

A CASE STUDY EXPLORING THE CONTRIBUTION OF JAZZ DANCE

IN ONE VOCATIONAL BALLET SCHOOL

BY

THOREY MOUNTAIN-EVERROAD

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the contribution of jazz dance in a vocational ballet school. My research design was an interpretive case study. In my role as Head of Jazz Dance at the case study school, and with the full support of the Artistic Director, I explain to parents of young auditionees that jazz dance complements classical ballet training. We emphasize the importance of versatility daily to our students, impressing on them the necessity of being able to meet the demands of today's choreographers and the increasingly diverse repertoire in ballet companies.

Theoretically the study was informed by two concepts from the figurational or process theory of Norbert Elias, processual change and figurations of interdependence, and by my own experiences as dancer, teacher and choreographer. The qualitative research was in two parts. The first part contextualized the empirical study with an historical chapter to illustrate the development of jazz dance as a theatre art form. I utilized documents and transcripts of interviews with three jazz dance exponents/performers. In the second part I used four semi-structured interviews and fifty eight questionnaire responses to explore the perceptions of key stakeholders on the place of jazz dance in elite vocational ballet training. The questionnaire comprised open-ended questions and the data were analysed thematically. The data and the testimony indicated that there is a broad awareness of the significant contribution that jazz dance makes towards enhancing the career possibilities of ballet dancers in training.

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Table of Contents

Chapter One Introduction	p. 1
1.1 Jazz dance within a vocational ballet school	p. 1
1.2 Researcher position	p. 2
1.3 Theoretical framework and research questions	p. 2
1.4 Case study school	p. 4
1.5 Thesis structure	p. 5
Chapter Two Theoretical framework, Methodology, Methods	p. 6
2.1 Introduction	p. 6
2.2 Theoretical framework	p. 6
2.3 Methodology	p. 14
2.4 Methods	p. 17
2.5 Sampling	p. 25
2.6 Access	p. 26
2.7 Insider Research	p. 27
2.8 Triangulation	p. 29
2.9 Ethics	p. 30
2.10 Data Analysis	p. 31
2.11 Summary	p. 33
Chapter Three History and development of jazz dance	p. 34
3.1 Introduction	p. 34
3.2 High art/low art dichotomy	p. 35
3.3 Roots of jazz dance	p. 36
3.4 Building on the past	p. 36

3.5 Ruth St. Denis and Denishawn	p. 37
3.6 Jack Cole and a fusion of styles	p. 38
3.7 Music and jazz dance	p. 39
3.8 The kernel of jazz technique	p. 40
3.9 Matt Mattox and a codified technique	p. 41
3.10 Defining jazz dance	p. 43
3.11 Balanchine and Robbins	p. 46
3.12 Diversity of repertoire	p. 49
3.13 Summary	p. 50
Chapter Four Presentation of case study results	p. 51
4.1 Introduction	p. 51
4.2 Complementarity	p. 52
4.3 Versatility	p. 56
4.4 Negativity	p. 61
4.5 The jazz/ballet interface and training	p. 63
4.6 Summary	p. 66
Chapter Five	p. 68
5.1 Introduction	p. 68
5.2 The evolution of the present from the past	p. 69
5.3 Figurations within the case study school	p. 74
5.4 Consensus and contradiction	p. 78
5.5 Responsibility	p. 79
5.6 Understanding the value of training	p. 80
5.7 Moving forward	p. 81

Chapter Six	p. 83
6.1 Key findings	p. 83
6.2 Strengths and limitations	p. 84
6.3 Ideas for further research	p. 85
References	p. 87
Appendices	p. 93

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Jazz dance within a vocational ballet school

The research explores the historical development of jazz dance and the contemporary contribution of that genre in the training of young ballet dancers. The empirical study is focused on one vocational ballet school in England that trains aspiring professional dancers from the age of eleven years, concentrating on the upper school where students are in full-time training from ages sixteen to nineteen. Jazz dance is second to ballet in the positioning of dance genres studied by the students. There will always be minor differences in the definition of jazz dance but this study is concerned with theatre jazz dance, a stylized form, which has a strong technique and has retained its early rhythmic propulsion and musicality. The classical ballet curriculum comprises the greater portion of the schedule but students attend a weekly 'jazz styles' class and one or more foundation jazz technique classes. There is a yearly formal jazz assessment and the technical and performance skills of graduating students in both dance styles are assessed in the Summer Show by the validating body, Trinity College London. In my position as Head of Jazz Dance at the school I am aware that the emphasis on jazz dance is contentious. I began to analyse why it was considered important in a vocational ballet school, who and what had influenced its historical development, and what were the perspectives of those most affected by its inclusion in the curriculum.

1.2 Researcher position

During my professional dance career I studied jazz dance with Matt Mattox, danced with his company and subsequently performed in West End shows, films and television for eminent jazz choreographers from the United States including Ron Field, Bob Fosse and Michael Bennett. Mattox's technique was inspired by the work of Jack Cole, who is considered to be the 'father of American jazz dance' (Loney, 1984, p. 12). A form of theatre jazz dance evolved from Cole's work which was codified by Mattox, and this discipline is taught at the case study school and at several performing arts colleges in London. The genre is concerned with training the body to increase strength without tension and develops technique through use of isolations, coordination, fluidity of the spine, distorted positions and contraction and release. Again, musicality and rhythmic complexity are essential to this form of dance. Unlike classical ballet, which emphasizes lightness, the work is grounded with the feet in parallel rather than the traditional ballet turn-out.

1.3 Theoretical framework and research questions

Theoretically the study is informed by two concepts from figurational theory or process sociology (Elias: 1978). Norbert Elias established this theory by examining long-term social changes from the Middle Ages to the present. These changes were brought about by people differentially connected to interdependent others in figurations.

The two research questions have arisen from applying figurational theory and my experience over a long career in professional dance and current position as a jazz teacher in a vocational ballet school:

1. In what ways have exponents of jazz dance shaped the theatre jazz dance genre taught in the vocational ballet school?
2. What are the perceptions of key stakeholders on the contribution of jazz dance in the case study school: current and former students, vocational staff, senior artistic managers of the school and associated company?

In addressing research question one, historical research using secondary and primary sources, including literature and archive documentation, three key informant interviews and personal reflections were undertaken. The focus was necessarily selective given the scope of the study and word limitations of the thesis. Because Elias's theory focuses on people as drivers of change, the influence of, for example, Ruth St. Denis on Cole, and the legacies of Cole and Mattox and their contribution to the emergent 'theatre dance form' taught in the case study school are explored. The importance of the work of George Balanchine and Jerome Robbins is emphasized because they both worked extensively on Broadway and in ballet companies, and were influenced by jazz rhythms. Bob Fosse and Michael Kidd are mentioned as pioneers in the figuration of interdependent people inspired by Cole who were instrumental in shaping the genre taught at the case study school.

Research question two involved an empirical interpretive field study using open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with expert key stakeholders in the vocational ballet school. Questionnaires were disseminated to 52 current and former students and there were 49 returns. Questionnaires were distributed to 11 vocational staff members and 9 were returned. Interviews were held with four senior artistic managers of the case study school and the associated company.

The research is original because no previous study has explored the historical background and contemporary contribution of jazz dance to vocational ballet training. My researcher position allowed ease of access to key stakeholders, and my extensive career first as a professional dancer and then as a teacher working in the jazz dance medium gave me first-hand knowledge of the founder-exponents of the genre and links to key informants who could provide unique historical accounts for the purpose of this study. Such positioning enables multiple points of access. It also brings the challenge of objectivity in data gathering, analysis and interpretation (Bell: 2005). However, my life experience and current situation do provide insights that outsider researchers could never come to know.

1.4 Case study school

Most vocational dance schools in England concentrate on providing students with a broad dance and theatre education allowing them to pursue careers in various branches of the performing arts. Five of the larger vocational dance schools are described as ballet schools; three of those five schools offer full time training only for those students aged 16-19. The other two schools, including the case study school, accept students from 11 years old. Those who successfully complete their early training may graduate into the senior school/upper school at age 16, post GCSE and continue their training until they are 18/19.

Two of the other ballet schools also offer jazz dance, although in the first of these, classical ballet is supported by contemporary dance and jazz dance is listed among other classes offered. In the second a variety of styles, including jazz, are offered during the first year of training but after that, students must decide whether to concentrate on classical ballet or jazz theatre dance (vocational ballet school websites: see references).

The case study school is associated with a major ballet company, and while it is intent on training tomorrow's classical dancers, its secondary focus on jazz is unique.

1.5 Thesis structure

Following this introduction to the research and the case study school, Chapter Two includes theoretical and methodological considerations for the study and details the research methods adopted. Chapter Three addresses results of research question one regarding the influence of key exponents on the historical development of theatre jazz dance. Chapter Four presents the findings of research question two, and reveals the results of the empirical case study on the contemporary position of jazz dance in one vocational ballet school. Chapter Five uses knowledge and understanding gained in the previous two chapters to discuss the historical and contemporary significance of jazz dance to vocational ballet training. Finally Chapter Six concludes the study, highlighting key findings, the strengths and limitations of the study and ideas for further research.

Chapter Two

Theoretical framework, Methodology, Methods

2.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the theoretical framework. Figurational or process sociology is employed to underpin the structure of the research and analysis. This theory supports the two-part study by acknowledging the historical development of theatre jazz dance and its relationship with classical ballet through the work of key exponents, and by focusing attention on the figuration or network of interdependent people involved in the teaching and learning of jazz dance in the vocational case study school. This is followed by a section describing the methodology, the rationale for the research design and methods used.

2.2 Theoretical framework

Embedding an empirical study in a theoretical framework allows clarity of focus and helps to achieve clear understanding of emerging data. In the profusion of social theories the selection of one is problematic as each theory has limitations:

Theories are ... selective in terms of their priorities and perspectives and the data they define as significant. As a result, they provide a particular and partial view of reality.

(Haralambos & Holborn, 1991, p. 765).

The theory had to provide a sufficiently flexible framework to allow ideas and themes to emerge during the course of the research. Carter (1998, p.2) claims that dance can be approached from many analytical perspectives: scrutiny of research literature on dance and

cognate cultural forms suggests that whilst no theory is perfect, figural or process theory is most appropriate for the current study which requires an historical perspective which can handle the development of cultural forms and social structures at a macro-sociological level and evolving micro-systems, that is networks of face to face interacting, interdependent human beings. Elias makes it clear that the concept of figuration could apply at macro and micro levels and indeed can connect these levels (Elias: 1978).

In evolving figural theory, Norbert Elias (1978) began by countering the trend in sociological theory to separate the individual and society, accommodating both Durkheim's contention that society existed *sui generis* and that sociology was the study of social facts, (Durkheim: 1982 [1895]) and reductionist theories. Thus figural theory allows the study of long term processes 'through which the relatively autonomous actions of many individuals and collections of people influence and constrain one another' (eds. Coakley and Pike, 2009, p.54) involving relationships of conflict and co-operation and differential power and/or authority. These processes lead to a wide range of unplanned and unintended outcomes 'which shift and change as power and relationships within figurations shift and change over time' (eds. Coakley and Pike, 2009, p.54-55). Accordingly the concepts of change over time (the historical development of a cultural form, jazz dance) and human interdependence and agency within a ballet school can encompass both researched history of jazz dance as a cultural form and face to face interaction in an organizational context – a vocational ballet school. Legitimising this choice, Layder (1994, p.114-115) argues that Elias's work stems from his conviction that '...long term developmental trends have given shape to the major features of our society and our knowledge of it'. According to Dunning and Rojek (1992, xiii) Elias insisted that change is the omnipresent normal condition of social life and Dunning (1999, p.69) adds that 'the conventional view, according to which society and history are

separate subjects, one concerned with ‘the present’ and the other with ‘the past’ is arbitrary and wrong’, insisting that ‘the present’ has to be read with an historical connotation. Figuration theory which is process based, searches for understanding over time, historically, in order to increase knowledge of ‘how things have come to be’ (Elias; 1978). Horne and Jary refer to the value of Elias’s work ... and his ‘insistence on a recognition of the historical specificity of social figurations, their ‘processual’ character and their essential openness to change (Horne & Jary, 1987, p. 89). Layder also cautions that uncritical extension of Elias’s ideas gets in the way of any real regard for the strengths and limitations inherent in his work – particularly with the so-called problem of the ‘individual and society’. His work has illustrated the problem of ‘...the emergence of the modern notion of the individual as a closed-off, self-contained entity (homo clausus)’ (Layder, 1994, p.115). Any exploration of jazz dance cannot be disconnected from the history and the contribution of influential people in its making as a theatre dance form, and understanding of the contemporary case study into the profile of jazz dance in one vocational ballet school would be impossible without recognizing how the profile of jazz dance in theatre had ‘come to be’. Therefore, figuration theory or process theory was the choice that could embrace the vision of the study.

Although conceptually, figuration theory as pointed out above, can potentially synthesise macro and micro perspectives, it has rarely been used in empirical studies of micro situations but rather in macro areas such as identifying processes of state-formation, globalization, politicization, civilization, and sportization (Benn: 1998). The sociology of sport and leisure is an area where process sociology has exerted considerable influence (eds. Dunning and Rojek: 1992). Figuration theory pertains to the idea that human society can only be understood through long term processes of development and change which occur through power struggles within figurations. Elias’s theory acknowledges: ‘...a fluctuating,

tensile equilibrium, a balance of power moving to and fro, inclining first to one side and then the other' (Elias, 1978, p. 131). A universal aspect of human figurations is that everyone is interdependent (Elias: 1978). Networks of interdependencies are linked to other networks, or figurations, in a world that is becoming progressively more globalized. In the shifting balances of tensions within human figurations, people are constrained or enabled by the actions of others in the process of development. Within figurations tension-balances result in continual changes either in a civilizing or decivilizing, integrating or disintegrating direction. In Western societies the prevailing direction of change from the Middle Ages has been in a civilizing and integrating direction (Benn: 1998). Civilization is a concept used with caution in sociology (Van Krieken, 1998, p. 93).

Thus it can be seen here that figurational sociology is particularly well-suited to analyse the historical and cultural processes which have shaped the development of jazz dance as a recognized dance form by incorporating cultural anthropology and social-structural analysis. However, Maguire (1992) recognised the generic importance of face to face encounters in forming identities, self-concepts and one's views of the world, and this could apply to the case study and the theatre dance world of jazz and ballet. Maguire invoked other interactionist concepts of self-realization, identity formation, social life as drama and the presentation of self. There is an acknowledged connection between figurationalism, interactionism and identity theory. However interactionism and identity theories are also critiqued perspectives not least for their lack of historical engagement and acknowledgement of the influence of the social situation. The fact that the first part of this study explores the historical development of jazz dance as a theatre dance form, inevitably influencing its existence in the ensuing vocational ballet school case study, supports the use of figurational or process theory in the current study.

While ‘gender and dance’ constitutes potentially rich research opportunities in dance research, gender was not the central focus of this study, although results indicate it could be profitable in the future. Feminist approaches, therefore would not be relevant to the current study. Similarly, critical class-based frameworks would not be appropriate here, although they offer much potential for the study of recruitment to and consumption of elitist art forms such as ballet which: ‘... is perceived as ‘high culture’, even an elite pastime’ (Wulff, 1998, p.46). Wulff suggests that in most [ballet] companies, the majority of corps de ballet dancers are ‘from the upper working class to middle middle class’ although she continues: ‘the disposition that cultural capital entails concerns the consumption of the arts, not production of them like professional dancing.’ Yet social class and usage of the body in different ways could be relevant in this study, for example through the work of Pierre Bourdieu and Elias on the concept of habitus.

In Bourdieu’s view cultural capital can exist in three distinct forms in its embodied, objectified and institutionalized states (Bourdieu; 1986). In its embodied form, i.e. in the form of ‘long-lasting dispositions of mind and body’ cultural capital is a competence or skill that cannot be separated from the person that holds it. The process of acquiring cultural and physical capital necessarily implies the dedication of time to learning and/or training and the conversion of cultural and physical capital into economic capital through professional employment. A vocational ballet school is a good example of accumulated cultural capital in its embodied state as the considerable investment in time hopefully allows students to become professional dancers. Graduating students will have gained a level of competence which, because it is highly prized by ballet companies, becomes an embodied form of cultural capital.

Bourdieu's theory of habitus 'links the social and the individual because the experiences of one's life course may be unique in their particular *contents*, but are shared in terms of their *structure* with others of the same social class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, occupation ... (ed. Grenfell, 2008, p.53). In this instance occupation could refer to the focus on ballet which is the common thread of a vocational ballet school. '... habitus can be and is being used to analyse a wide variety of issues and areas across a number of disciplines' (ed. Grenfell, 2008, pp. 61-62). Bourdieu and Elias have developed the concept *habitus* though in a slightly different manner, with Elias emphasizing the interdependence of human beings claiming that 'we are social to the core, and exist only in and through our relations with others, developing a socially constructed 'habitus' or 'second nature' (Van Krieken, 1998, p.6). It was this link with social connections that led to the researcher's final decision to use figurational or process theory. Key concepts from other sociological approaches could be encapsulated while requiring the historical dimension of 'how things come to be' to understand jazz dance in a vocational ballet school today.

In addition to the historical dimension, the ensuing study was shaped on the concept of figurations or networks of interconnected people. Clarifying the concept of figuration Elias used the analogy of a figuration of four people, sitting around a table playing cards together, Elias continued:

'It can be seen that this figuration forms a flexible lattice-work of tensions. The interdependence of the players, which is a prerequisite of their forming a figuration, may be interdependence of allies or of opponents' (Elias, 1978, p. 130).

He also used the analogy of dancers on a dance floor to demonstrate the idea of figurations stating that:

‘the image of the mobile figurations of interdependent people on a dance floor perhaps makes it easier to imagine state, cities, families and also capitalist, communist, and feudal systems as figurations’ (Van Krieken, 1998, pp. 57–58).

The figuration of interdependent people in the field study school used in the current research included those interested in how aspiring students were trained for the professional ballet world. This included teachers, former and current students and senior artistic managers of the school and associated company.

In summary then, following Dunning (1992) the concept of figurations admonishes the researcher to be aware of interdependency links and the interconnections made by acting human beings without prejudging the make-up of the interdependencies under investigation. In a vocational ballet school setting the significance of human relations cannot be over emphasized and although students require continuity even stability in the short term, organizational structures and cultures are continually changing as individuals and groups engage in patterns of conflict and cooperation involving political struggle for power and authority. In this context an example would be negotiation over the content of the curriculum, the allocation of scarce resources and use of students’ time. Elias argued that power instead of being reified should be regarded in terms of its relational character, viewed as balances and ratios (Van Krieken, 1998, pp. 63-64). He admitted that the term ‘power’ has

a rather unpleasant connotation for a lot of people and he explained this by pointing out that 'during the whole development of human societies, power ratios have usually been extremely unequal' (Elias, 1978, p. 74).

In conclusion figurational sociology whilst not exactly eclectic in a pejorative sense is more an open-ended research tradition than a theoretical school in the classical Durkheimian, Weberian or Marxian tradition. Cognizant of this criticism, study of the development of jazz dance is conceived of as a theoretically contextualised historiography which protects the academic integrity of the research and locates it securely in the figurational research tradition.

In contrast the atheoretical focus of figurational 'theory' on long-term historical links is perceived as a weakness by some Coakley and Pike (2009, p. 57). It has been suggested that the historical framework explains everything in long-term processes of change which results in attention being deflected away from the urgency of painful everyday issues and struggles. Additionally concentration on social interdependence can lead to minimising the consequences of oppressive power relationships and fails to take into account the necessity for united political action to change the balance of power in social relationships and other areas of social life (eds. Coakley and Pike: 2009).

Hargreaves (cited by eds. Dunning and Rojek, 1992, p.166), criticises Elias for his support of detachment and failure to place his work in an ideological or political setting. She suggests this 'provides a rationale for non commitment' which is in distinct contrast with the high quality of committed research which feminism calls 'working with passionate objectivity'. Max Weber committed to 'value freedom' in social science would heartily disapprove of such feminist approaches unlike critical theorists who share Marx's views that the point is not just to describe the world but to change it (Swingewood: 2000).

In evaluating the overall strengths and weaknesses of process sociology, on the positive side the research approach can utilise the concept of 'social facts' and statistical methods to investigate causation whilst avoiding the anti-positivist critique of reification. Furthermore figurational analysis can accommodate interpretive approaches and qualitative methodology to investigate social action and understand meaning and verstehen. Finally process sociology can investigate stability and change whilst avoiding the criticism that it is committed ideologically and biased toward either sociological conservatism or to conflict theories which explain social change primarily in terms of power struggles and clashes between differentially advantaged interest groups and classes.

Clearly process sociology can accommodate both the historical analysis of the development of jazz dance as an independent, identifiable dance form and investigation at the organizational level of inclusion of jazz dance in the curriculum of a classical ballet school.

2.3 Methodology

Using figurational theory and reflections on a life in professional dance, the research questions were:

1. In what ways have exponents of jazz dance shaped the theatre jazz dance genre taught in the vocational ballet school?
2. What are the perceptions of key stakeholders on the contribution of jazz dance in the case study school: current and former students, teachers, senior artistic managers of the school and associated company?

The research stems from an interpretive paradigm, that there are multiple truths and realities and that meaning is situated in the lives, experiences and interactions of individuals. This contrasts with the positivists' view, which is concerned with explanation. Grix suggests that positivism and interpretivism can be regarded as opposites, with positivists basing their research on natural sciences, which allow objectivity, and interpretivists feeling that a distinction has to be made between the natural and the social world. He indicates that within the interpretivist paradigm objective and value-free analysis is impossible as the researcher is a part of the social reality being studied (Grix: 2004). This does not mean that rigorous attention to validity and authenticity cannot be central to the research process. The interpretive process lends itself to analysis of people's experiences, artefacts and perceptions, probing into everyday realities and attributing value to such accounts (Robson: 1993). In pursuit of evidence for both research questions, qualitative data were included, that is, data which allowed the voices and experiences of those engaged in the development of jazz dance or the case study school to contribute to the emerging pictures. Denzin and Lincoln concurred that: '... qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world' (2005, p. 3).

In addressing research question one it was essential to engage in historical research. In order to write an authentic account of the role of key exponents in jazz dance, it was necessary and possible to synthesise primary, secondary and eyewitness oral accounts. Triangulating these sources together with interview data and personal reflection produced a vivid account of the past, and these sources are considered in more detail below. The study utilised archival research (Victoria and Albert Museum Archive and Library Reading Room), primary document analysis (British Library Reading Room), as well as transcripts from interviews. The interviews with three jazz dance performers allowed insight into the technical

accomplishments, stylistic and expressive qualities of notable theatre jazz dance pioneers (see Chapter Three).

An empirical case study in one vocational school was undertaken to address research question two. The case study concentrates on one specific phenomenon to be studied rather than a broad spectrum or mass survey (Denscombe, 2007, pp.35–36). The rationale for using a case study design was that it allowed for the growth of ‘detailed’ understanding of a single case (Robson, 1993, 2002), in this case the prominent positioning of jazz dance in one vocational ballet school. Although in the past, case study has been regarded as what de Vaus describes as a ‘soft option’ (de Vaus, 2001, p. 219), this view has now changed and Yin, for example, has championed the value of case study design (Yin: 2003, 1989, 1984). Grix points out that case studies: ‘... represent particular strategies for research, involving empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, and employing multiple sources of evidence’ (Grix, 2004, p. 162). The real-life context involved field research at the case study school to ascertain the perceptions of key stakeholders about the place of jazz dance in the curriculum.

De Vaus suggests that it can be beneficial to differentiate between ‘cases as a whole and cases that consist of various levels and components.’ (de Vaus, 2001, p. 220). He elucidates by stating that a school as a case study would include teaching staff, administrative staff, staff at different levels of seniority and experience, students at different year levels, parents, as well as characteristics that pertain to the school. Research in the case study school was limited to certain groups because the focus is the central figuration engaged with jazz dance in the taught curriculum. The key stakeholders used in the study were: current and former students, vocational staff, senior artistic managers of the school and associated company. The nature of the question required gathering qualitative data which is: ‘...exploratory, fluid

and flexible, data driven and context-sensitive’ (Mason, 2002, p. 24). Qualitative researchers emphasize: ‘...socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 8).

Table 1 Relationship of research questions to data sources

Research Questions	Data Sources
1. In what ways have exponents of jazz dance shaped the theatre jazz dance genre taught in the vocational ballet school?	Historical sources, biography, archives, interviews
2. What are the perceptions of key stakeholders on the contribution of jazz dance in the case study school?	Interviews, open-ended questionnaires, documentation, archives

2.4 Methods

Historical research

To discover how exponents of jazz dance have shaped the theatre jazz dance genre taught in the vocational ballet school many methods and sources were utilised. There is a paucity of academic work focusing specifically on jazz dance but secondary sources, primary documents and interviews with ‘eyewitnesses’ that provided oral evidence rendered useful information.

Secondary sources indicated that research would highlight the work of Jack Cole and Matt Mattox as jazz exponents whose work continues to resonate in the training of students at the

case study school. The importance of Ruth St. Denis as an early influence on Cole is acknowledged. The choreographers Jerome Robbins and George Balanchine are examples of the ballet/jazz interface and were key to the study.

A significant amount of the research for this part of the study is focused on the USA, the home of jazz dance before internationalization. Matt Mattox relocated from New York in 1970 and was instrumental in the growth of jazz dance in the UK where his codified technique began to be recognized and taught in several performing arts schools and colleges.

Denscombe suggests that documents can be used as a source of data in their own right and that one of the great advantages of using documents in research is that they are easily accessed (Denscombe: 2007). Documents held at the British Library Reading Room, which included collected writings and conference papers, were consulted on how to define jazz dance. I turned to secondary sources for information about the key jazz dance exponents and the roots and early history of jazz dance. Biographies focusing on theatre dance were consulted to show the manner in which the genre was influenced by modern dance pioneers and other forms of dance. Evaluating objectivity can pose problems; people who write about dance are often passionate about their subject and therefore open to bias in their writing. This can be addressed using multiple sources on the same phenomenon (triangulation) to increase validity and reliability of results. For example, Glenn Loney's definitive biography of Jack Cole, *Unsung Genius* (Loney: 1984) was first published as a series of articles for the *American Dance Magazine*, inspired by interviews with Cole's dancers shortly after his death and may therefore have a bias, but alongside other material including the transcripts of recent interviews a more objective picture can emerge regarding authenticity.

Among primary source material consulted were autobiographies and collections of reviews by eminent dance critics such as Walter Terry describing performances of jazz dance as well as an image of the relationship between ballet and jazz (Terry: 1978). The best critics write in an objective manner with reasoned opinions. However, some critics allow their enthusiastic response to certain dancers to ‘burst through’ their writing (eds. Adshead and Layson, 1983, p. 23). Other primary sources included material in the Jack Cole Archives at the Victoria and Albert Museum Theatre and Performance Collection held at Blythe House, visited on 27 October 2011, and interviews undertaken with jazz exponents in the USA and in the UK.

The monthly magazine *Dancing Times* which has been published in Britain since 1910, and its American counterpart *Dance Magazine*, first published in 1926, are respected publications. Layson suggests that the authoritative status enjoyed by both is due to their ‘longevity, continuous publication and the resulting vast written source which has accumulated’ (ed. Carter: 1998). Interviews with jazz dance choreographers and teachers used in the study were published in these journals. Films and video clips of jazz dancers central to the research and the work of choreographers were used.

To gain insight into their early training, their careers and their perceptions of working with jazz dance pioneers who are central to the study, semi-structured interviews with three key jazz exponents were conducted and the pseudonyms JE1, JE2, JE3 were used to preserve anonymity:

- An illustrious performer and jazz dancer who has worked with Jack Cole, Jerome Robbins, and Bob Fosse in the USA (JE1).

- A jazz dancer, teacher and choreographer who has worked with Jack Cole and Matt Mattox and whose career was centred in Britain (JE2).
- A former soloist with a classical ballet company who then studied and worked with Matt Mattox (JE3).

The rationale for interviewing is discussed below, but for the historical research, eyewitness and expert opinions were sought on the role of notable jazz dancers and choreographers in the development of jazz and its relationship with ballet.

Two of the interviews were face to face and the other was a telephone interview; the transcripts contributed primary source material to the study. Analysis and interpretation of the range of data sources involved looking for points of consensus and contradiction. The emergent picture has been woven into Chapter Three deepening understanding of research question one: ‘In what ways have exponents of jazz dance shaped the theatre jazz dance genre taught in the vocational ballet school?’

Empirical case study

Research question two examined the figuration at the centre of jazz dance in the case study school to discover the perceptions of key stakeholders on the contribution of jazz dance in the vocational ballet school. Open-ended questionnaires and interviews were the methods used and to preserve anonymity codes were used for each group. The case study school is referred to as CSS. The key stakeholders were senior artistic managers of the school and associated company, identified here as expert key stakeholders (EKS), vocational staff (VS), former students (FS) and current students. For analysis, current students were divided into two groups, third year students (graduands) are referred to as (Y6.3) and students in their second

year of the upper school, (Y6.2). Former students were included as it was felt that the juxtaposition of their perceptions and those of current students might diverge.

Situational analysis of the case study school

It was the Principal and Governors who proposed in 2002 that the case study school (CSS) should relocate to become an associate school of a major ballet company. Traditionally students at the school could choose to concentrate on one of two routes, classical ballet or Musical Theatre. It was stipulated however that when the move took place the school must become a classical ballet school because the company is a classical ballet company.

At the curriculum meetings which followed the announcement of the school's relocation, the Artistic Director of the company insisted straight away: 'I want them to do jazz.' The upper school students receive one lesson of jazz styles and one jazz technique class or more each week. The students also have weekly tap dance lessons which are under the umbrella of the jazz department and one contemporary dance class. Graduating students must be assessed in performance in both classical ballet and jazz dance to receive their Trinity Diploma in Professional Dance (see p. 1).

CSS is accredited by The Council for Dance Education and Training (CDET) which is the 'standards body of the professional dance and musical theatre industries in the United Kingdom' (CDET: 2008/2009). The CDET UK handbook of accredited courses in Dance and Musical Theatre states that students at CSS 'benefit greatly' from the school's association with the company (CDET: 2008/9). The importance of consistently building at both ends of the company is widely recognized (Mead: 2010). 'The relationship with the company allows the students to gain an insight into a professional dancer's life and with Sixth Form students regularly dancing with the Company...and on tour, extremely valuable

performance experience' (company brochure produced for twentieth anniversary: school archive). Y6.3 students are able to join the company's daily class on a rotation basis, which allows all students to sample life in a company. Dancers from the company teach classes regularly at CSS and their expertise is used on assessment and competition panels. The choreography of selected ballets is taught to the students by company staff, and costumes are provided by the wardrobe to ensure a professional standard of performance.

Since CSS became a classical ballet school the 'aesthetic look', together with the many physical attributes that are essential for classical training, such as turn-out and flexibility, have become the first qualities looked for at auditions. This can be contentious as frequently candidates do not have the exact aesthetic look or all those features needed for classical ballet but have other outstanding qualities, such as innate musicality and dance quality. Entrance to the Sixth Form (Upper School) from the lower school at CSS is not automatic and students are required to audition with the numerous other candidates. In the final audition the young dancers are scrutinized by the entire dance staff. There is frequently dissent and discussion among panel members before the final decision is made.

The change in emphasis to a classical ballet school provides the main reason for exploring the perceptions of key case study school stakeholders on the contribution of jazz dance in vocational ballet training. Despite careful screening at auditions, students may not achieve a place in a ballet company after training and their career paths may lead to other dance forms.

'Quality case study is characterized by researchers spending extended time, on site, personally in contact with activities and operations of the case, reflecting, revising meanings of what is going on' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p 445). As indicated, questionnaires and interviews were the most appropriate tools for exploring the perceptions of key stakeholders

on the contribution of jazz dance in vocational ballet training. Using these methods recognized the participant stakeholders as a primary data source (Blaikie: 2000). Both methods allowed exploration of the topic but in different ways, each method has advantages and disadvantages but together can strengthen the validity of results.

Open-ended questionnaires

Open-ended questionnaires were used with current students (27), former students (22) and vocational staff (9). Denscombe suggests that as well as a means of gathering facts, questionnaires can be used for investigating: ‘Opinions, attitudes, views, beliefs, preferences, etc.’ (Denscombe, 2007, p.155). The rationale for using questionnaires was underpinned by the belief that colleagues and students might reply more candidly than they would in an interview. Questionnaires allow anonymity and in turn the respondents may feel able to answer any sensitive questions more frankly (Robson: 1993, 2002). Six open-ended questions were formulated for current and former students (Appendix A). The questions were concerned with perceptions/recollections of jazz dance training, whether it was regarded as advantageous or disadvantageous in any way, what influence jazz dance may have or have had on a dancer’s career, and the respondents’ view of the interface between jazz and ballet and possible implications for training. An additional question was added for vocational staff, designed to gain an awareness of how they felt as teachers about jazz dance in the curriculum (Appendix B). Background information was provided and the purpose of the research explained. To avoid leading the participant into a particular line of response, care was taken not to give too much detail. Every attempt was made to make the questions clear and to guard against bias and ambiguity (Denscombe: 2007).

A disadvantage of questionnaires can be the challenges involved in collecting the completed forms; the response to postal questionnaires is typically low (Robson: 1993, 2002). The questionnaires were sent electronically to former students. The initial response was slow but the eventual response rate was 88%. Current students completed the questionnaires voluntarily in a classroom setting. Two current students elected not to participate in the study.

Interviews

Interviews for the field study were conducted with four expert key stakeholders EKS1, EKS2, EKS3, EKS4:

- Artistic Director of the ballet company that is associated with the case study school.
- Assistant Artistic Director of the associated company.
- Vice President of the school.
- Artistic Director of the school.

Interviews are regarded as a vital source of information for case studies and were semi-structured to allow for some flexibility (Yin: 2003). The semi-structured interview uses a plan of questions but affords the opportunity of clarification (Rose & Grosvenor: 2001) which is an advantage of this method. After the initial questions have been addressed, the interviewing process can, up to a point, be guided by the answers given by the interviewees (Robson: 2003, 2002). The use of a small voice recorder during the pilot interview made transcribing arduous. It was necessary to purchase an updated digital recorder to refine the quality of the recorded interviews. Transcribing took an inordinate amount of time and is regarded as a disadvantage of interviews (Robson: 1993, 2002).

Written, informed, voluntary consent (Appendix C) for their participation was received, and with prior permission each interview was recorded and handwritten notes were taken simultaneously as advised. The flexibility of open-ended questions allowed the opportunity to elucidate where necessary and test the boundaries of the respondent’s information (Robson: 1993, 2002). All four interviews for this section of the study were conducted face to face (Appendix D).

2.5 Sampling

The impossibility of studying everything and everyone makes sampling essential. ‘A *sample* is a selection of elements (members or units) from a population; it is used to make statements about the whole population.’ (Blaikie, 2000, p. 198) The sampling strategy employed is predominately purposive; as a researcher, decisions were made about which participants were needed to inform my study. It was essential to set boundaries and define the study. Although the school enrolment includes students aged 11–19 and all the students study jazz dance, it was the upper school students aged 16–19 who were the centre of the study because jazz dance technique is studied in depth in the upper school. A decision was made to include former students as the perceptions of young dancers alter with professional employment.

Table 2

Year of graduation of former CSS students

Prior to 2006	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1	1	4	5	4	7

Table 3

Employment status of respondents (former CSS students)

Assoc. Ballet Company	Major UK Ballet Company	Ballet Company Europe	Ballet Company USA	Touring Company UK	Contemp. Ballet Co UK	Freelance Dancers	Cruise ships	Dance related
4	1	9	1	1	1	2	2	1

2.6 Access

Negotiating access is often cited as a disadvantage of case studies (Denscombe: 2007). As an insider researcher this presented few difficulties. The proposed study was outlined to senior managers who gave permission and whole hearted support for the project (Bell: 2004). In my capacity as head of jazz at the case study school I was positioned to observe the day to day functioning of the school; I taught every student, interacted with colleagues daily, attended meetings, had access to minutes and was in constant discussions regarding students, their progress and the curriculum. The role of an insider researcher makes detachment more challenging because the researcher is part of what is being investigated (Grix: 2004). Some subjectivity is unavoidable as the researcher brought personal experience and opinions to the study. However, this is true of all research, as Susan Stinson points out: ‘Despite desires for objectivity, we bring our passions, which determine what parts of the world we look at and the lenses we use to look at them’ (Stinson, 2006, p. 203). The awareness of managing objectivity encouraged a cautious approach. As explained below, several steps were taken to maintain objectivity and to avoid the negative aspects of insider research.

2.7 Insider Research

“Backyard Research” (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, cited in Creswell, 2009, p. 177) refers to a study undertaken by a researcher in his or her work place or organization. It is suggested that “backyard research” can result in ‘compromises in the researcher’s ability to disclose information and raises difficult power issues.’ There are also problems of biased and incomplete data which may be compromised. It is emphasized that for the reader to have confidence in the reporting it is essential that the researcher employs ‘multiple strategies of validity’. Discussing the disadvantages of insider research, Robson (1993, 2002, p.174) also advises that maintaining objectivity is problematic for the researcher. The use of multiple methods or triangulation, can help to retain the rigour of the research and aid in countering threats to validity although the researcher needs to be aware that discrepancies may arise between different sources (ibid p.175). Lincoln and Guba (cited in Denscombe, 2007, p. 297) suggest that the employment of triangulation offers ‘reassurances that the qualitative data have been produced and checked in accord with good practice’. The advantages for the researcher are that the results are ‘likely to be much more convincing and accurate if...based on several different sources of information’ (Yin, 1994, p.137, cited in Grix: 2004). As noted the methods used by the present researcher included documentation, interviews and questionnaires.

Taking into consideration the fact that it can be difficult for a researcher to interview colleagues (Robson: 1999, 2002), a decision was taken to employ questionnaires rather than attempting interviews with other vocational staff members. The strong belief that the responses to open-ended questions would be in-depth and more honest supported this course of action. Although colleagues were known to this researcher, codes were added to the questionnaires as soon as they were returned so that the anonymity of respondents could be

maintained. Additionally although the questionnaires were distributed to students by the researcher in case additional information was required, a colleague was left to supervise and collect the completed questionnaires thereby preserving anonymity and allowing students the freedom to express themselves candidly without being inhibited by the presence of the researcher. Codes were also added to questionnaires from all students and former students. The researcher was unable to discern which responses came from which respondent (Bell: 2005).

Piloting the research helped to ensure that the interview and questionnaire questions were consistent, and offered the opportunity of focusing on the importance of not 'leading' the questions in an interview and avoiding a situation where an interviewee might feel that there are correct or incorrect answers, or might attempt to 'please' the interviewer.

During an interview the direct contact allows data to be checked for veracity and relevance as they are being gathered (Denscombe, 2007). Transcriptions of the interviews were sent to the participants so that they could be checked for accuracy. One of the pitfalls of conducting interviews during insider research becomes apparent if the researcher obtains confidential information from someone of a higher rank that could affect relationships with colleagues (Robson: 1993, 2002). In this case no confidential information was offered and relationships remained intact.

'The analysis of qualitative data calls for a reflexive account by the researcher concerning the researcher's self and its impact on research' (Denscombe, 2007, 301). Denscombe also indicates that it is essential for researchers to undertake data analysis from an unprejudiced standpoint (ibid.). The researcher remained cognizant of this throughout the study. Payne and Payne describe reflexivity as '...the practice of researchers being self-aware of their own

beliefs, values and attitudes...and self-critical about their research methods and how they have been applied...' (2004, p.191) (see Chapter Six 6.2).

The close contact in familiar settings could have made objectivity difficult to maintain but because there were no pre-conceived ideas of the outcome of the research it was important to be as unbiased as possible. Bell (2005, p.50), suggests that it is vital for researchers to satisfy themselves that everything has been done to ensure that the study is conducted so that it fulfills their personal and ethical principles. Integrity is paramount to this researcher and a personal code of conduct was formulated which permeated the procedural formality of all stages from gaining access to interviewing to systematic analysis. Because of a genuine interest in seeking answers to the research questions it would have been counter-productive not to take every precaution to stay as 'detached' and as objective as possible.

The counter-narrative of the insider research to the critique above is that the researcher's personal history as a professional jazz dancer, and currently teacher at the case study school, gave privileged access and insights to the study's context and participants. Leading world exponents of theatre jazz dance, current Artistic Directors, specialist students and others in this elitist world of dance training and performance would not have been accessible to outside researchers. Treating this privileged position with respect and sincerity in pursuit of genuine knowledge was, on reflection, the greatest strength of the study.

2.8 Triangulation

As indicated above triangulation, or the use of more than one method of data collection increases the validity and authenticity of the study. In this context, validity '... concerns

appropriateness of the data in terms of the research questions being investigated' (Denscombe, 2007, p. 296). Objectivity is of the utmost importance and alludes to the elimination of bias from research. It ensures that data collection and its analysis are fair and even handed. Triangulation by method has been employed. The use of more than one method of data collection to investigate the same phenomena lessened the possibility of bias (Grix: 2004). During the empirical investigation three methods were used: documentation, questionnaires and interviews. An advantage of multiple methods is that it reduces inappropriate certainty (Denzin, 2000, p. 370). The motifs that evolved from combining several data sources to include the different views of participants increased validity (Creswell: 2009). As data was analysed, a broad consensus emerged from the questionnaire responses and interview transcripts concerning the perceptions of key stakeholders in the case study school.

2.9 Ethics

Ethical procedures in an educational environment are essential to any research. Even though all the participants in the study were over 18 years of age, school regulations required consent at every level and therefore existing Child Protection guidelines were taken into account. Parents were emailed to inform them of the study. An application for ethical approval was submitted to the University's Ethics Committee as human subjects were involved. Both the University Code of Conduct and the British Educational Research guidelines for ethical research (2004) were followed. In each case participation information sheets and consent forms were distributed and voluntary informed consent was received (Appendix C). The voluntary nature of the research was emphasised and participants were made aware that they

could refuse to answer a question and could withdraw from the study at any time prior to submission. No deception was involved and every effort was made to recognise the participants' entitlement to privacy. By the use of codes confidentiality and anonymity were respected. Incentives were not offered and University requirements for storage and personal use of data were observed.

2.10 Data Analysis.

Thematic analysis is a form of content analysis and shares many of the same principles but it does not rely as heavily on the frequency of codes. In all qualitative data analysis: 'The analyst looks for themes ...and creates a framework of these for making comparisons and contrasts between different respondents' (Gomm, 2004, 2008, p. 244). The data from both open-ended questionnaires and interviews were text based and therefore analysed in the same way. A theme may refer to the obvious content of the data 'that is, something directly observable' (Marks & Yardley (eds.) 2004). For example, when coding the questionnaires the frequency of the word 'versatility' quickly became apparent and the connotations surrounding it indicated that it was an emergent theme. The responses to questionnaires and interviews were coded, categorised, and organised; patterns became evident, which structured the analysis. Codes are described as 'efficient data-labeling and data retrieval devices' (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 65). Highlighting relevant passages against emergent patterns, categories or themes, helped to focus on the sentences, words or phrases that were to be coded. Open-ended questionnaires and interviews give respondents the opportunity to express their views in considerable detail with the result that the amount of data that accumulates can be overwhelming and reduction is essential. The sheer quantity of different codes soon began

to confuse the issue and it was necessary to resort to the use of catalogue cards and coloured pencils to divide up the information into manageable portions. Decisions continued to be made about the data, which parts to disregard and which parts to be coded and the raw data were further reduced by means of selection and summary (Appendix E). Collating further reduced the data to related themes. Each completed questionnaire and interview transcript was given an identification code and number to aid data retrieval. The following identification codes were decided upon for each group of respondents:

Table 4

Codes used for respondents

Respondents	Code	Data retrieval	Code
Students in their 3 rd (final) year at CSS	Y6.3	Y6.3, questionnaire 4, line 2	Y6.3 - Q4 (L2)
Students in the second year of the 6 th form	Y6.2	Y6.2, questionnaire 3, lines 4 – 7	Y6.2 – Q3 (L4-7)
Former students from CSS who are now employed professionally	FS	FS, questionnaire 16, lines 4 – 5	FS – Q16 (L4 – 5)
Vocational staff at CSS	VS	VS, questionnaire 4 lines 11 – 16	VS – Q4 (11 – 16)
Expert key stakeholders	EKS	EKS, interview 2 line 128 – 136	EKS2 (L128 – 136)

By careful examination the data were finally reduced to four key themes: Complementarity, Versatility, Negativity and Jazz/ballet fusion. These headings are used in Chapter Four for presentation of case study results.

2.11 Summary

Norbert Elias was the acknowledged originator of figurational or process theory which was employed as a framework for the research and analysis. The methodology for the qualitative study involved an interpretive paradigm. The methods used included documentation, questionnaires and interviews. Both research questions were designed to gauge the regard felt for the theatre jazz dance genre at CSS and the authentic value of the training methods used to complement the traditional ballet curriculum.

The weaving of information in the following historical chapter, which contextualises the case study, with the findings from questionnaires and interviews provided deeper understanding of the historical development of theatre jazz dance and the contemporary significance of the genre in one vocational dance school. The synthesis of this research is discussed in Chapter Five.

Chapter Three

History and development of jazz dance as theatre dance

3.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses research question one: In what ways have exponents of jazz dance shaped the theatre jazz dance genre taught in the vocational ballet school? It uses literature, archival research, film sources and three interviews with jazz exponents. Its purpose is to produce new knowledge and to contextualise the historical development of the theatre jazz dance genre taught in the case study vocational ballet school. The chapter begins by indicating that there is a lack of research and academic writing on jazz dance and mentions the high art/low art dichotomy. The African roots of jazz dance and the fusion of African dance, and folk dance from Europe are touched on in order to underpin the early history. The development of jazz as theatre dance begins with the modern dance movement in America when early pioneers were looking for new forms of expression. Jazz dance found its own vocabulary, style and aesthetic, and as it evolved, informed by modern dance and classical ballet, dancers needed increasingly strong technique. Although jazz choreographers utilised the essence of what had become jazz dance, a fusion of ballet and jazz dance began to appear on stage and screen and this, together with jazz music, has influenced some classical ballet choreographers of the 20th and 21st centuries. The problems of definition are also addressed.

The key influential figures in this chapter include Ruth St. Denis (1879–1963), who inspired many dancers and artists, Jack Cole (1911–1974), who is a central figure in the development of jazz dance and Matt Mattox (b. 1921) who developed a codified technique from Cole's

work. Jerome Robbins (1918–1998), George Balanchine (1904–1938) are featured because they worked in ballet companies and on Broadway. Bob Fosse (1927–1987) is mentioned as he was inspired by Cole and is arguably one of the few pure jazz dance choreographers. The characteristics of jazz dance technique and the importance of rhythm and musicality embedded at its core are outlined. Three jazz dance exponents were interviewed and their views have been interspersed in the text to support various topics concerning the development of jazz dance.

3.2 High art/low art dichotomy

Kimberly Chandler Vaccaro (1997) suggests that the main reason for the lack of research and belated academic interest in jazz dance is because of the relationship jazz dance has with popular and commercial dance. Some of Jack Cole's most innovative work was performed in supper clubs. In 1940 Walter Terry wrote 'Great dancing is usually found in the theater, the concert hall or some other hallowed spot devoted to art, but the Rainbow Room at Rockefeller Center can boast of a great dancer in the person of Jack Cole' (Terry, 1978, p. 86). Lou Conte, founder of Hubbard Street Dancers bemoans the fact that: 'it [jazz dance] connotes frivolity in the dance world ... people think of jazz as lacking technique and not to be taken seriously' (Mazo: 1995).

Chandler Vaccaro feels that although jazz dance has sometimes been seen on the concert stage, those other associations have meant that it has been placed on the lower end of what she calls the 'high art/low art' dichotomy. Investigating the writings of Mura Dehn she suggests that Dehn, who spent much of her life as an advocate for jazz dance and African-American social dance, felt that jazz dance was both folk art and high art and draws attention

to the fact that Dehn indicated that African-American jazz dance changed the way a nation moved (Chandler Vaccaro: 1997).

3.3 Roots of jazz dance

A limited description of its origins is necessary in order to understand the development of jazz dance. Marshall and Jean Stearns give a comprehensive picture of the roots and early history of jazz (Stearns: 1968). Regarding this as a definitive study of this genre, Bill Drysdale points out that ‘they trace the origins of social dance in America, and its influence on theatrical dance, in parallel with the development of popular music’ (Drysdale: 1993). Jazz dance is both a technique and a style of dance. It is commonly agreed that it is an American creation and that it derived from the vernacular having its origins in European folk dance and African rhythms. Slaves transported from Africa to the New World retained and continued to express themselves through their polyrhythmic dances which were an essential part of their culture. In their new environment these enslaved peoples began to absorb influences from Europe, including folk dances and social dances, and gradually a home grown form of dance emerged which retained its rhythmic complexity. Mura Dehn refers to the marriage of cultures demonstrating the movement features of both Europe and Africa (Chandler Vaccaro: 1997).

3.4 Building on the past

Abandoning the early improvisational qualities of jazz, the pioneers of theatrical jazz dance were influenced by, and used techniques from, other forms of theatre dance, notably classical ballet and modern dance, while continuing to incorporate ethnic dance qualities. Classical

ballet training is rooted in tradition; it focuses on discipline, building strength, posture and flexibility and provides a foundation for other dance techniques. At the beginning of the 20th century classical ballet prospered in the United States mainly because of the popular tours by Anna Pavlova and the Ballets Russes de Serge Diaghilev (ed. Cohen: 1998). Independently, three pioneers Isadora Duncan, Loie Fuller and Ruth St. Denis, concerned about what they perceived to be the superficiality of theatre dance in America, left for Europe to explore new forms of movement. Ruth St. Denis returned to the United States, although she, like the others had been feted by intellectuals, writers, artists and musicians abroad.

3.5 Ruth St. Denis and Denishawn

Suzanne Shelton suggests that St. Denis's dance developed during 'the greatest expansion for American vaudeville, the mainstream of American popular entertainment' (Shelton: 1981). She toured America bringing dance to remote regions, performing with vaudeville and variety acts as well as in elite theatres. She was the inspiration for numerous artists including Jack Cole. St. Denis's meeting with Ted Shawn (1891–1972) has been described as 'a crucial event for American dance' (Au, 1988, p. 93). Sharing a belief that dance was a vital part of life and almost a 'form of religious expression' they founded their school, Denishawn in 1915. St. Denis's early training had included studying ballroom dancing, skirt dancing and exercises formulated by the nineteenth-century movement theorist, Delsarte (1811–1871). St. Denis regarded herself as a serious and highbrow concert artist although the Denishawn productions were renowned for their theatrical and spectacular productions and for the 'oriental' dances' which may have been influenced by the passion for exotica that was rife at the turn of the century (eds Dils and Cooper: 2001). Suzanne Shelton (ed. Cohen, 1998, pp.

490–497) suggests that variety theatre was ‘the incubator for American Modern Dance’ and that ‘the addition of a philosophical and emotional element to her [St. Denis’s] works gave her the right to be regarded as the mother of American Modern Dance.’ Her contribution to modern dance in America cannot be disregarded. The ‘new moderns’, Graham, Humphrey and Weidman, who had worked with St. Denis for many years eventually found her aesthetic too decorative and all three had left Denishawn by 1928, each finding a new movement vocabulary which changed the shape of American modern dance. Although modern dance was diverse it was ‘unified by its emphasis on the expression of feelings through dance, as opposed to a purely decorative display of technique’ (Au, 1988, p.131).

3.6 Jack Cole and a fusion of styles

Jack Cole began training at Denishawn in 1930 and, despite the fact that he had never danced before, was soon performing with the company. A request for access to the Victoria and Albert Museum performance archives at Blythe House resulted in the opportunity to study the Jack Cole Scrapbooks which contain photographs of St. Denis, Shawn and Weidman as well as programmes from performances at The Forest Theater in 1931 and the Lewisohn Stadium. Reviews, newspaper cuttings and letters give a vivid impression of the early period of Cole’s career and the photographs of him show his strength and magnetism. The actual dates on the cuttings are missing, but they are grouped together by the year. The Stock Market Crash of October 1929 and the depression that followed resulted in the loss of Denishawn House and cuts in touring dates. The Denishawn dancers headed by both St. Denis and Shawn performed for the last time together in August 1931.

Appearances with Ted Shawn and his dancers were followed by a period of study with Humphrey and Weidman where Cole took daily class and participated in their 'studies in distortion and stylization, leading to choreographic creation and performance' (Loney, 1984 p. 62). Cole was influenced by this element of their work and by Humphrey's craft as a choreographer. He was also studying classical ballet (Cecchetti method). This additional genre enhanced his technique, adding a new dimension to his work. As a choreographer he later demanded classical technique of his own dancers. Inspired by the unauthentic but lavishly costumed East Indian dances that St. Denis incorporated into her programmes, he learned bharata natyam with Uday Shankar and La Meri (Russell Meriwether Hughes). 'Cole mastered the technique – the cobra head movements, undulating arms, subtle hip-shoulder isolations, precise "mudra" hand gestures, and darting eyes. Then, without changing a beat or line of the classical lexicon, he wove it into intricate routines and danced them to swing music' (Valis-Hill, 2001/02, pp.29–39). He also retained the earthbound quality, the parallel positions and the fluidity of the hips used in African dance.

3.7 Music and jazz dance

Agnes de Mille wrote that 'Jack Cole was the first commercial choreographer to put a lasting stamp on the national style'. The innovative quality of his work was partly due to his use of the syncopated rhythms of jazz music, described as 'a simple and steady pulse disrupted by an anticipated or delayed accent' (Carr, Fairweather, Priestly, 1995). There was a parallel growth in jazz dance and jazz music and Cole was inspired by the music of Benny Goodman and Duke Ellington among others. He began to explore Caribbean and Latin rhythms, utilised

Spanish and Cuban music and absorbed influences from Harlem. According to Stearns it is swing that distinguishes American vernacular dance as well as jazz music (Stearns: 1968).

Agreeing with Sheron Wray and Peter Bertini that ‘the connection of dancing to music is jazz’s most basic element’ Danny Buraczeski says ‘The quality of swing and not being straight on the beat; of being low to the ground; of working with broken lines instead of ballet’s elongated lines – these stem from the music’ (Kay, 2010, p.70).

3.8 The kernel of jazz technique

Bob Boross, the American jazz dance teacher, choreographer and author, describes jazz dance as ‘a twentieth-century invention that personifies the social, technological, and visual history of popular American culture’ (Boross, 1999, p. 54). Neither time nor space allows an in-depth examination of Cole’s contribution to jazz and musical theatre dance. A renowned dancer and choreographer, he performed in supper clubs and night clubs, which flourished as Prohibition came to an end in 1933; in films, including a three year period (1944-1947) when his unique position at Columbia Pictures allowed him a full time company of accomplished dancers capable of meeting the exacting standards of his intricate choreography, and on stage. The burgeoning popularity of Hollywood musicals in the 1930s and 1940s resulted in Broadway directors, dancers and choreographers employing varied dance styles on the big screen and by the 1950s this genre had become: ‘the primary means of popularizing almost every variety of dance’ (ed. Cohen, 1998, p. 612). On Broadway, *Magdalena* (1948), which had music by Heitor Villa-Lobos was a show that made a considerable impact despite its short life: it is now considered a ‘neglected signature work by this early and influential master of jazz and musical theater dance’ (Dunning, 1996, p. 34–35). Agnes de Mille was

prompted to write to Cole in admiration and asked whether ‘there was any way of saving these dances so that we can go on seeing them...’ (Loney: 1984) (Appendix F).

Matt Mattox made his debut as a Jack Cole dancer in *Magdalena* and he continued to dance with Cole for eight years. Cole was a perfectionist and the demands he made on dancers are legendary. In my interview with JE1 she told me that she worked on the musical *Zenda* (1963) and television shows with Cole. Although she was scared to death when she realised that she was going to work for him she had a glorious relationship with Cole. She explained that she just wanted ‘to learn that style and have that kind of power and that kind of sharpness and strength.’

3.9 Matt Mattox and a codified technique

Lauren Kay suggests that the ‘second-tier status’ of jazz dance could be due to lack of codification that would give it universal standards (Kay, 2010, p. 71). Others hold the view that jazz dance technique has been codified by jazz masters such as Matt Mattox, Luigi (Eugene Louis Facciuto) and Gus Giordano (Boross: 1999). If it is accepted that Cole is the father of American jazz dance then Matt Mattox’s contribution to jazz dance teaching is paramount. Mattox ‘codified a technique inspired by Cole’s work that has had a global impact.....producing teachers who train jazz dancers in his technique throughout Europe and America’ (Boross: 1999). He moved from New York to London in 1970. It is the foundation technique at CSS and is taught at several performing arts colleges in Britain. The director Robert North wrote in an email: ‘The structure of his [Mattox] class is excellent because it really teaches you technique through his use of isolations, strengthening and stretching

exercises....’ Mattox insists that there should be no tension. ‘When you dance your fingertips are like the ends of a plume – it’s like a bird flying’ (Mazo: 1993).

In our interview JE1 stated that Mattox was a brilliant dancer. Discussing work on the 1954 film, *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*, choreographed by Michael Kidd (1915–2007), Jacques d’Amboise describes each brother:

Then ... Caleb – Matt Mattox, the greatest dancer of us all. He was a disciple of Jack Cole, the genius who revolutionized Broadway dance.... Matt Mattox was among the greatest male dancers I have ever seen (d’Amboise, 2011, p.154).

When I saw him last at his home in Perpignan, Mattox spoke with fondness of working with such a close knit group of dancers who were willing to try anything that Kidd wanted. We watched a sequence of the extended Astaire/Rogers-type sequence that he choreographed and danced with Carol Lawrence on the television *The Bell Telephone Hour*. The popular television series which ran from 1959–1968 brought classical and Broadway music and dance to a wide public as post-war America had seen the mass production and ownership of television sets (Mordden: 1992). This is a fine example of Mattox’s work, seamless and effortless in its musicality. He feels that jazz dance has the same intrinsic value as any other art.

Interviewing JE3 she described the experience of working with Cole in the London production of *Kismet* as one of the three Princesses of Ababu. Already a talented and experienced dancer, she was inspired to study more of Cole’s style and took classes with Mattox in New York. She stresses that Mattox’s technique is a fair representation of Cole’s work. Asked about her impressions of Mattox’s technique for ballet dancers JE2 stressed the contribution of isolations: ‘Your core is incredible! You learn to use the ribcage and then the

pelvis, your legs and then your arms but you work them all together... you can put that into ballet.’

There seems to be a difference between jazz dancers who have had classical ballet training such as JE1 and JE2 and ballet dancers who dance jazz. Jack Cole indicated that in his experience ballet dancers were the least adept at learning jazz style:

The ballet kids, with their dedication to and orientation toward linear design do the whole thing from the outside. They *assume* feeling. It seems to require a less formal person: by which I mean someone who is more concerned with individual expression, rather than one who sees himself as part of a tradition (Cole, 1963, p.35).

More recently, a review of *Strictly Gershwin* choreographed by Derek Deane for English National Ballet suggested: ‘At times I was reminded of my own days at ballet school, when we went to teenage parties and danced with turned-out feet to the Pointer Sisters: physical relaxation did not come naturally. Yet the worldly rhythms of Gershwin surely demand it’ (Thompson: 2011) (see Chapter Four).

3.10 Defining jazz dance

Jill Flanders Crosby began her initial research with Marshall and Jean Stearns’ *Jazz Dance* (1964/1968) and with an article that was published in *Dance Magazine* (Stearns: 1959) in which the Stearns’s insisted that current (1960s) jazz dance ‘lacked rhythmic propulsion, shape and essence of jazz expression, particularly the essence of swing’ because jazz music was not being used (Crosby: 1995). Roger Pryor Dodge writing in 1959 implied that jazz

dance had become a bland and watery mixture of styles which has done ‘no justice to the dance but much damage’ (Dodge, 1959, p.290).

Crosby mentions the Stearns’s objection to the fact that Jerome Robbins’s choreography to *West Side Story* was hailed as jazz dance. Russella Brandman also refers to the Stearns’s book and the Stearns’s assertion that the dance in *West Side Story* is not jazz dance, as it used only one jazz step ‘the pimp’s walk’ (Brandman: 1977).

In my own research I began with the Stearns’s writing but the reference to Jerome Robbins alluded to the conflicting opinions about *New York Export: Opus Jazz* rather than *West Side Story* (Stearns: 1968). *Opus Jazz* was choreographed by Robbins for his company, Ballets U.S.A. in 1958 and achieved immense popularity when it was broadcast on the Ed Sullivan Show. This CBS television show was broadcast to millions of viewers every Sunday for twenty-two years starting in 1948 and it became the premier venue for aspiring and established artistes. The dance critic John Martin believed that *Opus Jazz* ‘contaminated by the acceptance of the jazz techniques’ (1961) (cited in Stearns, 1968, p. 357) while Leon James, a professional jazz dancer who had danced with Whitey’s Lindy Hoppers at the Savoy Ballroom felt that there were few if any jazz movements (Stearns: 1968). The work was revived by New York City Ballet in 2005; some of the dancers were inspired to create a film, feeling that it had some relevance to today’s society. Referred to as ‘a ballet in sneakers’ the dance is a ‘formal, abstract exploration of jazzy rhythms, relationships (including an interracial pas de deux) and teenage alienation’ (Kourlas, 2009, p. 9).

When I asked JE1 whether she thought that *N.Y.Export: Opus Jazz* is ballet or jazz she replied that it is both. JE1 who had a lead role in the original cast of *West Side Story* explained that she first worked for Robbins on *Call Me Madam* and that that was a mixture of

ballet and character work and so she was doing things that she knew as she had been classically trained at the School of American Ballet: ‘It is his style. It is a mixture of character, acting – it was my first experience with really portraying somebody through dance. I think his choreography is a wonderful mixture of jazz, ballet and character – not in that order.’ She studied jazz with Peter Gennaro who performed the acclaimed Steam Heat number in Bob Fosse’s *The Pajama Game* in 1954. He assisted Robbins on *West Side Story* and choreographed both the ‘America’ number and ‘Dance at the Gym’ in that show.

Boross suggests that from 1936 to the 1960s certain choreographers, regarded as ballet or modern dancers created what he calls ‘a very demanding offshoot of jazz dance’ which required the technical skills of a trained dancer. He includes George Balanchine, Agnes de Mille, Jack Cole, Hanya Holm, Helen Tamiris, Michael Kidd, Jerome Robbins and Bob Fosse; their work was seen on the Broadway stage, in Hollywood and on television (Boross, 1999, p. 55). It could be argued that Cole and Fosse do not belong on the offshoots list as both of them were definitely jazz dance choreographers. Gwen Verdon, who had been Cole’s assistant, also became Fosse’s muse and assistant and brought with her all that she had learned from Cole. Fosse’s early work was in vaudeville and burlesque and his style developed from his own limitations as a dancer, the slightly turned-in feet and the minimalist, internal style. Bob Fosse acknowledged the debt that he owed to Jack Cole. The hit number that Fosse choreographed to Benny Goodman’s *Sing, Sing, Sing*, for his show *Dancin’* was dedicated to Cole. This was the first number that Cole had choreographed for his Jack Cole Dancers in 1947. In the New York Times obituary of Cole, Gwen Verdon is quoted as saying, ‘Jack influenced all the choreographers in the theater from Jerome Robbins, Michael Kidd, Bob Fosse down to Michael Bennett and Ron Field today.... When you see dancing on television, that’s Jack Cole...’ (Kisselgoff, 1974, p.40).

3.11 Balanchine and Robbins

George Balanchine and Jerome Robbins belonged to two worlds, the world of classical ballet and the world of theatre dance. Jerome Robbins's, training was eclectic and included modern, ballet and ethnic dance which was important to young American dancers in the late 1930s as there were few ballet companies and versatility was essential (Jowitt, 2004, p. 35). After an 'apprenticeship' which included appearing on Broadway, Robbins joined Ballet Theatre (later American Ballet Theatre). Continuing his training with Eugene Loring and Anthony Tudor his first solo appearance, in 1941, was as the devil in Agnes de Mille's ballet *Three Virgins and a Devil*. Agnes de Mille (1909–1993) also belonged to two worlds, ballet and Broadway although one of her leading dancers, James Mitchell, remarked that she had no interest in jazz dance (Long: 2001). She is credited with changing the American musical; with her choreography for *Oklahoma* (1943) dance was no longer on the periphery of the show but played an important role by blending in with the story and helping to move the plot along (Long: 2001). Miss de Mille suggests that one of the reasons for the success of *Oklahoma* was the fact that it was 'native in texture and appeal' and the United States was at war (de Mille, 1980, p. 188).

Also choreographed in war time, Robbins's first ballet for Ballet Theatre was *Fancy Free* (1944) with music by Leonard Bernstein. The vocabulary was ballet, but with an American feel; however 'the score is striking particularly in its use of jazz, which has a driving energy.... But the composition reflects equally Bernstein's immersion in Broadway music and jazz. Two cultures – classical and vernacular – interact with a continuous nervous intensity' (Long, 2001 p. 68). John Martin sang its praises and the critic Edward Denby talked about the ballet being 'as sound as a superb vaudeville turn; in ballet terminology it is a perfect American character ballet' (Jowitt, 2004 p. 86). The milieu of jazz spanned two world wars.

The formative years of this jazz environment were spread by the co-mingling of two common language cultures, their spirits lifted from wartime gloom by the rhythmic innovations of jitterbug, swing and jive. Mentioning the metamorphosis of the ballet *Fancy Free* into the musical *On the Town* Terry suggests that after this ‘the Robbins bounding from Broadway and back again became the rule rather than the exception’ (Terry, 1978, p. 355). Agnes de Mille describes Robbins, Kidd and herself as ‘pioneering native choreographers’ and writes that they have brought into ballet some of the ‘dynamics and techniques of modern or Graham style’. The list of other dance that they incorporated include, ‘many authentic colloquial steps, both country and urban, such as buck-and-wing, tap dancing, cowboy struts, jive, jitterbug, rock ‘n’ roll – in short, the whole popular vocabulary’ (de Mille, 1980, p. 144). Robbins felt that there should be no lowering of quality for a musical as compared with a pure ballet. He points out that ‘The effort I put into *The King and I* was equal to that expended on any ballet ... but what I learned in ballet is to be found in *West Side Story* and what I learned in musicals is now found in my ballets’ (Terry, 1978, p. 355).

George Balanchine also successfully balanced life as a choreographer for ballet companies and musical theatre. Lincoln Kirstein invited Balanchine to the United States in 1933 to set up a school and then a company. The economic climate could scarcely have been less favourable for such a venture; modern dance appeared more in keeping with the austerity of the time than classical ballet (Taper: 1984). ‘Cultures borrow from each other and fusions abound’ suggests Brenda Dixon Gottschild (ed. Dils & Cooper Albright, 2001, p. 336). She feels a characteristic of American ballet is its ‘Africanist presence’ and that this is what makes it different from European ballet. She suggests that as Balanchine’s choreography in Europe coincided with the Jazz Age (1920s), what she describes as the jazz aesthetic was familiar to him when he arrived in the USA. ‘On Broadway he [Balanchine] was thought of

as a real pro – quick, adaptable, easy to work with and possessed of an inexhaustible supply of clever and original dance ideas’ (Taper, 1984, p.177). *On Your Toes* (1936) starring Tamara Geva and Ray Bolger is regarded as significant in the history of musical comedy ‘his participation was an integral ingredient to the work as a whole.’ The dances were choreography, not just interludes which contained a dance act or a number from a chorus line, they were an ‘essential ingredient of the plot’, paving the way for de Mille and *Oklahoma*. These shows demanded well trained dancers of a high technical standard who were versatile, able to perform in whatever style was required. His work on Broadway helped him to assimilate popular, social, and vernacular dance influences in the service of the newly defined ballet medium. The Balanchine ballerina, Suki Schorer is quoted as describing *Concerto Barocco* as a ‘ballet with a very jazzy feeling’ (eds. Dils & Cooper Albright: 2001).

Director/choreographer Gower Champion emphasized that he could not ‘cross over to the City Center and do a ballet like Jerry [Robbins] can’ (Terry, 1978, pp. 460–461). Twyla Tharp has choreographed for her own company, for musicals on Broadway, including the recent *Come Fly with Me* (2010), and films, and following her close association with American Ballet Theatre her ballets are in the repertoire of ballet companies worldwide. Her work is difficult to categorize, combining ‘social dance, vaudeville, soft shoe, jazz...’ (Reynolds & Reimer-Torn, 1980, 1991, p. 282). Joe Layton created *Grand Tour* for the Royal Ballet in 1971. Working with him initially in her role as ballet mistress JE2, who was also a soloist with the company, stated: ‘He desperately wanted to do ballet. Being a musical theatre choreographer he worked with stars like Barbara Streisand...He created what he was going to do using me as a prop.’ She was given the role of a movie star in the ballet and was invited back as a guest artist and to help mount the ballet when it was revived. Layton

commented that she was dancing the role better than she had originally which she credits to the study that she had undertaken with Mattox.

3.12 Diversity of repertoire

I would suggest that few choreographers or dancers now ‘bounce’ between ballet companies and musical theatre although in 1999 David Bintley made a foray into choreographing for a musical when he worked on *The Pajama Game*, and Kenneth MacMillan was working on the National Theatre revival of *Carousel* when he died in 1992. However, the actual repertoire of classical ballet companies has become exceedingly diverse so that within a classical ballet company dancers, as well as dancing the classics, may be rehearsing *Slaughter on Tenth Avenue* from Balanchine’s *On Your Toes*, or one of David Bintley’s jazz inspired ballets such as *The Nutcracker Sweeties* which used Duke Ellington’s jazz version of the score ‘finding fresh imagery, mingling jazz dance, classical ballet and all the exhibitionism of an American musical’ (Dromgoole: 2004). Bintley continually expands the repertoire of Birmingham Royal Ballet and Sir Peter Wright, mentioning the programme *Quantum Leaps* which includes Bintley’s *E=mc²* (2009), insists that ‘Ballet must never be a museum ... Even the classics must change with the times because the audiences do’ (Mead: 2010). The Royal Ballet’s resident choreographer, Wayne McGregor is a contemporary dancer and, as mentioned, English National Ballet is currently touring *Strictly Gershwin* choreographed by Derek Deane, which is resonating with today’s modern audience.

In our interview I asked JE1 what her perceptions were about jazz dance in ballet training. She had some valuable insights:

I come from what they call the Golden Age ... and so many choreographers were alive ... dancers got to learn so many different styles. Dancing is ... a magnificent tapestry – you are that tapestry – you are what the choreographer wants to say and, if you are lucky enough ... to be hired to translate it for him – how lucky are you! You have to study ... you've got to build that foundation. ... [Jazz] gives students a larger feeling of expression. It is more colours...it makes you a broader dancer with much more expression in your body that just ballet.

3.13 Summary

The importance of defining the genre of theatre jazz dance taught at the case study school required tracing its development through the work of key exponents. Derived from the vernacular, the influences on the innovators of this technique and style of dance included modern, classical ballet and ethnic dance which led to fusion of styles. The signature movements and the use of jazz and swing music required dancers to be technically accomplished with an understanding of musicality and rhythm. The continuing links with classical ballet indicate the need for versatility of movement vocabulary among student ballet dancers to allow them to respond to choreographers who merge ballet with other styles and influences from other genres, notably jazz dance.

Chapter Four

Presentation of case study results

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the findings that address research question two ‘What are the perceptions of key stakeholders on the contribution of jazz dance in the case study school?’ are presented. Participants included current and former students, teachers and artistic directors of the school and the associated ballet company and were gathered through open-ended questionnaires and interviews. Thematic analysis of interviews resulted in a synthesis of four emergent themes: Complementarity, Versatility, Negativity, Jazz/Ballet Interface; these themes will be used to structure this chapter. The first theme, ‘Complementarity’ presents perceptions on the lack of fluency of movement that can arise during elite ballet training, the way that jazz technique can help classical ballet technique, performance quality, use of the floor and musicality, rhythm and dynamics. The section entitled ‘Versatility’ encompasses the ways in which jazz dance can help dancers adapt to the demands of today’s choreographers, casting and career options. The ‘Negativity’ component gives the views of a small number of respondents who found the inclusion of jazz dance in the curriculum to be disadvantageous, and ‘Jazz/Ballet Interface’ looks at participants’ views of the shifting ballet jazz relationship (Appendix G).

4.2 Complementarity

Rigidity and freedom

Classical ballet is an art form which exemplifies purity of line, perfection of technique, balance, artistry, harmony. The body is the instrument. Students in an elite training situation such as CSS are focused on daily improvement. They are self-critical and often perfectionists. The necessary exactness of the training can lead to certain rigidity. Three of the expert key stakeholders who were interviewed use the words ‘rigidity or rigid’ and ‘constrained’ in reference to the effects of classical ballet training on the body. Not denying this, an expert key stakeholder added: ‘certainly never when you are dancing should you have that kind of rigid look’ (EKS1 L171–174). One implied that classical ballet training ‘can be rigid these days’ (EKS3 L210) and another recalled that: ‘Madam [Dame Ninette de Valois] said that it was terribly good to get another dynamic in the school [RBS]. She used to give what she called her ‘plastique’ classes ... she’d have circles, and change, and different directions and all that because she thought that classical ballet was rather flat’ (EKS4 L350–352).

In the questionnaire responses the term rigidity is not used but reference is made to freedom and the ability to move freely that jazz dance can give, and this is mentioned by some students. Examples included comments that jazz dance gives you: ‘ability to move more freely’ (Y6.3 – Q4 L2), ‘freedom – allows expression in movement’ (Y6.2 – Q3 L4–7) and ‘Jazz makes you loosen up the body and dance’ (Y6.2 – Q5 L9–10). A former student takes this further by writing that [jazz] helped him/her to become a more fluid dancer: ‘Jazz training enabled me to prevent becoming a stiff ‘cookie cutter’ ballet dancer...’ (FS – Q11 L12–14). Another felt: ‘It [jazz] helped me learn to use my body and move more freely even

when dancing a traditional classical role’ (FS – Q16 L4–5). A member of the vocational staff emphasized the fact that: ‘Jazz training gave me more freedom of movement within the classical framework of classical ballet’ (VS – Q4 L6–8).

Expert key stakeholders also mentioned ‘freedom of movement’ in relation to their own professional careers:

...I would say that from the variety of roles I did do with the likes of Christopher Bruce and Glen Tetley certainly, and even the Kenneth [MacMillan] stuff my jazz, modern background helped, and you can always tell with a classical dancer, even the way they do classical dance, whether they have had that extra movement vocabulary and freedom because classical dance is so constrained, specially because classical dancers always want to be correct and are scared to go outside the limits (EKS2 L341–348).

She referred to the broad training that CSS students receive, indicating that students from both associate schools were recently working with the company. She said that they [CSS students] may not always be the best physically suited to ballet but they are the movers (ibid L420–423). Dancers who are able to engage comfortably with different dance styles often have an ease, freedom and natural movement quality.

In a discussion about those who are natural dancers with or without jazz training, EKS1 elaborated:

But I certainly think it [jazz training] shows in the CSS dancers...Just for movement with épaulement, that’s the most vital thing. It is easy for a classical dancer just to become this kind of conventional straight thing and I say to them...you never see a

painting of somebody standing like that, you always see a painting with movement which has épaulement (L165–169).

Both of these expert key stakeholders had initially received a broad training. Although his own formal training was classical, EKS3 never felt constrained by classical ballet. He also suggests that freedom of movement together with dance quality can help students erase some of the constraints of classical ballet:

I've often made the comment to your kids [the students] that if you are good at jazz you are good at classical and vice versa, and also if you can approach classical dance with the same freedom that some of the students approach jazz and contemporary ... classical dance ... wouldn't be so constrained and so rigid and stiff which classical ballet can be unless it has got a certain dance element – dance I mean “dance” in inverted commas (L130 – 142).

Jazz technique

Some respondents did mention that jazz technique helped classical ballet technique and mentioned isolation and the ‘ability to isolate muscles’ as particularly useful for control and strength. As noted in Chapter Three, isolation is of paramount importance in jazz dance. Jazz exponents referred to power, sharpness and core strength in relation to the work of Cole and Mattox (Chapter Three). A vocational teacher wrote: ‘I see the value of jazz training in these terms: body awareness, isolation and control, engaging energy lines to the full and developing presentational skills’ (VS – Q9 L16–17). Many students also mentioned that jazz dance helped their confidence and their sense of performance. Some staff members concurred: ‘It [jazz dance] gives the students the chance to ‘dare’ express themselves facially and physically ... I find that some are too inhibited and need to be helped to express

themselves more freely’ (VS – Q9 L15–19). ‘Jazz dancing is a form of dance that showcases a dancer’s individual style and originality and gives the students the chance to interpret and execute moves and steps in their own way’ (VS – Q5 L32–38).

Grounded/use of the floor

As mentioned in Chapter Three, Cole’s technique retained the earthbound quality associated with African dance. Although the need for being grounded and the importance of the use of the floor and weight is constantly emphasized to students in jazz classes at CSS, not one of the current students mentioned that aspect of the work or its usefulness in more jazz-influenced or contemporary ballets.

A former student referred to: ‘working more grounded, keeping the body weight more into the floor as opposed to the constant use of elevation in classical ballet’ (FS – Q10 L4–5) and one member of the vocational staff suggested that it ‘helps understanding of gravity and space’ (VS – Q1 L6–7). Another observed that it is ‘...more earthy and down into your legs more and the dynamics are very different’ (VS – Q4 L9–11).

All four expert key stakeholders acknowledged the importance of jazz for getting into the floor: ‘I think it helps classical dancers because it improves their consciousness of the floor as something that you can move down into instead of up and away from’ (EKS1 L385–386). They are also aware of how challenging it can be for ballet dancers. ‘It’s a difficult question the grounding, because we classical dancers are taught to be light on their feet’ (EKS3 L297–298). Recollecting that Dame Ninette de Valois requested that he work out a class using elements from the Jooss technique to see if he could help the dancers get more weighted EKS4 told me that: ‘She also realized that the way classical ballet was taught then was always very up, all very pulled up and not using the body a lot.’ (L 358–360).

Musicality/rhythm/dynamics

Despite the emphasis that is put on musicality and rhythm in jazz classes (see Chapter Three), this was not noted by any current CSS members. On the other hand former students wrote about coordination, rhythm of movements, dynamics of music and syncopation. ‘Jazz Dance has certainly given me more dynamics and musicality as a dancer too’ (FS – Q5 L8–9). ‘I enjoyed the challenge of different musicality to classical ballet (more use of syncopated rhythms)’ (FS – Q10 L3–4). A member of the vocational staff, whose broad training included jazz, responded: ‘Jazz encouraged me to think and move outside the confines of classical dance...promoted musicality’ (VS – Q1 L3–5).’ A second member of the vocational faculty concurred: ‘I also think it helped me musically – to understand syncopation for example’ (VS – Q6 L14–16). Three expert stakeholders mention musicality: ‘... jazz by its very nature is using different kinds of rhythms for class work... and there is an emphasis on rhythm ... dotted rhythms and things like that’ (EKS1 L415–417).

4.3 Versatility

As indicated in Chapter Three the repertoire in ballet companies is becoming increasingly diverse. The responses of current students did not always reflect an awareness of this. By comparison reading the responses of former students it would seem evident that a true understanding of the importance of versatility is gained by experience.

A current member of the associate company wrote:

A common misconception amongst ballet students is that when they join a professional ballet company their career will be filled with tutus, tiaras and an endless

array of ‘Swan Lakes’ and ‘Nutcrackers!’ They could not be more wrong! Within a year of joining the company not only had I been dancing in the big classical ballets but we had done two neo-classical pieces (‘Pulcinella’ – a newly commissioned piece by the contemporary choreographer Kim Brandstrup and ‘Nine Sinatra Songs’ – a ballroom themed piece choreographed by Twyla Tharp) and a jazz triple bill (consisting of three modern ballets all to music by jazz artists such as Duke Ellington or The Dave Brubeck Quartet) (FS – Q3 L19–26).

This dancer feels fortunate to have had such varied and strong jazz training and is aware, through experience, of how some high profile ballet choreographers were inspired by musical theatre and jazz dance noting that *Slaughter on Tenth Avenue* (choreography George Balanchine) is still performed regularly by the New York City and Birmingham Royal Ballet companies (FS – Q3 L19–37). Another dancer from the same company adds Bintley’s *Still Life at the Penguin Café* and *Carmina Burana* to the list of ballets that also ‘involve jazz technique’ (FS – Q5 L8 and L13). She feels that versatility is ‘crucial’ and thinks that ‘from a director’s point of view, a dancer is only useful if able to adapt to these different styles...’ (ibid L15–16).

Other former students who are now dancing with international companies had similar perceptions. For example: ‘When I have danced works by Balanchine and Kylian [Jiri] and Twyla Tharp I can draw upon my jazz training to help me...’ (FS – Q11 L 9–10). The choreographers Nacho Duato and William Forsythe were also mentioned:

Jazz classes taught me how to work in a more grounded way and also how to isolate certain movements from the rest of my body. This has helped me when learning modern repertoire, be it MacMillan – or now working in a company – Kylian, Duato

and Forsythe. Even though the Matt Mattox jazz technique is indeed very different to the latter neo-classical styles, many aspects of this technique (isolation, contraction, release...) have shown themselves to come in very useful for dancing in this kind of repertoire (FS – Q10 L14–18).

Another former student refers to Heinz Spoerli's work:

As a dancer in a 'Classical Ballet' company, our repertoire is varied and requires versatility from each dancer...Spoerli's 'Le Sacre de Printemps' is heavy, into the floor, with a lot of jumping to floor, turning on knees and jumping over each other...in jazz we were able to try things we wouldn't have the opportunity to do in classical ballet class. For example tricks, floor work, and being able to throw yourself around and overcome the fear that in my opinion many classical dancers have (FS – Q19 L10–17).

Casting

An expert key stakeholder, delighted to be cast in Paul Taylor's *Airs* makes a similar point about the fear some classical dancers have of trying new movements. She was chosen because, unlike some other dancers she was not afraid to try the 'audition' movement, which involved going 'into kneel very quickly, rolling over and getting up again' (EKS2 L446–447). She was known for being 'quick to pick up' and adds: '...but the thing is the jazz and the tap probably help – rhythm and everything' (ibid L229–231). Conversely, another key stakeholder talked about dancing in Michael Charnley's ballet *Symphony for Fun*. The vocabulary was classical ballet but it was funky and involved movements that they had never seen before. He was also cast in Tetley's *Field Figures* despite having had no formal contemporary or jazz training (EKS3).

Several former students recognized that their jazz dance training had been beneficial when it came to casting. One of them, who stated that it was important to have an understanding of jazz technique even for classical work, was cast in a pas de deux by Norbert Vesak whose musical theatre inspired works led to ‘a very jazzy and flashy style’ (FS – Q20 L18–26). Another, who felt that her jazz training has played a huge part in her artistic skills and personality on stage was chosen to dance the soloist role of Marilyn Monroe in a modern work called *Warhol* even though she had only been with the company for two months and was a corps de ballet member. She was one of the few who had the training to accomplish the part as she was used to working in heels and had experience in the style of that era (FS – Q18 L35–45).

The data gathered from former students was particularly rich, perhaps because they have had a chance to reflect on training having moved into the profession. Use of their voices has been necessarily selective but there was much consensus in their perceptions of the positive contribution of jazz dance to vocational ballet training. It also illustrates the growing diversity of the repertoire in ballet companies and of the demands of different choreographers.

Jazz and career options

All four expert key stakeholders expressed the realistic view that not all the CSS students will be able to attain a place in a classical company. One felt that ‘it is the broadest tool [jazz] – if they don’t get into a classical company. He used to do a medley of songs and the MC from the show *Cabaret* as a boy, which led to him being ‘noticed’ at his vocational ballet school. He thinks that Bob Fosse had an amazing style: ‘That’s why for me a broad training is important ... if you are a dancer in one of those kind of shows it’s just every bit as good. It’s

giving dancers a real chance to work in both worlds that is the important thing' (EKS1 L108–110).

'We are classed as a classical ballet school ... we still have to provide the kids on two levels' agrees EKS3 'Going into a classical ballet company with good jazz and contemporary, then you have to face facts – some of the kids will not make it. It's our duty to provide the means for them to get jobs in another sphere' (L273–276).

Five of the Y6.3 students mentioned exploring more commercial options such as cruise ships or musicals if they didn't secure classical contracts. One of them stated that: 'It [jazz dance] ... has given me a good secure knowledge that I have something else to do if classical ballet doesn't work as I would rather dance something than nothing at all' (Y6.3 – Q7 L12–14). Six Y6.2 students felt that it had given them 'something to fall back on' and they would like to do musical theatre or jazz after a classical career.

A former student, unsuccessful in classical ballet auditions had enjoyed commercial auditions and was now pursuing a non-classical career path (FS – Q1). It was interesting to note that some former students were already looking to the future. 'I have found jazz dance not only to be beneficial to my ballet career but [it] will hopefully allow me to carry on dancing for longer (when I can no longer pull off wearing tights)' (FS – Q3 L55–56). 'Solid foundation of jazz dance might also help me get employment in other dance fields if I am ever out of work in the ballet world' (FS 10 L22–23). One former student currently dancing with a classical company is: 'interested in pursuing musical theatre as another possible career and so jazz dance is hugely beneficial in allowing me to make that jump into more commercial areas of dance' (FS11 L24–25).

4.4 Negativity

In response to the question ‘In what ways has jazz dance been advantageous in your development as a dancer?’ all Y6.3 students except one acknowledged the fact that jazz had been beneficial to his or her development as a dancer. These students were also able to express their reasons for feeling that it was disadvantageous in some respects when answering question 3 ‘In what ways has jazz dance been disadvantageous in your development as a dancer?’ Most negativity appeared to be concerned with ‘time taken away from classical dance’. Eight students out of the eleven Y6.3 respondents highlighted this as a problem. Jazz dance is disadvantageous: ‘Only when it takes time away from classical classes. Otherwise it is helpful’ (Y6.3 – Q1 L7–8). ‘I think it has taken time away from classical training. I think we possibly don’t need as many jazz lessons’ (Y6.2 – Q3 L7–9). ‘Takes time away from our classical training’ (Y6.3 - Q4 L3).

One student suggested at CSS ... sometimes more time is spent on jazz than on repertoire, pas de deux and solos. His/ her perception was that ‘more emphasis on classical work would help me more in classical training’ (Y6.3 – Q5 L7–10). Another student had a similar impression, feeling that there have been times when ‘jazz has had more priority lesson wise than any of the classical classes.’ This was seen as a disadvantage as he/she wanted to concentrate on becoming a classical dancer (Y6.2 – Q7 L8–11). One student who had already gained a contract with a company where the rep included jazz pieces was concerned that the amount of time spent on jazz dance meant that there was not enough time to gain ‘upper body strength’ which he perceived as a problem (Y6.3 – Q8 L4). Another student who saw ‘time away from classical training’ as a disadvantage, did however admit that training in jazz dance and contemporary dance allowed her to pursue a career in cruise ships and musical theatre as well as classical jobs (Y6.3 – Q2 L78 and L11–14). A student who felt that if much of the

timetable is taken up with jazz in a ballet school, it loses both ‘the enjoyment/relief factor which I said was an advantage and then becomes an annoyance when you know that it is your classical technique that you need to improve upon and should be getting more lessons of’ (Y6.3 – Q9 L5–8). One student did not regard jazz as hindering classical training but did feel that it should be ‘specifically tailored to what is happening for a more classical career’ (Y6.3 – Q10 L12–17).

The one dancer who felt that there were few advantages to having jazz dance in the curriculum acknowledges that ‘doing many varied styles can make you a better dancer but ... it does mess up your chosen field of dance’ (Y6.3 – Q6 L4–7). There were concerns that sometimes ‘aspects of your jazz style may creep into your other styles of dancing, for example, turn-in and jazz arms’ (Y6.2 – Q1 L8–10), and ‘different techniques (parallel/pirouette arms) – could be hard not to carry these into ballet’ (Y6.2 – Q7 L5–6).

Of the remaining Y6.2 students, one gave no response, four felt that jazz dance was in no way disadvantageous and three students felt that it was a time issue. One student responded: ‘Sometimes we could spend more time doing other things like contemporary or ballet, but that is only because academics gets in the way of our timetable’ (Y6.2 – Q12 L14–17). Although these students are concerned about the amount of time spent on jazz they also see many advantages in learning jazz technique, including the fact that ballet companies perform jazz influenced works and that the Royal Ballet has a ballet that includes a tap solo. Some students feel that CSS has the correct balance between the styles (Y6.2 – Q12 L28–29) and that ‘the system is perfect at the moment as everyone wants a versatile dancer to work with’ (Y6.2 – Q5 L28–30).

Six former students responded to the question about disadvantages with a blanket ‘None!’ twelve responded with ‘None’ but then mentioned even more advantages. Four had personal reasons for mentioning some negative aspects of jazz dance but these were to do with their own physicality ‘increased flexibility – hard to control’, ‘possible muscle build’ adding ‘but not at CSS’, ‘possibility of jolted movements weakening back’ .

In my interviews with expert key stakeholders it was apparent that jazz dance in the curriculum was not seen as disadvantageous although two of them recognized the realities of time constraints within the schedule. ‘Whether there is time enough to concentrate on what is supposed to be at the top of your list [ballet]’ is qualified by the opinion that when she visits CSS she sees plenty of classical classes going on (EKS2 L506). Another expert key stakeholder would like there to be more jazz and contemporary in the curriculum but finds time constraints difficult particularly as academic expectations at CSS are high (EKS3). This is an area that can be contentious within the school.

4.5 The jazz/ballet interface and training

What is apparent when reading respondents’ comments about the interface of ballet with other styles and whether or not that should influence training, is that there seems to be an awareness of the changing nature of dance which is looked at from a variety of perspectives:

I wish this thing, this stigma of classical, jazz and the compartments of dance could be broken down more you know.... it is getting better, certainly in the repertoire of some of the major companies. For instance BRB does jazz element stuff and contemporary element stuff as well as the pure classical and even the Royal Ballet now with Wayne

McGregor as resident choreographer...it is an opportunity for classically trained dancers to break out and break away (EKS3 L164–166 & L171).

All sixteen Y6.2 students acknowledged that the nature of classical companies is changing and that training must reflect these changes. One student felt that ballet was becoming more appreciated ‘I think ballet has had more recognition for [being] the basic technique which all styles of dance are based [on] or have derived from.’ She recognizes that: ‘even if you decide to focus on contemporary or jazz, ballet is a very important aspect of training.’ She continues: ‘Without the basic understanding of classical ballet these genres would not be as easily performed’ (6.2 – Q9 L16–L28). A student felt that: ‘ballet is referred to as dated by modern youth’ (Y6.3 – Q3 L 13–14) while another thought that the fact that ballet has merged with contemporary dance over the past twenty years is great for the dancers and the audience but is adamant that a ballet school should ‘stick to being a ballet school with classes like contemporary included. We should leave jazz to the jazz schools’ (Y6.3 – Q6 L9–13).

Audience

Former students currently experiencing the interface of ballet and other styles of dance in their careers seem to be aware of audience reactions, demands and needs, and mention that people are branching out from the ‘safe options’ such as classics, and going to see triple bills which contain more modern, contemporary pieces. ‘In order for ballet to be a part of popular culture it has to integrate with other forms of theatre and evolve’ (FS Q11 L33–34). The feeling seems to be that ballet is less elitist than it was and that shows such as *Billy Elliot* and television programmes, for example, *Strictly Come Dancing* have introduced more people to ballet. ‘There is now a strong integration of dance styles, seen in all areas of classical ballet...partly to do with the fact that people are expecting more from their theatre

experiences and also that choreographers are asking more and more of their dancers' (FS – Q16 L12–17). Several former students made reference to the economic climate acknowledging the 'severe lack of employment due to the cut in funding to the Arts and so any work should be grabbed with both hands' (FS – Q3 L40–42).

Vocational staff members commented about styles becoming 'merged', 'more closely related', 'not so much changed as fused together and developing a hybrid style.' One member of staff emphasized that: 'Ballet is the same! What has changed are the types of choreographers being used. A strong classical framework and understanding is needed for any ballet company, but if you can move in another way then your scope of work and employment is far greater (as choreographers are chosen from all kinds of backgrounds)' (VS – Q5 L19 – 25) (see Appendix D).

Several students made interesting points about training. One student felt that: 'Training should continue as now but the current trend for fusion of contemporary and neo-classical should be made clear to students early in their training' (Y6.2 Q7). A former student concurred: 'I believe that it is important to expose students from a young age to a wide range of different forms to keep them open minded and help them develop into versatile, creative, knowledgeable, adaptable and intelligent dancers' (FS – Q10 L241– 243). The perception of one expert key stakeholder is that younger students enjoy jazz: '...but I don't think that they think that it is important for their classical careers' (EKS3 L470). There was a suggestion that more neo-classical rep should be taught and that: 'jazz rep should be taught as well alongside learning the technique so you learn to transfer your technique into something' (Y6.3 – Q9 L14–16) and a former student commented that it would be useful to have classes that were not limited to one style, for example, jazz dance on pointe (FS – Q16 L19–20). One student emphasizes the importance of training that prepares students for what will be

required in their career but adds perceptively ‘but with such new and innovative pieces being created constantly it is hard to judge what will happen even 10 years down the line’ (Y6.3 – Q10 L28–32).

During the course of this research I began to realize that despite their avowed understanding of the changing repertoire in ballet companies today, many CSS students do not seem to make connections between this and what they are learning at school and remembered that a choreographer who came to rehearse one of his jazz-influenced ballets, with some senior students said ‘Come on guys! I expect much better from you students than I do the company because you have the training and they haven’t’. He was encouraging them to become more grounded with deep jazz 4ths and parallel positions characteristics of jazz technique that we constantly emphasize in jazz classes.

‘I consider that some students are not benefitting [from following a substantial jazz programme in their training] because they lack appreciation of the fact that jazz and other dance styles can enhance ballet technique and performance skills’ (VS – Q9 L15–19). Another teacher stated ‘I wouldn’t say that the students receive ‘substantial’ jazz training as it is only a small part of their weekly timetable. If the students attend the school [CSS] they have been selected on the strength of their ballet. However ...if the student allows it, then jazz can only be a beneficial addition to their overall training’ (VS – Q6 L25–32).

4.6 Summary

In this chapter the findings from the analysis of four participant groups has been presented. It would seem that there is consensus among stakeholders that jazz dance complements ballet

training; there was agreement on the added fluency of movement that jazz dance brings to classical dance and the strength derived from, for example, isolations. The majority of stakeholders acknowledged that jazz dance helps understanding of gravity and consciousness of the floor. They also referred to an increased awareness of musicality and dynamics, although current students made no mention of these benefits.

The considered comments made by key stakeholders about the way in which versatility enhanced the training and careers of dancers, were enlightening. Although there appears to be an understanding of the changing nature of ballet company repertoire, current students do not always make the connection between this and the place of jazz dance in their training. Judging by the colourful responses of other key stakeholders this awareness is gained through experience.

Although jazz dance was seen as disadvantageous by a small number of current students this was mainly due to time constraints within the schedule with some concerns about contradictory foot and leg placement.

The following chapter contains a discussion of the results presented in Chapters Three and Four in relation to figurational theoretical perspectives introduced in Chapter Two.

Chapter Five

Discussion of Results

5.1 Introduction

Figurational sociology offers a framework for analysing and understanding social processes of change and the role of interdependencies in networks (figurations) of mutually interested but differentially related people (Elias: 1978). My professional career, first as a performer with American jazz choreographers and directors in the UK and my teaching and choreographic experiences in both the UK and the USA, as well as my current position teaching jazz dance in a vocational ballet school put me in a unique position to reflect on the historical development of jazz dance and the contemporary significance of the genre in the training of young dancers.

As the research into the contribution of theatre jazz dance in a vocational ballet school unfolded it seemed evident that there would be two discrete parts to the study: a macro perspective of the historical development, the role of key exponents, and how the theatre jazz dance genre taught in the case study school evolved; and a micro perspective, a case study in one ballet school focused on the views of key stakeholders on the contribution of jazz dance to vocational ballet training.

The purpose of the chapter is twofold: to provide insight into, and interpretation and understanding of, the processes inspiring and driving historical change and contemporary perspectives on jazz dance and its contribution to the training of classical ballet dancers. Concepts used in discussing the relationship between findings and theory include:

interdependence, power differentials, axes of tension within figurations and recognition of the importance of ongoing processes of change.

5.2 The evolution of the present from the past

Figurational sociologists place significance on examining how the present evolves from the past, as noted in Chapter Two. Elias (1978) believed that human societies were about change rather than timeless states and Horne and Jary (1987) refer to ‘openness to change’ as being a characteristic of social figurations. Societies are continually changing and the arts, including dance, reflect this shift. The historical research into key exponents and the development of theatre jazz dance illustrated that, within dance, artists push boundaries by exploring new forms of movement and expression and are driven to alter the status quo; they are the ‘movers and shakers’, inspired by passion for dance, changes in society, by current events and by artists working in other media. As mentioned in Chapter Two exploration of jazz dance cannot be isolated from the contribution of influential people who nurtured it as a form of theatre dance. As illustrated in Chapter Three, the development of jazz dance happened within a figuration of mutually interested people who were differently connected to each other (Elias: 1978). Interdependence is evident in that they influenced and were influenced by each other in their efforts to shape and reshape new dimensions in theatre dance.

The twentieth century, with its early resistance to the traditions of classical ballet, was perhaps the most vital epoch for dance exponents to be experimental risk takers (Shelton, 1981; Au, 1988; ed. Cohen, 1998). The emergence and ease of international travel and the intermingling of cultures brought diversity and eventually globalization of dance to a new level. An example of this pioneering creativity within figurations was seen in the legacy of

Ruth St. Denis. Returning from her European travels and after years of dancing in vaudeville she had discovered a different path. Denishawn was born out of her meeting and subsequent relationship with Ted Shawn and the influence of both the school and the company was far reaching (Shelton, 1981; ed. Cohen, 1998). As indicated it brought theatrical dance to a wide audience because the company toured extensively and on occasions its performances were held in arenas that attracted audiences in their thousands. With the doors of exploration fully opened Martha Graham was the first of the ‘new moderns’ to leave Denishawn and find her own kinetic vocabulary and inner expression. Initially thought of as a rebel, Graham’s work came to be revered (Au: 1988). Likewise Jack Cole might never have started to dance had he not attended a Denishawn production which inspired him to study at Denishawn House (Loney: 1984). This interdependence of dance exponents led to unplanned and unintended consequences referred to in Chapter Two (eds. Coakley and Pike, 2009). Humphrey and Weidman also, tired of the repertoire at Denishawn, were not afraid to innovate and experiment. This developmental change had a profound and far-reaching effect on dance in the USA and eventually globally, and resulted in an interweaving of ideas and styles. As noted, Elias insisted on historical specificity of social figurations and their ‘processual’ character (Horne and Jary: 1987). The steady but firm expansion of this figuration of exponents shaped the development of the formalised jazz dance genre and technical training we have today.

As noted, Elias placed emphasis on social life in terms of relations (Elias: 1978). He suggested that ‘balances of power’ are a part of all human relationships (as indicated in Chapter Two 2.2). An example of the shifting power balances described by Elias (1978) can be seen in the highly successful Denishawn school and company, where stresses caused by the depression created financial difficulty (Shelton, 1981; Loney, 1984). With access to

resources limited, new forms of funding were crucial to the success or collapse of pioneering companies. The power to secure new financial resources was dependent on sponsorship which in turn was often dependent on popularity or favourable responses from critics (Terry: 1978). The figuration of exponents was therefore also linked to wider figurations of sponsors, audiences, critics and the economic climate.

Denishawn's struggles were exacerbated by personal and artistic conflicts between St. Denis and Shawn. Elias referred to a 'flexible lattice-work of tensions' within a figuration and indicated that the interdependence of individuals can be an interdependence of allies or opponents (Elias: 1978). The axes of tension which appear in any incipient artistic endeavour occur among pioneers of any new dance form. There are disputes about serious as opposed to popular dance styles, technical or choreographic methods, effects on training or performance or simply clashes of personality. Tensions between Shawn and Cole meant that Cole's time in Shawn's company was short-lived (Loney: 1984). Cole's casual attitude to punctuality and responsibility at this period of his life was an area of contention first with Shawn and later with Humphrey and Weidman.

Within the changing dance figuration some deeply committed choreographers, with a passion for 'serious' dance, commanded respect from many dedicated dancers who often worked for no remuneration. However the intensive rehearsal and performance schedules allowed little time for any paid employment (Loney: 1984). It was Cole's recognition that serious and popular dance were not necessarily opposed that led to his increasingly powerful position in shaping and formalising jazz dance in more commercial venues such as nightclubs. This could be regarded as an unintended consequence of his dismissal by his mentors (Loney: 1984). He preferred to work where he was in sole charge of the choreographic content. These performances were enthusiastically received and the solid financial rewards enabled

Cole to search for his own style and create his own technique, refining his version of jazz as theatre dance. As indicated in Chapter Three by expanding his repertoire of ethnic styles and setting his choreography to 'swing', his jazz dance vocabulary, influenced by modern dance and classical ballet, allowed him to move jazz dance from 'folk dance' and vaudeville into the realms of technically challenging theatre dance (Loney, 1984; Valis-Hill, 2001). The unplanned and unintended outcome of this opportunity (Coakley and Pike: 2009) was the emergence of a new style of dance which has developed and continues to evolve. In turn, with the growth of respect for his work as a dancer and choreographer Cole became more powerful, able to make demands at Columbia Studios, a further example of Elias's discussion of the balance of power (Elias: 1978). The popularization of all styles of dance grew with the Hollywood integrated dance musical of the 1930s and 1940s (Cohen: 1998). New technology has always preceded primary social change and post-war America saw the mass production and ownership of television sets. This created a surge in demand for entertainment including vaudeville/variety acts and it increased the reputations of many emerging artistes (Mordden: 1992). Many Broadway musicals were showcased on the small screen with a growing focus on jazz dance. As the present continued to evolve from the past, dance practitioners embraced change; an example of what Horne and Jary describe as openness to change (1987) (see Chapter Two 2.2).

In the tension-balance within dance figurations there is constant debate about the quality of the work of choreographers and its location in the wider dance picture. A further example of what Elias referred to as 'axes of tension' (Elias 1978) is evident in the conflicting opinions concerning how jazz dance is defined and this was also apparent while researching the jazz/ballet interface within the dance community. The definition of jazz dance has led to a debate about whether the term can be applied to choreographers such as Jerome Robbins. As

seen in Chapter Three although many people would consider the dancing in *West Side Story* and *Opus Jazz* to be jazz dance there are others who would disagree (Martins, 1961; Stearns, 1968; Brandman, 1977; Kourlas, 2000). There are discussions and articles that are intent on trying to pigeon-hole the genre. Perhaps the style of dance in this type of production falls between two stools. The jazz exponent (JE1) quoted earlier, who worked closely with Robbins, felt strongly that his work was a mixture of styles (Chapter Three 3.10). It has been referred to as an offshoot of jazz (Boross: 1999) and in the view of some this could be cited as an example of the jazz/ballet interface (Taper: 1984). George Balanchine, another example of this jazz/ballet interface, was not a jazz dance choreographer but his work was influenced by the rhythms of jazz music and ‘flavours’ of jazz dance.

In the USA Matt Mattox had acquired a powerful reputation as an exponent of his codified dance technique and so his move to London in 1970 to teach at London’s Dance Centre was welcomed by many dancers, including the present writer (see Chapter Three 3.9). His contribution was eclectic and his disciplined work influenced and inspired ballet dancers, jazz dancers and contemporary dancers. The power of acclaim within the jazz dance figuration of mutually interested people ensured an instant following and devotees continue to develop his ideas in the UK. From this grounding jazz dancers in Britain have been able to adapt to the styles of other American jazz choreographers and cultivate British creative talent. Mattox subsequently moved to France which enabled him to broaden his European following and this propelled the growth of jazz dance globally (Boross: 1999).

The implications of developments in the theatre jazz dance genre influenced by and influencing many people, situations, and styles along the way means that today we have a codified jazz technique and a history which demonstrates how jazz dance achieved a prominent place in the world of theatre dance. What becomes apparent, are the exciting

connections between charismatic exponents of different styles of dance which are of the utmost importance in the education of young dancers. Without this historical perspective an understanding of Cole's technique and style, and the subsequent evolution of jazz dance, lacks depth. The fusion of styles, including the jazz/ballet crossover embraced by many choreographers and directors, influences the training of tomorrow's dancers and helps to explain the positioning of jazz dance as second to ballet in the case study school's curriculum. With this realization as a backdrop it was possible to examine the perceptions of current and former students, teachers and school and associated company directors on the effectiveness of theatre jazz dance in the vocational school.

5.3 Figurations within the case study school

As noted in Chapter Two Elias's conceptual framework bridges the macro-micro social divide (Elias: 1978); process theory is however more frequently utilised in studies of macro situations. As observed, to illustrate the concept of figurations Elias uses the image of dancers on a dance floor which he indicates could represent state, cities, families as well as systems (Van Krieken: 1998). As stated in Chapter Two, process theory accommodates observation and analysis of face to face interaction in an organizational context, in this case the vocational ballet school. Elias's emphasis on change as an omnipresent, normal condition of social life (eds. Dunning and Rojek: 1992) is apparent within an artistic and educational establishment. As indicated, (Chapter Two 2.2) the continual state of flux in the mesh of interdependent human beings ensures conflict, co-operation, continuity and change (Elias: 1978).

Since the main focus of the school changed to classical ballet and the links with the associated company increased in strength, (see Chapter Two, Situational Analysis of the case study school) the students who audition for the school, almost exclusively, hope to join one of the leading internationally acclaimed ballet companies. Many have aspirations to gain a contract with the associated company. Within the figuration, the interconnectedness between staff and the Artistic Director of the school, and with the Artistic Management of the company is apparent as students are given opportunities to perform with the company for tours and performances (Chapter Two and Chapter Four 4.4). This is an example of networks of mutually orientated people forming dynamic figurations; there is a reciprocal dependency. Such increasing links between school and company ensure that the focus of incoming students is now classical ballet. Inevitably as the school has gone through this process of change new contacts are brought into the school to work with, and inspire students. The networks of interested individuals is changing and evolving, resulting in the instigation of new ideas and a surge of creativity. The balance of the curriculum is discussed and shaped, suggestions made and innovations introduced (Chapter Two, Situational analysis of the case study school). The associated company's repertoire is constantly expanding and versatility of dancers' bodies to manage fusions of ballet, jazz, contemporary and other styles increases the demands and pressures on training young dancers (Chapter Three 3.12 and Chapter Four 4.3). The influence of the company on the school through committee structures that include its Artistic Director ensures increasing influence of the company on the vocational training school (Chapter Two, Situational analysis of the case study school).

Within the figuration of stakeholders there is a shared interest but not necessarily a total consensus on how to achieve common goals (Chapter Four 4.4, 4.5); here is evidence of what Elias describes as 'a fluctuating, tensile equilibrium, a balance of power moving to and fro...'

(Elias: 1978). The linkage and the subtle power structure between the school and the associated company permitted the Artistic Director of the company to make the decision to place more emphasis on jazz dance than contemporary dance (see Chapter Two), which might not have been a decision supported by all stakeholders (Chapter Four 4.4). As noted in Chapter Two (2.2) and as theorised by Elias, figurational theory allows the study of long term processes ‘through which the autonomous actions of people influence and constrain each other’ (eds. Coakley and Pike: 2009). This involves contention and teamwork in addition to fluctuations in power and/or authority. The power balance within the case study school is fluid and constantly changing so that although the Artistic Director of the school holds more power, in fact no-one within the figurations is powerless. The workings of power are, after all, reciprocal (Van Krieken: 1998) and as noted previously (Chapter Two 2.2), Elias believed that power should be viewed as balances and ratios (ibid.). The senior artistic management of the school was responsible for determining the curriculum but this was influenced by many things including the needs of the profession and dance tutors, as well as potential students and their parents seeking the most attractive vocational school. It was not surprising, given the history of the senior artistic managers in an innovative company that extends the boundaries of classical ballet, that value was given to jazz training in producing well-rounded and versatile dancers (see Chapter Four).

As indicated, Layder (1999) argues that Elias believed that the important features of our society have been formed by long term developmental tendencies (Chapter Two 2.2). Within a ballet school these tendencies must influence the training and the direction and ethos of the school (Chapter Three and Chapter Four 4.2 and 4.3). Taking into consideration Elias’s reference to the ‘lattice work of tensions’ and to the cooperation and conflict regarded by him as a normal part of everyday life (1978) there were times when support for the jazz

programme became less in evidence and more problematic (Chapter Four 4.4). As illustrated, lack of time within the schedule was an issue and was referred to by students, vocational staff and senior artistic managers (see Chapter Four 4.4). This did not only affect the place of jazz dance but other parts of the artistic curriculum because of the balance needed between all areas of the school, artistic, academic and pastoral (Chapter Four 4.4). This was particularly apparent when preparations were underway for the annual ballet assessments or during rehearsals for a classical piece for a performance when everyone was ‘fighting their corner’ for rehearsal time. When conflicts arose, in any ensuing discussions the Artistic Director had the power to adjudicate, ease the situation and make a final decision. The common goal provided the incentive for co-operation. The school exists because of the vocational ballet training. Without the classical ballet element of the school there would be no students, no artistic staff, no tutors in other disciplines. The key stakeholders are linked within this configuration – they are mutually dependent (Elias: 1978). The students must be given every opportunity to become the best dancers, achieve their artistic and technical potential to ensure that they will graduate with contracts in hand, whilst protecting their psychological and physical welfare.

Elias’s emphasis on ‘how things have come to be’ and the search for understanding historically plays an intrinsic part in the understanding and actual operation of a vocational ballet school (Chapter Two 2.2 and Chapter Three). Classical ballet is steeped in tradition and history and it is important that students have an understanding of the classics and of the eminent dancers, choreographers, teachers and impresarios who were at the forefront of preserving classicism in dance but who were also pivotal in the forefront of change (Chapter Three 3.4 and 3.12). The present must be seen in terms of the past (Dunning: 1999). Students are taught works by choreographers through the use of notation and they are

coached by those who have danced the roles in the past who may in turn have been tutored by the originators of these roles. The choreography is sacrosanct and each detail must be passed on with exactitude to preserve its integrity (Chapter Four 4.5). As has been noted during the empirical research it is important that students also learn about the history of jazz dance and understand how that dance genre also has evolved.

5.4 Consensus and contradiction

Research findings indicated a consensus of positive views concerning the contribution of jazz dance. Concurrent with this validation was the view that complementarity was supported by both current and former students (Chapter Four 4.2) whereas the need for versatility which was also an emergent theme in the results section, was most strongly supported by former students now in the profession (Chapter Four 4.3). The opposing views of some current and most former students indicated tensions regarding aspirations to be ‘ballet perfect’ to the exclusion of other forms of dance (Chapter Four 4.4) which is a further example of the series of tension balances in figurations (Jarvie and Maguire: 1994) see Chapter Two 2.2. It is noticeable that there was a wide gap in the understanding of students who are not yet working professionally and other stakeholders who have had viable dance careers (Chapter Four 4.4). Several former students were discovering the need for versatility and gave a vivid description of how their careers had been enhanced because of their ability to adapt to different choreographic styles. Some of them mentioned being cast in roles that they might not have been given if it had not been for their jazz dance background (Chapter Four 4.3). This identifies a gap in the perception and education of current students regarding the milieu which they hope to enter.

All expert key stakeholders and vocational staff had experiential knowledge of working with a wide range of choreographers in different styles of dance because of their careers as dancers, soloists, principals, directors, choreographers (Chapter Four 4.2). They are living proof of how the present emerges from the past (Jarvie & Maguire: 1994), see Chapter Two (2.2) and Chapter Three. It also allowed reflection on the fact that the need for versatility is nothing new. Referring back to Chapter Three (3.11) it was apparent that when Jerome Robbins was training it was deemed necessary to study many dance styles as there were few ballet companies in the United States at that time (Jowitt: 2004). Cole and Mattox studied a wide variety of dance styles (Boross: 1999). It was obvious from interview transcripts that in the past, classical dancers were expected to dance in a variety of roles for choreographers who were always taking the art form in a new direction although maybe dancers are being pushed further *physically* than they have been in the past (Chapter Four 4.3).

Former and current students' interviews and questionnaires, as well as teachers with responsibilities for different curriculum areas, revealed Elias's (1978) web of tensions in terms of the balance of curriculum time, the training needs for future dancers and perceived needs of students. For example, allocating curriculum time is a balancing act in terms of dividing the key resource of a school.

5.5 Responsibility

The senior members of the case study figuration agree on the school's artistic responsibility to future professional dancers. It is they who must have a uniform vision that retains integrity in classical ballet training, upholding tradition, the past and the necessary high standards, but at the same time embracing change, what is referred to as openness to change in Chapter Two

2.2 (Horne and Jary: 1987). Within a vocational ballet school there must be an environment of creativity that allows stakeholders to foster an understanding of the processes that drive and inspire change (Elias: 1978). It is essential to be able to view things from different perspectives and to ‘think outside the box’. As in the past, choreographers, influenced by the socio-cultural environment in which they find themselves, continue to push boundaries and search for new dimensions (Chapter Three). They demand stronger technique, more stamina and increased athleticism from today’s young dancers and although the essence of pure classicism and artistry must not be lost, students need to be prepared for the ever changing competitive world (Chapter Two 2.2 and Chapter Three). The pressure to embrace change is evident in the rising expectations at international ballet competitions such as the Prix de Lausanne and Youth American Grand Prix, in which school students are entered, where the standards of performance are exceeding those of previous generations. To allow these changes to be reflected in the students’ training necessitates the fluctuating balance of power that is at the heart of figurational theory (Elias: 1978). The power to allocate resources, for example time, finances, staffing, curriculum time, studio space, exposure to inspirational teachers and performance possibilities, alongside academic time, lies with the senior management and needs to constantly take cognizance of a changing dance world that in turn depends upon sponsorship, funding and audience acclaim. All of this reflects a world in a constant process of change.

5.6 Understanding the value of the training

The gulf between the understanding of current students and those who are working or have worked professionally suggests that an educational opportunity is being missed (see Chapter

Four). It is essential to ensure that current students have a greater understanding of the historical path of jazz dance, how it has evolved and developed and how the past informs current trends as theorized by Elias and figurational or process theory (Chapter Two 2.2). Students could be led to discover the wealth of experience that is around them and perhaps make their own insightful contribution. The connections between the present and the past can be learned from the professional experiences of their mentors, from members and senior management of the associated company and from former students further supporting Elias's theory and as indicated in Chapter Two. The value of the figuration in the case study school lies within its ability to interweave and apply the accumulated experience of its senior stakeholders (Chapters Three and Four).

5.7 Moving forward

Some former students were cognizant of the impact that a downturn in the economy has on the arts and funding (Chapter Four 4.5). They seemed apprised of the fact that sometimes choice of repertoire has to be audience driven and realized that it is important to perform the classics in addition to 'Triple Bills' which traditionally attract smaller audiences (Chapter Three 3.12 and Chapter Four 4.3). Several expressed the view that ballet is becoming increasingly popular due to shows such as *Billy Elliot* and television programmes such as *Strictly Come Dancing* and *So You Think You Can Dance?* (Chapter Four 4.5). Although these television productions do result in dance gaining a wider audience, their success is contentious and both an expert key stakeholder and a key jazz exponent were among professionals who felt that some of these shows do a disservice to serious and disciplined dancers which is an example of the high art/low art dichotomy mentioned in Chapter Three

(Vaccaro: 1997, Mazo: 1995). Some students believed that ballet is regarded as less elitist than it has been in the past while others believed that it is thought of as passé by young people (Chapter Four 4.5). With the vagaries of the economic downturn the fixed costs of running smaller venues has tempted performing arts companies to go back to an arena style production reminiscent of the large arenas often used by Denishawn and others in the past (Chapter Three). Three of the major UK ballet companies have recently performed classical ballet at the O2 Arena or The Royal Albert Hall in London.

As noted in Chapter Four (4.5) one student made the observation that with such new and innovative pieces being created any attempt to gauge what will happen in the dance world in future is difficult. One thing is certain, things will change. Using figurational theory we can learn from the past about how things have come to be, and we can deepen understanding by examining the dynamics of figurations of interdependence.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

6.1 Key findings

The use of figurational theory underpinned the structure and interpretation of this research study into the development of jazz dance and the significance of that genre in the training of young ballet dancers. The twentieth century saw an accelerated change in the technological improvements of mass media dissemination. Films and television revolutionized the popularity and appreciation of this form of dance. This matrix of technologies spawned the growth of jazz dance as theatre dance from its early roots through the beginnings of modern dance. The fusion of dance genres including classical ballet resulted in the emergence of a particular style. This theatre jazz dance has been incorporated into the core training at CSS and is positioned second to classical ballet. The scope of the research revealed that the perceptions of the artistic senior managers, vocational staff, current and former students, was dominated by positive views of the contribution of jazz dance to ballet training but there were also concerns over allocation of resources, and contradictions between current and former students' understanding of the realities of the professional ballet world. The advantages would seem to be invaluable, resulting in well-rounded, musical students who have the ability to move naturally and respond to the demands of directors and choreographers in classical ballet companies today. It was clear that some students remain open minded, and would consider working in other areas of dance following their classical careers. It is essential that a broader training continues to be offered so that students are able to find employment in some branch of dance or theatre should work with a classical company prove unattainable. An emergent concern was that some current students lack knowledge and understanding about

the world they aspire to join, its history and its exponents and the ever changing creative process.

The majority of questionnaire responses and insights from all those interviewed in the research indicated that jazz dance should retain its place in the curriculum at CSS.

6.2 Strengths and limitations

Although insider research can be regarded as disadvantageous, it allowed access to students, staff and key stakeholders and enabled me to apply the knowledge that I have of the curriculum, the schedule and the day to day running of CSS. My own professional dance experience added a level of insight and understanding to the historical context underpinning the research and the data that was obtained from the respondents. A further strength was the fact that former students had responded sincerely and in some considerable detail. Their perceptions and experiences made fascinating reading. All key jazz exponents, expert key stakeholders and vocational staff are highly respected professionals who have a wealth of experience and careers that span a wide range of achievements. The interviews provided insight into their training, early careers, opinions of jazz dance training and were lively and enlightening. My one regret is that space limitations resulted in my using only a small selection of the anecdotes and perspectives that they shared so generously.

There is never a perfect time to distribute questionnaires to students as every term brings its own demands and challenges. These questionnaires were handed out in March 2011 when Y6.3 students were attending auditions, making realistic assessments of their abilities and possibilities of gaining a contract. The continuing pressure to improve their classical

technique may have been reflected in their attitude towards jazz dance classes at that point, and consequently their questionnaire responses. In contrast the view of Y6.2 students appear more objective as the audition process might seem removed from them. Current students completed the questionnaires in a class setting, voluntarily, as I was concerned that the response rate would be low if I asked them to complete them in their own time. Responses may have been different if they had been given a longer period of time for reflection.

6.3 Ideas for further research

The paucity of academic work specifically about jazz dance was surprising. It is my hope that more freelance jazz dancers will turn to writing so that a wealth of information can begin to accumulate.

It would be useful to initiate a wider survey of dancers within the associated company to discover their ideas and experiences of a broader dance education. When company dancers visit the school they often show interest in the jazz programme and many express regret that jazz and tap had not been included in their own training. It would be interesting to know how easily classically trained dancers with the Royal Ballet Company adapt to the ballets of Wayne McGregor and more contemporary choreographers.

A project for CSS might be to follow the careers of former students more closely and encourage them to interact with current students when they have the opportunity. This would give added credence to the contribution of jazz dance in the case study vocational school. A recommendation would be the inclusion of an educational unit to increase awareness in the

changing dance world and the interconnectedness of different genres to encourage flexibility and open-mindedness in career choice.

My desire to understand the place of jazz dance in a vocational ballet school motivated me to undertake this research. My life-long passion for dance inspired me to examine the creative possibilities within this research. The work was comprehensive because it took place in the USA and the UK. I gained knowledge about the illusiveness of objectivity, the importance of honing new skills in critical thinking and writing, historical and field research, analysis and synthesis of data. I experienced the delight of interviewing talented and distinguished professionals in the ballet and jazz dance world and the fascinating task of reading responses from students and colleagues. The journey has given me a deeper understanding of the contribution of jazz dance to the training of dancers in preparation for the eclectic careers most vocational ballet students will meet.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Appendix A

Questionnaire for current and former students

1. What are your perceptions/recollections of following a substantial jazz dance programme in your training?
2. In what ways do you think that jazz dance has been advantageous in your development as a dancer?
3. In what ways do you think jazz dance has been disadvantageous in your development as a dancer?
4. In what ways has / or will jazz dance influence your career as a dancer?
5. How do you feel the interface of ballet with other styles of dance has changed in theatre dance in recent years?
6. Do you think these changes should influence systems of dance training and if so how?

Appendix B

Appendix B

Questionnaire for vocational staff

1. What are your recollections of your dance training? Did your training include dance genres other than ballet?
2. If your dance training included jazz dance, in what ways do you think that this was advantageous in your development as a dancer?
3. If your training included jazz dance, in what ways do you think that this was disadvantageous in your development as a dancer?
4. In what ways did jazz dance influence your career as a dancer?
5. How do you feel the interface of ballet with other styles of dance has changed in theatre dance in recent years?
6. Do you think these changes should influence systems of dance training and if so how?
7. As a teacher, do you feel that students in this school benefit or do not benefit from following a substantial jazz dance programme in their training?

Appendix C

Appendix C
Participant Information Sheet and consent form – Interviews

My name is Thorey Mountain-Everroad and I am conducting research for my MPhil(B) Research in Education – (Dance) at the University of Birmingham. My university contact is:



This research is to gain insight into the contribution jazz dance in vocational ballet training focusing on one vocational ballet school which is associated with a major ballet company. I propose to record the interviews using a Dictaphone and then transcribe the information; notes will also be taken. Participants will be encouraged to talk about their experiences in dance, and contribute their personal views of the subject to be explored.

The identity of participants will be anonymous through the use of pseudonyms. While the study is in progress all data will be confidential and will be kept securely. Excerpts from the interview/questionnaires may be in the final report but again no names or identifying characteristics will be included.

I would like to emphasize that

- Participation is entirely voluntary
- Participants may refuse to answer a question
- Participants are free to withdraw from the study at any time. This can be done by contacting me using the following contact details:

Phone:

Email:

Participant consent form

I _____ agree to participate in this study, exploring the contribution of jazz dance in vocational ballet training. I have read the information and understand the purpose of the study. I understand that I may withdraw at any time, that pseudonyms will be used and confidentiality assured.

Signed _____

Printed _____ Date _____

Appendix C

Participant Information Sheet and consent form - Questionnaires

My name is Thorey Mountain-Everroad and I am conducting research for my MPhil(B) Research in Education – (Dance) at the University of Birmingham. My university contact is t.c.benn@bham.ac.uk, should further information be required.

The title of my study is ‘A case study exploring the contribution of jazz dance in one vocational ballet school.’ This research is to gain insight into the place jazz dance in vocational ballet training, focusing on one vocational ballet school associated with a major ballet company. I intend to explore the perceptions of key stakeholders and former students and I will be using a mixture of interviews and questionnaires.

I propose to distribute questionnaires with open ended questions which I would like you to respond to in your own words. Respondents will be encouraged to include their experiences in dance and contribute their own personal views of the subject to be explored.

The identity of participants will be anonymous through the use of pseudonyms. All data will be confidential and will be kept securely. Excerpts from the questionnaires may be in the final report but again no names or identifying characteristics will be included.

I would like to emphasize that

- Participation is entirely voluntary
- Participants may refuse to answer a question
- Participants are free to withdraw from the study at any time, prior to submission of the study. This can be done by contacting me using the following contact details:

Phone:

email:

Participant consent form

I _____ agree to participate in this study, exploring the contribution of jazz dance in vocational ballet training. I have read the information and understand the purpose of the study. I understand that participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time prior to submission, that pseudonyms will be used and confidentiality assured.

Signed _____
Printed _____ Date _____

Appendix D

Appendix D

Interviews with Artistic Senior Managers of the case study school and associated company (EKS)

EKS1 25th March 2011

EKS2 22nd March 2011

EKS3 21st May 2011

EKS4 10th June 2011

Example of questions for interviews with Artistic Senior Managers

1. I would like to know something about your dance training. Was it purely classical or did you do other forms of dance as well.
2. How did you feel about the various different types of dance that you were involved in?
3. Did you have any jazz dance training?
4. Did you only dance in a classical ballet company or did you perform in other areas of theatre/dance?
5. Do you feel that there is any difference between dancers joining a ballet company who have had broader training, not just classical related subjects, and those who did not?

Appendix E

Appendix E

Data Analysis - Themes

Themes:

1. Advantages of jazz dance in training (ADV)
2. Career options (CO)
3. Disadvantages of jazz dance in training (DIS)
4. Jazz/ballet interface (J/B)
5. Jazz helps ballet (JHB)
6. Jazz helps repertoire (JHR)
7. Training – perceptions of students in light of changing repertoire (TR)

These were narrowed to three main headings and the data was reduced to four categories:

- 1) Jazz enhances classical ballet training, musicality expression, dynamics and performance quality – extracted from (ADV) and (JHB)
- 2) Jazz enhances versatility – extracted from (CO and JHR)
- 3) Disadvantages of jazz within a vocational school (DIS)
- 4) Jazz/ballet interface and training (J/B)

From this four main themes emerged:

Complementarity

Versatility

Negativity

Jazz/ballet interface

Appendix F

Appendix F

Throughout the 1980s Lee Theodore's American Dance Machine aimed to reconstruct and preserve the best of American Theatre Dance – the show stopping numbers of Cole, de Mille, Robbins, Kidd and Fosse among others. These are available on film and video in the Dance Collection of the Library of Performing Arts in Lincoln Centre, New York. For any student of jazz dance, You Tube offers glimpses not only of Jack Cole's choreography but also shows him dancing with other revered jazz exponents including Chita Rivera.

Appendix G

Appendix G

Field Study Results

8. Advantages of jazz dance in training (ADV)
9. Career options (CO)
10. Disadvantages of jazz dance in training (DIS)
11. Jazz/ballet interface (J/B)
12. Jazz helps ballet (JHB)
13. Jazz helps repertoire (JHR)
14. Training – perceptions of students in light of changing repertoire (TR)

These were narrowed to three main headings and the data was reduced to four categories:

- 5) Jazz enhances classical ballet training, musicality expression, dynamics and performance quality – extracted from (ADV) and (JHB)
- 6) Jazz enhances versatility – extracted from (CO and JHR)
- 7) Disadvantages of jazz within a vocational school (DIS)
- 8) Jazz/ballet interface and training (J/B)

1. Jazz enhances classical ballet training

Y6.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Space to explore moving in ways that feel different, expressing different emotions and meanings• Ability to move more freely• More adaptable style within classical ballet• Different lines and use of plié can help strengthen the legs to help with jumping and ballon in classical work
Y6.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Isolations and movements that use muscles which are not used as much in classical ballet• Freedom – allows expression in movement• Ability to isolate different parts of the body• You can take corrections from jazz and apply them to ballet
FS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understanding and expansion of movement• Coordination, rhythm of movements, dynamic of music• Musicality can't just be found in classical training• Lessons from jazz to ballet technique – see results and improvement• Jazz helped in strengthening muscles

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jazz helped in ballet technique • Stronger, more dynamic dancer with more attack and expression and able to release inhibitions • Enabled us to use our bodies a lot more and move more freely even when in traditional ballet • Feels grounded • More fluid dancer, stronger in school. Prevented her/him becoming a ‘stiff cookie cutter’ • Naturally stiff while dancing – jazz helped to become more fluid • Dynamics, musicality • Understanding and use of syncopation
<p>VS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More freedom of movement within the classical framework of classical ballet • Value of jazz training – body awareness – isolation and control – engaging energy lines to the full • Promotes and helps musicality and gives understanding of syncopation • Can enhance ballet technique • Helped understanding of gravity and space shows a different way of moving your body, more earthy and down into your legs
<p>Interviews</p> <p>EKS1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jazz training certainly shows in the case study school students – most definitely – just for movement • Rigid look is eased • Energy in the body even when standing • Jazz teachers emphasize getting into the floor • Different rhythms for class work – emphasis on rhythm – dotted rhythms
<p>EKS2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra movement vocabulary and a freedom – classical dance so constrained – dancers want to be correct – scared to go outside limits • Associate school students dancing in a production – CSS might not always be as physically suited but they are movers • Dance Styles really help in classical vocational school – anything that adds to sense of movement – sense of rhythm, precision, musicality can be nothing but beneficial • Tap and jazz probably help speed of learning
<p>EKS3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freedom • Grounded stability • Ability to move more freely • Classical ballet training can be rigid these days – difficult for some students to actually ‘let go’ • Jazz work can enhance classical work

EKS4

- Subtleties of rhythm
- Coordination of jazz movement (Michael Kidd)
- Uses the floor – grounded
- Works the whole body

2. Jazz dance helps students to become more versatile which enhances their ability to adapt to diverse repertoire and allows flexibility in career options

Students used the word *versatile* or *versatility* fifty times in the questionnaire responses

- a) The current students have limited experience with different repertoire although some had been chosen to dance in a jazz influenced ballet by a major choreographer, and others had appeared in some jazz influenced pieces when appearing with the company.

Y6.3

- Feel more comfortable and familiar with other styles – physically and theoretically
- Want to do dance as movement, not one specific dance form
- The ballet company I am working with next year also does jazz dances
- Jazz is where my personality shows most – prepared to pursue non-classical route in the future

Y6.2

- Will enable choreographers and directors to use me – longer dance career – ballet then jazz
- I'll be more versatile and hopefully able to get a job
- Interest in singing plus jazz could lead to Musical Theatre after classical career
- Many companies introducing different styles of dance into rep so jazz will help career

Former Students

Former students are now working in the profession and have first-hand experience about the diversity of repertoire, working with different choreographers, and what has helped, or hindered, their progress.

Adaptability:

- Not 'thrown' when choreographer asks him/her to dance in a way that is contradictory to classical ballet
- Was familiar with grounded movements, tricks and floor work from jazz. Had overcome the fear that many classical dancers have – led to more opportunities in company as this skill not shared by all (see EKS2's comment below)
- Adapt easily and quickly to choreographers and new choreography
- In a major British company – several jazz based pieces – jazz technique – essential to be able to adapt – the director needs dancers who can adapt
- Strong advantage when learning piece not traditional classical ballet – picks up non classical ballet quickly (see below) – fast to adapt to the different style, confident to perform
- Blank canvas for creations by different choreographers, adaptable and versatile

Meet demands of choreographer/director:

- Directors, choreographers expect well-rounded, versatile dancers. Lines blurring so choreographers – mix of classical ballet and aesthetics including jazz.
- Jazz helps rep – Musical Theatre and jazz inspired high profile choreographers
- Enable choreographers and directors to use in variety of areas
- Changed over years – higher legs, more turns, higher jumps. Ballet pushed to keep it edgy and exciting
- Adapt to different styles quickly and with more flair. Choreographers such as David Bintley use 'essence of jazz'
- Different choreographers African, musicals

Diverse repertoire:

- In company with diverse rep. Within a year performed two neo-classical plus a ballroom themed jazz ballet
- Demands high array of styles
- Classical company but versatility including jazz based pieces
- Jazz styles used in many professional companies – strong foundation essential
- Rare to see purely classical repertoire – jazz useful for future jobs
- In ballet company – more grounded, isolations help modern ballet rep. for example Macmillan, Kylian, Duato, Forsythe – many aspects of Mattox technique – isolations, contractions, release useful for above repertoire
- In classical company – varied rep so versatility required. Performed many different styles – traditional character, classical ballet, creative movement, heavy, into the floor, jumping into the floor, turning on the knees, jumping over each other

Helps career

- More roles because of experience of other styles
- Classical companies see jazz dance as an advantage seeing dancer as more employable
- Casting
- 3 years in a professional ballet company – cast as Marilyn Monroe – soloist role even though new to company – used to heel work – which was necessary. Others had no

<p>experience in heels or style of era because in audition excerpts she was one of only ones who had training. This will continue to help (her career)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In very classical company – neo classical pieces plus cast to learn a pas de deux by Norbet Vesac – inspired by Musical Theatre works – choreography –very jazzy and ‘flashy style’
<p>Specific advantage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jazz ballets, hips, rhythm in body, certain movements seem natural • Jazz training – ‘grounded’, utilize plié, used to working in parallel, dynamics of music and body for choreographers wishes • Body capable of different ways of moving, flexibility, adaptability to different forms of dance that has been required. Extra strength in different fields – contemporary and opera support • Advantages against other dancers who have not studied jazz dance. Balanchine, Robbins highly influenced by jazz styles and rhythms

<p>VS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of jazz ensured plenty of opportunities to put into use when a company member • Very classical career but on occasion Balanchine’s ballets allowed a different kind of freedom of expression • Professional dancers required to perform choreographic movements outside the confines of ballet technique • Benefit especially for ballet companies – not many companies performing classics
--

EKS1 had a broad training until he decided to focus purely on classical ballet. As a choreographer his work is informed by different styles.

EKS4 agrees that students need to understand that they will be working in ballets like *Elite Syncopations*, some of David Bintley’s work which uses jazz and tap including the clog dance in *Hobson’s Choice*, as well as ballets by William Forsythe and Wayne McGregor.

2. Jazz enhances versatility

b) Career Options

<p>Y6.3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Graduate as more versatile dancers, more options than just auditioning for classical jobs• Has become more open minded and acknowledges a broader route - room for classical ballet, contemporary and modern. Classical route no longer 'be all and end all' – commercial route not easy route – hard and more demanding• Extra 'string to bow.' Will help to adapt to all different types of rep• Secure knowledge that something else to do if classical does not work – would rather dance something than nothing
<p>Y6.2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Confidence when comes to jobs – explore if ballet not possible• Great to 'fall back on'• Wider options for possible career choices – jazz if classical doesn't work out or would like to retire early from a ballet company. More open- minded about pursuing other styles of dance in career• Want classical but if something happens etc. – West End. Variety of auditions• More exciting career. Longevity as a dancer as jazz not as demanding as ballet• Shows me that there is life after ballet
<p>FS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Had no success with ballet auditions so was able to audition for other jobs (unlike students from some other ballet schools)• Opened eyes to another (future) dance form – could have been more blinkered to professional options• Unsuccessful in ballet auditions – started to attend other types – loves it – changed path• Opened doors! She/he began in a ballet company and is now in Musical Theatre• Dancers can't be picky with the way theatre is changing• Helped pursue work in forms other than classical ballet - broadens range of companies, projects• Increases range of jobs
<p>Interviews EKS1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• He feels that it is the broadest tool (jazz) – if they don't get into a classical company. He loved the show <i>Cabaret</i> as a boy and used to do a medley of songs and the MC from the show. He thinks that Bob Fosse 'is amazing'. That's 'why for me a broad training is important ...if you are a dancer in one of those kind of shows it's just every bit as good.'• It's giving dancers a real chance to work in both worlds that's the important thing

EKS2

- They are at a classical ballet school but there aren't going to be that many jobs around.
- A broader education lends itself to far more opportunities

EKS3

- Although we are classed as a classical ballet school – we are because the main emphasis is classical ballet we still have to provide the kids on two levels. Going into a classical ballet company with good jazz and contemporary, then you have to face facts –some of the kids will not make it. It's our duty to provide the means for them to get jobs in another sphere

EKS4

- You can get a very good career now if you are a good jazz dancer. Jazz and tap are good for the subtleties of rhythm and for the coordination of jazz movement and that it is very good with ballet

While receiving classical training EKS4 danced in *Finian's Rainbow* with Michael Kidd's choreography. 'He [Kidd] came over and reproduced all his choreography. I sometimes used to use some of the steps when I did some choreography in musicals and had to audition all those people. It was amazing how you could tell at once whether they were coordinated, whether they could move, whether they had any rhythm in their bodies or anything.'

3. Disadvantages of jazz training in a vocational ballet school

Y6.3

- It is disadvantageous when time is taken from classical ballet classes
- Too much time is spent on jazz dance; more emphasis on classical ballet would help classical ballet training
- Jazz is tiring
- Jazz is boring [although the respondent admits that doing varied styles can make you a better dancer it is perceived as] 'messing up the chosen field of dance eg by using parallel positions
- Sometimes jazz is given priority. The respondent wants to concentrate on classical ballet. Occasionally there is more jazz than ballet – 'more emphasis on classical work would help my career'
- Jazz training means that not enough time is allowed for upper body strength
- Too much jazz takes away from classical ballet training and jazz loses its relief factor/enjoyment
- Can be type cast as jazz dancer rather than a versatile dancer
- Doesn't want to do jazz in future or as career

Y6.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aspects of jazz style creep in to ballet Time taken away from ballet training – focus needs to be more on ballet weaknesses Could be hard not to carry difficulties into ballet
FS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time away from ballet Could affect muscle build up – thigh muscles could bulk up – not at CSS though Not disadvantage but would have liked students to take it more seriously and show that there is more to life than being in a ballet company Retained possible weakness in back due to jolted more acrobatic movements but think everyone should study jazz in a vocational ballet school No negative but personal – jazz relax into movement more so being flexible –often lose control of body particularly arms Jazz important within training – but too much jazz – takes away from ballet training None – but wish had been possible to do more jazz, different styles and let go of inhibitions sooner
VS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sometimes throw body to floor – knee and back injuries – 2 or 3 lessons each week – not consistent enough for body to get used to

Choreographers mentioned by respondents: George Balanchine, Geoffrey Cauley, Kenneth MacMillan, Paul Taylor, Twyla Tharp, David Bintley, Glen Tetley, Christopher Bruce, Michael Charnley, Wayne McGregor, Jonathan Burrows, Lynn Seymour, Kurt Jooss, Michael Kidd, John Cranko, William Forsythe, Jiri Kylian, Norbert Vesac, Nacho Duato, Matthew Bourne, Stephen Mear, Mark Morris, Jerome Robbins, David Nixon, Akram Khan, Heinz Spoerli, Mats Ek, Kim Brandstrup

4) Interface of ballet with other styles and thoughts on training to reflect this:

VS Jazz/Ballet Interface	Training
1. All styles have become more merged	All dancers should have a classical training – important to introduce several other styles to prepare young dancers for a career
2. All art forms/dance genres are more closely related than ever. Ballet companies doing more contemporary rep. Versatility expected	Yes, an equal weighting of jazz/contemporary and ballet disciplines. 1/3 each

3. Not so much changed as fused together and developing a hybrid style	Dance training (classical ballet) should retain its academic identity in order to provide the dancer with a sound basic technique from which to expand
4. Left blank	Left blank
5. Ballet is the same! What has changed are the types of choreographers being used! A strong classical framework and understanding is needed for any ballet company, but if you can move in another way then your scope of work and employment is far greater as choreographers are chosen from all kinds of backgrounds and can make very interesting new work for the public	No! The training remains the same and must be understood at the correct level. Later on – depending on the ability and the intelligence of the students you may influence the students to work with suitable choreographers and ideas
6. I don't think that any one ballet company is just a ballet company any more. Dancers have to be versatile	I don't think that these changes should influence training unless it was felt necessary. However, if a technique is offered in a school, it must be delivered appropriately and professionally
7. Left blank	Left blank
8. There is increasingly a move towards companies bringing different styles of dance performance into their repertoire and also dance companies specifically set up to include all sorts of dance genres that in my opinion enhance the spectacle of theatre	Students should be made more aware of acting in performance whatever the dance style may be. I feel the physical training in each form of dance must remain 'specific'. But I'm certain that a wide scope of physical expression (as in different forms of dance) can only enhance a performer's skill set
9. Professional dancers are required to perform choreographic movements which are outside the confines of ballet technique. Thus, awareness of other techniques must be valuable in preparing students for a professional career	I think it is the students' perceptions that have to be changed by making it clear that ballet companies are demanding versatility in their dancers. Jazz and other dance styles can enhance ballet technique and performance skills

Former student FQ1

‘A rounded dance education is fundamental in creating a versatile, open-minded, multi-faceted dancer. For a more classical career although a solid knowledge of classical technique and repertoire is needed dancers should also be aware of history and be proficient in neo-classical dance’

Former student FQ 8

‘Companies must reflect the times. This is a way of recording history, showing fashions, trends and social commentary’.

Former students appear to be aware of audience demands and needs.

Former Students	
Jazz/Ballet Interface	Training
Ballet companies – diverse rep – ballet contemporary, jazz, tap, ballroom. Less elitist	Students in a bubble - to help students become more aware of changes in dance and theatre, jazz needs to be given more stature. As member of a ballet company - worked with jazz band, partnered other girls, worked barefoot, in heels and in trainers. These skills should be worked on in training
Audiences are more adventurous and go to ‘triple bills’ as well as classics. Increased appreciation of modern and contemporary pieces	Although having one focus, it is essential to train in as many styles as possible to be prepared to deliver whatever the choreographer or company asks of you
Like in every art form, evolution is demanded by an ever evolving audience. It is essential to move with the times. What ballet audiences came to see fifty years ago is very different from what they expect to see now. Wide range of styles appeals to public. Essential to keep public satisfied	Hopes that range of dance genres taught grows proportionally with the demands of the industry Strong foundation in other styles to allow dancers to adapt to ever changing needs of new choreographers
Classical ballet must be more versatile – audience may see contemporary or jazz and return to see classical ballet	Strong ballet and jazz will develop your language as dancer. Students who take this on board will have more varied careers than those who don’t.

<p>Increased awareness of ballet in other styles of theatre dance such as musicals eg. <i>Billy Elliot</i> has made the ballet world more accessible to the public. Television programmes such as <i>Strictly Come Dancing</i> have showcased various dance styles whilst showing how ballet forms the basis of all styles</p>	<p>Provide good base for versatility and confidence in performance skills – students should be given the opportunity to work with as many choreographer as possible or to learn new rep as well as the classics</p>
<p>Audiences are more demanding – companies must keep public interested to sell tickets</p>	<p>Ballet schools should have more jazz and also acting to enhance the dancer as a whole and keep more doors open in the future. Useful to have classes that merge styles together and rep that would include the crossover of different styles to understand how different dance forms influence each other</p>
<p>Revivals of classic musicals requiring ballet/ strong theatre dance technique and new innovation in other styles</p>	<p>Ballet training less crucial in theatre dance, however Stephen Mear and Matthew Bourne require strong classical technique</p>