

A Charter for the Older Dancer

1 Everyone should have equal access to participate, express and enjoy themselves in dance irrespective of age or physical ability

2 People can begin to dance, train, become choreographers, leaders and critics at any age. People's ability to express themselves and communicate effectively in dance is frequently enhanced by age and experience

3 A diverse range of dance cultures should be available to older people reflective of those cultures found among our population ballroom and modern sequence dancing, classical ballet, tap, contemporary dance, African, Scottish, Welsh, Irish and English folk dance, line dancing, Jamaican quadrilles and folk and classical forms from South East Asia to name but a few

4 Older people should have the opportunity to express the full range of emotions in dance and movement - not excluding their sensuality and sexuality, as well as anger, joy, grief, fear and so on

5 A new aesthetic must **continue to** be encouraged which allows for the real appreciation of older people in movement and dance

6 Older dancers provide a role model and a positive image of ageing

7 At a time when the benefits of 'moderate' exercise regimes **are widely** recognised as having enormous physical and mental health benefits, dance should be accepted as having a central role to play in all health programmes

8 Dance and exercise classes, creative sessions and performing opportunities should be a consistent part of older people's activity programmes, taking account of the individual needs with regard to health and fitness, and available in arts and community centres, day centres, residential homes, hospitals and other places where older people gather

9 Professional dance companies should look for consistent opportunities to employ older as well as younger dancers. Choreographers and artistic directors should be encouraged to acknowledge the exciting opportunities that older dancers can bring to dance

10 Dance companies **and choreographers** should employ older **dancers on an equal footing as younger dancers**

11 It is the responsibility of all sectors of the arts industry to nurture and develop dance artists and choreographers as they mature in age and skill

12 Dance companies and projects which employ older people should take care to schedule rehearsals, performances and tours, and arrange all working conditions in such a way to take into account the particular needs of older people

13 Those who work with older dancers should recognise that adults learn differently from younger dancers and should therefore acquaint themselves with models of adult learning

14 All dance and associated courses in colleges, universities, academies, etc. should acknowledge the important role older dancers can play either as students or as part of the faculties

15 Companies and venues audience development programmes should target older people as well as the young

16 The dance industry should positively embrace the potential of older people to contribute to a wide variety of professional roles within the industry

17 The industry should take the opportunity to learn from other cultural traditions, some of which may provide alternative models for valuing and supporting the older dancer

18 Those organising dance activities and opportunities for older dancers should recognise the importance of intergenerational work which places the older dancer as an equal

19 Opportunities to debate issues surrounding the older dancer, nationally and internationally, should continue

20 There should be a review of the language used around the older dancer and how we define 'older.'

21 There should be a central responsibility for ensuring that Dance Agencies and individual artists are kept informed of small pots of funding that can help sustain groups

22 A national standard of training for dance with older people should be established

23. A national older peoples network of artists, researchers, policy makers, agencies and participants should be established, leading to opportunity for joined up thinking, research and projects.

24. There should be greater research, opportunity and projects for older men dancing.

Original version taken from the Animated Winter 1996/97 © Foundation for Community Dance