

LETTER TO MAYOR BILL DE BLASIO, RE: ADVISORY COUNCIL ON ARTS, CULTURE, AND TOURISM

Wednesday, May 13, 2020

Letter to Mayor Bill de Blasio, Re: Advisory Council on Arts, Culture, and Tourism

By New York City area Dance Makers and Organizations

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May 13, 2020

Honorable Bill de Blasio
Mayor City of New York City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Re: Advisory Council on Arts, Culture, and Tourism

Dear Mayor de Blasio:

We are writing to you as a dance community of organizations and dance workers that make up a significant workforce that is central to New York City's cultural ecosystem and economy.

We are reaching out because of the glaring absence of a dance representative on the City's sector Advisory Council on Arts, Culture, and Tourism. While we acknowledge your team's efforts to develop a strategic COVID-19 reopening and recovery plan and appreciate the inclusion of the arts and cultural organizations in the City, it is critical that the dance community further advocates for itself. Although some of our needs and experiences intersect with that of other performing arts disciplines, the dance sector is unique and demands the attention of the local government.

The dance community in New York City attracts and exports talent around the world, drives local tourism, and is central to some of the City's most popular and lucrative cultural attractions— including Broadway. Dance/NYC's [State of NYC Dance and Workforce Demographics Report](#) has revealed that the dance sector contributes over \$300 million to the City's economy, even as dance remains the discipline receiving the lowest amount of funding in arts and culture. This doesn't include the many freelance artists, LLCs, and fiscally-sponsored groups that also help make New York City the dance capital of the world. Despite this, the dance community remains adaptable and vibrant. Our expertise and experiences position us as significant contributors to the health of the arts, culture, and tourism sector of our City as we endeavor to envision a future that will ensure our cultural capital can thrive once again.

Our work and organizations celebrate, employ, and serve a diverse group of New Yorkers: We are people of color, disabled people, transgender and gender-nonconforming people, women-identifying and immigrant people, and people living in poverty. We are the birthplace of hip hop, salsa, and modern dance. We are places of preservation of folkloric and culturally specific dance forms. We are performance venues, presenters, educational institutions and festivals. We are New Yorkers dancing barefoot, on point, taps, sneakers, and Broadway. We are community organizers and administrators, educators and therapists, large organizations, and small community collectives. Together we represent over 5,000 individual dance artists, 1,200+ dance-making entities, and 500+ nonprofit dance companies.

As a dance community, we demand inclusion and formal representation on the City's Advisory Council on Arts, Culture, and Tourism and its plans for recovery and reopening.

Since the start of the pandemic, Dance/NYC has collected data on the impact our sector has experienced as a result of COVID-19 and the findings are staggering: As of May 8, 2020, individual dance-makers reported a cumulative loss of at least \$3.3 million with organizations, projects, and groups indicating losses that exceed \$20.5 million. These figures largely account for only early March and April activity. The loss experienced by our community has only deepened and the impact continues to be felt by all. More alarmingly, many respondents are indicating they will not be able to sustain themselves or their institutions much longer without unrestricted funds to cover lost salaries/wages, living expenses, and food/groceries— we may soon lose a large swath of our cultural sector as closures begin to take course. It is against this backdrop that we as a community have already begun to organize and plan for the future, grounded in data and in the experiences of the very people that make New York City's arts, culture, and tourism sector thrive.

As the impact of the pandemic grows, our community is evidently suffering the consequences of systems that fail to consider our needs and contributions time and time again. We ask you, Mayor de Blasio, not to further anonymize our stories and expertise by refusing to include us in critical conversations about how we can collectively return to the workplace safely and sustain growth in the near future.

We thank you and your team for all you are doing and look forward to working with you as we move into a new future for New York City.

Signatories,

1. Abarukas
2. Abby Z and the New Utility
3. Abrons Arts Center
4. Abundance Company
5. A.I.M. by Kyle Abraham
6. Alice Farley Dance Theater
7. Alison Cook Beatty Dance
8. Alma Dance Company

9. Alpha Omega Theatrical Dance Company
10. Alvin American Dance Theater
11. American Ballet Theatre
12. American Tap Dance Foundation
13. Andrea Ward Company
14. Angela's Pulse
15. Arnhold Foundation
16. Arts Space Sanctuary
17. Artichoke Dance Company
18. Asian American Arts Alliance
19. Ballaro Dance
20. BalletCollective
21. Ballet des Ameriques
22. Ballet Hispánico
23. BARE Dance Company
24. Battery Dance Company
25. Bombazo Dance Co.
26. Boo Froebel Projects
27. Brooklyn Studios for Dance
28. Buglisi Dance Theatre
29. Brooklyn Ballet Theatre
30. Camille A. Brown & Dancers
31. Claudia Schreier & Company
32. Confluence Performance Project
33. CPR- Center for Performance Research
34. Creative Performances
35. CRS- Center for Remembering & Sharing
36. CUNY Dance Initiative
37. Dance Artists' National Collective
38. Dance Caribbean COLLECTIVE
39. Dance Entropy Inc./Green Space
40. Dance in Bushwick
41. Dance Lab New York
42. Dance/NYC
43. Dances For A Variable Population
44. Dance Parade
45. Dance Theatre of Harlem
46. Dance Visions NY
47. Dancewave
48. Dancing Crane Georgian Cultural Center
49. Danspace Project
50. Danza España/American Spanish Dance Theatre
51. Devalois Fearon Dance
52. Divine Rhythm Productions
53. Dixon Place Theater
54. Dorrance Dance
55. Doug Varone and Dancers
56. DNA
57. Elisa Monte Dance
58. Emily Johnson/Catalyst
59. Ephrat Asherie Dance
60. Eva Dean Dance
61. FAILSPACE
62. Full Circle Souljahs
63. Futile Gestures
64. Gallim / Andrea Miller
65. Garzia Capri Company
66. Germaul Barnes-Viewsic Dance
67. Gibney
68. Harkness Foundation for Dance
69. Heidi Latsky Dance
70. HEWMAN
71. Ice Theatre of New York
72. Indelible Dance
73. Infinite Body/Eva Yaa Asantewaa
74. Japan Society
75. Jessica Gaynor Dance
76. Jiva Performing Arts
77. Jon Lehrer Dance Company
78. José Limón Dance Foundation
79. Kate Weare Company
80. Kalamandir Dance Co
81. Kofago Dance Ensemble
82. Kosoko | Performance
83. Kristin McArdle Dance
84. Kupferberg Center for the Arts
85. Kyle Marshall Choreography
86. Ladies of Hip Hop
87. Lone King Projects
88. Long Island City School of Ballet
89. Lotus Music & Dance
90. Mark Morris Dance Group
91. Marth Graham Dance Company
92. Melina Ring / Special Projects

93. mersiha messiha | CIRCUITDEBRIS
94. MICHİYAYA Dance
95. Miguel Gutierrez
96. Monica Bill Barnes & Company
97. Movement Research
98. Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company
99. Nancy Meehan Dance Company
100. National Dance Institute
101. Nel Shelby Productions
102. Neville Dance Theatre
103. New Chamber Ballet
104. New York City Ballet
105. New Yorkers for Culture & Arts
106. New York International Salsa Congress, Inc.
107. New York Live Arts
108. New York Theatre Ballet
109. New York Theatre Ballet School
110. Omega Dance Company
111. PALISSIMO Company
112. Pentacle
113. Peridance Capezio Center
114. Pidgeonwing Dance
115. Rastro Dance Company
116. Renegade Performance Group
117. RIOULT Dance NY
118. RoCo Dance
119. Rod Rodgers Dance Company & Studios
120. Sarah Berges Dance
121. Shoen Movement Company
122. Shawn Bible Dance Company
123. Shen Wei Dance Arts
124. Soles of Duende
125. Staten Island Dance Project
126. Steps Beyond Foundation
127. Steps on Broadway
128. Suzzanne Ponomarenko Dance
129. Sydnie L. Mosley Dances
130. SYREN Modern Dance
131. The Chocolate Factory
132. The Borscht Collective
133. The Dance Union
134. The Equus Projects
135. The Field
136. The International Association of Blacks in Dance, Inc.
137. The Jerome Robbins Foundation
138. The Moving Architects
139. The New York Baroque Dance Company
140. The New York Dance and Performance Awards, The Bessies
141. The Red Lines
142. The School of Hard Knowcks, USA/Yoshiko Chuma
143. The Vangelina Theater
144. The Working Group of Creating New Futures
145. Third Rail Projects
146. Tom Gold Dance
147. Treehouse Shakers
148. Urban Bush Women
149. WHITE WAVE YOUNG SOON KIM DANCE COMPANY
150. Queensboro Dance Festival
151. Young Dancemakers Company

Updated May 19, 2020.

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