The background of the entire page is a repeating pattern of stylized birds in flight, arranged in a grid. The birds are colored in a gradient from yellow at the top, through blue, pink, green, and orange, to red at the bottom. The birds are facing right and are depicted in various stages of flight, with wings spread.

Dance in Flanders and Brussels is flourishing, but it's time that it had the opportunity to grow in order not to squander the pioneering position it has now achieved. What is to be done in a vital and dynamic dance landscape? Who is fulfilling these functions at the moment? Where are the difficulties, where are the gaps?

A group of dance experts and enthusiasts pored over some tricky questions such as the production of dance, its dissemination, the position of the individual artist, audience development, training, international work, and so on. Their analyses and recommendations have now been brought together in a 'master plan for dance', at once an overview of the current state of play and a feasibility study for its future.

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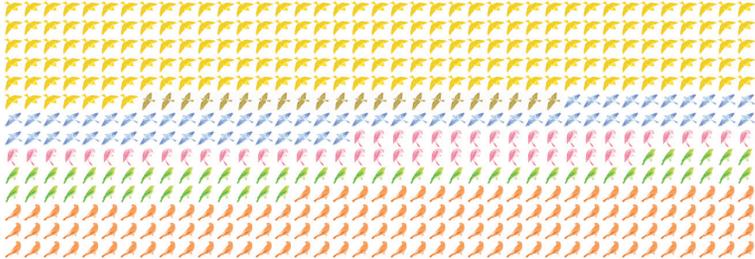
canaries in MASTER PLAN FOR DANCE IN FLANDERS AND BRUSSELS the coal mine

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the coal mine



Vlaams Theater Instituut, 2007

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Flanders sets the world standard when it comes to dance. Every one eyes this small piece of territory to learn how things should be done. We have to leave Flanders on a regular basis to explain somewhere in the world why our policy and dance landscape are so flourishing.

So why a master plan for dance?

The immediate reason is the first implementation of the Arts Decree. Both the advice given by the dance evaluation committee and the decision taken by Bert Anciaux, Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport, resulted in much disquiet in the dance sector, with both large and small players, among those who are structurally subsidised and those who are not. There is an uneasy feeling that the position at the top of the dance world which Flanders has occupied for many years now is not being converted into a vigorous policy by our politicians. Not enough instruments have been developed to secure the future of dance in Flanders. This situation too, creates dissension amongst players in the field.

In order to channel this discord and to better clarify the problems, the VTi devoted a complete dossier to dance in our magazine *Courant*. Our own statistical analysis plus the many testimonies from the discipline demanded a thorough discussion. The request from Theo Van Rompay (P.A.R.T.S.) to work on an integrated policy for dance became the starting point for 'Dinsdag Dansdag', a study day at the STUK arts centre, and ultimately also for this master plan. The conclusion from 'Dinsdag Dansdag' was unequivocally that all the aspects that promote a dynamic dance culture needed to be portrayed and connected together in one coherent vision.

As the intermediary between government and the profession, and in dialogue with Overleg Kunstenorganisaties (oKo), VTi undertook the task of co-ordinating activities around the creation of a master plan. A working party with expert knowledge of education, creation, promotion, audience development and internationalisation started off in the autumn of 2006 and worked for a year on the ideas that were put on the table at 'Dinsdag Dansdag'. From the word go the Royal Ballet of Flanders had a seat at the table too, which was in itself a historic event. Even so you will not find a comprehensive analysis of ballet in this plan. The changes in ballet are relatively recent, so it is too soon to integrate the position of ballet into the whole picture for dance. Some comparisons are made where appropriate.

How do we view the master plan for dance in concrete terms?

For a start, dance critic Pieter T'Jonck sketches out the developments in the world of dance from 1993 to this day. This vignette is not a direct part of the master plan but situates its content into an immediate historical context. The first effective part of the master plan details its genesis and defines the singularity of dance. What is it that makes dance so specific, who are the key players, and what needs to be done in a dynamic dance culture?

The second part runs through six themes which delve into the actual needs and perceptions currently prevailing in the world of dance. The totality of the recommendations per topic together form the ingredients for a forward-looking, integrated policy for dance. In conclusion, the most important recommendations are once again briefly and forcefully reiterated.

The master plan demands a shared responsibility. The recommendations in the plan are addressed to the government as well as to the dance professionals. There is work to do for all parties. With this master plan, we invite everyone to help in shaping the future of dance in Flanders.

Ann Olaerts,
Director of Vlaams Theater Instituut

Dance in Flanders 1993-2007

Pieter T'Jonck

1993: a significant turning point

In the early eighties of the 20th Century, dance in Flanders virtually appeared out of nothing. Apart from the Royal Ballet of Flanders and the work of Maurice Béjart at the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie ('the Monnaie'), there was little dance on offer in Flanders, let alone contemporary dance. That a number of individual artists almost simultaneously began producing work that would re-shape the dance medium in a very peculiar and personal manner is, at the very least, remarkable. It was, perhaps, even more remarkable that their breach with rusted national habits did not only cause sensation on the domestic front, but was considered radically innovative abroad, in Paris and even in New York. It would take Flemish theatre, that was going through equally radical and rapid changes at that time, much longer to reap international success than the new dance performances.

It is the international success that explains the government's rather sudden interest in this new dance. At first dance companies such as Rosas, Ultima Vez or Les Ballets C de la B received government subsidies granted *ad hoc*. However, the Performing Arts Decree, issued in 1993, would henceforth and all of a sudden enable dance companies and arts centres that had supported the new theatre makers as independent organisations from the beginning, to receive structural government support. 1993 is, therefore, an important landmark and symbolic moment in time, marking the transition for contemporary dance from a survival regime towards a situation in which it would be able to develop stable structures. Sure enough, the dance scene in Flanders and Brussels developed at breakneck speed, making Brussels the new Mecca of dance in

no time. Still, government subsidies for dance and the stronger position of the arts centres and later the workshops and studios are neither the only reason nor an adequate explanation for what was going on.

The government follows hesitatingly

At the distribution of the subsidies within the framework of the Performing Arts Decree, dance remained, time and again, the suppositious child, not only compared to the theatre, that counts considerably more companies and activities, but also compared to the Royal Ballet of Flanders. That company kept receiving a 'nominatim' grant, i.e. a subsidy granted automatically, without the company having to apply every four years, and this grant equalled the subsidies for all the other organisations put together. That did not really change after 1993. It is significant, however, that the Royal Ballet's new artistic director, Australian Kathryn Bennetts, publicly complained that even the 5 million € for the company were grossly insufficient. Considering the huge overhead cost of such an ensemble, she was probably right.

Since 1993, the 'major' – or to put it more correctly: properly subsidized – dance companies, apart from the Royal Ballet, are Rosas, Ultima Vez and Les Ballets C de la B. They have been receiving structural government support since 1993 and still receive the lion's share of the available budget. Noteworthy and typical for the generation of the eighties is that two other organisations, Jan Lauwers' Needcompany and Jan Fabre's Troubleyn, both of which were considered vital to the image of the development of dance in Flanders, were treated by the government as theatre companies, rather than as dance companies. The distinction between the two will probably become less relevant within the framework of the recent Arts Decree, which intends to treat all art forms on an equal basis. But it still is, in spite of the many internal differences, char-

acteristic for the artists of this generation, who no longer took the existing distinctions between the genres for granted and looked for the appropriate form for each individual work to tell their story.

Some other organisations, including Klapstuk and De Beweeging (later renamed wp Zimmer) and Dans in Kortrijk (later merged with Buda) were specifically recognized as dance organisations. But it would take until 2001 before structural subsidies were awarded to prominent choreographers such as Alexander Baervoets, Marc Vanrunxt or Meg Stuart. The evolution of the subsidies did not keep pace with the explosive increase of the number of 'makers' in Flanders, as will be described later in this essay. Not only did few makers receive structural support, only a handful among them received 'substantial' support. The rest received barely enough to survive. That situation did not really change with the new Arts Decree. Still, there is no reason to suspect the government of evil intentions. Lack of knowledge and understanding of the particularity of dance as a time and space consuming, and therefore very expensive, art form is a more likely explanation. In fact, the Performing Arts Decree had been made to measure for the theatre, not for dance.

Still, during the latest interim subsidy round, culture minister Bert Anciaux announced that the arrears would be made up. The manoeuvre turned out to be nothing more than a correction on the drop of the subsidies in 2005. And even now there is cause for concern: nobody understands why a choreographer such as Arco Renz, who holds a particular position in the present dance scene with his concept of 'abstract dramaturgy' and who was acknowledged for that by the advisory board, was in the end sent off empty-handed. Again, the only possible explanation is lack of knowledge and understanding of the practice. The remaining question, then, is: how did all the other makers keep afloat? One explanation is that during the period 1993-2007 a relatively large number of project grants had been awarded. A second explanation is that various arts cen-

tres and arts laboratories, and even some major theatres, gave a helping hand. The best known example is Rosas, that was able to continue operations for fifteen years as the company in residence of the Royal Monnaie Theatre, under the wings of Bernard Foccroulle, and was thus given access to considerable financial resources. From the purely practical point of view: what the present subsidy regime comes down to is that most dance companies, big or small, use the subsidies as a basic income, getting most of their revenue not from domestic, but from foreign sources, including co-productions and residences. Consequently, in the world of contemporary dance in Flanders, subsidies are considered a lever.

Not just Flanders...

The lively dance scene in Belgium is not an exclusively Flemish issue in yet another perspective. There is a lot of dance activity and vitality at the other side of the linguistic frontier as well. But over there, the public envelope is even thinner than in Flanders. And what's more: the local government's choices were a lot more conservative. Even though the French Community soon abolished the Ballet de Wallonie (the French speaking counterpart of the Royal Ballet of Flanders), Charleroi/Danses, that was meant to replace it, did not bring about any significant dynamics because it was used too exclusively as a vehicle for artistic leader Frédéric Flamand's own creations. That situation recently changed after the organisation was taken over by, a.o., Thierry and Michèle-Anne De Mey and Pierre Droulers, the first two of which – a musician/filmmaker and a dancer/choreographer – have very close bonds with a number of 'Flemish' companies – notably Rosas and Ultima Vez.

It is beyond dispute that there is – especially in Brussels – a lot more overlap between the dance communities on both sides of the linguistic frontier than is suggested by the water tight institutional partitions between both parts of the country. That has everything

to do with the distinctly international character of the dance scene. Most dancers do not care which side of the linguistic frontier they are recognized, as long as they can work. Some choreographers, including Belgium based French choreographer Karine Ponties, cross the frontier from time to time, be it that Ponties did it as a guest choreographer for LOD, a music theatre organisation.

But one of the most important reasons why Flanders and Brussels are so in demand as residence and as workplace for dancers and choreographers is that in this strongly internationalising field of action, the 'major' companies – and we should count American choreographer Meg Stuart's Belgium based Damaged Goods among them, in spite of the lukewarm official recognition – have attracted foreign dancers like magnets. And that is, no doubt, the best possible indicator for the quality and the international prestige of Flemish dance. Some dancers stayed in Belgium, even after they had left the company, to set up projects in various, often casual ventures. A typical example for this is Amgod, that was put together by members and former members of Rosas and Needcompany. Its high visibility probably also made the Flemish dance scene very attractive to youngsters with artistic interests.

P.A.R.T.S. as drive wheel

The foundation in 1995 of P.A.R.T.S. – Performing Arts Research and Training Studios – gave the development of the Belgian, and especially Brussels, dance scene yet another considerable boost. At that time, dance training in Belgium did not amount to anything. The schools were almost exclusively focused on classical ballet. And even nowadays, the number of training programmes and workshops for professional dancers still is rather limited. This may seem odd, because dance is the art form 'par excellence' that requires constant in-service training. It is an ironic twist of history that it is the French speaking part of Belgium that has been mak-

ing considerable efforts in this area for years. Contredanse, for instance, is – and this is also quite ironic in the Belgian cultural climate – the herald of American post-modern dance, with regular workshops by artists and theoreticians such as Bonnie Bainbridge, Lisa Nelson or Steve Paxton. For a couple of years, La Raffinerie, the Brussels arm of Charleroi/Danses, hosted D.A.N.C.E., an international network for dance training initiatives. In Flanders, attempts were made by various parties, including Louvain based STUK and Dans in Kortrijk, to set up professional training initiatives, but they never got off the ground, mainly for lack of funds. The Flemish government only recently began subsidizing initiatives such as Danscentrum Jette, which may, perhaps, one day develop similar strength. Similarly, the Flemish semi-professional circuit (e.g. Part-time Arts Education) is only weakly organized, at least as far as dance is concerned. Dance training is mostly left to flourishing private initiatives.

That explains why P.A.R.T.S. struck like a bolt from the blue. The school was founded in 1995 by Anne-Teresa De Keersmaeker. De Keersmaeker was one of the first to realize that the explosive growth of dance in Belgium lacked solid foundations, being the mere result of lucky coincidence. Proper training should, obviously, create such solid foundation as it implies the creation of places where the experience gathered by previous generations can come together and be passed on to new dancers. With De Keersmaeker as choreographer in residence at the Monnaie since 1992, her organisation had gathered considerable strength. And so, room was created to set up a dance training initiative together with the National Opera. De Keersmaeker's main source of inspiration was the example of former Monnaie choreographer Maurice Béjart's MUDRA school, that was also connected to the Monnaie. It was there, by the way, that De Keersmaeker herself was educated.

From an educative point of view, the model of this school was ground breaking. Contrary to regular arts education in Belgium,

you had to apply for this school and the recruitment was international. Moreover, the training programme claimed to be a lot more than merely technical training. The broad curriculum offered room for theoretical aspects such as general history and theory of art and culture, and for tuition in dance forms as divergent as classical ballet and Trisha Brown's 'release-technique'. Moreover, the teachers who were invited were, without exception, the best in their profession. The effect was, even within a very short range of time, astounding. P.A.R.T.S. had discovered a 'gap in the market', and the first crop of graduates soon made fame all over Europe. More important, perhaps, was that the school created a strong intellectual and artistic network of young choreographers that held out after the training, be it because many students stayed in Brussels and were offered opportunities within Rosas or P.A.R.T.S. After a long period of financial uncertainty, the future of this school has in the meantime been secured thanks to an agreement with the Ministry of Education. The Monnaie also continues to support the school, even though De Keersmaeker is, since the arrival in 2007 of new director Peter De Caluwé, no longer choreographer in residence.

The origin of new choreographers

Apart from schooling and the presence of companies, there is another important reason why dancers and choreographers choose Flanders as their basis of operations, or stay there after they have finished their training or work with a company. Sometime in the year 2000 dance laboratories such as wp Zimmer (that rose from the ashes of De Beweeging) or Dans in Kortrijk came into existence. Until then, it had been the arts centres in Flanders that had been commissioned by the Flemish government to support young choreographers. But, even though these centres had contributed considerably to the dynamics of contemporary dance, they were insufficiently equipped to fulfil this task. The task was gradually

taken over by the workshops. The particular quality of workshops is that they have the capacity to disconnect research and production entirely from public performance or distribution. Young choreographers are given the opportunity to develop their artistic idiom or questions in tranquillity and with strong and competent dramaturgic and practical backing. That is quite rare in Europe. Furthermore, these workshops are hospitable for foreigners. The rise to success of a ground breaking company such as the French-Austrian Supramas would not have been possible without the support of Dans in Kortrijk. Newcomers among the workshops are Brussels-based Nadine, Les Bains::Connective and the Pianofabriek. They added to Brussels' renown as the Mecca of dance.

The colourful palette of new choreographers anyhow proves that the term 'Flemish dance' refers less and less to the choreographer's or dancer's nationality, but more and more, or even nearly exclusively, to the place where that dance is created: Flanders and Brussels. In most cases, the choreographer's or ensemble's first appearance or performance clearly reveal their origins. P.A.R.T.S. produced a seemingly endless list of new names. Many of these former students worked in Belgium at least for a while, as a dancer with a larger company, as a performer in various projects, or as a choreographer. Often, they combined these different roles.¹ Rosas itself produced quite some outstanding choreographers, too, in-

1. Thomas Plischke was, undoubtedly, one of the most remarkable, but he is now mainly active in Germany. Still, a good number of former students have remained active here. The very long list includes names such as Salva Sanchis, Arco Renz, Charlotte Vanden Eynde, Claire Croizé, Nada Gambier, Ugo Dehaes, Etienne Guilloteau, Ula Sickle, Erna Omarsdottir, Riina Saastamoinen, Lisbeth Gruwez, Andros Zins-Browne, Andy Deneys, Heine Avdal, Larbi Cherkaoui, Roberto Olivan, Cédric Charron, Alix Eynaudi, Maria Clara Villa Lobos, Melanie Munt, Mette Ingvartsen, Benjamin Vandewalle, Eleanor Bauer and Tarek Halaby, and our list here is incomplete.

cluding Brice Leroux, Vincent Dunoyer, Thomas Hauert, Fumiyo Ikeda, Roberto Olivan or Johanne Saunier. Jean-Luc Ducourt, who co-signed some of the Rosas productions, recently began producing creations of his own again. David Hernandez, who teaches at P.A.R.T.S. and who often works together with De Keersmaeker, produced creations of his own, a.o. at the Beursschouwburg. Les Ballets C de la B proved a rich source of new choreographic talent too: Christine De Smedt, Koen Augustijnen, Sam Louwyck, Gabrielle Carrizo, Lilia Mestre, Mette Edvardsen, Einat Tuchman, Hans Van Den Broeck and, not to forget, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui won their spurs there. Ultima Vez, on the other hand, produced less choreographers who stayed in Belgium to work. Among those who did, Saïd Gharbi, Ana Stegnar and François Brice stood out recently. By its 'Ulti-Mates' programme, however, Ultima Vez actively supports former members who set up a company abroad, and offers administrative and practical guidance to companies such as Peeping Tom or Cie Soit. Damaged Goods, last but not least, produced quite some new names, including Ugo Dehaes, Heine Avdal, Yukiko Shinozaki and Davis Freeman (who also worked with Les Ballets C de la B).

And then there are the odd men out: Needcompany and Troubleyn, the organisations founded by Jan Lauwers and Jan Fabre. Dance plays an important part in Lauwers's work. People such as Franck Chartier, Carlotta Sagna and Misha Downey worked with these (and other) companies a long time before they went on to produce creations of their own. During the past couple of years, Grace Ellen Barkey, artistic leader Jan Lauwers's life companion, started making her own, highly personal creations within Needcompany. Jan Fabre created his most prominent choreographic work during the nineties, with ground breaking productions such as *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* or *Da un'altra faccia del tempo*. And dance figures largely in his major theatre and opera creations (*Je suis sang* or *Tannhäuser*, for instance). He

also created solo works for Lisbeth Gruwez and Erna Omarsdottir. Dancers such as Heike Langsdorf or the duo Annabelle Chambon and Cédric Charron come from his company and now make creations of their own.

A stimulating environment

It would, however, be wrong to conclude from this enumeration that dance in Flanders can be divided into 'schools', founded by the artistic leaders of the major dance companies. The conclusion would be correct for some cases, but entirely wrong for most. Worth noting is, for instance, that Christine De Smedt, Koen Augustijnen and Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui have been active as choreographers in residence at Les Ballets C de la B, founded by Alain Platel. De Smedt followed a rather experimental track, resulting, among others, in *9x9*, a series of works that investigated to which extent a large number of performers has an impact on how a work is experienced. Augustijnen, by contrast, developed projects more in keeping with Platel, a strongly theatrical, narrative and expressive form of dance theatre, recently illustrated in the excellent production *Import/Export*. Sidi Larbi is yet another story. We shall come back to that later. But however divergent they may be, these three artists were able to have their work successfully shown on international platforms. This again proves the permanent diversity, vitality and quality of the Flemish dance scene.

Within that landscape, choreographers such as De Keersmaecker, Vandekeybus and Platel go on developing a body of works², sometimes characterized by radical shifts of emphasis, to be sure. They can be considered as 'auteurs'. This is much less the case

2. This is neither the place nor time to go deeper into this, but in her most recent solo work, for instance, De Keersmaecker appears to reassess her entire work.

for the youngest generation. Rudi Laermans was one of the first to note that the younger generation has no, or little notion of 'authorship' and that it prefers to 'patch together' what presents itself in the course of a collaboration. Dancers and choreographers appear to be bent on acquiring as much and varied experience as possible within the limited duration of their career. The 'origin' of new makers, therefore, does not say much about the work they have produced later. First of all, the attentive observer will have witnessed some odd combinations of makers during the past fifteen years. The work by younger makers often proved a form of parricide. Whoever intends or tries to chart the relations between the companies, dancers and choreographers will soon get stuck in a highly confusing web. When it comes to diffusion, this is precisely one of the Achilles heels of the work of these young makers. Many among them lack the local network to back them up, keeping them within the confines of a small circle of venues – roughly speaking 'the Flemish Rhomb', with some prominent offshoot towards Kortrijk and recently also Bruges. The younger choreographers' and dancers' performances are, to use a witticism, mostly attended by other young dancers and choreographers.

Throughout the entire period 1993-2007, this rich diversity was, to a large extent, boosted and inspired by the activity of the arts centres. Apart from their domestic production activity, they offered an important platform to the work of notable foreign choreographers. Ghent's arts centre Vooruit, lead by Guy Cools, was conferred the honour of being the first in Belgium to present and co-produce Jonathan Burrows. Brussels' Kaaitheater introduced and produced the work of Jérôme Bel, Xavier Leroy, Boris Charmatz, also 'picked up' Burrows and gave, after Klapstuk, Raimund Hoghe a prominent place in the Belgian dance scene. Kaaitheater also made a couple of stages of the ground breaking project *Highway 101* by Meg Stuart possible. In 2003, Louvain's Klapstuk offered Jérôme Bel the curatorship of the festival, an opportunity Bel

seized with both hands to cast his artistic credos in the shape of an 'exhibition' of dance and theatre projects with a strongly conceptual bias. During the time of the renovation works of its venue, another Brussels based arts centre, Beursschouwburg, organised some equally spectacular and significant events in an old garage that was temporarily used as venue, under the impulse of Carine Meulders (who took over the direction of wp Zimmer in 2006). In 2001, Thomas Plischke completely re-defined the existing notion of a work of performing arts in the course of the ten day event *BDC/ Tom Plischke and Friends*. The ten days long continuous performance in which various artists did their bit, allowed the audience to stay overnight and sleep together with the artists. Eighteen months later, Plischke repeated this stunt during a three day event at Ghent's arts centre Vooruit that focused on 'queerness' and that also confirmed the new and more experimental course the centre had embarked on under the artistic leadership of Barbara Raes.

New ethics and practices

The common factor of what was going on here is that, perhaps even more than by the generation of the eighties, dance is no longer considered a discipline with traditions, methods and presentation formats of its own, but as a field of practices that makes the spectator more aware of his position towards both the work of art and the world in which he lives. Rudi Laermans describes this as follows: 'Contemporary dance is, in fact, not a coherent artistic trend, it is scarcely a genre, not an exclusively artistic but mainly a social practice, centred around the belief in the notion "contemporary dance".' Often it involves practices that deliberately raze the boundaries between art and society. It is a notion that strongly adheres to evolutions the visual arts had been going through with neo-dadaism and conceptual art at least since the sixties. Kaaithheater is the organisation that investigated this new dance,

that is more and more frequently defined as 'performance', most systematically. This approach towards dance strongly appealed to a lot of younger choreographers.

Among the 'established' Flemish choreographers, Meg Stuart was the one who threw a bridge between the first generation of choreographers and this 'new' approach. Her work shares the first generation's sense of strong imagery and an intense search for the development of a language of dance. After the turn of the century, she received international acclaim for scenographically overwhelming productions such as *Alibi* or *Replacement*, that were closely interrelated as far as content was concerned. But on the other hand, she had been a pioneer in exploring the border territories between dance and, for instance, architecture and visual arts since the nineties. To give an example: in 1994 she was a guest at the *This is the Show and the Show is Many Things* exhibition at the Ghent Museum of Actual Arts (SMAK). From 1996 onwards, Stuart initiated the *Crash Landing* project, that explored the possibilities of improvised dance, calling upon Steve Paxton, an icon of the eighties and the world's 'guru' of improvised dance. With this artistic research, she drew the attention straight back to the ground breaking conceptual developments of American post-modern dance of the sixties. She was one of the artists who contributed to bring back to notice the reflective and (socially) critical aspect of dance. After all, Stuart never locked herself up inside her own company, but always engaged in collaboration with other choreographers and artists, including Philipp Gehmacher, Benoît Lachambre, Stefan Pucher, Jorge Leon, Gary Hill and others. Their contribution never served to back up an existing practice, but always had a decisive impact on the nature of the work itself. The previously quoted *Highway 101* offered a first comprehensive synthesis of these various influences and is, beyond any doubt, one of the most meaningful and important works that was presented worldwide during that period.

In Stuart's footsteps

In the work of a new generation of choreographers, it is not hard to recognize the numerous strategic and artistic choices made by Stuart. The interest in the historic developments and positions within contemporary dance, the desire to work in varying associations, the desire to go beyond the limits of the standard format of a performance – all these evolutions have been announced by Stuart. Stuart herself still works from a fairly stable production structure of her own, an aspect which is not an issue among the younger generation of choreographers. They prefer to work more and more in rapidly changing associations. One of the possible explanations for this phenomenon is, of course, the lack of a solid financial and organizational basis. But not rarely do these choreographers justify this situation ideologically as a refusal to go along with the commercial logic of marketable and streamlined art products.

Organisations such as Nadine and Les Bains::Connective responded to this by shaping themselves as artistic cooperatives/experimental gardens, where the idea of a presentable or marketable 'product' is far away. Led by Sally de Kunst, Louvain's Klapstuk 2005 made this a theme by converting the festival into some sort of 'work in progress', inviting young makers to make contact 'in situ' and create new work. However, this valuable experiment clashed with the limits of what is 'presentable'. Spectators who had expected to see the nec plus ultra of modern dance felt cheated. After the festival, STUK, the festival's mother organisation, decided to change course and to put an entirely new festival formula on the tracks. In 2007, dance was integrated more structurally in the programme, while a new festival Playground approached the new, multicoloured landscape of 'performance' from an original angle: backed by its expertise in the visual arts, STUK put together a programme for Playground, in which visual art and live action came together into a new art form: 'live art'.

Besides, it is noteworthy how keenly not only the arts centres, but also the specialized, and even the general press went along with this story. The press gives relatively much coverage to this often early work that, however interesting it may be, does not always appeal to the general public. The contrast with the Dutch press in this matter is significant. In the Netherlands, the press spends most attention to bigger, and especially more classically oriented work. A festival like Springdance in Utrecht, that demonstrates strong affinity with what the Flemish Arts centres present, attracts little attention and is poorly appreciated.

Still increasing offer, more and more cross connections

The part played during that period by the major institutions such as the Monnaie in Brussels or deSingel in Antwerp, and by a festival such as the Brussels KunstenFESTIVALdesarts, that receives higher acclaim year after year, is not to be ignored. These organisations – notably deSingel and KunstenFESTIVALdesarts – regularly cleared the way to the big stage for new talent. DeSingel recently co-produced and presented the work of Thomas Plischke, who is, in the meantime, associated with Katrinn Deufert, and thus helped them on the way towards the big stage. But most of all, these institutions had the resources not only to present the work of innovators such as Bel, Charmatz or Hoghe, but also to bring over the more expensive work that is beyond the financial reach of the arts centres. Thus, as early as 1989 at deSingel, Flemish audiences and the dance community were given the opportunity to follow the evolution of a choreographer such as William Forsythe from nearby. During the nineties, Forsythe was extremely influential with his renewal of classical ballet. After the turn of the century, however, he became more and more explicitly experimental, not avoiding social issues. In this way, he reinforced the abovementioned evolution. It was these institutions that regularly scheduled presentations of

the work by American choreographers such as Trisha Brown or Merce Cunningham, or a European icon like Pina Bausch, constantly drawing attention to the historic continuity of contemporary dance. During the entire period, however, these institutions also presented a considerable portion of theatre dance after the model that boomed all over Europe in the eighties. This theatre dance – or physical theatre, if you prefer – creates a strong link between dance and content material and makes use of a hybrid dramatic language in which mime plays an essential role next to language. Combined with the strong traditions in that area represented by Wim Vandekeybus and Alain Platel, this also left deep marks in the landscape.

Flanders proves not only to be a front runner in the presentation and production of experimental contemporary dance, but also remains trend-setting in the theatre dance that has stood out in the Western Europe since the eighties. Even though this form of contemporary dance caused much less argument, it clearly attracted bigger and more diversified audiences, home and abroad. An interesting example of this tendency is the work of above mentioned, extremely prolific Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui. Grown up in the world of television shows and show dance, he was noticed by Alain Platel during a dance solo contest. After having participated in a couple of pieces by Platel, Cherkaoui threw himself on choreographic work of his own, that, as far as dance language is concerned, combines the best of different worlds and links dance to the theme of cultural and social diversity in all its aspects. In that context Cherkaoui emphatically called upon live performances of ancient music. It proved a golden combination. In less than no time, Cherkaoui was invited to make new creations by ballet and dance companies, major theatre houses, operas and major festivals. A provisional climax in the staggering production of this choreographer was the recent *Myth*, produced by Antwerp's city theatre Toneelhuis, where he now is artist in residence.

And what about ballet...?

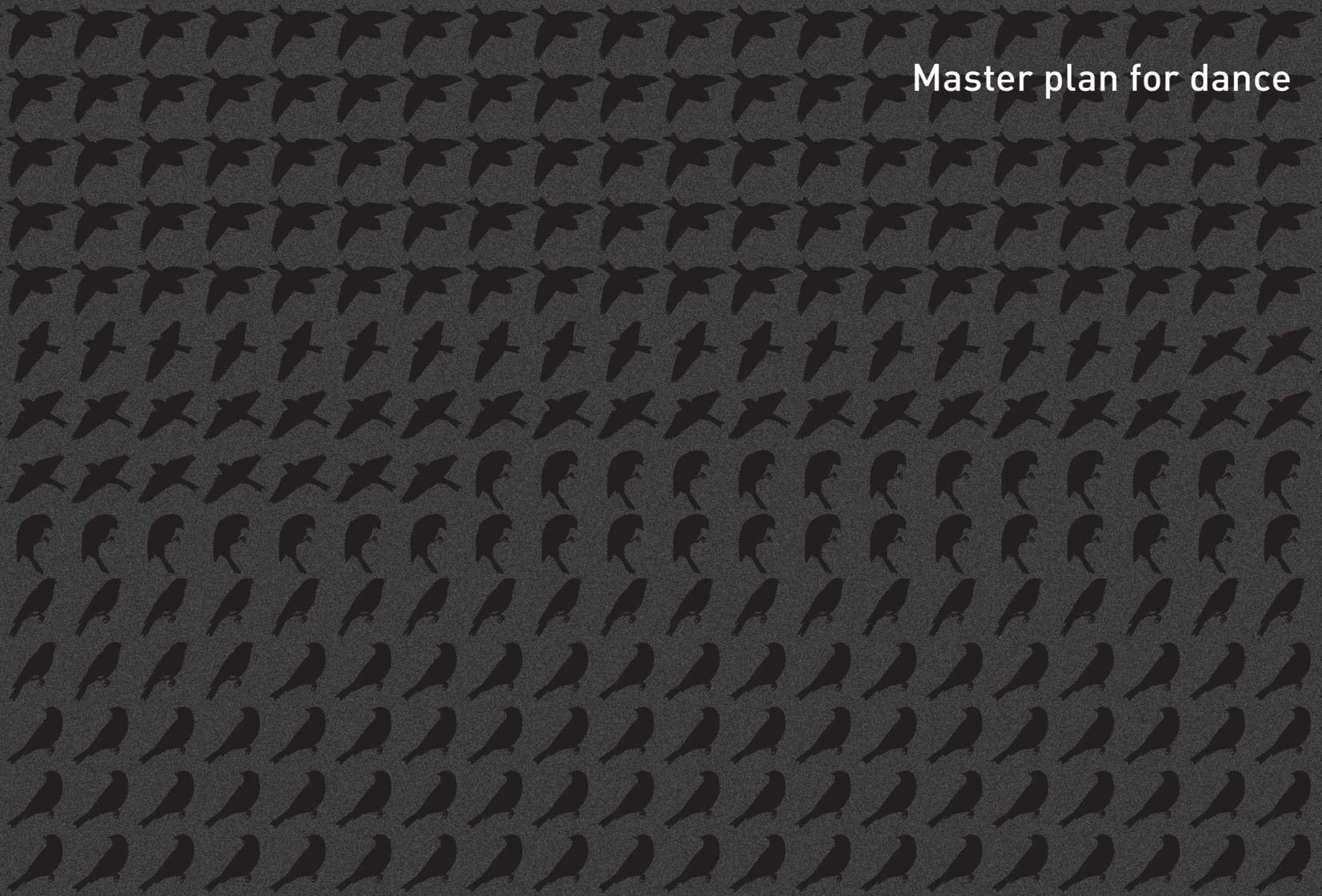
To conclude, a promising and interesting development is the new course set out for the Royal Ballet of Flanders under the leadership of Kathryn Bennetts. The previous director, Robert Denvers, had made a first opening towards contemporary dance by inviting Jan Fabre as choreographer for a new version of *The Swan Lake*. But basically he changed little in the somewhat old fashioned, rigid working relations within the company itself. Bennetts, however, knew to give a new fervour to the dancers of the ballet. Formerly in the service of William Forsythe's Ballett Frankfurt, she obtained the rights to Forsythe's *Impressing the Czar*, a piece that forces dancers to take a much bigger responsibility as a performer than is usual in ballet. Much to everyone's surprise, the dancers seized this opportunity with both hands to present an – internationally acclaimed – interpretation of this extremely difficult work. From then on, there was no stopping them: in the productions that followed, the new 'spirit' proved to take effect. In the course of a gradual renewal of the ensemble, some interesting character dancers were introduced. For new creations Bennetts also introduced a series of new choreographers that responded better to the qualities of the ensemble and, most of all, produced works that felt a lot more contemporary than was usual in Denvers' days.

The jewel in the crown was the Royal Ballet's organisation of *Uncontainable*, a contest for young choreographers, that also attracted various people from the world of contemporary dance, including Matteo Moles. When Kaaitheater offered to present this programme in its venue, it suddenly became clear that the walls of the ghetto, behind which the Ballet had been locked up for years, had disappeared. There was room, at last, for dialogue and an exchange between what happens at this institute and in the wide area of contemporary dance. And that can only add to the quality and diversity of contemporary dance in Flanders.

This is more important than it may seem. However diversified and dynamic dance in Flanders may be, there are blind spots: contemporary classical dance, jazz, hip hop... they are not in the picture, neither in the discourse nor in the practice, probably because the supply is already overwhelming. And yet, these well-known and more accessible forms of dance might be a lever to attract general audiences. Because if there is one weakness in Flemish dance, it is neither the quantity of production, nor its quality – both acknowledged and envied abroad – but the lack of renown and visibility at home. Things evolved so quickly during these past fifteen years that the outside world was unable to follow. Every now and then the attendance figures for performances of younger work put their finger on the sore spot. But then, it is still difficult to get this work properly distributed. The first generation's big names are still crowd pullers. Some of the choreographers that emerged during the nineties now attract dedicated, large audiences as well. The lack of domestic success is, therefore, relative, but must not be ignored. If younger choreographers are denied breakthrough opportunities, the flourishing of the dance scene could, in the long run, be undone. A lot remains to be done, also for the policy makers.

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Master plan for dance



CHARACTERISTICS OF DANCE AND HYBRIDISATION

If you draw up a balance sheet, 'dance' is a collective term for very varied artistic activities. 'It is not easy to define "contemporary dance",' wrote Steven de Belder in a recent sketch of the dance landscape in Flanders and Brussels:

It is after all not a "style" with a neat collection of principles and forms, which can exist separately from the person or persons who developed them, as is the case with ballet, modern dance and popular dance styles. Contemporary dance is a highly individualised activity, in which one can find many influences and tendencies, none of which are decisive. Contemporary dance encompasses the complex choreographic-musical structures of Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker and the melancholic theatricality of Alain Platel, the physical exuberance of Wim Vandekeybus and the almost tranquil precision of Vincent Dunoyer, the powerful imagery of Meg Stuart and the quasi-informal presentation of Carlos Pez, the dancing poetic expression of Anabel Schellekens and the cool conceptual rigour of Alexandra Bachzetsis, the bizarre dance fables of Grace Ellen Barkey and the modernistic meaninglessness of Alexander Baervoets, the structured improvisation of Thomas Hauert and the oriental-inspired precision of Arco Renz. You could go on like this, until virtually every artist who calls him- or herself a choreographer has been assigned their own niche.

The picture becomes even more diverse if you set your sights on ballet as well. There are indeed very varied and sometimes age-old traditions which dance creators can draw from or not as they wish. At the same time dance is also a very open system with a strong drive towards renewal and originality, where the usual boundaries and categories are frequently and enthusiastically called into question. Dance is a context that promotes importing new and foreign elements. *Metamorphoses*, the field survey carried out by Vlaams Theater Instituut (VTi) in the spring of 2007, gave evidence of an increasing hybridisation in the performing arts. More and more productions are making links between different disciplines, within and outside the fine arts. Dance has certainly played a pioneering role in this respect. The border between dance and other stage arts, but also with other artistic disciplines, media, design and technology seems to be more and more permeable.

It is not by chance that this openness on the part of dance for new and original lines of approach goes hand in hand with a large degree of self-reflection. One can see this in the performances themselves, where the basic principles of dance and movement and other languages are the subject of intense discussion. One also sees this in the discourse and cultural policies surrounding the practice of dance. Initiatives have recently been developed in various places in Europe – in Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands – where thought is given to what dance actually is and what kind of support it requires. In Germany the Kulturstiftung des Bundes – a Federal cultural foundation – made € 12,500,000 available to meet the structural needs of dance. The sector was asked to make suggestions regarding how to spend this amount. The so-called *Tanzplan Deutschland* (Dance plan for Germany), which will run until 2010, is not just a feasibility exercise but a support programme that coordinates various actions. The *Tanzplan* supports local actors and educational projects. Pro Helvetia and others worked with representatives of the dance sector in Switzerland to

publish a survey report: *Projet Danse - Pour un encouragement global de la danse en Suisse*. In April 2007 in the Netherlands there appeared the report *Dans zichtbaar beter* ('Dance visibly better'), an exercise in self-examination by the dance sector, stimulated by the Directies Overleg Dans, an organisation that defends the interests of the larger dance organisations, and the Stuurgroep Dansplan 20/20, which represented smaller organisations. Action points have also been formulated in Denmark (www.dansenshus.dk). And now there is the 'master plan for dance' with a Flemish-Brussels perspective.

Along with increasing hybridisation there also appears to be a need to reflect on the specific features and identity of dance. During a period when boundaries seem to be becoming less defined, it is necessary from time to time to point out the specific character of dance, because – in spite of hybridisation – dance has a couple of specific features that have a big impact on its production, distribution and communication. Although there are a number of performances that focus on posthumanism or virtual reality, dance is in most cases an art of the body. Creating dance is physical work and this makes specific demands as regards the education and training of dancers. Dance is also always movement in time and space. This makes the creation of dance labour-intensive and time-consuming and poses specific requirements as regards rehearsal spaces and infrastructure. The fact that dance is in the first place a physical art requires an investment in itself, regardless of the costs involved in the production.

Such factors render producing dance a relatively expensive business in comparison with other performing arts. Yet the specific nature of dance also offers economic possibilities. Dance operates in an international environment, more than other performing arts. Language barriers in any case do not play a significant role. Operating internationally not only offers an artistic added value, but

also the economic possibilities of an extended sales market. The need for an international market for a career in dance, however, requires a suitable policy framework that makes it possible to take advantage of these possibilities in an optimal way. Dance is a specific art form that requires specific support, even if there are more crossovers and hybrid arts nowadays.

In conclusion, this hybridisation guarantees extensive renewal, where dance plays a pioneering role thanks to its great intrinsic openness. But this also brings with it a number of concerns. The absence of a clear reference point makes the concept of 'contemporary dance' very unclear to outsiders, and therefore it is difficult to go looking for new audiences.

THE FIRST ROUND OF THE ARTS DECREE

There are therefore some factors that give dance a very specific place within a wider field. There are specific possibilities and challenges in relation to other stage disciplines. In this light it is not surprising that the same themes and concerns reappear in the various initiatives being developed in Europe: international activity, dance education, diffusion, production issues, communication, etc. But when one compares European initiatives more closely, it is nevertheless clear that they differ from each other very markedly. The themes may run in parallel, but the cultural policy context, the analyses, recommendations and implementation are very different. Cultural policy is for the time mainly run at national or regional level in any case. The point of departure therefore always varies in different countries and regions. There are specific reasons for each country to put heads together and to re-evaluate and re-explain the individuality of dance. Sometimes other players take the initiative. The Tanzplan Deutschland arose from an initiative by a government agency, the Kulturstiftung des Bundes (Federal Cultural Foundation), which made a sum of money available to support dance. Peo-

ple in this sector were then able to submit a spending plan, which is now being implemented. The Dutch plan appeared in the run-up to a fundamental review of the 'cultural regime' for performance arts. With this plan those who promote dance wished to test the feasibility of a political reform process. In Switzerland the 'Projet Danse' was a pilot project in the framework of a legislative process, the development of a new law 'to encourage culture'. The dance plan was intended to fulfil an exemplary function for similar initiatives in other disciplines. As regards Flanders, the situation is a little different: our master plan did not appear prior to but in the wake of a political decision-making process. As regards the discussion in the Flemish community, the first implementation of the Arts Decree was an important trigger.

On 1 January 2006 the Arts Decree came into effect, the main instrument with which the Flemish government supports the arts. The Flemish Parliament approved this decree in April 2004. In November 2004, arts organisations – therefore also dance organisations – were able to submit an application for a funding envelope for the period 2006-2007 or 2006-2009. Evaluation committees weighed up their merits as regards artistic qualities and content, while the administration of the Flemish cultural ministry considered their commercial soundness. At the end of June 2005 the Minister of Culture took a decision regarding the award of the long-term grant envelopes.

This whole decision-making process did not turn out to be an unqualified success for the dance world. The sector was confronted by a harsh status quo scenario. In the first place there was no inflow. Not a single new organisation was admitted to the long-term funding system. Cie Soit (Hans van den Broeck), deepblue, Peeping Tom and other companies were referred through to project subsidies. The dance producers who were previously already structurally funded heard that they could not continue to grow. As regards Ultima Vez, Rosas and Les Ballets C de la B, the minister said 'that

we have reached a ceiling within this Arts Decree as regards grants and further growth is practically excluded.³ His reasoning was striking. The minister noted that there was a lack of movement in the world of dance: 'Could we say that there is artistic stagnation?' The minister only found an interesting dynamic with Meg Stuart / Damaged Goods, but even here there was a fly in the ointment. The minister disapproved of the 'problematical presence and visibility' in Flanders of this internationally active organisation.

The dance world felt that it was not understood. The image that the policy communicated was not consistent with its self-image. The government and the evaluation committee for dance had incorrectly assessed the importance of international activities – a matter of life and death for the dance sector. Flemish dance companies are achieving great success internationally; they are some of the best in the world. But does Flanders value these international activities?

There was also the complaint that official policy viewed the dance landscape too much through the eyes of theatre. The culture minister stated he would no longer recognise any structures based around individual artists. He referred artists whose plans were not accepted through to the big companies. This concerns the city theatres (KVS, Toneelhuis and NTGent) whose historical role is to produce and present theatre, and the larger arts centres (STUK, Vooruit and the Kaaitheater), which generally operate in the field of a variety of artistic disciplines. The possibilities for dance are therefore more limited than for the theatre. There are after all no large companies whose main task is 'dance'. The creators in the dance world are therefore confronted even more by a phenomenon that arises along with a concentration of resources in the large companies: an increasing fragmentation of resources for smaller arts centres, arts labs, festivals, etc., with too few resources to develop sustainable operations.

3. Bert Anciaux, *Nota aan de Vlaamse regering*, 24 June 2005.

In the meanwhile there was a new interim funding round in June 2007. Since then there has been a small-scale repair operation. Cie Soit, deepblue and Peeping Tom have received recognition for two years as dance organisations. Also WorkSpaceBrussels, which will run the infrastructure of the Kaaitheater and Rosas as a dance laboratory, received recognition. At the same time the issues remain alive, such as the fragmentation at the basis of the funding pyramid.

AN INTEGRATED DANCE POLICY?

There was a strong feeling prevalent in the dance sector around 2006 that there was a mismatch between the sector's own practices and the dance sector's image with policy-makers. This was a reason for VTi to take action. We took a close look at dance in May 2006 in the context of a more inclusive field analysis – where we wished to consider artistic practices and trajectories in Flemish performing arts in the light of the ministerial decision of June 2005. In *Courant*, VTi's magazine there appeared a dance dossier with views from people from the dance world about thorny cultural policy issues, along with an analysis of the numerical data. Funding vicissitudes were a hot topic. Yet Theo van Rompay, the deputy director of P.A.R.T.S., in an interview situated this within the framework of the wider perspective of the development and flowering of a modern dance landscape in Flanders and Brussels since the 1980s:

(...) everyone accepts that there are limits and that it is necessary to make choices. This is not happening properly at the moment. There is no question of an integrated dance policy. I am inclined to say that we are basically missing a historical opportunity. Everyone talks about Brussels as the capital of dance, and that is correct on the basis of the quality of the work that is produced there. But Flemish choreographers have in the past

decade contributed to developments in dance on a global scale. That may sound patriotic, but this is a fact that has long been accepted in other countries.

It is symptomatic that this boom in modern Flemish dance has been achieved entirely from the bottom up. P.A.R.T.S. is also an isolated random phenomenon as regards cultural policy, because it was entirely initiated by the sector itself, in this case Rosas and La Monnaie. There is absolutely no pro-active thinking as regards policy. If we are thinking about formats such as dance workshops and dance festivals, then why not think about dance theatre? I am not saying that we need all this. But in spite of the boom of the past 20 years, not enough thought is being given to the interplay of production, research, presentation and training in the cultural policy area.

During 'Dinsdag Dansdag', a study day held on Tuesday 27 June 2006 at the STUK arts centre in Leuven, the sector (producers and programme makers) discussed the material in *Courant*. The dance world in Flanders and Brussels deliberated on the future. If it is the case that cultural policy-makers think too little about the interplay of production, research, presentation and training in dance then the sector considered how this interplay could find a place in an 'integrated dance policy', and what this might include. Three different lines of approach were raised in the same number of working parties. How can producers, arts centres and workshops, cultural centres, festivals and training courses together create a more sustainable inflow, throughflow and dissemination? Which partners can deploy which instruments to give dance greater support among a wider audience? How will it be possible to modify the assessment procedure in the Arts Decree to achieve a better interplay between actors and functions in the world of dance? To find an answer to these questions, the working parties proposed concrete trajectories for the sector and for policy-making. The idea to

create the dance master plan that we see here was developed in the group dealing with the evaluation process.

During the first funding round in the Arts Decree there turned out to be large gaps in the framework which were meant to be the starting point for the policy and quality evaluation. There was no accompanying policy letter in the previous evaluation round; the policy intentions were only known in part. A number of crucial policy choices, such as the minister's intention not to accept any structures based around a single artist, only became clear afterwards in the decision itself. It would therefore be desirable, as regards future funding rounds, for the context in the field and the objective of the policy to be more clearly articulated a long time in advance. This is a job for the government. Still the master plan that we are presenting today shows that the players in the dance scene realise that the ball is also in their court. Those in the field also bear a large degree of responsibility in creating a sound knowledge of the world of dance among outsiders. Those who inhabit the dance world can also make a significant contribution to creating a proper context for government policy. Analysing tendencies in the dance world is a permanent job and needs to happen in permanent dialogue between the authorities and those in the field.

FUNCTIONS AND PLAYERS IN THE WORLD OF DANCE

During the study day at STUK dance professionals came up with the proposal to set up a working party. This working party was intended to develop a master plan in order to create a policy context, a matrix for dance policy, which both the sector itself and policy-makers require. Such a blueprint for an integrated dance policy must at the very least relate to the major players in the world of dance and the way that they function. Which functions are necessary in a vital and dynamic dance landscape? Who is fulfilling these functions at

the moment? Who are the most important actors? Where are the problems, and where are the gaps?

We can in any case point to the following crucial functions in the world of dance:

- *Training* – Dance makes specific demands on education: it is best for dancers to start their training when they are young; they need to continue training and perfecting themselves their whole lives. The need for training continues for their entire careers. Schooling also remains important later on in the discussion about converting dancers and a possible transition to another profession.
- *Artistic creation and production* – Creating dance requires a specific infrastructure and also a relatively long-term creation process, to free up the necessary time for research and renewal.
- *Business support and trajectory management* – Some aspects of supporting artists' practice are not linked to creation and production processes.
- *Touring* – It requires an effort to give life to dance performances, which are relatively expensive and not always that easy to communicate to audiences, after the première as well, and to ensure that they can be presented in the right context.
- *Presentation* – Development of a dance programme is linked to certain preconditions. A theatre needs to have the necessary facilities to present dance performances in ideal surroundings. At the same time the theatre also needs to have a potential audience that is interested in the specific performance.
- *Informing* – Informing is a function that can be analysed on several levels. First there is the information provision to professionals, which needs to run smoothly. Secondly there is creating the context and making an audience aware of dance, which is more to do with education and audience development. Dance criticism, as feedback for artists and a guide for the audience, exists at the intersection of the two.

- *International operation* – Dance in Flanders operates in an international context. Operating internationally is inherent to the above activities. We nevertheless formulate this as a separate function because operating internationally requires additional effort and a specific framework.

These functions are fulfilled by a plethora of artists, cultural workers and organisations, of which some have a central and others a more peripheral position in the world of dance. The following players are crucial to the dynamism and vitality of the dance world.

To begin with there are organisations with very varied backgrounds that contribute to the production of dance:

- *Structurally funded dance organisations* – Rosas, Ultima Vez, Les Ballets C de la B, ZOO and Kunst/Werk received long-term funding for the period 2006-2009. Damaged Goods, deepblue, Cie Soit and Peeping Tom received a two-year grant for the period 2008-2009.
- *Artists and projects* – There are also numerous active artists who work on rather small projects and within constantly changing cooperative associations. These form part of a network with transnational ramifications. The Flemish Community only offers direct forms of support. There are work bursaries, or artists can apply for a project grant as a non-profit organisation.
- *Intermediary structures* – Artists can derive production resources indirectly by cooperating with intermediary structures, such as:
 - arts laboratories
(for an overview, see www.kunstenwerkplaats.be)
 - arts centres
 - alternative management bureaus (e.g. Margarita Production)

- *Other companies and partners* – VTi's field analysis shows that – alongside the above forms of organisation – theatre houses, musical theatre companies, festivals and cultural centres are also involved in producing dance.
- *Other countries* – There is also the contribution from co-producers and partners in other countries. We will see the scope of their contribution again below.
- The *Koninklijk Ballet van Vlaanderen* (KBW or Royal Flemish Ballet) is a special case: it does indeed receive funding via the Arts Decree, but is not funded as a dance organisation on account of its scale. This is one of the Flemish Community's so-called 'large institutions'.

There are many other functions apart from production. Facilitating organisations offer the artist support and services for creating, presenting and providing a context for their work. This support can be situated in various areas: financial support, content management, administration, residency, performance space, etc. Various types of organisations play a role here:

- the producers
- alternative management bureaus
- arts laboratories
- arts centres
- certain festivals and cultural centres
- some 'large institutions' of the Flemish Community (such as the international arts centre deSingel)
- training courses
- organisations which contribute to creating a context for and supporting artistic practice (such as VTi, the Kunstenloket, oKo, SARMA and network organisations such as IETM)
- ...

There are, in other words, quite a lot of players who are active in the dance world, but there is also a lot of work to be done. Are all these various functions in tune with each other? Is there a good inter-play? Where can this be improved? What can be done in concrete terms, on the levels of policy and the sector?

The working party that developed the present master plan looked at these questions. Various sections of the world of dance were represented in this working group: dance companies (including smaller initiatives and the Royal Flemish Ballet), arts centres, workshops, training courses, education, the advisory commission, the administration and the ministerial cabinet. The following were present at these meetings: Filip Coppieters (Ministry of the Flemish Community, as observer), Koen Kwanten (WorkSpaceBrussels), Carine Meulders (wp Zimmer), Ann Olaerts (VTi), Herwig Onghena (Les Ballets C de la B), Chantal Pauwels (Royal Ballet of Flanders), Barbara Raes (Buda), Theo Van Rompay (P.A.R.T.S.), Steven Vandervelden (STUK), Charlotte Vandevyver (VTi), Myriam De Clopper (deSingel), Ugo Dehaes (kwaad bloed), Joris Janssens (VTi), and Hugo Haeghens (CC Maasmechelen). The working group met some ten times between December 2006 and November 2007. The working group formulated a number of recommendations in June 2007 in connection with the interim revision of the Arts Decree. In September 2007 there was a debate at De Buren (Flemish-Dutch House) and the development of the plan was also discussed twice with the dance working party from oKo, the sectoral organisation for arts organisations in Flanders. In the meanwhile VTi supported the analysis with numerical data. The publication *Metamorphoses. Performing Arts in Flanders since 1993*, which examined performing arts production between 1993 and 2007 was further concentrated on dance.

The working party carried out thematic analyses in the course of this trip and developed recommendations regarding a number of burning issues. The interplay between players and functions in the world of dance was closely examined. Representatives of the Royal Flemish Ballet were also present, but the specific situation of ballet was not dealt with during these discussions. The following analysis starts in the first instance from the perspective of contemporary dance, but where possible we will raise parallels with ballet.

This process led to the identification of six themes, which are all sections in the master plan: production of dance, the position of an artist as an individual, international activities, touring, audience development and training. We will present a short update on each of these themes, an analysis of strong and weak points and we will formulate recommendations for various players. To begin with there are the official bodies at various levels: it is self-evident that the Flemish Community is the most obvious partner, but it is worth enquiring further to see how Flemish, local and supranational policies could be better harmonised. There are also many recommendations for players and organisations in the dance scene. It is very likely that many issues could be dealt with by means of new initiatives and better consultation.

1. THE PRODUCTION OF DANCE

State of the art: Metamorphosis in the world of dance

Halfway through 2007 VTi presented the field study *Metamorphose in podiumland*, of which an excerpt has now appeared in English as *Metamorphoses. Performing Arts in Flanders Since 1993*. This study contains a great deal of statistical information about the production of the performing arts in Flanders and Brussels during the period 1993-2005 – the time when the Performing Arts Decree was in effect within the Flemish Community. In this study we mapped out the artists and organisations who were involved in the production of the performing arts. The basis for this research was the VTi performing arts database (which can be viewed at www.vti.be). This database contains data on professional stage productions since the 1993-1994 season, which involved Flemish producers. Each production is represented on a fiche in the database containing the following information: production (title, date of première, season), cast, producers and co-producers and genre. For the purposes of the field study, we prepared data from twelve seasons – 1993-1994 until 2004-2005 – for quantitative research.

What productions were put on? Which artists and organisations received the credits for these? What does this say about the way in which the performing arts are produced? We list a few observations below from *Metamorphoses*. These show how radically the production of the performing arts changed between 1993 and 2005. We have identified five 'metamorphoses', trends in production practice with a considerable impact on cultural politics:

- *Growth* – More and more productions were being put on, but the growth reached its limits. Output already peaked in 2000, after which it levelled out at approximately 650 stage productions per annum.
- *Individualisation* – Performing artists hardly benefited from the growth in productions. Employment opportunities did not initially match this growth. A minor catch-up exercise from 2000 led mainly to an influx of ‘transients’ who only worked on a single production. Employment in the arts became fragmented. At the same time the survey concluded that the core group of performing artists held a different position in the sector than it did fifteen years ago. The loyal ‘house artist’ was becoming rare, while there were an increasing number of ‘jobhoppers’ who worked with several organisations within a developing freelance circuit.
- *Hybridisation* – In 1993 the stage was largely reserved for theatre plays. Until then there was just the one Theatre Decree with which the Flemish authorities supported the stage. Since the Performing Arts Decree came into force in 1993, other disciplines have come to the fore. It is striking that theatre companies themselves have contributed to the growth of dance and musical theatre. Fewer and fewer organisations actually work around one single discipline and productions are increasingly becoming a crossover of different genres.
- *Mutual dependence* – Barely one-fifth of Flemish output in the 1993-1994 season were co-productions. In 2004-2005 more than half of productions were co-produced, sometimes involving as many as fifteen different producers. Organisations are now increasingly dependent on partners at home and abroad for their productions.

- *Internationalisation* – Dance played a leading role in the internationalisation of the performing arts in Flanders. In 1993, dance already had a strongly international character. The numbers show how internationalisation spread to other disciplines. Between 2001 and 2005 more than 400 producers from 178 cities in 81 countries collaborated on the output of ‘Flemish’ performing arts.

In brief: the performing arts in Flanders underwent a fundamental change in a short time. The proto-typical organisation in 1993 was still a theatre company with a relatively stable team of performers. These days there are an increasing number of interdisciplinary production centres that maintain a casual relationship with freelance artists and co-producers at home and abroad. This is the picture that looms out from the data for the entirety of the theatrical and performance arts. But how are things for dance? We examine below whether the data for the output of dance productions follow these trends or indeed deviate from them. The VTi database enables us to make a judgement in this matter. As we saw above, the fiches on productions also contain information about the different genres. Every production in the VTi database is given one or several labels identifying the genre. This allows a similar calculation to be made in respect of the subset of productions for dance performances.⁴

4. Dozens of different descriptions of the genre have been used down the years. The following labels have been grouped together as a ‘dance’ cluster: ballet, kinetic art, movement theatre, butoh, dance, dance theatre, flamenco, court dance, jazz dance, modern dance, performing, performing arts, tap dance, video dance, popular dance. We have viewed ‘performing’, ‘dance theatre’ and the undefined ‘performance arts’ as cross-pollination with the theatre.

The growth in dance productions

For the period 1993 to 2005 we counted in total:

- 1,327 dance productions, that is one-fifth of the total number, one-third of which were reruns.
- 3,441 different artists worked on these, meaning that this number of people received a credit for these productions in an artistic role.⁵

5. The following 98 roles clustered as artistic functions (the figures in brackets indicate how many times this function was implemented): dancer (3,090), choreographer (1,171), dance (1,146), music (862), lighting design (610), by and with (482), with (457), concept (446), costume design (328), actor (301), direction (289), musician (275), set design (259), scenography (247), dramaturgy (157), composer (121), text (118), performer (106), video (105), music performance (95), creation & dance (90), dancers & actors (81), singing (60), photography (60), coaching (49), play (43), creation & play (34), after (34), design (27), creation (26), masks (24), musical direction (22), coaching (20), voice (18), musical consultancy (17), visual artist (17), concept and direction (16), consultancy (15), film (14), by (14), sound design (14), piano (13), artistic consultation (13), soloist (12), voice coaching (12), video artist (12), artistic collaboration (11), arranging (10), composition (9), arrangements (9), author (9), assistance (8), stage image (7), narrator (7), dramaturgical consultancy (7), sound décor (7), soundscape (6), sound tape and effects (6), décor/scenography/costume (6), translation (5), musical accompaniment (5), text/play (5), dance tutor (5), locomotive advice (5), technical research and development (5), conductor (5), animator (5), by (4), costume consultancy (4), artistic leader (4), scenario (3), musical arrangements (3), music arranging (3), orchestra (3), installation (3), artistic direction (3), drawings (3), singer (3), script (3), photo (2), video realisation (2), sound design (2), concept & play (2), costume designer (2), in collaboration with (1), set consultancy (1), musical processing (1), dance consultancy (1), orchestral leader (1), mezzo-soprano (1), sound tape (1), scenery (1), libretto (1), music ensemble (1), dance research (1), audiovisual designer (1).

- 620 organisations performed as producers; 251 of these were identified as the executive producer of the production.

We have already pointed out that dance in the period between 1993 and 2005 gained an increasingly strong position on the performing arts map. The table below illustrates this point:

Table 1: number of dance productions per season compared to the total during 1993-2005.

season	total	dance	dance proportion	dance growth	total growth
1993-1994	403	41	10%	100%	100%
1994-1995	419	47	11%	115%	104%
1995-1996	415	51	12%	124%	103%
1996-1997	446	62	14%	151%	111%
1997-1998	539	91	17%	222%	134%
1998-1999	577	122	21%	298%	143%
1999-2000	663	150	23%	366%	165%
2000-2001	659	157	24%	383%	164%
2001-2002	637	133	21%	324%	158%
2002-2003	603	131	22%	320%	150%
2003-2004	632	164	26%	400%	157%
2004-2005	660	178	27%	434%	164%
total	6,653	1,327	20%		

The above shows a strong expansion in dance productions from 1993. The number of dance performances rises from 41 in the first season (1993-1994) to 178 in the last season (2004-2005). In the span of twelve seasons the production of dance in Flanders

therefore quadrupled. This growth was much faster than that of the performing arts as a whole, which amounted to 164% over twelve seasons. In 1993-1994 only one-tenth of all Flemish stage productions featured dance, but this had grown to more than one-quarter in 2004-2005.

How do we explain this progression? One clue to explaining this phenomenon is probably the decretal history of the performing arts in Flanders. Before 1993 the Theatre Decree was in force. The Flemish Community did not have an instrument at its disposal at that time for supporting dance producers in any substantial way. The few means available were awarded *ad hoc* or came from the international funds of the Flemish Community. The international success of ensembles such as Rosas, Ultima Vez and Les Ballets C de la B put increasing pressure on the Theatre Decree, but it took until 1993 for a new arrangement to be introduced. Within the framework of the so-called Performing Arts Decree, not only theatre companies, but also dance and music producers as well as arts centres, could apply for assistance.

In *Metamorphoses* – and in particular in the chapter called ‘How many elephants can a snake swallow?’ (pp. 15-27) – we sketched out how the instrument that was the Performing Arts Decree was applied. It turns out that the new categories – that of dance and musical theatre companies – were given a hesitant start in 1993. Only a limited number of dance producers were recognised. Out of the eleven dance organisations that applied in 1993, only five were granted structural recognition. Apart from Rosas, Ultima Vez and Les Ballets C de la B only Klapstuk (a festival that is now incorporated into the STUK arts centre) and De Beweeging (a dance laboratory that is now called wp Zimmer) were recognised. In the course of time the first three companies were especially successful in creating confidence and in expanding their early funding. However, as we have said, these companies were told in 2005 that the limits of growth had been reached.

The subsidy figures also suggest that another ‘ceiling’ was reached in 1997. Especially in the period between 1993 to 1997 dance producers took a much larger bite out of the funding cake. Dance organisations received 5% of all structural grants in 1993, but this had grown to 11% by 1997. This ratio remained constant up to 2007. (As a footnote it should be stated that Klapstuk moved to the category of arts centres in 2001 via a merger. wp Zimmer became an arts laboratory in 2006, but the change in category is yet to show up in our production figures.)

Table 1 reflects the effects of the decretal history on the production of dance. Since 1993, the annual production output of dance has multiplied more than fourfold, yet the growth of this output cannot solely be explained by increasing subsidies. The production output grows faster and keeps growing. Dance’s slice of the subsidy cake has not become any bigger since 1997. A few new dance producers were recognised in 1997 (Dance in Kortrijk) and 2001 respectively (Hush Hush Hush, ZOO, Damaged Goods, Kunst/Werk). But there were also new admissions to other decretal categories, so it does not explain why dance output keeps on gaining ground within the whole of the performing arts.

The explosion in the production of dance does not therefore exclusively or directly arise from the fact that the companies subsidised through the Performing Arts Decree gained more muscle. This growth is also caused by the fact that many more organisations from a different background started to contribute to dance, because whereas the number of organisations funded under the decree hardly grew, it is certainly the case that the number of organisations that were involved with the productions increased.

Table 2 shows how many organisations were involved in putting on dance between 1993 and 2005. Again, this is in comparison to the whole of the performing arts sector.

Table 2: number of dance productions per season compared to the total over 1993-2005.

season	total	dance	dance proportion	dance growth	total growth
1993-1994	202	54	27%	100%	100%
1994-1995	186	55	30%	102%	92%
1995-1996	196	66	34%	122%	97%
1996-1997	212	77	36%	143%	105%
1997-1998	276	108	39%	200%	137%
1998-1999	301	124	41%	230%	149%
1999-2000	356	161	45%	298%	176%
2000-2001	389	183	47%	339%	193%
2001-2002	435	179	41%	331%	215%
2002-2003	428	203	47%	376%	212%
2003-2004	431	233	54%	431%	213%
2004-2005	497	241	48%	446%	246%
total	1,288	620			

The number of dance producers who collaborated in a single season during the period under investigation, multiplied from 54 in 1993-1994 to 241 in 2001-2005. There was also a big increase across the whole of the performing arts. But again, we note that the increase in dance is much higher: 446% compared to 246%. It is striking that in 2004-2005 nearly half the producers from the whole of the performing arts sector were actively involved with dance productions (which account for 'just' a quarter of the total output).

Types of organisations

The growth in the production of dance is the result of various factors. To start with there was an exercise in the period from 1993 to 1997 when the subsidies for dance were catching up. Another factor is that many more different organisations turned to dance during the course of 1993-2005. We will now dig a little deeper into the background of these organisations. What type of producers delivered the biggest contributions?

Unfortunately, we don't have any detailed information on the budgets for all these productions, so it is not possible to show which partners made the largest financial contribution. Nevertheless, the data enable us to say something about the specific weight of those 620 producers of dance in Flanders. A single 'executive producer' is identified for every production in the VTi database – in the old days we would have talked about a 'company' – but that term is obviously no longer adequate. If there are other institutional partners and co-producers involved in a production, we term them 'partners' below. This category will always be vague because it covers so many different things. The partnerships recorded in our database are sometimes co-productions with negotiated contracts, informal arrangements, heavy financial investments or a passive provision of infrastructure, involving enhanced buy-out fees or simply an exchange of symbolic capital. The phrases used on the posters do not always have just one meaning; they are used to describe a diversity of partnerships, such as 'co-production' or 'in association with'. What exactly does 'co-production' involve? This is something that is negotiated with every new project. The meaning of terms like these has most probably changed over time.

Despite this restriction, a distinction between 'executive production credits' and 'partnerships' allows us – at a basic level – to ascribe a relative weight to the different types of involvement in productions. The information in the credits offers possibilities too. We also assign

a relative value by counting how many production credits an organisation has to its name. By this reckoning the contribution from an organisation such as Théâtre de la Ville in Paris – active as a partner involved in 98 dance productions – weighed more heavily than, say, the contribution by the De Velinx cultural centre in Tongeren, which was involved in 19 dance productions.

We differentiate between four types of producers:

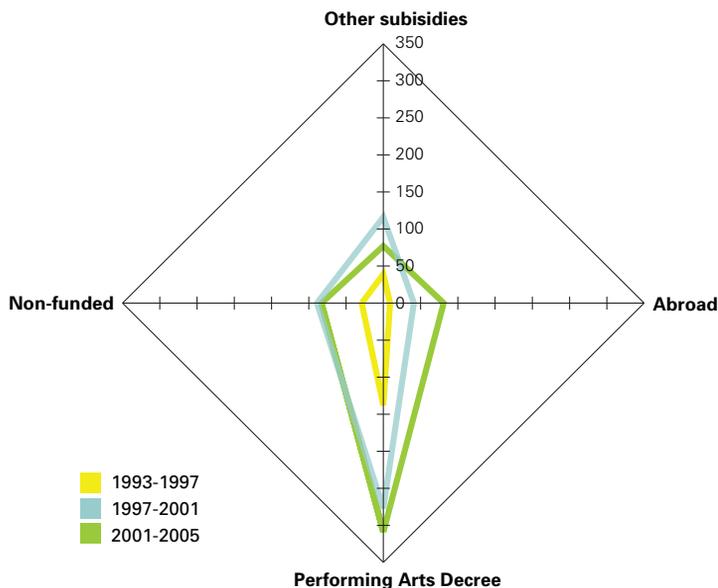
- *'Performing Arts Decree'* – organisations in receipt of structural grants within the framework of the Decree, or producers who in the course of a four-year funding period received at least once a project grant.
- *'Other subsidies'* – These comprise organisations in receipt of Flemish grants outside the Performing Arts Decree or the culture budget from other Flemish ministries or via other tiers of government, whether local, federal or European.
- *'Abroad'* – producers with an address outside Flanders or Brussels.
- *'Non-funded'* – In this category fall various types of non-subsidised organisations: temporary partnerships, commercial producers, organisations which join the subsidised circuit at a later date, etc.

Table 3: The number of credits and dance producers per grant category and grant period.

	type	credits		organisations	
1993-1997	Abroad	66	15%	17	13%
	Other	118	27%	55	44%
	P.A.D.	205	47%	31	25%
	Non-funded	45	10%	23	18%
1997-2001	Abroad	288	22%	52	18%
	Other	378	29%	135	47%
	P.A.D.	532	40%	50	17%
	Non-funded	122	9%	50	17%
2001-2005	Abroad	274	15%	69	15%
	Other	593	33%	226	49%
	P.A.D.	774	43%	93	20%
	Non-funded	156	9%	70	15%

Table 3 shows that there was a large increase in all the types discussed for the period 1997-2001. For the period of 2001-2005, the biggest increase was in the Performing Arts Decree (P.A.D.) and the foreign organisations ('Abroad') categories. In order to have a better understanding of what is going on, we make a distinction between the 'executive producer' and 'partners' in the next two graphs. The number of credits in each subsidy period is given for each of the four types. This affords us a view of how the relationships changed in the era of the Performing Arts Decree.

Graph 1: The number of credits by type of executive producer (1993-2005)



Graph 1 shows a spider's web that reflects the relative weight of the various types of organisation in each of the three funding periods. At the basis of this lies the number of credits collected by the producer organisations. For example, we can see that in the 1993 to 1997 period, the ensembles benefiting from the Performing Arts Decree account for 138 credits. That amount increases quite a lot in the second period (up to 277), but this growth was stemmed in 2001-2005 (down to 309).

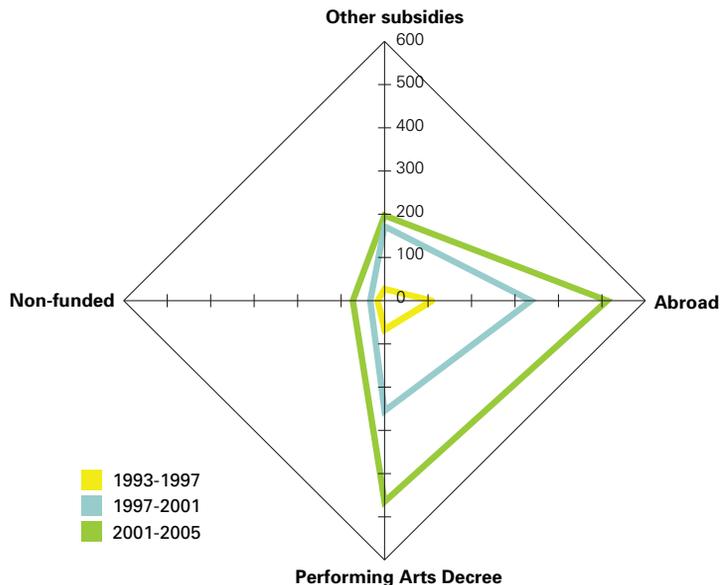
Graph 1 demonstrates the self-evident importance of the organisations that were subsidised via the Performing Arts Decree.

They were by far the paramount players in the field in each of the three periods. Particularly from 1997 to 2001 they took the initiative in the spectacular growth of dance output. But the most remarkable evolution shown on the graphs is to be found elsewhere, namely the growth in the number of foreign executive production credits. The biggest growth here can be found in the period from 2001 to 2005 (from 41 to 81 credits). Graph 1 demonstrates how they took the lion's share in the last funding round. These productions were not necessarily put on in Flanders or Brussels, but they appear in our tables because Flemish partners were involved, sometimes as executive producers – a few examples are *FORGERIES, LOVE AND OTHER MATTERS* by Meg Stuart (Brussels) and Benoît Lachambre (Québec) or *Sonic Boom* by Ultima Vez and Toneelgroep Amsterdam. The fact that an increasing number of foreign organisations show up as executive producers in our graphs means above all that Flemish organisations are acting as co-producers for foreign companies. For instance Kaaitheater acted as partner to Jérôme Bel and Boris Charmatz and KunstenFESTIVALdesArts co-produced amongst other artists the work of Bruno Beltrão and Hooman Sharifi. This kind of international exchange rarely occurred in the period 1993-1997.

Hence Graph 1 provides a good picture of who took the initiative in the spectacular growth of the dance output between 1993 and 2005. Before 2000 this was mostly down to organisations coming under the Performing Arts Decree. Thereafter the initiative can be found in an increasingly 'Flemish' input into performing arts that are put on 'abroad'. We put 'Flemish' and 'abroad' in inverted commas. These are relevant terms from the perspective of cultural policy, but the examples mentioned above show that this distinction is not always that simple when seen from the point of view of dance production. There is clear evidence in this area of transnational practice in production.

Graph 2 presents the reverse side of the co-production coin, by charting the credits of partners and co-producers.

Graph 2: The number of credits for partnerships, by type.



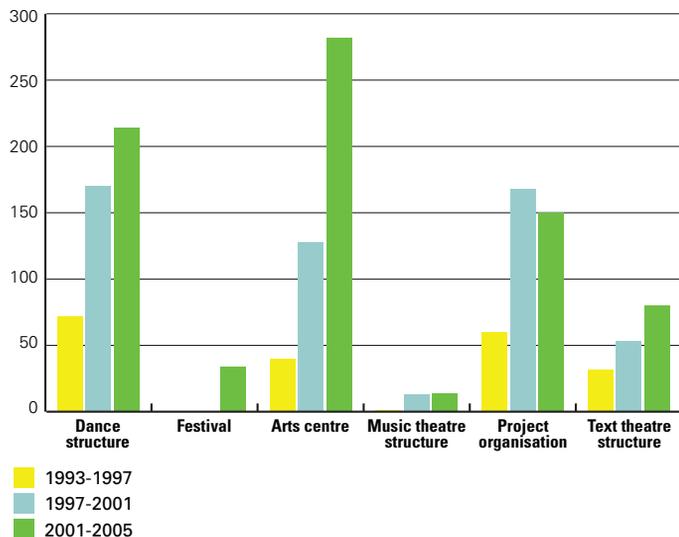
Graph 2 shows which types of organisations during the three funding rounds collected the largest number of credits as a 'partner'. This gives a totally different picture from the previous graph. We can conclude that there is a genuine multiplication in the practice of co-producing with all types of organisations, though this is strongest within the range of the Performing Arts Decree – from 67 credits over 255 down to 465 – and with foreign organisations – from 109 over 337 down to 512.

To say that the Performing Arts Decree is in a hegemonic position is therefore not correct. On the contrary, foreign organisations are the biggest grouping in each of the three periods. Their input into the production of Flemish dance since 1993 has been enormous. A comparison with Graph 1 shows that in the 2001 to 2005 period, the Flemish input into foreign productions also increased. International exchange has therefore recently acquired a more reciprocal character. For the sake of clarity: by reciprocal we do not mean bilateral relations between 'Flemish' dance and that from other countries. This is about crossing boundaries in terms of production space that can hardly be expressed in terms of nationalities. It is clear nonetheless that Flemish organisations have taken on a different position in this production space. Not only do they go abroad to obtain the means, but they also invest in work that is created abroad.

Focus on the Performing Arts Decree

The most important players in the world of dance are foreign organisations and those which are subsidised through the Performing Arts Decree. We spoke extensively about the origins of foreign dance companies in *Metamorphoses*. We will return to that in a later section. In this chapter we will briefly focus on the input of dance producers financed through the Performing Arts Decree. We will consider in detail which decretal categories show the biggest shifts.

Graph 3: Focus on credits of Performing Arts Decree organisations (1993-2005)



	1993-1997	1997-2001	2001-2005
Dance structure	72	170	214
Festival	0	0	34
Arts centre	40	128	282
Music theatre structure	1	13	14
Project organisation	60	168	150
Text theatre structure	32	53	80

The number of credits gained by the various categories described in the Performing Arts Decree (executive productions plus partnerships) are shown for each of the three funding rounds. For example, structurally subsidised dance organisations collected 72 production credits in the period between 1993 and 1997. Graph 3 summarises a number of developments.

- In the first place we can only now see the real effect of the previously mentioned *increased subsidised support for dance structures*. The financial injection they received in the course of the period between 1993 and 1997 had a particular impact on production during 1997-2001. It was then that dance organisations approached cruising speed.
- The biggest *influx of dance structures* took place between 2001 and 2005 (from six to nine), but the impact was relatively limited. We can see a robbing Peter to pay Paul operation: the credits of the project companies diminish accordingly.
- A further factor was increasing *hybridisation*. More and more theatre and music theatre organisations were acting as (co)producers of dance.
- We see the effect of a *decretal arrangement for festivals*. These were also a category in the Performing Arts Decree from 2001. Before this date they were subsidised by the use of different arrangements or – in the case of *Klapstuk* – as a dance organisation.
- The most remarkable phenomenon was the *evolution of arts centres*. If we compare 1993-1997 with 2001-2005, we find that the number of credits gained by arts centres increases by no fewer than seven times.

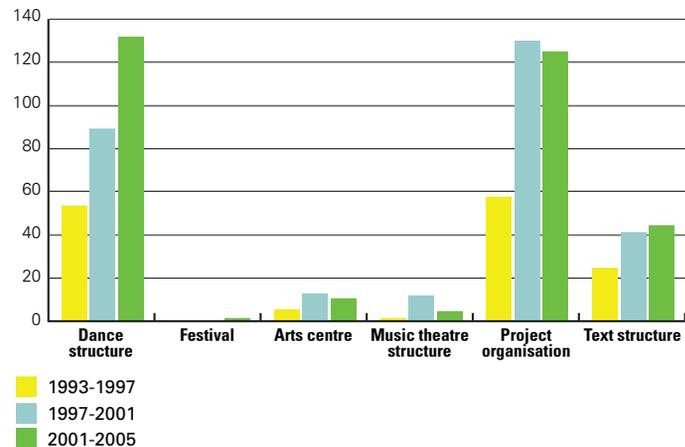
There could be several explanations for this advance of arts centres, which incidentally can be found almost entirely in the practice of co-productions. To begin with, it is true to say that the production

power of arts centres increased in the period between 1993 and 2005, much more than was the case with the dance companies. Just like dance organisations, a number of arts centres received a modest start-up grant in 1993. A few of them were able to develop further into the most subsidised organisations in the performing arts scene today, e.g. STUK, Vooruit and Kaaitheter. In general, the share taken by arts centres grew from 15% in 1993 to 19% during 1997-2001 and on to 25% of the structural funding budget in 2001-2005.

The (co)production capacity of arts centres has therefore undeniably increased. An entirely different explanation could be the increasing fragmentation of producing capacity. It is a conceivable hypothesis that the credits gained by arts centres will gradually count for less and that their efforts will be spread out amongst more and more candidates under the pressure of an increasing demand for co-production support. This hypothesis was put forward in the discussions of the working party for the master plan. The VTi database contains too little information for it to state anything definite. This hypothesis requires further research.

The fact that the role played by arts centres is largely in the domain of co-production, is shown by the following graph. This shows which Performing Arts Decree-supported companies were involved in dance productions as the executive producer:

Graph 4: Focus on executive producer credits under the Performing Arts Decree



	1993-1997	1997-2001	2001-2005
Dance structure	52	87	129
Festival	0	0	1
Arts centre	5	12	10
Music theatre structure	1	11	4
Project organisation	56	127	122
Text theatre structure	24	40	43

We can in fact see that arts centres and festivals hardly ever act as executive producers. The dominant executive producers are the structural dance producers but also the organisations that call on project resources. These companies were very productive; together they created more than the dance structures. Between 1993 and

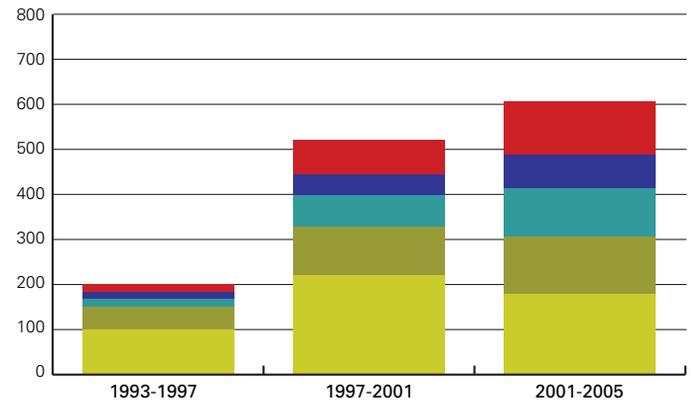
2005 the Flemish authorities subsidised 138 dance projects, an average of 11 per year. It turns out in the end that the companies which bid for these resources in 1993-2005, realised some 300 productions. Those who were denied any resources seem to have realised their projects anyway.

Mutual dependence

In *Metamorphoses* we pointed out the increasing mutual dependency across the whole of the stage and performing arts. In 1993-1997 four out of five productions were put together by one single organisation, but producers are now working less and less entirely on their own. In the period 2001-2005 about half of the productions were already being co-produced. The way in which productions were created changed radically in the period of the Performing Arts Decree. Of course, there were co-productions in 1993-1997. At that time 37 productions were created by five or more partners, with on average nine per season. *No Longer Readymade* by Meg Stuart and *Da un'altra faccia del tempo* by Jan Fabre are examples from the first half of the 1990s. The internationally oriented ensembles were therefore already co-producing in the 1993-1997 period. After that this form of production became more common. In the 2001-2005 period the number of productions involving more than five partners increased by no less than five times, to 185 productions.

It is also interesting to compare the figures for the whole of the performing arts with those for dance. Graph 2 already suggested that there was increasing mutual dependency in dance as well. The number of partnerships appears to have increased considerably during that period. Indeed:

Graph 5: Number of producers per dance production



	1993-1997	1997-2001	2001-2005
1	100	220	178
2	50	109	128
3	17	69	108
4	17	46	74
5 or more	17	76	118

Graph 5 clearly shows up the role of dance in pioneering 'mutual dependence'. The initial value for dance (1993-1997) can be compared with the final value for the whole (2001-2005); about half of productions were co-produced. In other words, half of dance productions were already co-productions in 1993-1997. At this time less than one-third of dance productions are put on by a single organisation.

Dance fulfilled a pioneering function within the performing arts. A particular production model developed, which since has been adapted by other disciplines as well: resources are not only used for creation but even more so as a lever to find partners and co-producers.

Opportunities and threats for dance production

In summary we can see that two significant 'metamorphoses' in the VTi field survey of performing arts manifested themselves earlier in the dance world. These concern the growth in production and an increasing interdependency between producers. Four times as much dance is being put on now as in 1993, and the number of dance production organisations has grown accordingly in the same period. This growth can be in part explained by the financial catch-up operation following the implementation of the Performing Arts Decree, which also led to more mutual cooperation with foreign partners. Dance is now being produced much more in a transnational network of producers and partners than happens in the rest of the performing arts. As regards mutual dependency, dance without doubt fulfils a pioneering role. An innovative production method has been developed in the dance sector, which is being taken over by other performance arts.

Why is there more mutual dependency in dance than in the performing arts as a whole? How come that in dance, the drive to create productions in a network situation started earlier than in the rest of the performing arts?

This could be explained by various factors. To start with the necessity for this to happen relates to the historical backwardness of subsidies for contemporary dance in Flanders. We pointed out before that dance in Flanders experienced extraordinary development in the 1980s, but government policy only started to catch up in the 1990s. The limited resources led to the few grants having a

leverage effect: the money was used as start-up capital in a search for partners and co-producers, which strongly increased production capacity. Thus before 1997, dance producers were very dependent on resources from partners at home and abroad. This explains why the majority of dance productions were already co-produced during the years 1993 to 1997. Even today, the business model developed in the 1980s remains necessary for putting on dance. This is not only advantageous for dance producers, but also for the official authorities. The return on the investment of dance subsidies is very high. That applies not only to structurally recognised organisations, but also to projects. Collaborative associations are a matter of life or death for these groups to be able to put on any productions at all. It is clear that collaborations are not just a question of economic capital, but also of symbolic capital.

Another factor that could explain the high degree of networking in the dance world is the intrinsically labour-intensive nature of production in dancing, which makes it relatively more expensive than other stage arts.

This so-called 'cost disease' was mentioned more than once in *Metamorphoses*. We refer to the dilemma that the American cultural economists William Baumol and William Bowen highlighted way back in the 1960s. They stated that in the performing arts the wages and production costs rise in line with the global economy, whilst productivity remains constant. This explains why the performing arts become increasingly more expensive without showing growth in output or improvement in quality.

This vicious mechanism applies to the entire performing arts sector, but more so to dance, because there is more labour involved in the production process. There are a number of factors inherent to dance that reinforce this cost disease.

- The *time* factor – The creation of a dance performance demands so much time because the work is in principle not based on an existing text or repertoire. The material is developed entirely during its creation.
- *Labour intensiveness* – The physical training of a dancer's body demands continuous investment. This limits productivity and requires inactive periods to be written off.
- *The space factor* – Dance places high demands on infrastructure and technical facilities.

These parameters are in part different from those in ballet. Contemporary dance and ballet have in common the fact that they are both physical arts, and that a dancer's body requires training and a large investment, but in ballet the existing repertoire is used more often, thus shortening the production process. Casts are quite large though, which adds sharply to the costs.

If all other parameters are equal, it can be said that the production of dance – including ballet – is expensive. Together with the history of funding for contemporary dance, this would explain why dance is reliant on support from partners and other third parties more than any other performing art. This strong networking offers its own possibilities. When a production becomes the collective responsibility of several partners, a bigger platform is created for productions, which in turn certainly benefits their dissemination. Yet at the same time the question arises whether the major increase in networking does not fragment production capacity too much. As we have previously seen, there is a feeling among the dance master plan working party that the amounts contributed by co-producers have systematically fallen in recent years and that as a consequence there are more co-producers needed to put on a performance. This constitutes a major challenge for players in the world of dance, namely, how to ensure a more thorough and consistent support system for artists and their practice.

Recommendations

Policy proposals

- *Balance between continuity and innovation* – When reviewing the world of dance, we observe a historically layered landscape. Among the structurally recognised companies we see dance creators and organisations that helped to bring about the famous Flemish wave of the 1980s. They succeeded in building solid structures. At the other end of the spectrum, we see a great number of new dance creators. The next chapter will show that many of these are 'transient'. Fragmentation is looming. In a context in which – according to the Minister of Culture – there is little margin for growth on the whole for the performing arts, it is an important task for any policy to search for a proper balance between continuity and renewal.
- *Functional line of approach and integrated quality assessment* – The diversity in organisational types and work modes, as well as the high degree of mutual dependency within the practice of dance, align less and less with the decretal categories of the Arts Decree. The growing hybridisation in the performing arts opens up the gates to a reflection exercise on a different way of organising these categories in the Arts Decree and, linked to that, on the organisation of evaluation procedures. In *Metamorphoses*, there is a plea for a functional approach to and a professionalisation of evaluations. In the short term an evaluation committee must be able to gain advice from other committees evaluating other disciplines. The advice on artistic content (evaluation committees) and business advice (the administration) should be better attuned to each other.
- *Relatively more money for projects* – If the minister maintains that no new organisations based around one single artist can be admitted – an option which we question in the next chapter

- it will not just suffice to give more money to the large established companies. The share of the funding kitty for projects and grants could easily and sensitively be increased to make space for newcomers.
- *Minimum envelope per project with wage costs as a parameter* – When we make a plea for more money for projects, we simultaneously argue for adequate funds per project. Creating dance is a relatively expensive enterprise. Policies must not result in bringing about the threat of fragmentation in the practice of co-production. This is the case now more than ever before. The amounts that dance projects are granted are too often inadequate for an appropriate realisation of productions. Projects must be supported with the necessary resources. Our preference is for fewer projects with appropriate financing instead of too many projects with little funding as a knapsack on the way. We advocate that the level of the grant awarded is at least sufficient to cover the wage bill, in line with the Collective Labour Agreement for the Performing Arts.
- *Infrastructure* – As mentioned above, dance sets a number of specific requirements for its production. The long rehearsal periods and their concomitant need for rehearsal space argue for a catching-up movement in the domain of infrastructure. The demand for rehearsal space with adequate technical equipment is very high. A solution has been found recently for Les Ballets C de la B and discussions are ongoing about the situation of Rosas. The search for rehearsal space is an urgent matter for smaller organisations and individual artists too. This role could also be fulfilled by a dance house (see below).

Recommendations for the sector

- *Selections within the sector* – We argued above in favour of making the evaluation committee and the policies responsible, but the sector itself could take up the challenge. The same motto applies here: fewer projects with adequate support are preferable to too many projects with fragmented resources. Someone who commits themselves to an artist will attempt to provide him or her with the best possible framework and support. This inevitably brings with it a stricter selection procedure, but much of that can be alleviated by improving consultation. We will deal with this in greater detail in the following chapter regarding the situation of the performer.
- *More attention to pre- and post-production support* – Expressions such as ‘co-production’ and ‘collaboration’ conceal a host of divergent practices in supporting the arts. It is critical that the support methods offered by the various organisations are mapped out and better distributed.
 - We are asking for greater diversity and innovation as regards support. For the moment we will conclude that there is something lacking at the pre-production and post-production levels, while both are crucial phases in an artist’s trajectory. Creators who do not yet have their own structures available to them somehow have to manage between the various bodies.
 - Reflection and experiment must be given sufficient space; both are of critical importance for future developments in dance. Production budgets may often be tight, but it is nevertheless necessary to safeguard space for reflection and experiment. It is crucially important to continue to invest in the pre-production stage. This is also part of the responsibility of policy-makers. In the previous structural decision-making round, workshops came under financial pressure and that put a great deal of pressure on the space for reflection and research.

- At this very moment the working party Kunstcentra en Werkplaatsen (Arts Centres and laboratories), on the initiative of oKo (overleg Kunstenorganisaties), is working on a definition and overview of existing forms of support. As a second initiative, better consultation among arts centres, cultural centres and workshops to support dance creators who lack their own structures, would be an answer to increasing fragmentation.
- *Infrastructure* – There are some initiatives whereby companies make their infrastructure available to third parties in slack periods, such as the P.A.R.T.S. Summer Studios. The success of such initiatives shows how great the need for rehearsal space is. The question remains whether the available infrastructure can be exploited to its fullest extent even more than is the case at present.

2. THE ARTIST AS AN INDIVIDUAL

State of the art: Fragmentation and transience in the world of dance

More and more artists

One of the most remarkable 'metamorphoses' found in the field study carried out by VTi concerns the position of the individual artist in the performing arts landscape. We concluded that there were gradually more and more artists starting up in the Flemish performing arts scene from 1993, but all in all, this increase turned out to be relatively small in comparison with the growth in productions and the number of organisations. The number of artists rose by barely one-third, while the casts and the artistic teams actually shrank during the period in question. It seems as though savings were made on artists in order to make the productions possible. In practice the regularisation of labour relations cost a lot of money. Since the Performing Arts Decree came into force, employees have to be paid in line with the salary scales of the Collective Labour Agreement for Performing Arts. So-called 'black work' has since then become scarce in the subsidised sector. From 2001, after the government invested half a billion Belgian francs (approximately € 12.4 million), one could speak of a minor catching-up manoeuvre. Artistic teams grew again and there was more work for artists, as our findings tell us, but fragmentation in employment opportunities emerged at the same time. The growth in the number of artists can be found almost entirely in the segment that we termed 'transient workers' in performing arts. This group comprises people who do not make a contribution on a regular basis. Over a period of four years individuals in this segment received credits for one production only.

The increasing number of transients shows that one can speak even less than before of a 'Flemish performing arts sector' as a clearly defined group of people. At the same time it appears that artists who do form a part of the core sector in the performing arts, occupy a wholly different position in the sector today from fifteen years ago. Artists who work regularly do so less and less exclusively for one single employer and more and more for several organisations, probably on a freelance basis. Permanent companies are less and less the basis for the practice of performing arts. The ties between artists and organisations are loosening all the time. This has not made the position of the artist any simpler.

How are things for dance? Compared with figures for the whole of the performing arts, the numbers for dance show a deviating pattern at crucial points. There is for instance not a slight, but very strong increase in the number of artists who were involved in dance production throughout the 1993-2005 period.

Table 4: How many artists were active in dance production during each season?

season	total	dance	dance proportion	dance growth	total growth
1993-1994	2,351	304	13%	100%	100%
1994-1995	2,292	446	19%	147%	97%
1995-1996	2,464	426	17%	140%	108%
1996-1997	2,540	434	17%	143%	103%
1997-1998	2,609	571	22%	188%	103%
1998-1999	2,320	488	21%	161%	89%
1999-2000	2,505	558	22%	184%	108%
2000-2001	2,634	612	23%	201%	105%
2001-2002	2,448	558	23%	184%	93%
2002-2003	2,763	671	24%	221%	113%
2003-2004	2,851	785	28%	258%	103%
2004-2005	3,453	1,055	31%	347%	121%
Entire period	12,304	3,150	26%		

It is clear that for the whole of the performing arts the growth in output was in the first instance managed with a stable number of artists. The growth curve only started to appear in 2002. At the end of that period the number of performing artists had barely increased by one-fifth while production rose by 61%. We can see in the case of dance that the cohort of artists grew remarkably during the period in question. The increase in the number of artists is less than the growth of production, but in 2004-2005 there were more than three times as many artists active as eleven seasons earlier.

The relatively strong growth in the number of artists can of course be explained by the strong growth in production and by the relatively strong rise of structural grants for dance and arts centres in the run-up period to the Performing Arts Decree. The number of foreign producers and partners increased as well over the entire period. This means that there was an inflow of resources, leading to a growth in productions and the number of artists involved in them. Another factor which could explain the rising number of artists is the often quoted attraction of Brussels as 'capital' of dance. There are several internationally renowned companies and collectives active in Flanders and Brussels, and the well-known P.A.R.T.S. dance school has its home here of course. Many artists from sometimes faraway countries seek their fortune in Brussels, and they are not being idle. They start dancing.

So the number of artists in the dance world is rising strongly. The question here, of course, is whether one can speak of fragmentation. Have work opportunities grown accordingly? The following table reflects how many credits this growing number of artists has collected.

Table 5: Increase in individual credits in dance, compared to the total in performing arts (1993-2005)

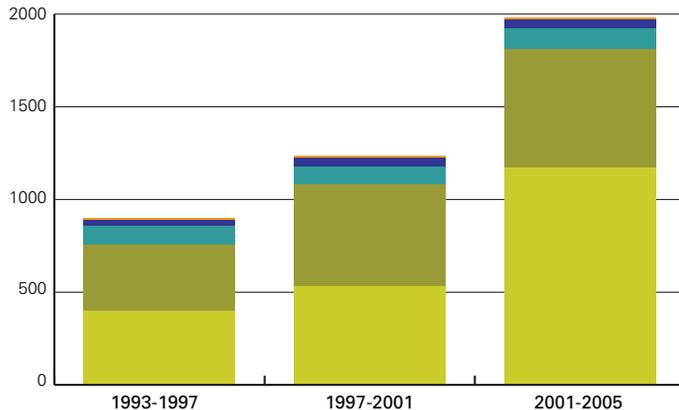
season	total	dance	dance proportion	dance growth	total growth
1993-1994	4,693	582	12%	100%	100%
1994-1995	4,630	762	16%	131%	99%
1995-1996	4,722	834	18%	143%	102%
1996-1997	4,611	685	15%	118%	98%
1997-1998	4,995	871	17%	150%	108%
1998-1999	4,733	842	18%	145%	95%
1999-2000	5,165	976	19%	168%	109%
2000-2001	5,354	1,188	22%	204%	104%
2001-2002	4,906	958	20%	165%	92%
2002-2003	5,212	1,077	21%	185%	106%
2003-2004	5,254	1,257	24%	216%	101%
2004-2005	6,304	1,594	25%	274%	120%
Entire period	60,579	11,626	19%		

It can be seen that the number of individual credits in dance also rose more strongly than in the total for the performing arts, but the growth is nevertheless quite a bit smaller than the number we counted in the database. The number of artists therefore increased faster than the number of jobs available to them. This suggests that there is indeed some fragmentation in the individual artistic credits. The next graph provides material for a discussion on this topic.

Transient workers in the world of dance

In *Metamorphoses* we counted all the productions that each creator worked on during the three funding rounds. In that exercise we distinguished between 'transients' – individuals who only worked on one single production in four years – and the 'core sector', creators who contributed more regularly to the output. We recorded the fact that a significant shift took place between the two in the period investigated. It turned out in particular that for the whole of the performing arts, the number of transients increased strongly between 2001 and 2005, while the core sector remained more or less constant with about 3,000 creators. So how are things for dance? The graph below shows how many credits each of the 3,150 dance creators collected for each of the three funding rounds.

Graph 6: Number of credits per dance creator per funding round



	1993-1997	1997-2001	2001-2005
1	400	533	1173
2 to 5	357	549	638
6 to 10	98	91	113
11 to 20	36	49	43
more than 20	7	15	15

This graph shows per artist, how many credits each dance creator collected over three consecutive funding rounds. To begin with, the growth in the number of dance creators who were involved with production during the time of the Performing Arts Decree is again surprising. By the third round the number of creators in the dance world has doubled. This rise is found in all segments. We see for a start that the 'core sector' of artists who made a regular contribution to the production of dance in the period concerned, grew considerably from 498 through 704 to 809. The number of creators involved in more than 5 productions does not rise as dramatically, namely from 141 through 155 to 171. But for dance too the most remarkable rise takes place among transients. This segment enjoyed spectacular growth over the three funding rounds.

The group of fly-by-nights increased by a factor of almost three during the survey period. For the period 2001-2005 there were almost 1,200 individuals whom we can barely link to one dance production. Transients account altogether for nearly a quarter of the individual credits in that period. This is almost a twofold increase in comparison with the period of 1997-2001.

The number of transients already caught our eye in *Metamorphoses*. We linked this phenomenon to other trends in the performing arts, particularly internationalisation and hybridisation.

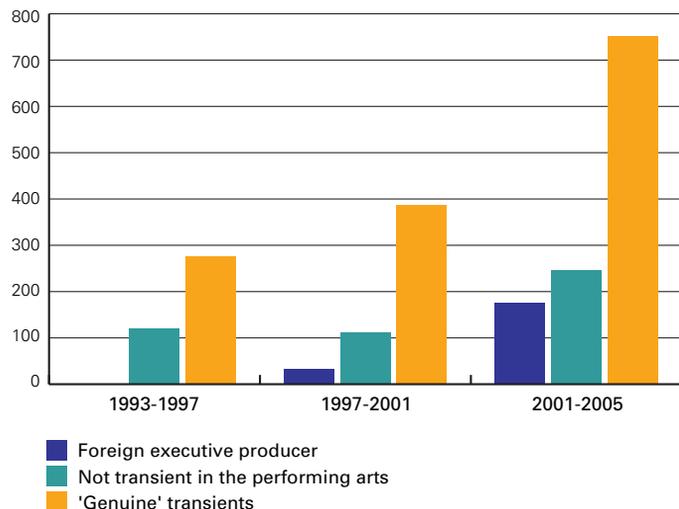
The Flemish performing arts are becoming less and less a self-supporting system. The exchange with other countries – and also with other sectors in our own country – is on the increase. Against a background where artists are becoming more and more internationally mobile, the number of transients will inevitably grow too. Working in Flanders and Brussels is becoming a whistle stop on an international tour for more and more artists. We also linked the phenomenon of the rising number of transients to the hybridisation of the performing arts. When new media such as the visual arts, music or technology are introduced to more and more productions, a different kind of expertise will have to be brought in. This could possibly lead to an increase in transient collaborators, because a larger number of video or sound artists are involved in the occasional dance project. Those who are not dependent on job opportunities in the world of dance are more likely to be ‘transients’.

So, who are these transients? We inevitably have only limited means to find an answer to this question. Unfortunately it is not yet possible today to relate the data in the VTi database to data on the performing arts from other countries such as the Netherlands, France, Germany or Denmark. We are working on this, but at the moment we are not able to map out the trajectory of these transnational nomads. Neither do we have at our disposal any equivalent databases as regards the output in the audio-visual sector or the visual or fine arts. The overlap of such information with the VTi database could throw some fascinating light onto hybridisation and crossovers. Nevertheless, the VTi database by itself does offer the potential to segment transients, a group that hardly appeared in *Metamorphoses*. We distinguish below between four different types:

- *Transients with a foreign executive producer* - The first type are temporary collaborators who work with a foreign executive producer. In other words, they collaborate on productions which do have a Flemish input, but which are not put on in Flanders or Brussels. We actually call them transient because the spread of the VTi database is too narrow to view their actual trajectory. It is obvious that this category plays an important part in the increase in the number of transient artists. We have seen before that there is an increase in investment by Flemish partners and co-producers in foreign organisations.
- *Transient as regards dance but not the performing arts* – A second type of transient does make a one-time contribution to the production of dance, but is otherwise fully engaged with the performing arts. These artists are also involved with the production of theatre or music theatre.

These two types may be considered ‘false’ transients: they work abroad or also in the (music) theatre. We need to filter these two types out in order to obtain a clear view of what is actually happening. Graph 6 shows how ratios between ‘genuine’ and ‘false’ transients changed between 1993 and 2005:

Graph 7: 'Genuine' and 'false' transients in the world of dance



To begin with we can observe an increase in the various segments. It is striking that a new type now appears on the graph, transient artists who appear in the tables because their foreign company collaborates with a Flemish co-producer. This hardly happened between 1993 and 1997 but between 2001 and 2005 there are almost two hundred.

However, the fact that there is more investment in foreign companies does not adequately explain away the phenomenon of transient artists, rather the contrary. The number of genuine transients during the period in question multiplied almost threefold, from 277 through 388 to 751.

So who are the genuine transients? Their credits are segmented on the basis of what function they fulfilled in the one production they worked on:

- *On-stage or off-stage* – We make a distinction between transients who were either 'on-stage' or 'off-stage' in the dance production they contributed to. The ratios between both categories hardly change during the period in question. Almost two-thirds of transient artists stood on stage in the production they contributed to:

Table 5: Genuine transients on-stage and off-stage

	off-stage		on-stage	
1993-1997	107	39%	170	61%
1997-2001	127	33%	261	67%
2001-2005	291	39%	460	61%
Entire period	525	37%	891	63%

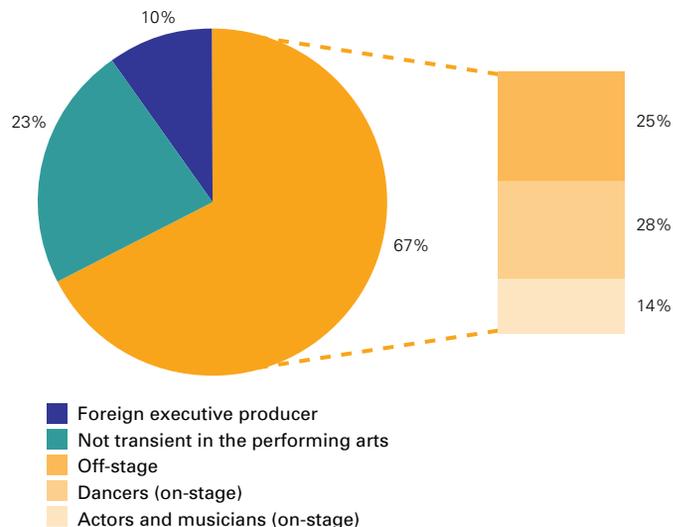
- *Expertise* – How many transient artists possess specific expertise in dance (e.g. being a dancer, a choreographer, movement adviser, etc.)? What percentage of transients fulfilled a function which demanded a specific expertise from a discipline other than the performing arts? This directs the spotlight to the presence of video artists, musicians, composers, and so on, who are involved in producing dance and therefore also on the hybridisation of the production of dance.

Table 6: Genuine transients and their expertise

	Dance expertise		Expertise in other arts		Other credits	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
1993-1997	125	45%	80	29%	72	26%
1997-2001	232	60%	68	18%	88	23%
2001-2005	271	36%	173	23%	307	41%
Entire period	628	44%	321	23%	467	33%

Again we do not discern a distinctly delineated evolution, but we do see a clear rise in all segments. That means that the rise in the number of transient artists cannot be ascribed to increasing hybridisation. An important conclusion here is that a large part of the 'genuine' transients in the performing arts, namely 44% over the entire period, collaborated in the overall production in a function typical for dance. Every now and then it is a choreographer or someone in an advisory function, but for the most part they are dancers. This is evident from the graph below, which gives a summary overview of transient artists in dance for the three funding rounds.

Graph 8: Summary overview of transient artists in the dance world (1993-2005)



In total only two-thirds of artists with only one credit are genuine transients. They work with a home-grown executive producer and are not active in the theatre or music theatre sector. Amongst these genuine transient artists, two-thirds appear to have been active on the stage. The largest number of them are dancers.

Legend to the graph on the cover:

The image on the cover and the overlaps is a graph, applying the above-mentioned distinctions - 'on-stage' / 'off-stage' and the division according to expertise – on all the artistic credits related to the 1,325 dance productions in our database. This leads to the use of six different types of artistic functions:



Dance expertise on-stage: Mainly dancers
(4,326 of 11,626 credits)



Expertise in other disciplines, on-stage: mostly musicians (484 credits)



Other credits, on-stage: mainly actors and non-specified performers (1,385 credits)



Dance expertise off-stage: mostly choreographers
(1,183 credits)



Expertise in other disciplines, off-stage: mostly authors and translators, composers, (audio-)visual artists
(1,304 credits)



Other credits off-stage: mostly scenographers, costumes or light designers, advisors,... (2,944 credits)

Each type is represented by a different canary.

Each canary represents 21 artistic credits.

Opportunities and threats for artists

Flanders is a magnet for dancers: they come here frequently to follow training courses, dance in shows, attend auditions. There is an ever increasing number of dancers, and there can be no doubt that this benefits the quality and diversity of the landscape. However, from a dance creator's perspective this can make the landscape quite inhospitable at times. Brussels and Flanders exert a massive pull on the individual, which brings a great many people to Flanders, but only a small percentage are actually able to realise their ambitions. The majority find themselves in poor living conditions and are forced to take on several jobs, and some even stay on illegally. In the Dutch version of our field survey (*Metamorfose in podiumland*), Delphine Hesters' made a clear analysis of these problems.

In recent decades there has been a change in the area of organisational forms. Developing a dance career in a linear way, that is, working one's entire career for the same organisation, appears to be a thing of the past. The evolution yields interesting and rapidly alternating constellations, in which individual artists – as freelancers – are coming to the forefront more and more. What complicates the situation, along with the emergence of a freelance market, is the internationalisation of the performing arts. The specific nature of a dance career – the increased risk of injury at work – makes a dancer's situation twice as precarious.

This situation presents a huge challenge for artists. Not only do they have to create art; not only do they have to organise their own lives; they have to keep their own structure alive too. Artists – particularly in the international context – face an administrative jungle, through which only a few can carve their way. They do not have the means to pay a manager/business advisor and it is hard for them to work through the tangle of laws by themselves. Even the law on NPOs has become extremely complex. Some artists are very flexible and have the skills needed to make it in an uncertain

working environment such as this. They have business acumen, and, aside from providing quality work, they also learn to become good at networking. The sector is developing into a freelance circuit and it would be difficult to turn back the clock. But the question is – do we really want the artist-cum-businessman to become the norm in the world of dance?

The grant system has not yet really found an answer for this growing segment of artists. Little by little they are getting more attention, and paths are being explored at several policy levels. In Flanders the system of work grants is under review, and the artistic development grants provided by the Vlaamse Gemeenschapscommissie in Brussels (VGC, Flemish Community Commission) are inspiring. Viewed from the perspective of an increasingly fragmented world of dance, the strategy of refusing on principle to fund new structures based around individual artists would appear to be counterproductive. The government's heavy emphasis on cooperation is justified but consigns some creators to a straightjacket. The idea of shared organisational structures only works if there is also a shared artistic vision.

Recommendations

Policy proposals

- *A better distribution of powers at the different levels of government* – This is the first step we should take if we want to tackle the situation properly. Opportunities for obtaining grants from different levels of government – the European Union, the community, the regions, the local authorities, etc. – are not sufficiently harmonised, nor are they well enough known. We refer here to the actual debate on the distribution of 'core tasks' among the different government levels in Belgium, and the artists' need of greater transparency.

- *International mobility* – When it comes to dancers it is almost impossible to get an accurate picture of international mobility. Dance exists in an international context and this gives rise to a fair few opportunities. Yet a dancer's ambitions are often hampered by complex regulations. The free circulation of people in the European Union is more of a paper idea than a real one, due to the lack of coherent legislation. Opportunities for grants at the European level are not well enough known and not sufficiently tailored to artists' mobility. We refer here to a study by IETM and PEARLE* on the international mobility of transnational nomads working in a freelance context (Richard Poláček, *Study on Impediments to Mobility in the EU Live Performance Sector and on Possible Solutions*. PEARLE*, Brussels 2007 (ISBN: 9519682457)). Examples of a few possible solutions: less complex, cheaper and uniform EU visa controls for non-European artists, measures to guarantee social security provisions for artists (such as a European, rather than national, social security counter), greater transparency and uniformity of tax systems in EU Member States...
- *Adaptation of the Performing Arts CLA to suit the freelance market* – Freelance artists are the weak link in the present production system. Working out a more accommodating system of payment for flexible collaborations is, in fact, a huge challenge for the future. Better payment for short-term contracts under the Performing Arts CLA is step forward. The proviso being, of course, that the size of the grants be adjusted to suit.
- *Recognition of the freelance market* – Our labour laws still focus on traditional career routes. For many artists the combination of several professional incomes from different countries leads to a financial drain, as well as a very uncertain tax status given the lack of harmonised legislation. Nonetheless, the increasing importance of freelance and international activity is a trend we are seeing across the labour market, and it is the government's job to enshrine this in the tax legislation.

- *Special career advice for artists* – We note that this subject is receiving more and more attention from the VDAB/ACTIRIS (Flemish and Brussels regional employment agencies) and the partners involved in Social Dialogue, but all too often at present the knowledge is fragmented. The support centres for the arts, the Kunstenloket and the Sociaal Fonds for Podiumkunsten [Social Fund for Performing Arts] (aided by social contributions from all of the sector's employers) can play a crucial role here.
- *Proof of experience* – A freelancer is only as good as his last job and he treads a capricious path, with a great deal of uncertainty and a short-term outlook. However, each job involves new skills and it is worth looking into the development of an official proof of experience as a way of acknowledging a freelancer's career path. Many skills are difficult to quantify because they cannot be traced back to the time of a contract or completion of a given training course. Over their careers many dancers build up a body of experience, which they can use later in a pedagogical setting. At the present time it is difficult, for instance, to become a dance teacher without the appropriate qualification.
- *Transition* – When an artist wishes to re-train he often meets with an absence of appropriate transition programmes, and those that do exist are designed for people with few qualifications or none at all. Dancers in particular face a pressing problem. Their careers are restricted in time due to the physical demands of the profession. There are very few safety nets in place to deal with this: a multiplicity of contracts with different employers means that there is no transition budget to speak of at the end of a dancer's career. The Royal Ballet of Flanders does, however, provide a transition scheme for dancers with at least 10 years of service. Unfortunately, this is an exception to the rule. We refer here to initiatives in the Netherlands and Canada, where transition funds are used with success to help dancers move on to a second career. The policy recommendations of

the former Vlaamse Directies Podiumkunsten, now the Overleg Kunstenorganisaties (oKo), which were formulated in the light of a study on transition in around 2000, are worth further consideration.

Finally, we formulate a few suggestions in the area of arts policy.

- *No stop in principle on structures for one person* – To fend off looming fragmentation and an overly quick inflow and outflow, and to be able to work on a continual basis, some artists must be given an opportunity to develop a structure of their own.
- *Revaluation of grants and projects in the Arts Decree* – The criteria for work grants present too high a threshold for young artists and freelancers. In the past grants were used in such a way that they overshot their objectives. Grants should not serve as a fallback scenario for organisations which are not yet ready for a structure of their own.
- *Defence of artistic development grants* – As regards work grants we refer to the success enjoyed by the artistic development grants (the so-called 'trajectsubsidies') awarded by the Flemish Community Commission (VGC). The idea was launched for the first time in 2006 and continued in 2007 (but was inadequately funded, unfortunately). They give the artist all the shelter he needs to concentrate on his own path for a year, and the emphasis lies on reflection and research. The artists in question are intensively supervised and assessed throughout this trajectory by a mentor who is able to give advice on careers and business. The success of the artistic development grants and the high percentage of dancers who have claimed grants, demonstrate that with this initiative VGC is meeting the needs of a specific niche of artists. These artists have widely differing profiles and many of them have already gained a sizeable body of experience (e.g. Kris Verdonck).

- *Submission dates for grants and projects* – These could be better tailored to the pattern of artistic activity. The very fact that project funding applications can only be submitted once a year brings the work rhythm under immense pressure. Miss a deadline and it is a long wait until the next round. Here we would argue for several submission dates a year and shorter grant allocation procedures. Among the amendments of the Arts Decree the setting of two submission dates in future is being considered, and this is a good thing.
- *Projects in arts laboratories and alternative management bureaus* – These organisations must be able to request additional project grants for artists who do not have a structure of their own. At the present time these organisations have to make use of shadow NPOs, and keep two sets of accounts as a consequence.

Recommendations for the sector

- *Link the training in with practice* – It is of crucial importance that training courses look at how to prepare for a career as an artist via info sessions and more frequent contact with people in the profession. The curriculum should include at least one subject that teaches highly practical skills (basics of policy, management, contracts...).
- *First line information* – Once a dancer arrives in the profession all kinds of information channels are available. However, practice shows that many get lost in the tangle of rules and regulations. The right amount of attention should be given to the dissemination and promotion of first line information. Special activities can be set up to make sure the existing information reaches the right target audience. A few suggestions:
 - Info sessions organised by the Kunstenloket and VTi with regard to legal issues or business basics for individual artists. Given the international dimension of the dance sector it is important that these sessions also be given in English.
 - A great many companies already have huge reserves of business expertise: knowledge which lots of artists can learn from. How can we share what has already been learned? This can be part of the support provided for artists.
 - A mobilisation plan for the migration department is also recommendable. On arrival in Belgium this is often the first authority with which a dancer will come into contact. It can immediately point dancers to the right contacts and safety nets (possibly via a brochure), so as to make sure they end up in the right place.
 - An info brochure for dancers is the ideal channel of information. The Kunstenloket already has an FAQ section on its website. If more subjects were covered, specific to dance, a publication of this type would help make the legislation more transparent. What are the consequences of working internationally, which contracts apply to me, where can I find the relevant workshops, what are the grant possibilities, what are the rules for setting up an NPO...? This publication can be disseminated through hotspots in the world of dance: companies, arts centres, cultural centres, arts laboratories, workshop locations...

- *Support for artists* – Analogous with the subject of production we argue for support *jusqu'au bout*. This goes further than assistance with production. Artists without a valid status, without an insurance policy, residency permit, et cetera, are in need of administrative help before they can start working for a company. Companies have a huge responsibility towards the artist. The net has drawn tighter in recent years with the professionalisation of the sector, but when it comes to small projects there are still artists working without insurance, staying in the country illegally, being underpaid for their work... All parties involved have a responsibility to keep an eye out for problems of this type.
- *Circulate expertise and make support for individual artists more apparent* – A great many recipients of structural grants take pains to use the knowledge they have in house for the benefit of other artists. This practice deserves to be encouraged and could even be made more visible. When writing grant files and activity reports they could, for example, consistently identify artists for whom an extra effort was made to offer business or other support.
- *More consultation* – The many NPOs in the profession could also consult each other on the submission of dossiers or the organisation of contracts. An NPO is often called into being for a single project, and leads a dormant life thereafter.
- *Alternative forms of support* – Dance involves a huge degree of mutual dependence. It would benefit the different parties to think up alternative and complementary forms of support for artists. This consultation might take the form of an exchange programme on the subject of support between companies, cultural centres, arts labs and arts centres.

3. THE INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION

State of the art

Over the years VTI has presented studies on the international dimension of the Flemish performing arts with regularity, in terms of both dissemination and co-production. Each time it has been seen that this international dimension is more intense in dance than in the other performing arts. A study VTI made on international dissemination in 2004 has shown that as many as half of our dance productions have travelled beyond the country's borders, and that 40% of Flemish dance performances were given abroad. This scenario was less pronounced in the other sectors, but in theatre and music theatre we also find companies that give the majority of their performances in other countries... For the performing arts as a whole the figures were one third and 14% respectively in the year 2004.

However, international activity is clearly not confined to *import/export*. It involves an increasing exchange in the area of production too. This was plain to see in the article on dance in *Courant#77* (May 2006) and in *Metamorphoses*. There we charted the contribution of foreign partners to dance productions. In the 2001-2005 period it transpired that about half of the organisations involved in 'Flemish' dance productions were resident in other countries. These international partners accounted for a total of about one third of the production credits. To find the lion's share of these foreign organisations we need to look to our neighbouring countries: France, Germany and the Netherlands. Further afield, we find a small group of countries with about ten partners: Italy, Canada, Great Britain, Portugal, Austria and Spain.

It is indeed the case that a relatively high number of these foreign organisations play no more than a coincidental role. At the same time a large number of foreign organisations do in fact make an extraordinary contribution. Théâtre de la Ville and the Rotterdamse Schouwburg take second and fifteenth place among the most active producers – at home and abroad. Other regular partners are: Centre Pompidou (Paris), Springdance (Utrecht), BIT – Teatergarasjen (Bergen), Künstlerhaus Mousonturm (Frankfurt), Festival d'Automne (Paris), Tanzquartier Wien, Luzerntanz, Schauspielhaus Zürich, Teatro Comunale di Ferrara, Tanzhaus Düsseldorf, La Rose des Vents (Villeneuve d'Ascq), Festival d'Avignon, PACT Zollverein/Choreographisches Zentrum NRW (Essen).

Metamorphoses gave us the opportunity to compare the international contribution to dance against the international contribution to the performing arts as a whole. Once again it transpired that the contribution to dance is higher than that to theatre and music theatre. It was also clear that dance plays a pioneering role in the systematic internationalisation of Flemish performing arts. In the 1993-1997 period, 27% of the production credits in dance were foreign, and we see a rise to 33% in the 2001-2005 period. For the performing arts as a whole we see a rise from 10% in 1993-1997 to 21% in 2001-2005. So while there is a lag, the gap is also closing.

Dance, which is obviously less hampered by linguistic barriers than text-based theatre, is highly internationalised in Flanders and Brussels. But this is not exclusive to dance. Its international dimension serves as an example to other disciplines, and is imitated by the other performing arts. In all likelihood there are historical factors behind this. When a contemporary dance scene began to develop in Flanders and Brussels in the 1980s, the Flemish Community did not have the appropriate channels available to fund it. It developed outside the official structures and outside the instruments of Flemish cultural policy. In the absence of a direct funding policy it was this international dimension that made the

'Flemish wave' of the 1980s possible. The Flemish government saw the international credits of the Commissariaat-Generaal van de Internationale Culturele Samenwerking [Commissariat General for International Cultural Co-operation] as the main tool for getting support to the new generation nonetheless. Thus the Vandekybus company received 100% of its funding from international credits in 1986 (and in that year Vandekybus won a Bessie Award in New York for *What the Body Does Not Remember*).

In addition, there came a flow of money from other countries. The limited funds that did exist were used to search out partners for foreign tours, co-production agreements, funding from foreign embassies... The huge diversity of sources made the international dimension the most important economic motor behind the 'Flemish wave'. At the same time it is almost impossible to quantify its artistic impact. International contact and exchange during Klapstuk and the Kaaitheater festivals, in the developing arts centres, on the foreign tours of Rosas, Les Ballets C de la B and Ultima Vez, have lifted Flemish dance to a high level.

Opportunities and threats to the international dimension of dance

In 1996 the former dance evaluation committee stated: 'In Flemish dance you will exist internationally, or you won't exist at all.' Extreme though this statement may have sounded at the time, the figures and people's general impressions appear to confirm its truth today. In the year 2007 Flemish dance creators and companies stand at the top of the international scene. Venues in Flanders and Brussels offer a stage to an international kaleidoscope of productions, which is unique for its richness.

The advantages of this situation are legion. It acts as a productive mechanism of artistic exchange. Dance exists in an international context, and, as such, it sits at a crossroad of influences. It

keeps the art lively and artists alert to new influences. And there are economic benefits too. The potential sales market is huge and productions have every chance of touring for a long time, given the international interest in dance in Flanders. This means that international operations offer extra sources of funding. Flemish subsidisers need not necessarily see this as a distortion of the market. On the contrary, Flemish grants are a necessary basis – leverage with an extremely high *return on investment*.

Of course, the international dimension of Flemish performing arts in general, and dance in particular, calls for a specially adapted policy framework. Good policy instruments have been developed over the years. In the 1980s the Flemish Community's international credits were still an *ad hoc* stopgap to make up for the absence of regular dance grants. Since then the policy framework has been heftily shored up. Also, international credits for culture have shifted from foreign policy to cultural policy. Likewise, with the Performing Arts Decree first (1993–2005) and the Arts Decree later (after 2006), a framework has developed that gives opportunities to support the international dimension of dance as well as that of other performing arts.

It is theoretically possible for organisations that fund their international operation structurally by identifying the international aspect as an integral part of their activity. This is advantageous for them because it reduces the planning burden: they don't have to apply for new funding for every international project. For an organisation that has not yet developed its international operation structurally, it is theoretically possible to apply for *ad hoc* project funding when necessary: as and when interesting opportunities or invitations present themselves.

Under the Arts Decree, art organisations are free to choose between structural or project-based international work. They can identify the international dimension as an important part of their

ordinary activity, or not, and define it themselves as they wish. Thus the decree places a strong emphasis on allowing organisations to profile the international dimension of their operation themselves. In *Metamorphoses* we touched on the point that the government has not followed up on this possibility of self-profiling, and that this constitutes a huge threat to the diversity of international activity. It would cripple organisations that have yet to develop a structural international activity of their own if they were to be forced into this straightjacket. If additional funding for international work were not forthcoming they would find it difficult to access the international circuit.

In the meantime there appears to have been some activity in this area. The Arts Decree is currently under review, and the amendments are looking positive. It seems that organisations with a two-year envelope will again be able to draw on project funding, and that is a great thing. At the same time, the government is thinking of making the international envelope for all four-year organisations structural. This looks to be a bridge too far for organisations with limited financial muscle. We suggest a lower limit of € 600,000. Any organisation funded above this figure is assumed to be including its international operation within that budget.

Recommendations

Policy proposals

- *Pro-active stimulation of the international dimension of the practice of dance* – Above, we have again seen the importance of the international dimension in dance. There is a high amount of interdependence in a transnational production circuit, and some Flemish organisations occupy a central position. The return is enormous, artistically and economically. This position is not in the least guaranteed or a matter of course for the longer term.

Given the importance of the international dimension and the position we occupy, we need an active incentive policy in place to give this position continuity and a structural basis.

- *Transversal impulse fund for projects outside Europe* – In this proposal we argue that organisations with a grant envelope in excess of € 600,000 should still be able to apply for project funding for exceptional projects outside Europe. Indeed, it appears in practice that the radius of international stage activity extends to (Western) Europe, and the impossibility of receiving project grants could adversely affect the diversity of international activity in future. For this reason we argue in *Metamorphoses* for a transversal fund to be set up that would draw on resources set aside for Culture, Foreign Policy, Tourism, Development Cooperation. To strengthen the link between international and intercultural culture policy the spend could include priority countries earmarked by the amended Arts Decree for ethnically and culturally diverse projects. These would then be countries outside Western Europe. By 'Western European' we mean the following countries: Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxemburg, Great Britain, Ireland, France, Germany, Denmark, Austria, Liechtenstein, Switzerland.
- *Reduction of complexity* – The international dimension of dance is hampered by complex regulations. We refer again to the work done by PEARLE* and IETM and the need to make the laws more friendly towards operating internationally. Even just when it comes to organising contracts, it would benefit a dancer if the Sociale Bureaus voor Kunstenaars (SBK, Social Bureaus for Artists), which currently operate as employment agencies with specialist knowledge of the cultural sector, were also given the authority to organise foreign contracts. Social security for artists can be centralised in this way.

Recommendations for the sector

- *International dance platform* – Development of initiatives, which may or may not be based on existing formats, to facilitate tours abroad. Here, we have in mind a European series for young theatre makers / collections of interesting productions in other countries. The existence of an international dance platform/festival in Flanders would serve to heighten the prominence of dance. We see this platform as an event spanning several days, at which programmers would get to see a package of performances and established names would be able to bring young makers under their wing.
- *More international cooperation in terms of setting the context, and development of discourse* – There is a need, for example, for an English language magazine or a European web portal of international allure. Various theatre and dance magazines have recently started collaborating in order to address this complaint. The arts policy centres have also launched a new initiative. The international sector can be briefed on what is happening in the Flemish landscape by means of an English language newsletter.
- *Importance of international network organisations - These are important in bringing people together because they develop strategies for networking and exchange. There are several angles of approach:*
 - An international platform for interaction/exchange, such as the Informal European Theatre Meeting (IETM);
 - Cooperation between venues with regard to production, such as Initiatives in Dance through European Exchange (IDEE).
 - Cooperation between houses with regard to tours and presentation of the work, such as Advancing Performing Arts Projects (APAP).

- *Shared ambassadorship* – The international reputation of Flemish dance can be used to win support for less established makers and companies. Through shared ambassadorship everyone can draw on their existing contacts abroad to create opportunities for young makers. A recommendation in another country can be an important springboard for a young maker.
- *Better visibility of the intercultural dimension of international practice* – The dance community prides itself on being an international meeting place, at which people from very different backgrounds can enter an artistic dialogue. Can this expertise be made more prominent in the current political debates on interculturalisation and the relationship between artistic practice and a rapidly changing, ever diversifying society?

4. DISSEMINATION

State of the art: 'overproduction' and 'limited touring opportunities'?

We saw above that dance production has grown vigorously in a relatively short space of time (4.3 times in twelve seasons). But it does not appear likely that the number of performances will match the huge rise in production. A few years ago ideas were expressed that created problems for the dissemination of dance in our own country. The discussion revolved around an assumed 'overproduction' versus 'limited touring opportunities'. It goes without saying that it has become more difficult to bring a dance performance to a wider audience since production rose. Competition seems to have soared...

The issues surrounding the dissemination of dance are not confined to the Flemish stage. We have shown above that dance is created and disseminated in a transnational circuit. Thanks to the excellent reputation of Flemish dance many companies have a place there, as the figures reveal. And yet, much can still be done to encourage the dissemination of dance in our own country. The potential reach would appear to be greater than we are currently seeing. To what extent does vigorous growth in dance production find its way to stages in Flanders? Is there any truth in the feeling that fewer and fewer stages have been giving dance their explicit backing in recent years?

The dearth of statistics we have today does not yet allow us to reach that conclusion. But we have no need of figures to acknowledge that the sales market for dance is small in Flanders and Brussels in any case. The supply is concentrated in the Brussels-Ghent-Antwerp triangle and in the arts centres, and there are offshoots to West Flanders and Limburg. We are reasonably well equipped to show small and medium-sized productions, but we do

not have the kind of infrastructure in which large-scale productions can be ideally presented (few stages in Flanders can compete with the Théâtre National in Brussels).

It would also appear that at the present time many of the shows are less well suited to an extended tour. The supply is much more experimental and small-scale, there is more *site-specific* work, more previews and showings and fewer shows that last the entire evening... The *formats* in which contemporary dance is presented today differ greatly from traditional formats such as the full evening show and the tour. In arts centres and at festivals we do see attempts to package the work and make it more visible, but when it comes to the cultural centres there is still a long way to go. New makers would be the ones to benefit most from this.

Things are different for the so-called 'middle field'. At a workshop on dance dissemination in 2004 (CC Kortrijk) it was felt that there were plenty of places at which new work could be shown, but that it would still be difficult for something a little more established, medium-sized work, to flow through. These productions are quickly referred on to the international circuit, where they come up against cutthroat competition. And the circuit outside the arts centres would be no more obvious a choice. The situation is again different for bigger companies: they seem to have outgrown much of the Flemish circuit due to the scale at which they operate.

Opportunities and threats to the dissemination of dance

Of course not everything that gets made will require the same degree of dissemination. Makers shouldn't be catapulted to the big stage too early. The principle that the right production should come to the right place would appear to be the ideal. Urban biotopes are suitable as a test garden for new and vulnerable experimental work, where selection processes can be brought to bear. A first showing to a core audience of experts should reveal which produc-

tions could go on to a tour of the cultural centres and theatres. But it is a matter of whether or not the envisaged 'supply chain' works properly today. This season VTi and Cultuur Lokaal have jointly organised *Platform Podiumkunsten*, a series of informal meetings designed to lend a better structure to the dialogue between the arts centres / laboratories and cultural centres. At one of these meetings the functioning of the programming chain was proposed for discussion. An excerpt from the report:

(...) in general it does seem as if through-flow from workshop to arts centre to cultural centres, as envisaged in the policy, is stalling. In particular, the transition from arts centre to cultural centres is extremely rare. This is why programmers are calling for consultation to set up small tours or to become acquainted with international productions. (Platform Podiumkunsten, Theaterfestival, 30/08/2007)

This finding was true for all performing arts, but specific issues do arise when it comes to bringing dance to a wider audience. As it happens, one factor that complicates dissemination is the relative expense of producing dance, which leads to relatively high buyout fees compared with other performing arts. In dance, the cost disease is particularly debilitating when it comes to dissemination. Tours are expensive because it often takes much longer to set things up. Re-runs are costly compared with the theatre: they require a longer rehearsal time and the right kind of infrastructure for artists to make the material their own. Dance is more expensive than theatre. This hampers the dissemination of dance productions, from the perspective of both the maker and the promoter/disseminator.

The cost of dance hampers its dissemination. Dance eats up a relatively large slice of the programming budget, whereas it finds an audience less readily (because it is perceived as difficult – but we will come back to this later). Dance is less likely to be programmed with-

out question, than is theatre, for example. Indeed, venues are quick to make the connection between relatively high buyout fees and the limited reach of a smaller-scale dance production. Programmers who loves dance might have difficulties convincing their colleagues of how important dance is to the cultural centre or the district. In a short space of time audience figures have become much more important in justifying a cultural centre's *raison d'être*, as has been argued in *Platform Podiumkunsten*. In some places these figures also put pressure on the programming. This pressure is usually exerted on the number of playing dates available, and these are most scarce in the cultural centres. This particular problem is even more acute among the small cultural centres, because they usually have the region's only stage. Competition is immense there.

Dance companies also find that dissemination is hampered by the high cost of dance. Big companies and new initiatives face radically different problems here. They all find it difficult to play in their own country. The problem experienced by large companies is a luxurious one. Flemish venues have to be in a position to compete with foreign venues, whose programming budgets are bigger. Smaller companies and projects find it difficult, because they have no structure of their own to fall back on.

The buyout fees asked by larger companies abroad are high by Flemish standards. Flemish companies have attained a quality of the type that brings them into a venues market whose players are more cash-rich than the majority of their Flemish counterparts. If economic factors alone were all that counted the big Flemish companies would be bought up by foreign venues. There are, of course, moral *incentives* to keep playing in one's own country: the work is created partly with Flemish tax money, so it should also be accessible by the taxpayer. There is a tight line, therefore, between moral obligation and the free market.

The problem of low buyout fees also applies in the Netherlands. One of the most notable results to emerge from the dissemination study made by De Brakke Grond (the Flemish cultural institution in Amsterdam) was that the programming budgets of Dutch theatres are not secure. This has diminished the range of international productions (including Flemish) on offer in the Netherlands.

Young artists cannot make an income from dissemination either, although the dynamic here is of an entirely different order to that in the structured companies. Being able to tour can be a poisoned chalice for companies with no fixed structure to fall back on. On the one hand they have to be in a position to take advantage of attractive invitations as and when they present themselves. But, in so doing, they can get themselves into debt, simply because playing costs more than it brings in. Arts laboratories do not have the resources to cover loss items of this type either.

The situation of the Royal Ballet of Flanders is a specific one: its explicit obligation to disseminate its work is an extra element. Under the terms of its management agreement the Ballet is obliged to 'play' the provinces. Yet possibilities are restricted here too, for much of the infrastructure in place is unsuited to large-scale productions.

On the level of Flemish cultural policy, the relationship between the Arts Decree (arts producers) and the Local Cultural Policy Decree (cultural centres) also plays a role. Are these systems well harmonised and are there any gaps? Of course, each decree has its own logic. Bringing performance arts to a wider audience is just one of the main priorities of the cultural centres, yet the problems highlighted above – cost, intensive development of an audience – have seen to it that in the cultural centres the place of dance is not guaranteed and may even come under threat. The question is – what can be done to remedy this? The Flemish Community does not have much power at the local level. Flemish grants account for only

a small part of the operating budget set aside for cultural centres. This could well be a point for discussion in the above-mentioned 'core tasks' debate, in which the Flemish Community is negotiating a fair distribution of power with the local authorities.

One step, which the Flemish Government has taken, is a review of the Local Culture Policy Decree. Under the Decree, as of December 2007, local authorities will be able to apply for additional funding for Flemish policy priorities. One of these priorities is to show more arts productions with Flemish funding. We will have to wait and see how these additional funds will be put to use. Perhaps Art Decree organisations could partner the development of new initiatives?

Initiatives could also be taken in respect of the Arts Decree itself. Practice has shown that the system leans strongly towards production. This creates a situation in which some performances are seen only a few times. And this too creates problems in the programming chain.

The criteria for project grants illustrate that the rules are biased towards production. A couple of years ago there used to be a minimum requirement of five performances of every project funded. This quantitative standard has been withdrawn, which is a good thing in itself. After all, project grants should give opportunities to young makers and keeping them free of too many demands is a good thing. In the past, grants could be reclaimed if the five-performance requirement was not met. We need to move towards a system that rewards people who do everything they can to actually get a return on the production investment. Under the present system the idea is to create a production every year, or so it seems. After all, the only way to stay visible on the landscape is to keep producing.

Makers who rely on project grants seem to have little chance of stepping out of this annual rhythm. However, too few people are aware that the project grants can also be used for re-runs.

Rules aside, not enough of the organisations funded under the Arts Decree are prepared to tackle the job of disseminating less established dance work. Bringing performances to a wider audience comes under what is known as 'postproduction'. It is noticeable that many facilitating organisations work on pre-production and creation (arts centres, authorities, festivals, workshops...) and spend less time in proportion on postproduction. Once the production has been launched it is left up to individual intermediaries to deal with bookings, or the project is abandoned altogether.

In *Metamorfose in podiumland* Han De Meulemeester stated that the dissemination of contemporary dance depends firstly on the fame of the company in question, and then on the network used to convert that fame into venues. From this we can deduce that dissemination is not a matter of course, certainly not in dance. Brussels hosts so many international makers, who – unlike a lot of theatre makers – do not have the local 'backing' needed to take a production on to Flanders. So how does the mechanism of dissemination get going? How does a production hook into a potential venue? It is often at precisely this crucial point that things start to go wrong and quite a lot of (starting) companies need a leg-up. Dissemination should be given as much care and attention as the phases leading up to it.

Recommendations

Policy proposals

- *Dissemination or re-run grants* – In *Metamorphoses* VTi argues that it ought to be possible to obtain project grants for re-runs. The Agentschap Kunsten en Erfgoed [Arts and Heritage Agency] of the Flemish Community has pointed out to us that dissemination or re-run project subsidies are in fact technically possible under the Arts Decree. However, what we see in practice is that they are seldom, if ever, used. This situation could be changed with the help of an awareness campaign, and this would be a worthwhile exercise. It isn't as if many artists produce an extensive play list in the course of a project. Once a production has run a successful course opportunities for a tour do tend to present themselves automatically. Most companies do not succeed in financing the added cost of this (international) tour themselves. A dissemination or re-run grant immediately guarantees that a production will have a longer life, and, along with this, sales to a bigger audience.
- *Dissemination allowance* – At the same time we might consider the route of offering dissemination grants for venues. This is a way to support cultural centres when they are willing to stick their necks out for new and lesser-known work. It is a boost for anyone who wants to sign up to a production during its first run: a budget for very new work, linked to the project pot. The current 'Podium en Nieuw Talent' [Stage and New Talent] regulations will be further elaborated in the Flemish Participation Decree, currently under construction. The contribution to the buyout sum will be attractive to the organiser (one third of the buyout sum, to a maximum of 600 euros). Makers will need to submit a file if they want to be included in this regulation. If they meet the conditions they will be listed. At the present time there

is no real (qualitative) selection process; perhaps it would be a good idea to link one in with the quality test applied during the project funding round (for more information see: <http://podium.vlaanderen.be>).

- *Core tasks debate* – The relationship between local cultural policy and the Arts Decree is still a point for attention, and it is worth monitoring further. We have already referred to the passage in the reviewed Local Culture Policy Decree, in which cultural centres – towns and municipalities in practice – are encouraged to make more room in their programme for productions funded in Flanders.
- *Ad hoc travel grants* – The international character of dance means that tours usually involve high travel expenses: about half of the performance days are in other countries. Travel grants would bring some comfort here, but it would be a positive move to increase this funding.

Recommendations for the sector

- *The right production at the right place* – A broader dissemination might not necessarily be the next step for everyone. Some productions have not yet matured enough to appear at certain venues, or they are simply not suited to a wider audience. However, there is a lot to be done to improve the through flow of artists who are ready to present themselves to a broader audience.
- *Ambassadorship*: a collective commitment in respect of the dissemination of dance – More players ought to be able to take on an ambassadorial role. The facilitating organisations, as well as established companies, can represent a maker who is not well known or provide experience in the area of dissemination. In this sense they can make up for any shortfall. After all, arts centres, art labs, alternative management bureaus, famous companies... have a whole range of contacts to draw on. They

usually disseminate productions through their own networks. With relatively little effort they could do the less established companies a favour, or, in other words, give them access to significant symbolic capital. Talks with the working party involved in this master plan for dance show that a great deal is already being done informally, but that it is largely a matter for committed individuals. There is certainly a need for more consultation, and exchange of expertise, information and contacts.

- *More care for postproduction* – This is because only a few facilitating organisations involve themselves in the dissemination of productions. Better consultation between programmers on task sharing, and swapping experience gained in prospecting, can help achieve a better degree of dissemination. Lots of expertise has already been exchanged informally. *Platform Podiumkunsten* – a platform of consultation for arts and cultural centres, which was designed to better lubricate the programming chain – also has potential.
- *Better visibility* – More visible anchoring points in the landscape can add to a better dissemination:
 - There is a need for a dance platform dedicated to programmers from this and other countries: a collection of interesting productions, artists ranging from established names to talents in-the-making, held over a few days. If several houses join forces a programme of this type could be quickly set up. The Amperdans festival is a joint venture involving several partners from Antwerp (on the initiative of wp Zimmer, the Royal Ballet, Monty, deSingel, Troubleyntheater, CCBE). Dans in Limburg is a joint venture set up at provincial level.
 - Development of new *formats*, such as collections of dance shows.

- Give makers plenty of time: these days there are precious few venues at which productions can run for two weeks.
- This season VTi and Cultuur Lokaal are organising workshops on the history of the performing arts, especially for young programmers. A study day about the history of dance in Flanders and Brussels is planned for June 2008.

5. AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

State of the art: link with the audience

There are two sides to the relationship between dance and its audience, just as there are two sides to a coin. On the one hand we can say that dance in Flanders, compared with other countries, mobilises a very large audience in a small area. Dance is appreciated in all layers of society and is a very widespread form of art, practised by a great many people. And yet many people appear to be far removed from stage dance. This is often perceived as hermetic and elitist, a difficult medium made for and appreciated by a small group of professionals.

The audience still tends to understand 'dance' in the classical sense, whereas that label is now a collective term for very hybridised works of art. Artists often go for the medium of 'dance' for the sake of the tradition in which they were schooled. And even if there is little dance involved nowadays they still come out in favour of the label '(contemporary) dance'. It is not always a simple matter for programmers to distil a coherent programme from this abundance of disciplines. It is even less simple to communicate these choices to an audience without greatly confusing the terms. What an audience is offered in the way of 'dance' is not always consistent with its expectations.

What we have here, therefore, is a problem of terminology: we have just one term to cover a variety of content. Our vocabulary is not subtle enough. Terms that at one time conveyed a difference, such as 'theatre dance' or 'conceptual dance', are no more enlightening and are often laden with clouded associations... The only answer is to work on a new treatment of contemporary dance and to try hard to facilitate communication between the various parties involved: the artist, the programmer, the audience developer, the audience.

In the visual arts this diversity of artistic output appears to be less of a problem. Production has a better discursive context, on different levels (catalogues, monographs, surveys...). But for someone who wants to know more about 'dance' or 'contemporary dance' there is no immediate, accessible frame of reference. We might achieve a better discursive context for dance by better valorising the image material available, thereby uncovering the historical context for this recent development in the world of dance.

What we understand by the term 'contemporary dance' has changed. The practice has become much more diffuse and more hybridised. There have also been radical changes in the area of production and presentation, which appear to render communication with a wider audience more difficult. In the dance edition of *Courant*, Steven De Belder related the shifting nature of production to a sort of fragmentation, which leads to poor visibility:

There is a huge amount of small-scale work, context-related projects, research without performance in mind, and crossovers to other media and their channels of distribution. On the one hand this arises on the basis of artistic and cultural-political motives, and on the other through economic necessity, for in the short term these things are often cheaper and more flexible. The ensuing fragmentation does help explain the poor visibility of contemporary dance: small, short-lived and virtually unidentifiable practices will be slower to attract the attention of the programmers, the public and the press. (Courant#77: 7).

They are experimenting with new forms of art and these are not always designed to produce a full evening's entertainment. The audience might also be presented with a *work in progress*, a 'lecture-performance' or a ten-minute solo... As we have said, it takes a creative approach to communicate this diversity of *formats* to a broader audience.

It also seems that there has been a very fast inflow and outflow in the last decade, an increasing fragmentation and a lack of through flow. The figures quoted above on the number of 'transients' in the world of dance might be indicative of this phenomenon. What we see is often a coming and going of artists who don't get a real opportunity to flow through to the 'middle field'. It has become extremely difficult for an audience to follow the flighty careers of artists and get used to the new script. Dance is evolving extremely quickly. In an international biotope there is constant cross-pollination between makers and appreciators of art. There is a chance that all this industriousness will make it less recognisable for a large section of the potential audience. And, moreover, this audience seems to have reinvented itself: the traditional dance audience appears to have made way for a less stayed audience, which quite happily *zaps* its way through an ever richer diversity of pastimes and potential activities.

Recommendations

Policy proposals

- *No cutting back on art education* – A striking paradox seems to have emerged in the attitude to art participation currently expressed in culture policy. The Participation Decree – which is still being pieced together – is presented as the crowning achievement of the present Minister of Culture, Bert Anciaux. On the other hand, relatively little funding is given to art education under the Arts Decree:
 - On the one hand, art education organisations financed through the decree are forced to work with minimal envelopes.
 - On the other, the review of the Arts Decree is threatening to put the art education activities of structurally accredited organisations under pressure. Soon they will no longer be able to apply for additional funding for art education projects in the course of a four-year grant round.

Does this cost-cutting exercise run counter to policy concerns over art participation? Art education must be written into the Arts Decree as a function in its own right and funds should be made available for it. Interesting programmes such as Bal Moderne, an initiative by Rosas, the countless art education programmes organised by Ultima Vez, etc., have proven their effectiveness, but have become defunct, unfortunately, through lack of funding.

- *Linkage with other areas of policy* – Participation is not just a cultural matter. It should be linked in with media and education. Dance is in danger of slipping out of the media. Can new cross-pollinations be made between these areas?
- *Art criticism* – Better support for art criticism is a self-evident route here. An analysis of the place of art in the media has already been made elsewhere. In recent years the arts landscape has repeatedly affirmed the importance of objective art criticism: on the one hand, as an instrument for deepening our understanding of the development of the arts, and on the other, as a vehicle for dialogue between the production and its wider audience. This affirmation has been rendered into a plethora of initiatives in the field (Sarma, Urbanmag, CCBE programmer Marc Goossens' dance blog, projects by Thersites, Corpus Kunstkratiek...), which do not always find a place for themselves in the policy framework.
- *Archiving policy* – A good archiving policy is an important factor in involving the audience wholeheartedly in dance. Dance productions circulate for a short time only and it is sometimes difficult, if not impossible, to rerun them. Better archiving and a new way of opening up the archives would make the history more accessible for an ever-renewing audience. To add to the existing archives additional funds are needed in order to digitalise the existing material. In the future an audience should be able to

access the archives via Internet technology and innovative campaigns to open them to the public. Will *digital dance videos on demand* be available at any point soon?

Recommendations for the sector

- *Long-term commitment between houses and artists* – These help make an artist better known to the public and in this way an audience can be built up for years to come.
- *New formats* – New formats can be used to generate a broader base of support for dance. It is becoming less and less common for a performance to last the whole evening and this calls for new forms of presentation and communication to be developed. There are already quite a few new formulas that work well.
 - Regional compilations of productions (for example 'Kwartslag' in Brussels, 'Dubbelspel' in Leuven, community season tickets for deSingel and Toneelhuis) allow arts and cultural centre audiences to circulate. What Buda, CC Kortrijk and La Rose des Vents are doing together is original: they have laid on a bus between Kortrijk and Lille. The audience in one town goes to watch performances in the other and is given an introduction on the way.
 - We can also think up a few more thematic links, non-programmed showings grouped together in a festival event lasting several days. There are plenty of examples: Fresh by BUDA, Bouge B in deSingel, Taste in STUK, ... This enables us to present disparate phenomena in a coherent way and find new audiences for them.
 - 'Mixed bills': wp Zimmer organises a tour with a variety of house artistes on the bill.

- *Actively extol the virtues of dance to the public* – In many cultural centres the programmers hold intensive discussions with the audience, more structured than the informal talk before and after the show.
 - The traditional info evening or members' evening has now been set up in Vooruit and STUK. These might involve video clips (in Waregem, for example), or one-to-one talks (in the De Warande cultural centre, Turnhout, for example) or *teasers* and mini performances (in Vooruit, for example). At Buda and STUK volunteers are given the opportunity to preview a performance and so take on the role of 'ambassador'.
 - Some cultural centres come to a member's home to explain the programme, and he/she invites ten or so guests, exactly like a Tupperware evening, for example. The culture centre in Kortrijk does this 20 to 25 times a season.
 - The cultural centre in Bruges has set up a good project to get young people involved in prospecting and programming. deSingel works with teachers to develop special sessions for schools. The work of the larger companies, and 'dancing' work, is very important in this dialogue with a bigger audience.
- *Development of a new vocabulary in relation to dance* – We should start by looking at the different needs of artists and of audience developers. Can we create new labels and formats to deal with this? Hybridisation is a huge challenge for the audience developer. In practice people are trying out all kinds of labels to cover endless variations of mixed forms. But it seems that the word 'performance' is not particularly audience-friendly. Sub-sub-categories such as 'dance installation' don't help either. And solutions involving a slash, such as 'dance/theatre/visual art' are not the way forward either. Perhaps we should use percentages, as some centres in Norway and Austria do? Festival formulas seem to work, but there is always the danger of overkill. When it comes to labelling it might be an idea to bring the various houses into the talks.

- *The role of art criticism and development of discourse* – Without overstating it, art criticism can also play an important role in developing a new language to report on artistic developments in the world of dance, and this would serve a core audience of professionals and the broader layers of the population alike.
- *Consideration for reruns and repertoire* – This gives the audience a second chance, and mouth-to-mouth advertising can be left to do its work. The rerunning of successful productions counteracts fragmentation and offers the audience more context and history.
- *Visible fixing points in the landscape* – Thought can be given to a 'dance house': there are no places for dance that operate similarly to the municipal theatres, whereas the arts centres have developed into 'arts' houses and oversee a variety of disciplines. We might also consider a 'dance festival', which functions in the same way as Het Theaterfestival in that it provides a calibration point at the end of every season. In the 2007-2008 season a few interesting festivals are organised: Playground (STUK), Amperdans (on the initiative of wp Zimmer, KBvV, Monty, deSingel, Troubleyntheater, CCBE), Bouge B (deSingel) and December Dance (Concertgebouw Brugge and CC Brugge). They each address the need for a dance festival, albeit from different perspectives. If these initiatives attract a following they should be given appropriate funding. Flanders has a need for a national or international festival with a broad spectrum of dance on offer.

6. EDUCATION

State of the art

It goes without saying that education and training should be given pride of place in an overall vision of the world of dance. After all, dance makes specific demands on education: it is best for dancers to start their training when they are young; they need to continue training and perfecting themselves their whole lives. The need for training continues for their entire careers. But semi-professionals and amateurs too stand to benefit from a rich choice of professionally organised courses. Finally, schooling continues to play an important role after a dance career has ended: the physical demands imposed by dancing are such that careers in dance are short lived. Once this point is reached re-conversion and transition become important, because many dancers start a new career once their dancing lives are over.

Therefore the importance of schooling and education has something to do with the physicality of the art of dance, but in the framework of this master plan that importance is present at other levels. There is also a direct link to the debate on art participation and art education, in which it goes without saying that schools have an important role to play.

On the one hand we might consider the place of art – and more particularly dance – in schools. The process of informing a wider public about developments in dance starts with art education. Recently, the place of art and culture in education has reappeared on the cultural-political agenda in Flanders. In the autumn of 2007, commissioned by the department of Education, Prof Anne Bamford published an investigation of the place art occupies in the compulsory curriculum. A number of remarkable lines came to the fore. The research clearly states that art and cultural education are not open to everyone. Despite the good intentions embodied in many

a policy document, origin and social background frequently affect the degree to which a child gains access to art and culture. Another point for attention is the marked fragmentation of the art education provision, which is a good argument for assuring its quality. So there is work to be done in developing appropriate tools to test the quality of art and cultural education. And here we include the provision in primary and secondary schools, as well as in teacher training. The time is ripe to contemplate what the analyses and recommendations in Prof Bamford's report might signify for dance.

Art education might also find a partner in Deeltijds Kunstonderwijs (DKO, Part-time Art Education). Here, we could work towards a better linkage between the dance profession and recreational dance for a wider audience, which might provide a broader base for 'stage dance'.

Education and training are crucial functions: not only for artistic development within dance, but also as a means of negotiating the place of dance in society. This is a complex area in need of further study and more detailed mapping.

The discussion resides at various policy levels and encompasses the provision of dance in ordinary education, dance schools for amateurs, DKO courses, conservatories, and education with a view to undertaking a professional career in dance. Further study is required in order to assess the quality of the courses and list their shortcomings. This master plan pre-empts this further-reaching and more inclusive perspective by formulating a few concrete recommendations.

Recommendations

- *More research and evaluation* – There is a need for further study to gain a picture of the dance provision in the compulsory curriculum and DKO and assess its quality. Higher dance education must also be catalogued and evaluated, as must the secondary level Stedelijk Instituut voor Ballet [Municipal School of Ballet] in Antwerp.
- *Dissemination and cataloguing of the provision* – If the educational provision were to be catalogued we might well find that there is a need for better dissemination. At the present time the dance provision is too concentrated in the cities, whereas everyone should have easy access to dance education of good quality, tailored to suit young people with varying ambitions (professional or recreational). In addition to improving the dissemination of the training provision, we must improve its quality.
- *More points of contact between education and modern practice* – It is hard for the achievements of Flemish dance to filter through to education. In lessons designed for amateurs we see few traces of contemporary dance technique. And on the aesthetics course how many pupils get to see an overview of interesting choreographers in Flanders, let alone a performance? At times education and professional practice seem like separate worlds, but, with a little effort, a lot can be done. Organisations such as Danspunt focus on dance through workshops, at which professional dancers and young people work together to create a piece.
- *Consideration for dance teacher training* – We note a large rift between the contemporary dance field (including the people who organise workshops within this field), and the courses on offer in our education system. And vice-versa, there is still not enough contact between professional dance creators and dance appreciators. This is partly to do with the scant attention given to

the teaching of dance in training courses for professional dancers. Dancers who have at one time stepped into the professional field can also be put to work as teachers, a matter worthy of special attention. This calls for more flexible teacher training in dance or the possibility of using a certificate of experience to obtain a licence [see above].

- *Revaluation of the profession of dancer* – Dancers who have followed a training course must have the opportunity to validate their qualification, so that they too can enrol for college courses or university. It must be possible to convert the lifelong learning to which most dancers are subject into certificates and seniority.
- *Improve the choice of lessons for professionals* – Unlike other countries, Flanders has a very poor choice of workshops for professionals, with or without renowned teachers. Brussels might be considered as a dance Mecca, but we can count the initiatives dedicated to providing open classes and workshops on one hand. La Raffinerie – run from Charleroi/Danses – and Danscentrum Jette are doing valuable work in this area. The bigger companies also have something to add, by opening lessons to a broader field of professionals (wherever possible, because lessons like these sometimes focus on particular creative processes). An initiative of this type can be enriching in that it brings dancers from different backgrounds in contact with each other.
- *Transition programmes* – In Flanders there are few structures in place to guarantee dancers a future, even after their short careers. The Royal Ballet has taken initiatives in this direction: it runs a programme in which dancers receive a year's pay and spend six months in retraining. However, we note that our neighbouring countries are quite a way ahead of us, in ballet as well as contemporary dance. We argue for a review of the study and policy suggestions made by oKo.

- *Open infrastructure to education* – Analogous with open schools, the infrastructure already in place can be made available to workshops, projects involving young people, or neighbourhood initiatives.
- *Expansion of the training provision in higher education* –
 - Bachelor and Master in dance - at the present time there is just one recognised three-year bachelor course in Flanders (Hoger Instituut voor Dans). P.A.R.T.S. is still not officially recognised. In the last 12 years this four-year course has demonstrated that, like the theatre courses, it can justifiably lay claim to a legally recognised bachelor (three-year) and master (fourth-year) diploma in contemporary dance.
 - Dance training beyond the level of master - There is also need for an advanced research project in dance and choreography, beyond the level of master.
- *Universities and colleges partnered to develop theory* – Four universities offer theatre science in Flanders: UGent, UA (Antwerp), VUB (Brussels) and KULeuven. These courses do devote time to dance, but unlike universities in our neighbouring countries, they do not offer a complete package on dance theory. Additionally, more intensive cooperative links could be set up between universities, colleges and dance courses, to help encourage cross-pollination between theory and practice. In emulation of dance master classes for professionals, it would be advantageous to invite renowned dance theoreticians now and then, and join forces with an international colloquium on current dance topics.

Conclusion: canaries in the coal mine

When we say that the performing arts in Flanders have changed so much since 1993, this assertion applies especially and emphatically to the case of dance. The tendencies we observed at work within the whole of performing arts creation are also delineated in dance, but much sharper still and much earlier in time. The growth in the production of dance has been truly spectacular. In 2004-2005 there were no fewer than 4.3 times as many dance productions as there were eleven seasons earlier. Since 1993, a good number of Flemish dance producers received the chance to build up a solid structure. It is evident that the catch-up operation under the Performing Arts Decree only partially explains this growth. It is also significant that Brussels and Flanders exert a global attraction in the world of dance. Many important players are established here, ensuring that many creators from across the world have ambitions to work here too.

The strong interdependence of dance producers in a *transnational* production circuit also helps to explain this phenomenal growth in output. Already in the 1980s, foreign companies were involved with Flemish dance production and the input from abroad is bigger than ever today. The relationship gradually grew more reciprocal after Flemish arts centres and festivals took on an increasingly active role.

This shows the innovative character from which the dance sector derived its pioneering position. Dance developed a production model – international collaboration with Flemish funding as the driver – which is increasingly being copied by other performance arts. The statistics show that a growing number of organisations in the areas of theatre and music theatre have gradually developed operations with a structural international impact. Dance in Flan-

ders has patently enjoyed the fruits of crossing boundaries while the other performing arts follow in its wake.

In other ways the pioneering role of dance makes it actually quite vulnerable. Increasing individualisation in the performing arts is probably the best example. Performing artists are increasingly less bound to one single ensemble; the performing arts have developed into a freelance environment. Once again this applies even more to dance. It turns out here too that the whole range of performing arts shows the same trend, except that it is less emphatic and happens a while later. This is true for 'transients' as well. More artists are now seem to be involved occasionally with production. Is this an indication of the looming fragmentation of employment prospects for individual artists? Obviously, the limitations of the VTi database play a part in this; it is becoming very difficult to capture the career of more and more hyper-mobile artists within the limited framework of 'Flemish' dance production. The changing position of the individual artist demands an adjustment of our cultural policies in every respect and it is clear that this thinking cannot be exclusively carried out at the Flemish level. The position of the individual artist in the world of dance – an increasingly transnational freelance environment – is indeed becoming very precarious.

The identification of dance's pioneering position leads to a crucial insight. The developments we sketch out here are not only important for the dance sector itself, but also in the long term for the whole of the performing arts. Dance is – because of the specificity of its creation and dissemination – the proverbial canary in the coal mine, indicating crucial future trends.

That is one reason why cultural policy should pay particular attention to dance. There is also another crucial reason which is rather connected to the historical position which contemporary dance in Flanders finds itself in today. Before the 1980s only the Royal Ballet of Flanders was able to go on international tours. In the 1980s a generation came to the fore in contemporary dance

that succeeded in gaining a leading international position. Decades after the international breakthrough, the question is still on the table of how this cultural and economic boom can be detached from being a historical accident and given a more structural foundation? How can we safeguard this cultural economic boom for the future? With this master plan, we wanted to provide an impetus to finding answers derived from an integrated vision of practices in the world of dance. Which job functions are necessary in a vital and dynamic dance landscape? Where is the potential and where are the gaps? Responsibility lies both with policy-making and with the sector.

As to policy, we conclude by highlighting the following recommendations:

- *Take into account the specificity of dance within the framework of a global arts policy, which at the same time needs to be adapted to increasing hybridisation and interdisciplinarity. A more integrated quality evaluation process is an important instrument that needs development.*
- *Seek a balance between continuity and renewal – A 'ceiling' for dance subsidies – or for other sub-genres – or putting a fundamental stop to organisations centred around one artist are not desirable options in this process.*
- *Develop an arts policy that is adapted to the vulnerable position of the individual artist.*
- *Think about the role of cultural policy with regard to the transnational production circuit. The national identity and roots of creators and producers in this process are less and less clear-cut. It was evident from the 2005 funding round that this was causing growing pains. The central and increasingly interrelated position of Flemish actors in this environment should not only be valued at its true worth, but also actively stimulated in a way that guarantees the continuity of their achievement in the future.*

- *Prepare to deal with the infrastructural needs* of dance creators, including both large and small-scale structures and projects.
- *Provide for more diversity and quality in education and training courses.*

It is obviously important for the sector itself to keep investing in the production of quality and subsequently work specifically on the following points:

- *Pay more attention to pre-production and post-production* - The system is focused too much on production and too little on gaining the biggest pay-off from what has been produced.
- *More consultation between producers themselves and between producers and presenters* - Who supports who and who does what? There is work to do on optimising the 'programming chain', the available but all too often halting flow from arts laboratories to arts centres to cultural centres.
- *Develop strategies for transmission* - The knowledge, networks, infrastructure, organisations, etc. acquired must be made widely available and passed on from 'old' to 'new' generations.
- *Improve the visibility of dance in our own country* - It is important to bring across the history of and recent developments in dance to new audiences.
 - There are opportunities for collaboration between established names and new blood. Acting as joint ambassadors could be one path to follow.
 - We also see a strong need for visible anchoring points in the world of dance.
 - The development of a new language to talk about dance is now more crucial than ever, as a means to bridge the gap between the fast evolutions in the development of dance and a broader public. This topic might also be the subject of a more intense international collaboration.

PLATFORM FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

Since it was founded in 1987, *Vlaams Theater Instituut* has developed into an open organisation with strong links to both the sector itself and the policy-makers. The reason for its existence is the need for sound information among the public, theatre professionals, politicians, students, press and academics. On performing artists and their work. On cultural policy and cultural management. On international work. On developments and trends. On infrastructure, touring and art education.

VTi wants to provide all this information in a broad range of easy-to-use resources. To this end it currently fulfils three main functions: documentation, research and information/awareness. Its intention is in this way to contribute to the ongoing growth of the sector and help build a social environment for artistic creation.

Documentation Centre for Theatre, Dance and Music-Theatre: *VTi* assumes responsibility for the intensive documentation of performing arts practices. The sector and its context are observed, artistic and policy-making developments are recorded, sorted and made accessible by means of the extensive database, library and website.

Sectorial Think-Tank in a Diverse and International Flanders: Applied research is a major component of *VTi's* work because it converts the information in the database and collections into a useful form. The research is applied to actual practices by means of descriptive and analytical fieldwork. In this regard, the performing arts are not simply the object of research, but also play an active part in shaping opinion.

Critical Interface between Theatre-Makers, the Public and the Policy-Makers: *VTi* is a place for knowledge, study and also vision. It is for this reason that it sets debates going, and wants to actively inform people and increase their awareness. Research and new insights are presented as feedback to the sector on the website, in publications and the periodical *Courant*, through the library and at study sessions. The chief concerns here are reflexive dialogue, practical usefulness and an overview of the broader picture.

In all these activities *VTi* links current events in the performing arts to long-term projects. At the moment, for example, attention is being focused on a thorough analysis of artistic practices and oeuvres, on public participation (concentrating on art education, touring and criticism) and on the challenge of international and intercultural cooperation.

DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS

VTi's three core tasks are organically combined in its day-to-day business.

In the *VTi library* visitors can consult books, periodicals, cuttings and documentation free of charge and without enrolment. It includes:

- Documentation on organisations in Flanders
- Books on the performing arts, cultural management, policy, art education, etc.
- At least 10000 plays, in both published and manuscript form
- current subscriptions to over 100 professional journals
- Cuttings archives of relevant information from newspapers and periodicals
- A video library with over 5000 hours of tapes

The www.vti.be website is intended to be flexible and keep pace with current news. It enables you to keep track of *VTi*'s work, with an overview of all its activities and documents. In addition, the site contains a mass of useful information on the performing arts sector: the ins and outs of subsidies, a list of first nights, the latest job vacancies, etc. An ingenious search engine also provides you with a huge amount of online information from the database.

The quarterly information booklet *Courant* keeps performing arts professionals with special topics, in-depth articles and brief news items.

VTi staff also answer specific questions by phone, e-mail, fax or post.

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Colophon

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