



Landslide: Innovations
in Service for Dance in
Canada

Executive Summary

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Background

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

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

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

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

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

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

RE-IMAGINING SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS: DECOLONIZING CANADIAN DANCE

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



Canadian Dance Assembly
L'Assemblée canadienne de la danse



Nigel Grenier/Photo by Derek Dix

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

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

Those needs were understood as:

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

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

Intentions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This document sketches out a potential path forward.

Trends in the professional dance sector

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

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

ON THE COMPOSITION OF THE DANCE SECTOR

3.2.3

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

ON THE DERIVATION OF CURRENT SERVICE OFFERS

3.3.5

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

ON THE CHANGES UNDERWAY IN SERVICE

4.14

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

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

Design Themes

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Design

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

LANDSLIDE: INNOVATIONS IN SERVICE FOR DANCE

SKETCH OF STRUCTURE

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

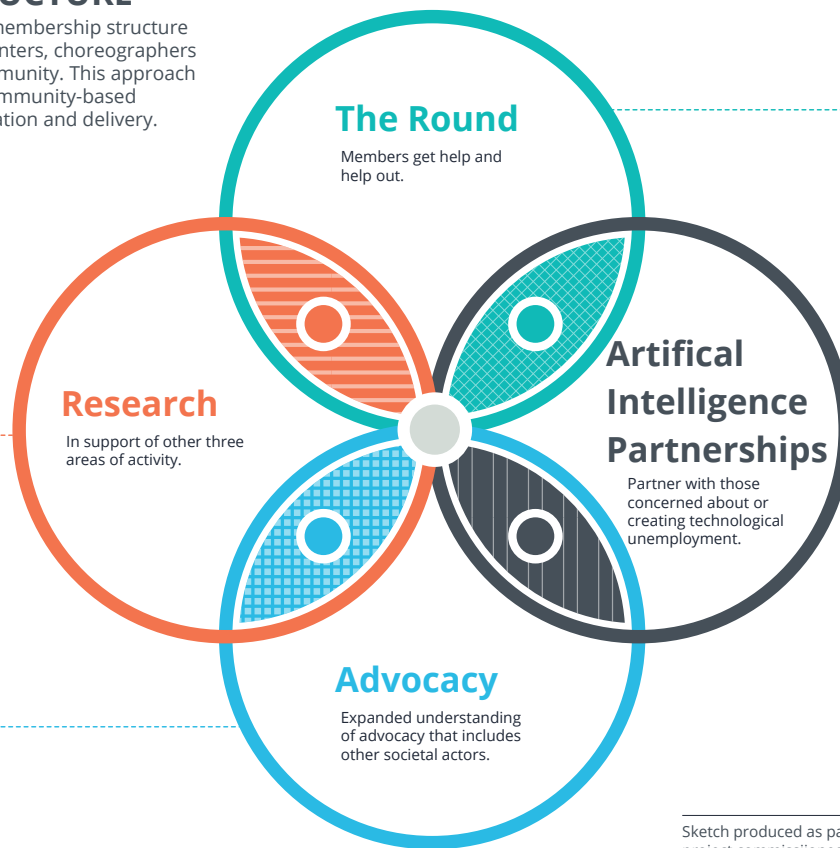
- Service Delivery
- Validation
- External Stakeholders
- Financing



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



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



The Round

Members get help and help out.



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

Artificial Intelligence Partnerships

Partner with those concerned about or creating technological unemployment.



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

Advocacy

Expanded understanding of advocacy that includes other societal actors.

Research

In support of other three areas of activity.

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

Service Redesign: The Round

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Round summary



How does this structure move toward decolonization?

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

How does the Round work?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What gets measured?

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

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

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

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

An Example

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

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

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

A paid administrator of the Round, working for the CDA, forwards the request to a list of presenters, some of whom are members of the Round, some of whom are not. One of these presenters is interested in Janice's piece and CDA introduces the two, outside of the Round, to make arrangements.

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

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

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

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

Why this model?

The following themes are central to the proposed sketch:

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

Service for dance needs to create contexts for those in the dance milieu to support one another to realize creative ambitions and a sustainable livelihood. This doesn't mean that the dance milieu should be left to fend for itself. Additional resources from public and private sources are necessary and warranted. However, how those resources are allocated, and the types of services delivered, need to derive from the experience of a more open and less professionalized framing of dance in Canada.

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

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

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

Is this just another service?

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

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

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

Who else is doing this?

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

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

Conclusion

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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