in university dance programs to prepare women leaders for directing dance companies in the future, specifically curricula concentrating on the skills she finds herself needing to engage when leading her own dance company and school. Thus, Johnson would include in dance education curricula courses in business, marketing, analytical writing, early childhood education and development, and other arts course work.

Johnson also discusses the importance of mentoring younger dancers to select college dance programs that will both support a specific lifestyle (since the life of a professional dancer in a large city may not be the dream of all dance majors) and a particular niche of the dance field the student is interested in pursuing. Helping young dancers understand the opportunities available to them in dance is important to Johnson. Since she often works with younger dancers who have not been to college yet, she finds the particular mentorship role she plays to be especially important.

Johnson describes the Colorado Springs community, where her dance company is located, as less educated about modern dance than a more metropolitan community might be since there is only one modern dance company and only a few small college dance

programs in town, even though Colorado College in Colorado Springs has a noted dance program with a strong historical record in dance making. Therefore, one of the roles she senses ODC fills in the community is educating community members (adults and children, alike) about dance. Before she opened a dance school, Johnson describes how her dance company would work with budding dance students in the Colorado Springs area to introduce them to new ideas about dance and to provide them performance opportunities. She notes in each Ormao Dance Company production,

we would create a community piece with kids, as an opener or a finale. We started doing that in every show and, after we did that twice, parents were like, “You really should offer classes.” I think our next step, actually, was that we had intermittent student performing groups and from there, we said, “We should really just have classes for the community.” (pers. communication, July 16, 2015)

Therefore, Johnson decided to open the Ormao Dance School, which offers a wide range of dance classes for children and adults. The school’s philosophy is detailed and inclusive of students who are interested in dancing for many different reasons. The mission of the school is as follows:

Dance is an art form! Dance is for everyone! Dance is FUN! We encourage all students to work towards excellence! Dance is an accessible way for everyone to express themselves! For those who aspire to dance professionally, we offer pre-professional student repertory groups which focus on a ballet and modern dance foundation which prepares them for dance in higher education. (Ormao Dance 2017)

Johnson notes that, unlike a lot of other dance studios, Ormao Dance School offers modern technique, improvisation, and choreography in addition to genres more often taught in a dance studio setting, such as ballet, jazz, and tap. Including a variety of diverse dance styles for her students is important for Johnson since she believes

introducing students to the many areas her dance company works in will encourage children to be interested in the diverse work of ODC, either as dancers or supporters later in their lives. She hopes that by continuing these traditions of connecting her dance company with her dance school through dance education, she will build an audience-base for the future, providing the ability of the dance company to sustain itself over the years.

This notion of sustainment over time is noted as very important to Johnson as she continues to describe how the crossover between her dance school and dance company open new possibilities for financial and artistic gain. She further describes in her interview how the ODC dancers are the teachers in the Ormao Dance School, how the school offers a student repertory ensemble in which students have opportunities to perform alongside the dance company, and how the school and company sometimes share resources. For example, in the past, ODC and Ormao Dance School have shared costumes, props, and theatrical equipment. Additionally, Johnson describes how this active crossover benefits her dance company when she concludes, “the school is so successful financially it can help support efforts of the company when necessary” (pers. communication, July 16, 2015). While she notes the dance company is well funded by local and regional organizations, having the option for additional support to feed in from the dance school makes her feel ODC is financially stable.

In order to assure the sustainment of ODC audiences and potential new dance school students, Johnson’s dance company offers an educational initiative for children called Mathtastic. The Ormao Dance website describes Mathtastic as “an in-school participatory performance that investigates math concepts using music, movement, and a

curious collection of everyday objects” (Ormao Dance 2016). Mathtastic links dance to curricular elements through the performances and an accompanying activity packet for teachers to use in their classrooms. ODC has presented Mathtastic to five local elementary schools, the Pikes Peak Library, and two local science festivals. According to Johnson, hers is the only organization in Colorado Springs to take on such an initiative and, so far, Mathtastic has proven to be popular and well received.

Johnson and ODC also maintain connections to the Department of Theatre and Dance at Colorado College and the Dance Program at Pikes Peak Community College, both located in Colorado Springs. Most of the ODC dancers either graduated with dance degrees from or currently teach dance at these institutions. These academic institutions offer Johnson a pool of dancers from which to recruit for ODC, and she often reaches out to them first when searching for dance school teachers as well. Additionally, ODC’s spring 2017 concert was sponsored by the Colorado College Department of Theatre and Dance and was produced on its campus in the Kathryn Mohrman Theater, indicating even more collaboration and sharing between ODC and local colleges.

Jan Johnson is an educator with an aim to open possibilities for the young people in Colorado Springs to learn about dance. While her dance school certainly contributes in large part to this mission, she also reaches into the larger community to teach children in public schools, making connections between dance and other areas of study. In addition, connections to institutions of higher education in Colorado Springs have been important in the development and support of her dance company in this community.

Brooke Schlecte

Brooke Schlecte's differing interests within dance education have converged into a budding dance school with an innovative curriculum, as I will detail in the following section. In addition to her interests teaching children, she has taught dance in universities using much of her self-described early educational experiences gained in high school, college, and graduate school. Schlecte emphasizes that her leadership skills were very much influenced by the example set by those she learned from when growing up.

Schlecte founded her company, Out on a Limb Dance Company (OoLD), while she was earning an MFA in dance at Texas Woman's University (TWU). She credits TWU with equipping her with many of the skills she relies on as a leader of her dance company, elaborating that,

through TWU, I gained so much confidence and so much knowledge. [My approach to] grad school was, "I'm going to learn everything I need to know so I can go somewhere and figure out how to figure things out, and to do what I want to do, and to start something in dance." (pers. communication, January 15, 2016)

Schlecte continues to describe how her dance company, established with a group of her TWU graduate student classmates, provided "a way to gather people who I enjoyed working with and wanted to continue working with after grad school" (pers. communication, January 15, 2016). Her TWU colleagues performed in Schlecte's MFA thesis concert and then, through a mutual interest, became members of her dance company. She says she wanted to "create a new model for a dance company and, somehow, [although we all] lived far away [from each other], to continue to dance with one another" (pers. communication, January 15, 2016). What began as a cohort of

students in a university system evolved into an innovative company of dancers participating in professional work by commuting from various cities throughout Texas and Oklahoma.

Since founding OoLD in Denton, Texas, Schlecte relocated to Waco, Texas, which has become the company's home base. While she senses many potential relationships blossoming between her dance company and local dance studios and other Waco arts and cultural organizations, she expresses a more limited connection to the large university in Waco (Baylor University), saying there is "zero comingling of our work" (pers. communication, January 15, 2016). This lack of relationship between OoLD and Baylor is disappointing to Schlecte, who once worked as an adjunct faculty member there, since she envisions potentially fruitful collaborations that could happen between her dance company and the university. However, she notes that the philosophies and goals of the two organizations differ greatly and that the dance program at the university is, unfortunately, dwindling in support and size. One bright spot Schlecte is hopeful about is that a recently relocated dance faculty member at Waco's McClendon County Community College may be interested in kindling a collaborative relationship between OoLD and the community college dance program in the future.

Schlecte's establishment of a unique children's dance education program called Dot Buds evidences, yet again, her impact in the Waco community. According to Schlecte, dance education in Waco is limited to the private dance studio experience, often built around a culture of competition in specific dance styles and genres such as ballet and jazz. According to Schlecte, studio education lacks comprehensive rigor in that it

does not address contextual elements, such as dance history and dance in differing cultures. Additionally, Schlecte finds the private dance studio culture disconcerting in that it teaches girls to be princesses and boys to be princes, a learned gendered normativity she hopes to counter with her Dot Buds curriculum.

Described on its website as “creative dance classes that emphasize movement skills and concepts, cultural studies, choreography, improvisation, and performance in an environment that fosters the children's needs and possibilities” (Out on a Limb Dance 2017), Dot Buds classes are currently aimed at children 4-7 years old and are held weekly in Waco’s Austin Avenue Methodist Church. The classes are often accompanied by live musicians and include community performance opportunities. At the end of each year, students present a small, public show to illustrate some of what they experienced together. These low-budget productions are appealing to parents who seek to avoid the exorbitant costs of dance studio recital performances.

According to Schlecte, the educational components included in Dot Buds classes that differ from the more traditional dance technique classes in terms of innovative curricula and dance practices. For example, in Dot Buds when students learn ballet, they learn not only the steps and physical positions of the body, but also the correct French terminology and pronunciation, ballet history, and the creative potential of ballet movement vocabulary to develop unique choreography. Additionally, Schlecte structures cultural units into the curriculum including a wide range of explorations into whatever culture is the focus at that time. When asked to elaborate on these experiences, she notes,

Right now we're doing [a unit on] Scotland. I try to bring people in from the community as guest teachers. I had a friend from Scotland [who came] with her bagpipe and her violin and she taught a whole class, and they sang some folklore songs and she taught everyone a dance. I make a poster board every semester with the food they eat [in that country], the animals of the country, the flag, the clothes they wear or wore, the music, and the dance—some really popular things they can grasp. [I include these elements] so they [the students] can really have a sense of what the culture is like. (pers. communication, January 15, 2016)

Schlecte notes that her classes have been especially popular with young boys, a particularly difficult population to reach with dance. She attributes this to the classes' emphases on different cultures, the classes' comprehensive approach to dance technique, and, pedagogically, a shift away from the more traditional gendered expectations of dance present in many other children's classes.

When discussing Schlecte's dance school with her, it is clear that she is extremely proud of what it has become and is surprised by her love of it. She claims,

I never thought I would teach kids. But those kids—[the Dot Buds]—they changed me completely and what I think about dance . . . and it has to do with my daughter being there, but still, I mean, it's been . . . Teaching this form of dance to 4-7 year olds is amazing. *Amazing*. (pers. communication, January 15, 2016)

Schlecte lights up, exuding pure joy when discussing her dance school's innovative practices. She credits her studies in undergraduate and graduate degree programs with preparing her for creating a comprehensive curriculum. Schlecte boasts that "there are no other dance classes like Dot Buds in town. . . . Providing that sort of class in the community is so unique for Waco" (pers. communication, January 15, 2016). She also describes how the response from the community has been astounding, asserting, "A lot more people are interested in [Dot Buds] than I thought" (pers. communication, January 15, 2016). She continues to emphasize how parents appreciate the pedagogical

well-roundedness of the curriculum, the lack of attention placed on gendered roles, and the reasonable cost of participation for their children.

Eventually, Schlecte hopes to expand the Dot Buds school as well as the educational engagement part of her dance company. She fully believes that “[dance education] has the potential and capacity to grow in Waco” (pers. communication, January 15, 2016) since so many in the community have expressed interest and excitement about her classes. For Schlecte, the future of Dot Buds will include levels for older age groups, thus requiring more dance teachers to support the school’s expansion. The need for more teachers and an expanded curriculum is one reason, she says, for applying for 501©(3) nonprofit status for OoLD. According to Schlecte, the dance company would then be able to apply for grants to support these initiatives (Since our interviews in 2016, Schlecte has indeed been granted 501©(3) nonprofit status for her company). Additionally, she hopes to take her curricular ideas into Waco public schools, offering master classes and workshop series to students of all ages in order to engage them with dance and dance in differing cultures. Thus, Schlecte is finding ways for her dance company and budding dance school to serve and interact with each other, similar to the way Jan Johnson discusses this idea earlier in the preceding section of this chapter.

For Schlecte, her own graduate dance studies experiences at TWU stimulated successful working relationships with fellow graduate students who she wanted to continue creating with upon graduation. This meant creating a working arrangement and dance company structure that would allow them to create work quickly since the dancers had to travel long distances to meet together. Locally, Schlecte created Dot Buds as a

way to meet a need within the Waco community and then realized it would help her gain non-profit status, benefitting OoLD as well as her growing dance school.

Katherine Kiefer Stark

In this section, I aim to offer the reader an account of a different way that university teaching can influence and affect an artistic director's decision-making and goals. Katherine Kiefer Stark directs her dance company, The Naked Stark, in Philadelphia. Stark also works as part-time, adjunct dance faculty in several universities within the Philadelphia area, which is, arguably, a less supported and stable position than Brim's tenured, full-time position, for example. Further, Stark's approach to her work, the ways her various professional and personal roles intersect and confront each other, and the challenges she faces are also very different than the other participants introduced in this dissertation.

Having gone through an MFA program with Stark from 2006-2009 at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, I know how committed she is to moving and teaching, and I knew I would be inspired witnessing her work with her dance company. Her choreography and pedagogy are intertwined and are equally important in her approach to students and dance company members alike. Her pedagogy is, in a word, *peaceful*. Deliberate, yet meditative in her approach, she encourages her students and company dancers to go within themselves to find inspiration for movement while also being cognizant of and attentive to each other while moving. In addition, Stark's language is beautifully image-laden and gently spoken to encourage soft joints and fluidity in movement from those participating in her classes and her choreography.

Stark began taking ballet classes in high school, but it wasn't until college that she discovered where she truly belonged in the dance field. During our discussion she reminisced on taking a university modern class in which she was asked to explore choreography. In our interview, Stark exclaimed about this memory: "Wow! *Making* something is amazing! I didn't really know what to do with that except knowing that someday I wanted to have a company where I could make a lot of somethings" (pers. communication, November 9, 2015). After earning a BA in dance from Connecticut College, Stark then moved to New York City to work as a choreographer and performer. Feeling vulnerable about putting herself out there in such a large field of working, experienced choreographers, she realized that to mature as a dance maker, she would have to go back to school. Therefore, she moved to North Carolina to attend UNC Greensboro, attaining her MFA in 2009. This MFA experience, Stark asserts, helped her become more confident in her ability to present her work publicly; this confidence then bolstered her in establishing The Naked Stark, where she could consistently produce her work. Currently, in addition to directing her dance company, Stark also works as an adjunct professor of dance at Stockton University and Bryn Mawr College.

Throughout my own personal relationship with Stark and throughout my interview and observations of her working with her dance company, I noticed a consistent devotion to pedagogy as a conceptual basis for her life. Stark speaks often of her teaching and how it connects to her choreography, performance, and her personal life. Her experiences at Bryn Mawr College and Stockton University as an adjunct professor were

sprinkled through our conversations, indicating a deep interest in bridging the academic and professional dance worlds.

Stark refers often in our interview to experiential learning and consistent dialogue with others as main sources of inspiration and motivation for her work with her dance company and in her work with university students. She learned these strategies through her own studies in universities, detailing conversations with colleagues and faculty, as well as practical lessons learned in graduate school preparing her to lead a dance company after graduation. She confirms, “It was really great to get to develop work in a place where there weren’t really critics and there were people to talk to about making your work. . . . Grad school was really great for honing that and giving me language to talk about what we do (pers. communication, November 9, 2015).

When asked to elaborate on how she infuses dialogue and experiential learning into her own artistic and pedagogical practices now, Stark references a site-specific dance called *Patchwork* that she tours to people’s private homes, catering each performance experience to the uniqueness of that person’s home. She describes this process in the following:

The idea behind [*Patchwork*] is that someone hosts it and invites their own community [to the performance]. In dances, we’re often creating communities that exist for two hours and then they [audiences] all disperse. . . . We’re providing a pretty tangible experience [with *Patchwork*], but audiences are not committed to sitting in the dark for an hour and they don’t have to go home and try and process it by themselves. What is it to make it a more social experience—where you see a little bit of dancing and talk right away to the person who made the dance, and you get to talk with your friends right away about the things they’re seeing? (pers. communication, November 9, 2015)

Stark is unquestionably enthusiastic discussing the potential benefits of *Patchwork* as an educational experience for both performers and viewers. Her enthusiasm is underscored by a deep investment in teaching and learning as a shared and immediate process.

Stark further describes inviting community members to dance as a very important practice in her choreographic works and her teaching, emphasizing that “everyone should get to move” (pers. communication, November 9, 2015). During The Naked Stark’s seasons (typically September to May each year), Stark holds a weekly “movement practice” for her dance company, welcoming anyone in the public to join in regardless of previous dance experience. Stark feels calling the classes movement practice rather than dance class offers some level of accessibility to people who may be curious about dance, but too intimidated to participate in more formalized or codified experiences.

Another important way Stark connects with communities in Philadelphia is through the educational initiatives her dance company offers via its productions. Stark’s award-winning, evening-length work *Goodnight War* examines “how and why we support war in our everyday lives, through the framework of a funeral [depicted onstage]” (Naked Stark 2016). The work premiered in 2010 and has since been expanded for restaging at two other locations. Most recently, in 2012, the work was presented as a site-specific series of task-based activities for dancers to perform through the Sanctuary of the Broad Street Ministry in Philadelphia. Non-dancers from the community were also invited to participate improvisationally in the work. Stark notes the work has now been structured to be “partly performative and partly process, and centers on what it means to be in a culture that’s embedded with war” (pers. communication, November 9, 2015).

The changes happening in each restaging of *Goodnight War* led Stark to create an educational component of the work:

Now, the project is in a phase called the Goodnight War Workshop, which is like an experiential performance workshop event. What I would like to do with it is bring it to colleges and universities and high schools and do the workshop there. My overall dream is to keep making those kinds of things possible and finding more ways to connect dance and people. (pers. communication, November 9, 2015)

Different from some of the other participants' ways of connecting to community through formalized dance education or engagement through several small performance events in the community, Stark's approach is holistic and rigorous, encouraging deep, continuous investigation. For example, rather than create multiple new works each season, as some of the other participants do, Stark prefers to expand *one* work over a period of many years—in this case, *Goodnight War*—teasing out its nuances from varying perspectives through many rounds of differing explorations. Further, she is interested in how her dances, through these stages of development, can become educative and participatory for community members.

Education and participation infuse the Goodnight War Workshop series, which is, according to Stark, “an experiential performance workshop event . . . It's partly performative and partly process, about what it means to be in a culture that's embedded with war” (pers. communication, November 9, 2015). The Naked Stark has toured the project to a private Quaker high school in the Philadelphia area after which Stark asserted that the students learned about privilege and social and cultural issues. She concludes that the, “workshop offers a really tangible way to think about these things—maybe a little

more concrete than just going to calculus” (pers. communication, November 9, 2015).

While Stark enjoyed presenting the work at a high school, the ultimate goal for the Goodnight War Workshop series is to tour it to universities and colleges, offering it as a multifaceted experience for students in higher education. She asserts that by learning about one’s own privilege and civic and cultural responsibilities through experiential activities, students may have increased chances of living generously and peacefully in the future.

In addition to imbuing ideas of shared teaching and learning into her choreographic process and works, Stark also incorporates these tenets into the practicalities of her professional life in academia and her personal life. She describes her adjunct faculty work at Bryn Mawr College as connected to her work with her dance company. In the following, Stark describes her sense of the word “release,” language she uses to motivate her college students to let go of tensions they may have brought into the class; however, she then questions how what she learns from working with these students might then help her dig more deeply into her choreographic ideas with her dance company. She states,

Since grad school, I’ve been starting to think about what the movement is and what, I think, are the basics of this thing called “release” . . . and, how am I talking about it? And, what is the language I want associated with it? Even though exactly what the movement is isn’t necessarily what I’d offer to professionals, or my company, there’s still a trickle down aspect. . . . So far, I’m feeling like [my] art and [my] teaching feel somewhat related. (pers. communication, November 9, 2015)

In her role as educator to beginning modern dance students, she is, therefore, able to explore the fundamental principles of the movement idiom she then investigates in a more advanced way with her dance company.

While Stark has found some useful connections between her roles in the university and in her dance company, she also notes some areas of intersection she would like to change in the future, if she could. One of the biggest challenges of maintaining both roles is that she feels there is not enough time to attend to all the important responsibilities necessitated by each. When asked if she finds the multiple roles manageable, she says, “The jury is still out. Right now, it’s a lot of work to plan. I feel that tug of ‘Do I plan a really good class, or finish their grading?’ There are a million things to do. Do I also *have* to check my email?” (pers. communication, November 9, 2015). She also grapples with a challenge that many part-time university faculty face: a lack of job security. She describes adjunct work as “here today, gone tomorrow” (pers. communication, November 9 2015), and has difficulty searching for future work while, at the same time, negotiating the demands of her current workload. Finally, she describes the challenge of working for academic institutions, which do not necessarily support local artists and dance companies the same way they support nationally recognized or touring companies, saying, “It’s interesting in this area because at a lot of the universities in Philadelphia, the [students] have to go see [dance] concerts, but often the syllabi will say you have to go see [a dance company like] Urban Bush Women . . . and they won’t send them to go see the local choreographers” (pers. communication, November 9, 2015). This is a problem, according to Stark, because she perceives her dance company’s ability to

grow in this community and city as limited due to the universities' assumptions about what kind of dance is valuable and worth sending students to view.

Katherine Kiefer Stark's experiences working in academia and directing her dance company paint a portrait of negotiation and compromise. On one hand, she senses the ways her roles as an educator and as an artistic director strengthen each other, as well as strengthen her students and her dance company. On the other hand, she faces day-to-day challenges that stand in the way of her ability to fully realize the potential of either role. It is especially interesting to compare the challenges Stark faces at the onset of a career in academia with the challenges Martha Brim faces at the end of an academic career. Whereas Brim seems wholly supported by her university, and has reaped the benefits of a mutually reciprocal relationship, Stark grapples with less direct support of her dance company from the universities with which she works. I sense that because Stark is an adjunct (rather than tenured) faculty member, the universities she works for do not feel compelled to support her research as they would a tenured or tenure-track faculty member. Further, Stark's dance company is relatively young and was founded in a large city with more competition for audiences. These factors, I believe, also contribute to Stark's (presently) more challenging situation.

Conclusion

The differing ways the participants in this study include dance education philosophies and community initiatives in their dance companies' work indicate the importance of the connections between their art making, learning, and teaching. The participants illustrate a mostly positive portrait of interactions, collaborations, and shared

goals taking place between the universities in their communities and their personal artistic endeavors. Whereas Martha Brim relies completely on a university for the very survival of her dance company, Jessica Heaton and Katherine Kiefer Stark find ways to shape their pedagogical interests and administrative strategies into opportunities that can be shared with (although not fully supported by) their local universities.

The other three participants in this study do not rely on university systems for support of their dance companies. Jan Johnson, for example, forgoes seeking support from her local university by using her successful dance school as a support structure for her dance company. Johnson's school provides a dance education for the next generation of dancers and dance supporters, while her dance company provides the school's teachers, and wages for those teachers, as well as creating opportunities for students to perform in a semi-professional capacity. Brooke Schlecte endeavors to create a dance school that gives parents of young children an option beyond that of a competitive private dance studio. She is deeply interested in creating an innovative curriculum for dance education with her budding school. For her, dance technique cannot be fully understood or appreciated without knowledge of the culture and history from which it sprang. Kathy Dunn Hamrick also does not fully depend on a university to support her company; instead, she has developed the more comprehensive format of the Austin Dance Festival as a means for reaching beyond her local community to dancers working throughout the country. This broad festival format provides an educational space for sharing ideas between dancers, choreographers, audiences, and those students taking workshops offered by the festival.

Overall, the women I interviewed found deep connections between their work with their dance companies and the experiences they had as students and/or faculty in universities. These educational experiences pervade their current artistic and educational ideas and goals. Further, universities and colleges provide many of these women with rehearsal and/or performance space, and a pool of well-trained dancers to recruit for their dance companies. Thus, although each participant's ways of working with institutions of higher education vary, the impact and influence of university dance programs on these women and their dance companies is infused throughout each of my conversations with them. The importance of the relationships between the participants' dance companies, and the academic institutions that surround them, cannot be overlooked in this dissertation.

In the next chapter, I discuss how the participants in this study manage multiple leadership roles in addition to their roles as artistic directors of their dance companies. In discussion with these six artistic directors, I realized how important multiple leadership roles are to them since the topic dominated much of our discussion. These leaders seem to triangulate leadership opportunities, with each role and leadership opportunity contributing to the richness of the others.

CHAPTER VI

WEARING MANY HATS: LEADERS WHOSE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR ROLES INTERSECT WITH OTHER LEADERSHIP ROLES

The concept of *wearing many hats* in their lives is echoed in the interviews with all of the participants in this study. Since these women leaders seek a multiplicity of leadership roles, both in their careers and personal lives, it is important to represent their descriptions of the reasons for and benefits of negotiating these roles. While all six participants describe similar experiences in regard to taking on many leadership obligations, Jan Johnson, Kathy Dunn Hamrick, and Brooke Schlecte most often discuss their investment in continuing to develop themselves as leaders of concurrent—often overlapping—projects, groups, and initiatives.

Jan Johnson, for example, leads her dance company as well as an associated dance school, a school which provides interesting contexts for the artistic projects she invests in and goals she has for her dance company. Kathy Dunn Hamrick's experiences directing her dance company and founding a regional dance festival provide a differing perspective about how professional dance and the broader community intersect. Brooke Schlecte serves as the artistic director of her dance company, the director of a regional dance festival, and is in the early stages of developing a dance school for children, with all of these roles intersecting and sometimes bumping up against one another in interesting and challenging ways. These three participants' descriptions of playing their

multiple leadership roles offer a glimpse into the unique ways leading a dance company can branch out into leading multiple initiatives. All three participants describe these additional roles as beneficial to and supportive of their main role of dance company artistic director.

**Jan Johnson: Balancing Leadership Roles Between a Professional Dance Company
and a Private Dance School**

The relationship between Ormao Dance Company (ODC) and Ormao Dance School illustrates a symbiosis wherein each part benefits and each part gives way to make space for the other. One of the greatest benefits to the dance company is that the dance school community (students, their parents, and their friends) supports ODC's productions and events, especially since Johnson makes sure to highlight student performers during many of its performances. In the following, Johnson describes the unique ways ODC brings in family audiences and why the school community is enthusiastic about the dance company:

We enjoy a relatively easy way of gathering our audience. They don't have a lot to choose from when it comes to dance [in Colorado Springs]. I feel like [ODC's] role is to make dance lovers out of unlikely people, hopefully, in that younger age demographic. I'm optimistic that all of our [school] families [including children] will come to all of our [dance company] shows, so we always offer a matinee—always, always, always—because that's when families come. (pers. communication, July 16, 2015)

In other words, the dance company benefits by having an automatic group of audience members within the school students and families, and those families benefit by having access to family-friendly, discounted professional performances. In our interview, Johnson elaborated about how ODC is essentially training its next generation of company

dancers in its school by inviting the school students and their families into the culture of the dance company early in their dance educations.

Another benefit in maintaining ties to the school for Johnson's dance company is in the financial opportunities made possible by the relationship between the two entities. Johnson describes the school as "functioning well" (pers. communication, July 16, 2015) financially. In fact, although the dance company operates with a separate budget and separate bank accounts, if needed, ODC could rely on being financially supported by Ormao Dance School. Although Johnson alluded to the fact that she has never had to call on this structure of support, it could be a hugely important resource if needed in the future to maintain her nonprofit dance company.

In addition to the possible benefits of sharing financial resources, Johnson notes both her dance company and school benefit when the two entities share staff. Of the 10 teachers listed on Ormao Dance School's website, eight of them also perform with Ormao Dance Company. Offering dance company members teaching positions, according to Johnson, is mutually beneficial because it gives company dancers opportunities to earn money (the dance company is not in a financial position to offer salaries) and it opens spaces for young dance students to interact with and learn from professional dancers they admire. Johnson elaborates, stating, "Our dancers are their teachers. The kids want to see their teachers dance, so it starts that connection and they get excited about it" (pers. communication, July 16, 2015). Further, young dance students have opportunities to learn about possibilities in the professional dance field since their teachers currently work in that arena and can offer unique mentorship in the form of

resources and advice. Finally, according to Johnson, the students have opportunities to join one of the three youth performing groups affiliated with the school, connecting their learning to specific performance initiatives. As part of these performing groups, school students are provided access to guest artists commissioned to set work on the dance company and, sometimes, are even cast in company works. All of these areas of crossover between dance company and school illustrate positive, fruitful connections, each entity helping the other reach its goals.

In addition to her work as artistic director of her dance company, and director of her dance school, Johnson also takes on the role of executive director of ODC. Some of the duties she takes on in this role include managing budgets, writing grants, contracting guest artists and collaborators, and developing fundraising initiatives for her dance company. These coexisting roles, according to Johnson, are challenging to keep up with, but also build on and intersect organically with each other. She credits her talent at multitasking, her previous work experience as a creative interior designer, and her eagerness to seek mentorship from others for her ability to manage her multiple roles concurrently; Johnson summarizes:

I take on all the roles. I was not expecting that. I'm grateful that I have a high capacity for multitasking. I mean, this is not a job for everybody and I do think I flourish in this environment. . . . Creative design, with its deadlines, just helped me learn to stay calm and to do the best I can—the best to get through it. . . . I do wear a lot of hats. I've taught myself how to do that and I've had mentors along the way [to teach me those skills]. In the beginning, I reached out a lot to Denver dance company artistic directors. [I asked] "How do I do this?!" and the overwhelming answer was that there is no one way to do this, so you're going to find your own way. (pers. communication, July 16, 2015)

Early in the dance company's history, Johnson relied on advice from other artistic directors, those who had done what she wanted to do. Over time, she realized that she would come to rely on many others as collaborators in the growth and development of her dance company and her dance school.

This theme of collaboration surfaced repeatedly when our conversations revolved around Johnson's knack for delegating and her interest in working as part of a team. Johnson surrounds herself with a strong group of supportive staff members, personal friends, and professional colleagues, crediting them for her ability to wear so many hats in her career. On the other hand, she also asserts a need for working with colleagues who are able and eager to share some of her leadership tasks. She specifies in the following:

I have other dancers and teachers who are good sounding boards for the school and for the company. I don't have any official [staff positions] because I can't pay them. I need a school director. I need an executive director. Those roles (school director, artistic director, and executive director) need to be separated. I'm always asking for help. Always engaging other people. I realized I've never had an office before until we moved in here, and the times that I'm here alone are probably my least productive times. I'm much better when someone else is in here and we're kicking around ideas. (pers. communication, July 16, 2015)

While she perceives a need for more help, she laments her financial position and an inability, at this point, to take action to develop paid positions (as do so many other participants in this study). Nevertheless, Johnson uses the resources she has effectively by specifically targeting people who fill the gaps in her own experience and knowledge. She notes the importance of calling on those who have experience in other areas she considers herself lacking in, such as law, business, and early childhood education and development.

In the following, Johnson describes how asking for help from others allows her to get beyond her areas of inexperience in order to know when and how delegating is necessary:

I think that in teaching, and in any kind of leadership role, I wish that I had had more course work in psychology, child development, and basic stuff like that in college. Thank God, I did have *some*. In hindsight, I wish I had had more . . . to help my [Ormao Dance School] teachers. Instead, I had to learn the hard way, and I've become surrounded by people who *do* have those skills. I can call upon them, so that I don't have to [have those skills]. (pers. communication, July 16, 2015)

In other words, Johnson thinks it is important to acknowledge what she is not skilled at in the leadership of her dance school and dance company. She then seeks out people in her professional networks for their specific expertise to support the areas in which she lacks, indicating a commitment to collaborative leadership.

In addition to Johnson's commitment to collaboration, one of her reasons for taking on so many leadership roles relates to the particular culture and makeup of the Colorado Springs community, which, incidentally, is also one of the major factors contributing to ODC's success. Interestingly, although the community seems quite invested in the arts through its many art centers and foundations, its citizens are particularly underserved by dance, even though there is a long-running dance major program within the city's Colorado College Department of Theatre and Dance. While dance studios abound, only one professional dance company exists—Ormao Dance Company. Therefore, she attributes the growth and impact of the dance company to the fact that it is the only dance company in Colorado Springs with which the large number of local visual artists, musicians, and designers can initiate collaborations. She asserts, "If you just hang around this town long enough, you get all the cool stuff! That's how it

works, all the cool stuff comes your way” (pers. communication, July 16, 2015). Johnson values the directions these collaborations have taken ODC, sensing she has had opportunities for much risk taking in her productions. However, on the flip side, she notes, “[We] don’t have any competition. It’s not like Boulder. Boulder has a lot of very active regional dance companies, so there’s a lot of competition. The upside there is that they have more dancers to choose from because there is more activity. We have fewer dancers to choose from” (pers. communication, July 16, 2015). Another downside to directing a dance company in Colorado Springs, Johnson describes, is the lack of financial support for dance there. She claims, “Culturally, there is just not a lot of money for the arts, especially dance. It gets the least money and the least attention [of all the arts]” (pers. communication, July 16, 2015).

Having witnessed the presence of Ormao Dance Company and Ormao Dance School in the community of Colorado Springs through observations of Johnson’s classes and a site-specific performance at a local art gallery, I sense the significant impact her work is making on the community. Her classes were packed with enthusiastic students and the performance I viewed was well-attended and well-received according to the comments heard from the audience. Johnson’s positive interactions with students, company dancers, and collaborators illustrate a leader fully invested and happy in her work. This passion is infectious to those around Johnson as I sensed them becoming energized by her presence. Further, audience responses to the dance company’s work and critiques from local newspapers indicate viewers are making meaningful connections to the choreography and the company itself.

Ormao Dance Company's 25-year tenure in the Colorado Springs community illustrates its sustaining growth and Johnson's strengths as a leader. In fact, when asked what she is most proud of in her career so far, she responded, "I'm most proud of the reach in the community, that people know our work and are happy with what we're doing, and have had a memorable experience. That's what makes me want to do more" (pers. communication, July 16, 2015). Even though Johnson describes the multiple roles she plays in her career as "unexpected" and "overwhelming" at times, the overlapping of these roles allows for the dance company and the dance school to coexist and even to push each other further than they would without the other.

Kathy Dunn Hamrick: Balancing Leadership Roles Between a Professional Dance Company and an Annual Regional Dance Festival

Hamrick's work with her dance company, the Kathy Dunn Hamrick Dance Company (KDH Dance), includes community engagement and educational initiatives she instituted as a leader in the Austin community. In her discussions, Hamrick often worries about the survival of dance in Austin (and everywhere, for that matter). To alleviate her concerns, Hamrick initiates new projects and ideas to keep dance relevant to the community in which the dance culture lives. Whereas taking on additional leadership roles within these initiatives presents new challenges for Hamrick, she also describes many benefits to her dance company as they establish new projects to expand their reach in Austin and beyond. Additionally, she continues to evaluate and edit her own practices of interacting with local funders, civic leaders, and audience members necessary to the success of these initiatives.

The Austin Dance Festival (ADF), founded by Hamrick as “a series of modern dance concerts presenting the work of emerging and established artists for Austin audiences,” (KDH Dance 2015) brings together regional dance companies from around Austin, as well as several dance companies from around the country, for a long weekend of performances, classes, and networking. In 2015, the festival featured three fully-produced concerts with a total of 23 works, all selected from a pool of three times as many submissions from diverse dance companies. Roundtable critical discussions about the works followed each concert, and classes in a variety of dance styles were also held during the weekend.

When asked why she decided to start a regional dance festival, Hamrick replied,

You know, there was a time when I thought that modern dance was just going away, that when I closed my company, it was going to be over. It was really starting to feel that way. Even before [founding] the Austin Dance Festival, we’ve always had something smaller at Café Dance [studio in Austin] where we present other choreographers. We added shows [each year] and we’d always sell out. We were turning people away, which is why we went to the larger Austin Dance Festival. Just providing an opportunity for other artists also (pauses) . . . The dance festival gives other companies an opportunity because, you know, the whole touring thing is just dried up. And again, thinking of ways to (pauses) . . . I need dance to keep going! There’s this part of me that wants to make sure that we as a dance field succeed, so that’s why we do the dance festival. (pers. communication, October 3, 2015)

In addition to creating a way for dance to flourish in the Austin community, Hamrick senses a deeper impact the ADF specifically has for those in the professional dance community. In the following, she confirms the many professional benefits and opportunities emerging as dance companies join together in an atmosphere of respect and sharing:

I think these festivals are a way for people to show their work and reach those new audiences and also see other people's work. Just to be inspired and motivated by that [is astounding]. . . . [This year, after the festival ended], people were emailing me and texting me all the next day, saying it felt like something we were all in together. It felt like this buoyant rising up of good will. (pers. communication, October 3, 2015)

In summary, The Austin Dance Festival, according to Hamrick, provides dance companies from the Austin region and beyond an opportunity to join together in mutual love for dance, while also giving her dance company name recognition and an opportunity to show their work to a wider audience. Since Texas is a very large state and spread out geographically, it is not often that dance companies in the region are able to see each other's work and to network with each other. Therefore, to have an opportunity for dancers and choreographers across the state to all come together at once is hugely important for supporting an active dance community in Texas.

Hamrick aims to continue directing the ADF provided there is space available in which to hold the event. One of the issues she describes arising in the Austin community is a lack of space for dance concerts to be held. As Austin becomes a more desirable place for families and professionals to live, more people are relocating to the city making what little space is available overcrowded and very expensive. Hamrick notes that since most performance companies do not make enough money to pay the rising rent prices of their concert spaces, theatres are being forced to close and be torn down in order to build condominiums that are then sold for a higher price to those moving to Austin. Thus, the theatre spaces KDH Dance has come to rely on are dwindling, and the few available spaces come at a premium in terms of competition for bookings. So, while Hamrick

perceives hugely important things happening with ADF as a continuing annual event, she also acknowledges the challenges that lie ahead for her as the leader of the festival in trying to make it feasibly possible within the changing demographics and economic climate of the Austin community.

Hamrick finds the dwindling performance space situation in Austin frustrating and works to overcome those challenges; however, she also encourages dance community building through the leadership of multiple projects and events *not* requiring performance spaces. For example, in our interview she described a Facebook page she initiated and currently manages to further support dancers in the Austin community: “I started this Facebook page called Dance in Austin because we don’t have an organization in town that supports dance. I started that page to be a clearinghouse for anything a dancer would need to know in Austin or even anybody who wants to go see a dance performance” (pers. communication, October 3, 2015). As of April, 2017, the page is still updated several times per week with upcoming performances and events, audition notices, calls for choreography submissions, grant announcements, class opportunities, and job postings. The page is undeniably useful for anyone looking to be involved in any aspect of the Austin dance field. Once again, Hamrick illustrates her keen ability to recognize emerging trends in how communities are built and how people relate to them.

In addition to founding initiatives like the ADF and the Dance in Austin Facebook page, Hamrick also gives much critical reflection to how she can be a better leader for dance in her community. When it was suggested by a local arts commissioner a few years ago that she introduce herself and her dance company to civic leaders, such as the city

commissioner and the city council, Hamrick responded that it is “not my personality to be out there, but I think to make a difference, we [leaders in dance] might have to start making that our business” (pers. communication, October 3, 2015). She took the advice to heart, acknowledging that in order to help civic leaders and funders understand what KDH Dance has to offer and, thus, appreciate its value in the community, she must put herself out there as an advocate for her dance company. This means moving past her social comfort zones in order to make herself known to those people who could potentially serve in supporting roles for KDH Dance in the future.

Further, when reflecting on her significant challenges, Hamrick identifies her need to keep up with the demands of acting as a teacher and artist, in addition to serving as her dance company’s artistic and executive director. She notes that while she started KDH Dance to provide more opportunities for publicly presenting her choreography, there was no one to teach her how to manage the administrative aspects of running a dance company, specifically in terms of fundraising. Hamrick did not expect there would be so many additional duties to contend with beyond making and presenting her dance works. Happily, KDH Dance received a capacity building grant from the Austin Arts Commission in 2015 that funded consultants to comprehensively analyze KDH Dance—an analysis that eventually helped Hamrick better manage her multiple roles. Hamrick notes the consultants’ assessment as including two suggestions: 1) to increase the turnover rate of the board of directors in order to “diversify and bring new community connections to the company” (pers. communication, October 3, 2015), and 2) to hire a managing director to take on some of the work that currently overloads Hamrick. When

asked to describe the process of prioritizing her competing roles and to describe how hiring a managing director would help her, Hamrick notes,

To me, a managing director is someone who wouldn't be full-time, and who would work closely with me, and who would take over some of those fundraising and development things, some of the marketing, so that I can make my dances. Not that I'm not going to help with those things, but to move forward, I need somebody who knows what they're doing, and enjoys doing it, and will go out and do it, and have the time to dedicate to it. I still teach and some people say, "Well, why don't you just not teach as much?" But I love teaching! And moving is my thing! So, that's not what I'm gonna give up! Let me give up the other stuff. (pers. communication, October 3, 2015)

While this has been a frustration for Hamrick for some time, she elaborates that, since initiating the process for rotating board members, KDH Dance's new board president is learning the ropes of fundraising and grant writing, which Hamrick claims is already taking a huge weight off her. The restructuring and emphasis on greater turnover of the board of directors, therefore, serves as a way for supporting Hamrick's ongoing growth as a leader of multiple initiatives.

In summary, after listening to Hamrick discuss her various projects, goals, and challenges, I was struck by how invested she is in supporting other dance companies and choreographers in the Austin region and beyond. It seems as if every choice she makes as a professional is in support of artists in her community and her own company dancers. She notes that by supporting one another, we as a dance community are better able to assure the future of dance in Texas. She cites the famous John F. Kennedy quote, "A rising tide lifts all boats," when discussing the importance of bolstering others' work and encouraging excellence in her peers in the dance field. Kathy Dunn Hamrick's endless support for others in the dance community contributes to her impact as a leader

constantly creating new opportunities for others in that community. Further, her consistent and continuous forward momentum defines her work with her dance company and her broader work in the dance field. Finally, her willingness to be self-reflexive in the face of adversity allows her to transform her leadership practices and adapt her artistic practices to fit the needs of a changing community.

Brooke Schlecte: Balancing Leadership Roles Between a Professional Dance Company, an Annual Regional Dance Festival, and a Private Dance School

Whereas Out on a Limb Dance Company (OoLD) has developed over the past decade, Brooke Schlecte describes Dot Buds, the private dance school she directs, as something new and in progress. She notes in the following that her daughter Sadie's interest in dance was a contributing factor in her founding of the school:

The reason why I started the Dot Buds is that she [Sadie] started an interest in dance, and I was very concerned with how she viewed dance and her body and women. I went into a local [dance] studio and the whole class was pretending to be princesses (serious expression as her eyebrows raise). The *whole* class. My jaw was open wide, and that pretending scared me. We can't pretend to be princesses, that's not real. And so I was most interested in her vision [of dance] being different. (pers. communication, January 15, 2016)

Schlecte's goal, then, was to create an experience with dance that allowed children more diverse and thoughtful ways to experience dance than what she found in the existing dance studios within her community. For Schlecte, this goal would be built on a dance pedagogy in which the young students would be empowered to create and enliven their imaginations through movement.

With this goal in mind, Schlecte also discussed her appreciation of being able to work on a project specifically developed for Waco—a community in which dance is

mostly seen as traditionally based in a ballet or jazz aesthetic. When asked to define her goals for the Dot Buds school, she reflects,

. . . the thought is to grow, adding a class every three years while continuing to maintain what I already have. I think that's pretty manageable. This is the second year. All of this [development and planning for the future] is kind of challenging because I don't have the perfect space, but I think it's doable. (pers. communication, January 15, 2016)

Schlecte senses her dance school will continue to grow because the Waco community is continually growing and becoming primed for more experiences with diverse arts and cultures. Schlecte senses that “Waco is at such a crucial point right now. . . . People are getting excited about all the different cultures here now, and they're wanting to celebrate them—especially in the arts” (pers. communication, January 15, 2016). She perceives many possibilities in the future for making connections between her dance school and dance company, specifically because of the overall growth of arts and culture in Waco. These connections will be further strengthened once Schlecte achieves nonprofit status with her dance company since she will then be able to position herself to apply for local and community grants that benefit both her dance company and school (nonprofit status has now been achieved since my interviews with Schlecte).

In addition to leading her dance company and her budding dance school, Schlecte also directs the {254} Dance Festival, an annual, regional event in conjunction with and supported by the Waco Cultural Arts Festival (WCAF). According to Schlecte, Doreen Ravenscroft, Director of the Waco Cultural Arts Festival, proposed that Schlecte start and coordinate a dance concert series as part of the WCAF. Schlecte describes Ravenscroft as “a jedi . . . like a fairy godmother!” (pers. communication, January 15, 2016), further

crediting Ravenscroft with the {254} Dance Festival's growth, the connections made between her dance company and the Waco community under the auspices of the dance festival, and even the overall growth of the arts and culture in Waco. With Ravenscroft's support, the {254} Dance Festival is in its seventh year and includes three components: 1) an adjudicated concert series featuring regional dance companies, 2) a choreography exchange program in which non-local choreographers are paired with local dance studios to set choreography on those dance students to be performed during the festival, and 3) a children's dance program that offers free dance concerts with educational components.

The most recent addition to Schlecte's repertoire of leadership undertakings is the founding of the Texas Dance Festival Alliance (TDFA). Similar to Hamrick's Dance in Austin's Facebook Page, Schlecte describes the TDFA as fostering "support and communication for Texas contemporary and cultural dance festivals" (TDFA 2016) by creating an online resource for dancers, choreographers, and dance companies to post and receive information about dance festivals in the state of Texas. This organization retains a board of directors, website, and committees separate from those involved in Schlecte's other organizations.

Undoubtedly, taking on leadership of the OoLD Company, the Dot Buds dance school, the {254} Dance Festival, and the Texas Dance Festival Alliance demonstrates Brooke Schlecte's abilities to maintain many concurrent leadership roles. When asked how she manages so many multiple projects and roles, she describes a meticulous process of selecting projects that will fit into her already busy schedule, specifically those which contribute to her own artistic and leadership goals and potentially piggyback on some of

the other projects to which she has already committed. For example, Schlecte sees her work with the Dot Buds as deeply connected to her relationship with her two children and the goals she has for the {254} Dance Festival Children's Program. Not only do these classes offer a way for Schlecte to include her children in her work and educate them about dance, but the classes also bridge the educational goals she has for the Dot Buds school with her dance festival's goals for educating community children about diverse arts and culture.

Another example of the way Schlecte bridges her multiple leadership roles is in her founding of the previously introduced Texas Dance Festival Alliance (TDFA). The TDFA benefits her dance company by giving the OoLD dancers information about how and where they might show and present their work to new audiences statewide. Additionally, the TDFA benefits the {254} Dance Festival since it provides a space for advertising and recruiting for the festival directly, while also spreading news about OoLD indirectly through its festival sponsorship. This method of triangulating projects for their mutual benefit is a particularly successful strategy for Schlecte as she manages multiple leadership roles.

Schlecte further discussed with me how time management is integral in her daily life when trying to juggle multiple initiatives, particularly since she juggles her many professional roles with being a mother to two young children—the role she describes as the most important to her, yet also the most demanding (discussed further in Chapter VII). She details this act of juggling multiple roles in the following:

I start with the family first, and when all their needs are met, then I spend time with the company. So, basically, I do as much work as I can while [the kids] are sleeping. I wake up at 3:00 or 4:00 am, I work until they wake up, I'm with them until nap time, nap time is my work period from 1:00-3:00 pm, then I'm back to mom from 3:00 pm until they're in bed at 6:30 pm, and then I spend time with [my husband] Charlie from 6:30 pm to when I pass out at 8:00 or 8:30 pm. That's how it works. I think that it works because I am so type A, and I am super, super, super organized—almost micromanaging everything. (pers. communication, January 15, 2016)

Schlecte continues to say that although there are things she would like to do with her day, such as watch television or sleep later in the mornings, she acknowledges that in order to be happiest and most productive, she must stick to her schedule, placing her family first and, next, her various work projects. Every daily event is planned. Within this meticulous schedule is the role of her husband, Charlie, who she describes as “super supportive” (pers. communication, January 15, 2016). She arranges meetings and rehearsals around Charlie's work schedule and when she has a particularly busy week, her husband makes special arrangements to take over more of the childcare. Theirs is a marriage of compromise, balance, and support, providing Schlecte a way to manage her life.

Another important strategy Schlecte relies on to lead such a cacophony of projects is seeking out people to whom she can delegate certain tasks. For example, her husband Charlie provides assistance with professional areas she has less experience in such as budgeting and marketing. She also recruited a team of supportive volunteer staff, including an intern for the {254} Dance Festival, who helped her with administrative tasks; a teaching assistant for her Dot Buds dance classes; and an assistant to the director for her dance company. She also outsources some administrative tasks when possible, such as logo and media design. Finally, since she was working toward nonprofit status for

OoLD, she now aims to include board members who can fill some of the administrative roles she would like to hand off to others who have more expertise in those areas.

Even though Schlecte is thoughtful about her commitments and takes her responsibilities very seriously, sometimes she is faced with difficult choices to make, such as projects that must be released from her life. For example, she describes an ill-fated 2015 Mommy-and-Me class she started specifically in order to include her son in her dance activities. During the second class, she says, “he started to get really clingy and he would just sit in my lap and cry, which was not like him” (pers. communication, January 15, 2016). She notes the class began during a particularly stressful, busy time for her family and, looking back, she senses her son wanted more one-on-one time with her. She knew she had to let the class go for the well-being of her son and family. Schlecte laments, “It was hard because it felt so terrible to have to cancel it. I felt like a failure. But also, it wasn’t the most important thing, so knowing when to be ok with stopping something has been integral [to a successful balance of my professional and family lives]” (pers. communication, January 15, 2016).

Schlecte further notes that, although she occasionally confronts insurmountable obstacles, for the most part, her multiple leadership roles exist with a sense of interplay, feeding off each other and adding to her overall sense of success and fulfillment in her career in the dance field. She concludes by claiming,

I love everything! Every thing [I’m involved in] hits a part of something about dance or doing things that I love. I love organizing stuff. {254}[Dance Festival] is like the optimum way to be in crazy paperwork and organize people . . . and then choreographing, performing, teaching, everything I’ve wanted to do, I’m getting to do it—all of it! (pers. communication, January 15, 2016)

While Schlecte's life appears to be impossible to manage given the many projects she is involved in and the multitude of leadership roles she plays, it is specifically this multitude of experience that she looks for to make her career and personal life meaningful. Finding joy in maintaining balance makes Schlecte's continual juggling seem fun to her.

The complicated multiplicity enacted between Schlecte's professional and personal lives is evidenced by the sheer number of interests, projects, and ideas she discusses with me during our interview. Whereas many artistic directors would fail to manage so many leadership roles at once, Schlecte seems to thrive on the regimentation required by the many roles she takes on. An adherence to time management and prioritization, a reliance on supportive individuals in her life, and her ability to triangulate her professional and personal experiences all support her desire for wearing many hats.

Conclusion

The leaders discussed in this chapter maintain multiple leadership roles and strategies in order to achieve differing and, at times, similar goals. Jan Johnson, for example, perceives the mutual benefits inherent in concurrently directing a dance company and a dance school. Since her major interests are in the sustainability of professional dance and dance education in and for the Colorado Springs community, she senses her leadership roles are contributing to these goals. Kathy Dunn Hamrick, on the other hand, seeks to create opportunities for dance to thrive in Austin, Texas by supporting others in the Austin and broader Texas dance community. Her main goal is to create an environment/network of sharing. She sees her multiple roles directing a dance

company and directing a regional dance festival as serving these purposes. Finally, Brooke Schlecte desires a variety of experiences in her career and personal life, and has made career decisions with this goal in mind. Her leadership of a dance company, dance school, and dance festival invite her to experience and organize a diversity of activities within the dance field in Waco, Texas.

What these women have in common is that each of their dance companies benefits from its artistic director maintaining her multiple leadership roles. The value of additional performance opportunities for dancers in the companies, additional work opportunities for dance company members who also teach in affiliated schools, and each company's exposure to new audiences and artists can be attributed to the directions of the multiple projects taken on by the company's leaders. Further, the ways these leaders encourage networking and dialogue through initiatives like community-based social media sites and websites and public events that focus on sharing amongst artists illustrate their desire to use their leadership skills for the benefit of other artists in addition to their own dance companies. Their multiple roles as leaders help sustain their dance companies, develop dance in their communities and beyond, and create webs of connections in dance, thus helping to sustain the art form in the future.

CHAPTER VII

THE PARADOX OF *HAVING IT ALL*: ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

WHO ALSO RAISE FAMILIES

All the participants in this research describe ongoing negotiations between their responsibilities in their professional and personal lives. Specifically, three of the women I interviewed discussed the many challenges and benefits found in their dual roles of raising children under the age of 10 and directing their dance companies. Since these interconnected roles were important to these women, and are also issues often raised among my colleagues in the professional dance field, I present in this chapter how the skills needed to balance professional and personal lives is relevant to this dissertation's research. Therefore, in the following, I analyze the differing ways Brooke Schlecte, Jessica Heaton, and Katherine Kiefer Stark grapple with the responsibilities of raising young families and leading dance companies concurrently, noting the various issues they identify, their strategies for managing any challenges they confront, and the possible benefits of serving as artistic director/mother/wife.

Family First: Brooke Schlecte's Prioritization of the Personal and Professional

As I perched on a stool in Brooke Schlecte's kitchen in Waco, Texas, one of her company dancers, Sarah Newton, looked over from a large dining table in the next room where she sat with her laptop, and exclaimed, "Brooke's helping me create my baby registry. That's what we've been sitting here doing for the past few hours. She's just been

telling me what to put on there . . . because I have no idea!” (pers. communication, January 15, 2016). Schlecte smiled and then glanced over to her son Silas, saying, “Who’s ready for a nap? Can you say bye to Ali and Sarah?” (pers. communication, January 15, 2016). Silas sweetly bids us goodnight and jumps into his mother’s arms to be carried upstairs to his bedroom. As I pull supplies out of my bag for my upcoming interview with Schlecte, I notice colorful toys, similar to those found in many parents’ houses; however, in Schlecte’s house, they were all gathered neatly in the space of a room off the foyer near the front entryway. I assumed this was a playroom or a kids’ room, and was amazed to see such calm, pleasant order and control in a home defined by young family energy and busyness.

What I expected would be a chaotic scene, instead, played out as a tranquil afternoon in conversation with Schlecte about her dance company, her family, and the many other ideas she has and projects she leads. Schlecte’s surprising ways of managing two small children, a marriage, and Out on a Limb Dance Company (OoLD), in addition to multiple other initiatives as discussed in Chapter VI, illustrate a portrait of her composure and intricate design of her life. This design is shaped by Schlecte’s intentions, planning, and expectations for herself and those closest to her as they sit at the forefront of her goals and strategies.

When asked about how she balances her many professional responsibilities with the demands of raising two young children and maintaining a marriage, Schlecte points to three concepts: prioritizing, planning, and delegating. These concepts support her professional and personal goals and, most importantly, provide her with the ability to

commit to so many activities at once. Supporting these concepts are the people and privileges in her life that also contribute to her ability to undertake so many projects concurrently. Further, she points to the guidance of several mentors from her past as instrumental in her self-confidence and preparedness for the choices she's made. Also, Schlecte discusses the privilege of having a husband whose career supports her family so that she is free to pursue directing her dance company and being a stay-at-home mother. In this section, I detail how these people and privileges support Schlecte's goals.

Early in her career, after Schlecte earned an MFA in dance from Texas Woman's University, she moved back to Waco, where she was born. When she had her daughter Sadie, she had already founded her dance company and was working as a part-time faculty member at Baylor University. She decided at that juncture to prioritize her children above all else. Her philosophy of juggling parenthood and career is to, as she puts it,

manage everything based around what time I have to give. I stay at home with the kids, and my first priority is to do that. . . . It was my choice to say, "Ok, I'm a stay-at-home mom." That's the choice I made. I could do it differently, but I only have a little bit of time to be with them when they're young, so . . . (pers. communication, January 15, 2016)

Her words trail off as she begins discussing her reasons for being a stay-at-home mother. In my follow-up questions about her statements, she asserts that she sees parenthood as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and to miss that by prioritizing work commitments is unacceptable to her. So, she chooses to work in the home, placing her professional responsibilities behind those affecting her family. So far, she notes, this prioritization has worked well for her. Of course, Schlecte acknowledges a privilege that not many dance

professionals have: a husband who is able to support her family financially. This privilege of not needing a second income is important to mention since it allows Schlecte the freedom to pursue her dance company and be a stay-at-home mother without the worry of financial strain. Even though Schlecte does have financial goals for her dance company that have not yet been met, financial concerns did not seem to be a major priority throughout Schlecte's conversation.

Schlecte's daily life is a meticulously scheduled agenda of to-dos that she excitedly discusses as an elaborately designed masterpiece of intricate construction. In the following, she details a typical day's itinerary:

In the mornings I prepare, schedule, check emails, and I work out to get my energy going. I have two afternoons [per week] when I rehearse, and the other three afternoons—and this is hard (starts talking faster)—I have meetings [mainly concerning community dance projects]—unless I have a child [to attend to]. I can [have meetings at my home] when they're napping, but when I do that, I'm losing my [home] office work time. It's always a wonder when I'm going to schedule those things. I like to have that concentrated two hours in [my home] office in the afternoons [during the children's naps] as my office time. And it's really just work in the office, getting stuff done, budget, website design . . . (pers. communication, January 15, 2016)

Her knack for detailed planning and organization borders on obsessive, she claims.

However, these obsessions play a large part in her ability to use time effectively. She elaborates in the following:

I am super organized—almost micromanaging everything. Actually, I take so long micromanaging things, I could probably be doing something else, but it seems to work. My alarms are set, I know when I'm supposed to do stuff [for the family], and I know that when I have a work time, I don't waste it. (pers. communication, January 15, 2016)

In other words, her ultra-organization and super-planning serve an important purpose: they help her maximize her valuable time. She acknowledges she can only commit to so many activities in order to do all of them well, or, as she puts it, “at the same level” (pers. communication, January 15, 2016). Therefore, she is very thoughtful about exactly what she commits to doing, exactly how and when in her day each responsibility will fit, and, if necessary, who will support her when she needs help with any of these tasks. Additionally, she reveals an early-to-bed, early-to-rise mentality which allows her to bookend her work days with time with her husband.

Within the structure of her daily schedule is a seemingly small point that could go unnoticed, but is actually one of the most important strategies Schlecte relies on to maintain her work with her dance company along with the responsibilities to her family. This strategy is her ability to work, as much as possible, while her children are sleeping. As noted in her weekly schedule above, she uses the children’s nap times (usually 1:00-3:00 pm on weekdays) to get administrative work accomplished and, on rarer occasions, to attend meetings. These meetings must be carefully planned so that they occur in Schlecte’s home, or else, she must hire a babysitter so she can attend them.

Schlecte further discusses specific strategies she calls on to work with her company dancers and the artistic processes she employs to assist her in maintaining both her dance company and her family. In order to meet her family’s and her own needs, she limits the amount of OoLD rehearsal time, shares the responsibilities of choreographing for OoLD with other dance company members, and, for added efficiency and effectiveness, seeks only friendly, positive interactions between all company members.

She, therefore, recruits dancers who are committed to rehearsing only one weekend per month and who are willing to work collaboratively toward shared choreography and performance. Additionally, OoLD dancers must be willing to travel to Waco for company rehearsals, performances, and events. In exchange for these travel requirements, Schlecte reciprocates by providing dancers various benefits. She further elucidates her perspective and process in finding and working with company dancers:

I'm trying to gather people who have a like-minded interest and people who are interested in this decision [to work in this way]. . . . If they're excited to be here [in the dance company] and are willing to travel [to Waco for rehearsals], I am able to make it free for people. So, I can pay for your gas, I can pay for your food, I can pay for your lodging, I can get you to performances and pay for all that. So, if you want to come and be with us and work with us and have the ability to retain and pick up stuff [movement phrases], and offer things . . . because I don't go in and say "This is the dance!" This has to be a collaborative process. (pers. communication, January 15, 2016)

According to Schlecte, this system for managing the needs of her dance company also allows her to address the needs of her family. She continues to stress this balancing act by focusing on how she seeks to work with a group of people she genuinely enjoys and respects as they collaboratively continue to create and perform dance works with OoLD in Waco. In this manner, work and family are not in competition; rather, both remain a joy for Schlecte.

Another important strategy she calls on to manage the professional and personal arenas of her life is to include her children in her professional work, even establishing side projects in which they can be a part. For example, she claims, "the whole reason why I started the Dot Buds [dance classes for young people] is that [my daughter] Sadie started [showing] an interest in dance" (pers. communication, January 15, 2016). When

searching for a good dance school for her daughter, as further detailed in Chapter V, Schlecte noticed an alarming trend: she perceived local dance studios teaching little girls to act as princesses and little boys as princes. She felt these schools were, therefore, equating those gender characterizations as not only fundamental to the meaning of dance, but also to the meaning of gender. This concerned Schlecte, who wanted her daughter's vision of dance and her vision for herself as a girl to not be defined by unrealistic societal attitudes and expectations. So, she established the Dot Buds, an ongoing series of dance classes for children ages four through seven. As detailed further in Chapter V, the Dot Buds curriculum is, according to Schlecte, innovative in Waco because it combines the tenets of traditional dance techniques, those valued in other local dance schools, with the added complexities of the differing histories, cultures, and expectations of diverse dance forms and the training supporting those forms. Thus, not only is Schlecte confronting traditional notions of how dance training is accomplished in her community, she is also combining her passion for teaching children with opportunities for spending time with her own children as they take the Dot Buds classes.

Following the founding of Dot Buds, Schlecte discovered a multitude of other benefits to this new program. One benefit is her outreach into the community of Waco through the families whose children take the dance classes. By often inviting these families to performances produced by her dance company, OoLD, Schlecte is able to develop new audiences for her dance company, as well as give her young students opportunities to witness the possibilities for dance as a career onstage and within differing community spaces. This growing community outreach has been a beneficial

way for building a relationship between Schlecte's dance company and the Waco community. However, most importantly, Schlecte concludes that, unexpectedly, she has discovered that she simply enjoys teaching children, allowing her to find new means of personal fulfillment within the dance field.

Throughout the interview, Schlecte discussed how her husband is the largest support person in her life, providing assistance in the forms of parenting and childcare, dance company support, and financial stability and advice. She notes that her detailed daily schedule rarely goes astray because of her husband's shared commitment to her needs and his enthusiasm for sharing in the parenting of their two children. Schlecte elaborates, contending that

[the schedule] very rarely falls apart. It really doesn't. Charlie, my husband, is super supportive. When I have rehearsals, he takes the kids. He loves it, and that's his time to be a one-man show. He thinks it's awesome. So, it very rarely falls apart. I've been doing it [that way] for so long. (pers. communication, January 15, 2016)

Having a supportive partner who shares in the work of raising a family, therefore, seems to be of utmost importance to Schlecte. In addition to providing schedule and child care support, Charlie's career is the main source of income for the family and since he is, according to Schlecte, "good with money" (pers. communication, January 15, 2016), he serves her dance company as a budgeting resource. Finally, the emotional outlet Charlie (and her children) provide her seems to offer Schlecte an escape from the busyness of her professional life. She describes the weekends when she is not rehearsing as "family time" (pers. communication, January 15, 2016). She smiles broadly when discussing her requirement for her family to "just give me all your time on the weekends.

Just give it to me” (pers. communication, January 15, 2016). Her partnership with Charlie, therefore, is clearly important to how she continues to work effectively as a leader, to manage so many projects at once, to be an active mother and partner, and to find joy in both her working and family life.

Although Schlecte did not discuss this explicitly with me in her interviews, I think it is important to note that the freedom Schlecte has to choose to work as a stay-at-home mother offers her many advantages as an artist and artistic director of a dance company. These advantages do not exist for all women and, as discussed in Chapter III, issues in balancing child rearing with careers supporting the responsibilities of parenthood remain at the forefront of concerns for many women working in the United States. Schlecte is able to devote any time her children are asleep to leading her dance company, rather than spending that time at another job. Further, her husband’s work supports the family effectively so that she does not have to worry about family finances. Her position with her dance company is, at this point, unpaid. This unpaid status could only be viable if her husband’s job is able to financially support the needs of the family. Finally, since she doesn’t have to work in another job, Schlecte is free to shape the way each of her days plays out. In other words, she is her own boss and can make decisions that best fit her children’s, her dance company’s, and her own needs each day.

As Schlecte looks to the future of her family and her dance company, she senses upcoming opportunities for growth and positive development. At the time of the interview in January, 2016, she looked forward to the fall of 2016 when her son is expected to attend school four days per week. Her daughter is already in public school

during the weekdays, so when both her children are in school in the near future, their daily absence will create a different work day schedule for her. She explains in the following: “I mean, I’m going to be all over the place sad, but at the same time, I will have so much more time to work. I’m not going to even know what to do with myself! I may sleep in a little bit” (pers. communication, January 15, 2016). Schlecte seems to understand that, even though her life may never be as busy as it is now when meeting the needs of a young child still at home all day, there will also be a sadness in losing that aspect of that busyness.

When asked to describe what she has planned professionally for the future, Schlecte discusses possible intersections of all her various initiatives, especially between her dance company and Dot Buds, her dance school for young children. At the forefront of these considerations, though, is always her family and their needs, and how those needs affect her ability to take anything else on professionally. Schlecte dreams of a time in which “everything can interact and the company could teach the little ones, or [both] could have performances together” (pers. communication, January 15, 2016). The dream of having the dancers in her dance company and her dance school perform together is supported by Schlecte’s interest in slowly building her school’s curriculum to add more advanced levels, especially as her own children age and are able to progress through these levels. She describes her dream as

having a big collective, and it would be from bottom to top, all ages. We would have space, and a group of artists in the space that have other interests. It would not be just dance, but [all] arts. So, Out on a Limb would go from bottom to top, young to old, all the way to the professional dance company. And in a new model, a new form. (pers. communication, January 15, 2016)

Again, the goals Schlecte has for these connected initiatives are planned around how her family's needs and ages will continue to grow and shift. This ability to connect the needs of her work with the needs of her family permeated Schlecte's interview.

A theme that emerged as I listened to Schlecte was how she works independently to build things she wants for herself, specifically setting this example of proactivity for her children. While she credits the mentors and supportive friends and family in her life enthusiastically, she recognizes that she has accomplished so much because of her own hard work and commitment to her goals. She describes herself as having grit and will, which then helped her achieve and balance a full professional and personal life. When asked about what she hopes for other women in the dance field who want to pursue similar goals, and how she would advise her own daughter to proceed in the field, should she choose that career path, Schlecte says,

I wish that [my daughter] Sadie, or women, or anyone could know that they *can* do this. They have the ability or they can go find the ability. [I would tell them to] go educate yourself, figure out a way to make something work for you. Build yourself something. Just like making a dance, build yourself the capacity to grow in where you flourish. I'd say that's what I'd love to see happen. And not just follow models that have previously worked for someone else, but find a way to make it work and fit in your life. (pers. communication, January 15, 2016)

Through her work with her dance company and the efforts devoted to her family, Schlecte continuously works to negotiate balance between the professional and personal. By prioritizing her family first, she organizes her work with her dance company around the schedules of her children, delegating various responsibilities to the people in her life she counts on for support. Her ability to organize her time effectively and to create

opportunities like her Dot Buds classes that reward her both personally and professionally, in addition to the financial advantages she has that allow her to work solely for her dance company as a stay-at-home mom, further provide the freedom to lead and shape her many diverse initiatives. Schlecte's professional goals and ideas for the future are constantly and continually further shaped by the growth of Schlecte's family, and she adapts these goals specifically to advantageously affect the growth of her professional life.

Cultural and Community Expectations: Jessica Heaton's Negotiation of Motherhood and Dance Company Leadership

Sitting with Jessica Heaton in the parent waiting/observation room of Smash Dance Academy in Provo, Utah, I notice brightly colored toys, board books, and blocks in every corner of the room—some strewn about on the floor and others organized into storage boxes. Heaton's dance studios most often host children's dance classes, but the academy's owner also donates use of these studio spaces to Heaton's dance company, Wasatch Contemporary Dance Company (WCDC), for rehearsals. As Heaton and I exchange small talk, she picks up several toys from chairs and the floor so we can sit down together for our interview. Immediately, I notice her knack for multitasking, and imagine the complicated juggle Heaton must be required to perform while mothering two young children and directing her dance company.

As we begin the interview, I am struck by the fact that Heaton discusses her dance company and her family as two very different parts of her life. However, it is clear she also needs each part in order to feel fulfilled and successful. Heaton loves her dance

company dearly, saying, “It’s my baby and I would do anything for it” (pers. communication, January 28, 2016); however, she then further describes how her family, and the Mormon values practiced by her family, are the most important influence on her work with her dance company. Unlike any of the other participants in this study, Heaton, her family, and her company are positioned in a community dominated primarily by the value and belief system espoused by the Mormon religion. Her descriptions of how her dance company participates in this community and culture offer insights into how the roles of artistic director, wife, and mother can intersect within a specific demographic.

Wasatch Contemporary Dance Company (WCDC) is comprised entirely of women, some of whom are mothers and wives. In the following, Heaton offers fascinating examples of mothers who dance in her company and who often share her values regarding the prioritization of their growing families:

One of our dancers performed with us when she was seven months pregnant. Our administrative assistant is eight months [pregnant], and she’s got a few weeks left and then she’s jumping right back in with us three weeks later. We have a pediatric nurse, Jessie, who is due in a few weeks and when she has her baby, we will have nine children and nine company members. We have almost more children than [we have] company members! (pers. communication, January 28, 2016)

Since she is interested in supporting the mothers in her dance company, Heaton knew from the outset that she would have to structure the casting, rehearsal process, and overall season programming differently than would many dance companies existing within different communities. Also, since most of the WCDC dancers are members of the Mormon community and church, Heaton recognizes the importance of the family values

specific to Mormon beliefs. Heaton notes how she wants to respect and support that culture of her dance company, asserting,

I'm glad I can provide the dancers opportunities to grow in their careers while having families, which is highly valued in our culture and community. My company is created in such a way that allows a dancer to still be a mom or have another career. . . . I never want to take people away from their families too much. (pers. communication, January 28, 2016)

Heaton is clearly very aware of the needs of her company's dancers, both in their personal lives and in their professional lives, and works to give them realistic opportunities so they can thrive as WCDC dancers.

In an effort to support her particular company of dancers, Heaton began WCDC as a "hobby company" (pers. communication, January 28, 2016), as she puts it. This status allowed her to give the dancers as much freedom as they needed to fit the dance company into their lives. However, this strategy ended up backfiring on Heaton because she says, "when, [at the last minute], people told me they couldn't be at rehearsal, I just had to deal with it" (pers. communication, January 28, 2016). Heaton further described dance company rehearsals in the early years as less productive than she'd hoped, with too much flexibility and not enough accountability for the dancers. She says she felt guilty asking any more of the dancers, though, since she was not able to pay them very much and since babysitters were very expensive, often costing more than the dancers would receive for rehearsing. The dancers would essentially be *paying* to be a part of WCDC. Nevertheless, Heaton recognized a need for more consistency in dancers' rehearsal attendance in order to continue producing work consistently.

To move away from the “hobby” status of the dance company and the ensuing problems discovered in that status, Heaton strategized ways to implement a dancer contract, pay the dancers more through grants and contributions, and narrow down to a smaller company of eight dancers. Of these strategies, Heaton claims,

Now that we can pay them a little bit, it has gotten better. Now, they have to give us at least two week’s notice for absences. We’re not getting that text [alerting us to a dancer’s absence] three minutes before rehearsal anymore. People know [what their expectations are] and they feel more responsible and accountable for the product we’re putting out there. I also think a smaller company helps. I think we had like 16 at one point. Eight is nice. They all feel very accountable to each other . . . it’s been nice to overcome that [challenge]. (pers. communication, January 28, 2016)

Additionally, Heaton casts the dance works in each of WCDC’s concerts based on the availability and amount of commitment the dancers have to give, noting,

I’m always trying to tell people, “Please be honest with the amount of commitment you can give.” Some people will say they can only be in one dance this season and some people aren’t married yet, so they can have a heavier schedule. And, some people say, “You know, I’m just going to take this season off because my family needs me at home.” (pers. communication, January 28, 2016)

She mentioned several times being aware of the dancers’ commitment to their families, and that she would never want to interfere with that most important commitment.

Therefore, another strategy she implemented in rehearsals was hiring a dance company babysitter who would watch all the dancers’ children in one of the dance studios while rehearsal took place in the adjoining studio. Unfortunately, however, as soon as the dancers heard their babies crying next door, they would leave rehearsal to tend to the children, creating an unproductive rehearsal environment. To combat this problem,

Heaton describes how many of the dancers now share babysitters and have established a system to help each other with child care during rehearsals.

Throughout her interview, Heaton discussed how much she admires the ability of the WCDC dancers to continue to grow as dancers while also being active mothers to their children. She notes how she is “super impressed that my dancers are staying current in this industry while having children. They’re amazing” (pers. communication, January 28, 2016). Heaton goes on to state that the intensely demanding set of expectations on these dancers/mothers inspires her to create opportunities for their continued learning and development as dancers. Since WCDC is a 501©(3) nonprofit organization, the dance company can apply for grants from local organizations, such as the Utah Division of Arts and Museums, to bring guest artists in from out of town. Heaton writes the grant applications for these residencies, and is able to get funding to support guest artists once or twice a year. She describes these residencies as giving her dancers opportunities to study technical practice through the diverse artistic focus of each guest artist. This study helps her dancers achieve their goals in advancing their dance artistry without them having to pursue additional training outside of WCDC—a key financial strategy to keeping these mothers developing as dancers. Heaton continues to discuss how her dancers deserve these opportunities and how creating opportunities for them is a rewarding way for her to sense their growth as dancers and mothers with their own specific needs and dreams.

Heaton, who is married with two children ages two and four at the time of the interview, describes several challenges arising when her responsibilities as a mother

conflict with her responsibilities as an artistic director. For example, she does not bring her children to rehearsal because at this point, she says,

they're not at a stage where they will just sit with a coloring book or something. When they are, I'm sure they'll be at rehearsal, where they can sit and just watch us. But they're still little and want to be held. Sky, [my daughter], likes to run in the middle of all my dancers [during rehearsal], which can be distracting and prevents us from accomplishing much. (pers. communication, January 28, 2016)

In addition to challenges in rehearsals, another example of how Heaton grapples with her dual roles as mother and artistic director is when she must work long hours with WCDC during the times the dance company is putting up productions. She notes, "kids don't understand why you're gone every night for a performance" (pers. communication, January 28, 2016), going on to say that it is difficult to manage emotionally when dealing with stress as an artistic director who cares about an upcoming performance and guilt as a mother who wants to be there for her children. Although "it definitely gets stressful" (pers. communication, January 28, 2016) for her family at times, she says she is grateful for the opportunity to set an example for her children about how to create balance in their lives and to show them an example of a strong, working mother.

To support her family's needs and the needs of her dance company, Heaton relies on several strategies to make the most of her time and to give her family and company what they each need from her. The support structure in her life she discusses most often in our conversations is her husband. She notes, "My husband is really supportive of what I'm doing [with the dance company] and that's a good thing. [His support] has been really helpful. I don't know what I'd do if he was like, 'I don't get what you're doing. I don't support this'" (pers. communication, January 28, 2016). Heaton further notes how

she met her husband after she started WCDC so, according to her, “he doesn’t know me without the company in my life” (pers. communication, January 28, 2016) and so, he knows what to expect of her commitments to WCDC. To help her during the busiest, most stressful times for their family, which are during the weeks of the WCDC shows, Heaton and her husband have developed a productive synergy. Her husband’s role in supporting her during this time is paramount. She concludes, “During dress rehearsal week, I’ll pretty much be gone every night and he’ll be with the kids that whole time. But, he takes [responsibility on] those weeks and knows that’s just what comes with it” (pers. communication, January 28, 2016). In other words, Heaton’s husband, according to her, is a true partner who steps in to do more of the child care during the times that she must be away from her family so she can invest more time with her dance company.

Heaton contends that the WCDC dancers share similar stories of their husbands feeling stressed during production weeks, yet also showing undying support during these times. Heaton jokes, “We think our husbands need to start a support group (laughs)! The few weeks that they don’t see us [during productions], it would be nice if they could just get together and watch football with the kids running around crazy” (pers. communication, January 28, 2016). However busy her life becomes though, Heaton reiterates that from the beginning of their relationship, her husband understood her responsibilities with her dance company and, although “he gets stressed sometimes” (pers. communication, January 28, 2016), he remains quite supportive of her work with WCDC. Theirs is a marriage of balance, mutual respect, and shared responsibilities,

Heaton says. These qualities in her marriage have directly supported her taking on leadership of a dance company and motherhood concurrently.

Heaton and her husband also give each other space to explore their individual interests, which has been important for both of them. She says, “I try to give him as much free time as I’m getting” (pers. communication, January 28, 2016). An example of how this compromise works for them is when Heaton takes the children for two nights per week so her husband can go hiking and, in exchange, he takes the kids two other nights that week so she can rehearse with her company. In this exchange, they both have chances to continue to develop as individuals as well as support their shared family.

Another strategy Heaton relies on for maintaining her dual role as mother and artistic director is by hiring babysitters. When her husband is not available to watch the children, she has many friends in the Provo/Orem area she can trust and call on for assistance with child care, some of whom she knows from her church community, while others live in her neighborhood, and others are from her network of arts professionals in the area. This sense of communal help between families makes it important for Heaton to then support other mothers by sharing babysitting duties. Heaton emphasizes throughout the interview that she is especially grateful to have loyal, trustworthy friends in her community who will take care of her children when she works with her dance company.

One of the largest support structures Heaton has created for herself to manage her life as an artistic director and mother is a framework of administrative support within her dance company. In this framework, every WCDC company member is appointed to a specific committee upon acceptance into the dance company. Some of these committees

include: a costume committee in charge of locating costumes to purchase as well as washing, sewing, and storing costumes; a historian committee responsible for the dance company's social media presence and for documenting events and concerts; and a publicity committee in charge of organizing interviews with radio and television entities, distributing promotional items, and keeping up with the WCDC online calendar. In addition to instituting dance company committees, Heaton named two associate directors of WCDC, Rachel Robison and Heather Norton, who, along with Heaton, "really carry the bulk of the administrative weight [of WCDC]" (pers. communication, January 28, 2016). For example, she claims Robison and Norton teach dance company technique classes, choreograph works for WCDC productions, help manage finances, update the dance company website, and provide a sounding board for Heaton's evolving vision of the dance company. In addition, Heaton says, one of them manages the dance company committees and the other manages WCDC's community engagement and guest artist residencies. Finally, Heaton describes adding an administrative assistant about a year ago to manage the "little things that were falling by the wayside" (pers. communication, January 28, 2016), such as compiling program information, planning post-production parties, and sending emails. This comprehensive framework of internal support in WCDC provides Heaton with administrative, artistic, and pedagogical reinforcement; contributes to a shared vision and implementation of that vision for all WCDC company members; and creates an environment of accountability and trust for Heaton and her dance company artists.

Heaton next widens the scope of our discussion to all women in dance, saying, “there’s always the family factor that I think holds back a lot of women in dance” (pers. communication, January 28, 2016). She believes women are still held accountable for most of the childcare and household responsibilities than are their husbands, claiming it’s not fair to expect this imbalance in any relationship. In order to combat this unfairness, Heaton discusses her reasons for pursuing her dance company in addition to pursuing a full family life. In the following, she asserts how personal challenge, growth, and fulfillment are important:

Your life can be so insane with children at home. I feel the need to do this [lead a dance company] on top of having a family because I don’t want my only creative expression in life to be how I got Sky [my daughter] to eat carrots. That’s just not going to cut it for me. Sure, you use a ton of creativity as a mother and it’s so challenging and you can learn so much from it, and I’m glad to be one. But to be here [in the dance company] and be among adults and to keep myself growing and thinking analytically and problem solving creatively—this is what my brain needs. . . . Sometimes that relief from family life . . . I feel like I’m a better mom because I get this [WCDC]. If I didn’t have my company, there would be something I wasn’t really fulfilling and that may come out in a lot of tantrums at home. (pers. communication, January 28, 2016)

In other words, Heaton credits her work with her dance company as her method of maintaining personal fulfillment, this sense of fulfillment then also makes her a better mother. Having balance in her life and striving for personal growth and an individual sense of identity are important ways Heaton perceives her work with her dance company as being beneficial to her role as mother to her children and wife to her husband.

One of the remaining questions I have about how Heaton manages her full, demanding life as an artistic director, mother, and wife is about personal finance—admittedly, a sensitive subject. The sensitivity of this subject kept me from prying further

into areas Heaton only hinted at in our interview. I wonder if her husband's career fully supports her family financially without Heaton having to take on a full-time, paid position of her own. Heaton alluded in the interview to the fact that her position as artistic director of WCDC is compensated very minimally, if at all. I assume she could only take on such a position if her family had other sources of income to support their lives, such as her husband's career. Heaton's ability to take on the (volunteer or, at least, minimally paid) leadership of her dance company without having to worry about a potential financial strain on her family is a hugely important advantage shared by participant Brooke Schlecte (discussed earlier in this chapter). In general, the idea that women in dance rely on their partners for several kinds of support, including financial, for their success as leaders of dance companies seems to be an important factor recurring in this dissertation, and, perhaps, points to areas for continued investigation in future research.

As Jessica Heaton grapples with the challenges of concurrently raising a family and directing a dance company, she creates opportunities for her own success as well as for the success of her dancers, many of whom negotiate similar issues in their own lives. To meet her family's, her dance company's, and her own needs, she relies on the following: a framework of support in her dance company in order to spread out responsibilities among the dancers; a network of supportive people, such as her husband and a community of babysitters, to help her with child care; and a wide-ranging, flexible season of events and opportunities planned for her dance company in order to keep the company dancers and the community engaged and excited about WCDC. Finally, even

though Heaton may not be the main financial support for her family, she provides much to her family and dance company as the needs of each supports the other.

The Struggle in Process: Katherine Kiefer Stark on New Motherhood and New Dance Company Leadership

I feel I already know Katherine Kiefer Stark as an artist, having spent the years 2006-2009 with her as her colleague in an MFA program. However, riding through Philadelphia in Stark's car several years later (in 2015), I now begin to observe her life as a mother. As we reminisce on memories of the time we spent together in graduate school, I look around her car and notice the presence of her two young children everywhere: in the well-worn car seat, various toys and books, and snack foods crumbs in Ziploc bags in the backseat. As we park on a side street close to Mascher Space Cooperative, the dance studio where I will observe Stark's rehearsal that day, I notice an elementary school across the street with well-kept trees lining the fence bordering a playground. Stark's children (Lu, 6, and Will, 3 at the time of the interview) attend a school with a dress code in which students are required to wear certain colors. Stark explains she likes the ease of the dress code, noting, "There are only so many things they can choose to wear each day!" (pers. communication, November 9, 2015). However, she also perceives issues with her children's inability to create unique identities for themselves.

Just as we begin unpacking the social implications of school uniforms, we arrive at the Mascher space, causing the topic of our conversation to shift to security measures taken in the building and how they affect her dance company. Spending the day with Stark, I am reminded of how skilled she is at devoting thoughtful, thorough attention on

the topic at hand, and then, just like that, being able to switch gears and devote as much rapt attention to the next idea to be encountered. Even before I begin formal observations of her with her dance company and the interviewing process, I sense that these conversations outside her rehearsal space concerning both the identities of her children and the needs of security for her dance space give me clear insights into who Stark is as a mother and a leader for her dance company. Both of these roles continually weave through her thoughts and conversations as the day unfolds.

Stark founded her dance company, The Naked Stark, after earning an MFA from UNC Greensboro, noting it was the perfect time since the graduate school experience allowed her to mature and gain confidence as an artist. She and her husband, Ben, were searching for a place to relocate to start fresh with their new baby, who was born in 2010. Since she had just had her first child, being near her parents was “a big thing” (pers. communication, November 9, 2015), causing them to choose to live in eastern Pennsylvania. When Ben found an opportunity to work from home in Philadelphia, they knew this city was the place to move. Stark describes the opportunity to be close to her parents, for Ben to work from home, and the thriving Philadelphia dance community as the major reasons to relocate there.

When asked to discuss her experiences with balancing career and family, she sighs heavily, saying, “Amazing question! I think all artists are balancing things and one of my things is the kids” (pers. communication, November 9, 2015). Stark serves her family as the primary child care provider, although she also works as a part-time faculty member in dance at a few universities near Philadelphia while directing her dance

company. When describing the juggle of these competing responsibilities, she returns again and again to the idea that she is still learning, still figuring out, still new at this, still growing. Since her family is young, her dance company fairly new, and her career in academia just budding, Stark seems very aware of the areas in her life needing attention. She also discusses how she is embracing her life's vision, while further acknowledging the undeveloped or unknown parts of her life.

As other participants in this chapter have noted, one of the biggest challenges facing Stark is the challenge of managing her time effectively and fitting everything she wants into her life. In the following, she describes her typical daily schedule, negotiating the needs of her children, her husband, her dance company, and herself:

Monday, the kids get dropped off for school and I go to Mascher [Space Cooperative] and I teach and I rehearse. Then, I go back [home] and, hopefully, Ben has picked up [son] Will and put him down for a nap. If not, I have to go pick him up right away and put him down for a nap. And then, I have to go get [daughter] Lu from school at 3:00 pm. Sometimes, I might have an hour to myself. Then, I'm "on" with them [the family] until bedtime. A lot of times, the time that I have that isn't scheduled, that isn't with kids, is 8:00 pm to midnight. It's been a challenge to try to do meaningful [artistic] work in that time frame. Sometimes it feels like it's hard to turn my brain on—or, I finally get my brain turned on, and then I can't turn it off because, really, I needed six hours to start processing that thought! Or, I'll have dessert and [see] a show with Ben and now I only have *this* amount of time. (holds pointer finger and thumb closely together indicating something small and then laughs) I find that balancing hard. (pers. communication, November 9, 2015)

In the previous passage, Stark describes multiple tasks she is responsible for throughout the day, each agenda item varying in its amount of urgency and flexibility. Similar to Brooke Schlecte's daily agenda described earlier in this chapter, Stark's schedule is filled to the brim with very little room for rest or adjustment. It is a masterfully crafted design

on which Stark relies when working toward goals in every area of her life. However, unlike Schlechte, there is some give and take in Stark's agenda; for example, she sometimes sacrifices creative processing time so she can get sufficient sleep or spend time with her family. These negotiations are a balancing act for Stark, pushing her to continuously reassess how much time is spent with each important element of her life.

Similar to the other dance company leaders in this dissertation, one of the biggest challenges for Stark in founding a dance company is figuring out how to manage the large amount of administrative work placed on her in her role as artistic director. Stark confirms this by noting that "I don't think I had a full handle how much administrative stuff there was until I was a year or two out of grad school and more into the logistics of trying to make it [The Naked Stark] all work" (pers. communication, November 9, 2015). In regard to skills needed to take on those administrative tasks, she also simply didn't know what she didn't know. For example, she claims she lacks experience in areas such as budgeting, advertising, and media relations, but does not have time in her life right now to learn these skills. Her strategy is to delegate some of the executive tasks to other people. She relates,

As I've seen my own weaknesses, I have then sought people with those strengths. That's been one thing that's been useful about the model of bringing in a couple other people to be involved administratively. It's really helpful because I don't have all the skills I want. If I were to develop those skills, it would be three full-time jobs. (pers. communication, November 9, 2015)

Stark is able to perceive the skills she lacks as the leader of her dance company, but with her other responsibilities to career and family, she knows she doesn't have time to devote to them. Importantly, she delegates those skills to others in order to move

forward with the artistic vision she has for The Naked Stark. She describes how many of the administrative duties in The Naked Stark are split three ways. Stark describes herself as “the artistic director, although I think in many ways I’m also the executive director (pers. communication, November 9, 2015). In addition, she has implemented two additional administrative positions (paid hourly), to include a development and project coordinator, in charge of organizing and planning events, and a social media and marketing coordinator, in charge of social media and communications. According to Stark, the social media and marketing coordinator duties were once clumped into the responsibilities of the development and project coordinator, but she saw a need for two positions once the dance company began to grow and expand in the number of supporting staff needed. Stark claims,

It’s nice to take those duties away from the other (development and project) position. The social media and marketing coordinator is only three hours of work a month, a small chunk of time, and, if that person is somebody that’s dancing for me already, then adding three hours a month is not much. And they already know what’s going on with the company. (pers. communication, November 9, 2015)

Stark repeats that, although this administrative framework seems to be working well, the shuffling of various administrative duties is still a work in progress, and she is still learning which dance company structure will work best for her company.

Delegating responsibilities to others is a related secondary challenge to Stark, as she describes in the following:

Delegating can also be more challenging for me because, [for example], you ask me where this thing is, and I think, well, I should just go there and get it. For me to describe where it is to you feels hard. (pause) Figuring out how to do some of that [delegating responsibilities] has been difficult. (pers. communication, November 9, 2015)

In other words, for Stark, delegating is sometimes difficult because she struggles with what she perceives as an extra step of teaching someone else how to do what she has done for so long on her own, in her own particular way. She perceives this added step as often spending precious time explaining, when it would take less time to just do the task herself.

Since Stark is hesitant to delegate to others—a trait that her own mother recognizes in her daughter—Stark’s mother has, in the past, delegated duties to herself to try to help her daughter, sensing what Stark needed and then trying to provide impromptu support. For example, Stark describes a community/audience building event put on by The Naked Stark a few years ago in which Stark’s mother took copious notes in a binder about everything her daughter did to accomplish the event. Stark felt these notes could serve as a manual, a wonderful tool for delegating in a more efficient, organized way. Stark asserts how this binder might be useful in the following:

I need to go through that binder my mom made and make some notes, so I have something physical that I could hand to someone else and say, “Here. This is how to do this.” Even the box office or something. I could hand it to a volunteer . . . just so I don’t have to reteach everything or do it all myself. (pers. communication, November 9, 2015)

However challenged she is by delegating to others, Stark creates strategies for how she might hand over these duties in the future. Her main impetus is to create long-term time-saving benefits she feels could be available through this shared administrative approach.

One of the topics of discussion arising from Stark’s descriptions of administrative duties is her constant negotiation with her own artistic vision for her dance company and

how stress is placed on that vision when she runs out of time or resources. While she adamantly refuses to make artistic sacrifices, other compromises are worth it to her in the long run for financial reasons. For example, she describes letting go of some of the more theatrical elements of The Naked Stark's community events, such as certain props, theatrical effects, specialized lighting equipment, etc. Stark claims that "Not everything has to be an artistic production. Even just to let go of some of the details . . . someone else can figure this out. It doesn't *all* have to be about my artistic vision" (pers. communication, November 9, 2015).

In order to work through all of these administrative and financial issues, Stark describes two people in her life as her foundation of support for raising her family and directing her company: her mother and her husband. In addition to helping her with childcare and household duties, these two individuals in her life provide her with the encouragement and emotional support she needs to work toward her professional goals. Stark and her husband, thinking about the huge responsibilities of raising children, relocated to Philadelphia to be closer to her parents, who could then help them with their kids. In addition to regular babysitting, Stark's mother often attends The Naked Stark events specifically to help her daughter with childcare and/or to serve as a volunteer for the dance company. As mentioned above, her mother shadows Stark sometimes at events, taking notes on the various administrative details associated with that event. Then, her mother creates binders to pass on to other dance company organization volunteers, thus freeing her daughter to attend to artistic concerns. Stark, in the following, also describes

her experience at a dance festival performance right after having had her first baby, in which her mother came to support her:

Will [my son] was just three months old when we performed at the First Person Arts Festival. It was really intense. It was an intense piece anyway, but it was really intense to have just had him. It was really crazy (laughs). My mom was very sweet and generous with her time. She came and was there with Will, and everyone just stopped when I had to nurse. But it was hard, and I think I overdid it a bit. (pers. communication, November 9, 2015)

The generosity she describes her mother showing her is an important element of support allowing Stark to continue performing while also being a mother with young children.

In addition to the support of her mother, Stark has an incredible advocate, support system, and friend in her husband Ben. She credits her husband's career for her ability to work in a part-time capacity, and thus allowing her to pursue long-held dreams of leading her dance company. Stark states, "I have a husband who has a job, and we have benefits, and those kinds of things. . . . That makes a really big difference" (pers. communication, November 9, 2015). She also describes Ben's generosity in sharing childcare and household responsibilities. When discussing her husband, Stark, similar to Schlecte and Heaton discussed earlier in this chapter, clearly appreciates the partnership in her marriage.

While expressing deep gratitude to her supportive husband, Stark also struggles to describe the difficulties she and her husband sometimes encounter in juggling everything in their lives: "Overall I think Ben is really supportive. The parts that are hard . . . My schedule is pretty . . . (makes a frustrated, overwhelmed face, raising her eyebrows)" (pers. communication, November 9, 2015). One of the difficulties Stark and her husband

face is finding time for date nights since she must attend numerous professional dance concerts in the community to stay active and relevant in the dance field and in the Philadelphia dance community. Stark points out how those performances can often conflict with date nights with her husband:

You know, another thing that's interesting about all this balancing is how much [dance] you have to go and see. Figuring that out with Ben—like, um—“Oh yay! We're finally having a date night! So, honey, how do you feel about going to see an experimental modern concert?” (laughs) It's hard to balance that. (pers. communication, November 9, 2015)

Stark's solution is to attend many dance performances alone or with friends, but the problem of finding alone time with her husband is ongoing, and possible solutions are a work-in-progress, according to Stark.

Stark and her husband also play different roles in their children's lives since they each interact with them in different ways, which, sometimes, leaves them both feeling unsatisfied and exhausted. She expounds,

I'm introverted and Ben is also. . . . I didn't think about that at all with parenting. Like, I'm gonna be living with three other people all the time. And they all want one-on-one relationships with me, and time with me. It's still kind of different from what they want from each other. Like, I'm the mom and the primary childcare provider, so that's a different role than what they want from daddy. Poor Ben, sometimes at the dinner table, they're both on top of me, and he's like “Ok. Don't you want to sit on *my* lap?” (laughs) That can leave me feeling really fried. (pers. communication, November 9, 2015)

As a researcher, I am drawn to this intimate portrait of the intricacies of family life and think Stark's words offer valuable information about how much pressure, stress, and complexity exists for women leaders as they negotiate their roles as mothers. Stark described this scene to me as a part of a larger discussion about the various parts of her

life that feel connected to and disconnected from each other. She strives to connect all these parts of her life, sometimes finding interesting ways to overlap them, while, at other times, she is still grappling with how to negotiate methods for weaving these shifting roles together.

Stark describes a deep investment in teaching her children about dance, specifically modern dance, in order to institute a certain culture in her home. One of her reasons for this desire is so her children have an appreciation and respect for dance, for physicality, and for hard work. She explains when she and her husband bought their house, they noticed the traditional dining room space would likely go unused and, therefore, agreed to use the space as a dance studio for her needs. Stark notes that her ability to work and dance in the home introduced her children to the daily work of dance while also allowing her to multitask. She describes,

That has been really great to be able to plan class there [in the house] and do some tiny rehearsals there. To even have that language [of dance] at home, to be able to have a space and call that “my studio,” and have the kids grow up saying “the studio,” that’s been a really great thing. (pers. communication, November 9, 2015)

Further, Stark claims her children have developed the desired deep respect for and enjoyment of dance she had hoped to foster in them. In addition, her home studio allows for more time spent with her kids while, at the same time, giving her time to work toward the goals of her dance company. Stark elaborates in the following:

I love that they think dance is neat. That’s fun to share with them. And the way our life is right now, as much as there are challenges, I also *want* to be with the kids, so it’s worth it to have those crazy days. And on Fridays, I just have [son] Will in the [home] studio with me. Even though sometimes, I’m like, dancing

around him (laughs) to plan a rehearsal or class or something, you know, it's nice. (pers. communication, November 9, 2015)

Thus, for Stark, establishing a space at home for dance supports her ability to multitask between her family and her dance company. Further, sharing her artistic processes with her children at home allows her to teach them about dance while also creating work for The Naked Stark.

Another way Stark describes her children affecting her work with her dance company is through the goals she sets for producing her work, contending the locations she chooses for performances are based on how they would affect her family. She states,

One of the goals [for my dance company] is that I'd like to be showing more work and showing it in other places. One option [for a future performance] is in Cincinnati and one is in DC. The reason I picked those is that they're drivable and they supply the venue. (pers. communication, November 9, 2015)

Stark emphasizes the importance of drivability because she would have to take her children with her to performances out of town since her husband Ben's job is less flexible and wouldn't allow him to take care of the children for long periods of time. Further, she asserts, driving is more economical for a family, it typically involves less overall travel time and allows family to be comfortable and flexible while traveling. Clearly, in order for Stark to reach the professional goals she sets for herself, her family, and her dance company, she has to negotiate things that a single person might not have to worry about, such as children and travel.

Having children has also influenced Stark to create opportunities for families in her community to engage with dance through The Naked Stark's work. Noticing that many families do not attend dance events because of their preconceived notions that

dance is expensive and is unwelcoming to children, Stark decided to create an event called Meet the Naked Stark. This event is held annually, typically early on a Friday evening, and is free for children. Stark and her dance company present works in progress, offer food to patrons, and facilitate participatory activities for both adults and children during these events. Stark elaborates on what she perceives are the best aspects of The Naked Stark events:

It's interesting to me in that sort of event that *everyone* gets to move and the kids get to run around and do whatever they're doing. It lets the grownups come and get to be out for a night and have some food and socialize a little bit—and they can have their kids there too! (pers. communication, November 9, 2015)

According to Stark, this family event has been wildly successful and parents in her circle of friends have requested more opportunities for participating in activities like this with their families and the dance company.

For Stark, another important component of engaging with families in the Philadelphia community is educating children, particularly young girls, about differing bodies, gender, and movements within dance in the United States. She senses young girls are often drawn to ballet for reasons of gender expectation and, once in ballet classes, adopt a limited view of what dance can be for women and men. Stark asserts,

Often, the thing people reach out to when they want to introduce their kids to dance is ballet, and I want something different for our girls. It's really fun for them to see [in The Naked Stark performances] women lifting women and women lifting men and women rolling on the floor. (pers. communication, November 9, 2015)

She suggests that by witnessing some of The Naked Stark's work and taking classes in modern dance from Stark at the universities and in her open community dance classes,

young women and men may have a wider view of how they can participate in dance and develop their own sense of what dance can mean to them. Thus, the activities and exercises offered at dance company events and in Stark's movement classes provide young girls and boys opportunities to explore movement and their bodies without assigning gender-based roles to those movements. Interestingly, this is similar to the issues raised by Brooke Schlecte when trying to find dance classes for her children which moved beyond replicating the traditional gender roles of prince and princess.

Additionally, in Stark's community movement classes, which are free and open to the public, she focuses on improvisation and weight sharing to encourage play and trust among the entire group. She asserts these pedagogical tenets illustrate an important step in changing the ways people view dance, themselves, and each other.

As I wrap up my conversation with Stark, I ask her about the future of the dance field for women, what she anticipates and what she hopes for the next generation. Her response centers on mentorship, expectations, and choices when she concludes, "I would like to see more mentorship, woman-to-woman . . . and a broadening, maybe, of what it means to be successful in the arts. Not to say that we should settle, but that we might make different choices, and it's ok to make different choices" (pers. communication, November 9, 2015). This response makes perfect sense, given the challenges and successes Stark describes in discussion about her work shifting between the needs of family and dance company. Some of the challenges she faces include her description of "reinventing the wheel" (pers. communication, November 9, 2015) when trying to develop effective administrative strategies for her dance company, a specific challenge

she feels could have been avoided had she been mentored by those with experience and expertise in these business areas.

Stark also doesn't shy away from the struggles she faces as a wife/mother/artistic director, acknowledging the responsibilities in each with humility. At the same time, she perceives the importance of what she is doing in all areas of her life, recognizing the many successes she, her family, and her dance company enjoy. By creating a structure of administrative support via staff members in The Naked Stark, relying on her mother and her husband for support, and continuously reassessing how her artistic vision and her life's responsibilities coexist, Stark feels she is successful. Her specific strategies for aligning her parenting, partnership, and dance company needs allow her to participate actively in each role while also allowing her to acknowledge the compromises made within these strategies and how those compromises raise new questions about what dance can become in the future.

Conclusion: Multitasking, Sacrifice, and Goal Alignment

The three artistic directors discussed in this chapter have three qualities in common helping them achieve their goals in both the personal and professional areas of their lives: the abilities to multitask, sacrifice, and create goal alignments. Each of them calls on her ability to juggle multiple thoughts, processes, challenges, and projects at once in order to get through her daily list of demands and appointments. Brooke Schlecte is definitely a planner as her structured agenda directs her daily goals and then long-term goals. Jessica Heaton, on the other hand, describes how she merges her roles as mother and leader in order to organize productions and events specifically for the other mothers

in her company and the needs of her specific community, as well as herself. Both Schlecte and Katherine Kiefer Stark invite their children to be a part of their dance companies' work by creating opportunities for events open to children. Stark even creates a dance studio space in her home so that her children can witness her working.

Schlecte, Heaton, and Stark all describe making sacrifices in order to maintain balance in all areas of their lives. These sacrifices include limiting the amount of time spent on dance company work in order to prioritize family, spending money on babysitters so they can work with their dance companies, and negotiating their artistic visions to fit the competing needs of their companies and families. The way these women align their goals with their actions indicate much forethought and constant recalibration of the needs of their families, their dance companies, and themselves as artists, mothers, and leaders. All three women discuss overlapping and intersecting the differing initiatives in which their dance companies participate in order to make this work possible for themselves, given the demands of their lives as mothers and wives.

While I find the successes and challenges described by the three participants highlighted in this chapter illuminating, I also think it important to be transparent for the reader about the limitations I perceive of this particular trio of participants: 1) none of them hold down full-time employment in addition to raising families and running their dance companies, and 2) all seem to have strong financial and emotional support from their husbands and/or families. These three participants are privileged in these ways, but these privileges do not exist for every woman wanting to lead a dance company and raise a family simultaneously. Further, I do not advocate that access to these privileges

represents the only means to managing both endeavors. My selection in this dissertation was based on those research participants I felt best replicated my own interests as a researcher. In the future, it would be interesting to expand my research pool to include mothers and leaders who might not have partners or who must also work outside of their roles in the home and in their dance companies.

In the following chapter, I offer the reader conclusions gleaned from this dissertation research. First, I summarize major themes that arose as I analyzed the words of my research participants. Then, I feature additional themes emerging from the data that, while they did not appear as often in data sets as the themes featured in Chapters IV-VII, were, nevertheless, important to the research participants and which could indicate potential areas of further investigation. Finally, I discuss future research trajectories stemming from explorations teased out in this dissertation research and questions I am still curious about regarding women's leadership of regional dance companies in the United States.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS AND TRAJECTORIES

In the following, I bring together the findings of the previous four chapters, summarizing important areas voiced by six women artistic directors of regional dance companies in the United States. Then, I highlight additional themes not mentioned in previous chapters that emerged in my interviews with and observations of the participants. Whereas Chapters IV-VII delved deeply into one idea each, this chapter encompasses differing themes important to these women. The themes emerging in this chapter did not weigh as heavily in the data sets as the issues discussed in previous chapters, but may provide important additional insights into how the participants think about and participate in their work as leaders and artists. Finally, I provide a trajectory of potential areas for future research based on issues and themes emerging in this study.

The new themes emerging in the data are discussed in the second half of this chapter. They include: 1) how artistic directors discuss differences they perceive in the ways women and men are treated and provided opportunities in the dance field and how they feel these issues affect their careers, 2) differences between artistic directors who have maintained a dance company for over 15 years versus artistic directors who lead newer companies, and 3) the commonalities discovered among all participants, to include funding issues, a prioritizing of choreography above all else, an interest in greater community engagement, a desire for collaborations amongst the arts, and issues with

delegation of responsibilities. These themes, in addition to those discussed in earlier chapters, will point me toward areas of future research and expansion of this study.

Summary and Analysis of Main Issues Described by

Participants in Previous Chapters

In my interviews with and observations of the participants, four issues or topics predominated as most important and are, thus, the focus of Chapters IV-VII. These issues and topics include: 1) the unique ways each participant strategizes and leads her dance company based on the social, cultural, and geographic particularities of her community; 2) the importance of connecting some of the participants' dance companies to universities, public K-12 schools, and private dance schools; 3) the multiple leadership roles some of the participants take on that ultimately benefit their dance companies; and 4) the challenges and benefits of concurrently raising a family and directing a dance company. Whereas each chapter does not include all the participants, the issues I chose to feature in these chapters recurred often in data sets and are further discussed as important issues in the scholarly literature presented in Chapter II of this dissertation.

Being Able to Adapt

Adapting to Serve the Needs of Communities

All the participants in this study described adapting to what they saw as community needs through the work of their dance companies. As detailed in Chapter IV, some participants (Brim and Heaton) felt that since their communities did not offer opportunities to students after graduation for continued learning and dancing, their dance companies could fill that need. Other participants (Heaton and Schlecte) noticed the

conservative communities in which they live needed exposure to—even education about—forms of dance other than ballet, so they built their contemporary dance companies to fill that need. Some participants (Hamrick and Stark) sought a specific niche for their dance companies to fill within the large cities in which they live and work, while others (Brim, Schlecte, and Johnson) cast their nets wide to a more general audience base in smaller cities, where there is less dance available to those communities.

In Chapter IV, Martha Brim and Jessica Heaton described a need in their respective communities of Columbia, South Carolina and the Provo/Orem area in Utah for opportunities for university dance program students in those communities to keep dancing and training after graduation. They both described students feeling lost or stuck after graduation because no opportunities existed in their communities for continued learning about dance or performance. Unless these dancers moved out of town, they would not be able to continue dancing—that is, until Brim founded The Power Company Collaborative (PoCoCo) in Columbia and Heaton founded Wasatch Contemporary Dance Company (WCDC) in Provo/Orem. Since most of the dancers who populate PoCoCo are former students of Columbia College, where Brim works, and all the dancers in WCDC are products of dance programs in the two large universities in the Provo/Orem area, Brim and Heaton are confident their dance companies provide opportunities for dancers that their communities once lacked.

In Chapter IV, Brooke Schlecte and Jessica Heaton described their respective communities of Waco, Texas and Provo/Orem, Utah as conservative, family-centric, and driven by religious belief systems. These conservative values have, according to Schlecte

and Heaton, shaped what kinds of dance are deemed valuable and/or acceptable to learn about and produce in their communities. Rather than reject the possibility that anything new could happen in these areas, Schlecte and Heaton built dance companies to bridge the gap between what members of their communities are accustomed to (dance genres that are commonly offered in local dance studios, like ballet and jazz) and new ideas about dance, such as the modern genre, collaborations amongst the arts, site-specific dance, and choreography that sometimes delves into controversial issues. Schlecte's {254} Dance Festival serves as the primary vehicle for Waco community members to experience her Out on a Limb Dance Company (OoLD) work. Further, since the {254} Dance Festival is connected to a larger, well-attended and well-funded annual cultural festival in Waco, Schlecte's reach is wide in her community. Heaton, on the other hand, creates choreography for the Provo/Orem community that is family-friendly in order to appeal to the religious values of that community—values she happens to share. Further, to stretch the boundaries of dance as an art form in Provo/Orem, Heaton sprinkles in a few new works each season that contain more adult themes and which ask community audiences to expand their ideas about dance.

One of the consistent considerations described by the six women artistic directors featured in this dissertation was the size and geographic location of their communities and, moreover, how those factors affect their dance companies. For example, Jan Johnson, Brooke Schlecte, and Jessica Heaton all described their communities' lack of contemporary dance, other than what dance programs in the areas' higher education institutions could provide. However, these participants also described this solo situation

as beneficial since they often had little competition when looking for rehearsal and performance spaces and were able to keep their dancers since there was nowhere for them to go. However, Katherine Kiefer Stark and Kathy Dunn Hamrick, working in the larger cities of Philadelphia and Austin respectively, described constantly being challenged by a lack of space and/or a lack of dancers due to the needs and opportunities of competing dance and other arts organizations in their communities.

Overall, the ways these women artistic directors described contributing to their communities with their dance companies indicate their ability to bring communities together in unique ways, creating opportunities for community members to learn about, discuss, and engage with dance. Further, the participants all seem to value the ways their dance companies continue lifelong relationships with dance for members of their communities as well as themselves and their dancers. Finally, that these women are all able to sustain their dance companies in such a diverse set of US communities is a positive hint toward dance's overall value in the United States.

Adapting to the Needs of Universities, Colleges, and Key Community Organizations

In Chapter V, some of the participants described the shifting relationships they and their dance companies have with local universities and colleges, relationships that continually adapt to the differing needs of the educational institutions as well as the needs of the dance companies. Whereas Martha Brim demonstrated important connections to Columbia College, which houses and supports her dance company, Jessica Heaton and Katherine Kiefer Stark described more uncertain, fluctuating relationships of their dance companies to area universities. In these cases, Heaton's and Stark's connections to

universities are not partnerships, nor do they involve artistic collaborations between their dance companies and the universities and, unlike Brim, they cannot rely on universities for support of their dance companies. All three women, however, pointed to the constantly changing goals and standards in these universities as impactful to their dance companies' connections to those institutions.

Some adaptations made by the dance companies to continue ongoing connections with institutions of higher education include changing aspects of productions in order to encourage university students as audience members and potential future dancers. This might mean having a sense of the standards and academic needs of universities in order to take advantage of potential partnerships. For example, in Chapter V and later in this chapter, Martha Brim described the way her dance company's mission adapts to fit the mission of the Dance Program at Columbia College. She describes how she "started changing the mission statement [of her dance company] as soon as [she] got back [from a sabbatical] in January, 2013, making sure that it aligned with the mission of the Dance Program [at Columbia College]" (pers. communication, March 1, 2016). Brim further specified that the Columbia College Dance Program began infusing its curriculum with improvisation and community engagement in course work, so she adapted the Power Company Collaborative's mission to include similar ideas and ways of working together. This decision, she said, created greater harmony and consistency between the dancers in her dance company, most of whom came out of the Columbia College Dance Program, and the current dancers enrolled in the program and who might become PcCoCo dancers in the future.

Another example of how these participants described adapting their dance companies to fit the needs of area universities was noted by Jessica Heaton in Chapter V. She highlighted an ongoing negotiation of the way her dance company promotes itself through advertising and social media to fit the standards of artistry and the value system inherent in the Dance Department at Brigham Young University (BYU). When she provides BYU with advertisements, for example, advertising images to post around campus, the images must be “wholesome” (pers. communication, January 28, 2016), which, according to BYU, means images must not show too much of the dancers’ chests and/or torsos. The same is true for productions Heaton’s dance company presents: anything deemed too racy or controversial could potentially offend conservative members of the Mormon-based BYU dance community. Heaton says over the past several years, she senses these aesthetic values are beginning to shift at BYU, indicating that Heaton and Wasatch Contemporary Dance Company may choose to shift as well in order to gear their work toward the potentially large audience base the BYU dance community affords.

Brooke Schlecte also discussed how changing standards and values of universities can change the ways nonprofit dance companies choose to interact and collaborate with them. Schlecte taught dance for several years at Baylor University, which opened possibilities for sharing resources and opportunities between her dance company and the Dance Program at Baylor. Unfortunately, in recent years, Brooke describes that the Dance Program has experienced decline in enrollment, so was downgraded to a minor-only program. Schlecte was disappointed about this, but indicates that she has hope for a potential reinvigoration of the program and its possibilities for future partnerships with

the recent hire of a new dance faculty member. So, even though Schlecte has not experienced the benefits of a partnership or collaboration with area universities, she recognizes the potential benefits of that arrangement and hopes for this collaboration in the future.

Other educational adaptations include how dance companies shifted their programming and projects in order to adapt to what they saw as needs for dance education in their communities. For example, two of the participants in Chapter V, Jan Johnson and Brooke Schlecte, perceived a need for dance education for children in their communities, so they developed dance schools to fill that need. Both also explore innovative curricular designs. While Schlecte includes unique historical and cultural elements in each of her dance classes for young children, to fill what she saw as a need for multicultural dance knowledge in Waco, Texas, Johnson is interested in exposing her students to improvisational approaches and finding ways for students at her school and her dance company members to interact. Also, Johnson consistently commissions guest artists from all over the country to come to Colorado City, CO to set choreography on her dance company and to teach master classes to the students in her dance school. Since not many renowned artists typically come through her community, Johnson feels she is filling a need in her community for diverse experiences with dance.

In Chapters IV-VII, the participants further discuss how making connections to people and organizations outside of the dance company, allowed them to focus on expanding a professional network. These connections often serve as structures of support for these dance companies; yet, support was also defined in multiple ways by the

participants. For example, in Chapter VII, Stark and Schlecte describe the efforts they make to connect to families in their respective communities of Philadelphia, PA and Waco, TX. By gearing educational programs and performances toward families, they create opportunities for their dance companies to engage with new and diverse audiences who may then support the companies in the future. In Chapters IV and VI, Hamrick and Schlecte describe the important professional networking and sharing opportunities arising from their founding of regional dance festivals. Not only do these festivals offer regional dance companies additional performance opportunities, they also lead to guest artist residencies and other teaching and performing opportunities for them and the dancers in their companies. Also, in Chapter IV, many participants discussed connections they have made with other arts organizations, civic and political leaders, public schools, churches, and other well-connected people in their communities. These connections with organizations and key people were purposefully made and based on the perceived beneficial relationships and supports they could provide for their dance companies. Finally, Chapter V focused entirely on the ways university, K-12, and private dance school systems support the work of these participants and their dance companies.

Adapting to Learning New Administrative Techniques

All the participants in this dissertation described how they adapted to learning new administrative techniques and skills along their journeys as artistic directors. Each participant carved out a specific administrative method for leading her dance company; however, each also discussed how these methods were continually changing as the needs of her company changed. This continual development of new and shifting skills were

described as a process of ongoing change, causing them to never stop learning. These continual changes in administrative processes then also refined the ways each managed and led her company. Since the dynamics of the participants' dance companies, their communities, and the people around them are constantly changing, these women seem to understand their roles as leaders as ever-changing. Dance leadership is not static; instead, it demands a willingness to continuously self-assess and learn new skills from that assessment.

Some of the participants who lead newer dance companies (Stark and Heaton) perceived their administrative duties ballooning to nearly impossible proportions upon starting their dance companies. However, they discuss these pressures declining somewhat as they began to learn the ropes or routines of dance company leadership. For example, Katherine Kiefer Stark referred to the idea that she was “reinventing the wheel” (pers. communication, November 9, 2015) in her role as artistic director of The Naked Stark, lamenting the fact that there weren't enough opportunities for learning the administrative skills required for dance company leadership through her formal education, nor even through her informal mentorship experiences. The other participants also claim that while their university educations helped them to develop strong artistic visions, these educational experiences did not prepare them for the significant business responsibilities needed, such as budgeting, marketing, and audience relations, needed to lead a dance company.

In summary, however, most of the participants in this dissertation described their administrative work lessening, or, at least, becoming less burdensome once they began to

enlist support for the administrative overload they faced at the beginning. The participants also described their administrative responsibilities becoming easier for them once they knew what to expect and how to use planning, time management, and supportive resources and people to help with their administrative work.

Ambitious Artistic Visions with Developing Work Ethics

Another important quality shared by the participants is an ambitious artistic vision combined with a strong work ethic. These women have big ideas and are not afraid to wholeheartedly commit to them. Many of the participants have visions for what their dance companies will look like and the kind of work they will be doing next year and in 10 years, indicating a multi-scope approach to strategic planning and future visioning. Further, they consistently discuss the importance of developing foundations for these visions in the form of relationships and funding to see these goals to completion. Mostly, the participants seem to have developed over time a knowledge about the amount of work they will need to undertake based on the size and scope of each project or goal they envision. They then create systems for how to manage the time and responsibilities, in terms of both their dance companies and their personal needs, to accomplish these goals.

Brooke Schlecte and Jan Johnson have long-term goals for their dance companies to merge with the dance schools they spearhead in order to establish more comprehensive and wider reaching dance programs in their communities. As detailed in Chapter V, Brooke Schlecte, aims to continue building her Dot Buds dance school, updating the curriculum annually as her own children move through its levels. Schlecte's dance school would then, in her vision, intermingle with her Out on a Limb Dance Company and her

{254} Dance Festival so that many more Waco, Texas residents would be served by dance, thus also allowing her company and school to grow. Jan Johnson, on the other hand, already directs a well-established dance school, Ormao Dance School, in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Further, her dance school already associates in unique ways with her Ormao Dance Company (ODC), such as when the children in the school and the professional dancers of ODC perform together and share rehearsal spaces and guest artists. Johnson does, however, envision even more chances for the two groups to work together toward common goals in the future; her ambitions include creating opportunities for collaborations with diverse art forms, such as growing partnerships with other arts and cultural organizations in the Colorado Springs community.

As discussed in Chapters IV and VI, Kathy Dunn Hamrick has bold ideas for how to make her dance company better known in her community of Austin, Texas, which is also the capital of Texas. Therefore, her future interests include introducing her dance company to well-known politicians, civic leaders, and other important people in the growing community. This strategy, she claims, is important to embrace since now, more than ever, the arts face significant budget cuts. Anything artists can do to help people understand and appreciate what artists do is vital, she asserts. Hamrick plans to create partnerships with non-arts related organizations and businesses so that more Austinites will support her dance company and her annual dance festival. This support will then, hopefully, grow as differing organizations emerge in the shifting and growing Austin population.

Katherine Kiefer Stark and Jessica Heaton, as detailed in Chapters IV and VI, are still working out the kinks of new dance company leadership, including honing their own approaches to being artistic directors and fine tuning the day-to-day work of their dance companies' overarching missions. They, understandably, focus on more short-term goals and visions at this point. For example, Stark's dance company, The Naked Stark, primarily creates new work for specific regional dance festivals and events, rather than producing its own consistent seasons of performances. Stark hopes to eventually tour her Goodnight War workshop and performance series to diverse US colleges and universities, indicating her interest in widening the scope of her visioning as her dance company grows. Jessica Heaton, in contrast, seems most interested in figuring out what kind of dance company will work best for her community of Provo/Orem in Utah and for herself as a mother and artist. She continues to investigate the community's response to different genres of dance and experiments with changing the size of her dance company, Wasatch Contemporary Dance Company. This recalibrating to essentially find the best fit for the Provo/Orem community and for Heaton as artistic director is essential to the dance company's survival, according to Heaton.

Throughout her career directing her dance company, The Power Company Collaborative (PoCoCo), and teaching in the Dance Program at Columbia College in Columbia, South Carolina, Martha Brim has acted on her bold and innovative ambitions. While she defines this part of her career as "closer to the end" (pers. communication, March 1, 2016) than the beginning, she continues to cultivate big ideas for PoCoCo. For example, her work developing the Liberal Arts 201 course at Columbia College, to

include collaborations amongst non-dance major students at the college, company dancers in PoCoCo, and organizations in the community when developing The Home Project, demands incredible vision and follow through to see such a project to fruition (Reference Chapter V for more information). Brim notes ideas for the future of her dance company, including forthcoming iterations of The Home Project, indicating her continued investment in PoCoCo's growth.

Overall, the women leaders interviewed in this dissertation are able to envision possibilities for how their dance companies can contribute in the future to their communities and to the dance field at large. Importantly, these women are also able to foresee the steps necessary to achieve these future dreams and foresee and be willing to put into action the work needed to realize their ambitions.

Creative Problem Solving

Also of great importance to the participants is their ability to be resilient in the face of adversity, often calling on the creativity and problem solving skills formed in their dance educations. All participants described issues funding their dance companies, with a few even discussing particular financial crises which left their companies in turmoil and uncertainty. For example, when faced with a financial impasse in 2015, Kathy Dunn Hamrick and her dance company's board of directors turned to nonprofit organization consultants for advice. These consultants, paid through a fortuitous capacity building grant awarded to the dance company by the Austin Arts Commission that year, suggested bringing in a new board president who could offer a different perspective and, perhaps, new administrative skills to KDH Dance. Additionally, the consultants

suggested Hamrick spend more money on upgrades to promotional materials in order to see greater profits down the road. Indeed, Hamrick's ability to problem solve when forming actions for using this advice turned Hamrick's dance company around and the following year KDH Dance witnessed its most profitable season. Hamrick describes this time in her dance company's history as scary, but also defining for her as a leader. Rather than folding, Hamrick, as well as other participants in this study who faced similar financial dilemmas, described the importance of forging ahead with new, creative solutions for relying on differing structures of support to find unique means of survival.

In addition to finding creative solutions to their dance companies' tough financial obstacles, some of the women in this study discussed the importance of saying no and letting things go that are not working. For example, in Chapter V, Brooke Schlecte discussed canceling one of the dance classes she offered to children in the Waco community when she realized it was taking too much time away from her own children. Rather than seeing these experiences as failures, Schlecte and other participants perceive them as opportunities for restructuring and refining existing dance company programming and goals. In Schlecte's case, she knew letting this class go was the only way she could turn her focus toward her children—her self-described first priority—and, at the same time, learn from this experience about how to effectively plan her community dance classes for the future.

Finally, most of the participants in this dissertation discussed the importance of self-reflexivity and critical feedback as instrumental in their ability to openly acknowledge potential failures and the need to make necessary changes in their dance

companies. For example, in Chapter IV, Jessica Heaton described inviting board members and contacts in her professional networks to informal showings of her dance company's works in progress. Following the showings, viewers are asked to critically discuss what they saw. Heaton and other participants described others' evaluations as priceless because it provided immediate feedback for the artistic directors concerning how their work is read by people in their communities. Further, it gave them opportunities to consider whether or not their work was ready for public viewing.

In general, the participants described their ability to creatively solve problems as instrumental in their dance company leadership success. They understand the need for taking risks, applying critical feedback, and sometimes saying no to things that aren't working in order to forge ahead toward their future artistic visions.

Prioritizing Different Roles

A deep awareness and attention to the unique, prioritized structure of each participants' personal life, her community, and her artistic and professional goals seem to motivate each of these women as they move forward. Each participant strategizes and organizes her life based on the way she creates priorities. The women with young children, for example, all described their families as their first priority. Therefore, their daily lives and long-term professional goals are organized around the needs of their families. Some of the women who lead multiple initiatives (Hamrick and Johnson) described a more fluid approach to prioritization, allowing whatever project is most pressing to come first. Women working full-time in other capacities, such as in academia or schools (Brim and Johnson), described prioritizing the roles that pay their salaries,

with the role as artistic director of their dance company coming in second. The participants acknowledge that they must make these priority decisions in order to better strive for all the parts of their lives to be in a balanced harmony, even if that balance continues to shift over time.

Summary

In the first part of this chapter, I discuss how dissertation participants share four qualities that I attribute to their success as leaders, as artists, and as people with family and personal concerns: 1) they are able to adapt to differing circumstances in their regions and communities in order to achieve results for their dance companies, 2) they have ambitious visions paired with a strong work ethic to accomplish these visions, 3) they solve problems creatively, and 4) they prioritize the multiple personal and professional roles they take on. These factors help the participants manage the ever-changing needs of their dance companies, their communities, their families, and themselves.

Other Important Issues and Considerations Described by Participants

In the following, I will discuss some of the other issues and ideas emerging from the voices of the participants that could potentially take me in new directions for future research. These issues include: 1) differences in the ways the participants describe gender affecting their success in the dance field, 2) how participants discussed the length of time their companies have been in operation as important to the continued progress, and 3) some further issues and ideas shared by all participants in this research but not discussed

at length in previous chapters. These four issues point to areas that can lead to my further inquiry into leadership of small, regional dance companies.

How Women Artistic Directors Perceive Gender Affecting

Choices and Chances in the Dance Field

The participants' perspectives on gender disparity in dance varied widely, yet all who mentioned this topic spoke of it quite passionately; this polarized fervor hints at an area of potentially fruitful further research. Whereas some of the participants perceive great inequalities between the opportunities afforded to women and men in dance, others do not perceive a disparity at all, and still others see the discrepancy as related only to leadership and funding opportunities. From my survey of national data regarding funding and opportunities for women leaders in dance in Chapter II, I was surprised to learn during my data collection that some women in dance do not share my perceptions of the inequalities present in the field. The variety of the opinions and experiences participants discussed about this topic is fascinating to me as I look toward future possibilities in this line of research.

Some of the participants notice—and have noticed throughout their careers—that a gap exists between opportunities and funding granted to men and to women in dance. Further, they feel American culture propagates these biases against women. Jan Johnson asserts, “Clearly women are not as financially supported as men for the same work. We know that” (pers. communication, January 16, 2016). Johnson supports her assertions by referring to a few examples of the best-funded choreographers in the country, all of whom are men (Bill T. Jones, Paul Taylor, Alonzo King, etc.). Kathy Dunn Hamrick

agrees, describing the larger cultural narrative that dominates American perceptions and career outcomes of men and women in dance:

I think there are biases against women [in American culture] that somehow make it more difficult for them to get grants or to be recognized as confident leaders. I don't think anybody goes out there and thinks about it that way in their heads, I just think on a cellular level, we have these biases. [For example], if a company is being run by a woman, it's probably not seen as good as that company that's being run by a man. These are subtle things, but I have seen them. I have seen women applying for city grants [in Austin] and then a man comes in, and he's new, and no one here knows him, and all of a sudden, everybody here is oh, so excited, and the man ends up getting the grant. (pers. communication, September 3, 2015)

In other words, Hamrick senses an excitement surrounding men in dance that doesn't exist for women in dance; this disequilibrium in perception, she thinks, contributes to the ways women leaders are perceived and how they are funded in the United States.

Jessica Heaton, on the other hand, attributes family goals and domestic expectations to women's disadvantaged status in dance, stating, "There's always the family factor that I think holds back a lot of women" (per. communication, January 28, 2016). Heaton continues, asserting that women can, in fact, create opportunities to include family and career in their lives, but that they must believe it is possible and be supported by those around them in order to do it. She laments how women's sense of self-doubt can stand in the way of finding a reasonable balance between family and leadership in dance, asserting, "I really hope women won't pass up the opportunity to do this because we need it. . . . Women can do whatever they want, so I hope they do it" (pers. communication, January 28, 2016).

In addition to perceived inequalities in how men and women are funded, some participants notice a difference in professional expectations of men and women dancers. Most of the participants in this study noted difficulty in finding men to join their companies and Jan Johnson believes this is related to the kind of work environment and professional expectations men demand. Johnson asserts,

I have not consistently had men in the dance company. It's not like it's my goal to have a [solely] female dance company, but we just can't seem to get the same level of commitment out of men. They won't work for less [than they deserve], which . . . I mean . . . There's a duality to that. I get pulled in both directions. Women shouldn't work for less [than they deserve] either! But if they didn't keep doing what they were doing with us, then we wouldn't have the richness of what we're doing. (pers. communication, July 16, 2015)

So, while Johnson is aware of these disparities and injustices, she seems to feel powerless to advocate for better treatment of the women in her dance company. She continues to assert her appreciation for the women who work with her, and describes the other ways she “pays” them such as through exciting performance and teaching opportunities, rewarding rehearsal processes, and a sense of family among company members.

Some participants describe how the differences between the ways men and women lead, in general and specifically in dance companies, affect the goals and outcomes of those companies. Jan Johnson asserts in the following:

Men run dance companies differently than women do. They seem more able to garner funding, delegate responsibilities, and get the funding for it. . . . They seem to be able to compartmentalize their stuff better. [However], I also feel like men don't necessarily get that community component very well. If women were embraced and supported for the value they really do have, so they can expand their reach, [the dance field] might look different. (pers. communication, July 16, 2015)

Johnson believes there is a fundamental difference between men's and women's approaches to leading their dance companies that dates back to the roles each gender played in ancient times, saying, "It has always been a woman's role to gather in the community, while men do all the hunting (laughs)" (pers. communication, July 16, 2015). She goes on to describe women's proclivity for community building, advocating for a greater commitment on the part of funders to support dance companies' community-building efforts. If these events are funded, she says, perhaps more value will begin to be placed on what she believes women have to offer to the dance field.

In contrast, some of the participants describe an equal playing field in which they have personally experienced no inequality or missed opportunities due to their gender. In the following, Jessica Heaton elaborates on her experiences in Utah:

In the dance community here in Utah, there weren't really any barriers to me becoming what I wanted in the dance world. I mean, maybe it's elsewhere in other genres or companies, but I've never felt any kind of oppression from a man. I've grown up in a world free of that. Women can continue to do anything they want. (pers. communication, January 28, 2016)

Heaton acknowledges that men are often the ones in charge of large dance companies in the United States, but reiterates that she has always felt confident as a woman to strive for and reach her leadership goals in dance. Again, it seems that some of the participants in this study are reframing what it means to find satisfaction as leaders in dance. Rather than aiming for more money and acclaim, perhaps some women seek specific opportunities to contribute as leaders in the dance field in ways that enable them to include other rewarding things in their lives such as families, community-building, and artistic vision uncompromised by funding standards.

Another interesting take on this topic came from Kathy Dunn Hamrick, who asserts that “the climate has become so competitive and so much more difficult [for women]” (pers. communication, September 3, 2015). Katherine Kiefer Stark agrees, perceiving that the competitive nature of women and the lack of woman-to-woman mentorship precludes women from supporting each other enough in the field:

I would really like—and I think it’s happening in some small ways in different places—for there to be more sharing of knowledge and resources, and less feelings of competition. . . . I would like to see more of that and more mentorship, woman-to-woman. I feel like that is a hard thing [for women in dance]. (pers. communication, November 9, 2015)

In addition to the importance of women supporting each other in dance, Stark notes that redefining success is crucial in women’s abilities to balance the parts of their lives, particularly children, with a dance career. She asserts, “[This is] not to say that we should settle, but that we might make different choices, and it’s ok to make different choices” (pers. communication, November 9, 2015).

Additionally, Stark describes a juxtaposition of what she considers her genuine identity and the identity she feels she must enact as a leader, saying, “I would like to figure out how to feel like a leader and how I can be strong without having to assume something that feels really unlike myself” (pers. communication, November 9, 2015). She notes feeling pressured to behave in a more stereotypically masculine way in order to be heard and respected, which she thinks may stem from the earlier days of feminism when women first entered the workforce. She supports this idea by saying, “If women entered male-dominated fields, they became more “masculine” in order to be heard because they didn’t know what else to do, but that doesn’t feel right in my body and,

overall, I don't think the world would be better if we were all like men" (pers. communication, November 9, 2015).

Stark also notes that while women in general face adversity because of their gender in the dance field, women of color, in particular, face even greater obstacles. As a result of these obstacles, the number of working women choreographers of all colors are unfortunately, dwindling:

I don't want there to be too many of us women to fall away [from the dance field]. I do worry a little bit about that. I have a friend who's a black, female choreographer and she's trying to make space for more black female choreographers. She talks about how they fall away much faster than white female choreographers. I think a lot of that is financial. How do we keep creating more spaces to share resources? And how do we do that through difference? (pers. communication, November 9, 2015)

Similarly, Kathy Dunn Hamrick, in the following, calls on women to be bolder in their approaches to leadership:

I think there's still a lot of room for women to get out there and . . . I think we're going to have to be a little bolder, actually, and that's not really in my personal temperament. Honestly, I'll be glad to not have to deal with that in 10-15 years. I think it's going to be hard [for women to do that], but it's always been hard for women in the dance field. (pers. communication, September 3, 2015)

Hamrick further suggests in her interview that women leaders in dance should reach out to other leaders in their communities in order to educate the general public about dance.

She describes her own struggles to approach political leaders in Austin since it is not comfortable for her to behave in such a bold way. However, she recognizes these people may be able to help support her dance company in the future, and she sees it as her responsibility to put herself out there when advocating for her company and dancers.

Hamrick also encourages women leaders in dance to be strategic in the ways their dance

companies engage the community with initiatives that cast a wide net. For example, her educational outreach events typically reach hundreds of children and often include parents and families; she states this equates to a potentially larger audience base for her dance company since many of the families involved in outreach events know about and attend her company's productions.

When considering the variety of the participants' experiences and opinions about gender and opportunity, it is important to reflect back on the women dance company leaders featured in Chapter II—Liz Lerman, Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, and Pat Graney. These three women received prestigious awards and substantial national funding to sustain their dance companies and their careers as leaders. Why were they able to receive such awards and funding when other women were not? Is national recognition more achievable for women who create opportunities to engage with national issues such as Black Lives Matter or climate change? Is acclaim more achievable for women making dance in larger, urban communities? Is it about the kinds of collaborations and partnerships these women create with their dance companies? Is it possible that Lerman, Zollar, and Graney made personal and professional sacrifices in order to achieve a certain level of support and acclaim for their dance companies? The obstacles and limitations discussed by the participants in this dissertation ask me to consider how some women and not others achieve accolades and funding. This line of questioning represents a possible research path for the future.

The issues about gender and inequality discussed in this section, while not a main topic of any of the previous four chapters, help shape the crux of my argument in this

dissertation. Since I am interested in how women lead dance companies, the participants' perceptions of how gender affects their professional and personal lives is hugely important to include. I find it most relevant to include this information in the concluding chapter because it provides a continuous thread woven through the cultural and contextual information presented in Chapter II.

How Length of a Dance Company's History Affects its Artistic Director's Goals and Responsibilities

Another topic emerging from the data that could expand future research is how the newness of a dance company can determine its goals and outcomes as well as its leader's job description and workload. The work of an artistic director who founds her own dance company seems to be front-loaded according to the participants in this study. What this means is that the participants describe the heaviest amount of work happening at the beginning of a dance company's lifetime. At the outset of these women's careers as leaders of their dance companies, they described themselves concurrently developing themselves as leaders and artists, discovering the structures of support they can rely on in their communities, and figuring out how to either learn new administrative skills or how to delegate them to others. Whereas newer leaders described *reinventing the wheel* of dance company leadership, more experienced leaders described continuously uncovering new opportunities for expansion.

Jessica Heaton and Katherine Kiefer Stark lead dance companies that have existed for fewer than eight years, while Jan Johnson's and Kathy Dunn Hamrick's companies have each been in operation for over 25 years. The ways Heaton and Stark approach

leadership at this early point in their careers is markedly different than the ways Johnson and Hamrick approach leading after a few decades of leadership experience under their belts. Heaton and Stark, for example, describe themselves as taking on multiple administrative and artistic roles within their dance companies, simply because they cannot pay someone else to do them yet. Heaton's strategy to combat this overwhelming situation is to assign volunteer duties to her company members, who, according to Heaton, take these volunteer duties on without hesitation since they have a vested interest in their dance company's continuation and success. Stark, like Heaton, also calls on her dance company members to help with administrative duties occasionally, but Stark's experience differs from that of Heaton's since some of Stark's initial struggle was in learning how to be the kind of leader she wanted to be for her dance company and how to take on that massive responsibility. She elaborates in the following:

I remember talking to [my husband] Ben about wanting to hire someone to manage me, and he was like, "But, *you* have to be the boss!" (laughs) And I was like, "But, I don't really know how to do that! I want somebody to come in and give me deadlines and tell me I have to get things done!!!" (laughs again). . . . I didn't know how to manage people. The dancers [who took on administrative duties when the dance company first began] didn't really have more experience than I did administratively, so we were all struggling together and it was like, "Who's in charge?" That was hard. And then it was hard to be like, "This isn't working." That was all very challenging. (pers. communication, November 9, 2015)

Part of the challenge of starting a new dance company for Stark, therefore, was discovering and being confident in accepting her own leadership responsibilities and capabilities. In addition to confronting issues with workload and leadership in their new dance companies, both Stark and Heaton also describe the difficulties of fundraising

without 501©(3) nonprofit organizational status. Both describe relying on informal fundraising events such as car washes, bake sales, and receptions in their private homes to garner enough funding to support their shows. However, as their dance companies developed under their emerging leadership, they both describe learning over the years (through various experiments) what works and what doesn't for their companies. These lessons have streamlined their roles as leaders, creating more time for working toward artistic and personal goals.

Hamrick and Johnson, the leaders in this study who have sustained their dance companies for more than 25 years, did not necessarily describe their leadership roles as simple or perfect in their conversations with me. In fact, like Stark and Heaton, Hamrick and Johnson also described their work as arduous and frustrating at times. However, some of the initial kinks newer dance companies face seem to be ironed out once a dance company has been established for a couple of decades. Hamrick and Johnson, at this point in their careers, understand the needs of their dance companies and their leadership roles within those companies. They also know their communities, the people in them, and the resources available to them to work efficiently and effectively toward long-term and short-term goals. Further, while Hamrick and Johnson both describe ebbs and flows of their dance companies' financial health and artistic impact over the years, they also describe being confident in risk taking, embracing change, and inviting new people into their organizations as instrumental for long-term sustainability of their companies and artistic satisfaction for themselves. In differing ways, Hamrick and Johnson both point to persistence for leading a dance company over the course of a decades-long career.

Possibilities for Future Research: Additional Areas of Common Interest and Agreement Among the Research Participants

In this section, I discuss issues, interests, goals, and challenges that the participants describe, and which were not discussed at length in other chapters of this dissertation. This section will highlight the following six topics: 1) funding issues, 2) the participants' prioritization of dance making, 3) interests in increased community engagement, 4) desires for collaborations amongst the arts, 5) issues with delegation of responsibilities, and 6) issues of feeling ill-prepared to lead dance companies.

When asked about the major challenges their dance companies face, every one of the participants mentioned funding first and foremost. Most of the participants point to greater cultural issues as the main reason funding for dance is scarce. They describe how a lack of respect for the arts, dance especially, in the United States contributes to a lack of general awareness and knowledge of the field and, therefore, dance's lack of value in American society. Nevertheless, these women manage to keep their dance companies funded to the extent that they can produce consistent work and provide their dancers some, even if very little, financial compensation. Many receive small grants from local funding organizations, they solicit private sponsorships and contributions from patrons, and they create unique opportunities for fundraising, such as offering master classes and workshops and selling goods embossed with their dance company's logo.

However, even though the participants find ways to keep producing their work, they all describe the constant and often overwhelming efforts required to secure enough funding. With rising costs of space and equipment rental and their own artistic standards

to consider, the feasibility of continuing to lead a dance company that is perpetually close to the brink of financial disaster seems like a recipe for burnout for these leaders. Further, financially telling is the fact that only one of the dissertation participants is able to provide salaries to her company dancers. In future research, I am interested in exploring regional dance company leaders' perceptions of their dance companies' financial status, how they would define financial success, and strategies they employ to reach their long-term financial goals.

In addition to the commonality in how the participants describe funding challenges, all describe a deep love for making dance in their interviews. In fact, they all describe choreography as their most valued and prioritized professional responsibility. Many also describe dance making as one of the reasons they founded their dance companies. Some of the participants, therefore, describe experiencing occasional resentment for the time required to undertake their administrative responsibilities, time they would much rather spend making dance. I was fascinated by this dilemma since I assumed some of the women would have claimed performing or leadership as their first love. In future research, I would be interested in asking women artistic directors more about how their artistic processes and products are a reflection of the mission and vision they have for their dance companies. Further, I would like to know more about how choreographic interests and goals shape the kinds of dance companies and productions these women decide to create. I would also be interested in whether dance leaders of small dance companies who identify as prioritizing choreography as their motive for

starting a company, felt their choreographic visions were compromised through funding structures or when adapting to the needs of their specific communities' needs and values.

Interestingly, for these specific dissertation research participants, all engage in some sort of community engagement initiatives; however, all also express a desire for more possibilities in this area. Some of the participants discuss community engagement as working with community members in differing capacities, such as co-creating art, discussing art, participating in art, and providing assistance and support, etc. Other participants seem to recognize a benefit to their dance companies in providing community engagement initiatives: more funding opportunities, a potentially larger audience base, networking and educational opportunities, etc. I would be interested in digging deeper into how the approaches to community engagement initiatives shape the artistic values of these dance companies and communities with choreographers as leaders. Questions underlying this future research interest could include: How do dance companies that make community engagement part of their missions, structuring all projects around the community, describe their impact in those communities? How do their communities, in turn, describe the dance companies' impact? Another line of questioning involves asking about the kinds of community engagement initiatives dance companies become involved in and how their work in the community impacts the choreography that is made, the dancers who are a part of the dance companies, and the funding garnered by them. Finally, how does dance create opportunities for community engagement that differ from other arts?

Another common area of interest among all of the participants is their desire for collaboration amongst the arts. They all describe as satisfying those projects that involve collaborations with other artists, indicating a desire to move toward interdisciplinary work in the future. I would be interested in knowing about what the processes of these collaborative works entail, how the leaders of the differing organizations worked together, and how collaborative work is described as yielding satisfying results. Further, I would like to know more about how the dance leaders interviewed perceive audience responses to this kind of work. Lastly, I would be very interested in how the artists approached making plans for working together in the future to create collaborative organizations—organizations that could share resources and funding.

The dissertation participants all describe delegation of responsibilities as an extremely important component of their work as artistic directors and, in fact, they assert that delegation of responsibilities is one of the main reasons their dance companies can sustain themselves. However, they also discuss the challenges inherent in the task of delegating. For example, some participants lament that they must constantly be reminding others to complete tasks, with tasks sometimes not accomplished. Another issue for some participants is that the teaching of tasks often takes longer than simply doing the task themselves, so they become frustrated with the perceived longer process of delegating responsibilities. In future research, I would like to delve deeper into the issues surrounding delegation, perhaps discussing with leaders in dance how, when, and why they delegate certain tasks to others and when they feel they are successful.

Finally, and, I believe, most importantly, the dissertation participants noted that they were not properly prepared to become artistic directors of their dance companies through the skills acquired in their own dance educations. They expressed having to learn leadership, business, and other administrative skills on their own, often calling on mentors, volunteers, and other supportive people in their personal lives to help teach or perform the skills necessary for managing certain responsibilities and issues arising in their dance companies. The differing areas the participants stated they were not prepared to manage include: budgets, personnel issues, grant writing, public relations, marketing and advertising, and early childhood development and education.

In future research, I would like to explore how leaders in the dance field learn how to be leaders. Some of the participants in this dissertation described mentorship experiences as very important to their development as artistic directors of their dance companies. Others described their past university course work outside of their dance courses (such as in business, education, or marketing) as helpful in building the skill sets necessary for nonprofit dance leadership. In the future, I would like to examine how American university and college dance programs are preparing students (or not) for the demands of leadership in the field. Further, interviewing more leaders in the dance field to get a sense of where or from whom they learn how to lead their organizations would be helpful as well. These lines of inquiry, including investigations into curricular design and course content in undergraduate and graduate dance degree programs, could be helpful in identifying the areas of needed improvement for university dance programs in order to best serve the needs of dance students entering the work force. Further, a deeper

exploration of the ways mentorship plays a part in the development of dance leaders could prove very helpful to other women (and men) hoping to start dance companies in the future.

Conclusion

Through analyzing and interpreting the words of my participants, it is clear they share many ideas, experiences, and beliefs about how their dance companies and themselves as artists and leaders contribute to their communities and to the dance field. In this concluding chapter, by summarizing the larger issues discussed in Chapters IV-VII and by highlighting some additional areas of curiosity and possible future inquiry, I hope readers get a sense of what a dense, complex task it is to condense the vastness of these research participants' experiences into a dissertation. So much of what the participants expressed to me in interviews and through their teaching, choreographing, and performing is lost in the limitations of this document. Not only could I write an entire text about each of them, I would be remiss not to make a dance about each of them too.

In many ways, the six women artistic directors of regional American dance companies featured in this dissertation have already shaped the ways I think about and approach leadership and dance practices with my own dance company. For example, since I recently became a mother, I have referenced the experiences and lessons given to me by Katherine Kiefer Stark, Brooke Schlecte, and Jessica Heaton, who also juggle young families with their dance companies. These three women count on management skills in every area of their lives in order to support them all. When I consider ideas for how I could serve my dance company, my community, and the university in which I

work more effectively, I refer to Martha Brim's consistent goal of triangulating her community, dance company, and university through specific projects that involve her dance company dancers, university students, and community members in shared performance experiences. Brim, in addition to Jan Johnson, uniquely seek to continue a tradition of lifelong learning and civic engagement through their leadership of dance educational initiatives, which I too value. The ways Brooke Schlecte and Kathy Dunn Hamrick invite differing communities, both dance and non-dance, to share through dance via their regional dance festivals is astounding. I strive to find ways of connecting dancers to each other and tying dance to the culture of the communities supporting these festivals. The six participants featured in this dissertation are, for me, heroes to dance in that they give everything they can to their dance companies, they sometimes sacrifice comfort and security in order to meet the needs of their dance companies, and they face enormous challenges in their work to make dance for and with their communities.

While politically and socially, the arts have arguably never faced more disenfranchisement and stigmatization than in the 2016 United States political climate, these women leaders sense something larger on the horizon—a reason for continuing the work of dance despite poor economic and cultural conditions. They all point to the impact of dance in their communities and, while this work is not always overtly rewarded in a traditional way through financial or celebrity acclaim, it is a reason these women persist. Their rewards come from supporting a continued investment in choreography and performance, creating opportunities for dance to happen in communities of all sizes and geographical locations, sharing with other artists, and pushing dance as an art form

forward. Their innovative ways of leading their dance companies and making dance indicate a hopeful future for regional presence of contemporary dance in the United States.

From this study, I hope women in dance will explore their own ways of starting something or continuing something with dance for their own communities and I hope dance educators will consider how we are training our students to become future leaders in dance. The complexities of the intersections of culture and community with professional and personal goals and strategies featured in this dissertation illustrate a need for training the next generation of dance leaders for a dynamically fast-paced, ever-changing environment of professional dance in the United States.

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APPENDIX A

IRB Approval Letter



Institutional Review Board
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
P.O. Box 425619, Denton, TX 76204-5619
940-898-3378
email: IRB@twu.edu
<http://www.twu.edu/irb.html>

DATE: May 27, 2015

TO: Ms. Alison Duffy
Dance

FROM: Institutional Review Board - Denton

Re: *Approval for Case Studies of Female Leaders in Regional American Contemporary Dance Companies (Protocol #: 18159)*

The above referenced study has been reviewed and approved by the Denton Institutional Review Board (IRB) on 5/26/2015 using an expedited review procedure. This approval is valid for one year and expires on 5/25/2016. The IRB will send an email notification 45 days prior to the expiration date with instructions to extend or close the study. It is your responsibility to request an extension for the study if it is not yet complete, to close the protocol file when the study is complete, and to make certain that the study is not conducted beyond the expiration date.

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.

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 adverse events or unanticipated problems. All forms are located on the IRB website. If you have any questions, please contact the TWU IRB.

cc. Dr. Mary Williford-Shade, Dance
Dr. Linda Caldwell, Dance
Graduate School

APPENDIX B

IRB Extension Letter



Institutional Review Board
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
P.O. Box 425619, Denton, TX 76204-5619
940-898-3378
email: IRB@twu.edu
<http://www.twu.edu/irb.html>

DATE: May 4, 2016

TO: Ms. Alison Duffy
Dance

FROM: Institutional Review Board (IRB) - Denton

Re: Extension for Case Studies of Female Leaders in Regional American Contemporary Dance Companies (Protocol #: 18159)

The request for an extension of your IRB approval for the above referenced study has been reviewed by the TWU IRB (operating under FWA00000178) 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. If subject recruitment is on-going, 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 extension is valid one year from May 26, 2016. 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. All forms are located on the IRB website. If you have any questions, please contact the TWU IRB.

cc. Dr. Mary Williford-Shade, Dance
Dr. Linda Caldwell, Dance
Graduate School