



A Study of  
Non-Concert Opportunities

**Bonnie Oda Homsey**

Commissioned by the Center for Cultural Innovation with generous support from the Department of Cultural Affairs, City of Los Angeles.

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# The Evolving State of Dance in Los Angeles

A Study of  
Non-Concert Opportunities

**Bonnie Oda Homsey**  
Los Angeles Dance Foundation

Commissioned by Center for Cultural Innovation  
March 2014



**CENTER FOR  
CULTURAL  
INNOVATION**



DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS  
*City of Los Angeles*



**LOS ANGELES  
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I am profoundly grateful to Cora Mirikitani for being the catalyst of this commission. Her scope of knowledge and keen editorial skill guided the final structure and flow of the report. Most importantly, the depth of analysis she motivated in me resonates beyond this study.

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## Preface

**A**lthough the dream does not recur often, it is still vivid. I hear the music before my ‘cue’ and race from the dressing room towards the stage. My hands check for loose bobby pins anchoring the headdress to my bun as my mind runs through ‘notes’ from the last performance. My pulse accelerates with the anticipation of revealing my private, inner world when the curtain rises. It is the act of leaping off a cliff – and the closest I came to feeling what Martha Graham spoke of as *doom eager*: being consumed by a destiny.

I began dancing at seven, and over four decades made the shift from performer to artistic director, educator and arts funder. In that time, the pendulum has swung many times between the “highs” – bountiful periods of creativity and funding – to the “lows.” Dance has morphed into a complex business. Exquisite artistry and stunning innovation are no longer sufficient. There is equal pressure for the dance companies and independent artists to prove solid management, fiscal stability, development and marketing resourcefulness. It is remarkable how the passion, dedication, and love of the art form can endure.

Touring is essential to creative growth and revenue, yet the tough reality is seen in diminished tour support, reduced volume of bookings and fees to the companies. Most presenters I spoke with, during the year and at the 2013 Western Arts Alliance conference, have no immediate plans to expand their dance series. The reasons center mostly on the economics of bookings that include ‘soft’ dance series subscriptions, inconsistent attendance at dance events, and the need to offset deficits when target ticket sales are not reached.

So, what have I observed to promote actions that strengthen dance in Los Angeles? How can the diverse artistry of the dance companies render meaningful experiences that excite participation and increase demand, particularly of younger and underserved communities? Do the dance companies have interest in and perceive benefits from non-touring work?

I co-founded and directed American Repertory Dance Company (ARDC) from 1994-2004 with its *living museum* of rarely-seen masterpieces by the modern dance innovators. ARDC’s model was to book one annual tour with the balance of income sourced from an annual home season and outreach/arts education work. This structure met the needs of our ‘mature’ artists, provided exposure in new communities, and built relationships with different venues and institutions.

The focus of this study is to investigate the interest in non-concert activity by the dance companies and scan the prospects of collaboration with the venues. My hope is the findings reveal opportunities for the dance companies to increase financial and operational capacity, attract new audiences, and advance their mission and creative goals.

Bonnie Oda Homsey, Director  
Los Angeles Dance Foundation  
[www.LADanceFoundation.org](http://www.LADanceFoundation.org)

## Executive Summary

The Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI) commissioned Bonnie Oda Homsey in October 2013 to conduct the first place-based scan and analysis of Los Angeles dance companies and venues. The task was motivated by the recognition that dance in Los Angeles is underserved in terms of performance opportunities and related funding to support creative growth and operations. This study assesses the needs and opportunities for collaboration between the dance companies and venues, focusing on the readily available and affordable “non-concert” activities (e.g., classes, workshops and other low-production events) in “win-win” partnerships, both financially and in terms of the organization’s respective artistic and audience goals. The methodology for the study included a survey and analysis of 20 Los Angeles dance companies and 35 venues in 11 of the 15 Los Angeles City Council Districts.

Los Angeles has a storied dance history with luminaries such as Alvin Ailey, Fred Astaire, Busby Berkeley, Agnes de Mille, Martha Graham, Lester Horton, Gene Kelly, Ruth St. Denis and many others. These choreographers and dancers pioneered American dance on the stage and in film, and conceived models of collaboration which cultivated enthusiastic new audiences for dance.

***Los Angeles dance is uniquely defined by its geographic size and the abundance of dance forms being practiced.***

Today, there are promising indicators for dance in Los Angeles. Unlike the other dance communities in the United States, Los Angeles dance is uniquely defined by its geographic size and the abundance of dance forms being practiced. The report, *A New Architecture for Dance*, summarizes the characteristics of Southern California’s dance community as distinct for its geography, structure, diversity, and intersections of dance worlds.

Yet, statistics point out the low impact of dance on the arts sector. Reports such as the *2012 California’s Arts and Cultural Ecology*, *2012 Otis Report on the Creative Economy of the Los Angeles Region*, and *Dance/USA’s National Company Roster* reveal low rates of audience participation, contribution to the arts economy, and fiscal budgets of local dance entities.

A disconnect exists between the creative vitality of the current dance sector in Los Angeles and the economic viability of the traditional company model, touring and presenting, and arts participation. The findings indicate opportunities in affordable non-concert collaborations with the benefits and incentives reported as growth in Earned Income and employment for the artists, larger visibility footprint, proficiency expansion, and audience development.

## Highlights of Findings

- 75% of the dance companies surveyed want to increase non-concert activity.
- 60% of the venues surveyed are interested in more dance activities. Culturally-based and popular dance are the styles their communities are interested in.
- Dance companies need to be more responsive to the evolving tastes, interests and needs of the venues and audiences. Venues need to increase the competence of staff to be effectual partners in aspects of managing and marketing a successful dance event.
- For some dance companies and venues, past collaborations were encumbered by insufficient communication, fragile finances, or time limitations with negative impact on the most well-intentioned project. These experiences clarified the attributes of a successful and meaningful collaboration.

## Conclusion Points

- **Capacity Building:**
  - Support more capacity-development initiatives, like the Department of Cultural Affairs “Los Angeles Dance Advance Initiative” to increase the marketing expertise of companies and choreographers, which focus on a concentrated area to develop.
  - Prioritize the information dissemination of the existing capacity-building resources.
- **Broader Presenting Partnerships**

Acknowledge a new reality of company models to serve creative and economic growth, and collaborations that can motivate innovative projects and engagement practices.
- **Arts Advocacy**

Connect with and join in arts advocacy. Advocacy elevates the creative value and economic influence of its populace through efforts by Arts for LA, California Arts Advocates, and the “Arts Census” by LA Stage Alliance. Participation is crucial to advance policies impacting the arts and culture at regional, state, and national levels.
- **Research**

Include the research lens as an indispensable tool to recognize the internal and external conditions and factors. The information can guide informed decisions in strategy and action to reach the organization’s short- and long-term goals.
- **Convening**
  - Commit to participate in a regular arts convening for collegial networking, information, and sharing perspectives of future directions for the arts and culture industry.
  - To fight the tendency to work in a vacuum and use opportunities like peer exchanges and workshops for collective discourse and information sharing and discovery.

## Background

The current state of dance in Los Angeles sharply diverges from a prominent history. The city's first movie studio was built in 1911, and iconic venues were erected during the 1920-1930s, among them the Hollywood Bowl, Rose Bowl, and Greek Theater. The venues and studios engaged important choreographers and dancers in creative collaborations, which in turn built enthusiastic new audiences. It is no coincidence the Los Angeles Convention and Visitors Bureau was established in 1921 during the blossoming of arts, culture, and entertainment.

Los Angeles' world-renowned dance history is anchored by the Denishawn School and Dance Company which spawned the modern dance pioneers Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman, and Lester Horton's legacy through Bella Lewitzky and Alvin Ailey. In her book, Naima Prevots states "for some time the press had been heralding the city as the dance capital of America" and she references the 1929 *Los Angeles Times* headline, "L.A. takes Lead as Dance Center."<sup>1</sup> The Dance Heritage Coalition's *America's Irreplaceable Dance Treasures: the First 100*, lists 20 dance luminaries who resided in Los Angeles at points during their career:

**Alvin Ailey, American Bandstand, Fred Astaire, Busby Berkeley, Adolph Bolm, Jack Cole, Agnes de Mille, Martha Graham, Gregory Hines, Lester Horton, Doris Humphrey, Gene Kelly, Bella Lewitzky, Eugene Loring, Donald McKayle, Nicholas Brothers, Eleanor Powell, Ruth St. Denis, Ted Shawn, and Charles Weidman<sup>2</sup>**

**"...the press had been heralding the city as  
the dance capital of America.  
The 1929 Los Angeles Times headline read,  
"L.A. takes Lead as Dance Center."**

Naima Prevots  
Author, educator, dance historian

Ruth St. Denis Program  
Collection of Bonnie Oda Homsey



Today, dance is the least robust of the performing arts in Los Angeles. To understand why, research was conducted with the focus on reports of *capacity* and *participation building*. The information became the framework for this place-based scan and analysis. This study explores the partnership opportunities between the Los Angeles dance companies and venues to jointly increase the value of the organization to the community through delivery of non-concert activities.

<sup>1</sup> Naima Prevots. *Dancing In the Sun: Hollywood Choreographers 1915 – 1937*. UMI Research Press: Ann Arbor/London. 1987. Pg10.

<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Aldrich, ed. *America's Irreplaceable Dance Treasures: the First 100*. Dance Heritage Coalition. Washington D.C. 2000

***This study explores the partnership opportunities between the L.A. dance companies and venues to jointly increase the value of the organization to the community through delivery of non-concert activities.***

The idea for this study emerged from the 2013 *Los Angeles Dance Summit*<sup>3</sup> presented by the Center for Cultural Innovation. The Summit's *big-tent* approach drew 214 participants across the profit and non-profit worlds from students to professionals, dance fans to prominent artists, agents, educators, funders, leaders, managers, and presenters. The event highlighted the need for further study and action to strengthen dance in Los Angeles. The *Summit* expanded on the 2007 *Community Dance Forum*<sup>4</sup> and its specific actions that culminated in formation of the Southern California Dance Futures Fund (SCDFF). SCDFF was tasked to identify stakeholder categories, develop a vision statement, and a dance community mapping. The 2008 report, *A New Architecture for Dance*, offered a self-portrait of Southern California's dance community:

- **Geography:** Decentralized layout creates a lack of focus and easy connection, and this makes it difficult for artists to participate in a community network as exists in other cities.
- **Structure:** Dance organizations appear underdeveloped with weaker infrastructure than their counterparts in the Bay Area.
- **Diversity:** Southern California is among the most culturally diverse collection of communities in the U.S., if not the world.
- **Intersections of Dance Worlds:** Southern California has large and influential commercial, concert, educational and cultural dance communities.<sup>5</sup>

The low impact of dance on the arts sector is indicated in recent reports. The 2012 *California's Arts and Cultural Ecology* report and the summary, *Arts, Culture and Californians: Charting Arts Participation and Organizations in a Vast, Diverse State*, indicates that **85% of arts nonprofits operate with budgets under \$250,000**. The rate of arts participation shows a high of **31% for Art Galleries and Museums and only 8% for Dance**.

*The 2012 Otis Report on the Creative Economy of the Los Angeles Region* provides dance statistics reflecting its contribution to the creative industry:

- *Table 24 - Visual and Performing Arts* shows 26.2% of jobs were attributed to the creative industry. **Dance contributed 0.1% toward the 26.2% figure** (Otis: 41).
- *Table 26 - Los Angeles Region Art-Related Nonprofit Sector* identified a total of 579 arts organizations and of those **Dance numbered 119 of the 579** (Otis: 43).<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The 2013 LA Dance Summit was sponsored by the L.A. County Arts Commission, City of L.A. Department of Cultural Affairs, and L.A. Dance Foundation.

<sup>4</sup> The 2007 Community Dance Forum was sponsored by Dance/USA, Music Center of Los Angeles, and Dance Resource Center.

<sup>5</sup> Community Dance Leader's Planning Committee. *A New Architecture for Dance*. 2008. Pg 4.

<sup>6</sup> Los Angeles County Economic Development Corp. *2012 Otis Report on the Creative Economy of the Los Angeles Region*. Pg 41 and 43.

The minor contribution of dance reflected in these reports is not rooted in a shortage of talent or entities. In fact, the 2011 James Irvine Foundation report states, “California has 11,000 arts and culture nonprofits, placing this state ahead of most nations in the world.”<sup>7</sup> Due to the abundant number of nonprofits, an organization’s capacity is indispensable to effectively operate and produce programs and services in the vast geographic size and spread of Los Angeles. In the Weingart Foundation report, TCC Group defines *capacity-building* as “any activity that strengthens the performance of a nonprofit organization”<sup>8</sup> which includes training, coaching, peer exchanges, consulting and convening.

**Recent reports indicate the low impact of dance on the arts sector.**

The Weingart Foundation report, *Collaborative Capacity Building: Lessons Learned from the Los Angeles Information Exchange Feasibility Study*, states there is “lack of awareness of available resources and...capacity building support is diffuse and not well coordinated.”<sup>9</sup> *Fortifying L.A.’s Nonprofit Organizations* recommends leaders collaborate on a capacity strategy to “bring program offerings into closer alignment with organizational functions...and to increase highly effective activities in short supply in the region. One concrete way...is to provide services through a focused capacity-building initiative...[with] a team of capacity-building providers with expertise in the chosen focus area.”<sup>10</sup>

Dance USA’s *National Company Roster* document shows 2011 data collected from 359 dance companies, members and non-members. It was noted 41 of the dance companies are in California, and 15 are in Los Angeles. The data from the Los Angeles dance companies follows:

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>3 dance companies</b> | <b>Budget of under \$150,000</b>             |
| <b>5 dance companies</b> | <b>\$151,000 to \$300,000</b>                |
| <b>3 dance companies</b> | <b>\$301,000 to \$500,000</b>                |
| <b>4 dance companies</b> | <b>\$501,000 to \$1 million<sup>11</sup></b> |

The fiscal circumstances of the dance companies listed in the Dance/USA document are not detailed. But, there may be some correlation between the revenue amount and level of demand from presenters to book touring based on ticket sale expectations.

Are the dance companies recognizing the shifting access to creative product? In 2013, *The Evolving World of Dance: Stepping into Hope and Change*<sup>12</sup> forum included a discussion of change in terms of technology and internet impact on the dance industry, with the new direct line of creative product going to the con-

<sup>7</sup> Ann Markusen, et al. “Arts, Culture, and Californians” from *California’s Arts and Cultural Ecology*. 2011. Pg 7.

<sup>8</sup> Weingart Foundation. *Fortifying LA’s Nonprofit Organizations*. 2010. Pg 2.

<sup>9</sup> Weingart Foundation. *Collaborative Capacity Building*. 2012. Pg 8.

<sup>10</sup> Weingart Foundation. *Fortifying L.A.’s Nonprofit Organizations*. 2010. Pg 10.

<sup>11</sup> Dance/USA. *National Company Roster*. 2013.

<sup>12</sup> The event was sponsored by SAG-AFTRA, Career Transition for Dancers, and SAG Foundation.

sumer. In his paper, Jaime Galli states, “The rise of participatory culture allows virtually anyone to be a distributor and consumer of art...Through web-based applications, [the] organizations have a way to re-connect with current audience members as well as attract a much larger and more diverse audience base.”<sup>13</sup>

One report defines the aesthetic *experience* as an encounter with the potential to involve “the spectator’s senses, emotions, and intellect.”<sup>14</sup> Are dance companies creating activities that stimulate participation and whet the appetite to experience more dance? The 2008 report, *Cultivating Demand for the Arts*, notes the number of nonprofit arts organizations has multiplied but the “demand for their output has not kept pace...as evidenced by declining rates of participation for Americans, particularly those aged 30 and under.”<sup>15</sup>

**Are dance companies delivering activities that stimulate participation and whet the appetite to experience more dance?**

Demand for dance has grown with media exposure and reality shows like ‘*So You Think You Can Dance*’ and ‘*Dancing with the Stars*,’ the latter producing unprecedented viewership of up to 17 million.<sup>16</sup> The downside is limited dance exposure can narrow the aesthetic experience with impact on the viewer’s knowledge, tastes and expectation of *live* dance events.

McCarthy and Jinnett (2001) offer a theory of the barriers to overcoming public arts participation: the **practical** (costs, location, marketing, etc) and the **perceptual** (inexperience with the arts, resistance to participation).<sup>17</sup> The eroding arts participation is echoed in a Wallace study of the decline being “most pronounced among those 30 and under – the presumed audiences of the future.”<sup>18</sup>

A goal of the 2011 Wallace conference, “Building Audiences: Sustaining What Works,” was to share audience development ideas. Suggestions for participation-building were to:

- **Understand audiences and identify strategies to “meet them where they are”**
- **Involve the whole organization in audience development**
- **Create a culture that embraces experimentation and learning**<sup>19</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Jaime D. Galli. *Organizational Management in the Non-Profit Performing Arts: Exploring New Models of Structure, Management, and Leadership*. 2011. Pg 17.

<sup>14</sup> Laura Zaharas, Julie F. Lowell. *Cultivating Demand for the Arts: Arts Learning, Arts Engagement, and State arts Policy*. 2008. Pg XV.

<sup>15</sup> *Cultivating Demand for the Arts*. 2008. Pg 13.

<sup>16</sup> David Bauder. *Reality TV Ratings: ‘Dancing with the Stars’, ‘The Voice’ Still Have Legs*. March 26, 2013.

<sup>17</sup> *Cultivating Demand for the Arts*. 2008. Pg 13.

<sup>18</sup> Susan Parker for The Wallace Foundation. *Building Arts Organizations that Build Audiences*. 2012. Pg 3.

<sup>19</sup> *Building Arts Organizations that Build Audiences*. 2011. Pg 4.

The national and state arts agencies have focused on amplifying access to the arts. The 2009 survey commissioned by Dance/USA describes the barriers to more engagement activity:

|  |                         |
|--|-------------------------|
| <b>Lack of time to plan or staff to run</b>    | <b>71%</b>              |
| <b>Cost</b>                                    | <b>69%</b>              |
| <b>Low participation by audiences</b>          | <b>32%</b>              |
| <b>Lack of technology know-how or software</b> | <b>31%</b>              |
| <b>Artist availability or lack of interest</b> | <b>28%</b>              |
| <b>Lack of physical space</b>                  | <b>26%<sup>20</sup></b> |

The task of identifying the barriers to arts participation for the organization is a first step to awareness of where improvement can be made to operations and programs. Creating dance experiences that motivate attendance and generate increased demand are linked to capacity and incentive factors such as knowledge of the venue and communities interests, needs and familiarity with dance. At the 2011 Wallace conference, Allison Crean suggested the three factors of change and emphasized all must be present to implement new processes:

- **Opportunity (the chance to do things differently)**
- **Capacity (the skills to carry it out)**
- **Incentives (the ways to provide motivation)<sup>21</sup>**

Coordinated capacity-building services are instrumental to the process of aligning programs or activities with organizational functions.<sup>22</sup> However, simply having capacity services available cannot be effective unless the entire organization is committed to fully engaging in any change or improvement plans.

***Eroding arts participation was  
“most pronounced among  
those 30 and under – the presumed  
audiences of the future.”***

The Wallace Foundation

Diavolo Dance Theater  
Photo: Kenneth Mucke



<sup>20</sup> Wolf Brown. *Survey of Current Audience Engagement Practices*. July 2009. Pg 23.

<sup>21</sup> *Building Arts Organizations That Build Audiences*. Pg 8.

<sup>22</sup> *Fortifying LA's Nonprofit Organizations*. Pg 10.

## Methodology – The Dance Companies

### Definitions

- “Earned Income” (E.I.) references the United States tax code that defines activities “*related to the organization’s exempt purposes.*”<sup>23</sup>
- For this study the sources of E.I. focuses on “non-concert activities” such as classes, workshops, lecture-demonstrations and low-production events by dance companies showing distinct artistic brand and solid infrastructure, and poised to successfully compete in the international and domestic booking marketplace.

### Selection Criteria

Dance companies had to meet the following criteria:

1. **Company is located within City of Los Angeles**
2. **Exceptional artistry in productions and performers**
3. **Consistently strong infrastructure and staff**
4. **Board support and governance**
5. **Fiscal management and oversight**
6. **History of touring and community programs**
7. **Solid marketing practices**
8. **Interest to innovate audience engagement**



Mythili Prakash  
Photo: Jorge Vismara

### Research

Names of prospective dance companies were identified through the researcher’s personal knowledge, colleague recommendations and websites. The research netted 25 candidates and the vetting narrowed the list to 20 dance companies, attached as Appendix I. The vetting process ensured the final list represented the characteristic variety of dance in Los Angeles. The following dance forms are practiced by the 20 dance companies:

**Acrobatic-modern, Afro-Brazilian, ballet, contemporary-modern, East Indian, Folkloric, hip hop, jazz, Jewish dance from Israel, modern, multi-disciplinary, site-specific, and Urban Latin**

### Interview Process

Three interviews were conducted in person and the balance by telephone. The questionnaire template is attached as Appendix II. Per request, the Analysis section does not attribute responses to a specific company. The information does provide a snapshot of the company’s economic vitality, structure, and audience engagement practices. The limitations of the interview process relate to variables such as different lengths of time for the interview, depth of reflection and response details, and the time restrictions of the study that limited the scope of inquiry.

<sup>23</sup> Putnam Barber. “What is Earned Income?” *National Center for Charitable Statistics*. Urban Institute.

## The Venues

### Definitions

- The participating “venues” reflect a mix of the Performing Arts Centers (PAC), Arts Centers (AC), and Recreation/Community/Senior Centers (RC).
- “Underutilized” refers to the current dance activity being at 50% or less of the total programming. Questions were asked whether the venue had appropriate space and floor surface to host a physically safe experience for artists, instructors and participants.
- “Non-concert dance activity” covers a variety of dance events, e.g., classes, lectures, workshops or low-production events.

### Selection Criteria

Venues had to meet the following criteria:

- 1. Venue is located within City of Los Angeles**
- 2. Programs benefit underserved or disadvantaged communities**
- 3. Fits into one of the venue categories of PAC, AC, or RC**
- 4. Has appropriate facility to host non-concert dance activity**
- 5. Has staff to administrate and manage programs/services**

### Research

Names of 62 prospective venues were identified through a combination of sources: researcher’s personal knowledge, recommendations, publications and online resources. It was noted that 40% of government websites did not list resources for Arts and Culture. Facility and program information of the venues operating under the City of Los Angeles, Department of Recreation and Parks was difficult to obtain. The research sources are listed below:

- Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) website listed “Neighborhood Arts and Cultural Centers” venues located in **Districts 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 12**
- City Council Districts’ website, most did not list any arts and culture or entertainment resources within their jurisdiction<sup>24</sup>
- *Southern California Performing Arts Venues* published by CARS, and *Annual Dance Directory* published by Dance Magazine
- Website of the City of Los Angeles, Department of Recreation and Parks
- Websites of Chambers of Commerce<sup>25</sup> (Asterisk notes an arts/culture heading):
  - Boyle Heights Chamber of Commerce
  - \*Canoga Park/West Hills Chamber of Commerce

<sup>24</sup> Councilman Paul Krekorian’s (CD 2) website included a sub-heading of “Arts & Entertainment,” but no links to venues. His staff did provide names of 16 venues and theater companies. Councilman Mitchell Englander’s (CD 12) website included a “Cultural, Historical, Arts” with a few venues listed. Councilman Bernard Parks’ (CD 8) website included an extensive directory,” but no listing for arts, culture or entertainment in his district.

<sup>25</sup> Four Chamber of Commerce websites had a Directory category for Arts and Culture, Entertainment, or Theater.

\*Chatsworth/Porter Ranch Chamber of Commerce  
 \*Chatsworth Fine Arts Council  
 Crenshaw Chamber of Commerce  
 LA Chamber of Commerce  
 \*Studio City Chamber of Commerce  
 Sherman Oaks Chamber of Commerce  
 South Los Angeles Community Coalition  
 Sunland-Tujunga Chamber of Commerce  
 United Chambers of Commerce San Fernando Valley & Region  
 Woodland Hills-Tarzana Chamber of Commerce

The vetting reduced the list to 38 venues, but subsequently, interviews could not be conducted with three venues: One closed and the closure was not shown on its website; and two venues never responded to repeated attempts for an interview.<sup>26</sup> The list of 35 venues is attached as Appendix III, and represent the following venue category types:

| <i>Number of Venues</i> | <i>Category Type</i>                           |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>9</b>                | <b>Performing Arts Center (PAC)</b>            |
| <b>7</b>                | <b>Arts Center (AC)</b>                        |
| <b>19</b>               | <b>Recreation/Community/Senior Center (RC)</b> |

The venue interviews were all conducted by telephone. The questionnaire is attached as Appendix IV. The template of questions was structured in anticipation of dealing with interview variables such as varying lengths of time for the interview, the person's job position and depth of knowledge. The limitations of the study related to these variables. Effort was made to call back certain venues to speak with a more senior representative. These attempts were not always successful.

In general, the venues gave less time to the interview process compared to the dance companies. Seventeen persons interviewed were at a manager or higher position. The other 18 persons gave basic responses that did not cover program planning decisions, details of the community's interest in dance, benefits of dance, and insight to obstacles to more dance.

***Today, there are promising indicators for dance in Los Angeles.***

The Wallace Foundation

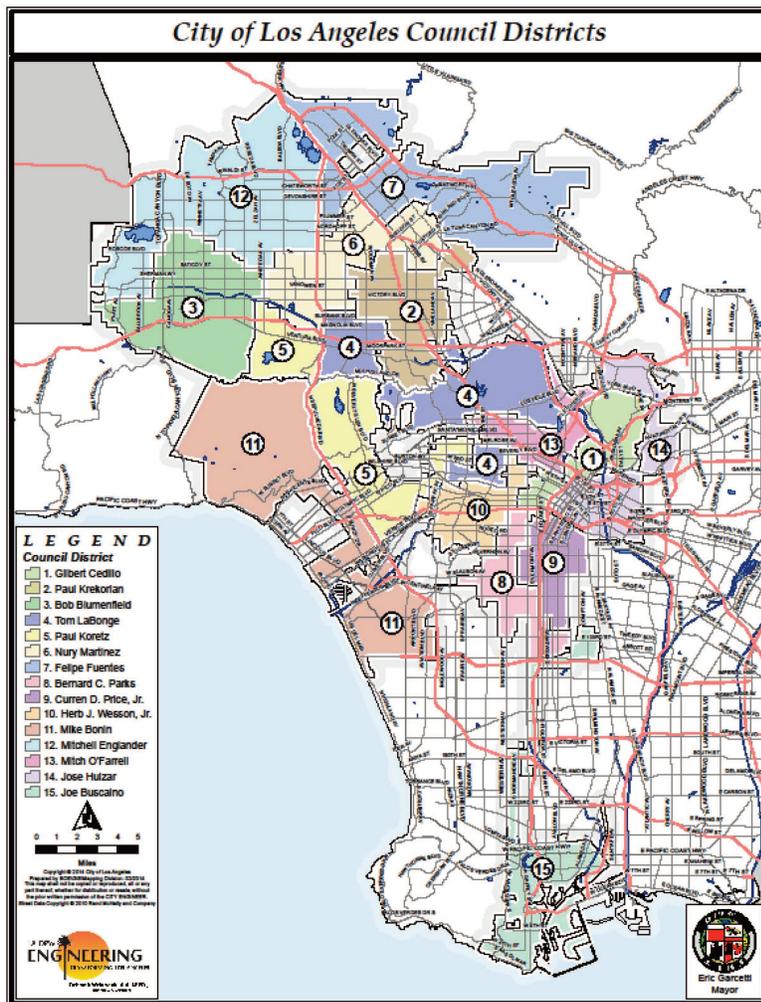
### **City Council Districts**

The City of Los Angeles, Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA), applies the designation of "underserved" to communities in **City Council Districts 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 12**. The designation was based on their internal examination of grant amounts disbursed to City Council Districts, the volume of proposals for particular Districts, and availability of adequate arts and cultural infrastructure in the District.

<sup>26</sup> The three venues not interviewed were: Central Park Recreation Center (CD 9), Chatsworth Recreation Center (CD 12), and Bootleg Theater (CD 13).

The preliminary research of the venues did not provide a balanced representation of the category types – Performing Art Center, Arts Center, and Recreation/Community Center. The scan was expanded to 11 of the 15 City Council Districts, to capture broader perspectives of the venue and the community interests, needs and tastes. The added venues were located in **City Council Districts 4, 10, 13, and 14**. The map on the following page outlines the boundaries of the City Council Districts.

The *Los Angeles City Council Districts Economic Reports* prepared by Beacon Economics provided an economic reference point in correlating “underserved” to statistics for employment, average annual wages, and gross annual receipts. The reports for 2010 through 2012 depict consistently lower annual wage rates in certain City Council Districts in comparison to the average annual wage in the City of Los Angeles. The low annual wages suggest financial hardship to participate in arts and culture events, and the venues in the low-wage Districts are challenged to provide adequate access to dance for their communities. The 2012 report shows that nine of the City Council Districts do not list an “Arts & Entertainment” sector among the 10 Top Sectors on the “Gross Receipts by Sector” graphs.<sup>27</sup>



The venues located in the 11 City Council Districts included the study are:

- CD 2\* **Paul Krekorian**
- CD 3\* **Bob Blumenfield**
- CD 4 **Tom LaBonge**
- CD 6\* **Nury Martinez**
- CD 7\* **Felipe Fuentes**
- CD 8\* **Bernard Parks**
- CD 9\* **Curren D. Price, Jr.**
- CD 10 **Herb J. Wesson, Jr.**
- CD 12\* **Mitchell Englander**
- CD 13 **Mitch O'Farrell**
- CD 14 **Jose Huizar**

\*The asterisks note the seven DCA designated underserved Districts.

Map courtesy of City of Los Angeles, Bureau of Engineering, Mapping and Land Records Division.

<sup>27</sup> LA Economic Development Corporation. 2012 *Los Angeles City Council Districts Economic Report*, pg 8.

## Particulars of the Analysis: The Dance Companies

The following dance companies were surveyed for the study:

| <b>Genre/Style</b>         | <b>Name of Company</b>   |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Acrobatic/modern</b>    | <b>Diavolo Dance Theater</b>   |
| <b>Ballet</b>              | <b>Los Angeles Ballet</b>  |
| <b>Contemporary/modern</b> | <b>Ateg dANCEcOMPANY</b><br><b>BODYTRAFFIC</b><br><b>Hysterica Dance Co.</b><br><b>LA Contemporary Dance Company</b>   |
| <b>Heritage based</b>      | <b>CONTRA-TIEMPO</b><br><b>Grandeza Mexicana Folk Ballet Company</b><br><b>Keshet Chaim Dance Ensemble</b><br><b>Mythili Prakash/Shakti</b><br><b>Viver Brasil</b> |
| <b>Hip hop</b>             | <b>Antics</b><br><b>Versa Style Dance Company</b>  |
| <b>Jazz</b>                | <b>Jazz Antiqua Dance and Music Ensemble</b>   |
| <b>Modern</b>              | <b>Invertigo Dance Theatre</b><br><b>Lula Washington Dance Theater</b><br><b>David Roussève/Reality</b>  |
| <b>Multi-disciplinary</b>  | <b>Rosanna Gamson/World Wide</b><br><b>Sheetal Gandhi</b>  |
| <b>Site specific</b>       | <b>Heidi Duckler Dance Theatre</b>   |

### Current and Ideal Touring Statistics

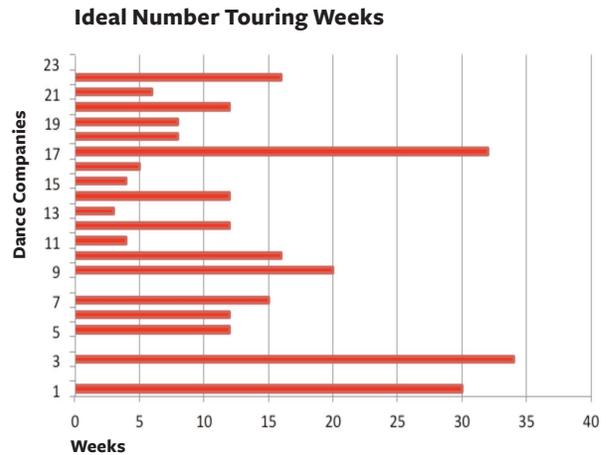
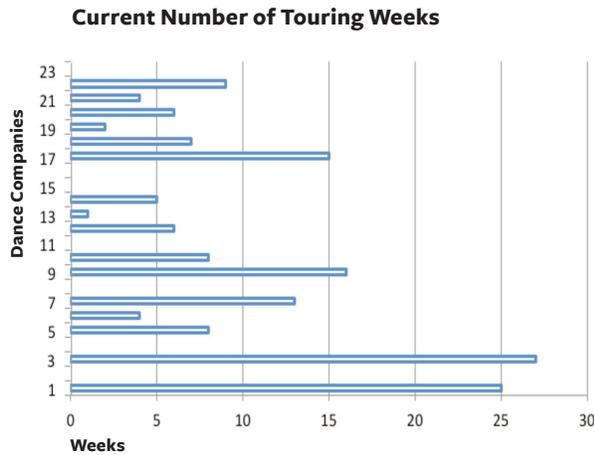
The majority of the 20 dance companies reported current touring at 10 weeks or less. Three dance companies presented local performances, but no “touring” out of the area. Five dance companies have been recipients of the prestigious New England Foundation for the Arts’ National Dance Project (NDP) grants with the goals to develop partnerships between the artists and national presenters, and to engage and expand dance audiences.<sup>28</sup>

A majority of dance companies cite an “ideal” touring at fifteen weeks or less. The findings reflect solid touring management as the touring income/expense of 15 companies are “in the black” or “break even” status. Just two companies report being “in the red.” One company does not tour and the explanation is provided in the “Current and Ideal Non-Concert Statistics.”

### Touring Income/Expense Information

| In the Red  | In the Black | Break Even  | No Current Touring |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------------|
| 2 companies | 7 companies  | 8 companies | 3 companies        |

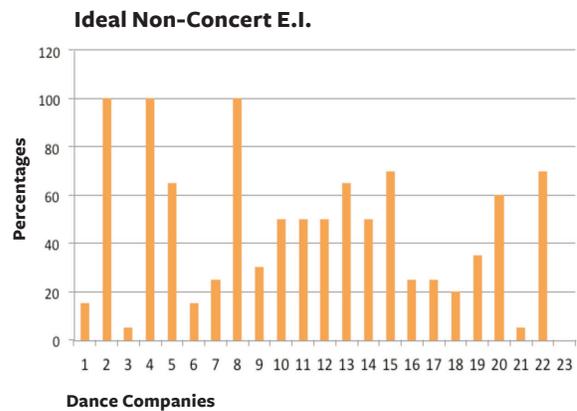
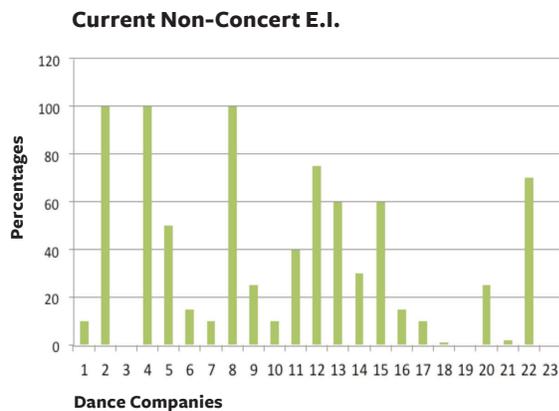
<sup>28</sup> The names of the Los Angeles recipients of New England Foundation for the Arts’ National Dance Project grants were supplied to the researcher by NEFA. These grants occurred between 2008 and 2014.



### Current and Ideal Non-Concert Statistics

Seventeen dance companies want to increase non-concert activities. One dance company altered its company model away from touring to 100% of Earned Income (E.I.) derived from non-touring revenue. The artistic director explained the decision accommodated the increase in choreographic work and the family priorities necessitating consistent teaching employment. Another dance company changed its structure to form a separate entity to conduct all non-concert work. A third dance company modified its structure to create a dedicated program for non-concert activities when the company is not on tour.

The graphs of the “Current Non-Concert E.I.” and the “Ideal Non-concert E.I.” depict 22 responses from the 20 dance companies. Two companies provided two sets of non-concert data; one set for the main company and another for the dedicated non-concert entity. The responses at 100% are the three dance companies described above. The next highest non-concert levels are 70% and 75%. The company at 75% plans to reduce non-concert E.I. to 50% and is working to increase touring from 6 weeks to 12 weeks. The company at 70% plans to retain this level and to increase touring from 9 weeks to 16 weeks.



## Benefits of Non-Concert Activities

The dance companies responded with the following key benefits of non-concert activities:

- **Economic growth including more employment for artists**
- **Proficiency development and enlarging job opportunities in the field**
- **Exposure to different communities that builds new audiences for local concerts and regional touring**
- **Conceive engagement formats that attract the 30 or under age participant**

## Issues and Obstacles to Non-Concert Activity

The major obstacles were capacity related. Comments were made about the lack of a mechanism or resource to facilitate new collaborations with appropriate venues. Most dance companies are operating with the slimmest of budgets. There is no wriggle room to add non-concert duties to the workload of staff. Increasing non-concert activity involves organizational capacity and function consideration, and if the investment in staff time and expense is amortized with prospective inflows of revenue.

Capacity was addressed in comments by venues that dance companies can be more responsive to the tastes, needs and interests of audiences. The dance companies recognize the importance of improving engagement formats, especially for participants new to dance. Multidimensional formats were described as providing multiple entry points to engage those with limited exposure to dance. The dance companies were unanimously interested in peer exchanges to share expertise and perspectives of non-concert activities. One artistic director already scheduled rehearsal time to explore dance-engagement practices with company artists.

There was preference for venue partnerships presented as successive or ongoing activities versus a one-time event. There is a financial upside to successive projects, but the dance companies felt the longer-term activities reinforced exposure immersion, discovery and learning for the participants.

Some dance companies mentioned disappointing partnership experiences with venues:

- **Untimely management by venue staff of paperwork for the dance activity**
- **Delays by venues in scheduling meetings or communications to coordinate the activity**
- **Lack of capacity to effectively present or help to publicize the dance event**
- **Inadequate follow-up by venue staff to build on the initial dance activity**

The attributes of the successful, meaningful venue collaboration are:

- **Responsibility, respect, trust, and regular communication between the parties**
- **Being on the same page increases the probability to attain the respective goals of the non-concert activity. The following are activity goals described by the dance companies:**
  - **To bridge cultural differences**
  - **To enliven learning different dance genres or styles**
  - **To provide a creative outlet for youth to better deal with their environmental challenges**
  - **To present fun ‘behind-the-scenes’ learning experiences for participants new to dance**

## Particulars of the Analysis: The Venues

### Venue Categories and Facilities

The venues reported a range of facilities for dance activities. Due to time limitations, on-site visits to evaluate the facilities and floor surfaces were not possible.

| <i>Number of Venues</i> | <i>Type of Facility</i>                |
|-------------------------|--|
| 18                      | <b>Multipurpose Room</b>               |
| 16                      | <b>Theater</b>                         |
| 13                      | <b>Gymnasium</b>                       |
| 5                       | <b>Other (Gallery, Clubhouse, etc)</b> |
| 2                       | <b>Dance Room<sup>29</sup></b>         |



Grandeza Mexicana Folk Ballet Company  
Photo by Will Wong

The 35 participating venues represent the following categories:

| <i>Number of Venues</i> | <i>Category Type</i>                |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 9                       | <b>Performing Arts Center (PAC)</b> |
| 7                       | <b>Arts Center (AC)</b>             |
| 19                      | <b>Recreation Center (RC)</b>       |

### Some Details of the Performing Arts Center (PAC)

The following PACs operate as both presenting and rental houses. Note: The asterisk identifies venues managed by the Department of Cultural Affairs.

**\*Nate Holden Performing Arts Center (CD 10)** Home to Ebony Repertory Theater, the theater seats 400 and the multipurpose room accommodates 35. Gayle Hooks, Managing Director, develops the dance programming. She reports 40% of the venue's dance activity is performance with 60% of activities being classes and workshops. There is interest to increase dance. Jazz and culturally-specific dance, not just African-American, are popular with young people in the community. Audience development in dance is particularly important for the venue. It was noted Jazz Antiqua and Viver Brasil have recently performed at the venue.

**Valley Performing Arts Center (VPAC) Theater and Concert Hall at California State University, Northridge (CD 12)** The relatively new VPAC Theater seats 1,700 and the Concert Hall seats 490. Anthony Cantrell, Arts Education, reports the VPAC Theater presents only recognized dance companies (past bookings included Russian National Ballet, Savion Glover, Bill T. Jones, Mark Morris). The venue offers master classes for the community by the visiting dance companies. VPAC has not presented local dance companies although companies can rent the facilities. He noted the Concert Hall is mostly rented for theater productions.

<sup>29</sup> The venues with dance rooms/studios were Granada Hills Recreation Center (CD 12) and Inner City Arts (CD 14).

***We are interested in dance and theater collaborations that challenge audiences to a deeper understanding of culture on a local, national and global scale.***

Chantal Rodriguez, Programming Director/Literary Manager  
Los Angeles Theatre Center

**Los Angeles Theater Center (CD 14)** Venue is home to Latino Theater Company with four theaters. Chantal Rodriguez, Program Director, reports LA Dance Project has been in residence, but dance is a small percentage of the total programs. LATC has done collaborations with Antics (hip hop) and In-vertigo Dance Theatre (modern). There is interest in more dance and theater collaborations that challenge audiences to a deeper understanding of culture on a local, national and global scale. Theater #3 has a seating capacity of 318 and works best for dance events.

**Luckman Fine Arts Center Main Theater and Intimate Theater, at California State University, Los Angeles (CD 14)** Main Theater seats 1,100 and Intimate Theater seats 250. Nicholas Mestas, Marketing Director, reports no subscription dance series. Dance is a hard sell in comparison to music. The location cannot attract dance audiences. Luckman presented BodyTraffic (modern) and does rent to dance companies. "Luckman Plus" is a free outreach and educational program featuring 50% dance artists. "World Arts Initiative" has booked international dance ensembles like Kibbutz Dance Theater.

The following PACs are a rental-house basis:

**\*Madrid Theater (CD 3)** The venue seats 440 and features full time administrative, production and house staff. Mawasi Belle, Booking Manager, reports competitive rental rates. Recent dance activities include Southeast Asian and Flamenco events. There is interest in more dance activity. If funding becomes available, there may be interest to produce an "Open House" that includes dance. Best rental period is October to November, as the theater is usually booked January to April. Community has lots of seniors and a mix of Jewish, Indian, Latino populations.

**Assistance League Theater (CD 13)** The theater capacity is 330, and multipurpose room seats 150. Linda Karchem, Director of Membership & Community Relations, describes the theater as a 'gem.' There is interest in more dance activity. The venue typically rents to children's theater groups that cater to underprivileged children and families. An obstacle is the renter must have capacity and resources to do all the marketing and advertising as the venue cannot assist in this work.

**Aratani/Japanese American Theater at JACCC (CD 14)** Theater seats 880, Multipurpose room seats 200, Gallery seats 100, and Outdoor Plaza is suitable for certain dance. Leslie Ito, Executive Director, describes a history of presenting dance but the venue is now a rental house. There is interest in dance, but the challenge is to develop an audience. Given the growing multiethnic, multigenerational audience, a mix of concerts, lecture/demos, and classes rooted in the rich cultural traditions of LA's communities would attract a dance audience. A Director of Programming has been hired.

**\*Warner Grand Theater (CD 15)** The venue seats 1,500 and has a marley surface. Lee Sweet, Theater Manager, is interested in more dance and fostering dance partnerships. Events like the Nutcracker and recitals are 10% of the total rentals. Cultural dance appears to generate appeal. The location in San Pedro appears an obstacle to attracting typical dance audiences. Audience development is an issue. The community does not usually support arts and culture unless the company has name recognition. Some renters lack the capacity to take ownership of the marketing/PR for their event.

### Profile Details of the Arts Center Venues (AC)

Note: An asterisk identifies venues managed by the Department of Cultural Affairs:

**\*McGroarty Arts Center (CD 2)** Multipurpose room accommodates 16 to 18 participants or can seat 80. Monica Hicks Jenkins, Director of Development & Marketing, reports dance classes are offered in ballet, jazz and hip hop for youngsters up to 9 years. It is a challenge to host dance in the space. The venue will begin offering ballroom dance to adults in 2014. There is interest in more activities like salsa.

**\*Canoga Park Youth Arts Center (CD 3)** Gallery can accommodate 20. Stuart Vaughan, Executive Director, reports there are currently no dance activities. In the past, there were African dance residencies that were funded by Department of Cultural Affairs. He has taught for 30 years and believes dance is “innate,” and would love to offer dance if the activity can be provided free. The venue serves a community with a mix of East Indian, Latino, and Middle Eastern populations.

**\*Lankershim Arts Center (CD 4)** Theater seats 45, and the Gallery seats 150. Rebecca Isenberg, General Manager, explained there used to be dance classes, but no dance is currently offered. The venue hosts acting classes for young people and acting workshops for adults. Rental and insurance costs appear to be obstacles to the dance companies. Location serves a diverse, arts-centric neighborhood. Popular styles like hip hop, jazz, and ballet classes might do well for youth, and salsa for the adults.

**Bolton Hall Museum (CD 7)** The venue has limited space to host dance activity. The venue also operates only on Sunday and Tuesday. Shirley Neuenswander, docent, explains no dance activities are currently offered, but the venue can be rented by dance companies. The venue is typically used to reenact events from 1913.

**\*Barnsdall Art Park’s Gallery Theater (CD 13)** Theater seats 299. There are also classrooms and gallery spaces but those are fully booked. Debbie Livingston, Booking Manager, reports 50% of the rentals are for all types of dance. There may be interest in initiating a co-producing relationship with a dance company if funding can support the event. The community would be interested in dance classes, but the venue would need funding to cover the dance instructor or artist fee and any marketing expenses.

**\*Center for the Arts, Eagle Rock (CD 14)** Venue has a large room with a linoleum floor that accommodates 225. Julia Salazar, Executive Director, explained no dance activities are currently offered although the Center has hosted adult square dancing in the past. She is interested in dance activities that can be incorporated into their after-school program. The obstacle is the mission has a focus on the visual arts and music, so her priority is directed to offering programs in those disciplines.

**Inner City Arts (CD 14)** Theater seats 140, Multipurpose room seats 40, the Dance Room can accommodate 20 but it needs a softer surface. Susie Goliti, Director of Operations, explains dance activities represent 10% of the total programs. There are after-school dance classes offered in modern, jazz and hip hop. Hula was offered in the past. The Inner City's *Institute* provide classes for youth ages 12 and up. A second dance class was added due to demand. A large percentage of the community is Latino so salsa would be good. There is interest in a full-time dance instructor for daytime and the weekends.

### **Profile Details of the Recreation/Community/Senior Center Venues (RC)**

The names of the RCs and their City Council Districts are:

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| <b>Canoga Park Youth Arts Center</b>               | <b>CD #3</b>  |
| <b>Canoga Park Senior Center</b>                   | <b>CD #3</b>  |
| <b>David M. Gonzalez Recreation Center</b>         | <b>CD #7</b>  |
| <b>Delano Recreation Center</b>                    | <b>CD #6</b>  |
| <b>Denker Recreation Center</b>                    | <b>CD #8</b>  |
| <b>Fernageles Recreation Center</b>                | <b>CD #6</b>  |
| <b>Fred Roberts Recreation Center</b>              | <b>CD #9</b>  |
| <b>Gilbert Lindsay Community Center</b>            | <b>CD #9</b>  |
| <b>Granada Hills Recreation Center</b>             | <b>CD #12</b> |
| <b>Leimert Plaza Park</b>                          | <b>CD #8</b>  |
| <b>Martin Luther King Recreation Center</b>        | <b>CD #8</b>  |
| <b>Panorama Recreation Center</b>                  | <b>CD #7</b>  |
| <b>Ritchie Valens Recreation Center</b>            | <b>CD #7</b>  |
| <b>Ross Snyder Recreation Center</b>               | <b>CD #9</b>  |
| <b>Slauson Multipurpose Center</b>                 | <b>CD #8</b>  |
| <b>Sunland Recreation Center</b>                   | <b>CD #2</b>  |
| <b>Van Nuys Multipurpose Senior Citizen Center</b> | <b>CD #6</b>  |
| <b>Van Nuys Recreation Center</b>                  | <b>CD #6</b>  |
| <b>Winnetka Recreation Center</b>                  | <b>CD #12</b> |
| <b>Woodland Hills Recreation Center</b>            | <b>CD #3</b>  |

The RCs operate under the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks, and represent the following sub-categories:

- 15 Recreation Centers**
- 2 Senior Centers**
- 2 Community Centers**

***After teaching for 30 years, I believe dance is innate for kids. We do not currently offer dance, but I have interest in hosting dance activity if it can be free to our community.***

Stuart Vaughan, Director  
Canoga Park Youth Arts Center

BODYTRAFFIC  
Photo by Christopher Duggan



### Venue Fees for Dance Activities

Eight of the venues offer dance activities under the “LA Kids” program.<sup>30</sup> Of those, two provide “LA Kids” but only for sports and/or arts and crafts programs. There are 14 venues that charge for dance activities. Those fees vary from pay-what-you-can donation, \$1.00 per class, to \$40 per session. The sessions vary in length from a monthly-basis to a 7 -to 8-week session.

### Dance Activity Statistics at all the Venues

In response to the question of increased dance activity, the venues describe their interest as:

**Yes - 21 No – 6 Not Certain – 8**

Six of the 19 the LA Kids program had no interest to increase dance activity, and reported these reasons:

| <i>Name</i>                             | <i>Current % of Dance</i> | <i>Reason</i>  |
|---|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Canoga Park Senior Center</b>        | <b>20%</b>                | <b>No space/time slots to schedule more dance</b>      |
| <b>Lankershim Arts Center</b>           | <b>0%</b>                 | <b>Theater company dominates space/time slots</b>      |
| <b>Woodland Hills Recreation</b>        | <b>10%</b>                | <b>Space issue as gym is being renovated in 2014</b>   |
| <b>Van Nuys Senior Citizen Center</b>   | <b>50%</b>                | <b>Only if costs of the dance activity are covered</b> |
| <b>Ritchie Valens Recreation Center</b> | <b>20%</b>                | <b>Not unless dance activity is offered free</b>       |
| <b>Ross Snyder Recreation</b>           | <b>0%</b>                 | <b>Issues with funding and finding good teachers</b>   |

The 21 venues with interest to increase dance activity had the following comments:

- **Community is hungry for more exposure to all types of dance**
- **Any type of cultural or popular dance works for their community**
- **Dance activity for the adults**
- **Summer dance program for youth**
- **Dance activities for weekdays and/or the weekend for youth and adults**

<sup>30</sup> Since 1996 the LA Kids Program, funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and Community Development Block Grant, provides free recreational opportunities for youth ages 5 to 18.

The most popular dance activities currently offered at venues are ballet and hip hop. “Fitness” was mentioned by some venues as a dance form activity they offer. The following types of dance are currently offered:

**Aztec, Afro-Brazilian, ballet, modern, Southeast Asian, East Indian, fitness, Japanese, folkloric, hip hop, Jazz, Latin/salsa, line-dancing, modern, multidisciplinary, senior-appropriate, tap and West African**

A majority of the 35 venues are underutilized for dance:

| <i>% of Dance to Total Programs</i> | <i>Number of Venues</i> |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>No dance activity</b>            | <b>9</b>                |
| <b>1 to 10%</b>                     | <b>16</b>               |
| <b>11 to 20%</b>                    | <b>4</b>                |
| <b>21 to 30%</b>                    | <b>2</b>                |
| <b>31 to 40%</b>                    | <b>2</b>                |
| <b>41 to 50%</b>                    | <b>2</b>                |

Nine venues do not offer dance activity, and the venue category breakdown is:

**(4) - Art Centers (4) - Recreation Centers (1) - Performing Arts Center**

At the opposite end of dance activity, two venues report 50% of dance activity:

- **Van Nuys Multipurpose Senior Citizen Center (CD 6)** offers a range of fitness, dance classes and social dance events for its senior community
- **Barnsdall Gallery Theater (CD 13)** is an active rental house for dance, but otherwise does not offer dance activities for its community



***My community is hungry for more exposure to all types of dance.***

Elizabeth Alamillo, Coordinator  
Denker Recreation Center

Los Angeles Ballet “Return to a Strange Land”

*Dancers: Allyssa Bross, Zheng Hua Li, Dustin True  
Photocomposition: Reed Hutchinson & Catherine Kanner*

Twenty-one venues have interest in more dance activity. The preference for types of dance activity are described:

| <i>Type of Dance Activity</i>            | <i>Number of Venue Responses</i> |
|--|----------------------------------|
| <b>Cultural and/or popular dance</b>     | <b>17</b>                        |
| <b>Any free or funded dance activity</b> | <b>9</b>                         |
| <b>Adult oriented dance activity</b>     | <b>2</b>                         |
| <b>Youth oriented dance activity</b>     | <b>1</b>                         |

### Obstacles to Increased Dance Activity at the Venues

| <i>Obstacle</i>   | <i>Venue Responses</i> |
|---|------------------------|
| <b>Funding</b>  | <b>22</b>              |
| <b>Space/scheduling</b>                                 | <b>13</b>              |
| <b>Audience development/Marketing</b>                   | <b>10</b>              |
| <b>Finding the right instructors</b>                    | <b>9</b>               |
| <b>Location of venue</b>                                | <b>3</b>               |
| <b>Other (mission, capacity, rental/insurance fees)</b> | <b>3</b>               |

***Given JACCC's growing mix of multiethnic and multigenerational audience base, a mix of concerts, lecture/demos, and classes rooted in the rich cultural traditions of LA's multiethnic communities would attract a dance audience.***

Leslie Ito, CEO

Japanese American Cultural & Community Center

The other ranked obstacles are explained in more detail as follows:

- **Space and scheduling ranked second. Grouped under “space” were comments such as lack of good floor surface, mirrors and barres, and only basic sound equipment to host dance activities. Under “scheduling” were comments regarding the dance activities competing for prime-time slots with the sports and fitness programs for the facilities allocated to physical activities.**
- **Dance companies lack capacity to develop audiences, and limited finances to successfully self-produce, market and publicize the activity**
- **There is difficulty in finding qualified, personable, reliable instructors who can pass the certification process with the Department of Recreation & Parks**
- **Other comments: The RC communities lack exposure to many types of dance and need motivation to overcome reticence to try new dance activities. The cost of rental and insurance appear to be an obstacle for dance companies.**

## Obstacles of the Recreation Centers

The obstacles reported by the 19 RCs are presented separately. The reason is the organizational link to the Department of Recreation and Parks (DRP) causes slightly different issues to increase dance activity. The DRP website states the mission “to enrich the lives of the residents of Los Angeles by providing safe, welcoming parks and recreation facilities and affordable, diverse recreation and human services activities for people of all ages to play, learn, contemplate, build community and be good stewards of our environment.”<sup>31</sup>

Since 2007, the City of Los Angeles budget and expenditure reductions included the DRP budget which impacted the RCs. The significant budget reductions to the RCs resulted in closures of centers and parks, reduced hours of operation, hiring freezes, elimination of programs and reduced maintenance at facilities. During one interview, a RC director explained he was currently responsible for supervising two separate RCs.

Funding is the core obstacle to more dance activity for the RCs. Of the four key issues described, three are funding-related but differ in the specific allocations of the funds. The allocation reference the DRP mission in providing affordable services in a safe environment. The fourth obstacle is specific to finding quality dance instructors who can pass the DRP’s certification requirement to teach at any of their venues.

- **Funding to offer the new dance activity for free or a subsidized basis**
- **Funding to cover the general operating expenses of the added dance activity**
- **Funding to improve the facilities to be safe and appropriate for dance**
- **Quality dance instructors that can meet the certification requirements of the Department of Recreation and Parks to teach at RCs**

<sup>31</sup> City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks webpage. <http://www.laparks.org/dos/dept/mission.htm>

## Conclusion

The ambition and distinct creativity of Los Angeles dance companies are strengths to leverage with capacity and participation resources to accomplish their short and long term goals. The current arts environment challenges dance companies to examine the viability of the traditional company models of operation, touring and presenting, and audience development. If the target goals are being met, nothing needs to be fixed. But if the dance company is falling short of its creative and economic goals, change might be considered.

The study indicates a majority of the dance companies and venues recognize the opportunities, benefits and incentives of the non-concert partnerships. The findings show ample need and opportunity to increase these collaborations.

The dance company and venue responses also signal a dynamic tension potentially influencing the outcome of a collaborative endeavor. The dance companies must improve capacity to be more responsive to the core needs and interests of the venues and community, and to originate non-concert experiences that excite those aged 30-and younger where the decline in arts participation is most significant. The venues must prioritize increasing the capacity of staff to properly manage the activity, assist in marketing it to community, and incorporate follow-up planning so the momentum fuels future learning and discovery for the participants.

These findings are intended for dance companies, venue, the private and public funders, and the agencies, researchers, and thought leaders with community-enrichment interest. Evolving the state of dance in Los Angeles obligates a convergence of energy, commitment, and involvement. The study concludes with the following recommendations:

### **Capacity building**

The research and findings support capacity development to seize the timely opportunities. For example, the “Los Angeles Dance Advance Initiative” by the Department of Cultural Affairs, expanded marketing practices of the dance companies and choreographers to increase visibility with regional and national audiences. Equally important is to prioritize the information dissemination of existing capacity resources. Broader and more efficient communication delivery systems are essential to connecting the organizations with the resource outlets.

### **Broader Presenting Partnerships**

Practicality of the traditional touring and presenting model may not serve the profile, needs and goals of current dance companies. In addition, the technological advances and emergence of *participatory culture*<sup>32</sup> have transformed how, when, and where dance is experienced. Non-concert activities can compete for attention if they are innovative, affordable, and unique experiences for participants. Atypical venues-spaces challenge the dance companies to employ fresh approaches, such as multidimensional formats, to movement experiences.

<sup>32</sup> Jaime Galli. Organizational Management in the Non-Profit Performing Arts. Pg 17.

**Advocacy**

The significance of advocacy can be underestimated by the dance companies and venues. Safeguarding inclusion of the arts is intrinsic to a balanced education and daily life. There is a need to elevate the value and economic power of the arts by monitoring key decisions enacted at the regional, state, and national levels. Efforts by Arts for LA, California Arts Advocates, and the Arts Census project by LA Stage Alliance must be supported. Dance companies and venues need to participate and enlarge what these entities are accomplishing for arts and culture.

**Research**

The research lens is an indispensable forecast and reflection tool. It helps organizations discern variables with impact on strategic planning, and signal trends in related areas including funding and philanthropy. Access to research has improved, but there is a need to improve effectively connecting the research resources to the dance companies and venues. There is also need to expand the metrics of data gathering: to add independent artists to workforce statistics, to address the diminished philanthropic relationship with Los Angeles dance companies and artists, to investigate viable company structures in step with the needs of current companies and venues.

**Convening**

All stakeholders in arts and culture must increase participation in regular arts convening. These gatherings are important means to network, gain topical information, collective discourse, and overall validate the power of the creative community. There is a need to support availability of scholarships for peer-exchanges, workshops, conferences, and to subsidize executive mentoring or internship programs especially for emerging or smaller dance companies and venues. Finally, convening counteracts the tendency to work and operate in a vacuum given the geographic size and spread of Los Angeles. There is everything to gain and nothing to lose in making the commitment to increase attendance in arts convening.

## APPENDIX I: List of the Dance Companies

| <i>Company</i>                               | <i>Genre/Style</i>              |
|--|---------------------------------|
| <b>Antics</b>                                | <b>Hip Hop</b>                  |
| <b>Ate9 dANCEcOMPANY</b>                     | <b>Contemporary-modern</b>      |
| <b>BODYTRAFFIC</b>                           | <b>Contemporary-modern</b>      |
| <b>CONTRA-TIEMPO</b>                         | <b>Urban Latin</b>              |
| <b>Diavolo Dance Theater</b>                 | <b>Acrobatic-modern</b>         |
| <b>Grandeza Mexicana Folk Ballet Company</b> | <b>Folkloric</b>                |
| <b>Heidi Duckler Dance Theatre</b>           | <b>Site specific</b>            |
| <b>Hysterica Dance Co</b>                    | <b>Contemporary-modern</b>      |
| <b>Invertigo Dance Theatre</b>               | <b>Modern</b>                   |
| <b>Jazz Antiqua Dance and Music Ensemble</b> | <b>Jazz</b>                     |
| <b>Keshet Chaim Dance Ensemble</b>           | <b>Jewish dance from Israel</b> |
| <b>Los Angeles Ballet</b>                    | <b>Ballet</b>                   |
| <b>LA Contemporary Dance Company</b>         | <b>Contemporary-modern</b>      |
| <b>Lula Washington Dance Theater</b>         | <b>Modern</b>                   |
| <b>Mythili Prakash/Shakti</b>                | <b>East Indian</b>              |
| <b>David Roussève/Reality</b>                | <b>Modern</b>                   |
| <b>Rosanna Gamson/World Wide</b>             | <b>Multidisciplinary</b>        |
| <b>Sheetal Gandhi</b>                        | <b>Multidisciplinary</b>        |
| <b>Versa Style Dance Company</b>             | <b>Hip Hop</b>                  |
| <b>Viver Brasil</b>                          | <b>Afro-Brasilian</b>           |

## APPENDIX II: Dance Company Questionnaire Template

**Contact:**

**Company Name:**

**Date of meeting/call:**

**Office Zip Code:**

1. How many weeks are you on tour this season? \_\_\_\_\_  
Details re amount?  
Recent changes to the org?
2. What is your ideal # of weeks on tour? \_\_\_\_\_  
How did you arrive at this # of weeks?
3. Have tour expenses been balanced by its revenue? \_\_\_\_\_  
In the Black            In the Red            Break-even
4. What is your current % of non-concert type E.I. ? \_\_\_\_\_  
What types of activities?  
Serving any particular communities?
5. Are you interested in growing this source of E.I.? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What is the ideal % of this non-concert E.I.? \_\_\_\_\_  
Why?
7. Does partnering with venues in under-served communities advance your mission?  
What venues have you partnered with in the past?  
What worked and what did not?
8. Would you participate in a peer-exchange to explore new iteration of engagement practices?
9. Do non-concert activities provide benefit/value/incentive?  
For the org?  
For the artists?
10. Would you participate in an online survey to better understand your needs and expectations about what a pilot program might offer your organization?

### APPENDIX III: List of the Venues

| <b>Venue</b>                                | <b>District</b> | <b>Category</b> | <b>% of Dance</b> |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| *Barndsdall Municipal Theater               | 13              | AC              | 50%               |
| *Bolton Hall Museum                         | 7               | AC              | 0%                |
| *Canoga Park Youth Arts Center              | 3               | RC              | 0%                |
| *Center for the Arts Eagle Rock             | 14              | AC              | 0%                |
| *LA Theater Center                          | 14              | PAC             | 1%                |
| *Lankershim Arts Center                     | 4               | AC              | 0%                |
| *Madrid Theatre                             | 3               | PAC             | 30%               |
| *McGroaty Arts Center                       | 2               | AC              | 1%                |
| *Nate Holden PAC                            | 10              | PAC             | 40%               |
| *Warner Grand Theatre                       | 15              | PAC             | 10%               |
| Assistance League Theater                   | 13              | PAC             | 0%                |
| Canoga Park Senior Center                   | 3               | RC              | 20%               |
| CSULA/Luckman                               | 14              | PAC             | 10%               |
| CSUN VPAC & Concert Hall                    | 12              | PAC             | 10%               |
| David M. Gonzalez Recreation Center         | 7               | RC              | 25%               |
| Delano Recreation Center                    | 6               | RC              | 20%               |
| Denker Recreation Center                    | 8               | RC              | 1%                |
| Fernangeles Recreation Center               | 6               | RC              | 10%               |
| Fred Roberts Recreation Center              | 9               | RC              | 0%                |
| Gilbert Lindsay Community Center            | 9               | RC              | 1%                |
| Granada Hills Recreation Center             | 12              | RC              | 10%               |
| Inner City Arts                             | 14              | AC              | 10%               |
| Aratani/Japan America Theater at JACCC      | 14              | PAC             | 5%                |
| Leimert Plaza Park                          | 8               | RC              | 0%                |
| Martin Luther King Recreation Center        | 8               | RC              | 5%                |
| Panorama Recreation Center                  | 7               | RC              | 10%               |
| Ritchie Valens Recreation Center            | 7               | RC              | 20%               |
| Ross Snyder Recreation Center               | 9               | RC              | 0%                |
| Slauson Multipurpose Center                 | 8               | RC              | 0%                |
| Sunland Recreation Center                   | 2               | RC              | 30%               |
| Sylmar Park Recreation Center               | 3               | RC              | 35%               |
| Van Nuys Multipurpose Senior Citizen Center | 6               | RC              | 50%               |
| Van Nuys Recreation Center                  | 6               | RC              | 5%                |
| Winnetka Recreation Center                  | 12              | RC              | 10%               |
| Woodland Hills Recreation Center            | 3               | RC              | 10%               |

\*Managed by City of LA/DCA

## APPENDIX IV: Venue Questionnaire Template

**Contact:**

**Venue Name:**

**Date of meeting/call:**

**Office Zip Code:**

**1. What are your facilities for dance activities?**

**Type:**

**Capacity:**

**2. What are the types of dance activities you offer?**

**Genres/forms of dance?**

**What are the costs for the activities?**

**IF YES:**

**3. Of the total programs, what % are dance related?**

**Have you added any new dance activities recently?**

**4. Are you interested in adding dance activity?**

**5. What type of dance excites your community?**

**Describe your community?**

**6. What are the obstacles to more dance?**

**Tell me more about the obstacle(s)**

**IF NO:**

**7. Are you interested in offering dance?**

**What type of dance would you like to add?**

**For adults, youth or both?**

**8. What is/are main obstacle(s) to more dance at your venue?**

**Tell me more about the obstacle(s)**

**9. What kind of dance events would excite your community?**

**Describe make-up of your community**