CREATIVE COLLABORATION:
DEFINING THE COLLABORATIVE PROCESS
BETWEEN A CONDUCTOR, COMPOSER, AND CHOREOGRAPHER IN
CREATING AND STAGING AN ORIGINAL WORK FOR MODERN DANCE

by

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I hereby certify that I have read this document prepared under my direction and
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... and Sean Zimmerman. What can one say about an unconditional friend and the "fuel" such a relationship provides to see ones goals though to their final fruition?

Thank you all for your vast contribution to this personal and professional milestone.
DEDICATION

To my heroes:

Thank you for believing in me

My parents, Bill and Eleanor Taylor

Susan, Dwayne, Kara and Megan Eadie

Nancy, Ray, and Riley Kettenbach

It has been quite the adventure; thank you for making the journey possible

I will be forever grateful for your belief in me.
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My Doctoral committee has required that a videotape containing examples of the dialogue as well as the final performance be submitted with this document. The videotape is on file at the University of Arizona Library

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ABSTRACT

This document is a record of an observed creative experience, defining the collaborative process between conductor, composer, and choreographer in creating and staging an original work for modern dance. There are three areas of focus. First, an introduction to and rationale for the project is coupled with an historical examination of the collaboration between a composer and choreographer (Igor Stravinsky and George Balanchine), and a review of the documentation on the conductors' traditional role in dance as established by the ballet conductors Robert Irving and George Crum. Second, suggested methods will be proposed for the skill level, and technique that a conductor should acquire to use as a method for gathering the talents of collaborating artists (choreographers and composers). These methods are comprised of vision, knowledge and expertise, respect and mediation. Third, a collaborative framework comprised of three sections was created, based upon an objective review of the data collected from the project so that the collaborative process between members could be effectively and efficiently studied. The three sections of this framework are (1) the artistic desires of the creative team, (2) the role of each team member, and (3) the working methodology of the creative team members. It is against this framework that the collaborative process between conductor, composer, and choreographer is defined as it relates to creating and staging a work for modern dance, as well to highlight the non-traditional role that a conductor may participate in as an intermediary and facilitator in directing artists in collaboration. The framework developed is demonstrated by specific examples from this
project that indemnify the findings, offering a clear and concise strategy that future conductors might use as a reference and guide.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND A SURVEY OF HISTORICAL COLLABORATIONS AND THE CONDUCTOR IN DANCE

The twentieth century witnessed many creative collaborations within the performing and visual arts. The cubist painters Pablo Picasso and George Braque and the choreographer Martha Graham and composer Aaron Copland are an example of such traditional and powerful partnerships. However, the current literature on artistic collaboration focuses more on the performance because of such partnerships, and less on the internal relationships and working dynamics that occur between the respective artists. Within the field of dance, related literature seems to avoid the role of the conductor and focuses almost exclusively on the collaboration between a choreographer and composer. This document seeks to illuminate the vital role that a conductor can play in initiating the collaborative process—the one member of the creative team who does guide the collaboration in performance, and who may serve as a catalyst in gathering the strength and skills of all participating artists into a single, cohesive whole.

Creative or artistic collaboration, as referred to in this document is defined as a dynamic process between artists engaging in a common desire to create. The process of artistic collaboration requires a strong commitment and recognition by participants that combined talents have the potential to create art at a level higher than each could individually.

The primary purposes of this document are to offer critical discourse on the
process of creative collaboration between a composer, conductor and choreographer, and to define the conductor's non-traditional role of facilitator and catalyst in the process of collaboration. Collaboration is not only the subject of this document but also, in large part, the context in which it was created. The process of working and discovering with like-minded artists is comparable to the creative process itself, that is, it's an evolving and adaptable variability that reveals when artists and creative minds, which are clear in vision and goals, engage in partnerships. The processes engaged in by the author were an attempt to allow for the non-interfering evolution of the collaboration, without guiding or manipulating the discussions and creative output. As a result, a framework was developed that could be used as a guide or reference for future collaborators. The following statements serve as the cornerstone for this investigation. Although they were not directly asked or inferred during the process of this collaboration, they are the fundamental questions, which guided this conductor throughout the project:

1. What is the role of a conductor as an intermediary and catalyst in gathering the unique creative resources of a composer and choreographer and culminating in an original work for dance?

2. What are the dynamic interpersonal relationships that manifest during the collaborative process between a composer, choreographer, and conductor?

3. What characterizes the collaborative relationships between the conductor-composer, conductor-choreographer, composer-choreographer, and the conductor-composer-choreographer?
4. Based on this non-traditional role, is it possible that the conductor can play an integral part in the collaboration, providing the impetus to gather artists and facilitate the process to create a work for modern dance?

These questions will be evaluated through information gathered from the observed and active participation by the conductor, the facilitator for this project. My doctoral committee requires that an accompanying videotape be available through the University of Arizona library. The videotape contains samples of the rehearsals and collaborative processes that transpired; in addition, the tape also contains the performance of *My Words Turn to Song in Your Fists*--the result of this collaborative project.

In the past century, the traditional role of the conductor in working with a composer and choreographer was typically based on the conductor joining the production in the final stages of rehearsals. It is rare for the conductor to be an equal participant in the collaboration between a composer and choreographer. As a result, published materials on the collaborative process, specifically on the role of the conductor, do not exist.

The current literature on the traditional relationships between a composer and choreographer is illustrated through a study of the composer Igor Stravinsky and choreographer George Balanchine. The role of Igor Stravinsky in the modernization of the dance score, and as a creative force in discovering a new way to synthesize music with the choreography, has been documented. Examples of his collaborative endeavors with Vaslav Nijinsky, George Balanchine, and Michel Fokine are well known. Perhaps
the most famous work representing these relationships culminated in the creation of *Le Sacre du Printemps.* Much has been written about this extraordinary choreo-musical partnership and is epitomized in the following excerpt:

*Le Sacre* is an extraordinary achievement musically: To work in so detailed and precise a manner with such a complex score, and without prior training of choreographer or dancers in this manner of working. Here was a new kind of music for dance and a new interaction between dance and music. Quite possibly the piece looked fussy, too pernickety in musical response, to some contemporary viewers. Thus, the critic Edwin Evans said, “evidence of industry rather than of musical feeling.” Today, the choreography appears both powerful as ritual reference and extraordinarily rich in its musical treatment.¹

The noted ballet conductors Robert Irving and George Crum played traditional conducting roles within the ballet genre. Although they were not significant forces in the creation of new compositions and choreography, their writings offer insight into the vital role of the conductor of dance, and allude to the required skills unique to the ballet conductor. Both conductors have written articles lamenting the lack of training for young ballet conductors. According to Robert Irving,

at the same time, there is still quite an amount of prejudice in the symphonic world against conductors who work for the ballet - and one must accept that one is not going to be gazed at and worshipped in the pit as one might be on the concert platform or in the increasingly attentive television camera. It would be wrong not to point out some basic defects inherent in conducting for the dance. First is the undoubted fact that the symphonic world is much more lucrative financially than ballet. And one is all too dependent on the resources and quality of the ballet company.²

Both Irving and Crum comment on the significant role that a conductor plays in directing

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an excellent dance performance. A clear indication of its significance lies within the following elaboration by Crum: “There is no doubt that he [the conductor] must also be thoroughly familiar with the repertoire from the musical, and for any real efficiency, also from the choreographic point of view. I say choreographic because it is virtually mandatory to be aware that this or that ‘pas’ arrives at this moment or that moment in the music, and is comfortably executed by the dancer at this tempo or that tempo! ...Know your dancers.” ³

Below I will discuss the conductor’s perspective on dance, as seen through the eyes of Robert Irving, and examine a collaboration between composer Igor Stravinsky and choreographer George Balanchine. Each of these examples offers valuable insight into the traditional roles of the conductor, composer, and choreographer; however, more relevant to this document is the belief that the conductor can be an active and equal participant in gathering artists in collaboration. This document proposes that a conductor may offer insight, directly and/or indirectly, into the creative collaborative process. However, an assertion that all collaborations need to involve the conductor is not assumed by this document.

Igor Stravinsky and George Balanchine

Both Stravinsky and Balanchine represent the traditional role of composer and choreographer in twentieth century dance collaborations. The roles offer valuable

perspective on the importance of recognizing artistic integrity and visionary commitment
to creating original works. Through professional and personal relationships, these highly
acclaimed artists discovered a unique way to present their respective art forms. Both
Stravinsky and Balanchine where skilled in recognizing the creative potential that such a
relationship could foster, and because of this, contributed on many occasions to each
other’s craft. Balanchine was a skilled musician and Stravinsky, understanding the
nuance of dance, was able to transfer this knowledge to both his compositions and
conducting. In a 1965 Canadian Broadcasting Corporation documentary titled Stravinsky,
the conductor Robert Craft recalls for the camera Stravinsky’s knowledge of dance:
“Stravinsky saw the big Tchaikovsky ballets when he was only eight. By the age of ten
the composer knew all the classical positions and was generally quite at ease with ballet
technique—down to the way he learned to bow in the Maryinsky tradition.”^ It is
unfortunate that a detailed documentation of the role of Stravinsky as a conductor in these
collaborations does not exist since he conducted many performances. Such
documentation surely would have illuminated further the role of the conductor in the
collaborative process. The choreographer Frederick Ashton discusses pertinent
information on how Stravinsky viewed his role as a ballet composer. In a 1948 article he
wrote,

Stravinsky has always been a favorite composer of mine, because I feel that he is
among the few composers of today who thinks in a contemporary way. He also has a

greater understanding of the problems of ballet than any other living composer, having had a vast experience in composing for the medium.\textsuperscript{5}

Balanchine is unique among choreographers because he was also a fine musician. According to Crum, “Mention music and choreography, and Balanchine’s name is probably the first to come to mind, for a number of reasons: an array of celebrated works whose raison d’être was their music, his extraordinary and unparalleled collaboration with Stravinsky, and a behind-the-scenes musician’s training, a professional training, that enhanced every work that he made.”\textsuperscript{6} Balanchine himself suggested that a musician would make a superior choreographer: “The composer is able to give more life to the bar, more vitality and rhythmical substance than a choreographer, or a dancer for that matter. The musician deals with time and sound in a highly scientific way. . . . the choreographer will never be able to achieve such precision in the expression of movement as the composer through sound effect.”\textsuperscript{7}

Clearly recognizing the importance of a mutual understanding between each collaborating member, or between the composer and choreographer, Balanchine transcended his specific expertise to integrate his knowledge of the music and choreography, reaching a heightened awareness as to how his craft functions in conjunction with the Stravinsky score. According to Jordan,

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\textsuperscript{7} Ivan Nabokov and Elizabeth Carmichael, “Balanchine: An Interview by Ivan Nabokov and Elizabeth Carmichael,” Horizon (January 1961): 47.
\end{flushleft}
There are many references to Balanchine conversing in sophisticated musical terms with composers, conductors and rehearsal pianists. Throughout his life, too, he made his own piano transcriptions of orchestral scores. As it is for many composers, such workmanlike enterprise would have given Balanchine an especially secure knowledge of a score, its structure, proportions, thematic manipulations, contrapuntal textures and orchestration. Everyone who worked with him testifies to his firm grasp of musical form, as background preparation to creating stages in the dance studio. He pressed for and won for himself one of the finest ballet orchestras in the world, directed in his own time by Leon Barzin and Robert Irving.8

The author concurs with the above statement and argues that all collaborators should strive to achieve the knowledge and respect for the craft of each member. This becomes fundamental to ensuring that the vision of the project is realized. Stravinsky, the composer, was important to Balanchine not only as a creator of music, but also as an inspirational colleague who provided to Balanchine early on in his career a platform in which to express his choreography. Surprisingly, the collaborative relationship between Stravinsky and Balanchine happened on only four occasions.

One of these four collaborations was the creation of Apollon Musagète. Stravinsky felt in both his personal life and in working with Balanchine a self-reflection analogous to Apollo’s own transformation, as the young god matures and eventually assumes the role of ‘leader of the Muses.’ Stravinsky stated, “In classical dancing, I see the triumph of studied conception over vagueness, of the rule over the arbitrary, of order over the haphazard . . . I see in it the perfect expression of the Apollonian Principle”

[referring to the collaboration of *Apollon Musagète*]. The biographer Charles Joseph identifies this collaboration as a significant historical milestone, and states, "*Apollo* is undoubtedly the nexus of this historic union. With uncharacteristic effusion, the composer sanctioned the newly merged partnership by publicly proclaiming his unreserved approval of Balanchine’s elegant choreography. Without a doubt, *Apollo* is a milestone of collaborative genius."\(^9\)

Robert Irving

Many great conductors have been associated with ballet companies at one time or another in their career e.g., Monteux, Ansermet, Horenstein, Abravanel, Dorati, and Rozhdestvensky. However, few have chosen to devote their lives to conducting primarily for dance. An exception to this is the American conductor, Robert Irving. Although Irving served primarily in the traditional role of a conductor, his perspective and understanding of the needs of dance are unique among his contemporaries. For forty years, Irving worked with the Sadler’s Wells Royal Ballet and the New York City Ballet, collaborating closely with Frederick Ashton, George Balanchine, and Jerome Robbins in the creation of dozens of ballets. "With his firm yet flexible beat, understanding of musical architecture, and an instinctive feel for dance and rhythms and pacing, he provided secure support for the dancers while upholding the integrity of the music. As a

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result, he and his orchestra were among the heroes of the New York City Ballet’s Stravinsky Festivals (1972, 1982), Ravel Festival (1975), and Tchaikovsky Festival (1981).” It is regrettable that observations of the collaboration between artists throughout the illustrious career of Robert Irving were never documented. Because of the lack of formal training available for the dance conductor and the insufficiency in recognizing the ballet conductor as a legitimate discipline, the role of the conductor in dance has been overlooked. Irving himself states,

The first difficulty for the aspiring conductor is that there is next to no training available for ballet conducting. Whereas all musical academies provide plenty of opportunity for the student to be initiated into the symphonic repertoire or to rehearse with opera singers, there is no chance of learning about the complexities of working with ballet dancers: and what opportunity does arrive, speaking from my own experience, one is very likely to be thrust in to perform works without any orchestra rehearsal, which demands a high standard of professionalism.12

The documented relationships between visual and performing artists reflect a number of independent philosophies developed during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, believing in the equal unification of both visual and performing arts. This idea is demonstrated in the compositions and writings of Richard Wagner, and expressed through the thoughts of Jean d’Udine and Jean Paul Sartre. Wagner believed that an equality of all participating artistic forces was possible, and could be achieved. Out of this belief sprang his idea of Gesamtkunstwerk (unified work of art). Wagner described the ideal work of the future in Gesamtkunstwerk der Zukunft (1849). In this book, he espouses

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12 Ibid., 74.
the unity of the "three purely human arts" (music, poetry, dance), in harmonic union with architecture, sculpture, and painting. The critics Camille Mauclair and Henri Ghéon wrote that the Gesamtkunstwerk principle developed by Wagner was alive and well in the Ballet Russes. They stated, "This dream-like spectacle beside which the Wagnerian synthesis is but a clumsy barbarism, this spectacle where all sensations correspond, and weave together by their continual interlacing. The collaboration of décor, lighting, costumes, and mime, established unknown relationships in the mind. Sensed the merging of elements in Firebird as if there were no distinction between artistic contributions: Stravinsky, Fokine, Golovine, I only see one author."  

Early in the twentieth century, Jean d'Udine developed a theory founded upon the idea that dance and music could be mutual partners of artistic exchange between one medium and another, and the belief in a possibility of transformation between them. The viewpoint of d'Udine was that the concept of equality related to a deep relationship stemming from the gestural basis of music itself, and indeed, all arts was possible. The result of this theory of collaborative endeavors was to create a balance of dance and music. The conductor, because of their potential to contribute to this union, obviously may play an integral part. According to Jordan, "The root of these ideas about equivalence is the essentially romantic theory of organicism [sic], wholeness, a long-

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13 Ibid., 18.
standing tradition in the arts of transcending dualities.” The notion of a true synthesis and equality linking the arts has been the topic of much debate. However, in a dance collaboration using a conductor, the concept of their equal partnership is certainly not impractical.

For young conductors preparing to enter the workplace of the twenty-first century, it is critical to be skilled and prepared in many fields and repertoires, and to recognize the potential they have as an intermediary, facilitator and catalyst. Therefore, the conductor not only can be an intermediary or facilitator as demonstrated in this project, but also could be an equal participant in gathering the unique skills of composers and choreographers toward the creation of an original work of dance. As a catalyst, the conductor uses his or her knowledge of the score, compositional methods, choreo-musical movements, performance traditions, gesture as well as leadership qualities to establish a nurturing environment, where collaborative artists, in a unifying whole, can accelerate their creative output to transcend individual skills. The impetus for this current project was motivated by the desire to provide conductors, choreographers, and composers with a guide to enhance the mutual understanding of how internal creative dynamics are revealed, all within the context of creating a new dance.

CHAPTER 2

THE ROLE OF THE CONDUCTOR

The modern conductor, if he or she chooses, can play a significant role in facilitating a dynamic working relationship between artists who are creating an original dance work. The author believes that in an ideal collaboration a conductor, is no longer a figurehead brought in at the last stage of rehearsal.

This chapter highlights the skills and tools that a conductor should have when conducting for dance, enabling him or her to implement and guide the collaborative framework as proposed in Chapter Four. Significant responsibility belays the dance conductor of the twenty-first century to gain an in-depth knowledge of the visual and performing arts, in order to act as a facilitator and catalyst in the creation of significant works of performance art.

A strong artistic background and an awareness of the craft of all involved is crucial in providing a non-judgmental atmosphere of respect and mutual understanding between the collaborators. In collaborating with composers and choreographers, the conductor must have the ability to understand the art of composition and the kinesthetic dynamics of dance in order to amalgamate the strengths and weaknesses of each individual participant to create a stronger whole. Igor Stravinsky stated, “The creator’s function is to sift the elements he receives from her, for human activity must impose
limits upon itself. The more art is controlled, limited, worked over, the more it is free.”

Stravinsky, recognized the importance of the conductor in establishing an environment in which creativity can flourish. He continues, “thus, what concerns us here is not imagination itself, but rather creative imagination: the faculty that helps us to pass from the level of conception to the level of realization.”

Vision, knowledge and expertise, respect, and mediation are the stages that a conductor should nurture to act as a guide in the development of original works of dance. Each of these four elements, as it relates to this project are defined as follows:

Vision

The conductor must have an open mind and clear vision of the project that lies ahead. “The plan is basic. Where there is no plan, there is no greatness of intention and expression, no rhythm, no volume, no coherence. Where there is no plan, we experience that sensation of formlessness, indigence, and disorder, unreason that the human mind cannot endure. The plan calls for a highly active imagination. It also calls for severe self-discipline. The plan determines everything else; it is the decisive moment.”

The vision and plan established by the conductor must be realistic and include all aspects of the resources available for the collaboration including funding, availability of

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15 Ibid., 194.
16 Ibid., 191.
performers (i.e., musicians and dancers), rehearsal and performance space, technical considerations, time constraints, etc. The vision and plan presuppose a delicate balance between creativity and practicality, adhered to with a conviction of integrity and the respect for the needs of the contributing artists and performers.

Knowledge and Expertise

In addition to an in-depth knowledge of artistic craft, the conductor must also understand the myriad possibilities of how composition and choreography intertwines. He or she must also have the highest level of expertise in the craft of conducting to ensure that the performance freely expresses the artistic soul of creativity and the collective vision of the creative team members. The conductor for dance must attend the dance rehearsals, preferably as an active conductor of the piano, or rehearsal pianist. It is one thing to determine the metronome markings in the score; it is quite another to have the ability to transfer the markings to the conducting gestures with reflection to dance movements.

The conductor must also be aware of the artistry of the dancers and be able to respond and/or nudge the performers to maintain the integrity of the score, musical phrase, and structure of the entire work. Although consistency from all performers is required, there are many factors that can affect a dance performance---the health of the dancers, the type of floor being used for their performance, the physical demands of the choreography, even to what a dancer ate for dinner. The conductor is in the pit to support
the dancers through the musical underpinnings and must tailor the music to a synthesis of
the kinesthetic dynamic of the dance, the demands of the composer for the score, the
abilities of the musicians, tradition and overall form—all while being unwaveringly
consistent. Once these skills are learned, a conductor uses this knowledge and expertise
to offer a compassionate yet sympathetic response to the dancers during performance.
However, care must be used to maintain a consistency between all performances and not
allow personal and/or situational circumstances to influence the conductors’ judgment.
As Irving warned, “It is almost inevitable that the aspiring conductor will give in too
much to dancers at first; he has not the experience to evaluate the validity of the claims
that the dancers will make on him and only with experience can he develop this faculty.
Unfortunately, some conductors seem to think that a habit of assiduously waiting on
hesitant dancers is the sure road to progress, whereas it is the quickest road to chaos and
indiscipline.”^18

Conductors must develop skills beyond the foundational knowledge of dance,
score, and composition to attain fluency in choreo-music and composition terminology.
These skills will allow them to converse with choreographers in the language of dance
and with composers in the language of music. By doing so, respect may be established.
The score provides the conductor with a two-dimensional guide to unlock the composer’s
intention, requiring from the conductor a musical understanding of all genres, forms,

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traditions, and how they relate to the vision of the choreographers and composers.

Knowledge of dance tradition and preparation of the musical score are of the utmost importance. As a result of a careful preparation the conductor does not need to focus on notes, rhythms, and gesture, rather devoting full attention to the performance on stage.

The British conductor Constant Lambert sheds light on the tradition of ballet conducting when he stated, "In classical ballet, such as Giselle and Swan Lake, the customer is always right, the customer in this case being the dancer. Unless tempi are grossly changed, it is the ballet conductor's job to follow the dancer's physical idiosyncrasies. In modern ballet it is, on the whole, the job of the dancer to follow the more or less symphonic interpretation of the score by the conductor, but of course one can't make hard fast rules in either case."\(^{19}\) Once attained, this in-depth knowledge of the composition and the choreography, along with a strong conducting technique, is analogous to the relationship between the conductor, choreographer and composer engaging in creative collaboration. By demonstrating an in-depth knowledge of the craft of the composer and choreographer, the conductor may foster mutual respect. In a creative collaboration, the conductor can then establish a working environment wisely building upon the talents and personalities of the collaborators.

Respect

Great art cannot be created, nor can it flourish within the confines of petty

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\(^{19}\) Ibid., 92.
jealousies and a milieu of insecurities. Once the composer and choreographer engage in collaboration, the conductor fosters a working environment in which respect has a chance to occur, wherein the artistic integrity of each team member and the freedom to express opinions can occur without fear of judgment. Awareness by the facilitator/conductor of how individual artistic personalities may unify ideas, to envision a stronger whole has the potential to develop. Perhaps there is no greater example of artistic respect than in the relationship between Igor Stravinsky and George Balanchine. Stravinsky and Balanchine were frequently engaged in,

casual conversation as the choreographer suggests that Apollo [ballet] moved too slowly for Diaghilev; there was simply not enough action. Now the work has become so familiar, Balanchine contends, “people whistle it in the street.” Stravinsky retorts, “Not always in the street, maybe in the bathroom.” He then offers Balanchine more to drink, saying, “Let’s be drunk. You are not dancing, and I am not dancing.” All of this bantering could not have been better designed for the camera, yet the footage, farcical as it is, reveals an ineffable bond between the two - an affection that is impossible to express in words.²⁰

An unequivocal and reverent partnership is demonstrated in the above quote, which goes far beyond the simple recognition of artistic talents, and in an ideal relationship, it moves to an awareness of personal integrity. I hope that the conductor can lead by example. Every conductor when engaging in a collaborative relationship every conductor should endeavor to develop a significant depth of understanding of and respect towards the collaborators and their art.

Mediation

Artists strong in conviction and opinion thrive upon riveting interchange with like-minded individuals. This can lead to self-discovery and the development of a strong artistic identity. The task of the conductor, in this instance, is to encourage artistic individuals to grow while guiding the collaboration from genesis to performance. Hopefully, an atmosphere of joint respect will emerge during the process.

The conductor can be integral in mediating the creative process. In order for the process to be successful, effective mediation must be (or should be) present at all times. The conductor can build trust between collaborating artists and guide the creative team through the first three stages: vision, respect, knowledge and expertise. These skills are suggested as a starting point; collaborations combining these skills will be as unique as the individuals involved.
CHAPTER 3

THE COLLABORATIVE PROCESS

The Genesis of the Project

The author’s diverse background in the collaborative arts and a desire to understand the internal dynamics of the collaborative processes, motivated him to undertake this project. This project, which eventually resulted in the creation of an original modern dance work entitled *My Words Turn to Song in Your Fists*, was begun in June 2001. As demonstrated by this collaboration, each project will be as unique as each of the individuals involved. The assumption that the conductor should always act as the initiator and leader in a project of this nature is indeterminate. However, in the collaboration to follow, the author does fulfill the role of the facilitator.

During the initial six-month period, the conductor was an active participant in conducting and observing dance. Following this, the observation was made that because many of the nuances of choreography are very subtle and the movement is not generally recorded in dance scores, the potential for friction exists if the conductor is not included in the rehearsal process. During these observations the author learned that every choreographer is unique and each views the role of the conductor, as well as how to interpret the music differently. According to Jordan,

The choreographer imposes a view on musical interpretations, whether consciously or not, depending on how actually s/he hears music and identifies changes in it performance and the dancers’ response to it. This is not entirely a question of precise musicality, rather that some choreographers allow more leeway than others do in
performance interpretation. Some choreographers are open to change from one performance or rehearsal to the next, to the creative freedom of the performer, whether dancer or musician.\(^{21}\)

In relation to the above passage, Robert Irving stated “Jerome Robbins [choreographer] is a tremendous player of records and is apt to think that somebody’s version is it, instead of somebody’s version of it.”\(^{22}\) It was Robbins practice to give precise performance instructions to his musicians, which often created difficulties when his [Robbins] interpretation was not that of the musician. By including the conductor early in the process, one may avoid these kinds of misinterpretations. This is practical because the conductor is the only individual participating in the collaborative process that has a direct effect on the actual live performance. Stephanie Jordan comments on Philip Gammon’s role as a pianist for the Royal Ballet:

The ballet conductor and pianist must have a well-developed sense of movement, a physical empathy with the dancers. Gammon [Royal Ballet pianist] breathes with the dancers in *Rhapsody*, for instance, with the ballerina’s cadences, to match precisely with the beginning of her last solo, or to time the final chord of the *pas de deux* to the moment *just before* the male soloist lifts the ballerina into the wings. He had freedom to develop his own interpretation when learning the piece for Ashton’s [choreographer] first rehearsals, but now choreographed, his timing is automatically less free than he would enjoy in the concert performance.\(^{23}\)

The following anecdote illuminates the transition of a conductor from knowing the score as a concert conductor, to understanding his role as a dance conductor and how

\(^{21}\) Ibid., 90.


the score relates to the choreography and the dancers. Sir Thomas Beecham, in response to the choreography of Delius’ *Romeo and Juliet* (1943) deepened the more he became acquainted with the ballet. According to the ballet critic Edwin Denby “He conducted the Delius score at the first performance as if in a concert, sumptuously and as if a showpiece, but his ‘legato obliterated the traditional landmarks they were used to.” Movement flow is especially hard to track in this score with no groove provided by the beat. However, by the last performance, Beecham had gained a full understanding of it as described in the following excerpt:

> The dancers not only recognized their cues, they could find in the musical phrase where they were cued to the exact impetus, which suited their momentary phrase of dancing. But only Sir Thomas understood completely on the stage and in the orchestra what aspect of the score it was that Tudor had counted on, and he made this aspect musically plausible and expressive.

The present project needed a passionate and visionary composer, and a choreographer who were willing to commit to the ultimate culmination of an original dance work. The author of this document was the conductor; the composer was John Altieri, a master of music student in composition and recent graduate of the Eastman School of Music. The initial choreographers where LoRee Kenagy, and Daniel Robinson, both undergraduate dance majors. Each of these creative artists brought a rich and varied history of education and performance experiences from widely diverse backgrounds.

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Relationships between Conductor, Composer, and Choreographer

The Taylor-Altieri-Robinson collaboration began in May 2001. An early example of the relationship between the composer and conductor transpired during the course of personal conversations. The author asked Altieri to elaborate on a dance piece he was conceptualizing that was based on the game of basketball. The following is a comment by Altieri:

I've wanted a chance to write for dance for a while. Composition is often urged on by visual or verbal stimuli for me, and I already had sketches for a choreographed piece that I was hoping to bring to fruition as a “near future” project. The sketched piece was based on the body movement of the game of basketball--from the graceful finesse to the strong and aggressive. It would be structured to proceed as a basketball game does. As I composed I came up with melodic, coloristic, and rhythmic materials. I was envisioning the basketball movements and imagining what they might evolve into when in a dance context. It was these gestures and body shapes that brought the music about.

Intrigued by the passion expressed by Altieri, the author engaged him in further conversation, which resulted in a passionate exchange of ideas by both members who emerged from this heated dialogue with an initial commitment to collaborate. Altieri later stated, “Needless to say, after Bruce asked me to write a dance piece, there was no turning it down. Not only would I get to create music once again inspired by body movement and expression, but I had a team of Bruce and, at the time, Daniel Robinson, who would see the artistic vision and energy through to the end.”

With an initial commitment by Altieri to engage in the project, the author contacted Sam Watson, Professor of Dance in the School of Music and Dance at the University of Arizona, to discuss the project with a hope of finding a choreographer
within the school to join the project. The author outlined the initial concept of the project to Professor Watson at a meeting in April 2001 in the following manner: “What I would like to do is create an original work with a composer, choreographer, myself as conductor, and try to understand and define the creative process between these three artists. I originally looked at restaging the *Aubade* by Poulenc, with a new choreographic concept to create a dance on the coming-out process of a young gay male, based on a discovery of one’s self. I soon realized that a far stronger concept would be to use an original composition to create a truly original work in all senses of the subject.” Watson replied, “It’s surprising but there are little to no artistic works based on this concept—interesting. It will require a choreographer with depth and a comfort level and understanding of the subject matter. I will get back to you.” Within days, Professor Watson furnished the name of undergraduate student Daniel Robinson. Daniel was intrigued by the topic of the project because he could draw upon his own personal experience and dance background. At this point with the music composed and initial choreography for the third section blocked, it should be stated that Daniel Robinson collaborated on the project from May 2001 to December 2001, at which time he chose to pursue an alternate opportunity in New York City and left the collaboration. Due to an unfortunate circumstance, the choreographers changed from Robinson to Kenagy in January 2002.

With three of the four movements of music already composed the project, fell into jeopardy in December 2001 with the departure of Daniel Robinson. The author agreed
with Altieri to contact a new choreographer to continue with the project. LoRee Kenagy, also intrigued by the topic and the possibility of expressing her own experiences through dance, enthusiastically entered into the collaboration. Music based upon the collaboration between Taylor-Altieri-Robinson was near completion so Kenagy prepared to create choreography for the completed composition. The project met with yet another upheaval when Kenagy, due to health reasons, could not return to the collaboration following the spring break of 2002. However, the project continued with fellow students coming to the aid of Kenagy to help see her vision in dance realized. With regard to the collaborations, and the writing of this document, Daniel Robinson played an integral part with Taylor and Altieri in the creation of the music from the choreographers' perspective and LoRee Kenagy, who later joined the collaboration, contributed her expertise in creating movement to the already established music.

The process of collaboration is always unpredictable and, as experienced in this project, the best intentions are often met with unforeseen changes. Because of strong visions and deep personal beliefs in the value of creating art, each setback was met with stronger resolve and commitments to see the initial concept come to reality. After Kenagy's departure, the indomitable human spirit of love, and belief in the project boiled to the surface from within each of the student performers, which resulted in the completion of the choreography. Strong in character and passion, choreography for the project was finished by a number of her colleagues: April Greengaard, Claire Hancock, Jason Rachel, Alison Cummins and Ashley Williams, all under the supervision of
professor Sam Watson. As discussed throughout this document and by the collaborative framework presented, when individuals combine artistic talent and strength to create in collaboration, a strong, significant work can emerge.

Integrated Relationships between Creative Team Members

An essential element that ensured the success of the project was discovered during this collaboration. Integrated relationships as referred to in this project are defined as the internal working dynamics, and interpersonal relationships that occur between team members. The integrated relationship between each of the collaborative team members was an essential force of innovation and creativity. Vera John-Steiner addresses this notion of the human desire to engage in joint creation, when she explains that, “Rodin’s sculpture ‘The Thinker’ dominates our collective imagination as the purest representation of human inquiry—the lone, stoic thinker. But while the Western belief in individualism romanticizes this perception of the solitary creative process, the reality is that scientific and artistic forms emerge from joint thinking, passionate conversations, emotional connections, and shared struggles common in meaningful relationships.”

The relationships that developed during this project matured through free exchanges of ideas, which resulted in a natural and unhindered evolution of the collaborative process. In order to document and evaluate these observation, I video and audio recorded all conversations, interviews and rehearsals that occurred during the

course of this project, with the consent of all participating artists. After the composition
and initial choreography were completed, an objective synthesis of the collected data was
evaluated to develop a collaborative framework.

As a result of this evaluation, a framework comprised of three sections was
created, based upon an analysis of the collected video and audiotapes. This analysis was
then used to study, both effectively and efficiently the relationships between
collaborators. The three sections are (1) the artistic desires of the creative team, (2) the
role of each team member, and (3) the working methodology of the creative team
members. It is important to note that for the clarity of this documentation, the framework
utilized in the collaborative process is presented in a linear fashion, that is, each section is
presented leading from one to the other. However, in reality, the dynamic relationship is
fluid and moves without distinction between the three sections of the framework.

The Collaborative Framework

A framework for collaboration is presented in order to offer clear and concise
strategies that conductors may use in collaborative projects. The specific elements of this
framework are:

1. The artistic desires of the creative team are subdivided into the stage of intrigue,
   respect and desire.

2. The role of each team member is subdivided into contributing to dialogue;
   contributing specific expertise, and the amalgamation of skills.

3. The working methodologies of the creative team members are subdivided into
reactions, integration, combination, and synthesis.

Each of the framework sections and subsections draw upon specific examples from the collaboration. Although every attempt was made to offer precise and specific discourse for each of the sections and subsections, one will notice that a cross-pollination of ideas occurred. As a result, it is impossible, when dealing with creative collaboration, to view it as occurring within a “vacuum.” The collaborative framework will aid readers in understanding the following documentation. However, it should be noted that the framework was constructed because of this collaborative project and not presupposed before the project began.

I. Artistic Desires of the Creative Team

Intrigue

One may argue that it is human nature and intrigue that forces artists to seek others to explore the unknown, and in turn, to draw upon shared experiences discovering the knowledge needed to satisfy their curiosity. The playwright Tony Kushner, author of the play *Angels in America*, traces his many collaborations throughout the trilogy, and identifies the potency of intrigue as a central force in gathering artists. However, in his essay, *Is it a Fiction that Playwrights Create Alone?* Kushner explores why intrigue in cultural, political, and philosophical context have been downplayed within collaborations.

American individualism has led us to focus on creativity almost exclusively as the acts of individual genius, and diverted our attention from relationships and collaborations that occur along the way. Capitalism, with its focus on ownership, also
plays a part in this. We conceive of creativity as a cultural product, and this concept shapes the way we think about the who, where, and when of creativity . . . together we organize the world for ourselves, or at least we organize our understanding of it; we reflect it, refract it, criticize it, grieve over its savagery, and help one another to discern, amidst the gathering dark, paths of resistance, pockets of peace and places from whence hope may be plausibly expected.²⁷

As Daniel Robinson stated during the following dialogue with the author, intrigue initially compelled him to engage in this collaborative project.

Taylor: Hey Daniel. I understand that Sam has talked to you about my little project and filled ya in on what it’s all about?

Robinson: Yeah sounds pretty amazing. And so weird ‘cause I had just been to Sam’s office a week ago and we were talking about this very issue.

Taylor: Sam said that when we talked. Weird, eh. Well, I guess everything happens for a reason [laugh]. Well, you interested in meeting and I can fill ya in on everything?

Robinson: Yeah most, definitely.

Taylor: It’s still very much in the infancy stage; that’s why I want to get ya in now if you’re interested.

Robinson: Totally interested. Wow, when can we meet?

The presentation of ideas to Robinson was based on a previous knowledge of his personality, and what would “intrigue” him to join in the project. When the author indicated to Daniel that he had understood that Professor Sam Watson had spoken with him, awareness of Daniel’s sexuality was being considered in the dialogue as well as how the project would captivate and serve as the expressive medium Daniel sought. In

gathering artists, a conductor must be aware of each artist's unique skills, personality, history, and talents and have a clear idea of what might provide the impetus for both artistic and personal interest to the project.

There is an urban myth, perpetuated by individual iconoclasms of North American culture, which espouse that suffering individuals create great art. It is the desire to co-create, based upon curiosity surrounding the subject matter, and the realization that collaboration has the potential of producing a different creative product, that prompted Taylor-Altieri-Robinson and Kenagy to initially engage in this collaborative process. As the composer Altieri stated in an April 2002, interview for this project,

The idea of interacting with other artists not necessarily speaking the same language to result in a work interested me. As a composer, there is always dependence and collaboration with other human beings, but that usually happens post composition. What I put on paper (unless a solo work I can perform myself) is meant for another person to bring to life, hopefully, what I have put on the page is substantial enough for the performer to find a piece of him/herself in it, and allow their personal artistic voice to speak through mine. Nevertheless, here was an opportunity for that collaboration and dependence to occur on the "process" side of composition. Meaning that the ideas and movements fed to me by Bruce and Daniel would affect my decisions and my decisions would, in turn, affect theirs, etc. This is a fascinating concept! Taking separate human beings, and through spiritual awareness, become one! Or like an assembly line, only instead of the steps being consecutively linear, the steps are cyclic and constantly return through the same station, but with different parts there to be assembled each time.

Respect

Once individuals were engaged by the project, they established mutual respect for their artistic viability and a common desire to develop shared interests in an artistic work. The conductor, when engaged as a facilitator, can assist in creating an atmosphere of
respect and trust. To establish such an environment, the author mediated discussions where participants shared their specific expertise, history of creative endeavors, and intrigues that compelled them to join in the collaboration. In frank and open discussions, individuals shared their strengths and weaknesses, which aided in the development of a mutual understanding between members, this, in turn facilitated the synthesis of the expertise of each member.

Each team member felt compelled to express his or her personal relationship with the topic of the project—youth dealing with their homosexuality and the “coming out” process. An intense personal subject to Taylor, Robinson, and Kenagy, each expressed their own personal journey of emotions, love, longing for acceptance of self and by society, fear and hate, and how they came to accept and respect themselves. The compassion and understanding expressed by team members allowed them to develop an intensely close personal relationship. Once gained, mutual respect and belief in the project propelled the collaboration forward. The existentialist philosopher and writer Jean-Paul Sartre speaks to this sense of respect by stating that,

belief in a partner’s capabilities is crucial in collaborative work, as marginality, estrangement, and self-doubt frequently plague creative people. As he was nearing the end of his life, Jean-Paul Sartre remarked to Simone de Beauvoir: “You did me great service. You gave me a confidence in myself that I shouldn’t have had alone”...

the co-construction of ideas is helped by a listening ear. Innovative works of literature, drama, choreography, and art are nourished by emotional support. Building a resilient sense of identity is aided by a self that is stretched and strengthened in partnership.28

Desire

The final stage in this initial phase of collaboration is the desire by creative team members to use their specific talents as tools to reach the shared goal. Michael Schrage, author of *Shared Minds: The New Technologies of Collaboration*, described the role of artistic tools in facilitating collaborations in today’s society in the following manner,

The arts, commerce, and, indeed, one’s non-professional lives, come largely from the process of collaboration. What’s more quality and quantity of meaningful collaboration depends upon the tools used to create it... people spend as much time understanding what they are doing as actually doing it. Vocabulary is defined precisely; imagery to illustrate ideas is agreed upon; individuals generate shared understandings that they couldn’t possibly have achieved on their own.29

This elusive creative craving, which we all desire at some level, whether in the arts or through some other means of expression, will continue to plague a creative individual until he or she find a means of releasing and expressing this intuitive desire. Each of the collaborators expressed this intuitive longing and passion through conducting, composing or choreography and, at times, sacrificed personal well being to learn the necessary skills and acquire the tools. For example, the author has had a lifelong desire to express his personal struggle though the art of conducting and an intense longing to participate with like minds to create a significant work of art. To express this desire, it was necessary to acquire and master the tools of conducting and team leadership first. These tools enabled him to gather other artists in collaboration. Altieri had the following words to say of his

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desire in an interview conducted for this project:

The sense of journey is unique. The way it parallels life gives me a chance to create a life. Each time I embark on another composition, I am getting a chance to map out a world, a planet, that has an inhabitant, or many, or none. This planet can be made of snow or consist of green forests or be made of metal, etc. will the inhabitants be peaceful or violent, die young, live long, both? I bring my own answers to my own questions and create a place that uses its own planet to exist, finding the resources there; in the place, I have invented, to continue life. This sense of journey exists in music due to the fact that it takes place in time. Time must transpire for us to experience the art! Unlike a canvas or photograph that needs no time passage to be experienced; it is just there, captured in eternal pause. . . An artist’s output, when considered over his/her life span, is one giant piece of life and it, too, is full of decisions and questions. Composition enables me to be a human being in the way that seems and feels most honest and right to me. Composition allows me to push out in all directions, and climb out of my own skin, beyond naked.

Altieri speaks of his need to acquire the tools of composition as a means to express his desire. When each creative member reaches this plateau of artistic desire and commitment, true dialogue, in conjunction with an amalgamation of ideas occurs—the belief in and love of the project becomes significant. Stravinsky said “In order to create there must be a dynamic force, and what force is greater than love?”^30

II. The Role of each Team Member

Contribution to dialogue

Within the context of this framework it is essential that each member contribute to a dialogue regarding the creative process. These ideas are given unbiased consideration in an open atmosphere; as a result, creative discourse can then occur in a

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nurturing environment. The initial stages of artistic discourse during this collaborative process relied upon unbiased and non-judgmental dialogue—a critical element in transforming the roles of creative team members into a unifying force of common respect and desire. An example of dialogue within the process of creating is alluded to in "The Spink-Gough Collaboration," which began in 1982. Since that time, the two artists have produced five major dance works, which constitute a record of their investigations into the collaborative working methods involving choreographers and composers. Spink described the beginnings of his collaboration with Gough in the following manner:

I think that the reason I’m with Orlando [Gough] more often than any other composers I have collaborated with is because we’re both very interested in sitting down and talking about what we are going to do, and how we are going to do it. I tend to find that the most satisfying way to work is to spend a lot of time working through ideas, and then setting up a situation, or a series of ideas, which will operate on the work. I’m not so interested any more in coming to a piece of music that exists already and has had a completely separate existence.31

Taylor-Altieri-Robinson and Taylor-Altieri-Kenagy spent many hours in brainstorming sessions to gather ideas—a collection of raw thought from which the project *My Words Turn to Song in Your Fists* emerged. The following small sample of dialogue taken from the many hours of discussions sheds light on the importance of unbiased and open exchange within all aspects of the collaborative process. With members cutting in before a sentence is complete, the dialogue indicates the connectedness of the team and how they are beginning to anticipate what other members are going to say. A crucial aspect of this

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dialogue is the obvious need each team member feels to speak their minds freely and the need to prepare one’s thoughts to avoid rejection. Taylor demonstrates this when he restates and emphasizes a suggestion made by either Altieri or Robinson, ensuring that an understanding had been reached.

Altieri: So, what I was saying previously is that it might be an interesting first impression to give because, in context of this relief and coming after this, it really fits as the extreme theme of . . . because what’s surrounding it and pulled out of context. It’s a first impression that could be interesting.

Taylor: So you think you should go with the third movement because the third movement for you will require. . .

Robinson: The most energy.

Taylor: Well, the most other dancers too.

Altieri: Yes

Taylor: Which isn’t necessarily a bad thing because, in some respects, you’ll. . .

Robinson: The hardest thing will be out of the way.

Taylor: The hardest thing will be out of the way, because the first movement is about you, the second is about you and the female figure with the. . .

Altieri: Male.

Taylor: In addition, the ending is about you, another male figure, and the female figure again.

Altieri: Exactly.

Taylor: So really the third movement is the most difficult. You will be starting with the most difficult. At least get a sketch of it of an idea obviously that could change once you start the first, second and then OK we need to rethink how I’m doing this because now that I’ve done the first, we need to transition it a little bit different or rethink it.
Robinson: I’m just going to do a rough draft of it instead of doing it full out with, like, if we’re going to be taking off clothes.

Taylor: No I wouldn’t do that. You don’t want to give things away.

Robinson: I won’t take the clothes off, no.

Taylor: No no no.

Robinson: What are you trying to say?

Taylor: I don’t think that will make any sense either unless they have seen the first or second.

Robinson: Yeah, it would be just like “ripping it off.”

Taylor: Well, it’s just an impression at this stage of the game.

Altieri: We have to make it very clear in program notes we aren’t saying...

Robinson: Yeah.

Taylor: This is a work in progress... So the audience doesn’t go, “what the hell did we just watch?”

Robinson: What we could do is Movement three, once. Don’t listen to this; I don’t want you to use this when you write it [addressed to Altieri]. We could use Movement three as an incorporation of all four movements. Like, I could use the whole plot up until this point maybe, this point in Movement three.

Taylor: I wouldn’t try and do that.

Robinson: No, I mean just starting out. I mean being really short with it, being like me being on stage and having her enter.

Taylor: I don’t think I would do that.

Robinson: Ahh, I just don’t want to throw notes out.

Altieri: Well then, maybe we shouldn’t go for this concept; that’s fine.
Robinson: No, no, no. I think that I could do that. I could do that and not “fuck it up.”

Taylor: Well... well, let’s see. We can obviously work on that; it’s not that long to begin with.

Altieri: Its five minutes.

Taylor: We are trying to put so much into it and it’s just going to add to more confusion. We need to keep to the integrity. People will realize its part of a larger work. We don’t need to decide that now; lets decide what movement we are going to go with.

**Contributing specific expertise**

For the next stage in the project, team members contributed specific expertise unique to their individual talent. Specific expertise is comprised of those skills both innate and learned, projected by each artist individually, and manifested as a significant representation of their artistic craft. Through dialogue and observation awareness of how individual experiences fit within the framework and project time line was developed.

This is eloquently demonstrated by the following dialogue between composer John Altieri in conversation with LoRee Kenagy the second choreographer for this project:

Altieri: One of the things structurally about this piece of music is that there are four movements and there are transitions here [sings music] and here [sings music] that are extended solos, the individual in this drama... setting and these solos happen in transitional periods. For instance, the musical material of the cello solo take a little of the first movement [sings] and then makes it into [sings] and the [sings] and that’s material from the second movement, so its providing a segue as after a transitional point in life where lots a of contemplation and discovery occur. Anyhow, so structurally they represent something a little deeper... What’s kind of cool about the second movement is that you’ll hear. [Sings] Although you have that pretty melody that I just attempted to sing... As the second movement progresses, snippets of this
material [sings] and the bass [sings] get kind of stacked over that pretty melody, and simultaneously at times, especially at the end with the soaring sweeping melody, the octave woodwinds with this low material punching against it in a way so there is a combination of counterpoint and these opening sonorities, sounds pervade. Even when the brass comes in here after the beginning [sings] those sonorities are pulled from the opening, as well, and again used by the saxes in the third movement. What kind of detail are you looking for? What’s important for you?

Kenagy: I think it’s important to me to listen to what you have to say.

Altieri: I think, initially what’s most important is the passage of time, and the aural surface is what matters the most, and then after that because... that’s why I wrote the piece. I wrote it with my ears not with my brain--through my brain aided by ears... it’s what matters; that’s what I feel is most relevant.

Kenagy: Those things help my head - craft - what it is about to you, helps me listen.

Altieri: Things can be what you like - slower - faster - longer.32

Each member of the Taylor-Altieri-Robinson and Taylor-Altieri-Kenagy teams contributed specific expertise. For example when Altieri speaks to the craft of composition in his explanation of how he writes, “with his ears, not with his brain - through his brain aided by his ears.” He further stated “It’s what matters; that’s what I feel is most relevant,” along with his explanation of the structure and musical architecture of the piece rooted in his conscious, learned expertise as a composer. Once reached, understanding at this level of specific expertise melds to create fluidity of roles and expression within the scope of the project. This in turn allowed a powerful working dynamic to occur; hence, amalgamation, which serves as the final dynamic role of,

32 Bruce Taylor Lecture Recital Video (Tucson: University of Arizona Library, 2002), video tape, 00:00:22.
combined expertise.

**Amalgamation**

In the context of this framework, the amalgamation of the skills of each team member occurred when vision, talent, and a variety of ideas were combined to create a homogeneous union. This amalgamation of specific expertise will not transpire without a fundamental and mutual understanding of how the role of each member contributes to the vision of the project. This must be in conjunction with a commitment to utilize intrigue, desire, respect, and dialogue to reach a heightened awareness of individual disciplines. The following exchange between Taylor-Altieri-Kenagy clearly demonstrates this heightened awareness as each contributes suggestions both in and outside their specific areas of expertise:

Kenagy: Ok, how can I. Is there a beat?

Taylor: Yeah, actually its going 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8, 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8 [sings] this recording is not great; there is always a kick on the ‘and’ of eight to help you.

Altieri: [sings rhythm]

Kenagy: The stuff that comes on top of it. I felt I couldn’t decide if it is suppose to be were it is, or is it lagging?

Taylor: [laughing] It should be lined up, and right on top. The saxes are amplified so it should be clearer. I’ll work on that in rehearsal.

[Listen to movement again]

Kenagy: I can’t hear it yet.

Taylor: It’s just “muddy;” there is no definition.
Altieri: I still... on this recording the other percussionists are ad lib. They are "muddy" when they shouldn’t be.

Taylor: We need to set more guidelines; they need to outline the rhythmic pulse, which would help the dancers.

Altieri: So there’s 12345678 as the bass pulse or a slow 1--2--3--4--5--6--7--8.

Kenagy: Yes.33

Within this dialogue, Kenagy addresses the needs of her choreography with respect to Altieri’s composition, which he agrees to fix after. Taylor recognizes the importance of a strong beat pulse to aid Kenagy in the creation of the dance, as well as for the dancers to hear. A clear and vibrant amalgamation of the creative role of each member clearly transcends individual expertise. The conductor should help this process without judgment or bias, to ensure that the conceptual ideas of the dance and music work toward the common goal.

III. Working Methodology of the Creative Team

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the collaborative framework is that of the working methodology between team members. At this juncture in the process each member merges his/her art to create a combined whole and the possibility of true collaboration begins. Team members now develop a unified working relationship that

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33 Bruce Taylor Lecture Recital Video (Tucson: University of Arizona Library, 2002), video tape, 00:04:53.
transcends individual ideas, are which becomes unique to the project within which they are engaged. The working methods implemented were developed from mutual respect, a desire to create and hours of intense conversations. It is also at this point in the process when the greatest potential for conflict can arise and the conductor can be a key to mediating disagreements that may hinder the progress of the collaboration. Fortunately, in the context of this collaboration, this did not occur.

Reactions

Collaborative working methods employed by the team members to create a common artistic goal emerged to provide an adaptable dynamic, based upon reaction, integration, combination, and synthesis. Reaction, the first of these methods, is based upon the individual depth of knowledge each creative team member possesses of his or her own art, as well as an awareness and respect for the artistic knowledge of others. This is seen in both spontaneous and responsive reactions. Within the environment of this collaboration, reactions between the team members occurred both in response to the music and/or choreography and to comments made by individuals on a continual basis throughout the process. On each occasion, during meetings and rehearsals, Taylor-Altieri-Kenagy and Taylor-Altieri-Robinson engaged in discourse as a constructive and critical response to both observations of the music/choreography and/or reactions to the comments made to each other. Reactions were both verbal and physical, (i.e., in dialogue, non-verbal communication, or a kinesthetic response by the body to the music).
A responsive reaction was established during the following conversation after the first rehearsal of the third movement on September 30, 2001:

Altieri: My reactions are . . . I think what I had in mind. The aggressiveness and energy that I think will be expressed to the audience, especially once the saxes are in balance - that will be the forefront - as bombastic and chaotic, the sax line will be most present. One reaction tossing in my head . . . this thing in context of the whole twenty-five minutes and keeping that in mind, this will work. It's pretty thick, especially at the end. That unraveling chaos will be appropriate thinking in regards to the whole twenty-five minutes. First readings are always interesting.

Robinson: I think I agree with what you are saying. A bit spastic it needs to build up for it . . . maybe not so hard.

Taylor: In the context of the twenty-five minute work, I think it is cool to be thrown into it.

Robinson: Definitely.

Taylor: I like your comments before that it made you uncomfortable. I agree that what we want the audience to feel is uncomfortable so when the ending of it finally comes, it's going to be this incredible poignant moment with this dispersion of energy.

Altieri: And the soprano enters.

Taylor: Oh my God.

Robinson: Pretty insane.34

As the conversation progressed, it demonstrated both spontaneous and responsive reactions by the participants to hearing the music for the first time. Reactions during the first segment of the Taylor-Robinson-Altieri exchange were indicated by the slower rate

34 Bruce Taylor Lecture Recital Video (Tucson: University of Arizona Library, 2002), video tape, 00:09/09.
of speech, and each member finishing a sentence before comments were made. Additionally, each member took time to understand what he had heard, allowing understanding before he reacts and responds. Spontaneous reactions are indicated during the latter part of this verbal exchange when the rate of speech increases and members respond rapidly on an emotional level by interrupting the thoughts of other members.

The conductor demonstrated another example of spontaneous response when he recalled a dance lift he had performed years before. Clearly, the reaction to the dancer’s movement helped the conductor to remember specific knowledge and expertise that contributed to the project’s choreography.

The author was cognizant of such spontaneous and responsive reactions (verbal and non-verbal), and offered help when needed in interpreting the stimuli for each of the team members without the specific expertise in conducting, composition and choreography to ensure against misinterpretations. As the craft of each member became familiar to the others, an integration of specific creative expertise begins, introducing the next stage of the collaborative framework.

Integration

Integration is an application of creative-based disciplines and structure to ensure that the common vision is reached. During a discussion of the first movement by Taylor-Altieri-Kenagy on February 12, 2002, all three team members shared individual ideas unique to their specific areas of conducting, composition, and choreography to ensure
realization of the project's goal. Integration is evident during this dialogue with a discussion of the percussion ostinato (Appendix 2 Measure 38) and its relation to the kinesthetic quality of the choreography. Because of the ostinato, a need to find the natural tempi for the musicians and corresponding conducting gesture was integrated, enabling the relentless rhythmic motion to continue.

Taylor: A couple of things for me, and to fill LoRee in as well, when I first started talking about this movement and some of the discussion we had, some of the underlying things was an incessant... like when you get a thought in your head you just can't get rid of this was kind of... the idea. There is always something there that keeps drawing and pulling you back in, like that thought in your head you just can't get rid of, being pulled into the light [referring to lighting ideas that had been previously discussed]. The kinetic energy starts from a conducting standpoint. It would feel more natural to the ensemble to fall into a groove. I think you agree, John that this section needs to be faster. There needs to be more of a sense of direction; it's a little too...

Altieri: Ploddy.

Taylor: Yeah, ploddy, and when the winds come in, we need to feel the ostinato and balance it as well. The incessantness is there always until the cello comes in.

Altieri: Umm, the second movement I introduce - the break drum - which foreshadows the third movement perhaps. Break drum accents can be used to highlight the ostinato.

[John sings pattern]

Taylor: Yeah, I liked that idea of a wood block or clave that is always sounding no matter what is going on.

Altieri: As the layers thicken, we lose the ostinato, which is O.K. But if we have the highlight of it there, it may be enough.

Taylor: And that will help you guys, as well [addressing Kenagy], if there is something regardless of all the texture you can lock into.
Kenagy: Absolutely.

Altieri: We can totally experiment with that.\textsuperscript{35}

The conductor must be knowledgeable of the crafts of the others, both in composition and in choreography, and guide the presented ideas of the integration without predisposition, based on how each member’s talent would best integrate to create a stronger and more unified artistic expression. Robert Irving called attention to the knowledge that a conductor must have of dance and how this is essential in the integration of artistic ideas. He stated, “It is essential for the aspiring ballet conductor to have a basic interest in the dance, coupled with a well-developed sense of movement, which enables one to perceive when the dancers are being rushed or, which is worse, being dragged back by too slow a tempo.”\textsuperscript{36}

Combination

The combination of shared experience, talent and passion constitutes the third method of the working process, and serves as the stage when individual roles begin to blur. According to John-Steiner, “These partnerships require a prolonged period of committed activity. They thrive on dialogue, risk taking, and a shared vision. In some cases, the participants construct a common set of beliefs, or ideology, which sustains them in periods of opposition or insecurity. Integrative partnerships are motivated by the

\textsuperscript{35} Bruce Taylor Lecture Recital Video (Tucson: University of Arizona Library, 2002), video tape, 00:15:02.

desire to transform existing knowledge, thought styles, or artistic approaches into new visions. John-Steiner uses “dynamic integration of expertise” to best explain integrated collaboration in both science and art. Combination of shared experience is seen as an integral element of the collaborative process. Within the confines of this project, combinations of shared experiences were clearly visible during the initial rehearsals of the dancers with both conductor and composer present. It was during these rehearsals that the crafts of all three artists began to meld, transforming the project into a singular unified creation.

As is often the case, it was during the final stage of the rehearsal process, with both live music and dancers that the greatest awareness of combined experience manifested. Team members became completely absorbed and cognizant of the skills of the other collaborators, and became acutely aware of how their artistic contributions fit within the confines of the total production. Decisions could be made at the highest level of understanding by the combination of specific artistic expertise to create a performance at the highest level of excellence.

During the final stages of preparation, the conductor must have a clear understanding of the project from a holistic perspective, and decide how to combine and achieve the best performance within limited rehearsal time. Once again, the conductor must be a master of rehearsal technique, be aware of the physical limitations of each

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dancer and be sensitive to the endurance of the musicians; all while balancing the vision, needs, and demands of each member of the creative team.

Synthesis

The final and most profound of all the stages of this collaborative process was when the synthesis of individual artistic skills transcended individuality to form a unique and combined working dynamic. At this point in the collaboration significant individuality melded into the whole. The shackles of apprehension, self-consciousness, and insecurity were released at this advanced point in the process allowing the collaborators to create at a level higher than that of any one individual. During the creation of My Words Turn to Song in Your Fists, the creative team reached this heightened awareness after many hours of passionate conversation and debate, observing each other create, and working together in collaborative creating and rehearsing. In a mutual attempt to understand the perspective of other team members and the individual processes they used to reach their artistic choice, an integrated relationship was energized. John-Steiner explained the dynamic in the flowing manner:

Artists working together combine their different perspectives and their shared passion to shed the familiar. In fashioning novelty, it is often hard to overcome practiced modes of seeing and creating. The partnerships of Picasso and Braque, Stravinsky and Balanchine, and O'Keefe and Stieglitz, among others, provide many examples of this dynamic. Transformative contributions are born from sharing risks and challenging, appropriating, and deepening each partner's contribution. Individuals in successful partnerships reach beyond their habitual ways of learning, working, and
creating. In transforming what they know, they construct creative syntheses.\(^38\)

This passage describes a few of the most significant artistic partnerships of the past one hundred years, and how each of these relationships was unique to the individuals involved. It is at this final stage in any collaboration when the process enters the intuitive realm and is not easily defined by accepted norms—a possible reason for the lack of documentation surrounding this final stage of artistic collaboration. A synthesis was attained when each of the contributors within both the Taylor-Altieri-Kenagy and Taylor-Altieri-Robinson teams were able to remove personal barriers and share their deepest concerns. As stated by Barron, Montuori, and Barron,

> When the heart speaks, it may seem unreasonable. But if we listen to it without losing our heads, we may find hope in it that what lies ahead is a new and better way of living. In that lies the strength of living with an uncovered heart. But there is that fearsome vulnerability too. We take a chance when we open ourselves to others. We can be hurt. Some of the most timeless examples of creativity are those moments when hearts have been uncovered, when an individual has emerged who addresses those unique experiences that bind us together in the human condition. The uncovered heart reveals both vulnerability and strength. Its strength lies perhaps precisely in that ability to open itself to itself, with elegance and grace that invites the hearts of others to do so too.\(^39\)

Not until we face our own internal fears, and have complete trust in a relationship, will we allow others past our fleshy exterior and observe the depths of our creative soul. Perhaps this is the most difficult, but the most essential, element for the conductor in collaboration: to set aside ego, judgment, preconceived notions, and stand

\(^38\) Ibid., 96.

vulnerable on the podium. The conductor must lead by example and provide the atmosphere of complete artistic safety.

What really counts is to strip the soul naked. Painting or poetry is made as we make Love; a total embrace, Prudence thrown to the Wind, nothing held back.  

Joan Miró

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40 Ibid., 24.
CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

Martha Graham wrote, "There is a vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening, that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all time, this expression is unique. And if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and will be lost." Graham was an icon of twentieth century dance, and an important collaborator with the composer Aaron Copland. Collaborative artistic unions remain a hallmark of great art, transcending individual talents to create a greater whole.

This project witnessed the collaboration of four passionate artists, Taylor, Altieri, Robinson and Kenagy in staging and creating an original work for modern dance. The collaborative process experienced many changes throughout the project in regards to the relationship of the choreography to the composer and conductor. These changes provided an atmosphere where the final performance synthesizing the creative ability of all team members was presented as the performance of *My Words Turn to Song in Your Fists*. This artistic sojourn of creation, staging, and performance allowed this comprehensive commentary and discourse on the process of creative collaboration to occur. This in turn resulted in the development of a practical framework defining the collaborative process between conductor, composer, and choreographer. The process also shed light on the significant role that a conductor can play as a catalyst in gathering the skills and talents of

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composers and choreographers to create a new work of dance. This document also highlights four aspects of the skills that aspiring conductors should acquire to help understand the unique challenges in conducting for dance: vision, knowledge and expertise, respect and mediation.

The collaborative framework conceived and developed by this author as a result of this project consists of three sections. The first section, the *artistic desires of the creative team*, constitutes the initial stages in creating artistic relationships and is comprised of intrigue, respect, and desire. Intrigue drives team members with similar and overlapping interests to engage in a project. Respect between creative team members ensures that the artistic viability and a common desire to develop unified interests into an artistic success can materialize. The desire by creative team members to use their specific talents as a tool to reach the shared goal demonstrates their visionary commitment to the project.

The middle stages of the collaborative process involve tangible observations concerning the second stage of the framework, the *role of each team member*, which is established individual processes composed of contributing to dialogue, contribution of specific expertise, and amalgamation of skills. Dialogue and creative discourse occurred within a nurturing environment (i.e., brainstorming and voluntary collection of ideas). In order to create a common artistic goal, each team member contributed specific expertise. Awareness by team members was developed contiguous with how individual expertise fit within the framework and project time line (i.e., individual contribution within the structure of the project). Amalgamation of the skills within the framework becomes the
common goal; within the scope of the project, creative individual expression transpired.

The final stage in the collaborative framework, working methodology of the creative team, concerns incorporating individual talent and expertise to create a working dynamic unique to the assembled artists and is comprised of reactions, integration, combination, and synthesis. Integration of specific techniques unique to the art of each individual team member is developed; application of creative-based disciplines and structure ensures the success of a common vision. The combination of shared experience, talent, and desire creates a dynamic integration of expertise. Synthesis of talent transcends the ability of the individual to become a unique combined working dynamic; the sum of the parts becomes a whole.

This document offers suggestions that can be used by aspiring ballet/dance conductors in a collaborative setting. The prerequisite for the conductor must be a clear vision of the project, a passion for dance, respect for the crafts of collaborating artists and their unique personalities, and finally, an in-depth knowledge of conducting, composition, and choreography. Once the conductor has attained these necessary components, an application of the collaborative framework can be initiated and the journey begun.

Perhaps the lesson learned as a result of this collaborative endeavor was the fact that the best intentions of a conductor to gather artists in collaboration are more often than not fretted with unpredictable circumstances. The strength of the project was demonstrated by the ability of each participant to take each unforeseen event and emerge with stronger conviction and vision, to complete My Words Turn to Song in Your Fists.
In the first stage of the framework, the artistic desire of each team member proved to be the crucial binding element as each new choreographer committed to the project, and was the unifying force in the final stages when LoRee Kenagy's colleagues stepped in to complete the choreography. Everyone involved, from the project's conductor and composer through to the final choreographers, volunteer performers, and technical support were intrigued by the project, and respected each other through common vision, trust, and a strong desire to see the work completed.

The collaborative framework presented is but a rough guide that artists can use as an aid in creating new works of art. The strength of the framework really lies within the first section: the artistic desire of each member. Artists working towards a common goal, who are strong in conviction and desire, understand that a unification of individual skills has the potential to create a stronger artistic whole. The second two sections of the framework are far more adaptable and can be molded to suit the needs of each unique relationship; roles of the creative team and working methodology will vary greatly depending on personalities. Certainly, the first section of artistic desire must be established to ensure any hope of being successful in the subsequent stages.

Arguably, no greater artistic collaboration of musical and visual art exists than in the world of dance. For here, emotion, action, drama, and pure beauty are expressed with the utmost sincerity and integrity of character. Dance cannot rely upon the spoken word to convey narrative, or tell the audience of what and how they should feel. Each participant is free to interpret the aural and the visual at an intuitive level, rendering each
dance experience truly unique. For these reasons, I encourage conductors to gather the
skills and talents of composers and choreographers and to advocate that new works of
dance are developed. "For all this - compromises, dangerous uncertainties, and, most of
all, time pressures that preclude optimum discussion - the magic of the moment of
performance itself can still remain. Furthermore, in looking at any dance, we are
confronting something with a highly complex and shifting identity, although, we can
never fully grasp or control." For those who enjoy great challenges, the rewards of
working together with top-class artists are very great.

42 Stephanie Jordan, Moving Music: Dialogues with Music in the Twentieth-Century Ballet (London: Dance
COLLABORATIVE FRAMEWORK

I. Artistic desires of the creative team

(a) **Intrigue** that drive each member to engage in the project (Similar and overlapping interests).
(b) **Respect** between creative team for each member’s artistic viability and a common desire to develop common interests into an artistic work (Common vision and trust).
(c) **Desire** by creative team members to use their specific talents as a tool to reach the shared goal (Visionary commitment to the project).

II. The role of each team member

(a) **Contributing to dialogue** and creative discourse occurred within a nurturing environment (i.e., brainstorming an informal and voluntary collection of ideas).
(b) **Contributing specific expertise** is contributed by each team member in creating a common artistic goal. Awareness of how individual experiences fits within the framework and project timeline (Individual contribution within the structure of the project).
(c) **Amalgamation** of each creative team member’s skills within the framework becomes the common goal. Creative individual expression is allowed to occur within the project’s scope and working dynamic (Fluidity of roles).

III. Working methodology of the creative team members

(a) **Reactions** during the collaborative process by individual team members-based on their depth of knowledge (Spontaneous and responsive).
(b) **Integration** of specific techniques unique to the art of each individual team member is developed; application of creative-based disciplines and structure ensures the success of a common vision. (Discipline-based approaches).
(c) **Combination** of shared experience, talent and passion (Dynamic integration of expertise).
(d) **Syntheses** of each creative team member’s talent, which transcend to the formation of a unique working dynamic. The sum of the parts becomes a whole. Significant individuality melds into the whole (Transformative co-construction).
APPENDIX B

VIDEO SEGMENTS AND TAPE COUNT
VIDEO SEGMENTS AND TAPE COUNT

My Doctoral committee has required that a videotape containing examples of the dialogue as well as the final performance be submitted with this document. The Video is on file at the University of Arizona Library

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Example</th>
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<td>Amalgamation</td>
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<td><em>My Words Turn to Song in Your Fists</em></td>
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APPENDIX C

THE SCORE

My Words Turn to Song in Your Fists
My Words Turn to Song in Your Fists

I.

Copyright © 2002 Altieri Music
cadenza, passionato

con moto

suddenly pulling back
slower, delicato
Accel. to piccolo

Ob. mp

A. Sax. mp

Hn. mp

Tpt. mf

Tbn. mf

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Vln. Accel.

Vla.

Vc.
Play 4 times

A. Sax.

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

Per. 1

Per. 2

Per. 3

B Ch.
Play 3 times

A. Sax, T. Sax, Bar, Sax.

Perc, 1
tom-toms ad lib.
Perc. 2
ad lib.
th. sh.
Perc. 3
Gl, A, Sax, T, Sax, Bar, Sax,
Perc- 1
tom-toms ad lib.
sus. cym.
Perc. 2
ad lib.
th. sh.
Perc. 3
net.

B.G.
Play m. 265 independently in a staccato, scurrying manner w/ energy.

The woodwind should proceed with cadenza even if other instrumentists have not yet finished their final repetition.

A. Sax.
T. Sax.
Bar. Sax.

Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3

B. Cl.
cadenza, with anger and intensity

quasi-rubato

A. Sax.

slop tongue

A. Sax.
IV.

Perc. 1

Soprano

my words turn to song in your fists

Solo, expressively, inwardly, with subtle rubato
REFERENCES


Note: A VHS video cassette recording is included with the Special Collection copy at the University of Arizona Special Collection Library.