

D/NYC TESTIMONY TO THE NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY - 12.13.10

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By Lane Harwell

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Testimony to the New York State Assembly Standing Committee on Tourism, Parks, Arts and Sport Development and the Assembly Standing Committee on Oversight, Analysis and Investigation on the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) Programs – Albany, December 13, 2010

By Lane Harwell, Director of Dance/NYC

I submit testimony today on behalf of New York City's dance makers—over 1,200 entities and 5,000 dancers—to call attention to the importance of the New York State Council on the Arts' programs to our industry, and highlight contributions of our industry to the State.

The impact of local dance on the City and State is demonstrated by Dance/NYC data including:

- \$23.2 million taxes paid to the City and State
- \$80.2 million in wages
- \$217 patron per capita spending for visitors to NYC
- Nearly .5 billion dollars in both direct and indirect impacts on New York City.

These economic impact numbers are threatened by recent challenges. According to Dance/NYC's 2009 Economic Climate Survey, over 25 percent of local dance groups are reducing staff, and 20 percent are making cuts to programs and services, which now reach a NYC-based and on tour audience of 3 million.

The NYC dance community has been well served by NYSCA's commitment to discipline-specific funding and program innovation (funding areas now include: performances, commissions, long-term residencies outside NYC, rehearsal space subsidies, general operations and services to the field) and by the intellectual capital staff and panelists bring to artistic and managerial evaluations. Current programs help to meet the financial, infrastructural and creative needs of NYC dance, drive industry trade throughout the State and achieve a high return on investment.

Understanding that funding and staff losses have demanded NYSCA restructure its operations and broaden the scope of work for program officers, Dance/NYC is grateful the agency has pledged to maintain discipline-specific funding. Regrettably, it appears budgetary reductions will eliminate all money for site visits and independent audits, posing an evaluation challenge for all, especially for new applicants and groups outside of NYC.

I am here today to express my support for NYSCA, to ask you to do what you can to restore the agency to funding health, and to offer Dance/NYC as a resource to help you and the new administration to maintain a vibrant NYSCA.

With NYSCA, NYC dance can continue to help the State work its way out of the recession and contribute to a brighter future for every citizen and resident.

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