

Northern Michigan University

NMU Commons

All NMU Master's Theses

Student Works

8-2020

The Female Leadership Experience in Pre-Professional and Professional Ballet

Jill Grundstrom
jgrundst@nmu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://commons.nmu.edu/theses>



Part of the [Dance Commons](#), and the [Educational Leadership Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Grundstrom, Jill, "The Female Leadership Experience in Pre-Professional and Professional Ballet" (2020).
All NMU Master's Theses. 633.
<https://commons.nmu.edu/theses/633>

This Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Works at NMU Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in All NMU Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of NMU Commons. For more information, please contact kmcdonou@nmu.edu, bsarjean@nmu.edu.

THE FEMALE LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE IN PRE-PROFESSIONAL AND
PROFESSIONAL BALLET

By

Jill Grundstrom

THESIS

Submitted to
Northern Michigan University
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of

EDUCATION SPECIALIST

Office of Graduate Education and Research

April 2020

SIGNATURE APPROVAL FORM

The Female Leadership Experience in Pre-Professional and Professional Ballet

This thesis by Jill Grundstrom is recommended for approval by the student's Thesis Committee and Department Head in the Department of Education, Leadership, and Public Service and by the Dean of Graduate Education and Research.

Committee Chair: Dr. Bethney Bergh Date

First Reader: Dr. Joe Lubig Date

Second Reader (if required): Mr. Bill Digneit Date

Department Head: Dr. Joe Lubig Date

Dr. Lisa Schade Eckert Date
Dean of Graduate Education and Research

ABSTRACT

THE FEMALE LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE IN PRE-PROFESSIONAL AND
PROFESSIONAL BALLET

By

Jill Grundstrom

The purpose of this qualitative, narrative research study was to explore the experiences of current female leaders in pre-professional and professional ballet. These stories often remain untold, as leadership in ballet has been largely male-dominated. The study examined the stories of four female leaders in ballet, including their journey to leadership, leadership philosophy and protocol, and thoughts regarding the future of female leadership in ballet. This study collected data using in-person, phone, and email interviews. The collected data was analyzed and coded for themes and conclusions using deductive and inductive approaches.

From the data, four conclusions emerged. First, it was determined that a particular training was common among the participants and directly influenced their career development. Second, similar female leadership philosophies, qualities and traits were recognized, indicating that a successful leadership protocol could be identified from the data. Third, extensive leadership responsibilities were prevalent in each participant's story. Fourth, the significance of mentorship was acknowledged; the participants both having and being strong mentors.

Keywords: female leadership, ballet, female leadership qualities, leadership responsibilities, choreographer, dancer, artistic director, arts administration, entrepreneur, mentor

Copyright

Jill Elizabeth Grundstrom

2020

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to every bunhead who danced before she walked, and to the exceptional female leaders and mentors they have become.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my family and friends for their unwavering support and encouragement. To the Education Department at American Ballet Theatre, thank you for being such a massive part of my dance journey. To my professors in the School of Education, Leadership and Public Service and to my colleagues in the Department of Theatre and Dance at Northern Michigan University, thank you for your support and guidance. To my thesis committee—Dr. Bethney Bergh, Dr. Joe Lubig, and Mr. William Digneit, your encouragement and excitement for my research was inspirational and appreciated.

Most importantly, I would like to thank the amazing women who took time from their busy schedules to share their stories and philosophies, that they may inspire and guide future female leaders.

This thesis follows the format prescribed by the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA), Seventh Edition and the Educational Leadership Department.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| Chapter 1: Introduction | 1 |
| Research Problem | 1 |
| Research Purpose | 2 |
| Research Question | 2 |
| Theoretical Framework | 2 |
| Significance of Study | 3 |
| Definitions of Terms | 3 |
| Positionality Statement | 5 |
| Limitations | 7 |
| Summary | 8 |
| Chapter 2: Literature Review | 10 |
| History of Ballet Leadership | 11 |
| Leadership Culture | 13 |
| Current Culture of Ballet Leadership | 14 |
| Evolution of Leadership | 15 |
| Gender-based Leadership | 16 |
| Female Leadership Style | 18 |
| Female Leadership in Ballet | 20 |
| Summary | 24 |
| Chapter 3: Methodological Design | 26 |
| Research Design | 26 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Participant Selection Process | 27 |
| Data Collection | 28 |
| Data Analysis Procedures | 29 |
| Data Storage and Protection | 29 |
| Interview Questions | 30 |
| Summary | 31 |
| Chapter 4: Research Results | 33 |
| Participant Narratives | 33 |
| Cynthia Harvey | 33 |
| Current Position | 33 |
| Dance Training | 34 |
| Performance Career | 35 |
| Teaching and Leadership Career | 36 |
| Molly Schnyder | 38 |
| Current Position | 38 |
| Dance Training | 38 |
| Professional Career: West Coast..... | 39 |
| Professional Career: New York University..... | 40 |
| Professional Career: American Ballet Theatre | 40 |
| Rachel Hamrick | 42 |
| Current Position..... | 42 |
| Dance Training | 43 |
| Performance Career | 43 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Entrepreneurship and Education Career | 45 |
| Adrienne Canterna | 46 |
| Current Position | 46 |
| Dance Training | 47 |
| Performance Career | 49 |
| Production Career | 50 |
| Key Themes | 54 |
| Training and Career Development | 54 |
| Personal Mastery | 55 |
| Female Leadership | 57 |
| Evolution of Female Leadership in Ballet | 58 |
| Behaviors and Traits of Female Leaders | 60 |
| Benefits of Female Leadership | 62 |
| Encouragement of Female Leadership..... | 65 |
| Leadership Responsibilities | 65 |
| Organization of Daily Activities | 65 |
| Feedback | 68 |
| Barriers | 71 |
| Successes and Challenges | 73 |
| Favorite Aspects of the Job | 75 |
| Mentorship | 76 |
| Summary and Findings | 78 |
| Chapter 5: Overview, Conclusions, and Recommendations | 81 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Overview of the Study | 81 |
| Conclusions | 82 |
| Recommendations for Future Research | 83 |
| Summary | 84 |
| References | 85 |
| Appendix A: Email to Potential Participants | 89 |
| Appendix B: Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study | 90 |
| Appendix C: Thank You Email to Participants | 93 |
| Appendix D: IRB Approval | 94 |

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In the past few decades, an absence of female leadership in the dance industry, specifically in pre-professional and professional ballet, has been identified. As a female in this industry, I have seen and experienced this first hand. Frequently, local dance studios and schools are owned and managed by women, it is also frequent that the teachers in these studios and schools, as well as pre-professional training schools, are women. Beyond this point on the professional ballet spectrum, the number of female leaders is limited and those who have achieved that position have untold stories (DeFrank-Cole & Nicholson, 2016).

Research Problem

There is a need for more insight into female artistic leadership roles in professional and pre-professional ballet, as there is a lack of documentation on this subject. The research on female leadership is vast and includes foci on styles, qualities, and opportunities. The research acknowledges the progress forward in female leadership and the advantages it presents (Eagly, 2007). However, the research on female leadership in the performing arts, specifically ballet, is less prevalent. In ballet, dancers, most of whom are female, are taught discipline, commitment, listening skills, collaboration, benevolence, and work ethic, among many other things. This skill set coordinates with the qualities of a progressive, contemporary leader. Recent events in the entertainment and dance industries have highlighted gender inequities and demonstrated a need for a cultural shift in the patriarchal leadership of the past. There is a need to study and incorporate the aforementioned skills in current leadership to catalyze a cultural shift in

professional ballet companies and pre-professional ballet schools and document experiences of the few female leaders in this industry to begin to correlate best practices.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate and document the female leadership experience in pre-professional and professional ballet and to shed light upon the experiences, stories, styles, advantages, and disadvantages of current female leaders in the professional and pre-professional ballet world.

Research Question

The primary research question is: *What is the experience of being a female leader in professional and pre-professional ballet?*

Theoretical Framework

In determining a theoretical lens to be used to guide the narrative, I initially considered the possibility of a female or feminist leadership lens, as the focus is on female leadership. However, I found a lack of information supporting this as a viable option. Vetter (2010) claims that there are no feminist theories of leadership, and in fact, there is a lack of theoretical analysis of women as leaders. Instead, there are “feminist theories of power, autonomy, citizenship, representation, and ethics, which are related to but not simply synonymous with feminist leadership” (Vetter, 2010, p.3). While these theories are important, they are not related to the purpose of this study, which is the documentation of female leadership experiences in pre-professional and professional ballet. The completion of this research may lead to a connection with the aforementioned theories, or other leadership theories. However, that cannot be investigated until this current narrative research is completed. It is for this reason that I will not

focus a lens on this study and let the storytelling, and analysis of such, identify themes that may be further investigated with a theoretical lens in future research.

Significance of the Study

With the lack of experience, and subsequently, data, regarding female leadership in ballet, this study aimed to contribute to the collective database of what is known about leadership, female leadership, and leadership in ballet. A leader's influence on a dancer's career (whether amateur or professional) has a significant effect on not only the overall health of that dancer, but also how they relate to dance throughout their life. By demonstrating what successful and positive leadership looks like, it is hopeful that the face of leadership in the arts will continue to evolve for the better and that more females will feel empowered to pursue leadership roles.

Definitions of Terms

American Ballet Theatre Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School (JKO School): A pre-professional ballet training school in New York City that is affiliated with American Ballet Theatre. The JKO School began with just one level and 12 students and now includes multiples levels and over 400 students.

American Ballet Theatre/Ballet Theatre (ABT): America's National Ballet Company, as sanctioned by the US Government. Housed at 890 Broadway near Union Square in New York City, the company opened in 1939 and was directed by Lucia Chase and Richard Pleasant.

Ballet mistress: A woman who responsible to for training and coaching members of a ballet company in the company's repertoire.

Ballet ranking system: A way to classify dancers in a ballet company. The system is as follows: Corps de Ballet (body of the ballet) as the lowest rank, Soloist (middle rank), Principal Dancer

(the highest rank a ballet dancer can achieve). This system can vary from company to company with modifications to the identification of rank.

Bunhead: A nick-name for a ballerina.

Dance captain: A dancer responsible for knowing all dance choreography in a piece of choreography or a production. This person is also typically responsible for rehearsing the cast when the director or choreographer is not present.

Flexistretcher: A dance conditioning tool created by Rachel Hamrick that uses isometric stretching and strengthening to enhance strength and flexibility.

Hamrick Method: Created by Rachel Hamrick, Hamrick Method is a conditioning methodology designed to enhance the skills, including strength and flexibility, of dancers.

Make a Ballet: An ABT residency program in select New York City Public Schools in which students learn all aspects of creating a ballet including story development, music selection, costume design, funding, and marketing.

Mariinsky Ballet: The classical ballet company housed at The Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, Russia.

New York City Ballet (NYCB, City Ballet): A New York City-based ballet company housed on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. The company was founded by George Balanchine and Lincoln Kirstein in 1948.

Pas de deux: A dance for two people. In classical ballet, this is usually a male and a female.

Prix de Lausanne: An elite, international amateur ballet competition in Lausanne, Switzerland.

School of American Ballet (SAB): A pre-professional training school that acts as the feeder school to New York City Ballet.

Universal Ballet: A professional, classical ballet company in Seoul, Korea founded in 1984.

USA International Ballet Competition (USA IBC): An elite international ballet competition in Jackson, Mississippi.

Variation: A solo dance in a ballet. This can be performed on its own, or as part of a grand pas de deux.

Youth American Grand Prix (YAGP): An elite international ballet competition. There are semi-final competitions hosted all over the world, with finals taking place in New York City.

Positionality Statement

The nature of this study was exploratory in design. The stories collected from the participants were examined for accuracy, as is typical of a narrative study. The researcher would like to acknowledge her prior and institutional knowledge, assumptions, and biases, as they could affect the research findings and the synthesis of such data. This section will recognize the researcher's position in relation to the subject of female leadership in ballet.

I began my dance education at the age of three at a local dance studio with a female ballet teacher, much like my participants. I grew up respecting the values and behaviors that dance instilled in me. At a young age, I knew how to manage my schedule, balance schoolwork with dance classes, and balance school and dance with my social time; I understood the importance of taking direction and accepting criticism, as well as the gratification of performing to my teacher's standards. I was even given opportunities to assistant teach, teach, and choreograph. It

was this drive, dedication, and access to opportunities that drove me to further study dance at New York University and American Ballet Theatre (ABT).

My position at ABT, which is sanctioned as America's National Ballet Company, began as an internship and quickly turned into a full-time position in the Department of Education. It was in this capacity that I learned about the upper echelon of ballet. I was introduced to Ms. Lucia Chase, the co-founder of ABT. During the research process for a Guggenheim *Work & Process* dedicated to Ms. Chase, I was made aware of her amazing story and impact on American ballet. A widow with two children, it was unusual for a female to be in such a leadership role in the 1940s, but Lucia defied many odds in that respect. Ms. Chase was the benefactor for Ballet Theatre, as it was then named. She was also known for her ability to organize and manage significant amounts of material—whether that be tour, rehearsal, or family schedules or choreographers' exorbitant requests, making her an extremely valuable asset (Ewing, 2009). Beyond running Ballet Theatre, Lucia was also a dancer in the company. It was during this experience researching her life that my eyes were opened to the experiences of female leaders in ballet.

It was at ABT that I found two of my current research participants, Molly Schnyder and Cynthia Harvey. I remember realizing that the company employment ratio was female-dominant, which is expected in the world of ballet; however, the two positions that weren't held by women were Artistic Director or Choreographer. I began to wonder about the possibilities for females seeking such roles in any capacity.

After my time at ABT, I returned home to Marquette, MI to teach dance at Northern Michigan University (NMU). At the time, NMU did not have a dance program, which allowed me to use my NYU degree and ABT leadership skills to create a program forged with sound

training and a clever curriculum. I still teach in and direct the program, as well as choreograph multiple theatre and dance performances yearly, which I feel is a strong accomplishment as a female. My position at NMU has allowed me to continue my training through professional development, including work with Rachel Hamrick, creator of the Flexistretcher and Hamrick Method. It was this connection that re-ignited my interest in female leadership in ballet. Not only was Rachel a former dancer, but she was also an entrepreneur and the creator of a conditioning curriculum.

While the leadership experiences of the females acknowledged above are identified as having been successful, it must be recognized that sacrifices were made to achieve such success. However, I also believe that women are resilient, especially ballet dancers in their persistent drive to perfection. It is through these experiences that I have developed my beliefs on the advantages (and shortcomings) and successes of female leadership. My personal experiences, knowledge, and connections have shaped my perspective on this subject.

Limitations

Similar to most studies, this study was also laden with limitations. This study used in-person, phone, and email interviews to collect narrative data from four female leaders in pre-professional and professional ballet during February and March 2020. This period coincided with the onset of COVID-19, an extremely transmittable novel virus, which made collecting data difficult. Initially, there were to have been five to seven participants in the study. However, many of the possible participants that the researcher contacted were unavailable due to unexpected circumstances connected to the virus.

As participants were fewer than anticipated, there was a location limitation. Due to personal connections that the researcher maintains, two of the participants interviewed were from ABT. This wouldn't have been an issue had more participants been interviewed, however, with the limited number of interviews, 50% of the scope of the study was focused on one company. It would have been ideal to have at least one participant from the neighboring company, New York City Ballet. This factor limits the exposure to multiple company cultures and leadership philosophies and behaviors.

Another limitation was the lack of female subjects in leadership roles in ballet. Since there are so few females in leadership roles currently, the population from which to draw on was very limited.

The final limitation was that of time. This thesis needed to be submitted to meet a graduation timeline. The researcher's time in New York to conduct in-person interviews was limited to five days, and the full timeline of the study was limited to five weeks. If the period to conduct research had been longer, it is possible that more participants could have been secured.

Summary

The purpose of this research study is to shed light on the experiences of female leaders in pre-professional and professional ballet; a world dominated by females, but led by males. While this ratio is slowly shifting, the stories and experiences of those females who have achieved leadership roles are untold and unexamined. The research conducted aims to provide examples of successful female leaders in ballet in the hope that future leaders are inspired by their journeys. The primary research question was: *What is the experience of being a female leader in professional and pre-professional ballet?*

This was a qualitative, narrative study, as determined by the nature of the research question. This methodology experienced limitations, as most studies do. The researcher disclosed a significant background in ballet and leadership, leading to a potential bias in reporting findings.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In the world of professional and pre-professional ballet, female leadership has been relatively limited, despite ballet being a predominately female art form. The ratio of male to female dancers is grossly unbalanced. According to one study of students surveyed at the American Dance Festival, of 272 students, only 21% were men (Van Dyke, 1996). Even in 2000 at The School of American Ballet in New York City (feeder school to New York City Ballet), of 416 students, only 107 were male (Klapper, 2017). However, in an industry dominated by women, traditionally few of the women rise to leadership roles and those that do have undocumented stories and experiences.

In researching female leadership styles, it is suggested that as leaders, women are more likely to focus on relationships with others, teaching and learning, and building a community (Sergiovanni, 2013). These are the qualities that seemingly coincide with a nurturing, artistic environment where dancers can grow and find success, yet women have traditionally not been in leadership roles at the executive or artistic levels in the dance industry. One possibility for this is that,

Women in ballet are nothing if not feminine in their movements and risk a great deal if they break with the historic views of this behavior. . . Put another way, women have difficulty being seen as competent leaders while also being perceived as appropriately nurturing or feminine. Specifically, in ballet, could it be that the ethereal dancers are deemed ‘not aggressive enough’ to lead? (DeFrank-Cole & Nicholson, 2016)

In examining the literature, there are few studies specifically documenting the female leadership experience in professional and pre-professional ballet. Those that do exist support the identification of unequal opportunities for women in areas ranging from artistic direction to choreography, but do not tell the stories of the women who are breaking through the glass ceiling, riding the glass escalator to the top, or perched on the glass cliff. The existing literature that was explored was focused on the history of ballet leadership, the evolution of male and female leadership, and acknowledgment of the barriers to and lack of female leaders in ballet, despite it being a field largely populated by women, demonstrating a gap in the literature documenting the female leadership experience.

Presently, there appears to be a shift happening in which the number of female leaders in this industry is rising to match that of males in the upper echelon of ballet. It is time to investigate this change and examine the experiences that are occurring because of it.

History of Ballet Leadership

In reflecting on the history of ballet and the roles that women have traditionally assumed, it has been said that women frequently serve as founding directors, and when the company becomes institutionalized and deemed culturally important, men are often placed in charge; this was the case for ballet from the beginning (Meglin & Brooks, 2012). Brought to the French courts from Italy by Catherine de Medici when she married King Henry II of France, the art of ballet was used to promote etiquette and politics (Homans, 2010). Furthered by King Louis XIV, a royal dance academy was established, controlling access to the art. Dancers and dancing masters at this time were mostly men (the technique of working in external rotation of the legs was developed by King Louis XIV himself) and they developed a guild (similar to a union) in which one had to be accepted to join the academy. At this time, when ballet transitioned from the

court to the theatre, the hierarchical structure of a ballet company was developed. At the lowest level is the corps de ballet, the body of the ballet. This level consists mostly of women and in most cases, they are to move synchronously as one, yet they are fiercely competitive with each other vying for advancement in rank to soloist or principal dancer. Control remained with one male leader who “set wages, assigned roles, and could fire the dancers” (DeFrank-Cole & Nicholson, 2016, p. 75). Most notable leadership figures in ballet up until the 1940s were male: Pierre Beauchamps, who codified the five positions of the feet; Jean Georges Noverre, ballet master at Paris Opéra and author of *Lettres sur La Danse et sur Les Ballets*, which offered four ideologies on the structure of ballet (which is still followed in many cases); Carlo Blasis, who wrote *The Elementary Treatise Upon the Theory and Practice of the Art of Dancing* (1820) and *The Code of Terpsichore* (1828) for codifying ballet technique (Homans, 2010); August Bournonville, choreographer for the Royal Danish Ballet; Enrico Cecchetti, master teacher of Cecchetti (Italian) school of ballet; Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov, choreographers of ballets such as *The Nutcracker*, *Swan Lake*, and *The Sleeping Beauty*, among many others; Sergei Diaghilev, found of Ballets Russes; Michale Fokine, choreographer for Ballets Russes; Vaslav Nijinsky, choreographer and dancer for Ballets Russes; this is the shortlist.

Cue George Balanchine’s arrival in the United States from Europe in 1933. After watching his homeland, Imperial Russia, collapse, he brought a modernistic view of ballet to America and ran New York City Ballet (NYCB) like a miniature Imperial court where he was the tsar (DeFrank-Cole & Nicholson, 2016). Balanchine is said to have demonstrated the Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX) in his approach to leadership. This leadership theory “conceptualizes leadership as a process that is centered on the interactions between leaders and followers”, rather than just the actions or behaviors of the leader (Northhouse, 2013. P. 161).

LMX theory challenges the assumption that leaders treat all followers the same way. This means that within an organization, followers become members of the in-group or out-group based on how well they work with the leader, and they are treated differently because of such identification (Northouse, 2013). In this particular instance, Balanchine segregated his dancers into an ‘in-group’ and an ‘out-group’ based on how well he worked with them (DeFrank-Cole & Nicholson, 2016). Referencing the Five Bases of Power as identified by French and Raven (1959), Balanchine held “reward power” with the ability to promote dancers to higher ranks and better roles (the in-group) and “coercive power” with the ability to punish or manipulate dancers by giving lesser roles or firing them (the out-group) (DeFrank-Cole & Nicholson, 2016, p. 76).

Mr. B (as he was called) changed the face of American ballet through NYCB and the School of American Ballet (SAB- the feeder pre-professional ballet training school to NYCB). He changed the way ballerinas should look, move, and act. His influence is still felt, and not just at NYCB, but the world over, due to the power of SAB and NYCB.

Leadership Culture

The school culture is the complex pattern of norms, attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, values, ceremonies, traditions, and myths that are deeply ingrained in the very core of the organization . . . the historically transmitted pattern of meaning that wields astonishing power in shaping what people think and how they act. (Barth, 2013, p. 198)

The awareness of an organization’s culture is critical to understanding the organization and how things are done; the shaping of an organization’s culture is imperative to the success and longevity of the culture (Barth, 2013). To change a culture, a leader must “bring in more desirable qualities to replace the existing unhealthy elements of the culture” (Barth, 2013, p. 199). The desirable leadership qualities required for the positive creation of culture include the

ability of the leader to model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). By successfully engaging in these practices, a leader can develop a culture that makes participants feel strong, capable, and committed; a culture that fosters collaboration and builds trust (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

Current Culture of Ballet Leadership

The culture of leadership in professional and pre-professional ballet has recently found itself under attack. With a lack of female leadership and an abundance of controlling male leadership, there have been events that portray the culture of ballet with a negative connotation. The retirement of Peter Martins, former Director of New York City Ballet (NYCB), due to (uncorroborated) misconduct allegations and physical violence complaints and the firing male ballet dancers at NYCB for sharing nude photos of female dancers do not represent a healthy company or school (School of American Ballet) culture (Pogrebin, 2018; Cooper & Pogrebin, 2018). This is just the tip of the iceberg however, there are many instances in which dancers have witnessed the effects of unhealthy leadership on their career and the careers of others (Pogrebin, 2017). In an article in the New York Times, it was stated that:

Ballet culture has to change, and if there's one upside to all the misery at City Ballet, it's just that: It's changing. It has to. It's 2018, yet an infantilism persists in this art form, in which women in their 30s are referred to as girls, and power resides solely in the hands of an artistic director, typically a man. (Kourlas & Burke, 2018)

Evolution of Leadership

To truly understand what is being sought from leadership, it is necessary to first define leadership.

Leadership is a long-term, value-based process that encourages leaders and implementers to initiate actions that contribute to achieving a common purpose, and to willingly make significant contributions in meeting mutually agreed to goals. (Vecchiotti, 2011, p. 6)

Furthermore, Eagly (2007) states that good leadership is contingent upon context – elements such as societal values, the culture of the organization, the nature of the immediate task – and as future-oriented and fostering of followers' commitment and ability to contribute creatively.

As noted above, leadership has to evolve as a practice to exist in any given culture or society. Vecchiotti uses the lens of a practitioner to communicate his reflection on the evolution of leadership. Vecchiotti (2018) suggests that the definition of leadership is evolving from a male behavior bias to something that encompasses much more. Leadership is now also defined using such behaviors as collaboration and teamwork, work-life balance, and continuous learning and feedback (Vecchiotti, 2018, p. 40). Vecchiotti provided a short review of leadership in the early 19th century, identifying that it (leadership) was usually framed with adult male qualities such as inquisitiveness, strong instincts, control, and ability to adapt to change. He also suggests that many movements, events, and circumstances have shaped leadership behaviors from the 1950s until now, including the characteristics of women leaders and their contributions to success beginning in the 1960s and 70s. Women have changed the practices of leadership by focusing on employees and their development and the long term and the short term, by being willing to admit when they do not know an answer, by being more collaborative than men, and by expressing their leadership style as one that is nurturing and evolving to achieve results (Vecchiotti, 2018).

Vecchiotti identifies that leadership as a people process began with women. Leaders and implementers (i.e. followers) must be willing to develop and contribute to the identification and achievement of mutually agreed-upon goals. There must be trust for the relationship between the two entities to function successfully. While this process of leadership may be ever-evolving as society continues to evolve, it appears that leadership as a process has opened communication between parties and engaged more implementers to contribute to success, even as shift continues to happen. In this new space, implementers will shape the behaviors of their leaders, as the leaders have to adapt to the needs of their implementers. It is suggested that servant and transformational leadership styles will be factors that catalyze the success of leaders in the current and future climates.

Gender-based Leadership

The question of gender influencing leadership has been researched for years; even as far back as 1975 when J. Brad Chapman completed a study comparing the male and female leadership styles, including the examination of leadership style and leadership behavior. He defined *leadership style* as “the underlying need structure of the leader which motivates his behavior in various leadership situations and infers the consistency of goals or needs over different situations” and *leadership behavior* as “what a leader does: the specific acts in which a leader engages during the course of directing and coordinating task oriented activities” (Chapman, 1975, p. 647). It was determined that, while men and women leaders engage in the same or similar styles of leadership, their leadership behaviors may differ. He also identified that both males and females may be conditioned by society and culture to adopt particular behaviors with men being more authoritative and women being more passive (Chapman, 1975).

Shakeshaft, Nowell, and Perry (2000) reference a study from E. Garfinkle in 1988 demonstrating

that while men and women do have similar styles of leadership, they frequently have different focuses. This is initially showcased in their differing definitions of *trust*; men believe that trust is about the ability to disclose honest information safely, while women define trust as an expectation that they uphold in another individual or group that can be relied upon (Shakeshaft, Nowell, & Perry, 2000). This implies that men value the keeping of secrets, of not discussing outside of the group, while women believe that sharing and discussing actions and feelings is inevitable, and even helpful. Women found people untrustworthy if they didn't do something they said they were going to do, while men felt that was a time management issue and not a trust issue (Shakeshaft, Nowell, & Perry, 2000). Furthermore, in the Garfinkle study referenced by Shakeshaft, et. al (2000), it was found when examining evaluations of female teachers, male and female principals focused on vastly different elements: women were likely to focus more on teaching and learning (which encompasses a great deal of material) while men simply focused on organizational structure and avoiding conflict.

In Alice Eagly's (2007) article "Female Leadership Advantage and Disadvantage: Resolving the Contradictions" she identifies that while women are applauded and recognized for their combination of skills that garner favorable leadership styles and elevated effectiveness, they are often not offered the opportunity to assume a leadership role. Eagly asks the question, "How can women enjoy a leadership advantage but still suffer from disadvantage?" (2007, p.1). She determines how good leadership is defined and re-affirms that leadership is frequently defined in masculine terms. The reiteration of leadership styles versus behaviors is also present. Eagly (2017) states that researchers have responded to the evolution of leadership by defining good leadership as future-oriented and fostering creative collaboration within the organization. Even as far back as 1978 (around the time of Chapman's study), the term *transformational leadership*,

which “involves establishing oneself as a role model by gaining followers’ trust and confidence”, was in development (Eagly, 2007, p. 2). A transformational leader mentors and empowers their followers and encourages them to reach their potential, therefore positively affecting their organization (Eagly, 2017). *Transactional leadership* involves clarifying responsibilities, rewarding objectives that are met, and helping followers correct and re-assess when upon failure (Eagly, 2017). Eagly determined through research that yes, transformational and transactional leadership are effective styles, though transformational may be slightly more effective, and that female leaders were more transformational and transactional than male leaders. This research implies that leadership style is linked to leadership effectiveness and the data supports this. It was found that companies with larger percentages of women in their top management groups or on boards of directors had better financial performance (Eagly, 2017). It is even stated that women overall are obtaining more education than men to achieve leadership positions. So why do women face obstacles that men do not?

Female Leadership Style

At its base level, the female style of leadership focuses on empowerment, relationships, teaching and learning, and community building (Sergiovanni, 2013). When synthesized, the backbone of these traits is trust. Trust is most noticed in its absence, as without trust, the effectiveness and progress of a leader are impeded (Tschannen-Moran, 2013). Female leadership style focuses on building trust so that those being led are offered the power *to*, rather than the leader having power *over* them (Sergiovanni, 2013). A dancer who cannot trust their leader, whether that be director, choreographer, or teacher is less likely to perform at a top-level. “Human learning is most profound, most transformative, and most enduring when two conditions are present: when we take risks and when a safety strap or belaying line supports us when we

fall, so that we don't get killed" (Barth, 2013). When participants are engaged in a trusting relationship with their leader, they are more willing to take risks and participate in collaborative endeavors, leading to higher-level learning, performing, and innovation. These are important factors when considering ballet school or company culture.

As defined by Tschannen-Moran (2013), there are five functions of instructional leadership: visioning, modeling, coaching, managing, and mediating. Each of these connects directly to the strengths of female leadership. In creating shared-vision, leaders must build trust by being open, honest, and forth-coming with plans. Participants need to understand where they are going and why they are working to achieve trust and henceforth elevated success. A positive relationship of communication must be established between the leader and the participant. Successful leaders must also "walk the talk" (Tschannen-Moran, 2013, p. 44). They must demonstrate the qualities they are asking of their participants, which includes continuity between actions and words. In dance, demonstration of technique or concepts is necessary, but it should never be flaunted to deflate a participant's ego. It is said that skillful leaders lead quietly, by being soft on people and hard on projects (Tschannen-Moran, 2013). Dancers are fragile; they constantly put themselves on display for judgment and feedback. A dancer will respond more positively to a leader who listens, holds them accountable, manages their progress and possibilities, and can be honest, but caring.

The value of female leadership style in pre-professional and professional ballet has yet to be connected to hard data in a significant way. Female leadership experience in the upper echelon of this realm has been historically sparse but is beginning to grow.

Female Leadership in Ballet

George Balanchine is quoted as saying “ballet is woman”, yet there has been much research on the unequal leadership opportunities afforded to women in ballet. In an article by Lisa DeFrank-Cole and Renee Nicholson (2016), they identify that women dominate the art form performance-wise, yet few are awarded prominent positions in leadership. In another study, Colette Kelly states that many “fail to acknowledge structural and systemic inequalities that promote men in ballet at the expense of their female peers” (2017, p. 1). The numbers indicate that professional ballet in the United States is dominated by females, however, men are preferentially awarded more opportunities to choreograph. It’s been 14 years since a female was commissioned to create a main-stage ballet at the Royal Opera House (Jennings, 2013). The Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) presented a fall program in 2017 with 13 pieces of choreography, only three were choreographed by women (Taragano, n.d.). In the Joyce Theatre’s 2017 spring-summer season only one-third of the works showcased were choreographed by women (Taragano, n.d.). In 2016, NYCB performed 58 ballets, none were choreographed by a woman (Cooper, 2016). Kelly’s research shows that “62% of professional ballet dancers in the nine largest American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA) signatory companies are women, yet men comprise 85% of the choreographers who create original work for these companies” (2017, p.2). This is a seemingly perfect example of the glass escalator theory. The glass escalator theory “describes the differences in upward advancement between men and women in the workplace, particularly those workplaces that are female-dominated” (McCallister, n.d.). Kelly lists four factors that must be present for this phenomenon to fit the glass escalator theory. First, it must be a predominately female profession (which was proven in the statistics above). Second, there must be inequalities within the same profession (choreography versus performance). Third, it

must be proven that “men are preferentially hired and promoted as ballet choreographers” (Kelly, 2017, p. 3). Finally, “the glass escalator theory states that preferential promotion results from negative culture stereotypes keeping men out of female professions” (Kelly, 2017, p. 3). Kelly can identify each of the factors in her research, indicating that the glass escalator theory applies to professional ballet.

To prove each of these points, Kelly (2017) researched Justin Peck and Benjamin Millepied, both professional ballet dancers turned world-renowned choreographers and interviewed three female choreographers, Gabrielle Lamb, Emery LeCrone, and Helen Pickett, all of whom were also professional performers and now choreographers. At first glance, there is no issue; the women have become professional choreographers. The glaring difference is that while Peck and Millepied have been fortunate enough to take on roles such as resident choreographers or choreographers for commissioned works for major companies, none of the females have had this same ease of experience. The women, who have engaged in various choreographic projects, not only have to be the choreographer, but also the administrator. This means hiring dancers, finding rehearsal space, balancing schedules, finding performance spaces, etc. The experiences are on opposite ends of the spectrum of support and grandeur. Rachel Moore, former professional dancer, Executive Director and CEO for ABT and current President and CEO for the Los Angeles Music Center, states that,

The men are able to get the more stable, more solid jobs. For a variety of reasons. I think that it’s still a man’s world and for many places, the male candidate is going to get chosen over the female candidate. Because boards [of directors] are more comfortable with that, there’s a history there. They’re seen as more credible on some level. I think that’s all still true. (Basco, 2015)

Similarly, there is a lack of research or publicity given to female-centric ballet. After many searches on the parts of Meglin and Brooks (2012), it was discovered that few articles discuss female artistic directors in dance, while several discuss “male directors strengthening the ensemble work of the women in the corps de ballet” (p. 1). They further acknowledge articles in *Dance Magazine* and *Dance Teacher Now* that identify female leaders in dance, but of these, only one is an upper-level company with a female leader. At the time of this article, of six top-tier companies in the USA, only one executive position was held by a woman (and she is an executive director, not artistic, at ABT) (Meglin & Brooks, 2012). In surveying the New York Times archives for articles on “women choreographers” and “ballet”, there are only 23 articles, indicating a lack of female presence. In 1994 there was an interview with three women choreographers featured in NYCB’s Diamond Project at the New York State Theatre, which sounded promising, except that the male choreographers outnumbered the females three to one.

DeFrank-Cole and Nicholson did explore one story of female leadership in the upper echelon of ballet: that of Lourdes Lopez, former professional ballerina and current Artistic Director of Miami City Ballet. Ms. Lopez was handed a company in distress. Former director Edward Villella had many troubles with the Company and the Board and left his position, after having been the one to help establish the company. Lopez had been running a small, experimental company in New York and had a strong career as a performer before her post in Miami. This was identified as a *glass cliff* scenario, a term coined in the early 2000s “referring to leadership positions that are perilous for women” (DeFrank-Cole & Nicholson, 2016, p. 82). It seems that the Board was relying on Lopez’s female leadership qualities to turn the Company around. They chose wisely. Lopez demonstrates many effective leadership behaviors in that she listens to her dancers and takes their input, brings a ‘positive vibe’ into the room, and encourages

choreographic creativity in her dancers. She has opened the lines of communication. She has been identified by her dancers as being ‘supportive, but tough’ and has brought the Latin culture of the company’s hometown into consideration when planning performance programs. She has a vision for the Company, is an ally to the dancers, connects to her community and culture, demonstrates stewardship, and empowers those around her (DeFrank-Cole & Nicholson, 2016). She demonstrates transformational leadership, as formerly defined by Alice Eagly in this review.

It is stated in the study by Kelly (2016) that the under-representation of men in female-dominated professions, such as ballet, could be part of the reason men are given preferential treatment and more opportunities. By moving men into these authoritative positions (i.e. choreographer or artistic director), it may be possible for the company to compensate for the negative societal pressure of being in a female-dominated industry or profession. Another reason for the preferential awarding of these positions to men may also be that for females, there are more demands on them as professional performers, therefore they do not have the time or energy to focus on creativity while they are working towards promotion in the company. Kelly identifies this as an institutional structure issue stemming from the competition to achieve an advanced rank (i.e. soloist or principal dancer); women rarely choose to be a choreographer over the possibility of promotion (i.e. discontinuing their career). Finally, most women dance in the corps de ballet before being promoted to soloist or principal dancer. The corps de ballet requires uniformity and does not challenge creativity, therefore derailing the dancer’s creative impulses. Anna Laekerson of the Royal Danish Ballet stated that “It was in the air that you had to be a good girl, and being a good girl meant performing not creating” (Meglin and Brooks, 2012, p. 3). Alastair Macaulay, dance critic for the New York Times, wonders if ballet is ready for such a shake-up of change in the addition of female leadership, being that many old hierarchies and

codes (such as women performing on pointe and men being strong partners) are still in place (Meglin & Brooks, 2012). He also pondered whether new choreographers and artistic directors would question or change these historical and aristocratic roles.

Summary

There is significant general research on leadership culture, style, and behavior; there is even significant research on gender-based leadership. Female leadership opportunities have been sparse in the past, but are growing as society shifts. This fact alone has allowed the aforementioned gender-based research to exist. The characteristics that comprise a successful leader are known, the stereotypical differences between male and female leaders and the advantages and disadvantages of both are also known. What is missing, however, is the narrative surrounding the female leadership experience. There is not much written on the journey of females to their leadership positions. What was their path to leadership? What do they feel are the qualities/behaviors required to lead? What can we learn from their experiences that might inform future preparation?

Dating back to King Louis XIV, the majority of ballet leadership has been male; male ballet masters, male choreographers, male directors. There have been a few females who have risen to leadership roles, but not far beyond the traditional ballet studio class or ballet mistress. Whether the position is director, owner, or choreographer, the female leadership opportunities in the upper echelon of ballet have been limited. This could be due to the sheer number of female dancers, the competition among female dancers, and/or the technical career demands of female dancers preventing more of them from achieving leadership positions. As society continues to evolve, more possibilities are presenting themselves. It may be true that ballet is ready for more

female leaders, but this remains unknown until those who have achieved leadership positions tell their stories.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

The purpose of this research was to examine the female leadership experience in pre-professional and professional ballet. This study examined the stories of four women currently in leadership positions in the ballet world. Through in-person, phone, and email interviews, data was collected. From the data, the following themes emerged: training and career development, female leadership, leadership responsibilities, and mentorship. The purpose of this chapter is to detail the process undertaken in this research study.

The first section will discuss the research design and rationale for selecting a qualitative, specifically narrative, study. The second section will detail the process of participant selection. The following sections will address data collection, the process of analyzing collected data, storage and protection of data, and questions posed during the interview process.

Research Design

The chosen methodology for this study was qualitative, narrative design. “A narrative typically focuses on studying a single person, gathering data through the collection of stories, reporting individual experiences, and discussing the meaning of those experiences for the individual” (Creswell, 2012, p. 502). The purpose of a narrative study is to tell the stories of individuals who are willing to share their stories, offering practical and specific insights (Creswell, 2012). In this study, the researcher wished to gain insight into the female leadership experience in professional and pre-professional ballet through interviewing women who have ascended to the position of leader. The narrative approach allowed for the exploration of the

experiences of individuals through their life histories and personal experiences. Before engaging in any selection or collection, the researcher obtained permission to conduct this study through the Internal Review Board (IRB) and Northern Michigan University (NMU).

Participant Selection Process

In conducting a qualitative study, there are five interrelated steps that comprise the process (Creswell, 2012). The first of these steps is identifying participants. The population being studied in this research was female leaders in pre-professional and professional ballet. After the identification of the population, the researcher employed a purposive, homogenous sampling approach, meaning that participants were identified based on the premise that they could best help the researcher understand the intended central phenomenon and belong to a subgroup with defining characteristics (Creswell, 2012). In this instance, the subgroup would be the specification of females in various leadership roles in ballet including artistic direction, administration, entrepreneurship, production, and choreography.

The second step in the processes of conducting qualitative research is gaining access to the site, and subsequently, the participants. The researcher contacted nine potential participants through email that fit the sampling criteria of females in leadership roles in ballet. Of the potential participants contacted, the researcher knew three of the women personally. The remaining five candidates were acquaintances of the aforementioned three. Of those eight, four responded that they were available and willing to participate in the study, spanning leadership positions in arts administration, entrepreneurship, artistic direction, and production and choreography. At this point, the researcher emailed the participants an informed consent document to ensure that the participants understood the full scope and purpose of the study. All participants signed and returned the document.

Data Collection

The collection of data is the third step in the qualitative research process. This includes the process of determining what types of data best address the research question. The researcher determined that conducting interviews would be the best protocol for this particular research question. This was also in alignment with the definition and best practices of a narrative study, which includes collecting personal stories and experiences. In this study, 14 open-end interview questions were devised for one-on-one interviews that would inspire conversations spanning participants' current position, leadership behaviors and philosophies, personal reflections on female leadership in ballet, and challenges they face. Upon acceptance into the study, the participants were emailed four pre-interview questions to be returned to the researcher prior to the interview, as well as the remaining 10 interview questions. As will be discussed later in the study, the participants all maintain extremely busy work and personal schedules. Therefore, the pre-interview questions were not completed before the interviews. Due to time limitations, a pilot interview was not completed. The researcher contacted each participant to schedule a date and time to complete the 40-60 minute interview. Three of the four interviews were conducted in-person; two at the participants' workplace of ABT and one at a coffee shop on the Upper East Side of New York City. The fourth interview was conducted over the phone, as the participant had just returned home to Maryland from a performance tour with her company in France (which was cut short due to COVID-19). Prior to each interview beginning, the researcher reviewed the participant's informed consent document to ensure that the participant would allow the interview to be audio recorded and to confirm that the participant approved having her identity revealed. All interviews were recorded on the researcher's personal iPhone and transcribed by a professional service.

Member checking is defined as the process in which the researcher asks the participants involved in the study to check the accuracy of the account (Creswell, 2012). In this study, the completed interview transcripts were member checked via email communication with the participants for accuracy of information and presentation. Minor edits were made to the transcriptions, leading the researcher to step four in the research process—analyzing the collected data.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data analyzed was derived entirely from the interview transcriptions. In examining the data, the researcher sought out themes, connection points, and categories that ran through the interviews. The combined deductive and inductive analysis approach, along with perspectives held by the researcher allowed for the identifying of inferential themes that might lie below the narrative.

Creswell (2012) stated that a good narrative study not only reports the stories and experiences of an individual but also situates them within various contexts to derive themes to be reported. The researcher began analyzing each interview by putting the journey of the participant into chronological order, allowing for commonalities across experiences to be determined. The researcher then began to investigate the participants' responses for categories and themes. Cross-cases analysis was used to code data. All coding was done by the researcher. The four themes to emerge from the data were training and career development, female leadership, leadership responsibilities, and mentorship.

Data Storage and Protection

All data collected is stored in digital format on the researcher's password-protected computers and iPhone. The researcher used a professional transcription service to transcribe the

interviews into a Microsoft Word document format. All signed consent forms have been scanned and saved digitally on the researcher's laptop as PDF files. All files, including data and consent forms, are backed up on a password protected cloud program, Microsoft OneDrive. All data will be kept for seven years.

Interview Questions

The interview questions were designed to elicit responses to the main research question:

What is the experience of female leaders in pre-professional and professional ballet?

Pre-Interview Questions (sent to participants via email to be completed in advance):

- What is your current leadership position?
- What has your journey been to achieve your current position?
- What do you believe the benefits are of having female leaders in pre-professional and professional ballet?
- What leadership styles/traits/behaviors do you find most effective as a leader in pre-professional and professional ballet?

Interview Questions (asked in the interview):

- Do you have any mentors who have influenced your practice of leadership?
- How do you approach your day to day activities/assignments/duties in your leadership position?
- What do you believe are your successes in leadership?
- What do you believe are your challenges in leadership?
- What is your favorite part of your job?
- As a female leader, do you feel obligated to embody a certain set of behaviors in order to be successful?

- Have you experienced any barriers to reaching your current position?
- How do you feel the female leadership experience in this industry has evolved?
- How can we encourage women to pursue leadership roles in pre-professional and professional ballet? Did you have any mentors who influenced you?

Summary

This section of the thesis was devoted to addressing the researcher's methodology, including research design, participant selection process, data collection, analysis of data, storage of data, and interview protocol. The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of female leaders in pre-professional and professional ballet, with a guiding question that directly reflected that idea.

The research sampling included four women who are all current leaders in the world of ballet, three residing in New York City, one with a home-base in Maryland, representing the full gamut of female leadership opportunities in ballet. Each participant was confirmed and scheduled for their interview via email communication. An informed consent document was also emailed to each participant in advance of the interview to ensure that the full scope and purpose of the study was understood.

Data collection was completed through one-on-one interviews. A selection of 14 questions was presented to the participants in advance of the interview to allow time for processing and preparing responses. All interviews were audio-recorded for accuracy and transcribed by a professional service. Final transcripts were emailed out to all interview participants to be reviewed for accuracy. Upon completing the minor edits to the transcripts, all data was hand-coded for commonalities and themes. From the data, four themes were identified: commonalities in training, female leadership, leadership responsibilities, and mentorship.

The data collected is stored on the researcher's password-protected laptops and iPhone, as well as on a storage cloud program that is also password protected.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH RESULTS

In this study, four women shared the experiences, philosophies, successes, and challenges of their leadership role in pre-professional and professional ballet. The stories told during the interview process presented personal experiences as perceived by the participant. While each interview was unique, many recurring themes developed across the narratives.

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the women who participated in the study and present the findings related to the research question: *What is the experience of female leaders in pre-professional and professional ballet?* The first section will familiarize the reader with each of the four female participants. The following sections will present the key themes discovered from the interview process, as well as the overall research findings.

Participant Narratives

This section will introduce the reader to each of the study participants including their background in dance training and journey to their current leadership position.

Cynthia Harvey

Current Position

Ms. Cynthia Harvey is presently the Artistic Director of the American Ballet Theater Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School (ABT JKO School), as well as the overseer of the William J. Gillespie School at Segerstrom Center for the Arts in Orange County, CA. She artistically directs the ABT National Training Curriculum (NTC) and also teaches for ABT's JKO School and Studio Company.

Dance Training

Despite a wildly successful international performance and teaching career, Cynthia Harvey's training background is much like many other dancers. Ms. Harvey grew up in California and began her dance training with her sister in tap, acrobatics, and baton twirling classes when she was four or five. The Harvey family couldn't afford to continue to keep their daughters in dance classes, so they were forced to withdraw. Cynthia shared a memory from her early training that speaks volumes about her personality. When the girls were able to return to dance class, the local teacher offered ballet class, and Cynthia's sister could reach the ballet barre, but she couldn't; she was too tiny. Of course, this made Cynthia want to do it even more. She states, "Because a challenge has always been like my bull to a red cape. My go. Even at that early age, I somehow took to a challenge" (C. Harvey, personal communication, March 6, 2020). Following the acceptance of this challenge, Cynthia enrolled in a park-and-recreation-type summer course at the age of eight years old. After her mom saw her trying to emulate Margot Fonteyn on the television, she decided (along with the teacher's recommendation) that Cynthia needed real ballet lessons. Cynthia began training with Christine Walton in a small town north of San Francisco, Novato, CA. Christine's husband did wood-work; he owned a saw shop and he built a studio off of the garage. This was where Cynthia trained, along with various summer courses in New York: City Ballet's SAB, San Francisco Ballet Summer School and the National Ballet of Canada's summer school. Before moving to New York to study more intensely, Cynthia performed with the Marin Civic Ballet, now known as Marin Ballet, in San Rafael, CA, in the 1970s. Upon moving to New York, Cynthia resumed her academics at Professional Children's School and at age 16 auditioned and began studying at American Ballet's training school when Patricia Wilde and Leon Danielian were in leadership. At the time there was only

one class, the scholarship class, at ABT. Cynthia stated, “It was a long, long time ago. I've kind of come full circle now” (personal communication, March 6, 2020).

Performance Career

Only nine months later, Cynthia auditioned for the company at ABT but was too young to be a member, so she was given the rank of Apprentice. That July, two months after her birthday, she was made me a company member. Cynthia recalled this happening because John Neumeier had come to stage *Le Baiser de la Fée*, and he chose Cynthia to perform in the ballet over a company member. That was that, and Cynthia was a member of ABT. Interestingly, when Cynthia joined ABT, they initially changed her name from Cynthia to Cristina, a name she chose because her teacher's name was Christine. Lucia Chase, a co-founder of ABT, requested the change. “She thought Cynthia Harvey and Cynthia Gregory (another dancer in the company) sounded too similar, and Lucia wanted that differentiation” (C. Harvey, personal communication, March 6, 2020). Cynthia recalled that the name change lasted maybe, around six or nine months, and then at a company party, Lucia Chase (who might have had a little too much to drink) was approached by Cynthia Gregory who said, "This is ridiculous. You had two Alicia's (in the company), and nobody said anything about Markova and Alonso. It's not a big deal". Cynthia called the American Guild of Musical Artists (the dancer's union) the next morning and said, "Please give me my name back." Cynthia was a member of the corps de ballet at ABT from 1974 through 1978, when she was promoted to Soloist. She was again promoted to the rank of Principal in 1982 performing all of the great ballets with some of the world's best dancers and partners. In 1986, Cynthia went to the Royal Ballet in London for almost three years; it was here where she sustained an injury. She returned to American to retain physical therapy and then

traveled back to London to perform as a guest artist. Following that, Cynthia came back to ABT and performed until her retirement in 1995.

Teaching and Leadership Career

Retirement saw Cynthia eventually moving back to England where she took a smattering of freelance jobs, but she wanted to have a family. She has one son. When he was four years old, Cynthia was asked by Natalia Makarova to stage *La Bayadère* in Poland and later at La Scala in Italy. While doing this, she was asked to teach a ballet class. Cynthia had been teaching at a local school in England, so she gave teaching company class a try—and that snowballed. She was soon receiving requests to teach all over the world—Australia to Dresden, Germany, to Sweden and in England at Royal Ballet School, international ballet schools, and at the Prix de Lausanne. From 2007-2016, Cynthia staged *Giselle*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, and *Don Quixote* in various places, though she states that she cannot remember a step from any of these ballets. “As soon as I leave it, I forget it. It's so weird. It's just on to the next thing” (C. Harvey, personal communication, March 6, 2020). In the summer of 2015, Kevin McKenzie, who is the current Artistic Director of ABT reached out to Cynthia, which he had been doing periodically for some time. “Sometimes he'd ask me if I could be a ballet mistress, but I was not interested. I did not think I'd find that attractive” (C. Harvey, personal communication, March 6, 2020). On this particular occasion when Kevin called, Cynthia had only been at home in England for five weeks within six months. “I was traveling so much teaching and guesting, and I was getting a little fed up with traveling” (C. Harvey, personal communication, March 6, 2020). During their call, Mr. McKenzie made an interesting offer, he said "I have this possibility. What would you think of running the School?". Cynthia's initial reaction was, "Are you kidding? I've never thought about it at all.” (C. Harvey, personal communication, March 6, 2020). Kevin went on to say that

Franco De Vita (who was, at the time, director of the JKO school), and Raymond Lukens, (who ran the NTC), were retiring, and they wanted to make sure that someone was in place to take over. Cynthia responded, limitedly, as she had laryngitis, that she would respond to him (Kevin) in a few weeks when she was feeling better. Cynthia did contact Kevin, as promised, with the news that she was interested, but not available quite yet. She was scheduled to go to Hong Kong for something but would be available in October. Cynthia asked if she could visit the JKO School to see what was going there and ask questions of the administrative team—which is precisely what she did.

I came in October. But when I came, it was as if they thought I had taken the job already. They introduced me to the Board, and you know, "Come sit in a meeting." And I'm thinking to myself, "Well, I haven't signed anything, and I haven't even agreed." At that time, I figured that I kind of had the upper hand. I thought, "You know what? It's one of those situations where it's a huge upheaval. My son was just graduating from high school, so I knew he didn't need me at home anymore. I could pretty much go away and know that he was okay in his dorm or somewhere in the middle of England. And then if it didn't work out, I would let them know." But as it happens, it's worked out okay. Nobody's kicked me out yet. (C. Harvey, personal communication, March 6, 2020)

Cynthia went on to say that when she arrived at the JKO School and saw the potential, she was excited. Having trained and danced with the company, she knew all of the usual ABT limitations and the purpose of the JKO School in terms of financial support for the company. Her main goal was, and still is, to elevate the stature of excellence to contribute to the well-being of the students, some of whom will pursue professional dance careers and other who will not, and to

ensure that regardless of their path, they all have a life after dance. She stated that a lot what is done at the JKO School now is with that in mind.

Molly Schnyder

Current Position

Ms. Molly Schnyder's current title is Director of Training Programs at ABT, which includes managing all parts of the NTC. The NTC programming includes teacher training sessions and workshops, the collaborative ABT/NYU Master of Arts in Ballet Pedagogy degree program, and the examination program.

Dance Training

Molly's training started at a "pretty abysmal Daisy Mae dance school", as she called it. (M. Schnyder, personal communication, March 5, 2020). She acknowledged that in her current position, this is the kind of training ABT wants to overcome. A dance school at which the "teacher that doesn't really think about the students, what would be best for them, how to launch them if they loved this so much" (M. Schnyder, personal communication, March 5, 2020). Molly indicated that her teacher was that kind of person, but regardless, she had a good experience. She continued dancing through high school, but then left dance behind for college and a major in biology and a career in medicine, or so she thought. Molly attended University of California Irvine, which happened to have an amazing dance program with a very strong ballet component. The program was founded by Eugene Loring, one of the founding fathers of ABT. She considered taking some classes, or even double majoring, as that would demonstrate her well-roundedness when applying to medical schools. Molly soon found herself taking ballet classes with very qualified ballet teachers and being exposed to proper, classical training and a whole new universe of ballet. Molly's passion for dance was re-ignited, and eventually, she dropped her

biology major and became a full-time dance major on the dance pedagogy track. While still in school, Molly found that teaching did not come naturally to her, which led her to pursue other avenues in the arts. She accepted an internship in the Education Department at Laguna Art Museum in Laguna Beach, California. The general job of the woman who Molly interned under was to engage with the community (adults and children) and help them develop an appreciation and love for art. Molly thought this was wonderful and considered how she might do something similar with dance. After her college graduation, Molly returned home to Northern California. Her goal was to work in the Education Department of San Francisco Ballet. This kind of position wasn't on the horizon for yet.

Professional Career: West Coast

Molly first found herself in the temp employment office at University of California Berkeley. The person she interviewed with offered her any open position she wanted, based on her exceptional skill set. One of the positions open was in fundraising in the development office, which Molly knew would be an important stepping stone and element of knowledge if she wanted to work in an arts organization. Molly stated that she worked with a great group of people there for two years and then through a connection worked at University of California San Francisco in their alumni fundraising office. At about age 27, Molly realized she had learned a lot about fundraising, but this wasn't what she ultimately wanted to do. She had always wanted to live in New York City and New York University (NYU) had a Master of Arts in Performing Arts Administration degree that would help her reach her end goal. After applying and being accepted, Molly chose to defer for one year to gain a little more experience in San Francisco.

Professional Career: New York University

At age 28, Molly moved to New York to attend NYU and took on a full-time job at NYU Tisch School of the Arts in alumni fundraising to pay for her degree. In this position, she had two bosses; one through Tisch and one in the central fundraising office for NYU. She remembers having to work two and a half days in each office, and NYU's campus is very spread out. This wasn't a system that worked. In the meantime, she started her master's program, and in her first class, Environment of Performing Arts Administration, they had to work on a group project.

We were going to all have to pick an organization to profile. Then, we were also going to have to kind of create our own organization. The theater people grouped together, the music people grouped together, and the dance people grouped together. We weren't just dance people, we were specifically ballet people. (M. Schnyder, personal communication, March 5, 2020)

One of Molly's group members had just started a position in the finance office at ABT and Molly was enthusiastic to learn all about it. The group member offered to set up and interview with the Director of Education at ABT. Molly interviewed with Mary Jo Ziesel, was offered the internship, and never left.

Professional Career: American Ballet Theatre

She left the fundraising position at NYU and accepted a part-time position at ABT, which was much more manageable than her full-time position. She started as the Education Assistant, assisting all four employees in the department, including the Studio Company. Molly indicated that, unknowingly, her timing was perfect, as the ABT Education Department was on the cusp to growing amazing programs that hadn't been realized yet. She was well-positioned, knew her co-workers and the company, and was getting her Master's degree. Upon graduation from NYU,

Molly's work at ABT evolved into a full-time position working with Dennis Walters in educational outreach, including programs such as *Make a Ballet*. Molly was given her own *Make a Ballet* program to run because she was an adult in her late twenties. She joked, "That didn't mean I knew what I was doing, but I wasn't totally green" (M. Schnyder, personal communication, March 5, 2020). She was given a lot of responsibility right away, which was amazing and stressful. Again, Molly (self) proclaimed that she wasn't a natural teacher, so being in charge of and teaching in the outreach programs was very stressful for her. Luckily, she had a teaching partner who was a natural. "I would plan everything and then he would go run it. It was a perfect dynamic" (M. Schnyder, personal communication, March 5, 2020). However, Molly eventually realized she wasn't destined for working in outreach programs. When an opening became available with ABT's Summer Intensive programming, she jumped at the chance to work with Sienna Siegel. They were managing the five Summer Intensive programs and then a donor came and said, "I'd like to help you start a program that feeds into the Studio Company." This launched the Studio Company Associates Program (SCAP), which began with 12 students, one of whom is currently the Director of Summer Intensives at ABT. This group (the Studio Company Associates Program) fell under the direction of the Summer Intensive staff, not the Studio Company Manager because there was already too much on that person's plate. John Meehan auditioned the students for the SCAP and worked with them, and Sienna managed the program. Sienna had trained at the School of American Ballet (SAB) at New York City Ballet (NYCB), so she was a natural at managing this program, as SAB is a feeder directly into NYCB. When Sienna left ABT after her child was born, Molly became the head of Summer Intensive, and by default the head of the SCAP. At this time, Kevin McKenzie, Artistic Director of ABT decided that the SCAP should become a full school. Franco De Vita was hired to direct the

school and he inherited Molly as his administrator. Molly recalled sitting down in an initial planning meeting with Franco, who had a clear vision for this new pre-professional training school: grow from one level to two levels, in the next year add a third level, and so on. Subsequently, he was also creating the NTC. At this point, Molly indicated that managing both the Summer Intensive program and the new school was still manageable. Simultaneously, Molly left to have her first child and the NTC was being launched. When Molly returned after maternity leave, the department did some restructuring to make workloads manageable. Molly would administrate the NTC and the new training school. As if this wasn't enough, a Saturday-morning recreational children's ballet program had been started. For ease of administration, this program was moved into the new school and the full JKO School at ABT was born. Also during this time, the partnership with ABT and NYU was forged. This all happened in 2008. Molly was thrilled to be working with Franco, the JKO School, and the NTC. Molly stated that Franco had the vision and she did whatever she could to help make it happen. Molly took maternity leave again in 2011 for her second child, and upon her return worked solely for the NTC at part-time, which she states is a gift. She wasn't sure the current administration wouldn't allow this to happen now, but at the time she was grandfathered in. She feels very fortunate.

Presently, she oversees the NTC, which is expanding to add two new curriculums. The NTC is now also being taught internationally, which means the coordination of staff travel to present teacher training workshops and administer student examinations.

Rachel Hamrick

Current Position

Rachel Hamrick recently sold her company, Flexistretcher, which she led for the last 10 years. At Flexistretcher, she oversaw the creation of the product, production, marketing,

importing, shipping, creative direction, design, accounting, and staffing. She is now focused on dance conditioning training and development, as well as launching her new brand, Hamrick Method. She is also a dance educator, focusing on the teaching of ballet and proper dance conditioning. Concurrently, she has been consulting for small businesses with marketing and design.

Dance Training

Rachel grew up with a passion for ballet. At the age of 12, she went away to study more intensely at the Kirov Academy in Washington, D.C. Rachel indicated that her driving passion at such a young age outweighed any fears she had about leaving home or foregoing traditional schooling. She had set out on a unique path to follow her goals and dreams, and by doing so allowed those elements to take front and center in her life. Rachel stated that she had to fervently self-drive and self-motivate. She even did her own home-schooling at age 16 in order to finish her education early, so that she could focus solely on her ballet training.

Performance Career

Rachel faced a reality about her professional career early on. “I was taller, so it was harder for me to find a job right away. So I really worked really hard” (R. Hamrick, personal communication, March 6, 2020). Upon completing her schooling at the Kirov Academy, Rachel accepted a trainee position at Orlando Ballet in Orlando, Florida. She remained there for one year and then sought out opportunities with more of a “big company” atmosphere. Rachel recognized that she would have to leave America because she was a taller ballerina. She found herself moving to Seoul, Korea to dance with Universal Ballet. The director of Universal Ballet was also the director of the Kirov School in Washington, D.C., where Rachel had trained. Coincidentally, he was also the former director of the Mariinsky Ballet in St. Petersburg, Russia

so he was bringing in a strong supply of elite teachers and coaches; many students from the Vaganova Academy were also being invited to join Universal Ballet if they weren't going to Mariinsky. This was a great opportunity for Rachel. Once again, Rachel found herself going down her own unique path that was driven by passion. She recalled having people question what she was doing and the choices she was making, but she knew exactly what she was doing. Rachel left for Korea at age 19 and stayed with Universal Ballet for four years. The company traveled a lot, so Rachel was able to see the world at this young age. She remembered experiencing many different cultures—as well as the thrill of working as a ballet dancer, of being able to provide for herself. “It really brought out a lot of self-motivation and responsibility, knowing that if I wanted to follow my passion, I had to go out and make it happen, and do it myself” (R. Hamrick, personal communication, March 6, 2020). At about age 23, Rachel left Universal Ballet and headed for Europe, stating that she wanted to experience Europe and dance there because it was the epicenter of the ballet world. She found herself in Budapest at the Hungarian National Ballet, where she remained for four years.

I loved it there. It was such a beautiful city, and the Opera House is so old, and the Ballet there is so respected. I tried to learn the language and really get into the culture at the time, and not many people spoke English. Same in Korea. So all those life experiences, I think, really led me to where I am today. I'm going down my own path, driven by my passion. (R. Hamrick, personal communication, March 6, 2020)

Following Budapest, Rachel moved to Amsterdam to dance with the Dutch National Ballet, Montreal to perform with Les Grands Ballet Canadiens, and after an injury, to New York. Somehow, she knew that New York was where she needed to be.

Entrepreneurship and Education Career

Upon her move to New York, Rachel found herself doing freelance performance work, while simultaneously developing the business she had begun while she was performing, Flexistretcher. “I am very self-taught. Everything I've learned about business is life, trial and error, and it's been an accumulation of about 12 years now” (R. Hamrick, personal communication, March 6, 2020). Flexistretcher was created while Rachel was still dancing professionally, then she ran the company for six years as her full-time job. She attributed her success to her self-drive, discipline, and passion. Rachel is now taking those skills and applying them to her latest venture, Hamrick Method, which is a dance conditioning training method. Rachel stated that her training systems holds a special place in her heart, as she is passionate about properly training the next generation of great dancers. She is also currently working to launch her branding agency, through which she can help other small businesses get off the ground.

For me, with business, when I felt so lost, I didn't know where to go. I can self-teach, but some people get very overwhelmed, and any marketing agency, is going to be too expensive for a small business. It's something that I want to do, to inspire and help small businesses, even if it's younger entrepreneurs, just to get off the ground. I want to help with the Business 101 basics, like website design and launch, social media, e-commerce, etc. (R. Hamrick, personal communication, March 6, 2020)

Rachel's entrepreneurial spirit is not slowing down. She believes the traits she learned as a dancer, especially in carving her own unique path, has led her to the present.

So many times along my journey, I felt very insecure, or like I was in “fake it till you make it” mode. Like if I'm in a meeting or something, and someone references something

I don't know, then I go home, and research, and learn it. Like, "Wait, repeat that word? Okay, I'm going to go learn this now." It's a really good trait to have as an entrepreneur, but also as a dancer. (R. Hamrick, personal communication, March 6, 2020)

At the end of our conversation, Rachel shared the following story regarding this lesson and how it relates to dancers:

When you're working with young students, you're trying to teach them to be self-motivated and to think for themselves; like working outside of the classroom, coming into the classroom ready, and wanting to learn everything. For example, when I was at Youth American Grand Prix, and I was the senior host teaching a variation, and I walked in and I said, "Okay, we're going to do Lilac Fairy (from The Sleeping Beauty). Let's go." And I said, "You guys know this, or you should know it, because you're all trying to get into companies, and once you're in a company, it's not really the ballet mistress's job to teach the choreography, at least with the classical ballets." The students have to want to take the initiative for themselves, which is the same in business. (R. Hamrick, personal communication, March 6, 2020)

Adrienne Canterna

Current Position

Ms. Adrienne Canterna owns a production company, SweetBird Productions, of which she is also the founder and director. She works with clients to produce events such as master classes or organizing talent for a charity performance. The events can be as small as one class or as big as a three-month tour. Adrienne creates shows, produces events, choreographs, directs, and dances, of course. She works with a company in Europe to produce tours two to three times a

year. In this type of scenario, Adrienne works as the middle man; they (her bosses) hire her and then she hires her crew, talent, dancers, production stage manager, essentially anyone she needs.

Dance Training

Adrienne began her dance training when she was very young. She trained in all styles of dance: ballet, tap, jazz, gymnastics, she also did some modeling and singing. She did everything she could within the scope of the performing arts. Adrienne remembered that she couldn't get enough of it and always wanted more. Her parents, who were the opposite of stage parents, were always making sure this was what she wanted to do. They never pushed. Adrienne was infatuated with dance and knew, at the age of six, that she wanted to be a ballerina.

I distinctly remember. I was in rehearsals for the local *Nutcracker*, and there was a photographer there from the newspaper taking my picture while I was stretching and warming up at the barre. I was so serious, and obviously six years old. The next day, my photo was in the paper with my leg up on the barre, stretching. At that moment I was like, "Forget it. This is it. This is my life. This is my world." (A. Canterna, personal communication, March 14, 2020)

Adrienne recalled her parents being incredibly hardworking and generous when it came to providing for her and her siblings (one sister and two brothers), in terms of training. They taught their children to want more training, instead of the latest jeans or something similar. Adrienne stated, "We were definitely raised right" (A. Canterna, personal communication, March 14, 2020). With a massive amount of training, and private lessons all the time, Adrienne was training very seriously in her art form. Her parents even built a dance studio in their home.

I was highly competitive. I was in every dance competition imaginable. They were much different back then. They were much more like competitions; there was only first, second

and third place, and that was it. It was really good, because it let you know where you stood, and the judges were tough. It was real competition, and it was my favorite thing. I definitely was not in it for any other reason than to win. I'm not ashamed to say that. That's how I was growing up. Not in a malicious way at all, but in a tunnel vision way. Like I tell my dancers, just don't get distracted. Don't focus on the wrong things. Don't focus on the wrong people. Focus on the work. Put your blinders on, and get to work, and don't stop until it's right, and therefore you won't stop, because it'll never be right. That sort of thing. (A. Canterna, personal communication, March 14, 2020)

Adrienne continued to train in local studios and through private training. She remembered having many different coaches in the Baltimore and Washington, D.C. area, which is where she is from. In her early teenage years, Adrienne began training for the USA International Ballet Competition (USA IBC), which is held in Jackson, Mississippi. She began training approximately one year before she was accepted into the competition (dancers have to audition to be able to compete). Her coach, whom she trained with daily on top of all of her other dance classes, had danced with the National Ballet of China. Adrienne remembered training for hours and hours every day, which paid off when she won the competition at age 15. After winning, she received multiple job offers—big ones, with big companies. However, her parents were very against her going anywhere before she finished high school. Instead, Adrienne enrolled, on full scholarship, at the Kirov Academy, where she got an incredible amount of training that she was so grateful for in her last two years of high school. This is also where she met Rachel Hamrick and her now sister-in-law and the three of them are like sisters and have been ever since. Adrienne described the academy to being a “gigantic boarding school of bunheads” (A. Canterna, personal communication, March 14, 2020).

Performance Career

After Adrienne won at USA IBC, she did a lot of guest performing at a very young age, between ages 15 and 18 years old. Her partner at the time was Rasta Thomas, who is now her ex-husband. Together they did a massive amount of guest performing all over the world with legendary dancers. They were invited to perform with the likes of Natalia Osipova and Diana Vishneva; Adrienne even performed the *Le Corsaire* pas de deux with Carlos Acosta. These opportunities are what ballerina's dream of. Adrienne recalled, "What's crazy about is this is before YAGP. This is before Instagram. This is before all of that. I can only imagine what my life would be like now if I was doing all of that in like that realm of social media" (A. Canterna, personal communication, March 14, 2020). She is now glad she didn't have that access during this time, as she was so young. After graduating from the Kirov Academy, she danced a season with Washington Ballet in Washington, D.C., which did not end up being a good fit for her at the time.

Adrienne stated that having so many different performing opportunities at such a young age put her on a different path than what she thought she wanted when she was younger—which was to join a ballet company. Adrienne spent about three years, from age 17 to about 20 performing with Universal Ballet in Seoul, Korea. She danced many of the classical, full-length ballets (possibly years before she should have) such as *Don Quixote*, *La Bayadère*, *The Nutcracker*. On her 17th birthday, she was dancing the role of Gamzatti in *La Bayadère* in Korea at Universal Ballet, sitting next to her at dinner after the performance was Clive Barnes, dance critic from The New York Times. While she enjoyed her time at Washington Ballet and Universal Ballet, it just wasn't for her. It wasn't what she thought it would be, or what she had made it out to be when she was younger. Adrienne wondered if she had gone back two years, or

five years later, how different her journey might have been. However, at the time, she needed something different but wasn't sure what that was. She stated, "It was also hard going from doing all of these spectacular things at such a young age, and then just going to work every day in the corps de ballet and not really knowing where you stood" (A. Canterna, personal communication, March 14, 2020). She said this was especially the case at Washington Ballet because at that time there was, but there wasn't a ranking system, which is a little confusing for a 19-year old who had just come off all of this extreme success. When Adrienne discussed this it wasn't in an egotistical way, but instead in a way that acknowledged the lack of proper guidance and direction she was experiencing.

After her experiences in the two ballet companies, Adrienne did a lot of soul searching. This led to a year dancing with Complexions Contemporary Ballet in New York City, which is under the direction of Dwight Rhoden and Desmond Richardson. Adrienne performed with Desmond quite a lot, and her partner in the company was Danny Tidwell, a brilliant dancer who just recently passed away. She remembers this being a really beautiful year in her life. After she left Complexions, she got pregnant, which she stated was the best detour of her life, but still a detour.

Production Career

After her daughter was born, Adrienne and her husband (now ex-husband), Rasta Thomas, created a show that became extremely successful in Germany, eventually landing under the brand name *Rock the Ballet* in the summer of 2008. He directed it, she choreographed for it. She remembered there being a couple of other choreographers, as the show was more of a mixed repertoire. Both Adrienne and Rasta starred in the show, which was only nine months after she had their baby. The brand of the show ended up taking off and is currently trademarked by her

producers in Germany. Adrienne went on to create multiple versions of *Rock the Ballet*, including at least five variations of the first show. Following that success, Adrienne went on to make an entirely different show, *Rock the Ballet II* in 2012, and that was entirely hers— no outside choreographers, no mixed repertoire. The show consisted of 90 minutes of dance, music, lighting, and costumes. Adrienne described the show as a rock/pop concert, but with dance. The baseline of the show has always been classical ballet, which is Adrienne’s foundation, but with all of her other passions combined, including jazz, contemporary, acrobatics, hip-hop, and ballroom. “It’s a very American style; it’s so fluid and entertaining, and very unique, especially to the European dance scene” (A. Canterna, personal communication, March 14, 2020).

Adrienne recalled that this was created before shows such as *So You Think You Can Dance* and *Dancing with the Stars*. This hybrid style of dancing wasn’t happening yet in a major in the concert dance world, and if it was, it didn’t have the strong technical background that Adrienne brought to the stage. *Rock the Ballet* and *Rock the Ballet II* had the brand credentials to back up the artistic choices being made. The show wasn’t a fad or a trend, it was original and wildly American. Adrienne and her husband had grown this extremely successful business and touring company—but they didn’t know how to handle it. Everything was new to them: parenting, directing, choreographing, running a business, taking care of artists. The only familiar thing was dancing. She remembered it being constant on-the-job training.

Fast forward a few years to when Adrienne and her husband divorced, allowing her to leave behind an extremely physically, mentally, spiritually, and verbally abusive marriage (A. Canterna, personal communication, March 14, 2020). In the wake of this, she started her own production company, SweetBird Productions. Thankfully, she had cultivated numerous incredible relationships and had showcased her exceptional work (which she retained the rights

to) throughout the process of the last production with her ex-husband. What this meant was that she had this arsenal of shows, repertoire, and relationships at her fingertips. Adrienne persevered and forged ahead during what was an incredibly difficult time in her life.

I had no choice. I had a child, and I had to work, and I had to provide. That's what I did, and that's why I started my company, and all of my producers that I work for today followed me, and all of my artists followed me. (A. Canterna, personal communication, March 14, 2020)

This upheaval happened in late 2014/early 2015, and Canterna stated that it has been one day (and many tours) at a time since then. Presently, the brand has been to over 30 countries, completing a massive amount of tours, with two or three tours happening simultaneously sometimes. Interestingly enough, the show rarely performs in the United States. “We had one three-week run at the Joyce Theatre in New York in 2009, I think, and we got panned by all of the critics, but yet the show was sold out for all three weeks” (A. Canterna, personal communication, March 14, 2020). Adrienne noted that the brand has evolved since 2008, settling into its current form around 2013. When this all began, Adrienne was a very young and unknown, inexperienced choreographer.

I was a very successful dancer and a very good dancer. I'm not boasting. But dance, I knew how to do that. But in terms of producing a show, and staging, and just everything . . . The audiences loved us in the beginning, for the first couple of years, because we were really good dancers, and they could see and feel how much we loved dancing. It wasn't because they were these intricate ballets that were so brilliantly choreographed and directed. It was not that at all. What has happened with the brand, and what I've put so much work and heart into every day is making really substantial entertaining artful shows

that I don't cringe when I look back on. But the brand has grown up with me. I grew up with the brand. It's evolved in a massive way. (A. Canterna, personal communication, March 14, 2020)

Adrienne attributed starting her own company and being able to make decisions herself, to ultimately finding her voice. “I was no longer submissive, and I felt empowered, and just realized like the audiences aren't stupid. They don't need certain things. They don't want certain things” (A. Canterna, personal communication, March 14, 2020). After 12 years of work on these shows, and five years of owning her own company, Adrienne stated that it can be incredibly overwhelming. This is mostly because she doesn't have a big staff—and that alone is overwhelming. “Finding people whom you not only work well with, but whom you trust and respect, and who trust and respect you, and the work, and don't take things too personally, and know how to get the job done is a challenge” (A. Canterna, personal communication, March 14, 2020). Adrienne indicated that the number of meetings she attends is massive and all of the details fall on her shoulders. While she doesn't do the lighting, she does all of the choreography (usually around 90 minutes per show), music selection, and costume design.

I tend to get my best work done when the stakes are that high. I wish that wasn't always the case, but I do tend to flourish in the chaos. I've kind of been that way my whole life. I really, really like, I don't like, I love working, and I love working, and working really hard. I've always been that way. I would much have always rather be working than doing pretty much anything else. So, it's the bunhead in me. Us bunheads, we're no joke. (A. Canterna, personal communication, March 14, 2020)

Key Themes

The research question, “*What is the experience of female leaders in pre-professional and professional ballet?*” elicited many themes. While a deductive approach had been formulated from existing data, the researcher was prepared to encounter new categories and themes based on information collected during the interview process. The categories that were expected to have been found were those of past practices, barriers, discrimination, successes, funding and accessibility, leadership styles and philosophy, future predictions. The interview process led to precisely such findings, and the information gathered has been collected into four encompassing themes. The first theme identified was that of training and career development. Each of the four participants had a unique journey to their current position and much of what they learned and experienced along the way shaped them, and is continuing to shape them, into the leaders they are now. Secondly, the theme of female leadership surfaced during the interview process. This included the evolution of female leadership in ballet, behaviors and traits of female leaders, benefits of female leadership, and expectations of female leaders. The third theme to be identified was that of leadership responsibilities, which were incredibly vast for each of the participants. In every case, each participant was doing the work of a full team, which led to conversations regarding organization and management of time and resources, successes and challenges, collecting feedback, barriers, and highlights of the job. Lastly, the theme of mentorship and encouragement of future female leaders in the ballet industry surfaced.

Training and Career Development

Based on the participant narratives shared above, it is evident that training and career development are critical examination points when exploring the experiences of female leaders in ballet. Presently, the participants are where they are because of their unique journey. From

Cynthia's story of seeing ballet as the red cape to her bull and working diligently for her literal and figurative place at the ballet barre and on the stage, to Molly's forethought of working in fundraising to meet her end goal of working in dance administration, to Rachel trusting her passion and studying aggressively so that she could finish school focus on her dance training, and to Adrienne's story of intense training and perseverance as life handed her some curveballs, each of these women took their background and used it to their advantage as they developed their passion into their career.

Personal Mastery

Senge (2013) referenced the concept of "personal mastery" as a means of effective leadership.

People with a high level of personal mastery are able to consistently realize the results that matter most deeply to them—in effect, they approach their life as an artist would approach a work of art. They do that by becoming committed to their own lifelong learning. (Senge, 2013, p. 7)

The four participants in this study are ideal models of the concept of personal mastery. All began studying their art at a very young age, all kept dance as a focus in their lives (even when they thought they might escape their calling to do so), and all have found successful careers in leadership in this arena. In order to maintain these successful careers, each has had to continue to learn and grow as the industry has evolved.

In Adrienne's story, she mentioned everything that she had to learn on the job in order to produce and choreograph her show, she even went as far as to say she and the brand of the show grew up together, influencing each other at every step. Whether it was learning about costuming and hiring dancers, or how to be a working mother, she had to keep learning; she is still learning.

Despite Molly's best efforts to tackle a career in medicine, the draw to back to ballet was intense. Each program that she has touched at ABT has revolutionized the company and the Education Department. From what started as four people in an old dance studio, to the massive team they have now accumulated, the learning curve has been steep. In her time at ABT a trainee program, pre-professional training school, and an internationally renowned training curriculum have been developed. This doesn't happen without personal mastery and the willingness to commit to life-long learning.

Rachel's story of jumping into the business world post-dance performance career speaks volumes to her commitment to personal mastery. Having finished her schooling at age 16, it is apparent that a degree in business is not in her arsenal. However, that didn't stop her and it hasn't slowed her down. She has learned from the school of trial and error, and with her diligent bunhead iron will, she has seen far more success than she has failure. Her willingness to pay it forward to future leaders through the development of her branding agency also indicates that her rigor is as strong as ever.

In Cynthia's case, running the JKO School at ABT was something she had never even considered. She had a very full and glorious performance career, dancing with the best of the best on the most famous stages in the world. Now in her "second act", she is learning an entirely different side of ballet; one that is possibly more fragile than a performance career. She has hundreds of young minds and bodies looking to her for guidance and a team of colleagues looking to her for vision.

"Personal mastery is the discipline of continually clarifying and deepening our personal vision, of focusing our energies, of developing patience, and of seeing reality objectively" (Senge, 2013, p. 7). The above statement is a key concept in the development of strong,

successful leaders. In the case of leadership in ballet, it appears that personal mastery sought through training and career development is, in fact, the cornerstone to success. Without it, the successes that the four participants have seen might not have been a reality. Whether the attraction and drive to personal mastery is a uniquely female leadership trait or not remains to be seen, however, this can be acknowledged that for the purpose of this study, its effect on career trajectories has been impactful.

Female Leadership

At its base level, the female style of leadership focuses on empowerment, relationships, teaching and learning, and community building (Sergiovanni, 2013). The participants in this study echoed those themes. These focuses also allow a leader to accomplish the five functions of instructional leadership: visioning, modeling, coaching, managing, and mediating (Tschannen-Moran, 2013). In creating shared-vision, leaders must build trust by being open, honest, and forthcoming. Participants need to understand where they stand, where they are going and what they are working to achieve. A healthy relationship with a strong communication component must be established between the leader and the participant. Successful leaders must also “walk the talk” (Tschannen-Moran, 2013, p. 44). They must demonstrate continuity between actions and words. In ballet, demonstration of technique, concepts, or choreography is necessary, but it should never be flaunted to deflate a participant’s ego. It is said that skillful leaders lead quietly, by being soft on people and hard on projects (Tschannen-Moran, 2013). Dancers are fragile; they constantly put themselves on display for judgment and feedback. A dancer will respond more positively to a leader who listens, holds them accountable, manages their progress and possibilities, and can be honest, but caring. The four participants in this study demonstrated this through their responses during the interview process. The responses have been categorized into

four subthemes addressing female leadership in ballet: evolution, behaviors and traits, benefits, and encouragement.

Evolution of Female Leadership in Ballet

When asked about the evolution of female leadership in ballet, the participants in this study had varied responses due to their varied backgrounds. For Cynthia, the idea of a female leader in ballet was something she was very familiar with and in support of.

I started at a school that was led by a female teacher, and I joined ABT, which was led by a female director, so for me, it doesn't feel totally foreign or alien. What I am liking is seeing female choreographers especially come to the forefront. That vision of embracing the female point of view is really nice. And I think it'll help diversify and give opportunities to some great talent. (C. Harvey, personal communication, March 6, 2020)

While Cynthia doesn't have the financial resources to call in choreographers for the JKO School, the Studio Company at ABT does. The students in the JKO School often stop to watch Studio Company rehearsals from the hallway, allowing them to see that being a female choreographer is an achievable goal if they want to work for it. During the interview, when questioned about Lucia Chase, founder of ABT, Cynthia recalled her being flitty and always in a hurry, but Cynthia suspects this was an impression she gave rather than who she truly was. "And yet she got things done and poured her heart and soul, and finances into it (the company)" (C. Harvey, personal communication, March 6, 2020). Cynthia has Lucia's desk in her office, a gentle reminder of the legacy she left behind.

Molly's response to this question echoed Cynthia's response and went on to identify the lack of female presence in the position of company artistic director. She hopes that this is something ABT might pursue when their current director, Kevin McKenzie, retires.

Mr. McKenzie has been the artistic director of ABT for 30 years.

I feel like maybe there are things happening in the world now that we don't need to be doing the same way. We can have a female artistic director come in. We're ABT. We can just decide to do it differently. We don't need to adhere to traditions. I have dreams, I have visions, I have ideas for which women could step up, but we'll see. (M. Schnyder, personal communication, March 5, 2020)

Molly did acknowledge that on the administration side, ABT is strong in female presence. The company currently has its second female executive director, and there are certainly several female senior staff members.

Rachel's experience with this question was a little different and very personal. She had a great experience with a female associate artistic director, Julia Moon (who was also still performing on top of directing), at Universal Ballet. Rachel remembered her being inspiring and approachable, but she also commanded respect. However, Rachel also encountered the challenging side of female leadership in ballet.

I was once told that I was unfit to be a leader because I was a mother and a wife; that there's was no way I could be a leader or run a business. Basically, insinuating I should just be at home. This was by a woman business owner. (R. Hamrick, personal communication, March 6, 2020)

She went on to say that although we are making progress on this issue, there is still a stigma and stereotype of what you can and cannot, or should and should not, do as a wife and/or mother.

“It's really disheartening that a woman business owner feels like she can't have balance and be supportive of other women because she is fighting to be heard or respected; almost that she is behaving in a masculine way” (R. Hamrick, personal communication, March 6, 2020). Rachel also referenced a situation with a fellow participant, Adrienne, in which her ex-husband's name

was kept on the show brand for some time because of who he was, even though Adrienne was doing most of the creation.

Behaviors and Traits of Female Leaders

The question of behaviors and traits of female leaders led to very interesting conversations. When asked the question, “*As a female leader, do you feel you obligated to embody a certain set of behaviors to be successful?*”, each of the participants responded that they did not. Cynthia joked that Dennis Walters, Director of Educational Outreach at ABT, was the odd one out in the education department. Molly felt that she could be herself at work and that she was appreciated for being herself. Rachel felt similarly in that she was always very focused on what she wanted to do, so even if someone expected her to behave a particular way as a female, she didn’t recognize or conform to it.

The leadership behaviors and traits that were identified as being the most effective by the participants included the ability to delegate, the development of clear communication, positive relationship building, the ability to motivate, trustworthiness, approachability, passion, and compassion. A through-line that developed in this research was the amount of multi-tasking that each of the participants was expected to do.

Cynthia believed one of her strengths was her ability to delegate, which she has to do since she has so many responsibilities at ABT. However, this wasn’t something she did right away. It took Cynthia approximately two years of being in her current position before she asked for help. She recognized her limitations and knew she needed more people around her to be successful. For example, the week before our interview, she was in assessments with the students until 7:30 PM, after having arrived at 10:00 AM to complete administrative work, as well as teach classes.

I think its maybe my age and my confidence, but I know what my limitations are, and I'm not afraid to say. I'm not afraid to say most of anything nowadays, to be honest. I think that may also be a detriment, I'm pretty much open. I don't have an agenda. I hate politics. So, if somebody asks me a question, I answer them. And sometimes I need to think about what I say. (C. Harvey, personal communication, March 6, 2020)

While Cynthia is unsure of how her honesty affects her perception as a leader, research indicates that clear and honest communication are avenues to building trust in an organization (Tschannen-Moran, 2013). "I'm pretty pragmatic and philosophical, but not one to pretend" (C. Harvey, personal communication, March 6, 2020). She was adamant that she wants people to know what is working and what isn't so that they, as a team, can collectively fix what is broken in the process.

In her response, Molly reiterated the necessity for clear communication so that everyone knows who is responsible for what; she also spoke to the fact that ABT is a team player kind of company.

But I will say, for anybody to be successful here they need to be a team player with a lot of flexibility; to be willing to jump in. The people that really succeed, at least here in our department, I don't know about other places, but the ones who succeed say, "You need someone to cover that class, I can jump in and do that." They care, they understand, they're well trained, they know what they're doing and they're willing to jump in where they're needed. (M. Schnyder, personal communication, March 5, 2020)

Molly also referenced the fact that she is constantly looking for great people to be a part of the team. As people retire or are injured, she has to make sure there is a team available to fill in when necessary to prevent any lag in the momentum their department is experiencing.

Rachel's answer to this prompt was very inspiring and philosophical. She believes the best leaders are passionate and can motivate someone to help them succeed. Coincidentally, this is something that Cynthia says she lacks in. As someone who is very self-motivated, she can't understand why others can't motivate as well. She joked this was one of her least desirable leadership traits. Rachel, on the other hand, echoed what Tschannen-Moran said regarding being tough on projects and soft on people. As a leader, "you offer careful corrections and explain the best way to develop from these corrections so that the person can improve" (R. Hamrick, personal communication, March 6, 2020). Rachel also spoke to modeling behavior, providing inspiration, being approachable and encouraging while still holding someone accountable, as well as being fair and ethical. She, as well as the other participants, wholly embody Kouzes and Posner's five principles of exemplary leadership which include modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

Benefits of Female Leadership

When questioned about the benefits of having a female in a leadership position in ballet, every participant referenced their role as a mother as an asset. In the recent past, motherhood and a career in ballet were two things that didn't necessarily go hand in hand. Molly referenced the amount of work that it takes a female dancer to succeed due to pointe work, as well as the competition females' face in ballet versus men. That amount of focus this requires didn't always leave time for things such as a family. However, that isn't the case with the participants in this study. All drew on the understanding they have gained from motherhood; also the knowledge of what the dancers, male or female, are going through at any given time.

Cynthia has used her experience as a mother to deepen her understanding of her role as the artistic director of the JKO School.

Well, particularly in my case, running a school, I think, I've been able to use my experiences as a mom, and that has not been a hindrance at all. I'm able to say, "My son had this, and I understand." And I've lived a long, long life, and there's an empathy, I think, that is particular to females. Maybe I'm wrong, but I do feel that. And working here with a lot of females, I also sense this sort of understanding, especially of having been a dancer and knowing the difficulties. And now as a female leader, knowing the competition for girls is so tough . . . I haven't forgotten, even though I'm way older, I haven't forgotten that sense of uncertainty, that you never know what's going to happen, especially because the competition is so huge. And for the boys, it's more about keeping them in line and understanding that they are boys and there is a difference. (C. Harvey, personal communication, March 6, 2020)

Molly spoke about understanding this same sense of uncertainty as a female dancer. She spoke about the importance of training as a dancer so that as a leader there is an understanding of where a dancer might be coming from or how they might be feeling. That the journey is tough, all around.

While empathy and compassion are generally guarded as beneficial qualities in leadership, especially in an environment where you are working with very young dancers, Adrienne discussed how empathy can sometimes be a hindrance in her position.

I am a mother, I'm also a choreographer, so I'm extremely connected. My mind and my heart are very connected. I think that's a really good thing as a leader, but I think that it can also be a very tricky thing as a leader. If you lead from a very direct headspace, and

not so emotional—it's hard, because I don't want to say don't be emotional, because that's what makes so many moments and so many decisions really beautiful and really impactful for your business, but don't try and be your business', or your employee's or your colleague's mother. That's my big thing. I used to think mothering was it. It was everything. In my late 20s, even in my early 30s, I thought the more I could care for people in every possible way, the better I was at what I did, and that is not true. So now I try and teach my dancers, my employees, even my daughter, I try and teach them how to take care of themselves. To love themselves, to work hard, to not think that's a selfish or a bad thing. It's a very good thing, in my opinion, if it's not obviously malicious. But, take care of yourself. Because if everyone was taking care of themselves in the best possible way, then we'd all be coming in 100% whole, ready to work. (A. Canterna, personal communication, March 14, 2020)

Adrienne has worked diligently to find the balance between being an empath and being a leader, being a mother to a 12-year old has helped instill that lesson. The stereotype of female leaders is that they will be too empathetic or compassionate, but that's where balance becomes a key element in leadership behavior. Rachel believed that females in leadership roles represent great role models because they do tend to find that balance of being supportive while requiring excellence. She was trained in the Russian school of ballet in which teachers used fear tactics and yelling to get students to produce results. While this methodology does produce results, there is more positive way to instill the same behaviors. Rachel believed that demonstrating to students what they can work towards and where they can go if they are passionate and hard-working is imperative as leadership behavior. It's that communication component, sharing the vision.

Encouragement of Female Leadership

In this study, each participant was asked, “*How can we encourage women to pursue leadership roles in ballet?*” Each participant had an interesting suggestion for how to accomplish this. The first response centered on exposing the dancers, especially the females (as there are more of them, therefore more competition), to the possibilities of careers in dance outside of being in a company. Cynthia expressed that she would like to hear less of “Well, you may not . . .” and more about realistic opportunities such as working as a dance critic, nutritionist, physical therapist, something that keeps them still involved in the dance world. This might happen through guest speakers or the equivalent of professional development so that students truly understand what their options are before they get too far down a road that won’t be fulfilling. Others felt it important for there to be a balance in female leadership for it to be appealing to the upcoming generation. Molly reported that some of what is asked of senior staff is not sustainable long-term, and certainly not with a family or without help.

Leadership Responsibilities

The responsibilities that the four participants balance daily are ambitious. The participants were asked how they approached their daily activities. Responses from each of the four participants varied greatly, with the common theme that each has an incredible amount to handle daily.

Organization of Daily Activities

Cynthia’s initial response to the question “*How do you approach your day to day duties in your position?*” was “Not very well, it’s one of the things I stress about the most” (C. Harvey, personal communication, March 6, 2020). She went on to say that she doesn’t feel as though she is doing anything really well because she is having to lower her standards to accomplish any of

it. Cynthia's daily responsibilities include directing the JKO School and NTC at ABT, overseeing the Gillespie School in California, as well as teaching classes in the JKO School and for the studio company. Cynthia was quick to acknowledge the staff she works with and her gratitude for each person and all that they take on to keep the entire ship moving forward. While Cynthia noted that she doesn't believe that she is a great motivator, it seems her staff has done a very good job of motivating themselves. She went on to say that they (the staff) do much of the work, and she is there to sign off on things. Cynthia was extremely complimentary of the organizational skills of the staff in the Education Department, noting that some of them have "Sudoku jigsaw puzzle brains" as they can sort out scheduling Cynthia's many responsibilities. Not only is the scheduling difficult at best, but there is also the issue of switching brain space over to teach different levels of class, while also trying to squeeze in administrative work in between.

Mondays and Fridays, I teach Studio Company. Tuesdays, I teach the top level of the school. Every other day, I teach the second to the top level of the school. And on Fridays, I also teach the children's division level three. And that's a big spread, and I have to plan. I plan classes. Where I've fallen off the wayside is that I've stopped planning my classes. I walk in totally cold because I run from a meeting often stone-cold into the studio, and I'm thinking on my feet. And I don't love that because I was used to being freelance, where I planned every class. I do kind of know the kids (in the JKO School) now. It takes me, probably, the first two months to kind of go, "Oh, okay, now I know what they need, where they're at." But it stresses me tremendously. I'm feeling like I'm just not... I'm not teaching to my best ability, and that bothers me a great deal. I miss being ready in the studio and knowing "This is what you're getting," because the kids, they don't want an

excuse. They don't want me to say, "Sorry. I just came from a meeting. I was dealing with a crisis at the dorms, or I was dealing with something." They don't care. They need a good class, and I'd be the same. I'd be really mad if somebody didn't come prepared. (C. Harvey, personal communication, March 6, 2020)

This is an aspect of dance and teaching dance that is universal. Cynthia said it best when she said she doesn't have enough brain time. Time to truly sit down and plan, to be proactive, rather than reactive. With only one day a week off, Cynthia simply doesn't have enough time.

If I only get Sunday off, it doesn't give me enough time. And I think brain time is very underestimated here, and maybe that's the case elsewhere too. But I feel like we're not paid for time to think. We're just paid for what we do. And if you can be used every single hour of the day in some form or another; that verifies a lot of the idea that you're being paid well. And I am. I'm not complaining about that at all. I made my contract strong on purpose because I didn't really need the job. I was perfectly happy doing what I was doing. And now I'm working, and I'm working and without time to think, so I'm thinking on my feet a lot. (C. Harvey, personal communication, March 6, 2020)

Adrienne felt that sometimes she does a really great job of approaching her daily to-do list, and sometimes she fails miserably. Similarly to Cynthia, she surrounds herself with people that are good at reminding her and who can keep her on track.

I'm able to take direction and I'm able to say, "You're right, I need to do that." I really do try and take things one day at a time, when I'm feeling overwhelmed, it's normally because I'm doing too much, and then I try and somehow cut back and focus on the people, places or things that really deserve my attention. Because, just we're so good as women at being multi-taskers, but it's really just not such a good thing to do. I used to

really pride myself on being busy, but busy is not always a good thing. I try not to get so maniacal when it comes to planning. The really important things, yes I'll write them down. But beyond that, I just try to live in a sort of day-to-day situation. I think touring really teaches you that. I've been touring so much, since I was a teenager really. Life on the road is just that. It's life on the road. It teaches you that you've got to roll with the punches, or you're never going to be able to make it. Motherhood has taught me that too.

(A. Canterna, personal communication, March 14, 2020)

Molly and Rachel were similar in their response to the questions about daily organization. Each uses lists and task management software to keep the focus where it needs to be. In Rachel's present situation, she is doing less of the import/export and inventory management that she was doing with Flexistretcher, which has given her time to focus on developing Hamrick Method, her teaching/education opportunities, and her branding agency. This is still not a shortlist of responsibilities, but it is more manageable than in the recent past.

Feedback

Emotionally Intelligent Leadership is defined as being aware of yourself, your emotions, values, strengths, limitations, and worldview (Shankman, 2015). Based on conversations that developed during the interview process, the researcher posed the question, "*How do you collect/receive feedback in your leadership position?*" to two of the participants.

In the case of Cynthia, she receives an annual evaluation from Kevin McKenzie, Artistic Director of ABT. From there, the evaluation goes to human resources. However, most of the questions on the evaluation pertain to administrative staff.

For Adrienne, the process is much different. Adrienne indicated that this has been a work in progress for her, often finding teachable moments in the process.

It's different when you have a small business and you don't have all these different people in positions that you really need, and you don't have a big human resources department. You just don't have those things and those people, so you have to try and read things, and talk to people, and just make sure that you're on the right path as to creating your own safe, nurturing, supportive and efficient work environment, because no one's going to do it for you, and it can all blow up as quickly as you started it. (A.

Canterna, personal communication, March 14, 2020)

She went on to say that just because she runs a small business, doesn't mean she can't learn from big businesses. "It's like now, going through so much of what I've gone through personally, and as a woman, as a mother, as a survivor, as all of these things, those things are the most important to me now, and creating a work environment that is healthy is everything (A. Canterna, personal communication, March 14, 2020). Adrienne's protocol in collecting feedback consists of clear communication with her dancers, most importantly the dance captains, producers, and even from fans. She credited her ability to decipher and act on feedback in a level-headed way to her being a female and her strong listening skills.

I think you just have to listen. You have to listen, and you have to sort of always keep your eyes open, and your ears open, and your heart open and your mind open, because honestly, you can learn so much about yourself and your surroundings if you really pay attention. If not, you just keep doing the same shit over and over again, and you just never really learn. I could've really fallen into that, but I think being on my own after so long and being in such a scary place for so long, and then not being as scared, I was sort of fearless, and just tried to really listen. Like I was saying, because when you're really

fearful, you don't listen. You're just sort of on autopilot because you're scared all the time.

(A. Canterna, personal communication, March 14, 2020)

Adrienne went on to share a story about her dance captain on the tour they were just working on (before COVID-19 ending the tour early):

She's a young woman. She's in her late 20s. Beautiful in every way, inside and out, and extremely intelligent and hardworking. Just wonderful. Just so promising. But when she came to me in her first couple weeks of the job, telling me how different it was to not just be a dancer in the cast, but to have more responsibilities, to have an elevated position, a position of authority even, and how it made her feel so different, personally, and to question things; about how she's annoyed by certain things now, and she's confused by certain things now, and how some people treat her differently. When I was able to hear those things from her, I thought this is a perfect moment for feedback for her. This is the perfect moment to not say, "Everything's going to be okay." To just not let it go. To instead say, "This is real life, and this is what I'm going to tell you, and this isn't going to change. You're going to have to change this." All of the stories that came out of her opening up about her feelings that I could've just pushed aside and said, "Yeah, it's tough, huh?" That sort of thing, but I couldn't. It was a teachable moment for both of us.

Because I tend to think now, whenever I make decisions like that, I tend to think how would I have wanted it? Would this have been beneficial for me if someone did this for me? Did I need this? Did I not have this? What would have happened if I did have this person, or if this person did say this to me? I try to constantly reflect on how to be better than I was or just be better for them. And more present, because feedback is everything. As difficult as it is to hear, or say, or experience or whatever, things really do improve

when you actually take the initiative to do it. (A. Canterna, personal communication, March 14, 2020)

What was interesting in this conversation was how Adrienne not only addressed how she is given feedback but also how she gives feedback, continuously demonstrating her strong leadership skills as a female in ballet.

Barriers

The participants in the study were asked about barriers they encountered as females during their rise to leadership positions. Cynthia expressed that she hadn't experienced barriers per se, but recognized that there was an aspect of female assertiveness that was not necessarily embraced at ABT and in ballet in general still. She qualified herself as being straightforward, which is unexpected, and could be a barrier. "I think a male could get away with saying things in the manner I say them . . . a little more diplomacy on my part perhaps is necessary" (C. Harvey, personal communication, March 6, 2020). Cynthia also noted, however, that Mary Jo Ziesel, Director of Education and Training, would say that she (Cynthia) is the most diplomatic person she has met.

Rachel's experience spoke to a few more barriers than Cynthia's. The first being her stature, which while lithe, as a ballerina typically is, Rachel is quite tall. This is a challenge in ballet because the ballerina should typically shorter than her male partner so that once pointe shoes are added she doesn't tower over him. She expressed that she knew she needed to find a way to dance professionally, and she did. She found her own unique path, which might not have been the same as many others. "If you are willing to work hard and sacrifice, if you're willing to do that, then there is a way" (R. Hamrick, personal communication, March 6, 2020). The second major barrier Rachel faced was in the business world. As someone self-taught, there were many

barriers. She spoke to knowing then what she knows now and how things might have been different, yet also understands that she learned so much from those experiences. Rachel told the following story regarding the sale of her first business, Flexistretcher:

With Flexistretcher I wasn't exactly happy with how the company was sold. I scaled really fast, and I thought, "Oh, great! This is going really well. I'm just going to keep working." I wish my partner, I had a partner at the time, and people we worked with, I just wish someone had told me I was going to need more funding to keep up with the scale because this scale meant I needed more inventory and staffing; that there was no way I was going to be able to keep operating at that level, it wasn't feasible. That was the time when I probably should have looked for new partnerships. I was really hoping to partner with Capezio, or get new investors, or do something like Shark Tank. I never thought it could go down, but when it did it wasn't because the demand wasn't there, but because I couldn't keep up with it. I also dealt with a lot of counterfeits from Asia. They hijack your Amazon listing and counterfeits pop up everywhere. So if someone was ordering from me, it would really go to them, because you bid for the buy box. It's just crazy what I had to deal with, so it was just sucking all my time and energy. I seemed like I was doing well because everything was growing, but because it was doing well, it was just so much more work, and the money wasn't there to keep up with it. But now (with Hamrick Method) I'm staying in business. I understand more now that I am deeper into business, for example, if you have a company and it's doing well, then you go back to a venture capitalist for your next series of funding. You've grown the business to here, you've met all your goals, and now you need more funding. You can't keep operating otherwise. (R. Hamrick, personal communication, March 6, 2020)

As more and more dancers enter the world of entrepreneurship, whether it's starting a company or building a personal brand, these are stories that they should have in their repertoire to learn from others' experiences.

Successes and Challenges

“Leadership requires major expenditures of effort and energy—more than most people care to make” (Gardner, 2013, p. 19). The four participants interviewed in this study exemplify the amount of effort and energy required to do the jobs that they do, and to do those jobs well. Responses to questions of successes and challenges in their roles as female leaders in ballet were eye-opening and genuine. A response that rang through for each of them was the fact that they were a mother on top of their leadership role. The researcher did not intentionally choose women who were leaders and well as mothers, this was simply an interesting and happy coincidence.

Cynthia spoke to her ability to bring a global perspective and high standards back to ABT as some of her successes. She danced with ABT, she danced with the Royal Ballet, she taught all over Europe and became friends with many of the school directors there. Having danced with the greatest ballet dancers this world has seen also has something to do with her success.

If we have any success, it's probably due to my standard; my standard being from my time dancing, from having had the greatest dancers around me, Mikhail Baryshnikov and Anthony Dowell and people who helped me in my career. Having that standard with me and within me, from those illustrious people, you don't lose it. (C. Harvey, personal communication, March 6, 2020)

For Molly, her success lies in the creation of the NTC and her longevity at ABT. She equated the creation and implementation of the NTC to birth. “I have this physical thing that I feel like I birthed . . . literally . . . this curriculum. This binder is like . . . I did this! And that's

kind of cool” (M. Schnyder, personal communication, March 5, 2020). Molly has worked at ABT for 19 years. She is still a trusted and involved staff member and hasn’t lost her passion for what ABT stands for.

Rachel identified her success as being an educator, teacher, mentor, and entrepreneur, all while being a wife and a mother; also that she accomplished all of this with such an unconventional educational background. In her roles as an educator, teacher, and mentor, she spoke to working with her students on a new skill or preparing for competition. With some of her young students, if they don’t get it right away, or don’t win right away, they want to stop. She hopes that she can inspire them to think a different way, to show them how to follow their passions, work hard, and to know that they can learn anything if they are willing to put in time and effort.

The ability to be a business owner, working choreographer and dancer, as well as a mother are elements that define Adrienne’s success. Having won a lot in her past, in ballet competitions and such, success is not something she often took time to think about. For her, success was about personal successes that came from challenges. She is a survivor of domestic violence, she is proud she left a horrible marriage, she is proud to be raising her daughter in a feminist way, she is proud to make her own money, that she found her voice, and that she feels empowered (A. Canterna, personal communication, March 14, 2020).

As far as challenges go, Molly and Cynthia expressed similar viewpoints. The limitations of ABT are known, but Cynthia didn’t initially realize how much of a role financial implications played. From the time she came back to ABT, she has been working to implement her vision. Having done what any good leader would do upon accepting a new position, she re-introduced herself to the institution and got to know the staff and the students. Now, she is working to make

changes, but financial limitations and implications make this a challenge. She wondered if she had been forceful enough in enacting change, as the process is taking longer than she would like. During this time, her network of colleagues and friends who are also school artistic directors, have become an important resource. She joked that Jason Beechey, a male director she knows in Dresden, Germany told her that it took him 10 years to get his school the way he wanted it. Her response was, “Well, I don’t know if I will be alive that long. That’s a long, long time” (C. Harvey, personal communication, March 6, 2020).

In her interview, Molly mentioned the stress that senior staff members are under as a particular challenge, as well as the lack of resources (financial and otherwise) chronically present at ABT. Molly referenced a book by Michelle Obama which acknowledged the fact that working parents, especially moms, get themselves into situations where they agree to work for less pay in order to have the flexibility to take care of their family, yet they still end up doing the same amount of work and having the same amount of responsibility. Finding balance and advocating for yourself are two challenges that many working mothers encounter. “It’s hard to find a balance and it can be very stressful, but we don’t want to complain because we’re grateful for the job and the flexibility” (M. Schnyder, personal communication, March 5, 2020). Molly also discussed the financial situation at ABT, that every penny is spent making sure the company fulfills its mission. This means working with a very lean staff, limited technology, and bare-bones resources. They have all learned to do a lot with very little. In Molly’s case, the NTC is completely self-funded; everything that the NTC does or wants to do has to be self-generated.

Favorite Aspects of the Job

When asked what their favorite parts of their respective jobs were, the participants in the study produced four different answers, demonstrating that leadership, especially female leadership in ballet is not cookie-cutter.

Cynthia loved that she is still able to be in the studio with the students; being able to watch them fix a correction or express joy when they are awarded a role. “I love coming here every morning. Coming in and passing a studio or even being in the studio and seeing those young kids who are so joyful and happy here, for me, that’s still the best part of the job” (C. Harvey, personal communication, March 6, 2020).

In Molly’s case, her favorite part of her job is the people at ABT. Having worked at places that didn’t have the same camaraderie, she appreciated that about where she is currently. Recently, New York City Ballet has had massive company culture issues that have made national news. Molly said she cannot imagine that kind of behavior at ABT.

For Rachel, her favorite part of her job now is that she can work for herself and control her own destiny. She has a true passion for learning new things, and now she has time to see where that takes her. Her end goal is always to help people and to let her passion come through in that. She also loved that she has more time to be with her son now; she wants to be a good role model for him.

Adrienne identified her favorite part of her job as being when she feels like she has learned something, or made a good decision as a leader. The thrill of seeing something come together because she made a really good choice and made a difference.

Mentorship

The value of a mentor in the ballet world is invaluable. As the participants have stated, there are times in this industry when you are left not knowing where you stand or what to expect. When asked this question, the participants in the study all responded that they had at least one mentor, and in many cases, more than one. For Cynthia, it was Gailene Stock and Amanda Bennett, both of whom run pre-professional ballet training schools in Europe. Molly identified her co-workers, Mary Jo Ziesel, Dennis Walters, and Franco De Vita as being her mentors.

Molly looks to these people for vision and direction, and she does everything in her power to make it happen. She found their ability to envision and manage so many projects inspiring. For Rachel, her mentors are the teachers she had growing up, one female in particular that she trained with outside of the Kirov Academy. Rachel noted that this teacher's passion, approachability, and willingness to get in and do the work inspired her. Though, she also noted that inspiration has come from people who didn't believe in her. Rachel's drive to succeed and to prove the naysayers wrong were strong motivators. In Adrienne's interview, she acknowledged her parents as strong mentors, especially her dad who was a successful business and family man.

Secondarily, she mentioned the woman who owns the dance studio where her company rehearses in Maryland. The studio is called Design in Motion, and the woman who owns the studio was Adrienne's jazz teacher growing up. Since there aren't dance classes being held at the studio during the school day, Adrienne is allowed to use the studio to rehearse with her dancers. This is no small gift, as finding and affording rehearsal space anywhere can be a massive challenge. Not only is she a mentor as Adrienne's teacher, but they have also now forged a relationship and friendship as two adult women.

She has this massive amount of knowledge. And she's a mother, and she's been divorced. She's just the coolest, most wonderful, level-headed, big hearted, trustworthy, protective person that I know, really. She has kept me safe when I was not safe before, in terms of having doors closed. She's just everything. She's really smart with money, and I'm not. She had a bank job in the past. She's brilliant. Just even a lunch with her, I learn just loads. She is amazing and so generous. I've had a home for my business, two big studios every day that I'm working because of her. (A. Canterna, personal communication, March 14, 2020)

Summary and Findings

This chapter presented the categorized findings from four separate interviews concerning the research question: *What is the experience of being a female leader in professional and pre-professional ballet?* The purpose of the study was to answer the aforementioned research question and also to shed light upon the experiences, stories, styles, advantages, and disadvantages of current female leaders in the professional and pre-professional ballet world. The questions asked of the participants who are introduced in this chapter, focused on their stories and experiences as females in leadership roles in pre-professional and professional ballet. While each interview was unique, just as each participant's path was, recurring themes presented themselves across the narratives. Those themes were training and career development, female leadership, leadership responsibilities, and mentorship.

A thorough introduction of each participant was provided. As this is a narrative study, which requires the telling of the participants' stories and experiences, it was critical to start the story from the beginning, which for the purpose of this study is when each participant began her training and career in ballet. All four participants have the commonality of having trained extensively in ballet. The rest of their stories and experiences intersected and diverged often, providing a thorough picture of what the female leadership experience is in pre-professional and professional ballet.

The findings demonstrate that the female leadership experience in ballet is ever-evolving, challenging, rewarding, and a life-long journey; that the participants often work under stressful conditions with few resources, and little "brain time". It is their passion for ballet that has kept them in this field. Even when they tried to close the door on their involvement with ballet, it found a way to work its way back into their lives. The researcher found that the initial

experiences in ballet training shaped the careers of the participants. If any singular event in any of the participants' lives had been different, their entire experience may have been altered.

In Cynthia's case, if she had not felt that competitive push to do what her older sister was doing, she might not have trained with the vigor that she did. This training led to her moving to New York, joining ABT at a very young age, building an amazingly successful career, moving to England, coming back to ABT, retiring and starting a family, beginning a teaching career, only to come back to ABT as the director of a pre-professional training school. Her leadership behaviors and philosophies are related to her experiences. Having worked with high standards during her performance career, she has continued this into her teaching and directorship.

For Molly, if she had not gone to college at University of California Irvine she might not have continued with ballet. If she had not worked in fundraising at various universities, she might not have had the skillset for the internship and subsequent full-time position at ABT. Her strengths lie in her organizational and implementation skills; skills that she developed through a lifetime of multi-tasking in each of her jobs.

Rachel's story was filled with elements of perseverance and passion. If she had not developed these through her ballet training, her path might have been very different. She knew from the beginning that she was on a unique journey. She even shared a story about being young and writing a book in school that she titled, "Rachel's First Published Book". She was driven to lead and forge ahead from a very early age. In her case, every experience she has had has been an opportunity to learn and grow.

Adrienne's experiences in ballet and life have carved her into the leader and performer she is today. The choices she made, the wins and the losses, and the lessons she has learned

along the way have informed every aspect of her leadership. She leads from a place of honesty and compassion because of her life experiences.

Each of the participants demonstrated all of the hot buttons of successful leadership in their current positions. From personal mastery of their craft to a focus on being present and appreciating the work that they get to do every day. They are each self-reflective in the execution of their responsibilities and take an authentic approach to their work. They have built trust in their organizations to inspire others. They have demonstrated benevolence, honesty, openness, reliability, and competence, qualities that define a trustworthy leader (Tschannen-Moran, 2013). They each have a thoughtful vision for a better future that challenges the status quo, even when they don't consider themselves to be a visionary. It's something that is engrained in them, and whether that is something that is unique to this group or true to ballet dancers as a collective is a much larger study than the scope of this research.

CHAPTER 5: OVERVIEW CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This thesis aimed to explore the female leadership experience in pre-professional and professional ballet. This study is significant because, while there is substantial research on leadership and female leadership, not much has been examined in the way of female leadership in ballet. The main research question was: *What is the female leadership experience in pre-professional and professional ballet?* The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the research study and findings, conclusions drawn, and to present recommendations for future research.

Overview of the Study

This research study was a qualitative, narrative study. A narrative study employs the use of collecting stories and experiences, retelling those stories, and devising themes and conclusions from the data collected. The sampling of participants was purposeful and included four females who are currently in leadership positions in pre-professional and professional ballet. Each participant was initially contacted by an email invitation. Upon acceptance, a 60-minute interview was scheduled with each participant. This study experienced limitations due to the onset of COVID-19, the fact that there are few females in currently in leadership roles in ballet and that two interview subjects are from the same company, as well as time frame to accomplish research. The participants in the study spanned the spectrum of leadership in ballet from administration, to artistic direction, to production and choreography, and entrepreneurship.

A review of the existing literature provided a basis for the researcher to develop the interview protocol. The literature examined included the following categories: history of ballet leadership, leadership culture, evolution of leadership, and gender-based leadership. Both leadership as a general category and leadership in ballet were examined. The literature discussed overall leadership and ballet leadership culture, male-focused and defined leadership, the qualities and benefits of female leadership, as well as the lack of literature on the specific subject of female leadership in ballet.

Findings from the interview process revealed answers to the main research question: *What is the female leadership experience in pre-professional and professional ballet?* The responses were analyzed deductively to determine what the leadership experience is like for females in ballet. This included an understanding of the participant's training background and career development, their experience as a female leader including behaviors, benefits, and responsibilities, and the importance of having mentors and being a mentor to the next generation.

Conclusions

While the scope of this qualitative study was small, the researcher was able to provide insight into the female leadership experience in pre-professional and professional ballet. Secondly, the researcher found that in this instance, each individual's unique path to leadership had informed their leadership practice, behaviors and philosophy. Due to the nature and limitations of the study, the researcher cannot definitively say that this would be the case for every leader, but it was true in this study. Whether it was the competitive drive against a sibling, the forethought to take a position outside of ballet in order to work in ballet, the pulsing force of passion and perseverance, or the thrill of discovery and entrepreneurship, the experiences leading to a leadership position are what inform the actions, behaviors, and traits of the leader, as well as

influence the narrative moving forward. If any element in any participant's story or experience had been different, their entire path, and therefore their leadership behavior may have been different.

The purpose of this study was to investigate and document the female leadership experience in pre-professional and professional ballet, which was accomplished through a substantial interview protocol. It is the hope of the researcher that the stories and experiences shared in this study will shed light upon the styles, behaviors, successes, challenges, and predictions of current female leaders in the pre-professional and professional ballet world.

Recommendations for Future Research

In this study, the researcher was able to explore the effect that past experiences have on current experiences to answer the question: *What is the female leadership experience in pre-professional and professional ballet?* If undertaking future research on a similar subject, the researcher would recommend more time to complete the study, including follow-up interviews and observations of the participant in their work environment. The researcher would also recommend expanding the pool of participants to include more leaders, as well as leaders from different generations, and perhaps even from different countries to truly understand the female leadership experience in ballet, as well as the scope of how past experiences have the potential to influence current and future experiences.

From these further research recommendations, the researcher would like to see the development of a training system or mentorship network for females looking to work towards leadership roles in ballet. This could be expanded to include other categories within the performing arts.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to provide an overview of the study, present the conclusion the researcher was able to draw, and offer recommendations for future research. The researcher was able to provide insight into the female leadership experience in ballet in the areas of administration, artistic direction, entrepreneurship, and choreography and production. However, the researcher was not able to make a generalized statement about the female leadership experience in pre-professional and professional ballet due to the small scope of the study. From the data collected in this study, the researcher was able to conclude that for these four participants, their past experiences informed and influenced the current leadership practices. Recommendations for future research include widening the scope and timeline of the study to devise a more generalized and broadly applicable conclusion, as well as the development of a training system or mentorship network for females looking to work towards leadership positions in ballet.

REFERENCES

- Barth, R.S. (2013). Culture in question. In M. Grogan (Ed.), *The Jossey-Bass reader on educational leadership* (3rd ed.,pp. 197-206). Jossey-Bass.
- Barth, R. S. (2013). Risk. In M. Grogan (Ed.), *The Jossey-Bass reader on educational leadership* (3rd ed., pp. 287-296). Jossey-Bass.
- Basco, S. (2015). Where are the women in ballet? Retrieved December 8, 2018, from the WBUR Boston's NPR Station website: <https://www.wbur.org/artery/2015/09/18/women-in-ballet>
- Chapman, J. B. (1975). Comparison of male and female leadership styles. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 18(3), 645–650. <https://doi.org/10.2307/255695>
- Cooper, M. (2016, June 23). Breaking the glass slipper: Where are the female choreographers? *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com>
- Creswell, J.W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Pearson.
- DeFrank-Cole, L., & Nicholson, R. K. (2016). The slow-changing face of leadership in ballet: an interdisciplinary approach to analyzing women's roles. *Leadership and the Humanities*, 4(2), 73–91.
- Dobbins, G. H., & Platz, S. J. (1986). Sex differences in leadership: how real are they? *The Academy of Management Review*, 11(1), 118–127. <https://doi.org/10.2307/258335>
- Eagly, A. H. (2007). Female leadership advantage and disadvantage: resolving the contradictions. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 31(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.2007.00326.x>

- Ewing, A. C. (2009). *Bravura! Lucia Chase and the American Ballet Theatre*. University Press of Florida.
- French, J. R. P., Jr., & Raven, B. H. (1959). The bases of social power. In D. Cartwright (Ed.), *Studies in social power* (pp. 150–167). Institute for Social Research.
- Gardner, J. W. (2013). The nature of leadership. In M. Grogan (Ed.), *The Jossey-Bass reader on educational leadership* (3rd ed., pp. 17-27). Jossey-Bass.
- Homans, J. (2010). *Apollo's angels*. Random House.
- Jennings, L. (2013, April 28). Sexism in dance: Where are all the female choreographers? *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com>
- Kelly, C.L. (2017). Dancing up the glass escalator: Institutional advantages for men in ballet choreography. *Columbia Undergraduate Research Journal*, 2(1).
<https://doi.org/10.7916/D8R78MJX>
- Klapper, M. R. (2017). “You shouldn’t tell boys they can’t dance”: boys and ballet in America. *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*, 10(2), 248–267.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/hcy.2017.0027>
- Kourlas, G., & Burke, S. (2018, October 18). Two critics reflect on ballet’s #MeToo moment. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/18/arts/dance/new-york-city-ballet-me-too.html>
- Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (2007). The five practices of exemplary leadership. *The Jossey-Bass reader on educational leadership* (2nd ed., pp. 63-72). Jossey-Bass.
- Lexico powered by Oxford (n.d.). *Feminism*. <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/feminism>

- McCallister, J. (n.d.). Glass escalator in sociology: definition & effects. Retrieved November 23, 2019, from Study.com website: <https://study.com/academy/lesson/glass-escalator-in-sociology-definition-effects-quiz.html>
- Meglin, J. A., & Brooks, L. M. (2012). Where are all the women choreographers in ballet? *Dance Chronicle*, 35(1), 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01472526.2011.650617>
- Northouse, P. (2013). *Leadership: theory and practice* (6th ed.). Sage.
- Pogrebin, R. (2017, December 12). Five dancers accuse City Ballet’s Peter Martins of physical abuse. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/12/arts/dance/peter-martins-ballet-new-york-city-physical-abuse.html>
- Senge, P. (2013). Give me a lever long enough...and single-handed I can move the world. In M. Grogan (Ed.), *The Jossey-Bass reader on educational leadership* (3rd ed., pp.3-16). Jossey-Bass.
- Sergiovanni, T. J. (2013). Leadership as stewardship: Who’s serving who? In M. Grogan (Ed.), *The Jossey-Bass reader on educational leadership* (3rd ed., pp. 372-389). Jossey-Bass.
- Shakeshaft, C., Nowell, I., & Perry, A. (2000). Gender and supervision. *The Jossey-Bass reader on educational leadership* (1st ed., pp. 257-266). Jossey-Bass.
- Shankman, M. L., Allen, S. J., & Haber-Curran, P. (2015). *Emotionally intelligent leadership: A guide for students*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Taragano, M. (n.d.). Choreography and gender: Still looking for the female choreographers. Retrieved August 19, 2019, from website: <http://conectom.leimay.org/profiles/blogs/choreography-and-gender-still-looking-for-the-female>
- Tschannen-Moran, M. (2013). Becoming a trustworthy leader. In M. Grogan (Ed.), *The Jossey-*

- Bass reader on educational leadership* (3rd ed., pp. 40-54). Jossey-Bass.
- Van Dyke, J. (1996). Gender and success in the american dance world. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 19(5), 535–543. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-5395\(96\)00048-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-5395(96)00048-9)
- Vecchiotti, R. (2011, March 10). Leadership: A contemporary view. Retrieved from:
<https://beampines.wordpress.com/2011/03/10/leadership-a-contemporary-view/>
- Vecchiotti, R. (2018). Contemporary leadership: the perspective of a practitioner. *Journal of Leadership Studies*, 12(2), 40–45. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jls.21573>
- Vetter, L.P. (2010). *Overview: feminist theories of leadership. Gender and women's leadership: a reference handbook*. (p. 3-10). Sage.

APPENDIX A

Email to Potential Participants

Dear Ms. _____,

My name is Jill Grundstrom. I am a graduate student and college professor in Michigan. I am working on a thesis research project on female leadership in ballet and was wondering if you would be willing and available for an interview as a _____? This is a narrative study, meaning that I am documenting the female experience in ballet leadership, as many of these stories are untold at this point. I intend for this study to be inspirational and informational for future leaders of ballet. The process will consist of 4 pre-interview questions and 7 interview questions. Interviews can be conducted in-person, over the phone, by email, or via Zoom meeting. The process should take about an hour. A copy of the final product will be provided to you! I hope to hear back from you and can provide further information at that point.

Thank you in advance for your consideration!

Best,

Jill Grundstrom

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study



Northern Michigan University
School of Education

PROJECT TITLE: The Female Leadership Experience in Pre-
Professional and Professional Ballet
IRB Approval Number: HS20-1105

Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to participate in this study.

Purpose of the Research Study:

The purpose of this study is to understand the female leadership experience in pre-professional and professional ballet through a narrative study that will tell the stories of female leaders.

What you will be asked to do in the study:

- A series of pre-interview questions that will be emailed to you.
- An in-person/Zoom/or phone interview that will consist of 7-10 questions.

Time required:

The pre-interview questions could take up to 30 minutes. The interview could last up to 90 minutes.

Risks and Benefits:

The only risk that could possibly apply would be that of honesty within interviews and the effect the reporting of this may have on the organizations as a whole if there was any connected behavior that pointed towards misconduct. Participants may experience some discomfort sharing elements of their leadership stories based on their individual experiences. Though, with the anticipated participants, this will likely not be a problem, as the organizations they work for appear to be functioning healthily. .

The potential benefits of the study include The benefit of this study is that light will be shed on the female leadership experience in pre-professional and professional ballet, a role that has been typically held by males in most organizations throughout history. This research study may contribute the development of future leadership theories, as not much has been documented in this sector..

Incentive or Compensation:

There is no incentive for participating; therefore, you will not be adversely affected in any way if you choose not to participate.

Confidentiality:

Your identity and affiliation will be shared in this study, unless you request anonymity.

If you request anonymity, your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. Should you elect not to remain anonymous, you will be de-identified by an assigned code. Your name and affiliation will not be used in any report or publication.

Voluntary participation:

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence or penalty.

Whom to contact if you have questions about the study:

If you have any further questions regarding your rights as a participant in a research project you may contact Dr. Lisa Schade Eckert of the Human Subjects Research Review Committee of Northern Michigan University (906-227-2300) leckert@nmu.edu. Any questions you have regarding the nature of this research project will be answered by the principal researcher who can be contacted as follows: Jill Grundstrom, jgrundst@nmu.edu, 906-361-8607.

Agreement:

If you wish to participate in this study, please sign the form below. A signature will indicate agreement to participate.

Participant's Name: (Print) _____

Signature _____ (Date) _____

I understand that I will be audio or video recorded digitally by the researcher(s). These files will be kept by the researcher(s) on a password protected computer. I understand that only the researcher(s) will have access to these files.

Sharing of identity

Participants will be offered the options of remaining anonymous in the telling of their stories or being identified in the research.

I consent to having my identity/affiliation shared: Yes _____ No _____

Video recording of study activities

Interviews may be video recorded to assist with the accuracy of your responses. You have the right to refuse the recording. Please select one of the following options:

I consent to video recording: Yes _____ No _____

Audio Recording of Study Activities

Interviews may be using audio recorded to assist with the accuracy of your responses. You have the right to refuse the audio recording. Please select one of the following options:

I consent to audio recording: Yes _____ No _____

Photographing of study activities / participants

Photographs of participants may be taken to preserve an image related to the research. You have the right to refuse to allow photographs to be taken. Please select one of the following options:

I consent to photographs: Yes _____ No _____

APPENDIX C

Thank You Email to Participants

(To be sent post-interview and transcription)

Dear _____,

Thank you for sharing your leadership experiences with me! I appreciate your taking the time to do so, especially in the wake of all of this craziness. I have attached a copy of our interview transcription to this email for you to verify for accuracy. If you have any additional thoughts, ideas, or reflections that you would like to share with me please do not hesitate to reach out.

You may respond to this email or call me, whichever you prefer. My email address is jgrundst@nmu.edu, and my phone number is 906-361-8607.

Thank you very much!

Jill Grundstrom

APPENDIX D

IRB Approval



Graduate Studies and Research
Marquette, MI 49855-5301
906-227-2300
www.nmu.edu/graduatestudies/

Memorandum

TO: Jill Grundstrom
School of Education, Leadership, and Public Service

CC: Bethney Bergh
School of Education, Leadership, and Public Service

DATE: February 24, 2020

FROM: Lisa Schade Eckert
Dean of Graduate Education and Research

SUBJECT: IRB Proposal HS20-1105
IRB Approval Date: 2/24/2020
Proposed Project Dates: 1/29/2020 – 4/2/2020
“The Female Leadership Experience in Pre-Professional and Professional Ballet”

Your proposal “The Female Leadership Experience in Pre-Professional and Professional Ballet” has been approved by the NMU Institutional Review Board. Include your proposal number (HS20-1105) on all research materials and on any correspondence regarding this project.

- A. If a subject suffers an injury during research, or if there is an incident of non-compliance with IRB policies and procedures, you must take immediate action to assist the subject and notify the IRB chair (dereande@nmu.edu) and NMU’s IRB administrator (leckert@nmu.edu) within 48 hours. Additionally, you must complete an Unanticipated Problem or Adverse Event Form for Research Involving Human Subjects.
- B. Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant.
- C. If you find that modifications of investigators, methods, or procedures are necessary, you must submit a Project Modification Form for Research Involving Human Subjects before collecting data. Any changes or revisions to your approved research plan must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation.

All forms can be found at the NMU Grants and Research website:
<http://www.nmu.edu/grantsandresearch/node/102>