

**A Working Guide
for New Zealand Dancers**

He Whakaterere Huarahi

Melanie Hamilton

DANZ

DANCE AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND LTD

*This Guide has been produced and published by DANZ with funding from Creative New Zealand.
DANZ is the national arts, education and service agency for dance in New Zealand.*

*The writer thanks the Reference Panel for their support:
Shona McCullagh, Ann Dewey, Stephen Bradshaw, Toby Behan and Katie Burton.*

*The writer also thanks the following people for their expert advice:
Peter McCluskie, (BA Hons, LLB), Lecturer, The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand.*

David Suisted, Chartered Accountant.

Susan Simpson, Physiotherapist.

*Acknowledgment is also made of the use of Brendan Roach and Susan Simpson's
Discussion Paper, 2003, on dance injuries.*

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Foreword

A career in dance is certainly not one that could be recommended for assured security, financial gain or even guaranteed job satisfaction.

But what can be guaranteed is a rich ride, filled and fuelled by people who may be progenitors of learning, esteemed and quietly revered colleagues or possibly lifelong friends, depending on how good you are at keeping in touch.

I write this with much compassion and excitement about the journey that many of you will undertake and fulfil. A life in dance is indescribably bountiful, possibly on levels you are not yet aware of. This guide has been written with care and integrity with the intention of helping you to map a pathway that is both individual and unique. For each one of you the choices will be different for different reasons.

There is one common thread that holds true for choreographers and dancers that succeed. They are unswervingly passionate about their artform and with that loyalty comes commitment and a determination that is always about the ideas and the people that will realise them.

Be supportive of others, be loyal to yourself, treat those with respect who treat you with respect and know that this pathway is not easy. You will have to work hard – physically, mentally and emotionally. But the rewards are such that you can lie still on a hot summer's day and know you've never been bored for a day and you've fulfilled a desire that was unstoppable.

Shona McCullagh

Choreographer, filmmaker, NZ Arts Foundation Laureate, MNZOM
Director Human Garden Productions, Director The Human Garden Agency

Introduction

This guide has been written to assist people beginning a freelance dance career in New Zealand, especially students and recent graduates of tertiary dance institutions.

It has been written to offer practical advice, not artistic insight. We have sought to give advice in areas that dancers have highlighted as being areas of concern, such as access to sample contracts and advice about tax. We are conscious of the fact that there will always be alternatives to what is offered here.

There is always more than one way to put on a production, manage a career or write a contract. What we have produced is a guide that offers directions, possible approaches and production advice. Developing your own dance career will be incredibly rewarding, highly personal and hugely adventurous, and we hope this Guide will assist you in making that process easier.

Each person's career pathway is unique, determined by many unexpected events, new opportunities and sometimes a bit of luck. We look forward to seeing what you will do.

Feedback

The first issue of the guide is a trial run, so all feedback is welcome. Please let us know if you think we've missed something out, if you want more information on some sections or if you think some parts are unnecessary. Please feel free to be as specific as you want. Email any queries, comments or suggestions to danz@danz.org.nz.

A Working Guide for New Zealand Dancers will be updated to incorporate your feedback, so please, read on, enjoy and comment!

Melanie Hamilton



Choreolab 2002, organised by Footnote Dance

Getting started



Good training can lay the foundation for a successful career but it cannot ensure it; developing and maintaining the career you want is now up to you. To succeed you have to consciously make a decision to be a dance artist – and you may have to recommit to that decision more than once.

On the completion of full-time dance training, you should have many tools to help you build a successful career. Most importantly you should have an alert, aware, fit and trained dancing body. As well as consolidating all the different skills you have learnt, you now need to develop the work practices of an independent dance practitioner.

It is important to remember that establishing a career can take time and the first few years out of training will be a transition period. Be aware of that transition and give yourself the time to look at your options and reflect upon how you could shape your career. Be open to changes and new opportunities so you can find out where you really want to go and the type of artist you really want to be. Have clear goals but don't be afraid to change them either.



Only you can work out what you need, to stay motivated and committed to a dance career. You will need to find your own source of creative inspiration. As well as this, to nurture a professional career there are some practical things you should have:

- A healthy dancing body:** this is vital; even if there is no work in the foreseeable future keep on top of it physically and go to dance classes. Maintaining your dance practice helps avoid injury and means that you will be ready to work at short notice. It also means you will be regularly seen by potential employers which often helps get people employed. Maintaining a profile and being able to develop your own work ethic are extremely important tools in the dance world.
- A good support base:** friends, family and your peers will provide invaluable support. And as you lend support to others it will return to you.
- A creative mentor:** it can help to have someone that you trust to discuss creative ideas with and the development of your dance career.
- Professional contacts in the dance world – networking:** in such a small industry professional contacts become very important and often lead to work, so keep the contacts you have made through your training, go to people's shows, invite the choreographers you would most like to work with to your new show – find ways to stay in touch with other dance artists. Email news lists such as NZ Dance News (<http://www.danz.org.nz/nzdancenews.php>) are invaluable tools; also DANZ offers industry resources and support (www.danz.org.nz).
- A professional attitude:** don't be afraid to ask for work, present yourself well when you audition, be prepared to diversify and be reliable. Small things like punctuality can make a real difference. Support the wider dance community when you can. A lot of people have worked hard to build and grow our dance industry – they can be huge sources of inspiration. If there's an industry forum or meeting, go along and hear what people have to say. Your contribution will be welcomed.
- An updated Curriculum Vitae** (which you could put onto DVD or CD Rom). Make sure you have a copy of this that you can easily email, as this is the most common way of sending CVs. In your CV include:
 - Your training qualifications and previous employment history.
 - Support letter(s).
 - Professional photos: portrait shots and photos of you dancing, in both black and white and colour.
 - A show reel: a short (4 – 5 min) film made up of clips showing your best work (if you're using other people's choreography make sure you have their permission).
 - Full-length films of works you have choreographed (sometimes it works best to send these later, but it is important to have them readily available).
- Reliable contact details:** make sure you have at least one email address that you regularly check, a cell phone and a reliable postal address.

You may also want an agent. This can help you find well-paying, short-term commercial work to add to your CV and financially assist you to keep dancing. The Human Garden, which is Auckland based, is the main agent for dancers in New Zealand. Web: www.humangarden.co.nz Email: info@humangarden.co.nz

If you're interested in TV commercials then you will need a local agent. Some people have different agents in different cities.



*Dolina Wehipeihana, Atamira Dance Collective.
Photo, John McDermott*



Creating a dance career in NZ

Currently there are not many secure, full-time dancing jobs in New Zealand. However, both the dance sector and support for it are growing. Often contracts are short term, so as you establish your career you will need to be flexible and adaptable and willing to create your own work opportunities.

As a freelance dance artist you may find work on short-term, project-based contracts and/or in the commercial and educational sectors. New Zealand dancers frequently work as both a dancer and choreographer and often in cooperative situations. The dancer/choreographer/project manager roles are more integrated in New Zealand than overseas and people slip between them more often here than in other places. Until the dance industry becomes more financially secure, people will still have to undertake a variety of roles throughout their careers. It is important to remember that you can sustain a career in dance in New Zealand if you are prepared to diversify and work in a variety of ways.

An open mind and a willingness to develop new skills will always go far. As you develop your career, remember to grow a support base of people that you trust to guide and assist you, and remember mentors can be extremely helpful.



Project work

Short-term dance projects funded by Creative New Zealand's Arts Board and Te Waka Toi, or on a smaller scale, through local funding schemes such as Creative Communities, are the main way most freelance performers and choreographers in New Zealand survive. Although the work is not full-time some dancers find themselves moving from project to project. Securing your first project contract can be a daunting task and during this time a mentor and support network can really help.

There is no magic formula to getting your first job and it does require bravery. Often it is simply a task of constantly reminding people that you are available and putting yourself in situations where they see or hear of your work. Ask yourself who you want to work with and then contact them, do classes with them and send them your CV. Remember to keep looking around and seeing what other people are up to – you never know when you'll meet someone new who will inspire you and point you in another direction. When you are just starting out, maintaining visibility can be the key to securing project work. It pays to always be in shape as you never know what will happen. Keep going to class with other freelance dancers.

You may be invited to understudy for free, or for low wages, in your first year as a freelancer. This is often because budgets are extremely tight and choreographers have to give priority to dancers with more experience. They do however wish to offer opportunities to younger dancers, and understudying can be a

route to securing work. Choosing whether or not to work for free is an individual decision; some people are against it on principle whereas others will do it to gain experience. Either way it is important to feel that the project will give you something in return and expand your abilities as a dance artist, so only you can decide if it's worth doing it for free. Remember that there will always be other ways of being involved, and it can be no bad thing to work as a publicist or stage manager to develop your knowledge and skills. Production skills will always prove valuable in the future.

There are a limited number of full-time dance contracts available in New Zealand. Companies currently employing dancers full-time include Torotoro, the Royal New Zealand Ballet Company, Black Grace, Kahurangi Dance Theatre and Footnote Dance. Each company has their own audition policy so keep in touch with them if their work interests you.

Graduating from the New Zealand School of Dance in an era when the freelance community was not as visible to graduates as it has become, I was extremely fortunate to be taken under the wing of a former Limbs dancer, Leanne Plunkett. I distinctly recall Leanne taking me to my first Monday morning freelance class in Thistle Hall and being confronted by a large and energetic community of freelancers who I had, up until that day, no idea existed. Through Leanne's guidance and introductions many of these freelancers in turn, became future employers, a number of whom I still count as valuable colleagues, peers and friends. She became my mentor, someone I trusted who was experienced and known in my hopeful future profession. She answered my questions and gave me guidance on who to meet, who to get to know and where to be seen. This was an invaluable experience that enabled me to positively develop my own voice and negotiate the new world I found myself a part of. There are many experienced dance professionals in our community – think of tutors you've had who have really inspired you – who could be approached for guidance and help, perhaps even just for a coffee, don't be afraid to ask.

Helaina Keeley, October 2003

Funding work yourself

It is always possible to create work for yourself outside the conventional funding avenues. Many successful choreographers and performers developed their craft through small, experimental shows and presentations which did not receive any formal funding. So as you begin a freelance career don't forget to find ways that you can develop and work on your own craft – it does not always require funding to do this.

Even without formal funding there will always be some money involved in putting a show on. A small group of you may choose to each put a small amount towards the production or you may fund it all yourself. It is still important to manage the money well and run a budget for the production, even if it's just detailing what you spent money on the first time to help you write your next budget. For future funding applications it is good to be able to show that you are responsible with money and can keep records of your income and expenditure.

I made two full-length works and several shorter works before I applied for funding. I wanted to make dances but I didn't feel ready for being responsible for public funds (tax payers money). In a way you are much freer if you start out like this.

Ann Dewey, December 2003



Commercial work

There is a variety of commercial work available to dancers. This includes body doubling for film and TV, stunt and bodysuit work, TV advertisements, children's theatre, corporate entertainment, dancing in operas and musical theatre productions. Frequently it is short-term and fairly well paid. This type of work can be easier to secure with an agent.

Putting yourself up for commercial work can be an avenue to support your choreographic or dancing career. It does not suit everyone, and you may find you want to stick to contemporary dance only, which usually means going from project to project. However, it is important to acknowledge the variety and number of jobs available to dancers who are versatile and can also sing and act.

If you wish to undertake this type of work you may need skills in addition to those learnt at dance school. You may wish to take singing, voice or acting lessons for example. These skills are transferable as dancers are frequently asked to sing and act in contemporary dance shows.

To win commercial work you must present yourself well in an audition, and sometimes you will be competing with actors for work. For some jobs you will also be competing with Australians as companies

can audition in both countries. Never underestimate the importance of preparing for an audition, turning up on time and dressing for the part.

Frequently actors are trained in how to prepare for and behave in auditions, and in these situations dancers often let themselves down. If you have an agent it is important to communicate effectively with them. They can let you know what's likely to happen and give you advice about how to prepare for the role/part. Also, to secure commercial work it is important to have good professional photos, an excellent CV and professional records of your work.

Agents take a percentage of your fee, which is how they survive. It is important to remember that often your fee will be higher if an agent has secured it. People working on the same project may not always be on the same pay rate. On the whole agents tend to negotiate a better rate for their clients than people who try and do everything themselves.

Having an agent simply means you have more opportunities for employment than you would otherwise. You have someone who actively submits you for usually well paid work and that means the possibility of fewer hours waiting tables and more hours doing class or rehearsing work. An agent also protects your interests and has the ability to negotiate strongly for the best rate for you, which can be difficult to do for yourself without knowledge of the bigger picture of the commercial world. Commercial work is not for everyone – only for those who are prepared to invest in good photos, are willing to form a positive, professional relationship with their agent and employers and who don't regard commercial work as somehow tainting their art form. The discipline of commercial work can be a healthy antidote to the vagaries of self-generated projects. With the right attitude it can also be loads of laughs, a vital component of surviving as a freelancer.

Shona McCullagh,
 Founder of The Human Garden Agency,
 a specialist agency for dancers,
 December 2003

Teaching dance

The benefits of teaching are wide reaching for dance artists. Aside from working with your peers and organising your own classes, the two avenues usually explored are teaching at tertiary dance institutions or at primary and high schools working with the new arts education curriculum. Private dance teachers can contact the New Zealand Association of Dance Teachers for support: www.danz.org.nz/nzadt.html.

It is recommended that you have a few years working professionally in the industry before you begin to train others, otherwise you'll just be repeating what you learnt when you were at dance school. Teaching other freelancers and receiving their feedback is an excellent way to develop the skills needed to have something unique and worthwhile to offer dance students.

Teaching dance can be a hugely rewarding way of understanding your own dance principles. Having to organise your own class structure and explain specifically how to do movements will help your understanding of how you dance and how you can pass that knowledge on. You will learn more about the physiology of movement as you apply your own movement to other people's bodies. Once you feel you have these skills, working in tertiary dance institutions may enhance your own dance practice and choreographic abilities.

Aside from teaching at tertiary dance institutions your local ballet teacher may wish to offer a contemporary dance class. It can be surprisingly easy to create teaching work once you start offering your services. It's important that you have a good understanding of anatomy and basic first aid skills when you start teaching dance.

Teaching dance in primary and high schools requires a different approach, as it is less about technique and more about instilling awareness and understanding of dance and movement in young people. You are working within a large system that requires appropriate qualifications. DANZ offers services to guide people making a move into this profession so if you are keen to work in the education sector contact them at schools@danz.org.nz.

If you have a degree in dance then you will only need to do one year at Teachers College before you can teach in schools as a qualified teacher. Remember to think broadly as you search for teaching work. Some of the music or drama teachers at schools may wish to hire you to assist them in school productions or for other work they are doing throughout the year.

Teaching dance in a secondary school is intense, however dance professionals are not unused to hard work! It offers a regular income, the paid holidays are great(!) and I have the pleasure of knowing that I am educating future dancers and helping to grow the dance audience. Now is a particularly interesting time to be teaching dance with the dance curriculum and NCEA coming online, and many schools setting or expanding their dance programmes.

Melanie Turner, December 2003

Teaching has been an incredible way for me to discover my own philosophies about what I believe dance is and how I articulate it. This in itself has given much to my own development as a dancer. It is also one of the most rewarding areas, when you can watch students take on what you are saying and right in front of your eyes you see their bodies and their relationship to it change.

Raewyn Hill, December 2003



Developing other dance-related skills

Most dancers have a huge variety of skills that they tend to undervalue. They are perceptive, intuitive, kinetic people who are usually very good at thinking quickly and making fast decisions. All these traits are useful for a variety of jobs from body doubling to organising events to teaching yoga.

There are a variety of ways you can keep an active interest in dance. Reviewing dance may be an avenue you wish to explore as your experience and awareness of the art form grows. There are a variety of dance studies courses currently on offer through which you can further develop your writing skills and gain qualifications. Some tertiary institutions also offer dance-related courses through other departments, such as Music and Anthropology departments.

There is currently a shortage of people with management and production management skills in the dance sector. Should you choose to apprentice yourself to a production, or offer to be an assistant to either the choreographer or manager, then you will find your new skills in demand later on, if not immediately.

The Project Manager / Producer / Production Manager roles can be high-pressured and often mean working to tight deadlines with a group of people also under similar pressures. They can also be a lot of fun, and if you want to put on your own show, it can pay to have a good awareness of what everyone else in the production team has to do. So there can be many benefits associated with developing production and management skills even if it's not the area you wish to specialise in.

As you establish your career you will probably also have to take on part-time work. It can be hard finding a balance between needing money and needing time to dance and work on your craft, and also finding a job which allows you to take as much as three months off at a time. Try and keep strong and put what you most want to do first. The need to juggle life, money, dancing and your career will never go away and the pressures of life will always come and go. Finding a balance is an ongoing act which needs to be re-done constantly, you'll always be finding new solutions and making changes throughout your career.

It's up to you to choose how you wish to maintain your interest in dance between contracts or projects. For some dancers performing in shows, learning about dance-related subjects and contributing to productions in a variety of different ways becomes a lifestyle. Some dancers just want to dance and not work in other areas. As you decide what you want and forge your career, up-skill, diversify and experiment, remember to keep time aside to keep fit and stay in shape.

Finding other dance-related work between projects is also about building your confidence and a belief that your skills are important and transferable. As an artist you will always be learning and seeking further ways to extend and enhance your practice. This habit should continue whether you are in dance employment or not.



Alexa Wilson. N/A: Epoch



Working together and creating your own show

Everyone has different ways of producing and creating their own shows. The key is to find a way of working that suits your group or you as an individual. After graduating, dancers often form a collective and put on a group show to present their ideas and choreographies to the public.

Putting on your first show, whether it's your show or a collective effort, is a huge task but hugely rewarding. It is also a great way to build new working relationships and make professional contacts that you will use in the future.

If you form a cooperative – even if it's a cooperative for one show only – it's important to acknowledge that apart from the artistic differences of the group, people will also have different working methods and ways they want to get things done. From everyone's ideas a collective way of working will emerge, but this process can take some time and can be quite stressful when everyone is learning things for the first time.



Vacuum PACT Dance Company formed in 2002 when the four of us (Anna Bate, Katie Burton, Geoff Gilson, Julia Sadler) all graduated from the UNITEC Dance Degree. We all really wanted to choreograph and dance, and it seemed a bit overwhelming at the time exactly how to do that. We found that the decision to work in a collective provided a support network that was and still is invaluable to participating in and making dance work.

Un-funded we toured to Christchurch, Dunedin and Nelson with our 'Vacuum Packed' show and have completed funded projects in Hamilton, Wellington, Christchurch and just recently in Tempo 2003. We discuss all monetary and artistic decisions and make group choices about everything except the choreography of our own individual works. We still have the individual freedom to work with other people but are supported within Vacuum PACT as well. Communication, inspiration and cooperation are essential to Vacuum PACT.

Katie Burton, Vacuum PACT, 2003

It can be beneficial to acknowledge the different jobs and roles that people will need to undertake from the outset. Everyone needs to keep communicating to avoid having basic misunderstandings over who should be doing what.

It is also helpful to seek advice, engage a mentor and have someone with good listening skills assist with clarifying the aims and goals of your group. It's important that everyone gets to say what they want out of the project, and that people are realistic about what they have to offer and what they can expect from other people. It's best to do this before the project begins if at all possible. Inevitably some of you will be taking on additional roles from dancing or choreographing, such as publicity or keeping track of the budget, so how this happens needs to be discussed and made as easy as possible for everyone.

Everyone's roles in the production should be achievable and matched to their interest and skills, and discovering these strengths takes time and lots of conversations. There is always a lot of talking and

discussing of ideas and ways to approach tasks when a collective or co-operative is set up.

For many young dancers, choreographing their own work and presenting their own pieces in group shows is the surest way of developing their craft and increasing their understanding of their own artistry. Occasionally this has meant for people that they have been seen as an 'emerging choreographer' and not necessarily as a 'dancer'. Although we all know these roles are flexible, in New Zealand people can get labelled too, so remember that at some point you will have to consciously decide how you approach and promote your work.

Your ideas

The greatest investment you can put into any show is the development and refinement of your creative material. This can and should happen well before rehearsals begin. Researching, exploring and honing your ideas is an incredibly important process which can take a long time. It can help to present your early ideas to friends or an invited audience before you begin rehearsals or working on other aspects of the show. Again, this part of the process does not necessarily need funding for it to happen.

Discussing your creative ideas with a mentor and finding a rehearsal director if you are dancing in the work as well as choreographing it are invaluable steps to ensuring a show's success. Once rehearsals begin, things like publicity and budget constraints eat into creative time so be prepared for this and begin confident in the integrity of your creative concepts. Try to factor in enough rehearsal time early on. As opening night gets closer, pressures often increase, so try to plan the best use of your time.

People you may want as a mentor will usually be very busy, so try to ask people reasonably far in advance on the project's start date. If you need a reference for a funding application the same thing applies. Giving people as much notice as possible is important for both you and them, as occasionally people will be forced to decline your request not out of lack of interest, but because they're too busy.



Your group

This is a completely personal step, but it is vital to work out who you want to dance with and who you want to ask for artistic and production support. Together the group will make all the decisions from the naming of the cooperative to the order of the show, so make sure there is a level of compatibility to begin with. There should be fundamental things you all agree on and communication within the group should be open.

The production base

You will need one place where all the information goes, preferably somewhere with a computer, phone and fax. Decide where the hub of your show will be – you may want to have meetings about your artistic concepts somewhere different to where you meet to go over the budget and work on the business side of your production.

One of the things I discovered in engaging with the group Curve was how to communicate. Often for Curve this was at someone's house having a cup of tea and some food. A relaxed place that provides focus and little distractions. Stopping the habit of having meetings in cafes and on the run gave our time more significance and was more enjoyable. Allowing time for lateness, time for everyone to say hello to each other and catch up on where they were at while having a cup of tea, brings the people into the space and creates a readiness.

This at times meant we didn't get through all of what we may have wanted but we did achieve what was needed with everyone's engagement and abilities at that time as a group. People were also able to contribute as much as they could at that moment and we didn't get into the muddy overworked unproductive time that can make people not want to be there.

Establish the group before the actual project begins; clearing any old misunderstandings or dramas between people can be helpful, rather than entering with old baggage. If the group has been functioning for a while often things can get clarified with people at a de-brief, at the end of a project. Its important for all of us to not carry resentful or unexpressed feelings and to know the benefits of constructive resolution and not have things just fester on.

The times when we have brought people in for support or to facilitate communication in the group (often at the end of a project) have been deeply significant and vital, to have someone 'outside' the established group, guiding people to express what they experienced and felt in any moment in the process, can be greatly rewarding to any choreographer and performer. It allows people who are normally in the role of director to step away from the responsibility of the whole to come back and express themselves. A facilitator can also provide clarity, allowing everyone to speak without interruptions and giving support when needed.

It might be of use to discuss the 'vision' of the group, whether it be long or short-term, if you are sharing roles whether they have a time limit before someone else takes on a responsibility. Just asking can give you a sense of where you could go and if that means that everyone stays together or not, you will find out. When people see a place for themselves and an opening to express themselves they will be present and willing. When you can see the dramas, the practicalities, the set backs, the time as contributing and enriching the whole creation it can be a lot easier and exciting.

Kelly Nash, Curve, December 2003



Funding

First off, decide if your show needs to apply for funding, or whether it's something you can self-fund in order to experiment with ideas and working methods.

If you do want to apply for funding, work out who is financially accountable. This person's funding record will be affected by how you manage your project so it's best that everyone is as clear as possible on where the money comes from, where it goes and who is taking the risk. The whole group needs to know:

- if you are applying under a group name, who are the people that make up the group
- who in your group will write the application for the funds, and whose name will be on the application
- whose bank account will the money go into
- if it's a co-operative bank account, who are cheque signatories (it is recommended to have two signatories to keep procedures open and accountable)
- who does the bank regard as being ultimately responsible for the money
- who is taking the risk on having an overdraft in their name
- who will write the funding report.

At the end of the day who is financially accountable for your project – to both the group, the funding bodies and the bank?

Once these questions have been addressed a lot of stress should go. Most often it's ambiguity regarding money and the worry of having to write reports that leads to stress and unnecessary tension. Funding is a relatively straightforward process as long as everything is clear and open. More than one person in your show should have access to the budget.

Funding sources for your show include:

- Creative New Zealand's Arts Board Creative and Professional Development and New Work funding programmes, Te Waka Toi's Heritage Arts, Te Reo, New Work, Indigenous Links and Experiencing Maori Arts programmes. Creative Communities administered through local city councils, City Council programmes such as Wellington's Arts and Cultural Funding Round and Auckland's Arts Alive, Philanthropic Trusts listed on the 'Fundview' website available at public libraries, Arts Festivals such as the Fringe NZ's Kakano Fund and Gaming Trusts such as the Lion Foundation.
- You can also find money through other avenues such as personal support, private patrons, fundraisers and garage sales.
- DANZ's website has a list of funding organisations with their contact details:
www.danz.org.nz/funding.html.

Funding applications need to:

- Express your ideas, have a realistic (not inflated) budget that is supported by quotes made out to your cooperative, and answer the basic questions of what, where, who, how, when and why.
- Follow the funding criteria – or at least acknowledge it. Ring up the administrator of the organisation you are applying to and seek free advice.
- Be well written, free of spelling mistakes and succinct. Show people your draft applications and edit them more than once.

It helps to:

- Have a record of your work. Keep all your press clipping and reviews and include them as support material in future applications.
- Include letters of support from established people in the profession.



Sponsorship

Securing sponsorship takes time, so try and work out what the production needs and which organisations you would like to approach early on. Sponsors usually like the personal touch so don't be afraid to have a meeting with someone before you write them a formal proposal. Always make sure you know something about the company you are meeting with. And of course be confident about your work and your group's ability to create a successful production. A sponsor could be just as interested in supporting the growth of your co-operative as the actual show.

Sometimes sponsorship can be secured verbally but always follow these conversations up with a letter or email to confirm what you believe was said. When you do write a sponsorship proposal you will need to outline who you are, what you want from the company and what you can do for them – much in the same way as you would write a funding application. Be very clear about what your production actually is, the aims of your group, and what type of show their company will be associated with. Also be very clear about what you can do for them. For example, how many programmes will you put their logos on, how many complimentary tickets can they have, how many people could possibly see your show?

Sponsors can offer cash support or services and product support (contra sponsorship). Often the services of an organisation may be of more value to your show than outright cash, for example radio advertising or printing services. Cash can be harder to get than product or services, so work out what you really need. For instance, your time might be better spent getting cheap costume hire, or a reduced hire rate on the rehearsal space, than trying to get \$1,000 cash.

Work out what you can realistically do to promote a sponsor. For example if you've told them you'll put their logos on your posters and fliers, make sure there's enough time for the designer to organise this and that you've allowed sufficient distribution time. You don't want your posters going up the week before your show opens because you were waiting for a logo from a sponsor.

You may decide on other ways of acknowledging sponsors, such as signage at the venue and their logo on the show programmes. Either way, be open and honest with people who are considering sponsoring your show. Be generous with free tickets and always follow up with a thank you letter once the show is over. A small thank you package which includes reviews of the show, a copy of the programme, a poster and a flier can be good too, especially if their logo was on that material.



Show Budgets

The show budget is integral to the creative process – it is not separate. It is important to be able to understand how you can make your artistic vision happen within budget constraints. The show budget needs to be consulted and updated regularly once your project gets underway.

The budget put together for a funding application may end up being different to the one used for the actual show. This is because by the time the funding decision is announced there may have been some kind of change to the project. Or you may receive only a portion of what you applied for. So be sure to write a new budget once you find out exactly how much money you have to spend.

Think creatively and laterally if you are awarded less than you requested – or if one expense turns out to be a lot more than originally quoted. Creatively solving financial dilemmas is an important skill and one that becomes easier with practise.

Someone in your group needs to be in charge of the budget; checking actual expenditure against projected expenditure. Your working budget needs to have two columns. The 'projected' column – what you plan on spending – and the 'actual' column – what actually gets spent. If you received less money than what you applied for then this will be a completely new budget. The difference between what you plan to spend and actually spend can vary a lot. It is important to keep on top of this every day of the project to prevent going into debt. You should always know how much money you have left to spend at any stage of the project.

Get quotes from more than one source as soon as you can. Before you spend any money, you should have quotes for most of the things you want to spend money on, apart from wages. Sample budgets are in Appendix 2.



Publicity and Marketing

Publicising and marketing your show takes time and energy but it is an essential part of putting on a show. The person responsible for this must be committed to your show and what it is your co-operative is trying to achieve.

You can generate some free publicity for your show by making sure it is listed in all the free gig guides and making sure newspapers and magazines run stories early enough. How much you actually spend publicising and marketing your show should take into account the potential income you can get from your box office. There's no point risking a lot of money advertising a show that only 50 people can see. In that instance you'd want to develop a smart way of ensuring word of mouth and targeting particular people to come.

At the beginning of your project work out a marketing plan. As well as coming up with angles to convince people to come to your show your plan would outline how much money you have to spend, the audience you want to target and the deadlines for all publications, TV and radio stations (radio stations won't do free give-aways on air without enough notice).

A guide on marketing the arts has been produced by Creative New Zealand. Called 'Smart Arts: marketing the arts in New Zealand – Toi Huatau: Te hapai i nga mahi toi i Aotearoa', it includes examples of publicising and marketing dance. It has examples of marketing plans, sample media releases and examples of effective marketing campaigns, and has details on essential information for your posters and fliers (for example the booking number and time and dates of your show). It is highly recommended that the publicist working on your show read it and use it throughout the project. Creative New Zealand will mail you a free copy of the book if you ring them or you can email them to request a copy. It can be viewed online at www.creativenz.govt.nz.

Over time you will build your own network of media contacts. Creative New Zealand has a media contacts page on their website, and other people you work with, even sponsors of your show, may help you access different media contacts.

It is important that you get your marketing images as early as possible. Having them ready three months before your show opens is ideal as magazines need images that far in advance. Also potential sponsors may want visual images to help them understand your work.

Box Office

Convincing people to come to your show takes a lot of effort, so once they've made the decision to come it should be as easy as possible for them to actually do so.

If your venue is not running a box office system for you, or you're not using a ticketing agent such as Ticketek or Response, then make sure you organise an efficient booking system. Make sure it is very clear whether or not bookings can be made by phone or email. Work out what your policy regarding complimentary tickets is, and what you'll use as tickets on the door. The person selling tickets needs to know if they can let people in late. If you're doing your own ticket sales, what is your policy regarding refunds?

When you set your ticket prices be realistic and don't undersell your work. However take into account the length of your show, sightlines, the average price of shows at that venue and the quality of the experience you're offering.

If possible, try not to rely too much on box office income as your only way of making up a budget shortfall or your wages. Try and manage your budget so that some of your money from tickets sales can be reinvested into your next show. For example you may want marketing images for your next project to help with sponsorship and advance publicity.



Venues

The size of your box office income is related to your venue – in more ways than just the amount of people that can see your show.

The venue can influence people's decisions to see a show. People can have pre-conceived ideas about venues and the types of show they can expect to see there, which may or may not influence their decision to see your show. They are not always right of course, and challenging these ideas may be one of the aims of your show, especially if you are using a non-conventional performing space. But be aware that you might be faced with people having perceptions of your show which are based on factors not related to your show at all.

Developing your audience

It is important to collect as much information as possible about your audience so you understand the people interested in your work and also so you can contact them again for future shows.

Electronic ticketing, if possible, is best as this information is recorded at the point of sale and at the end of the show you have a ready-made database. If you're at a venue that doesn't have this, have forms available at your show so people can join your database. Be sure to collect their postal and email addresses so you can let them know about your next show. Even if your database is just 20 people it's a start.

Keeping track of your audience is also beneficial to potential sponsors. They will want to know how many people come to your shows and as much information as possible that you can tell them about the audience, e.g. what percentage are male/female, what age they are, what occupations they have. Collecting this information can take time, and remember that after the season has finished someone has to input the data into a spreadsheet or database, but eventually it is worth it.

A sample audience profile form, provided by DANZ, is in Appendix 3.

Invite lists

One of the best marketing tools you have is the people who come to your opening night. Word of mouth is still the best way of publicising your show. So invite people who talk a lot – invite your favourite theatre directors, favourite choreographers and dancers, invite actors working on the next play in the theatre – invite people who will spread the word. Always invite people you want to work with in the future. If you want a commission from a company or want to work with a particular choreographer then invite them to your show. It doesn't matter if they live in a different city – they may be in town for that weekend.



Presenting your show under a festival umbrella

Festivals are presentation platforms for shows and are usually regional in their focus. They may be programmed by a Director, which means the number of shows will be limited. You usually have to be invited to be included in the programme, though you can put yourself forward for selection.

If the festival isn't programmed by a Director then they are usually open access, which means for a registration fee anyone can become part of it. Open access festivals often provide a supportive environment for cooperatives putting on their first shows.

Performing your show in an open access festival means that for your registration fee you receive ticketing and marketing support. Your show is included in the festival programme booklet and the festival provides generic publicity, for example daily newspaper listings of events. Sometimes festivals are able to contribute to your fixed costs such as venue hire, or they provide pre-negotiated reduced rates with certain hire equipment companies or newspapers. Occasionally they are able to contribute to travel costs.

Festivals under which you may wish to present your new show include:

- tempo^o Auckland's Festival of Dance, October and November, www.tempoco.nz
- The Body Festival, Christchurch, www.thebody.org.nz
- Fringe NZ. Fringe NZ takes place in Wellington each February/March. They administer a new works fund which provides small grants for new shows. Applications close each November, see their website for further details, www.fringe.org.nz
- Other Fringe Festivals: Nelson Fringe Festival, Annabel.Norman@ncc.govt.nz
Dunedin Fringe Festival, www.dunedinfringe.org.nz
- PaoPaoPao – an annual Maori music and dance festival which includes performances, workshops and plenary hui.
- Otago Festival of the Arts, www.otagofestival.co.nz
- Christchurch Arts Festival, www.artsfestival.co.nz
- Fuel Festival (Hamilton), www.fuelfest.co.nz
- Taranaki/Womad, www.taranakifest.org.nz.

For a comprehensive list of festivals in New Zealand and overseas see the DANZ website: www.danz.org.nz/festivals.php.



Production Management

If you've initiated a project, or the formation of a collective, eventually you will have to hand over some of your responsibilities to a different person. The realisation of ideas, whether they're yours or the groups, is always a collective effort. Don't try and do everything.

The person managing the show is sometimes called the producer. In reality they are usually managing the project not producing the show. Many artists are actually producers of their own shows as all the financial responsibility rests with them. For example, it is often the artist who has written the funding application.

A Producer in the wider sense is someone who has written the funding applications and has a financial and sometimes artistic stake in the show. A Producer is usually an equal partner with the Artistic Director of the show.

Think about how you want to manage your show. Do you want to share the financial risk with someone? Would you rather employ people and maintain total control? If so, how much of your creative time are you prepared to give up to manage the project?

In cooperative situations the person called the producer is not always the person who is financially accountable, so in reality they are a project manager. Try and work out who is doing what – what you label the roles is less important than working out clear definitions of what people will actually do. However it is important to be realistic at all times.

- Who is ultimately responsible for the artistic outcome?
- Who is ultimately responsible for the financial outcome?
- Who is making sure these two people communicate effectively?
- Are you having weekly meetings to discuss issues or are people running off and doing their own thing?

The Project Manager:

- Intervenes when communication is not effective
- Checks and updates the budget
- Liaises with the venue, organises the venue hire, negotiates a better rate
- Liaises with the production manager
- Writes the contracts for the dancers, light designers, etc.
- Makes sure people have filled out their IR330 forms
- Liaises with the publicist – or they might be the publicist
- Oversees and often writes information that goes out regarding the show, be it contracts or letters to festivals
- Organises meetings between the choreographer, dancers and designers
- Makes sure invitations go out
- Liaises with sponsors and makes sure all funding bodies and sponsors are appropriately acknowledged
- Keeps everyone in the loop about all aspects of the show and makes sure communication is clear and open.



The Production Manager:

- Coordinates all technical aspects of the show
- Organises the pack-in and pack-out schedules
- Makes sure the technical crew have a clear understanding of what is required of them
- Makes sure the technical information, such as light design and set specifications, are recorded and given to the choreographer or director at the end of the season
- Coordinates the distribution of fliers and posters
- Makes sure the show runs smoothly.

The Publicist:

- Co-ordinates the publicity images
- Writes the media releases – coming up with different angles for different publications
- Distributes information to the media – must have email skills for this
- Makes sure all options for distributing information about the show are covered
- Follows up all media contacts to make sure they have the information
- Convinces the media to do a story or take a photo – and writes the caption if need be
- Invites the reviewers – via the arts editor of the publication
- Negotiates the best deals for getting the posters and fliers printed
- Comes up with new ways of selling your show – may come up with new marketing ideas
- Thinks about new ways of increasing audience numbers
- Explores new ways of connecting with potential audiences, such as text messaging
- Must love your work.

Tricky decisions that have to be made will undoubtedly arise and only you and your cooperative can work out who should be responsible. For example, if the production manager gets a great deal on items needed for the set who decides how many free tickets to give away? If the publicist can get great coverage in the newspaper but needs the dancers for a photo-shoot on their only day off who decides to call the dancers in? Who says whether they should get paid extra for that?

Sponsorship can be very important. Cash sponsorship can be hard to get, but contra (when they give you the product, e.g. a discounted or free print run) can be easier. Who decides how much to offer a sponsor? They may want their logo on the posters but the publicist might want the posters ready early.

Only clear communication, regular meetings and honesty can ensure a show reaches its true potential. It's not just the clarity of artistic ideas and the talent of the dancers that makes a successful show. Everyone on the production team needs to be working to their best potential. For this to happen you might need to move some responsibilities around and be flexible with the roles. It's best that people are working hard at what they're good at and the jobs are allocated to suit the people involved – you don't want people struggling with jobs they're not good at or frustrated with jobs that don't use their skills to their full potential.

For this to happen the group needs clear communication. Weekly production meetings can be extremely helpful. Never underestimate how important it is for the team to share what they're doing and what they think their next job is. It can be easy to presume everyone is working towards the same goal; everything needs to be talked about and clarified and the communication needs to be ongoing.

Mentoring support is available from DANZ during 2004 to assist with making these processes easier to manage. Email DANZ at danz@danz.org.nz.



Touring your show

An aim for your work is to take it on tour. It can be a way of making some money out of a show once the creation costs have been met. Touring should be seen as an extension of your audience development. It is possible to self-fund small tours of your shows. Other times you will want funding support or to sell your show to venues and festivals.

Creative New Zealand have produced a valuable touring guide, written by Fenn Gordon who has toured a number of dance productions. It is recommended that you ring and request a copy of this book. It is free and has a lot of information you will need to tour shows, including sample budgets of touring productions and advice on getting sponsorship.

PANNZ is the Performing Arts Network of New Zealand. They have developed resources to assist people touring shows. The website has information on joint ventures – sharing the risk of touring your show with festivals and/or venues – and also has the type of information you must send festivals that are interested in presenting your show. www.evanz.co.nz/pannz/pannz_2004.htm

There are many ways to tour your show. Always seek advice. Don't accept the first deal or sign the first venue hire contract you see. You could self-fund a tour. This would require people putting money into the show, e.g. by paying for their own airfares and splitting the box office evenly.

You can sell your show to a festival or venue. This takes time and you need the appropriate recourses. You will need all the technical information on your show, such as the lighting requirements. You also need to know what your show is worth, so discuss these issues with people who have experience.

Touring needs to be planned, and you always want to be touring your best work. The Creative New Zealand touring manual outlines the above options in greater detail.

WHITE choreographed by Raewyn Hill, is an example of a show which has successfully toured. A lot of this was due in part to careful planning in the beginning.

The show was created on a \$20,000 grant from Creative New Zealand, and premiered July 2002 at Bats Theatre, Wellington. Raewyn worked to create an hour-length show which met her artistic vision and was also easy to tour and suitable for a variety of festivals.

All the NZ festival directors were invited to the show. This led to an invitation to tour to the 2003 Christchurch Arts Festival and also to present the show at Downstage Theatre. In both cases performance fees and a tour package were negotiated, meaning that funding for touring support was not required.

An information pack for WHITE, which outlines the show and contains reviews, publicity material, audience statistics and the technical information on the show has been made. This can be presented to other festivals and further tours of the show now organised.

WHITE will be presented at the Australian Performing Arts Market in Adelaide, 2004.