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Pedagogical Dilemmas in Dance and Music: Balancing the Demands of the Art with the Needs of the Person.

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Introduction

“Ballet is unforgiving, it’s ruthless. It is an absolutely cruel and horrendous world, but it’s beautiful!”

“...competition in one form or another is a pretty basic part of it... We try to keep it down a little bit here by rotating part assignments but, there is a merit base in part assignment. You’re not going to put your worst player to play a first horn on the Bruckner fourth Symphony. You try not to put somebody on the part that will embarrass them and the school.”

“I think a lot of people have a sort of a love- hate relationship. I mean, if you didn’t have a fair component of love you couldn’t make yourself do it forever but the resentment of all the time it takes and how much you miss in your life.”

The study and pursuit of art is a fulfilling and delightful manifestation of a fundamental need of the human spirit. The engagement with new challenges of achievement is invigorating. The pursuit of ideals of excellence gives purpose and meaning to life. But, in the context of a consumer society, art is easily appropriated as cultural entertainment capital. Artistic concepts, aesthetic standards, and creative innovation can become idealizations of perfection forced on performers being exploited for societal pleasure. Individual achievement is mythologized as symbol for the corporate society. In this context, how can the needs of the individual be balanced with the demands of the art?

A first, and very important step, is the admission that a problem exists – that the demands of the art in our time may not be aligned with the needs of the individual. It requires the recognition that pedagogic dilemmas exist and a conscious awareness of the values inherent in choices and behaviours. As researchers, it requires both a willingness to see beyond the “appropriate answer” of the discursive frame and to confront the “ugly” side of art but at the same time objectivity and responsibility toward time-honoured artistic values and practices.

Sociology of sports (Donnelly, 1997) now very openly admits there is a problem of verbal and emotional abuse of those considered talented as well as of many simply falling short of coaches and parents’ expectation. A recent colloquium addressed the issue “head-on” (Talented

Children in Sport, Music and Dance: How can we Nurture Talent without Exploiting or Abusing Children? – University of Toronto, Centre for Sport Policy Studies, Sept 28-29, 2001). In music education we have essentially no research looking at this issue and little if any acknowledgement it even exists. In dance there is acknowledgement that there is risk of physical injury and eating disorder, but little attention to emotional issues of pedagogy. In music education we have the further concern of “legitimised deprivation” of opportunity for children on the basis of “talent.” Since music is a naturally occurring intelligence, education for the development of musical potential should be every child’s right.

Social justice literature points to places where the “system” deprives a certain group of the opportunity to develop a natural potential. Epp & Watkinson (1997), in a book entitled “Systemic violence in education,” state that they view as “violent” any practices and procedures that adversely impact individuals by “burdening them psychologically, mentally, culturally, spiritually, economically, or physically. It includes practices and procedures that prevent students from learning, thus harming them.” Parker (2000) and Bartel (2000) have pointed out applications to music.

Background – Research Program

The present research report is part of a program of research: it is based on and has grown out of several previous studies and is in essence a progress report. Our research has three facets:

Conditions of Learning (Written Personal Narratives-Music). In an article entitled, “What really matters in music class” (Cameron & Bartel, Fall, 1996), we invited students and educators to submit personal narrative accounts of memorable experiences with music learning - positive or negative. We also gathered accounts from students at the University of Toronto. We were looking for learning conditions facilitating engagement. Initial findings were reported at the Canadian University Music Society conference in 1997 (Bartel & Cameron, 1997). We have now acquired a total of 132 individual usable accounts. We conducted a thematic analysis of the narratives and compared our results to the conditions of learning model of Brian Cambourne (1988) and the student-centred philosophy of Max Van Manen (1986). We found that our findings matched these models but extended the significant categories to include aspects perhaps specific to music learning. We reported the findings at a commission of the International Society for Music Education in South Africa in 1998 (Cameron & Bartel, 1999; Cameron & Bartel, 2000).

Self Efficacy of Generalist and Specialist Teachers Teaching Music. In 1997 we began a questionnaire study on teachers' self-perception of confidence to teach music and perceptions of musical talent (Bartel & Cameron, 1998). The questionnaire asked teachers to describe in detail any critical incident or series of incidents that affected their self-perception of ability and confidence to teach music. In 2001-2002 we continued this research in a comparative education study focused on the “generalist” teacher required to teach music. This study, conducted with Jackie and Robert Wiggins, compares teachers in New Zealand and Canada in self-efficacy and related factors. Most recently we have expanded this to include in-service and pre-service music specialists. Findings have been reported at the International Society for Music Education in South Africa in 1998 (Cameron & Bartel, 1999; Cameron & Bartel, 2000) and are being reported at AERA, 2002, and have been accepted for ISME 2002 in Norway.

Face the Music (Interviews on Systemic Issues). During 2000-2001 we focused our research on broader systemic issues and began in-depth interviews. A graduate student working in our research program conducted a small pilot study with interviews stimulated by movie excerpts (Jacques, 2001a) that replicated our results Conditions of

Learning but re-focused analysis and proposed several new themes in the data. Jacques (2001b) conducted further interviews to explore the effectiveness of various approaches to the use of video excerpts.

To date we have conducted semi-structured interviews with 31 musicians (School music teachers and private studio music instructors teaching beginners, intermediate, advanced, and pre-professional students). Interviews used video clips from popular movies as thought stimulators and memory “joggers” and focused on the following themes: (1) Value of excellence, (2) importance of virtuosity, (3) role of teacher as conductor, (4) perceptions of human motivation and ability, (5) concept of talent, (6) and role of music in culture. We used qualitative analysis to examine data and identified factors (themes) in the perpetuation of the “talent-oriented” system. Initial partial results were reported in a paper in the Music Education SIG at AERA in Seattle, 2001.

After the AERA conference in Seattle we began a parallel research process with dance teachers and dancers. The present paper is based on this most recent research but draws on the model of the conditions of learning first established in 1997 and refined in each of the subsequent studies.

METHOD

Data for this study are drawn from 51, ninety-minute music and dance interviews:

Music: Interviews related to music (n=31) included 9 teachers teaching pre-professional level music students, 8 teaching music at a beginner to intermediate level in public schools and community, 6 not teaching music but who have taken lessons or music in school, and 8 who are music students in a pre-professional music program.

Dance: Interviews related to dance (n=20) included 5 teachers teaching dance in high school, 6 private studio teachers, 2 ballroom dancers and dance teachers, 3 students in professional dance schools, one “dance mother,” two folk dancers, and one former dancer now teaching dance education.

All participants were contacted by the interviewers, signed consent letters approved by the university ethics committee, and participated in taped interviews. Interviews were conducted by researchers Linda Cameron and Lee Bartel, and by doctoral students, John Stathakos, Pandora Bryce, Brandi Jacques, and Anne-Marie Walsh. Interviews were transcribed in whole or in relevant part to facilitate thematic analysis.

RESULTS

Although we found some differences between the experiences and interpretations of dancers and musicians, dancers seemed to encounter dilemmas similar to those we found earlier for musicians. We examine these first and then look at some differences.

Pedagogical Dilemmas.

The study and pursuit of music and dance seems to be fraught with constant tensions and dilemmas: the student likes the positive teacher but feels something is being missed; the teacher emphasizes technique but then demands expressivity; to be an excellent performer a child must start very young but loses out on holistic development; all students deserve equal opportunity to participate but some students achieve a better performance; there is motivational benefit in competition but psychological cost in not winning; critical ability must be developed to be artistically responsible but the inner critic can ruin confidence and the love of the art.

Artistic Expressivity — Technical Proficiency. Music experienced from the perspective of a listener is sound with structure and expressive import. Dance from the perspective of viewer is gesture with stylized technique and interpretive expressivity. So even from the perspective of audience, the technique-expressivity binary is evident as the listener/viewer may attend to the syntax, the form, the compositional elements, and the traditional movement elements but may respond primarily to the expressive elements. However, when you experience music or dance as a performer, the technical aspects—the repetitively practiced motions of muscle and bone—are inescapable. When music or dance is performed is a replication of a composer's or choreographer's intent, "mistakes" become glaringly evident, and a first priority of the performer. An excellent performance is one "not only technically competent but also musically good" (study participant).

In the study of music and dance, this demand for technical competence seems to be the basic ingredient but it is meaningless without artistic expressivity. Technique is a prerequisite but expressivity is the justification.

I want to be amazed but I also want to be moved and that is the dichotomy of the technical vs the artistic and the really amazing performances obviously combine the two." D011

Looking back in retrospect, sometimes you feel you're always being told a double theme from

your teacher. You know you're told that musicality is important — you should feel this, feel that, or whatever — but it has to be perfect. I've always found that those two things shouldn't really, fundamentally be put together. And yet, as a student you are always being bombarded with this idea that there is perfectionism that's absolutely required.

This is technical perfectionism?

That's right. So, the idea that he's fuming at him [Shine- movie] to have everything, all the notes there—"don't disappoint the composer, don't disappoint me" — that sort of thing, yet at the same time, "feel the beauty of the notes." It's a double message.

What do students usually opt for?

[laughs] well I find that at least today — I think there is at least in the top conservatories a real over-concern with perfectionism at the expense of real character and musicality.

Best experience...the first time I understood that dance was more than steps.

She taught dance drama...I who had ...technique...I felt something different...it totally changed me...everything goes together.

If it is a dilemma for students, it is equally a dilemma for teachers. Expressivity is limited by technique. But an emphasis on technique may ignore the expressive. For teachers the question is whether you go through technique to expressivity, through expressivity to technique, or whether you go back and forth. For sensitive teachers, the dilemma seems more evident because, as in the experience of students, they seem to feel that insisting on technical matters is an expression of discipline, of rigidity, of the "tough" side of teaching and misses the motivation and "heart" of the art.

...if that trust is created between teacher and student, the teacher can later on go on and become just technical for a while, but actually you shift from this to that — you need to do both sides. You need both sides but you can start off by creating the trust and then you can become more rigid at certain moments....

Because artistic excellence is associated with technical perfection and the rigor and discipline of its development, students may feel a need for the "whip" of technical discipline.

there was one girl who asked me a couple weeks ago to help her. She wants to do her masters and she really needs work on technique, then I heard her sing in recital and I thought, she's got a

wonderful singing spirit, and to really focus on technique would be detrimental to her because a lot of that is happening naturally—so I wondered what makes her think that she needs to do this, because she doesn't feel brutalized, perhaps?

The expectation of performative perfection, which always means note or gesture perfect, technical perfection, may come from teachers, may come from the students' internal competitiveness, but both may be fueled today by the image we set up as the ideal.

There is a higher premium on technical perfection and accuracy than there used to be and it's easy, and very possibly correct, to blame recordings. We hear so much perfect playing that you expect that live.

The cost of greater technical perfection may be the richness of individual expression.

...for some people it's a major accomplishment to let go of worrying about technical growth and focus on musical growth, and on your own personal character identity in you're playing. And, that's what we are missing, of course, these days.

The "Bar" is technique...but that is a circus trick... Get people to value excellence...of passion, vision, ...raising the bar so that there is more beauty or passion or thought or idea...and it isn't about better "technique"

But, the greatest cost of an emphasis on technical perfection is not just "these days" — it is a long-standing problem of instruction. Technical imperfections are blatantly evident, especially when they result in "mistakes." Consequently, teachers are often sticklers for technical development, intolerant to mistakes of any kind, and upset at a lack of similar values by students. A student's inability to achieve the desired perfection is most commonly attributed to a student's lack of ability or lack of sustained effort. Rarely is it considered a weakness of pedagogy. This translates easily into a sense by students that the teacher is justified in being upset, that being upset is attributed to such a strong passion for the demands of the art, and that is it is the insufficiency of the student that is ultimately at fault.

I had some classes with someone in Israel actually who was the sort of person who just badgered you over and over again until — that was more in a musical sense— you could tell he felt so strongly about phrases and this and that —

even though it was difficult you felt he was doing it for a certain point.

We weren't allowed to learn any pieces at all— only scales and studies. [The Cleveland teacher] was a bit horrified that our wonderful quasi-Suzuki teacher had no interest in any of that, any of what you would call standard technique... so there was sort of a corrective summer. And probably really great in a sense because after that point there was always a sort of double teaching — [The Cleveland teacher] was very regimented in Galamian technique and the [London teacher] was always talking about sunshine and the soul and the spirit, and that sort of thing and it was a really good combination. So this sort of dual studying thing went on the right up until I was 14.

As is evident from these last quotes, the emphasis on technique seems associated with one kind of teacher, usually a demanding, picky teacher who may be considered necessary like bad tasting medicine, while expressivity is associated with a pleasant, inspirational teacher. However, since technique is so essential, the unpleasant teacher is sometimes considered more important and in fact more desirable.

Sunshine Teacher—Pushing Teacher. A clearly evident theme in our data was the experience with teachers considered difficult, demanding, harsh, and unpleasant and in contrast, teachers who were pleasant, supportive, encouraging, and inspirational. In some cases students quickly left the unpleasant teacher, but disturbing in our data was the evidence that students often do not leave harsh and demanding teachers, and may in fact consider them necessary to the difficult challenge of conquering the "monster" of the non-compliant body or instrument.

I loved what she represented in dance, but I hated her as a teacher. D09

I had a range of teachers some of whom were very harsh and some were extremely nice, and the extremely nice teacher didn't produce the same results, in a sense. I got the impression that he was, like, very happy with his own playing, all of that, and that shined — that was always apparent, and so maybe in a sense that was a learning experience, because one did feel inspired, but one wasn't actually feeling like "oh my God if I don't prepare well for the next lesson he is going to skin me alive."

He was not a mean man at all but he was very picky and inside of a couple of

years I was so unsure about what to do that I'd pick up the horn and I'd almost freeze. ...and actually I started taking lessons on the sly with other teachers. In the summer in Boston there was this wonderful former bass trombonist of the Boston Symphony who had actually been a roommate of my Curtis trumpet teacher when they were both at Curtis but they couldn't have been more different — one was very fussy and this trombone player was very casual laid-back rather crude and had a very simple approach: “tongue and blow kid—play it louder faster”—and he'd take you through easy stuff, “play it out a kid — tongue and blow” —he got me going again. And then there was a Boston Symphony trumpet player, Armando Ghitala, who is a wonderful almost father figure and the combination of this got me playing again and I think the teacher at Curtis probably thought his lessons were finally kicking in.

These study participants described what they recognized as harsh and demanding teachers. Yet, they found some value in these teachers and, in fact, felt that the more pleasant teachers had perhaps not served them as well. This phenomenon seems related to a belief in another dilemma: students may have the **desire to achieve** but they **lack the ability to self-motivate** adequately. This may be a belief absorbed from the teacher's impatience and “pushing” while being a student. There may in fact be a different basis for the “pushing” in teachers than is perceived by students. The teacher may be so “envious” of the perfection of the art that lack of attainment of this perfection is upsetting and angering, and to justify this anger a scapegoat is created – the student's lack of motivation and commitment (an application of Rene Girard's memetic theory, Jordan, 2000). The student comes to believe this is his or her personal short-coming and that the teacher's pushing is needed.

Further, the demand of the art is such that growth in technical and expressive excellence is “a forever thing” and therefore, the belief and feeling that one is “good” can be considered inappropriate. The feeling “I am really good at this” can be interpreted as being out of touch with professional artistic reality since this could only be held by the most elite performers of the art and if held by a student would probably serve to inflate expectations unrealistically and probably place a damper on motivation. The tough critical teacher is then viewed as being the voice of realism and honesty.

they were very lenient ...I took advantage of that and I tried to run the class myself and I thought I was so much better than everyone else ...My dancing went downhill a lot...those four

years...really factored on me progressing... when I left there I had a lot of catching up to do... when I went to the National...it was hard because I had to go back to what I did when I was younger...

The data of our study made it clear that the teacher's “pushing” may be directed subjectively at the student and be perceived as a personal attack, or directed objectively at the requirement of the art and an insistence on artistic perfection. The later is not perceived as abusive, and when associated with expectation of the student's ability to master the challenge, may be productive and rewarding. However, if expectations of the teacher are unattainable or never satisfied, the student comes to the ultimate realization of inadequacy and develops a powerful inner critic.

Well it is needed to drill you and needed to embarrass you somewhat but to an extent that they are telling you that you aren't any good and you can't do it anymore and you should leave...that shouldn't be a part of it...there is nothing wrong with telling you you need to work harder at this...that will make you a better dancer

The theory that students may have the **desire to achieve** but inevitably **lack the ability to self-motivate** adequately is not in fact true. Several participants in our study described their development as entirely lacking in teachers who had to push them. They admitted knowing about such teachers, hearing fellow students descriptions of such teachers, and even fearing the possibility with their own teachers. However, they counted themselves “lucky” in not having such teachers or in avoiding the teacher's displeasure through conscientious work and commitment.

and then the guy at Eastman was the most humanistic beautiful person you can ever meet. He could have taught any instrument and you would've just loved what you were doing. One time I played something for him — and he was 80 years old — he taught most trombone players — he turned out a lot — he was legendary — and I played something for him and he goes “wheww!” and he brushed me on the shoulder. I didn't know what he was doing. He says “... you keep playing like that and you'll be in the Philadelphia Orchestra someday.” I mean ...it was tough playing lessons for him because, he'd say “what's wrong?” — I'd make a mistake or something wouldn't sound right because I was smiling— and it's tough to play when your smiling. I was so happy to be studying with the guy and I'd break into a smile sometimes. I never had any experience like that [movie clip from Shine] at all thank goodness, because I think it would've

turned me right off. That reminded me of when I was in junior high and the so-called nerds of classical music.

Interviewer: So that's what you are afraid of?

Participant: Well it could have been — obviously I was stereotyping them a bit.

Some students recognize that “abuse” may not be about themselves as people or about the art:

Sometimes it is not about the art, making the dancer better, its not about anything but making someone feel small..to hurt them so you feel better.

As well, difference in personality is involved in the perception of “pushing” and the response to it:

Some people who are pushed, push back...I'll do that better than you can even imagine. It comes down to ego...some push back others leave...

Some student's who managed to avoid teachers who really pushed them, still felt somewhat guilty that they had not been pushed – and attributed some of their technical shortcomings to this lack, and therefore their own inadequacies or personality deficiencies.

—she was the one I had after Mrs. Teacher , so I would have been 9 or 10 or 11 in there—I just didn't like her, her face was stern, and things weren't good. And then we moved to Woodstock. I had [teacher]—I spoke to her this morning on the phone actually —lovely lady, and I liked it because she didn't push me. So back then I could explore my own—I could do a watered down version of the Hungarian Rhapsody.....I still got the joy of it. I'm still not great doing all the scales and chords and so on...

And why does it matter?

I don't know — maybe, it's the “I must work harder” mentality.

Is there such thing ... that without that moving catastrophe of being insulted or embarrassed and generally torn apart, that you might not have worked as hard and achieved as much. Is there justified abuse in the pursuit of excellence?

I would have to say yes. I don't think it needs to go to the degree that it sometimes goes to, but I think everybody, no matter what field they are in, needs somebody at a certain point to say “hey, make sure you're serious about this. If you are I'm going to kick your butt and try to realize your potential.”

There is no doubt that participants in this study have experienced what must be called abuse – physical, verbal, and emotional. Many participants named it as such. But is it justified abuse as the quoted participant above seems to think? Other participants agreed:

I guess that [physical abuse] helped me a great deal, seeking for perfection.

In a way it [physical abuse] also made me stronger, 'causeI really want to prove to her that “you're wrong! I can do better— a lot better than you think!”

Maybe to some people because it pushes them to want to progress...but to some people it makes them give up...A couple of times I wanted to quit because I was so embarrassed but I think then my mom tells me not to worry about it. It does push me to want to do better...but it also makes me step back and look at it and think whether Do I really want to do this? , Do I want to keep going at this...do I want to get embarrassed EVERY day I go to dance class...You have to deal with this...if you do, then obviously you really want it bad and that passion for dance is there.

The teacher has the ability to affect your emotional state and can create an emotional environment that either leans more to the pleasure of the movement or can be a very uncomfortable environment...the great teachers are the ones who make the environment a positive place to be even when they are working on you and correcting you and letting you know that it isn't working. Change can hurt...but in the long run, I am glad that I got totally emotionally trashed by teachers-- in the long run it was necessary. That happens to everybody...that trashing...It can be a terrible thing...depending where the environment is that it is happening.

We recognized the effects of abuse in many expressions, beliefs, attitudes, reported and observed behaviours. The scope of this analysis and implications are, however, beyond this paper.

Another pedagogical dilemma possibly contributing to the existence of harsh and abusive teachers is the difference between the level of challenge appropriate to the student, especially the beginning to intermediate student, and the level of challenge rewarding and stimulating to the teacher. This is a problem more evident in music since the task of the student is determined by a “repertoire” of

performance prescriptions in notation and often available in immaculate recordings. Data seemed to indicate that music teachers who find music making opportunities appropriate for their own level, have more understanding and patience for students. The teacher whose primary artistic self-expression is “through” students, either as a teacher, director, conductor, or choreographer, is likely to experience more frustration at imperfections and is more likely to express this frustration as anger directed at the students.

Finally, we recognize that a teacher’s self-report of pedagogy may not be completely accurate and neither might a student’s version of that pedagogy. But, perhaps most troubling is the possibility that the social psychological theory (Helson, 1964) of adaptation-level operates here. Adaptation-level is a level of stimulation that becomes neutral through repeated exposure and serves as a reference point for judgments on that dimension. Music and Ballet students may learn to expect and tolerate certain behaviors and accept them as normal, although these very behaviors may have adverse psychological effect. As well, teachers may teach in a certain way because that simply is the “model of learning” in which they themselves were trained and the model used by their peers. One teacher seems to recognize this possibility:

I have been watching teachers...surrounded by teachers that are so strict like.. that it obviously feeds off to me...and I think when I teach that is exactly what I do..even though I say I don't like it. I think that is what it takes to make a good dancer.

Relative standards — Objective standards. The first response to music or dance by audience, performer, adjudicator, or clinician always seems to be critical judgment. In fact, we teach strongly for such a response stance. This critical judgment can be norm referenced — relative to the person’s potential and progress, the age level of the performer, the size of the school, etc or it can be criterion referenced — with objective standards or criteria set by the ideals of the art. Most striking in the data from our participants was the tension experienced between these two bases for critical judgment. They might begin with avowing adherence to a relative, student-centered approach, but slip into an objective artistic standard.

“As a teacher I am nurturing, as a director I’m a bitch” D09

I think you can have an excellent performance by even a young ensemble which would necessarily

be judged at a different level than a professional ensemble.

So is it then the personal best of the performer or the group in the moment?

Maybe, although some people may not be capable of a personal best which would rise to the level of any definition of excellence.

So there is an objective definition of excellence in music to which we aspire, we rise toward, we work toward?

Well, in terms of musical phrasing and being together and obviously right notes and right rhythm— it’s not going to be excellent in the way I would feel about it unless they meet the standards of the music.

I remember doing a lot of high school clinics, and a teacher would say oh I’ve got a great group they’re playing really great, and I’d go in there, and they could hardly blow their nose, they could barely put their instruments together, and you don’t want to say anything to the high school instructor that you’ve been deceived or something like this —you think, it’s nice that the instructor is so enthusiastic about his students and thinks so well of them.

When you say, “that was an excellent performance” what do you mean?

I mean, for them where they are now. There was a student who sang today “that was really excellent” I said, those are the words I used. Was it as good as he could do? No, but for where he is at right now, those are the goals he set, and considering all that went on before, things he’s got out of alignment, he did well. It’s different for each student.

You don’t hold up a fixed musical criteria?

No, no it’s school.

How important is the pursuit of what you perceive as the standards, even though the student may be this far away, are you still gunning for those artistic standards?

Yeah, it depends, if the student really has it, then I really push them with lots of encouragement. I always let them know that they’re good and I believe in them, but they really need to do the skill work, or the structured work. If I don’t think that that is there, I don’t tell them that. I get them to be the best that they can be.

[Ballet school]...they don’t know you...they might yell at you ...they don’t really know you, they don’t know how you really can dance...don’t know who you are...not small enough to compare

you to someone else ...they compare you to professionals...it is a lot harder.

Self-judgment is a powerful and constant element in learning and performing. The teacher may be fueling this self-judgment by pointing to the standard, the ideal, or possibly the unattainable goal for the student's potential.

The musicians self-esteem is so highly based on how you actually play, and even without Kiwanis and competitions, almost everybody is constantly aware where the level is around them and, you know, even with students I have here we set up unattainable goals. Because, we say go to the Toronto Symphony and listen to the soloist. And they're playing the same piece but we know that they are never realistically going to play in that same vein, and yet that's what we set up for them as the pinnacle.

Equality of opportunity—merit-based assignment.

Another tension in the pedagogical/performance task of teachers exists between the benefits of providing equal opportunity for all students (especially for solos) and the performance excellence advantage of merit-based assignment.

Well, I think competition in one form or another is a pretty basic part of it. You know, it's what kick-started me. Getting any job is a competition—an audition or an interview is a fact of life. We try to keep down a little bit here by rotating part assignments but, there is a merit base in part assignment. You're not going to put your worst player to play a first horn on the Bruckner fourth Symphony. You try not to put somebody on the part that will embarrass them and the school. I don't like competition particularly. I much prefer adjudicating or going to noncompetitive festivals or category festivals than ranked festivals, but it's all around — competition is all around and it is not something you can ignore because it's there. The trying out for parts, the auditioning to get into the faculty of music — some are accepted and some are rejected. You can't just say yes to everybody.

A problem however, lies in the subjective assessment of ability that can well be influenced by personal "favorites."

Teachers need to get away from having a personal relationship with students...they have their pets, their students...they know who is going to have the solos...They have them in the front row...

Love of Engagement with the Art—Love of

Achievement. Artistic achievement can be pursued for several reasons. A person may in fact love and enjoy music or dance and find great fulfillment in its study and performance. However, the act of achieving is in itself ego-rewarding. Achievement in a field where there is essentially little recognized challenge will not be particularly rewarding for someone who seeks recognition for the act of achievement. But, a field that presents great challenge and in addition, the meeting of that challenge is in public performance, presents great opportunity for ego-driven achievement. Music and dance both seem especially subject to such ego-driven effort.

Even if one professes love of music it's often, you know, still sort of a clever veil for one's ego.

You mean what one actually loves is achievement, the recognition of achievement rather than music itself?

I think it happens quite often.

Is it typical that the teacher starts to want the student to succeed for their own ego...

Oh sure

Rather than the student's goals?

Yes, I think it's a real danger all of the time, because the way you are seen as a teacher whether in the community or in the larger context, gives you access to better students who will then know your reputation. If you can start with better students you'll be producing even better — you know, it's sort of a chain. Because people often say that derogatorily about various, very famous teachers who don't seem to actually teach at all but they always have terrific students.

Certainly everyone who is going to stand up or sit and perform for others, there has to be ego there. How much varies considerably and I think it varies at different times of our own lives. I think ego is not really enough to sustain a career. It's sort of insatiable — you need constantly new conquests. I also think that the love of playing an instrument is not enough to sustain a career. I can think of trumpet players that I think love playing their instrument but they get bored with the music and I think that's sad. It's really the love of music that can sustain a career.

When can a musician stop struggling for greater excellence and enjoy competence?

Boy, that's a hard one... It's probably when your love of music becomes stronger than your ego that you can enjoy competence and if you're good

enough to play well — competently at whatever level you're playing.

When you think of your own personal inner critic, what fuels it or where does it come from in your case?

Probably ego, that we always want to be the best, that typical American thing of being the best you can and working hard at it — no pain, no gain, kind of thing. Always perhaps wanting to be the best and that's unfortunate.

Factors other than a focus on the real meaning and experience of dance can also be a parental motivation. The ego of the parent may thrive on “showing off” a child.

Putting little girls on display to show off instead of a sharing of an art form....

Love the Art—Hate the cost. Dance and music are arts that are exceptionally demanding in terms of the time and effort involved in the development of the ability required to reach a professional level. But not only must the performer spend much time and effort during the formative years, this time must continually be spent if the ability is to be sustained. Even those who have an abundant love of the art and are not simply pursuing ego-driven achievement, the cost of maintaining ability is great but without the ability being maintained near its peak, the enjoyment is lost.

I think a lot of people have a sort of a love- hate relationship. I mean, if you didn't have a fair component of love you couldn't make yourself do it forever but the resentment of all the time it takes and how much you miss in your life. Armando Ghitala, the principal in Boston and the man in the poster up there who is such a great artist said, he resented all of the time it took, all of the books he couldn't read etc.

Ballet is unforgiving, it's ruthless. It is an absolutely cruel and horrendous world, but it's beautiful!" D011

But, the cost is not only a personal one. We may, as a culture, so value something that we are willing to close our eyes to things we should not, or perpetrate things we might not except for the great value we place on a certain experience.

Do we still allow things to happen or justify things because finally we have these elevating experiences with the arts and, therefore, almost

anything is justified in the creation of this experience? The end justifies the means?
I think that happens. There's been books written about a certain conductor and his opera orchestra and yet everybody seems to be totally willing to overlook all his personal failures because of his great musical successes.

Incredible Art—Rotten Profession. Related to the “love the art--hate the cost” dilemma is the conclusion that a number of the participants seem to reach, music and dance are incredible arts but a rotten profession.

I feel really guilty about all of the students who are trying to become musicians — I think it's an incredible art and a rotten profession, because it's so poorly paid and the failure rate is so high. I worry about all the students here and other places that have such a hard road and are probably not going to make it in terms of traditional performing. I think the music schools are guilty, but on the other hand who do you tell “no.”

There's a difference between the music business and the business of music— one is great and the other is horrible, but you have to combine the two. Some people are just scraping by... But, they seem to enjoy what they're doing—maybe they're just unrealistically waiting for their break.

Healthy Childhood Holism—Singular Focus for Peak Achievement. One of the really serious dilemmas related to each of the previous ones, is the tension between the need to start a child very young and keep them consistently practicing for them to become peak performers, and the damage done by the removal of that time from the normal holistic pursuits of childhood.

Because kids are brought up musically, that becomes their only way to be loved and appreciated, so it becomes this overwhelming search for appreciation... I think parents and teachers contribute to varying degrees. I don't have a solution. To be a successful violinist you need to create that facility and technique when you're younger, it's a sort of fact of violin playing. And so you have a real problem there.

Having been through what I consider perhaps a mildly abusive musical upbringing, it seems to me that there are some things to do that could enrich a child's education that would not be terribly difficult. I wouldn't really advocate dismantling the entire Kiwanis system, but at the same time

the Kiwanis can be very detrimental— so much is up to the parents — and the parents are not aware of these kinds of issues. I don't really know how one would solve that besides having some kind of counseling to go along with every Kiwanis class which actually probably would not be a bad thing.

A related issue to this dilemma is the investment parents make in the achievement of their child. During the time the child is subject to parental influence, a great weight of obligation can be placed on a child.

they had put in a tremendous amount of money and emotional effort into me continuing...you can't quit...we have put too much money into it...you have to keep going until you make it ...we are not going to waste the money we have put in...Keep going!

Some Differences Between Music and Dance

In the dilemmas discussed above, we saw similarities between music and dance. However, differences do seem to exist. We mention these here but will not examine them fully. First, compared to the study of classical music, classical dance (ballet) seems to be recognized as an elite art – that few are chosen for serious training and few actually have the potential for success. This may result in ballet as an honoured “dream” for children and as an activity symbolic of beauty and grace, valued more as a societal ideal than a practical reality.

Second, both music and dance are subject to performance injuries. However, musicians tend not to have “accidents” that lead to sudden loss of the ability to perform but suffer repetitive strain injuries. Musicians find it difficult to admit injuries because they tend to be seen as the result of inherent weakness. With dancers there is greater acknowledgement of physical problems, partially because the “instrument” is the physical body, but also because the “physicality” is blatant and so “injury” has a clear link to the demands on the body and often to specific moments of “accident.”

Third, there is a difference in the length of the performing career. Because dancers tend to have short careers and then devote themselves to teaching, advanced dance students rarely see their teacher perform – music students often do. We wonder whether dance then is more “crafted” through abstract concepts, technical direction, or metaphoric inspiration? Perhaps this places a greater competitive strain on the community because fellow students are used as models? Perhaps in multi-ability, multi-age groupings it may also provide supportive modeling? It may also result

(and for music teachers who stop performing this can also be very true), in teachers “living” through their students, of realizing their personal artistic ideas through their students:

I get very excited...the joy inside...I see myself in their shoes...when you see a good dancer.

Fourth, the nature of the basic experience differs. Dance is in its very nature a bi-modal phenomenon, i.e., dance is experienced as gesture following sound – for the dancer as a kinesthetic connection to sound, and for the audience as visual interpretation of aural experience. Music, especially as recorded music, can be experienced as a purely aural phenomenon. For the music-maker music is experienced as gesture initiating sound, and for the audience music is experienced as sound with a visual/gestural dimension that can be a distraction, a parallel entertainment, or in some cases the source of complex meaning.

New Issues Emerging from Dance

The new issues we are exploring focus primarily on the dominant role that the body plays in dance and the role that group interaction plays in pedagogy.

Body

Body as Instrument. This is a simple observation, but it is highly important to the art and experience of dance and dancers. It means that issues of health, body characteristics and image, injury, sexualization, and teacher and peer touching are a significant part of the demands of the art and the needs of the artist.

Health. General health is of utmost importance for strength and endurance. Weight and physical fitness are monitored carefully. Today, dance teachers openly acknowledge the risk of eating disorders and attempt to monitor not only weight gain but weight loss. However, weight gain is the biggest risk and if this is not “under control,” dancers face rejection.

Ideal Body and Image. Closely associated with health is the strong emphasis on ideal body type. Because dance is a visual medium, appearance is of utmost importance-- body, hair, face, expression, clothes, costume, feet positioning. Image is everything! You are judged on things that you really might not be able to do anything about. Consequently, a dancer's self-image is under constant scrutiny. It is fragile and the target of much of the criticism dancers receive and the source of much hurt and disappointment.

Worst experience: being told that I shouldn't do ballet because my breasts stood out...that it was my fault that they were so big, it was bad. I felt shame.

...I would love to be in the company but I can't because I am not 100 pounds and 5'5"...so every time that makes me so upset, I know I can never be a professional ballerina...I can never do what I want to do because God made me a certain way...and I think that is ridiculous, it shouldn't be about how you look but rather how you dance.

There is an expectation that you look a certain way. ...dance can become a way to both love and hate your body... You can feel power when you move that maybe therein it can frighten you, it can give you pleasure, you are aware of sexuality

Injury. In dance the body is the source of great kinaesthetic delight but the body also becomes a painful enemy. Injury can happen dramatically in a fall or some difficult move. These injuries affect further development of ability and the type of dance a dancer can pursue. Concern over safety in dance is a pedagogical issue. Repetitive strain injuries can also occur.

My career is going to end when I am 30...with all the injuries...I have tons of injuries so there is no way that I can last.. not even until I am thirty... knees...chipped bones in my ankles...lower back problem...so bad that I couldn't even walk...I have done so much of dance and I haven't had a chance to recuperate...too much is too much

Sexualization. Ballet may be an admiration for the ideal body versus the real body or it may be an idealization of body as form, in the manner of classic Greek sculptures or Renaissance paintings. However, sexual dimensions are inescapable with the traditional costuming and the very corporeality of the art. Modern, jazz, and ballroom dances often make sexuality the primary expression. Clearly responding to the changing times, but somewhat inherent in the very nature of the movement, ballet, and dance in general, seems to idealize the female body as juvenile rather than mature. In a school context, rather than in the self-selecting elite ballet studio, ...”*Often kids want to do dance that validates them sexually...with peer group...real imitation of video dance.*” Most troublesome in our research findings was the sexualization of the child in early ballroom instruction. Children as young as five years “copy” seductive, sexualized adult dance moves.

Touch. Touch plays an important role in the needs of a person. However, touch can be both emotionally nurturing and devastatingly violating. Because dance

consists of highly refined physical movements by the body, both the learning of dance and the performing of partnered dance invites and requires extensive touch of the body in many places. The inherent dangers especially for the child and adolescent are obvious.

Group Interaction

From earliest levels to the most advanced, “class” is highly important for dancers. Most instruction is in group class. Dancers almost always work in a team, a troupe, a group whereas musicians are more independent. The role of peers in the process of learning to dance is significant. Comparison, competition, peer pressure, social interaction and dynamics are a part of the dancer’s learning process constantly. Keeping up, depending on others, having to vie for attention, being the favored or unfavored one, being positioned at the front, getting the solo part, are some of the issues expressed in our interviews.

If this class context was always a supportive community, it would be a fine learning environment. But it is not.

There is a lot of jealousy in dance class and sabotaging goes on...take your costume...ruin your costume, cut off part of your shoe, and it happened to me in ballet and skating....If you get a lead or a part...and you think you deserved it...you have to prove that you can do it...it is hard...

If the dance class were a democratic, cooperative, collaborative learning context it would seem an ideal learning environment. However, although the dancers work in groups, many commented on being silenced by the teacher with only his/her voice ever being audible.

*The only voice you are allowed to hear in the studio is the teacher's...
The teacher's voice is often a critical one.*

Because dance requires a large space on a special surface, most students attend “class” in the studio many hours a week. The number of contact hours with a teacher is, therefore, much higher than in music and most other arts. But, if that environment becomes hostile, it can be difficult if not devastating to the person.

Conditions of Learning:

We have discovered that music and dance are demanding arts. Learning, from the first attempts to elite performance levels, is fraught with pedagogical dilemmas and the needs of the person are often neglected. How can these needs be addressed while pursuing the ideals of the art? We

propose that the key is the protection and nurturing of the individual's engagement with the art. Here we draw on a model (Figure 1) we have been developing for several years (Cameron & Bartel, 2000). At the core of this model is **engagement**. Foundational to learning and engagement is **immersion** in what is to be learned with many **demonstrations** of what is to be learned by trusted and esteemed individuals. The context of this immersion and demonstration is positively or negatively coloured by the **emotional tone** and the presence or absence of a **sense of community**. The central factor is engagement with the **content** of what is to be learned. To enhance engagement, the content must be **real, meaningful, and relevant** to the student. Engagement is facilitated by:

(1) **Expectation**. If students expect to achieve they achieve; if they expect to fail they fail. But, the teacher's expectation of the student is particularly influential.

She gave me a solo...that showed a side of me that I had never shown before...I never imagined that I would have a solo...that gave me confidence...

(2) **Responsibility**. To engage effectively in learning, students need to be allowed responsibility "to make their own decisions about when, how, and what 'bits' to learn in any learning task."

(3) **Use**. Engagement increases when learners have time and opportunity to employ their developing control in functional, realistic, non-artificial ways.

(4) **Approximation**. Especially important in music learning is the need for the learner to be free to approximate the desired model -- 'mistakes' are essential for learning to occur.

(5) **Response**. For engagement to be sustained, the learner "must receive 'feedback' that is relevant, appropriate, timely, readily available, non-threatening, and with no strings attached."

*You can have a great class and then with a look or glance or gesture a teacher can reduce you down to ribbons....and make you feel small...The teacher with the same thing can elevate you when you are having a bad class...
...a teacher only has as much emotional power as you give him...it is much easier to slashed to ribbons by a teacher you respect and admire and have given emotional power over you. A teacher you haven't given that emotional power to cannot do it to you*

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I think the life of a professional dancer must be a good one. One thing that always amazes me is how much children love dancing. I think dancing must be in their blood. MY e-BOOK. See a sample. Mail this lesson to friends and teachers. Click the @ below. THE ACTIVITIES.Â Write five GOOD questions about dancing in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper. When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers. STUDENT 1. _ STUDENT 2.