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Place: Offices of Dance Victoria, Victoria, BC

Interviewer: Dr. Allana Lindgren

Interviewee: Stephen White

Transcribed By: Kathleen Jerome

Interviewee has read the transcript: Yes

Introduction:

This interview was held with Stephen White in Victoria, British Columbia. During the interview, Mr. White discusses his early theatre training at the University of Windsor, followed by his time working as a playwright, a university professor, a festival producer and a grants officer before he became the producer of Dance Victoria, a non-profit organization that arranges for touring dance companies to perform in Victoria. Dance Victoria also hosts artists-in-residence and secured funding to allow choreographers to create new work. In this interview, Mr. White discusses the process of creating a season for Dance Victoria, the many changes he has made to the activities and structure of a dance presenter organization, as well as the dual roles of being an artist and a businessman. Finally, Mr. White addresses the difficulties of attracting younger audiences to the arts.

Rationale of editing/transcription choices:

The following transcription has been edited for clarity, though the content remains an accurate reflection of the conversation.

-Interview-

Allana: Today is October 24, 2011, and I am in the offices of Dance Victoria with Stephen White, the producer of the Dance Victoria Dance Series. Welcome.

Stephen: Thank-you.

Allana: So Stephen, can we start by talking a little bit about how one becomes a dance producer? What's your background?

Stephen: Oh well I have a very crooked path to the position and the position really has changed so significantly since I started with Dance Victoria, which was twelve years ago. So, you know, I came from a performing arts background. I studied to be an actor. I have a Bachelor of Fine Arts in acting from the University of Windsor. And then upon graduation and when I began to audition, I realized that I didn't have the temperament that was suitable to be an actor. All that rejection—I took it quite personally. So I went back and did some post-graduate studies in directing and then, over many years, I worked as a playwright. I worked as a sessional instructor at the University of Victoria in playwriting. I was mostly affiliated with theatre and then spent some time as a festival producer and also as a grants officer with the British Columbia Arts Council.

And twelve years ago this opportunity came along. At the time it was called the Victoria Dance Series and the fellow, Doug Durand, who started the Victoria Dance Series, was leaving for a job with the London Arts Board in the UK. It was quite exciting. And so this small contract

was on offer and it was essentially a promotions contract to publicize a small subscription series for dance that was happening in Victoria. And then a number of things transpired and grew out of there so that it's now, you know, a much larger organization and the way that we present dance is quite different from how it was twelve years ago.

Allana: Okay. So then what was the job like when you got it and how did your training in theatre prepare you for it?

Stephen: Sure, thanks. What Doug had done was really clever and I think, it really created a new model. I don't know if anybody else has taken it up, but it was a really smart way to start something to happen in a community. And that was that he knocked on the door and talked to those dance companies that sometimes included Victoria as part of their tour out west in Canada. They were companies like the National Ballet of Canada, or the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, or Ballet Jazz de Montréal—companies of a certain scale that would independently just book the Royal Theatre and offer a couple of performances in Victoria. And he contacted them and said, "I think there would be more power if we actually had a whole season of dance and if we were able to package that and sell it as a subscription." And he convinced those organizations to put a small amount of money into a common fund that then he used to build a subscription campaign and create this notion of a subscription dance series. And that's how he preceded for three years. So when he then got the job with the London Arts Board, the Victoria Dance Series was offered to just a couple of people in the community who were doing that kind of work.

And I was in that world of contracts; I was doing a summer festival—that was one contract. And I was also working, you know, I helped to open the CBC Radio station and that was another contract. And I was doing promotions and marketing primarily for out-of-town theatre companies that were coming and booking the theatres, so I would do their promotions in Victoria. So I think at the time it was a twelve thousand dollar contract and the offer was that I would promote this series that Doug had put together and that I would be pro-active in talking to the companies that book the Royal Theatre the following year.

And what transpired in that first year was that within days of Doug leaving Victoria, and it was mid-May, one of the companies that was supposed to be on the series phoned me and said, "Oh I'm so sorry, we can't make it." So we were suddenly—we went from three companies down to two companies, which did not make a series—it was very modest in those days. And so I—knowing nothing about the dance milieu it was a whole brand new world to me at the time—I contacted the only person in town that I could think of and that was dance teacher Lynda Raino, and I said to her. "Help, what do I do?!" And she had a friend in Montréal who was working on a show, and that friend happened to be a former choreographer with Cirque du Soleil. And I thought, "I could sell that. Cirque du Soleil!"

Allana: [Overtop Laughs.]

Stephen: So we invited Debra Brown to come to Victoria with a pick-up group and the choreography as it turned out—I was so naïve, but at the time I didn't really realize—you know, it hadn't really been completed. I don't know how long...

Allana: [Overtop Laughs.]

Stephen: ...Debbie had been in the studio putting it together because she got this gig out in Victoria. And so, you know, I advertised it as from, you know, the choreographer from Cirque du Soleil. World Premiere! And [Laughs] we had to add an extra show.

Allana: [Laughs] Oh my gosh!

Stephen: So, you know, unfortunately that incident made me think that this presentation thing was the way to go—that [Laughs] it was easy.

And so then what happened was Doug's original model morphed a bit and over the ensuing years, I'd say about three or four years, we Dance—or it was called Victoria Dance Series at the time—began to take more and more of the risk at the box office and started to contract with dance companies, and I was responsible for inviting those dance companies to come to Victoria and putting the season together. So the season grew and the whole notion of what we call assisted self-presents, that's where the company hires the local promoter to do the promotions for them but takes all the box office out-of-town when they leave. That assisted self-present model fell away and so that now Dance Victoria is fully a presenter and contracts with all the companies that come to Victoria—selects and contracts with them.

Allana: What other changes did you make to the organization because you've really grown the organization significantly?

Stephen: Yes, that's right. So it continued to be a part-time contract for me. I would say in the first three or four years of my tenure, maybe even five years, and we grew it, you know, the—and when I say “we” I mean the board of directors and also my partner Bill Hamar who was for many years an invisible employee and then finally who we got to a point where we could afford to hire him on a part-time basis.

So the audience for it grew. We grew the series about, you know, five—four or five years into my tenure we began to introduce contemporary dance because it had primarily been oriented toward ballet. And then we split it into couple of series, so you could buy a contemporary dance series, or you could buy the whole thing, or you could buy a ballet series. And we played a little bit with the format and as we felt more confident financially that we had found a model that was working, we were able to take bigger risks and bring higher profile companies to Victoria.

I often think that from the beginning, you know—and Doug had established this and then I kind of took it a little bit further—there was always this notion of audience development and education that was part of it, so we always wrote a newsletter. And when I took on the newsletter I decided that I wanted it to be an intimate conversation with the people that were coming to see the shows. And I purposely wrote and structured it that way so that it had kind of a clubby feel and it was like Stephen's personal notes to you, the subscriber, about why this work was selected how it sits within the canon or within current practice. And in doing that I think what happened is I took that core audience on a journey with me because I was learning so much about the milieu at the time. I was really just a sponge.

I would go to National meetings of the CanDance Network—which is our national dance presenters' association—and listen to who it was that the other presenters were interested in terms of artists and companies and be part of those discussions and scurry away and do my research and try and figure out, “Oh, who is it they're talking about?” And then I also educated myself by going to a lot of performances and festivals over many years. And, subsequently, in

my twelve years I have seen a whole lot of dance and become a lot more familiar. I've also educated myself by reading texts and keeping current with developments, you know, and magazines and reading scholarly pieces because, quite remarkably, I fell in love with dance. I came from theatre through festivals really with not much knowledge of dance at all and fell in love with it.

Allana: What is it about dance that attracts your—or, what kind of dance attracts you?

Stephen: Well, I think for me those are kind of two separate questions. What is it that attracts me about dance? I think its ability, when it works, to express something that words can't express. It can create an environment; it can create a mood; it can take you on a journey that sometimes is very hard to articulate even, you know, speaking with a friend afterwards about the piece when you move beyond, "Did you like it?" to what/how it moved you and what it was about.

There's a quality that you feel when you're watching a piece when you're fully engaged that there—when it's right—that has a resonance about life and the mysteries of life that you can't really talk about. There's also the beauty of the human body and its capacity.

You know I just saw a piece this past weekend where this woman was—the control she had with her gestures and her body was just phenomenal. And she did transport this entire audience even though people afterwards said, "Well, it could have been more dynamic for me." There was a moment in the theatre—she was between pieces and there was no music but she was moving on the stage and you could have heard a pin drop—that old expression—just because she had been so successful in taking us out of our busy, distracting, daily lives into another place entirely. So that's what I love about dance—when it transports you that. And now I've forgotten the other question. [Laughs]

Allana: Ah well, what kind of dance are you naturally...

Stephen: [Overtop] Oh, okay.

Allana: ...attracted to?

Stephen: So you know I'm lucky that my—because I was new to dance that my tastes, I think, are pretty diverse. I would say of the forms probably my favourite is contemporary ballet just because I do really value the technique, the dedication, the hard work that goes into ballet training and I love to see the line and the extension, but I also like contemporary dance, for sure, but I find contemporary dance a little bit more challenging because I think it's harder to find really good contemporary dance. There's a lot of contemporary dance that, no fault of the choreographer or the company, isn't fully realized and so, or perhaps the idea—the genesis—of the piece wasn't as rich as it could have been so the investigation is actually—I think that often happens actually where, where the question that the choreographer has, or the area of investigation when they go into the studio, isn't deep enough or rich enough to warrant a full piece. So I'm drawn to really all kinds of dance I would say.

Allana: Do you think presenters are implicated in that then? The need for a full evening's worth of dance? Do you think that's pushing choreographers to stretch ideas beyond the time length that they really need for their idea to be developed on stage?

Stephen: I think it's the whole culture of creation in the dance milieu in Canada—in English Canada. I would say for our friends in Québec, it's a different scenario. But I think what happens is funding agencies give small grants to independent artists who, if they're not affiliated with a company, are suddenly burdened with the responsibility of finding the rehearsal space, finding the dancers, scheduling, and then, aside from spending the time in the studio, promoting the event, booking the space, working with the technician, finding a lighting designer, all with a small amount of money. And so, you know, there's probably too much on the shoulders of the independent artists in terms of their responsibilities and there's probably not enough time for contemplation for development.

The ideal situation for most creative people across genres is to have some time to develop and create, some time away from a piece or a painting, time back with it and so it's about allowing time. I wonder about the supports for the development of work, if there's enough dramaturgical expertise in dance? Are there enough people that these independent dance artists can turn to say, "Can you come in and take a look at my piece? Can we talk about it?" In a more objective manner just in terms of the arc of the dance, or you know, the development of the idea. And so those kind of, I think, you know, because it's such a paltry—there's such a paltry amount of money and few opportunities for an independent dance artist, emerging artist, or even a mid-career dance artist to be presented by a presenter.

I was just this past weekend at our latest CanDance meeting—the network now has thirty-eight members across Canada. Presenters of all kinds of scale, everything from the National Arts Centre, to Dancer's Studio West in Calgary, which is a seventy-five seat venue—we're all doing our practice in different ways. Although it's interesting when we do a roundtable we talk about the companies that we're booking for the coming season and the companies that we're talking to for the future season, there is some commonality. And in my hotel room between meetings on the weekend I thought about the power that we have in that room, those thirty-eight organizations in terms of shaping and selecting. On many levels, shaping is shaping the taste or the attitude of our local audience, as well as who it is we give opportunity to, who it is that we select for our seasons, and how they can then make a tour out of it, and how then they become a more important voice than the ones that have been neglected. And then you think about, you know, the happenstance or the kind of—I don't have the word—but the way that that's such an arbitrary decision in some ways and it can be made by one presenter who happens to be in the bar at the right time [Laughs] with a dance artist and then talks to other presenters/colleagues that are respected by that, that initial dance presenter. So it's an unfair system in a way and so I think that what I've realized is that our responsibility has to extend beyond, as presenters, beyond just putting together a season of work that's got popularity at that time or that there's some consensus in the national arena that these are companies of interest, that there's a responsibility that extends to our local community and also to the emerging and mid-career artists that aren't being given the main stage performances, but have a lot of valuable ideas. How do we invest in those artists to give them the time and opportunity to do that?

Allana: So as power broker...

Stephen: Mhm.

Allana: ...how—that's the theory, but when you're putting a season together, can you talk me through what is involved in putting a season together?

Stephen: Sure. So it's a gigantic puzzle and it takes many, many—I'm in the throes of actually planning 2013, I mean it's mostly there but I'm now waffling about whether I've selected the right combination of companies and the right combination of dates and...

You know for a time we're—we can talk about this a little later about the shifting landscape in terms of what our practice is as presenters in Canada, how it's a really a dynamic time right now—and so because of those factors I'm second guessing myself quite a bit. But really a whole process always starts with securing dates in the theatre, because in Victoria—and this is common I think across the country—we share our venue with the opera company and symphony, and so we will soon have a meeting about 2013/2014 where we hash out what dates, who gets what dates in the theatre.

Allana: How's that determined?

Stephen: In meetings. It's collegial...

Allana: [Laughs.]

Stephen: ...It's friendly [Laughs], although you may have to push a little bit to say, "Look, I can't start my season in December. I have to have a fall date." So we'd have a couple of meetings. All of us with our calendars unfurled in front of us. And so that's how it starts, is you know that you have these dates in the theatre, and then it's a matter of matching the dates with what might be touring. In many cases, Dance Victoria has works on its seasons that are part of a larger tour and we're working with the New York agent or working with manager of the Canadian company who is trying to piece that tour together.

In other cases, it happens from time to time, actually it's increasing because there are no real agents in Canada because we are a relatively small audience spread across a wide piece of geography. We tend to, as presenters, take on a lot of responsibilities that agents would normally take on, and so that is that I may be travelling somewhere and at a festival and see a company that I'm very excited about that I will then come back and talk to fellow presenters about—I usually will have my materials—they're materials with me so that we can exchange those and then we will independently or I will take the lead on actually creating a small tour for that company. So for example, Alonzo King LINES Ballet, which is on our season this year, is shared by two other BC presenters and it was the three of us that came together to make that tour happen. And then Dance Victoria takes the lead to apply for some funds to help offset the price of travelling that company through BC.

So it's a whole combination of things. I think it's really important, and I know my fellow presenters share this opinion as well, that we see as much work as we possibly can and that even on our off time that we check out performances in cities around the world to see where the next thing might be coming from.

Allana: Well, it is a huge responsibility as you've suggested because you're actually doing much more than just booking companies; you're also helping to create work, to commission work.

Stephen: That's right. And that's that part that I spoke about just a few minutes earlier about where I feel the responsibility extends beyond just that presentation series. And you know honestly, Allana, in the beginning what brought us to this point today, where we have our own studios, and where we have companies in residence, where we offer—we have a mentor program where we bring a mentor from Vancouver to work with local choreographers who are developing new work and we do that annually. And we're doing a number of other things: giving free studio time to choreographers who are creating new works, and doing as much as we can to support the professional development of our own local community, while also contributing to the national milieu by having companies in residence here.

The genesis of that was that shortly into this gig, I realized just how fragile it was to have a presentation series where you booked companies and you brought them to town. What the heck happened if two of them didn't sell or—and, you know, we were very fortunate, I would say in the first ten years of my tenure that in working on a very, very, very narrow [Laughs] margin we were able to balance the books on an annual basis and that was all really dependent on box office sales. So I had a really lucky streak for a long time of being able to select work that the Victoria community responded to, still maintain an office and some staff—a staff compliment.

So the notion of, just a couple of years into this, that we need to put down more roots, that we needed to be more vital to the community, and that we needed to have an impact on the community, was in some sense a business decision just to find ways to mitigate the risk at the box office. But that developed and, even though it was a business decision, it also had such a positive impact for the local community. And it was the right direction for us to go.

So a year ago we acquired, we paid for, we bought the head lease on our current facility, which is twelve thousand square feet with three studios, and that has allowed us to really beef up the projects that we've—that were in place to support this creative development.

Allana: You're also very modest though, because you just haven't balanced the budget and taken on a studio, but you have expanded the staff. I mean, you've lasted fifteen years, celebrating your fifteenth anniversary this year—that's quite amazing. And, and so it seems like you have a lot of business savvy, do—are you thinking like a business?

Stephen: Definitely. I think it's, you know, we're definitely entrepreneurial and one of the considerations and motivations for buying the lease and having a studio that operates where we sublease to a number of local dance schools or studios was that we—what was really attractive for us was the monthly cash flow, the fact that there were cheques coming into the office every month to pay for rent and it just made a much more healthy kind of revenue stream for us and gave us more of a solid foundation. It also provided us with street presence.

I think it's imperative to approach what we're doing as being a community asset and contributing to the vitality and the community both in our genre and just in general in terms of the quality of life. But to approach that with a very kind of business, with a business approach. I think that's vital. I think if organizations that are too oriented toward the art form without that, they often just struggle to make ends meet and the art form gets obscured. Yeah, so it's a social enterprise essentially and I think more and more that's kind of the understanding of people in positions similar to mine.

Allana: You make it sound very easy, but what are some of the challenges that Dance Victoria has faced?

Stephen: Well I think it's staying relevant and staying connected to the community. Increasingly—I talked about this shifting landscape and you know, it is something that we began to feel a couple of years ago and initially we figured it was the recession, but then a lot of my partners locally, like at the theatre and the opera and the symphony, were reluctant to admit that they were experiencing some of the same decline in audiences that we were. And it's mostly in the single ticket sales; it's not so much with subscribers. Our experience is that those people who are close to the organization and loyal to it have remained so. But it's enticing that other audience—that single ticket audience—to come through the door.

And this past weekend when I was at the Network meetings, a very eloquent speaker, Jeff Melanson, who is the new CEO of the Banff Centre and one of the parties responsible for building the National Ballet School and the Royal Conservatory in Toronto, had recent statistics and had done the research and gave a very interesting presentation on the decline of audiences for traditional performing arts. And you know it's evident from 2008 and it's right across the county and it's right across the board, and he discounts the recession; he figures that's one part of the equation, but he also feels that what's really coming home to haunt us is that demographic shift we've been talking about for years. And our failure to connect with a younger audience is in part because that younger audience did not receive a quality of arts education in the schools; those were programs that were cut fifteen years ago so it's still something new to them the whole notion of opera, or dance, or theatre.

And also at the same time, the rise of the digital world and the fact that people are spending five-to-seven hours in front of a digital screen every day, and that there are so many options for entertainment and individualized entertainment as well; you tailor your entertainment with tools like the iPad, or the internet. ... And so it then it becomes a very interesting challenge for our organizations to continue to be relevant and to do the education piece that hasn't happened, and we've talked about it for many years. It's surprising that it has hit so suddenly within just a few years.

Allana: So how will you go about addressing this issue?

Stephen: Well, I think it's the big cloud over my head right now if you could look at my aura...

Allana: [Overtop Laughs]

Stephen: ...it would be filled [Laughs] filled, if you could see it. And it's the hot topic of conversation on a daily basis in our office, and we talk about how we connect with that audience, how we make it attractive to them.

I think this season for Dance Victoria is a very traditional season. This season I programmed really emanating out from the Ballet Nacional de Cuba and thinking—because it's a renowned classical company—and thinking about how ballet has developed from those classical roots. And so when you look at the season, it is more closely related to ballet, and that's probably less relevant to a younger audience. The other thing that's happened, of course, with that young audiences is popularity of the competition television shows and so there's an expectation that the dance that they want to see is going to be dynamic, and have lots of tricks, and virtuosity. And I think the dance we have in our season has all those qualities at times, but I

think maybe there's a perception that it's their grandmother's art form, as opposed to something that's relevant to them today.

Allana: Hm. Is that the major challenge going forward, or how do you see the future, how do you think, you know, the role of the producer in the whole dance milieu going forward?

Stephen: Yes, I think that's it. I think it is staying relevant. I think it's continuing to have an engaged audience. I think that's the challenge for the presenter in the country today. And it's not only about growing audiences, it's about sustaining audiences, which is an interesting challenge; nobody's really talked about that until recently.

Personally though, for Dance Victoria specifically, I think it's a very exciting time because we're just at the beginning, on the cusp of becoming a much more dynamic organization in the way that we support the development of work. And next year we're going to start having artists-in-residence. I'm looking at making all the programs that we do relevant, and rationalizing them all, and putting them all as one piece and Dance Victoria has a growing profile. My colleagues applauded around the table when I told them about the fact that we're installing equipment so that one of our studios is going to become a performance lab that's fully outfitted with equipment to add to the value of a residency for a company when they're in Victoria. And the Chrystal Dance Prize is very exciting for me as well. It's—

Allana: Can you explain that?

Stephen: Yes, so it's a major dance prize that will happen on an annual basis right—this year it will be worth fourteen thousand dollars, but next year twenty thousand dollars, and it's for an individual artist who wants to work with someone outside of the country. And so the first one is a local dance artist, Jung-Ah Chung. We were able with the prize to send her to Korea where she began to create a new work with a Korean choreographer [Kyung-eun Lee]. And that choreographer will come to Victoria for a month in January 2012, spend that time in the studio with Jung-Ah. We'll invite our presenter colleagues to come out to Victoria. One of the things they'll see on the weekend they're here is the work that has been created by Jung-Ah and her colleague from Korea. So that's very exciting to me that annually that we will support an artist working outside the country and brining the work back to Canada.

Allana: You've also taken a leadership role among your colleagues at the national level. Can you talk a little bit about that?

Stephen: Sure. I was the President of the CanDance Network for a couple of years; it's probably been about three or four years since I was in that position. At the time what really preoccupied me was the idea of, I really wanted to look at how fees and how much we were paying dance artists because as I got more involved in the milieu I realized that there were a lot of partners around the table who were paying just pittance to have dance artists on their stage, and it felt unequal. And so we went through a process: we hired consultants, we got support from the funding agencies to do an analysis of current practice and make recommendations for future practice. And that still continues to have some reverberations. Unfortunately it, it didn't lead to us adopting a—I would have been more satisfied even if it was a loose arrangement that we, as presenters, all bought in to a sort of scale, or a way, an equation for evaluating—or adding up

how much we pay to dance artists. But it's a complex issue and what's complex about it is that the presenters that are in the organization are of such a different scale, as I mentioned earlier, that it's difficult to come to kind of consensus on how much an artist should be paid for their work. But at least I think now there's more of an awareness that this is something that needs consideration.

And coming out of that also came a whole question about, because we are power brokers sitting in room determining careers and public taste, that there should be some ethic attached to how we conduct ourselves. And so there are some ethic statements that we've adopted that, as an organization, that I can't take full responsibility for but I think emanated out of that original research and analysis of the fee payments. So on that level we are a leader.

I think also with our [Laughs] colleagues, and it was reiterated from a few of them this weekend, our relationship with the private sector is unusual in our milieu. In fact, one colleague said, "Victoria has the best in terms of cultivating its relationship with its donors and with private business." And I would have to say it's probably true when I look at how the rest of the country is fairing in those areas.

Allana: What's your secret then?

Stephen: Well I think that one of the secrets is having hired or created a full time position for a director of development six years ago; it being the next significant hire that Dance Victoria made before we hired any other kind of help in the office. And so, although you don't reap immediate rewards but it's like, what do you do when you have a party? Well you send out invitations, and if you had a party and didn't invite anyone, you know, big surprise no one is going to show up. So with the development it's like, you tell people, "Hey we're open to take donations and this is why we need donations, and this is what your donation will do." And then you obviously have to show the evidence of delivering on what it is you promised to do, but just inviting people to make a donation is probably the first step because then people will have an awareness, "Oh that I could do that." And then there is a little bit of science involved with it, that our current director of development—or development manager, Tony Cheong—has spent a lot of time researching and developing his practice and to good effect.

Allana: Good. Where—as we sort of begin to wrap up—where do you see yourself and where do you see the organization when you look ahead, you know, half a decade, a decade from now, where would you like Dance Victoria and yourself to be?

Stephen: I would, well ten years from now I think I would still like to have a hand in programming...[Laughs.]

Allana: [Laughs.]

Stephen: ...because it's what I love to do the most.

Allana: Is it?

Stephen: Yes, for sure. To select companies and to talk to artists and to support artist development. So I would definitely ten years from now still like to have that role.

My fantasy for the organization is really just to fill out the sketch that we've created—to fill in all those kind of areas that are already outlined, to make this a vital centre on several levels so that there are national companies that are resident here. That this becomes a destination for dance development, but that also our local community has the opportunity to work with and train with and we begin to export the work from the local dance community across the country and perhaps around the world. I mean there is a bit of that that's happened already; you know, in terms of our support for Crystal Pite and that commission *Dark Matters* that has played throughout the US and Australia, and it's still touring in Europe. And that's a wonderful feeling to know we had been the lead commissioning partner on that project.

So, yes. Just all of that. Just to really make this buzz and bubble with excitement and have people really engaged on all levels of seeing dance, of learning about dance, learning how to dance, and also creating work—all emanating from the one organization.

Allana: Victoria seems like an unlikely success story. It's a city on an island. It has a reputation of being conservative in terms of aesthetic taste, and so on. But you've proven those stereotypes completely wrong through your leadership of Dance Victoria. So it's been a—

Stephen: Oh! Thank-you.

Allana: —yes, it's been a great pleasure to speak with you.

Stephen: Thank-you.

Allana: Thank-you.

-End-