

## TESTIMONY TO THE COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES AND INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP RELATIONS ON OVERSIGHT: NYS CDP

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### Testimony to the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations on Oversight: NYS CDP

By Lane Harwell, Director of Dance/NYC

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I submit testimony today on behalf of New York City's dance makers—1,200 entities and 5,000 dancers—to highlight the value of the New York State Cultural Data Project (CDP) to our industry and the importance of City investment.

I bring with me a powerful example of the project's success: Dance/NYC's State of NYC Dance (2011), which uses the first-ever CDP data on 127 nonprofit dance organizations and establishes key benchmarks for measuring their activity, economics and workforce. Study findings underscore the importance of nonprofit dance as a contributor to and an ambassador for our City, with thousands of performances locally and on tour, hundreds of new works and millions in attendance. Total aggregate expenditures of groups analyzed are \$231 million—healthy contributions to our economy and powerful returns on investment.

The CDP provides Dance/NYC, and all of our sister researchers and advocates, unprecedented efficiencies and quality controls in terms of data collection and analysis, improving the regularity, scope and quality of research and strengthening our messaging. We can use CDP studies like the State of NYC Dance to expand public awareness and guide policy, funding and management practice—bolstering the support structure for the the arts. Participating arts groups can understand their businesses and impact in context and learn how to grow.

This is not to say the CDP is a "cure all" for measuring the health of the arts. Establishing an initial CDP profile is especially labor intensive, and ongoing profile entry is challenging, and individual artists, unincorporated groups and the smallest nonprofits (less than \$25,000) lack the resources and incentive to do. This blind spot is particularly acute for NYC dance where, as Dance/NYC's Census of New York City Dancemakers (2007) tells us, individual artists and alternative groups comprise the lion's share (more than 50%) of 1,200 local dance makers.

I expect participation in the CDP to grow as awareness spreads, and the system's value is demonstrated by reports like the State of NYC Dance. I suggest there may also be opportunity for "short form" profiles for those artists without nonprofit status, for instance, those who benefit from fiscal sponsorship arrangements. Dance/NYC is currently working with local fiscal sponsors, including Fractured Atlas, Pentacle, New York Live Arts and the New York Foundation for the Arts, to extend its State of NYC Dance findings to their dance artists.

Who is not in the CDP tells us we need to keep hunting to understand how alternative corporate models are evolving. But who we see in the CDP provide: a snapshot for a vital segment of NYC arts and culture; baselines for future research that will allow us to track trends in the nonprofit space; indicators relevant to those in, entering or working with nonprofits; and cues for how businesses of all kinds can be built in the arts. My thanks to you for making this possible.

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